



Judicial Council of California

455 Golden Gate Avenue · San Francisco, California 94102-3688

courts.ca.gov/policy-administration/invitations-comment

INVITATION TO COMMENT

SPR26-18

Title

Family Law: Adoption Order

Action Requested

Review and submit comments by May 18, 2026, to invitations@jud.ca.gov

Proposed Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes

Revise form ADOPT-215

Proposed Effective Date

January 1, 2027

Proposed by

Family and Juvenile Law Advisory
Committee
Hon. Tari L. Cody, Cochair
Hon. Stephanie E. Hulse, Cochair

Contact

Sarah Jacobvitz, 415-865-4533
sarah.jacobvitz@jud.ca.gov
Alison Hart, 415-865-7843
alison.hart@jud.ca.gov

Executive Summary and Origin

Senate Bill 450 (Stats. 2025, ch. 757) amended California adoption law to require adoption orders to include the names of all adoptive parents and any existing parents maintaining parental rights. To implement SB 450, the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee proposes revising *Adoption Order* (form ADOPT-215), the mandatory Judicial Council form used for all orders for the adoption of a minor child.

Background

California law provides multiple statutory pathways for adoption, including agency, independent, intercountry, stepparent, and confirmatory stepparent adoptions.¹ Although the statutory requirements vary depending on the type of adoption, all orders for adoption of a minor child are issued on *Adoption Order* (form ADOPT-215). The Judicial Council adopted this form in October 1998 as part of a proposal establishing mandatory uniform adoption forms for minor children subject to adoption proceedings.

¹ Fam. Code, §§ 8700 et seq., 8900 et seq., 9000 et seq., 9000.5.

This proposal has not been approved by the Judicial Council and is not intended to represent the views of the council, its Rules Committee, or its Legislation Committee. It is circulated for comment purposes only.

Form ADOPT-215 currently includes fields for the names of the adoptive parent or parents and any parent who will maintain parental rights only when the child will have more than two parents.² The current form also includes a field indicating who was present at the hearing. Except for the hearing item, the form does not include a designated space to include the name of a parent who will maintain their rights when the child will have two legal parents after adoption.

Confirmatory stepparent adoptions arise when the minor child was born during a marriage or domestic partnership and either one of the spouses or partners gave birth to the child or the child was born through gestational surrogacy under specified statutory circumstances.³ In those matters, one spouse or domestic partner adopts the child and the other maintains parental rights. A hearing is generally not required in confirmatory stepparent adoptions.⁴ Therefore, under the current version of the form, the name of the parent maintaining parental rights in confirmatory stepparent adoptions would not ordinarily appear on the order unless a judicial officer attaches an additional page to the order with that information.

Senate Bill 450, which went into effect January 1, 2026, added Family Code section 8626, which requires every adoption order to include the names of both the “adoptive parent or parents and any existing parent or parents who will maintain their parental rights after the finalization of the adoption.”⁵

The Proposal

To implement SB 450, the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee proposes revising form ADOPT-215. The proposal also includes nonsubstantive revisions to improve clarity, organization, and usability.

Implementation of Senate Bill 450

To comply with Family Code section 8626, the revised form reorganizes page 1 to include a section listing the names of all parents following adoption, including the adopting parent or parents and any existing parent or parents who will maintain parental rights after finalization of the adoption. These sections allow parties to list up to three adoptive parents and up to three parents who are keeping their parental rights. This revision implements the requirements of Family Code section 8626 that requires adoption orders to expressly include the names of the child’s legal parents following adoption. Listing all parents on the face of the order is intended to

² In the current version of form ADOPT-215, adopting parents are listed in item 1 and parents maintaining existing parental rights are listed in item 12.

³ Fam. Code, § 9000.5.

⁴ Fam. Code, § 9000.5(b)(1)(C).

⁵ Fam. Code, § 8626. The legislation also clarifies that the failure to include an existing parent or parent on the adoption order “shall not be construed to terminate the parental rights and responsibilities otherwise maintained under existing law by an existing parent or parents.” Further, the legislation clarifies the jurisdictional requirements for adoption cases.

reduce ambiguity, facilitate the creation of accurate court records, and improve consistency across adoption types.

Reorganization and usability improvements

In addition to implementing SB 450, the proposal includes several nonsubstantive revisions intended to improve usability and clarity for courts and court users. These revisions include:

- Adding instructions at the top of the form specifying which items will be completed by form users and which items will be completed by the court;
- Reorganizing the form so that all parents are listed on page 1;
- Removing address fields for parents, as address information is captured elsewhere in the court record;
- In item 3c, removing the address line for place of birth and requiring only the city, state, and country of birth, when known, to align with the information requested in form ADOPT-200;
- In item 5a, removing the write-in field used to name a parent keeping parental rights who appeared at the hearing and including a checkbox to indicate the appearance of an attorney for the parent or parents keeping their parental rights, to conform with the manner in which the appearance of other parties and attorneys are listed in this item;
- In item 5b, simplifying the language that explains when a hearing may not be required;
- Reorganizing the content on pages 2 and 3 by separating court findings from court orders to improve readability and align with the structure of other Judicial Council order forms; and
- On page 3, adding a clarifying instruction for clerks regarding how to identify orders involving the adoption of an Indian child to support compliance with mailing requirements to the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Alternatives Considered

The committee did not consider taking no action because SB 450 requires adoption orders to include the names of all adoptive parents and any parents maintaining parental rights. The committee considered proposing only the revisions necessary to implement SB 450. However, the committee concluded that incorporating additional nonsubstantive improvements at the same time would promote clarity and usability for courts, justice partners, and the public.

Fiscal and Operational Impacts

Courts may incur costs associated with training court employees, printing revised forms, and updating case management systems. However, courts and litigants will benefit from having

clearer orders that expressly include the names of the adopted child’s parents following adoption, which may reduce confusion and administrative inefficiencies.

Request for Specific Comments

In addition to comments on the proposal as a whole, the advisory committee is interested in comments on the following:

- Does the proposal appropriately address the stated purpose?

The advisory committee also seeks comments from *courts* on the following cost and implementation matters:

- Would the proposal provide cost savings? If so, please quantify.
- What would the implementation requirements be for courts—for example, training staff (please identify position and expected hours of training), revising processes and procedures (please describe), changing docket codes in case management systems, or modifying case management systems?
- Would two months from Judicial Council approval of this proposal until its effective date provide sufficient time for implementation?
- How well would this proposal work in courts of different sizes?

Attachments and Links

1. Form ADOPT-215, at pages 5–7
2. Link A: Sen. Bill 450 (Stats. 2025, ch. 757),
[leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260SB450](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260SB450)

ADOPT-215 Adoption Order

Clerk stamps date here when form is filed.

DRAFT
Not approved by
the Judicial Council
ADOPT-215.03.17.26.FH

(Complete ①–④. The court will complete the rest of this form.)

① Adopting parent or parents

- a. Name: _____
- b. Name: _____
- c. Name: _____
- d. Lawyer, if any (name, address, telephone number, email address, and State Bar number): _____

Fill in court name and street address:

Superior Court of California, County of

② Parent or parents keeping parental rights

- a. Name: _____
- b. Name: _____
- c. Name: _____
- d. Lawyer, if any (name, address, telephone number, email address, and State Bar number): _____

Court fills in case number when form is filed.

Case Number:

③ Information about the child

- a. Child's name **after** adoption
First name: _____ Middle name: _____
Last name: _____
- b. Date of birth (month, day, year): _____ Age: _____
- c. Place of birth (if known, city, state, and country): _____

④ Name of adoption agency (if any): _____

(Court will fill out section below)

⑤ Court Hearing

a. Court hearing information

Hearing date: _____ Judicial officer: _____

People present at the hearing:

- Adopting parent or parents Lawyer for adopting parent or parents
- Child Child's lawyer
- Parent keeping parental rights Lawyer for parent or parents keeping parental rights
- Other people present (list each name and relationship to child): _____

b. No court hearing (Check this box only if this is an adoption confirming parentage. Fam. Code § 9000.5)



6 Court Findings

- a.
-
- Child's name
- before**
- adoption

First name: _____ Middle name: _____

Last name: _____

(Complete for nonrelative agency, independent, intercountry, or stepparent adoption. If this is an adoption of a dependent child by a relative filed under Family Code section 8714.5, complete only if requested by the adopting relative or by the child being adopted, if 12 years old or older.)

- b. The child (check all that apply):

(1) Is **12 years old or older** and agrees to the adoption.(2) Is under **12 years old**.(3) Is not required to consent because this is a tribal customary adoption.

- c. The court has reviewed the report and other documents and evidence and finds that:

(1) Proper notice to all persons with actual or possible parental rights has been provided and their voluntary or nonvoluntary participation is documented in the court file.

(2) Each adopting parent:

(A) Is at least 10 years older than the child or meets the criteria in Family Code section 8601(b);

(B) Will treat the child as their own;

(C) Will support and care for the child;

(D) Has a suitable home for the child; *and*

(E) Agrees to adopt the child.

(3) The adoption is in the child's best interest.

- d.
-
- The child is an Indian child. The court finds that this adoption meets the placement requirements of the Indian Child Welfare Act or that there is good cause to give preference to the adopting parent or parents.
- (The clerk will fill out 8.)*

- e.
-
- The child will have more than two parents. An agreement waiving termination of parental rights, signed by the existing parents and the adopting parent or parents, was filed with the court.
- (Do not check this box if this is for an intercountry adoption.)*

7 Court Order

- a. The child's name after adoption is listed in
- 3**
- .

- b. The adopting parent or parents listed in
- 1**
- and the child listed in
- 3**
- are now parent and child under the law, with all the rights and duties of the parent-child relationship. For a tribal customary adoption, the court adopts all the rights and duties set out in the tribal customary adoption order and Welfare and Institutions Code section 366.24.



Adopting parent or parents: _____

Case Number: _____

- 7 c. Tribal customary adoption
The tribal customary adoption order of the (name of tribe): _____ dated _____ containing _____ pages is attached and fully incorporated into this order.
- d. Adoption under the Hague Adoption Convention
Verification of Compliance with Hague Adoption Convention Attachment (form [ADOPT-216](#)) is attached and fully incorporated into this order.
- e. The court approves the Contact After Adoption Agreement (form [ADOPT-310](#))
 As submitted As amended on form ADOPT-310
- f. The court grants the request of the adopting parents for the court to make this order effective as of (date): _____, as doing so serves public policy and the best interest of the child.

Date: _____
_____ Judicial Officer

(Instructions to court clerk: Complete this section if 6 d is checked.)

8 Clerk's Certificate of Mailing

For the adoption of an Indian child, the clerk certifies:

- a. I am not a party to this adoption.
- b. I placed a filed copy of the following forms in a sealed envelope, marked "Confidential":
 Adoption Request (form ADOPT-200) Adoption of Indian Child (form ADOPT-220)
 Adoption Order (form ADOPT-215) Contact After Adoption Agreement (form ADOPT-310)
- c. The envelope was mailed by U.S. mail, with full postage, from (place): _____ on (date): _____
to: Chief, Division of Social Services
Bureau of Indian Affairs
1849 C Street, NW
Mail Stop 310-SIB
Washington, DC 20240

d. Date: _____ Clerk, by: _____, Deputy