

# Apply for adoption of an adult

If you want to adopt a person who is of age, you and the person to be adopted can apply for this at the family court.

## Competent Department

- [Amtsgericht Bremen](#)
- [Amtsgericht Bremen-Blumenthal](#)
- [Amtsgericht Bremerhaven](#)

## Basic information

You can adopt a person of full age as a child if you wish to establish a parent-child relationship with the person and this is morally justified. This is assumed in particular if a parent-child relationship already exists between you as the adopter and the adult person; for example, in the case of a stepchild or foster child. If such a relationship does not yet exist, there must be such a strong emotional bond that a relationship similar to the parent-child relationship can be expected. In addition, the adoption must appear morally justified in view of the purpose pursued by it. This means that the adoption request must not violate a moral prohibition and/or must not exclusively pursue a material purpose, such as avoiding inheritance tax or establishing a right of residence.

In order to adopt the adult person as a family member, you and the person concerned must file an application with the family court.

The adult adoption is basically an adoption with weak effect. This means that the adopted adult's family relationship with his or her biological family is not cancelled, only the newly created relationship with the adopters is added.

Under certain conditions and upon application, an adoption with more far-reaching legal consequences, as they apply to the adoption of minors, is also possible. This is then also referred to as a "full adoption" or adoption with "strong effect". This would result in an almost complete legal integration of the adult into your family. This means that the relationship and thus, among other things, all inheritance and maintenance obligations to the natural parents are cancelled. In the case of a stepchild adoption, this does not apply to the continuing relationship to the remaining parent.

## Requirements

- You may adopt an adult person as a child if the adoption is morally justified. In other words, the adoption request is based on an existing parent-child relationship or a comparably strong inner bond and does not violate a moral prohibition and/or does not exclusively pursue a material purpose. This is the case, for example, if the person to be adopted has already lived in your family as a minor child.
- The adoption must not conflict with the overriding interests of third parties, for example your biological children.
- According to case law, there should generally be an age difference corresponding to a parent-child relationship (at least 15 years).
- The applications and any necessary consents (for example, of the spouses) must be in notarized form.

## What documents do I need?

- Notarized application

Notarized application of the adopter and the adult. The applications must not be bound by any condition or time provision.

- Notarized declaration of consent

If the adopter or adoptee is married or in a civil union, a notarized declaration of consent from the spouse or civil partner is required.

- Other required documents

The family court may request other necessary documents. For example, proof of civil status (such as birth or marriage certificates).

## Procedure

You must submit the required documents and the applications (adopter and adoptee) in writing to the locally competent family court. You can also commission a notary public with the submission.

The court will then check whether all the necessary requirements for an adoption have been met, such as:

- what the relationship is to the person to be adopted
- whether the adoption is morally justified
- whether the adopter has reached the minimum age required for an adoption (completion of the 21st or 25th year of life)
- whether there is a sufficient age difference to the adopter
- whether overriding interests of third parties oppose the adoption
- for example, the natural children of the adopter or the adoptee or the parents of the adoptee.

For this purpose, the court hears, among others, the parties involved and, if necessary, other persons.

If the requirements for an adult adoption are met, the court pronounces the adoption of the adult by means of an order.

## **Legal bases**

- [§§ 186 bis 199 Gesetz über das Verfahren in Familiensachen und in den Angelegenheiten der freiwilligen Gerichtsbarkeit \(FamFG\)](#)
- [§§ 1767 bis 1772 Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch \(BGB\)](#)

## **How long does it take to process**

There is no legally prescribed duration of the procedure. It depends on the complexity of the individual case and the completeness and accuracy of all documents. On average, proceedings take between 4 and 12 months.

## **What are the costs?**

There are: Notary fees, court costs and, if applicable, attorney's fees.  
The respective amount depends on the individual case.