



PÚBLICA

# The Family Origins Search Procedure in Colombia

Under-Directorate for Adoptions ICBF

18 February 2022



El futuro  
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Gobierno  
de Colombia





# Services offered as part of the Origins Search Procedure



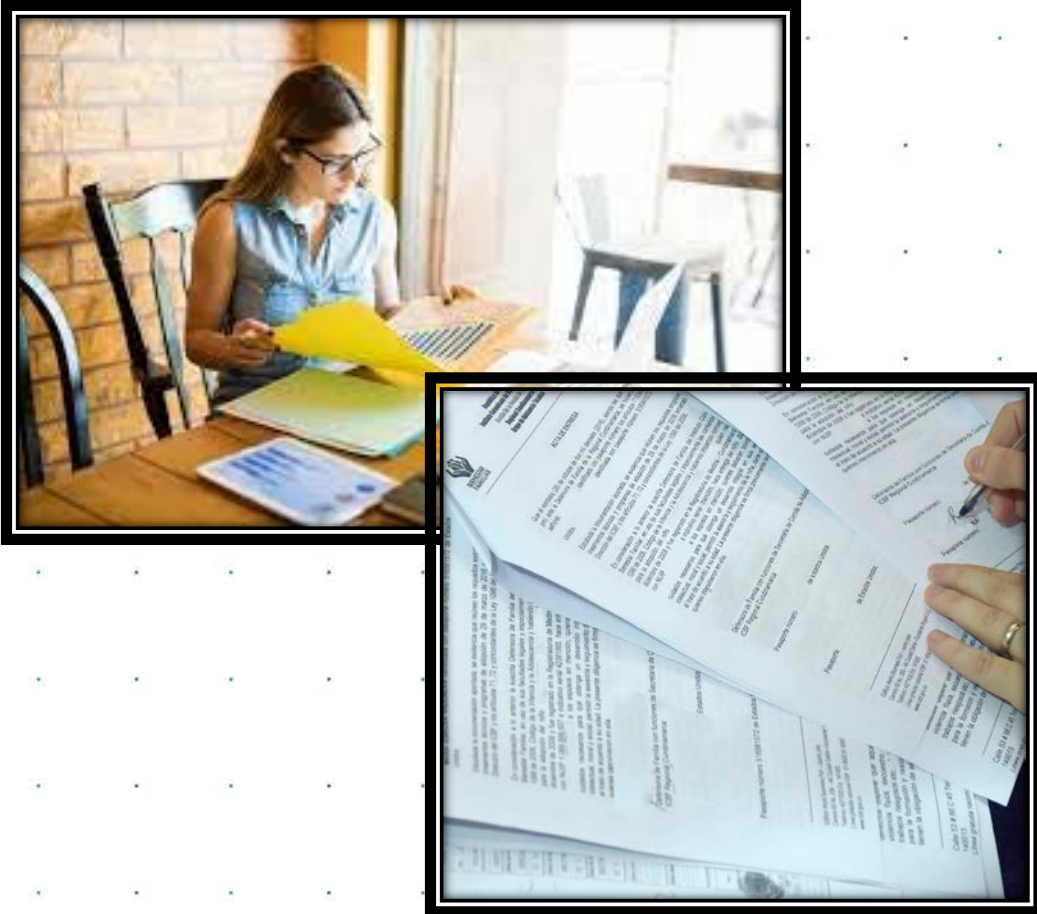
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**BIENESTAR  
FAMILIAR**

# Copy of the Care File



**Adult adoptees**, who request it, may have access to a digital copy of the documentation relating to their process of protection (rights restoration) / adoption (*i.e.* all administrative and/or judicial proceedings), which will enable them to find continuity between their life story of origin and their current life.

In the case of **underage adoptees**, only their adoptive parents, as their legal representatives, may submit a request to the ICBF.

# Copy of the Care File

## Submission of the Care File to the applicant

1

Lifting of the reserve, search, retrieval from archives and digitization of the adoption file (Central Archives at the Regionals and ICBF's National Historical Archives).

3

A video call is offered to the adoptee in order to present him/her with the digital file and to review it with him/her in order to provide information on the context.

5

If identified as necessary, it may be suggested that the ICBF's professional undertake interdisciplinary activities with adoptee's psychologist or therapist, before the full file is submitted to the adoptee.

Review, analysis and summary of the information gathered from the file.

2

Considering that the information is sensitive, it is suggested that the adoptee benefits from psychosocial support in his/her country of residence throughout the process.

4

# Copy of the Care File

## Reconstruction of the Care File

1

If the file cannot be found in the ICBF's archives, based on the information provided by the adoptee, a search for documents relating to his/her process begins, and relies on the archives of participating external bodies: National Office of the Civil Registry, Notary's Offices, Courts, amongst others.

2

A review, analysis and summary of the information found during the reconstruction are undertaken.

3

A video call is offered to the adoptee in order to present him/her with the digital file and to review it with him/her in order to provide information on the context.

# Search for the family of origin

The aim is to undertake an active search for the origin's family (parents), by determining the feasibility - or not - of finding them and their willingness to proceed with a reunion with the adult adoptee.

If no information be found about the biological parents in the Care File, an active search for other significant relatives, who were involved in the child's care and are mentioned in his/her file, begins.

Psychosocial support is offered to the adoptive triad throughout the process, in order to facilitate their understanding of the search's potential outcomes (ICBF and international partners).

The adoptee may request a search for biological siblings who remained with the origin's family or in the protection system.

## What about siblings, who were adopted?

This process is only feasible when these siblings also submitted a request to the ICBF for a search aimed at reunion.

**EXCEPTION:** With regards to underage adoptees, the search for the biological family will only proceed if a physical or psychological health professional supports this request, by demonstrating that it is totally **necessary** for a therapeutic process, and that it will not be counterproductive for the adoptee.



# Search for the family of origin

Submission of the Care File to the applicant

The file is sent under the same conditions as for the Copy of the Care File's Service.

1

During the review and analysis of the Care File, particular focus will be drawn to biological relatives' identification data, as these will be the basis that makes it possible or not to undertake a search.

2

Counselling is provided on the feasibility - or lack of it - of initiating a search, based on the information available. If there are preliminary outcomes, the information is provided.

3

Based on the information found in the Care File and through governmental and/or private bodies, a search for the potential contact details of biological relatives begins (Civil Registry, social protection system, health sector, pension funds, etc.).

4

Confirmation of identity and tracing

# Search for the family of origin

## Contact with the biological family

If information on location is found, the professional initiates contact by phone in order to verify the identity of the sought person.

1

If contact by phone is not successful, the professional goes to the domicile (in Bogota, this is Under-Directorate for Adoptions' responsibility; in other cities, it is incumbent on the competent regional office).

2

*"Information is only provided to the sought person"*

When contacted, he or she is informed about the process undertaken by the adoptee and psychosocial support is offered to determine the feasibility, preparation and interest in a potential reunion.

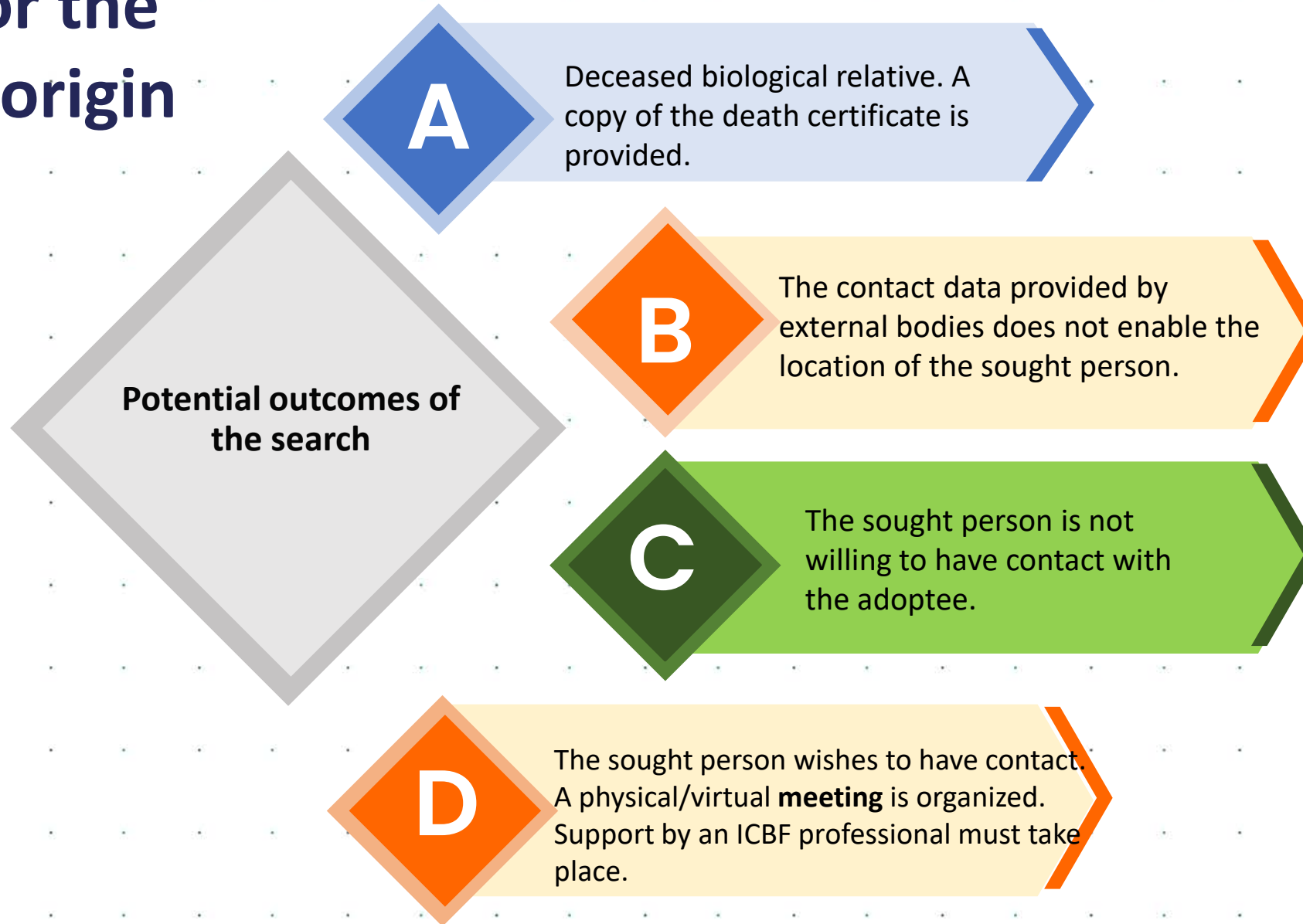
3

Contact data will only be shared with the adoptee once this has been authorised.

4



# Search for the family of origin



Phone or e-mail **follow-up** with the adoptee and the biological family is undertaken in order to offer psychosocial support if necessary (responsibility of the Under-Directorate for Adoptions).

# Biological family searches for adoptee

In accordance with Colombian legislation, the biological family loses all its rights and duties in relation to a child and any legal parentage terminates when an adoptability resolution or a consent granted by the biological family have been expressed, as well as a final adoption judgement.

However, any member of the adoptee's biological family may request to the ICBF:

- ☑ Register/update his or her contact details on the information system (*Sistema de Información Misional SIM*), in order to become a source of consultation **if** the adoptee submit a request to the ICBF to undertake an active search for his or her biological family;
- ☑ Submit, with his or her request, a letter or pictures in order for the ICBF to share them with the adoptee.



# Prioritize the right to identity

As part of the child protection process, if no birth certificate has been requested by the biological parents, the Family Defender must request the child's registration in order to safeguard all his/her fundamental rights.

Once the adoption judgement has been issued, the original birth certificate becomes 'void', but is not removed; it is preserved within the archives of the Civil Registry offices and the Notary's offices, with a mention that it was replaced by the post-adoption birth certificate. Both certificates are registered at the same Civil Registry or Notary office.

The Technical Administrative Guidelines of the Adoption Program includes - as part of the process of preparation of applicant families for domestic and intercountry adoption - the development of tools to manage information about the child's life story, adoptive identity, search of origins, preservation of the language and recognition of the cultural traditions of the country of origin, amongst others.

At the time of matching an adoptive family and a child, priority is given to the matching of Colombian families.

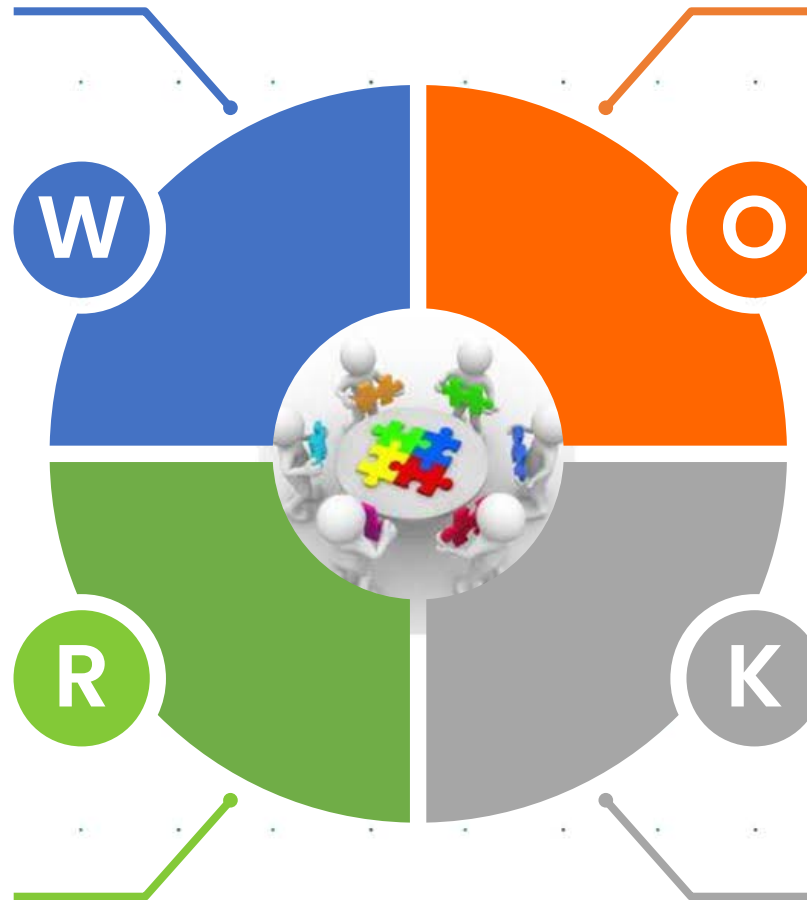
The search for origins procedure was designed to safeguard the adoptees' right to know their origins, as an essential element in the continuity of their identity from birth or entry into the protection system until their current life stage.

Law 1098 of 2006 "Article 25. RIGHT TO IDENTITY. Children and adolescents have the right to have an identity and to maintain its elements, such as a name, nationality and parentage in accordance with the law. Thus, they must be registered immediately after birth on the civil registry. They have the right to preserve their language of origin, culture and idiosyncrasy".

THUS:

# Recommendations for good practices

It is necessary to strengthen the existing collaborative work and to create new relationships of cooperation with those countries involved in requests for origins' searches (countries of origin and receiving countries).



It is necessary to raise awareness amongst adoptees and adoptive parents as to the importance of approaching Central Authorities, accredited adoption bodies or ISS, in order to benefit from support in their origins' searches, instead of resorting directly to social networks or private investigators.

Improve practices and administrative procedures in order to facilitate the response to requests in compliance with the legal framework.

The services of origins' search needs progress and adjustment to the changing legal requirements, the demands of society, the advance in technologies, the outcomes of research in the psychosocial field, amongst others.

# Contact

## Origins' Search Team / Under-Directorate for Adoptions

Persons adopted in Colombia, who reside abroad, and wish to initiate a search for origins may send their requests to the following e-mail :

- [Busquedaorigenesadoptados@icbf.gov.co](mailto:Busquedaorigenesadoptados@icbf.gov.co)

Questions or concerns of Central Authorities, accredited adoption bodies, ISS, organisations or NGOs, may be submitted to the following e-mails:

- [Lina.RodriguezR@icbf.gov.co](mailto:Lina.RodriguezR@icbf.gov.co)
- [Tilsa.Pena@icbf.gov.co](mailto:Tilsa.Pena@icbf.gov.co)

ICBF webpages with all the information about the process of search for origins at:

<https://www.icbf.gov.co/programa-adopciones>

<https://www.icbf.gov.co/programas-y-estrategias/proteccion/subdireccion-de-adopciones/busqueda-de-origenes>



# THANK YOU!!!







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