



**1. What is the difference between a “certified” and an “uncertified” copy of a birth certificate?**

A **certified** copy of a birth certificate issued by the State Vital Records Office will have a raised seal, will show the signature of the State Registrar, and will be printed on security paper. A certified copy may be required to obtain a state-issued driver’s license or identification, for travel to foreign countries, to obtain a passport, or for benefit purposes.

State law restricts who may obtain a **certified** copy of a birth certificate. A **certified** copy can only be issued to those people with a “direct and tangible interest” (section II, categories A – E) which means the following people:

- The person named on the birth certificate (section II, category A).
- An immediate family member, defined as current spouse, current domestic partner (Declaration of Domestic Partnership registered in the Wis. Vital Records System under Chapter 770, Wis. Stats.), child, or parent (whose name is on the birth certificate and whose parental rights have not been terminated), brother/sister, or grandparent of a subject of the record (section II, category B).
- NOTE: Grandchildren, step-parents, and step-children can only obtain certified copies as in section II, categories C – E.
- The legal custodian or guardian of the person named on the birth certificate. Legal proof, e.g., a court order of custody or guardianship, is required (section II, category C).
- A person authorized in writing by one of the above. A written and notarized authorization must accompany the application and the authorization must clearly state the relationship of the authorizing party to the subject of the record (section II, category D).
- A person who can demonstrate that the birth certificate is required to determine or to protect a personal or property right (section II, category E). Proof is required.

If you do not meet one of the above criteria, you cannot receive a **certified** copy of a birth certificate.

An **uncertified** copy will contain the same information as a certified copy but it is **not** acceptable for legal purposes, such as proof of identity (section II, category F).

**2. Limitations on access to certain birth certificates**

An **uncertified copy** will contain the same information as a certified copy but it is **not** acceptable for legal purposes, such as proof of identity.

According to Chapter 69, Wis. Stats., **uncertified copies** of the following types of birth certificates may not be obtained by anyone:

- A child born to unmarried parents and paternity has not been established.
- A child born to unmarried parents and paternity was established by court order.

Only persons with a “direct and tangible interest” (categories A – E) may obtain **certified copies** of those types of birth certificates listed directly above.

**3. How long will it take to process my request?**

Copies of birth certificates are available from the State Vital Records Office no less than 3 weeks from the date of the birth.

- **Applying in Person**
  - In-person requests for **certified** copies of birth certificates are usually completed within 2 business hours of application, if the birth certificate is on file.
  - In-person requests for **uncertified** copies of birth certificates are not completed on the same schedule as requests for certified copies. In-person requests for uncertified copies may take up to 1 month to complete.
- **Applying by Mail**
  - Requests for **certified** copies of birth certificates may take up to 2 weeks plus mail time to complete.
  - Requests for **uncertified** copies of birth certificates are not completed on the same schedule as certified copies. Mail requests for uncertified copies may take up to 1 month plus mail time.

**4. What identification is required when applying for a certified or uncertified copy of a birth certificate?**

A photocopy of the applicant’s current ID as listed below must be submitted with **all** mail applications. A current ID as listed below is required when applying in-person.

**At least one form of ID must show your current name and current address. Expired cards or documents will not be accepted.**

The acceptable forms of identification are:

<b>One of these:</b>	<b>OR</b>	<b>Two of these:</b>
Wisconsin driver’s license		Government-issued employee ID card or badge with photo
Wisconsin photo ID		US Passport
Out-of-state driver’s license or photo ID card		Check or bank book
		Major Credit Card
		Health Insurance Card
		Recent dated, signed lease
		Recent utility bill or traffic ticket

**If you have questions regarding this form, please call 608-266-1373 or visit our website at <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/vitalrecords>**