|  |
| --- |
| **What’s Next for a Petition to Change the Name of a Minor?** |

Congratulations {{ users }}! You have completed the first of the forms required to ask the court for a Petition to Change the Name of a Minor.

## Next steps:

1. Print out the pages of the form that you have filled out and take them to a Notary Public with a valid personal identification.
2. Deliver a copy to your attorney if you have one.
3. **Keep a copy of the printed forms for yourself.**
4. File the finished application to the court in your district.
5. If the judge decides to grant the petition you will get the name of the minor changed.
6. Check the order when you get it to make sure it is correct.

## Finding a Notary Public:

1. Notary Publics can typically be found at city offices, courts, banks, real estate and insurance offices, travel agencies, local drug stores or pharmacies, or in the phone book.
2. Bring a form of identification that proves each party’s identity and has legal weight, such as a birth certificate, driver’s license, or passport.
3. Notarizing a document should never cost more than $1.25 in the state of Massachusetts.

## To file the application right away:

1. Look over the forms below one more time and make sure everything is correct.
2. Ensure that you have attached the Notary Public’s signatures or proof of notarization before submitting.
3. Call the court that you selected during the interview to find out how they want you to submit the forms.

## Serving the other party:

1. Within a reasonable time of filing the application, the applicant must mail or personally serve all interested parties with a copy of this Petition to Change the Name of a Minor, as well as a notice of final hearing if applicable. Failure of the applicant to comply with this requirement will result in a dismissal of the petition by the court.

## What can the judge do?

1. The application will be reviewed for completion, clarity, and proper supporting documentation. Such documentation will include child’s original or certified birth certificate, proof of residency etc. If the petition is filed on behalf of the minor child by another party, it is the petitioner’s responsibility to submit all the applicable supporting documents for the court’s discretion.
2. Final approval of the Petition to Change the Name of a Minor requires a final hearing that will be held either before a judge in Family or Probate Court or a Judge-In-Chambers.
3. The entire petitioning process can take between 2-to-5 weeks to complete.
4. The court will request a criminal record check on any parties involved from the Office of the Commissioner of Probation. The minor child will also be subject to a background check if they are over the age of 12.
5. The court will send a notice of Petition to Change the Name of a Minor, which will instruct you as to how you can provide public notice of the request by publishing a notice in a local newspaper.

## What happens if the judge grants the petition?

1. If the petition is approved by the judge, the court will issue a decree to legally change the minor’s name, as well as a certificate displaying the minor’s new legal name.
2. If there are any objections, the court will schedule a hearing. After a hearing, the court may schedule a trial date, dismiss the petition, or sign a name change decree. If the judge allows the name change request, the court will issue a decree and certificate with the minor’s new name.

**Read** the order as soon as you get it. Call the court to fix any mistakes or errors that you see. You may need to appear before the judge to have the order corrected.