

**PROBATE COURT OF CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO**

**ANTHONY J. RUSSO, Presiding Judge**

**LAURA J. GALLAGHER, Judge**

**REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURT IN STEPPARENT ADOPTIONS**

[probate.cuyahogacounty.us](http://probate.cuyahogacounty.us)

**PLEASE SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING ITEMS AT TIME OF FILING THE PETITION FOR ADOPTION:**

1. **One (1) typed and signed copy of the Petition for Adoption, including cover pages.** All forms must be complete with middle names included for all parties involved in the adoption.
2. **Certified copy of the adoptee(s) birth certificate.**
3. **Consent to Adoption** by any parties authorized to consent.
4. **For children born on or after January 1, 1997, documentation showing a search of the Putative Father Registry has been completed. (Form JFS 1695).**
5. **Affidavit for Service by Publication**, if applicable.
6. **Criminal Record check pursuant to O.R.C. Section 2151.86. This is to be done at the court at the time of family office interview with social worker.** 
  - A. **Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII) – \$22.00 per person.** This search is necessary for all petitioners and any adults in the home of the petitioners. At the time of fingerprinting, petitioner must provide a valid driver's license or State Identification card.
  - B. **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) - \$24.00 per person.** This search is necessary for any petitioners who have lived outside of the State of Ohio in the last five (5) years. Fingerprint card must be completed.
7. **Medical report on child using form provided by court.**
8. **If child is in counseling/therapy, a current letter from treating professional regarding the adoption.**
9. **Completed medical report on adopting parents using form provided by court including a statement regarding the petitioner's suitability for adoption.**
10. **Documentation regarding the basis of petitioner's proof of income and/or disability income.**
11. **Petitioners must have a letter from their respective employer(s), and four (4) letters of character reference from other individuals with personal knowledge of the petitioner(s). All letters should be addressed to:** 

**Judges of the Probate Court  
Probate Court of Cuyahoga County  
1 Lakeside Avenue, West  
Cleveland, OH 44113.**
12. **A certified copy of marriage certificate at time of filing if petitioners are married.**
13. **Certified copies of all divorce decrees of both adopting parents, if either or both have been previously married. This will become part of the Court's permanent record.**
14. **CSEA/Bureau of Support statement regarding child support of potential adoptee, if applicable.**

15. **Proof of support of any minor child(ren) from previous marriages/relationships**, if applicable.
16. **Proof of death if either birth parent is deceased.** Certified copy of death certificate.
17. **Certified copy of death certificate for any previous spouse of the petitioner(s)**, if applicable.
18. **Copy of most recent IRS 1040 tax return filed.** Must copy both sides of return and all schedules.
19. **Financial Statement (ODHS 1681).**
20. **Results Notice from Ohio Department of Job and Family Services for the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System Alleged Perpetrator Search (SACWIS).**
21. Petitioner, and spouse, must be available for interviews and for a home visit prior to the date of the hearing.
22. **On the date set for hearing, both petitioner(s) and child(ren) must appear in Court.**
23. **Supplemental Information Sheet**, which must be typed.

At time of filing the petition, petitioner(s) will pay court costs.

**All costs must be paid by cash, money order or credit card (additional fee applies to credit card transactions) made payable to Cuyahoga County Probate Court.**

The following fees apply:

<b>Court Costs</b>	<b>\$175.00</b>
<b>Home Study</b>	<b>\$150.00</b>
<b>Service by Publication</b>	<b>\$40.00 (if applicable)</b>

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL (216) 443-8988 or (216) 443-8989**

Please be advised that the court staff is prohibited from giving legal advice to prospective petitioners.