



This is for information and instruction. Do not file it.



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This packet is not legal advice. It provides general instructions on how to use these forms in your court case. It cannot and does not try to cover everything that might happen in your court case. Your use of the forms does not guarantee you will be successful in court.

How a judge handles a case can vary from county to county. **Your county may have special requirements that are not covered in these instructions.** Ask the Circuit Clerk's office if your county has local rules and, if so, where you can get a copy.

HOW TO CHANGE YOUR NAME

ADULT NAME CHANGE

1

FILL OUT AND FILE FORMS. START YOUR CASE.

To start an Adult Name Change, you begin by filling out a *Request for Name Change (Adult)*. You will file (usually with e-filing) through the Circuit Clerk's office in the county where you live and get a case number and a hearing date.

If having the court file be public would be a hardship and have a negative impact to your health or safety, you can ask the judge to remove the file from the public record by filing a *Motion To Impound (Make Court Records Private)*. Note: Until the *Motion* is granted or if the *Motion* is denied, this form will be a public record.

Note: Publication for adult name changes has been repealed from the law as of March 1, 2025.

Use these forms:

- *Request for Name Change*

2

GO TO COURT AND ASK THE JUDGE TO CHANGE YOUR NAME.

In court, you will be placed under oath and asked questions about why you want to change your name. Answer the judge's questions truthfully. The judge will either grant or deny your *Request*.

Use this form:

- *Order for for Name Change*

3

CHANGE YOUR DOCUMENTS IF THE COURT APPROVES YOUR NAME CHANGE.

After the Court grants your *Request*, ask the Clerk for certified copies of your *Order for Name Change* which you can use to change your other identity documents. Nothing changes automatically so you will need to bring this *Order* to change your name on your social security card, driver's license/state ID card, and other documents.

Laws covering these forms: [735 Illinois Compiled Statutes, section 5/21-101 through section 5/21-104.](#)



STEP 1

FILL OUT AND FILE FORMS. START YOUR CASE.

ARE THESE FORMS FOR ME?

You may **use these forms to ask the court for a name change of 1 adult and their spouse.**

- To change your name, you **MUST**:
 - Be at least 18 years old; AND
 - Have lived in Illinois for at least 3 months or will have lived in Illinois for 3 months at the time of the court hearing or entry of name change order.
- If you are seeking a name change and have been **convicted of a felony**, you **MUST** have completed your sentence or been pardoned to get a name change. This includes your parole being completed.
- You will need to file a *Request for Name Change*.

Do not use these forms if:

- Someone under age 18 is asking the court to change their name.
- An adult is asking the court to change the name of minor children requires a different form.
- You do not have to file a *Request for Name Change* if your name has been changed by a court order (for example, divorce judgment) or by a valid marriage certificate.
- Anyone currently incarcerated in state or federal prison **cannot** get a name change.

Forms required to start an adult name change case:

- *Request for Name Change (Adult)*: gives the judge the information needed to decide if you can change your name.
- *Order for Name Change (Adult)*: court order either granting or denying your request for a name change.

Note: Make sure your current name *matches exactly* as it appears on your birth certificate to avoid any delays or issues.

Forms that may be needed in some circumstances:

- *Motion To Impound (Make the Court Records Private)*: used to ask the court to keep the case private so only the people involved in the case, like the judge and the court clerk can see them unless the judge gives someone else permission.
 - **In Cook County (1st District) only:** The Court requires all petitioners to e-file, as an exhibit, a photo or scanned copy of your birth certificate and a photo I.D. If your photo I.D. does not have a Cook County address, you need to provide additional proof of address (such as a lease or a bill). You can redact any sensitive information. Save exhibits as a pdf file and be in portrait orientation. If your birth certificate is in a language other than English, the judge may ask you to provide a certified translation of your birth certificate. Birth certificates can typically be ordered from the agency in your state or country of birth that oversees vital records. If it is not possible for you to get a birth certificate, the court will likely ask you to provide additional documentation.

Can I include my Spouse in my Name Change Request?

- Yes. Your spouse must fill out the same information in the *Request for Name Change* form and follow the restrictions regarding criminal history. Any instructions included in this *How To* also apply to your spouse.
- You can find all statewide forms online at: ilcourts.info/forms.

I was born outside of Illinois and that state requires an order of gender change to change my birth certificate. Can I ask for an order on gender change at the same time as my name change?

- Illinois **does not require** an order on gender marker change to change your birth certificate or state I.D.s.
- If you were born in a state that **does** require an order to change your birth certificate, you can file a separate petition at the same time as your *Request for Name Change*. For more information visit: ilao.info/change-gender-on-id.
- You will need to check the requirements for the state you were born in to see if this applies to you, and to verify the specific requirements for that state. You may need to consult with an attorney.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

► **WARNING:** Anyone who is required to register under the **Sex Offender Registration Act**, the **Murderer and Violent Offender Against Youth Registration Act**, or the **Arsonist Registration Act** in this State or a similar law in any other state and have not been pardoned, you will be committing a felony under those laws by seeking a change of name during the registration period **UNLESS** your request for legal name change is due to:

- marriage;
- religious beliefs;
- status as a victim of trafficking; OR
- gender related identity as defined by the Illinois Human Rights Act.

Anyone who is required to register under these laws and is granted a legal name change **is required to notify the law enforcement agency with whom they are registered of the name change within 3 days for sex offense, 5 days for murder/violence against youth, or 10 days for arson.**

► **Special Note for People Who Need to Keep Their Name Change Private**

You can ask the judge to remove the case from the public record by filing a *Motion To Impound (Remove Court File From Public Record)* if you believe public disclosure would be a hardship and have a negative impact on your health and safety.

Examples of hardship may include, but are not limited to: physical harm, discrimination, harassment, bullying, or threats of violence. You may attach supporting documents, such as court orders to help explain why it would be a hardship, but official documentation is not required—your motion alone is enough.

Other examples include, but are not limited to, people who are transgender, adoptees, survivors of domestic or intimate partner abuse, survivors of gender-based violence, survivors of human trafficking, refugees, people who have been granted special immigrant status, people who have survived reparative or conversion therapy, or people who have been granted asylum in the U.S.

- File a *Motion To Impound (Remove Court File From Public Record)* when you submit your name change request if you want to keep your case private.
- The judge will review your motion when they consider your name change request. Until the *Motion* is granted or if the *Motion* is denied, this form will be a public record.

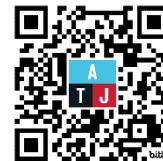
Note: If you or a member of your household do not want to disclose your address, you can use an alternative address on these forms.

EXTRA HELP FILLING OUT THE FORMS

Name Change Easy Form

Illinois Legal Aid Online has an Easy Form program that helps you complete your forms. Easy Forms ask simple questions and put your answers in the right places on the forms. At the end of the program, you can download or email your forms to e-file or print them.

Easy Forms are free to use. Visit ilao.info/adult-nc-easy-form or scan the QR code to use the Easy Form.



For more information about going to court including how to fill out and file forms, call or text **Illinois Court Help** at 833-411-1121 or go to ilcourthelp.gov.

If there are any words or terms used in these instructions that you do not understand, please visit **Illinois Legal Aid Online** at ilao.info/glossary. You may also find more information, resources, and the location of your local legal self-help center at ilao.info/lshc-directory.



COSTS AND FEES

There may be costs and fees to take part in a court case. These fees and costs can include fees for filing court documents and Sheriff's fees for providing notice. Depending on the type of court case, there may be other costs and fees charged. If you cannot afford to pay costs and fees, you can ask the court to file for free or at a reduced cost by filing an *Application for Waiver of Court Fees*.

This is a separate form you can find at: ilcourts.info/fee-waiver-forms.

HOW TO FILE THE FORMS



E-filing

- After you fill out your court forms, file them with the Circuit Clerk. This is done by electronic filing, called 'e-filing'. You do not have to e-file if:
 - You qualify for an exemption (see "Not E-filing" below) or
 - Your case involves a criminal matter.
- Most people e-file their forms using Odyssey eFileLL at ilcourts.info/efile.
- There may be fees to file your forms. See the previous Costs & Fees page for more information.
- Follow step-by-step instructions and watch videos that walk you through the steps for e-filing at ilcourts.info/efile-info.
- E-filing is easier on a computer. It may not work on a cell phone or tablet.
- If you do not have access to a computer or if you need help e-filing, take your completed forms to a public library or a Circuit Clerk, Appellate Clerk, or Supreme Court Clerks' office. These places offer public computers where you can e-file your forms.
 - Depending on your courthouse, you can bring your forms on paper and there may be public computers with a scanner where you can turn your paper forms into electronic files.
 - Librarians and courthouse staff may be able to help you e-file, but they cannot provide legal advice.

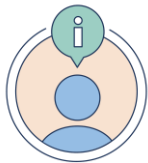


Not E-filing

- Some people are not required to e-file, which means they can file paper forms at the courthouse or by mail. People who do not have to e-file are:
 - Inmates in prison or jail who do not have a lawyer.
 - People with a disability that keeps them from e-filing.
- You may also qualify for an exemption from e-filing if you:
 - Do not have internet or computer access in your home, and it is hard for you to travel.
 - Have trouble reading, writing, or speaking English.
 - Are filing documents in a sensitive case, such as an order of protection.
 - Tried to e-file your forms, but you were not able to because the equipment or help you needed was not available.
- To ask for an exemption from e-filing, use the form at ilcourts.info/exempt. If you cannot print this form, then ask for it at your local courthouse.
 - File your *Certification for Exemption from E-Filing* form along with your other court forms at the Circuit Clerk's office or by mail.
 - Bring or send your signed court forms and at least two copies of your forms to the Circuit Clerk's office. Ask them to stamp your copies and return them to you.
 - If you need to make copies of your forms, you can do that at the Circuit Clerk's office. They may charge you a fee to make copies.
- There may be fees to file your forms. See the previous Costs & Fees page for more information. If you mail your court forms to the Circuit Clerk's office, include a stamped envelope addressed to you. The Circuit Clerk will file your forms and then send your copies back to you in the envelope.



WHAT'S NEXT



STEP 1

AFTER YOU FILE YOUR CASE AND HAVE A CASE NUMBER, ASK FOR A COURT DATE.

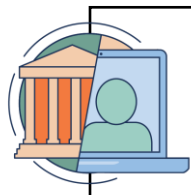
- Ask the Circuit Clerk if you have to schedule a court date or if one will be scheduled automatically.
- If you need to schedule the court date, ask the Circuit Clerk how to do so.
- If the court file being part of the public record would be a hardship and have a negative impact to your health or safety, you can ask the judge to remove the file from the public record by filing a *Motion To Impound (Remove Court File From Public Record)*.



STEP 2

GO TO COURT AND ASK TO CHANGE YOUR NAME.

- Bring these items with you to court:
 - Photo I.D.;
 - Stamped copies of: *Request for Name Change* and *Order for Name Change*;
 - Judgment for Dissolution of Marriage or Declaration of Invalidity of Marriage (if it applies);
 - Other papers related to your *Request* (like papers relating to your criminal record if you have one) showing that if you have been convicted of a felony, you have completed your sentence or you have been pardoned.
 - **In Cook County (1st District) only:** The Court requires all petitioners to e-file, as an exhibit, a photo or scanned copy of your birth certificate and a photo I.D. If your photo I.D. does not have a cook county address, you need to provide additional proof of address (such as a lease or a bill). You can redact any sensitive information. The exhibits must be saved as a pdf file and be in portrait orientation. If your birth certificate is in a language other than English, the court may request that you provide a certified translation of your birth certificate.
 - If you were born outside of Illinois, and are from a state that allows amendments or corrections to a birth record after a legal name change, some states require you to include additional information in the *Order* to change your birth records (for example the date, location of birth, and Certificate Index Number). Make sure to **check your birth state's requirements and you can include that in the Additional Information section on the Proposed Order.**
- Get to the courthouse at least 30 minutes early.
- Go to the courtroom number listed on your court form.
- If your forms do not have a courtroom number, look for a list of cases at the courthouse or ask the Circuit Clerk.
- Check in with the courtroom staff and wait for your name and case number to be called.



Make sure you know how to attend your court date.

Your court date could be in person, by phone, or by video. If it is by phone or video, it is called a "Remote Appearance." Call the Circuit Clerk or visit their website for more information. To find the phone number for your Circuit Clerk, visit ilcourts.info/clerks.



STEP 3

THE JUDGE MAKES A DECISION.

- The decision is called a court order.
- If the judge needs more information to make a decision, the judge may set up another court date.
- The judge may immediately issue a written court order if they have enough information. Get a file-stamped copy of the order.
- If granted, get certified copies of the *Order* from the Circuit Clerk. You need a certified copy of the *Order* to change names on records like birth certificate, social security card, and a driver's license.
- There may be a fee for the certified copies.



YOU'VE COMPLETED THE STEPS OF A NAME CHANGE CASE!