

1. Certified vs. Uncertified Copy

What is the difference between a certified and an uncertified copy of a birth certificate issued by an authorized Wisconsin Vital Records Registration Office (state or local)?

A **certified copy** of a birth certificate issued by our office will have a raised seal, will show the signature of the State Registrar, and will be printed on security paper. If the document is issued by a local registration office, the document will also have the local registrar's information.

A certified copy of a birth certificate may be required to obtain a state-issued driver's license or identification, to obtain a license to marry, 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 may be issued to:

- The person named on the certificate;
- The spouse of the person named on the certificate;
- A parent of the person named on the certificate;
- A sibling of the person named on the certificate;
- A child of the person named on the certificate;
- A grandparent of the person named on the certificate;
- A person authorized in writing by one of the above (The written authorization must accompany the request and the relationship of the authorizing party to the subject of the record must be clearly explained.); or
- A person who can demonstrate that the certificate is required to determine or to protect a personal or property right.

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 will **not** be acceptable for legal purposes, such as obtaining identification.

According to Chapter 69, Wisconsin Statutes, the following kinds of birth certificates are only available to persons with a "direct and tangible interest":

- 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.

2. Identification of Applicant

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

A current valid photo ID (e.g., Wisconsin Driver's License, Wisconsin State Identification Card, passport, Military Identification Card) is required when applying in person.)

A photocopy of the applicant's current valid photo ID must accompany all mail applications.