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Relationship & Parental Recognition Laws: Voluntary Acknowledgment of Parentage (VAP)

No updates required since April 1, 2024

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****Please note that this is not legal advice and families are encouraged to reach out to legal experts such as the [LGBTQ Family Law Institute](#) or LGBTQ legal advocacy groups such as [NCLR](#) and [GLAD](#).****

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Background

For most children born to unmarried parents, legal recognition of parentage is established through the “voluntary acknowledgment of parentage” (VAP), a legal document typically completed at the hospital at the time of the child’s birth. There are no costs associated with it, and once it takes effect, it is the legal equivalent of a court decree of parentage and, under federal law, must be respected across state lines and in all jurisdictions.

However, in many states, only men who are believed to be the genetic father of the child in question are permitted to sign VAPs. As a result, many LGBTQ families face obstacles to this pathway to parental recognition. Now, a growing number of states are updating their parenting laws to ensure that any parent—regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, or genetic relationship to the child—can sign a VAP and have their parental relationship legally recognized and protected.

Equality Map & Additional Resources

- See our [Equality Map: Voluntary Acknowledgment of Parentage \(VAP\)](#), which is updated and maintained in real time alongside this document.
- Please see GLAD’s [FAQ: Voluntary Acknowledgment of Parentage \(VAP\)](#) for further information and detail, including how VAPs for LGBTQ parents can differ from state to state.
- See also our [Equality Maps: Parental Recognition Laws](#) for information on other pathways to legal recognition of parentage, and our [Equality Maps: Child Welfare Nondiscrimination Laws](#) for information on whether states’ child welfare (i.e., adoption and foster care) systems specifically prohibit discrimination against LGBTQ parents and/or youth in child welfare. All these resources are updated and maintained in real time.
- See MAP’s June 2023 report, [Relationships at Risk: Why We Need to Update State Parentage Laws to Protect Children and Families](#), for further discussion of the importance of legal recognition of parent-child relationships, the many pathways to legal recognition of parentage, recent examples of modernized parenting laws, and policy recommendations for all states.
- Please note that this is not legal advice and families are encouraged to reach out to legal experts such as the [LGBTQ Family Law Institute](#) or LGBTQ legal advocacy groups such as [NCLR](#) and [GLAD](#).



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Summary Table

Category	States	Source	Year Enacted
States where Voluntary Acknowledgment of Parentage (VAP) is explicitly available to non-genetic and LGBTQ parents <i>(12 states)</i>	California	AB 2684	2018
	Colorado	HB 22-1153	2022
	Connecticut	HB 6321	2021
	Maine	LD 222	2021
	Maryland	SB 697	2019
	Massachusetts	Partanen v. Gallagher	2016
	Michigan	HB 5207 and HB 5214	2024
	Nevada	AB 191	2017
	New York	A1071 , passed as part of budget bill S7506B	2020
	Rhode Island	H 7541 / S 2136	2020
	Vermont	H 562	2018
	Washington	SB 6037	2018
States where access to VAP has not yet been expanded, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist <i>(38 states, D.C., and 5 territories)</i>	All others		



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Chronology

(by date of governor signature or case outcome filing; not by effective date)

2016

1. Massachusetts – [Partanen v. Gallagher](#) – 2016

2017

2. Nevada – [AB 191](#) – May 22, 2017 (effective July 1, 2017)

2018

3. Washington – [SB 6037](#) – March 6, 2018 (effective January 1, 2019)
4. Vermont – [H 562](#) – May 22, 2018 (effective July 1, 2018)
5. California – [AB 2684](#) – September 28, 2018 (effective January 1, 2019)

2019

6. Maryland – [SB 697](#) – May 13, 2019 (effective June 1, 2019)

2020

7. New York – [A 1071](#), as part of budget bill [S 7506B](#) – April 3, 2020 (effective February 15, 2021)
8. Rhode Island – [H 7541 / S 2136](#) – July 21, 2020 (effective January 1, 2021)

2021

9. Connecticut – [HB 6321](#) – May 26, 2021 (effective January 1, 2022)
10. Maine – [LD 222](#) – June 10, 2021 (effective October 1, 2021)

2022

11. Colorado – [HB 22-1153](#) – May 23, 2022 (effective August 2022, 90 days after adjournment)

2024

12. Michigan – [HB 5207](#) and [HB 5214](#) – April 1, 2024 (effective 90 days later)



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State-by-State Sources & More Detail

Alabama

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Alaska

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Arizona

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Arkansas

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

California

- State VAP is explicitly available to non-genetic and LGBTQ parents
- See [AB 2684](#) (2018; effective January 1, 2019), [CA Voluntary Declaration of Parentage page](#), [CA Parentage Opportunity Program](#), and sample form in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Colorado

- State VAP is explicitly available to non-genetic and LGBTQ parents
- See [HB 22-1153](#) (2022; effective August 2022, 90 days after legislature adjournment)

Connecticut

- State VAP is explicitly available to non-genetic and LGBTQ parents
- See [HB 6321](#) (2021; effective January 1, 2022) and [sample form](#)

Delaware

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

District of Columbia

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Florida

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Georgia

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Hawai'i

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Idaho

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist



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Illinois

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Indiana

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Iowa

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Kansas

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Kentucky

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Louisiana

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Maine

- State VAP is explicitly available to non-genetic and LGBTQ parents
- See [LD 222](#) (2021; effective October 1, 2021) and [VAP form](#).

Maryland

- State VAP is explicitly available to non-genetic and LGBTQ parents
- See [SB697](#) (2019; effective June 1, 2019; search for “affidavit of parentage”), [MD Family Law §5–1028](#), and VAP form in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Massachusetts

- State VAP is explicitly available to non-genetic and LGBTQ parents
- See [Partanen v. Gallagher](#) (2016) affirming acknowledgment of non-genetic and LGBTQ parents, though state [did not update its form](#) until 2018. See also MA’s [“How to establish parentage”](#) page and [sample form](#).

Michigan

- State VAP is explicitly available to non-genetic and LGBTQ parents
- See [HB 5207](#) and [HB 5214](#) (2024; effective 90 days later)

Minnesota

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Mississippi

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist



Missouri

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Montana

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Nebraska

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Nevada

- State VAP is explicitly available to non-genetic and LGBTQ parents
- See [AB 191](#) (2017; effective July 1, 2017). See also [AB 287](#) (2021) further improving gender-neutrality of statute language, and [NV Office of Vital Records](#).

New Hampshire

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

New Jersey

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

New Mexico

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

New York

- State VAP is explicitly available to non-genetic and LGBTQ parents
- See [A1071/S2071B](#), passed as part of budget bill [S7506B](#) (search for “voluntary acknowledgments”) (2020; effective February 15, 2021 (see p86)). See also [NY Public Health Law § 4135-B](#) and [VAP Form LDSS-5171](#).

North Carolina

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

North Dakota

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Ohio

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Oklahoma

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Oregon

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist



Pennsylvania

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Rhode Island

- State VAP is explicitly available to non-genetic and LGBTQ parents
- See [H 7541 / S 2136](#) (2020; effective January 1, 2021), [RI Gen. Laws § 15-8.1-301](#), and [sample form](#)

South Carolina

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

South Dakota

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Tennessee

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Texas

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Utah

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Vermont

- State VAP is explicitly available to non-genetic and LGBTQ parents
- See [H 562](#) (2018; effective July 1, 2018), [VT Title 15C, Chapter 3: Voluntary Acknowledgment of Parentage](#), [VT Dept for Children and Families page](#), and [VAP form](#).

Virginia

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Washington

- State VAP is explicitly available to non-genetic and LGBTQ parents
- See [SB 6037](#) (2018; effective January 1, 2019), [RCW 26.26A.200-265](#), [WA Acknowledgement of Parentage webpage](#), and [VAP form](#)

West Virginia

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Wisconsin

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Wyoming

- State has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist



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U.S. Territories

American Samoa

- Territory has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Guam

- Territory has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Northern Mariana Islands

- Territory has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

Puerto Rico

- Territory has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist

U.S. Virgin Islands

- Territory has not yet expanded access of VAP, but other pathways to parental recognition may exist