

SEDGWICK COUNTY NAME CHANGE GUIDE

By Remy Que – They/Them

So, you've got your name figured out, what's next? Here are the ins and outs of changing your legal name in Sedgwick County.

Filing the case

What you need

- \$197 (\$204.88 for card payments)
 - You can have this fee waived either in part or in full
- A few dollars for parking
- Your name how it will be spelled all figured out
- An hour or so
- Parent, Guardian, or Emancipated Minor documentation (if less than 18)

The Process

Once you've got your name figured out (including how to spell it), it's time to head to the Sedgwick County Courthouse at 525 N Main St, Wichita, KS 67203. You'll need to be a resident of Sedgwick County for at least 60 days before you can file a case here. There are quite a few parking garages close to the courthouse you can park in for a couple bucks. You'll need to leave your weapons in your car (sorry, not my rules) and pass through a metal detector on your way into the courthouse. Go to the civil department, located on the 11th floor and open 8-4 at the time of writing this document. You can go to dc18.org to see if anything here has changed.

Go into the civil office and say you need a name change. If you need to have the court fees waived, ask for an affidavit of poverty as well. They'll have you sit down and someone will bring you the papers you need. The first is the filing document, fill that out, and at the part that asks why you want to change your name, just say something like "The name I was given at birth no longer suits me." The second is a creditor worksheet. List any institutions you owe money to here (car loans, medical bills, credit cards, etc.) If you don't have any that's okay, but you'll need to send out an ad in the paper which is a lot more expensive than the certified mail option detailed later. If you request the affidavit of poverty, it just asks a bunch of questions about your income and assets, and you will take it with you to the judge and they will decide right away.

Go to the judge's office they tell you to go to (not the courtroom) and tell the clerk you are filing a name change. The door for the office is down a hallway by the courtroom, and it will say civil assessment on the door. They'll have you fill out more paperwork and have the judge sign off on what you need to bring to your court date. There are four options:

- Notifying your creditors via certified mail. This is the cheapest option—\$6.59 per creditor—and this is the option you usually get if you have at least one creditor.
- Sending an ad out in the paper for three weeks. This is what you will need to do if you have no creditors, and it costs around \$130.
- Both of the above. I have heard of judges making people who have a long list of creditors do both options to make sure they didn't leave anyone off.
- None of the above – This option is only for people under 18 years old. Everyone that I've heard of changing their name under 18 didn't have to do notifications, but ultimately it's up to the judge, so it's technically possible for them to require notifications.

The whole point of this process is to make sure you aren't changing your legal name to get out of debt, but fortunately the wait isn't ridiculously long.

Once you have the paperwork completed and looked over by the judge, head back to the civil office and file the paperwork. This will cost you \$197, exact cash, check, or card unless you have the fees partially or fully waived via the affidavit of poverty. Paying by card will add a 4% fee, which brings it to \$204.88. They will have you fill out one more form, and give you a receipt and some copies of the Notice of Suit. If you need to mail letters, they'll give you one copy for each letter you need to mail, and just one copy for newspaper ads. They'll also have you set a 9 AM hearing—three weeks out for certified mail and five weeks out for newspaper ads. From here, you can go ahead and move on to getting the Notice of Suit out.

Certified Mail

What you need

- General Correspondence mailing address for each of your creditors
- \$6.59 per creditor
- Copies of your Notice of Suit
- Anywhere from 15 mins to an hour+ depending on how many creditors you have and how long the line is. Try to go during the middle of the week to reduce wait times. Avoiding the beginning and end of the month is also helpful.
- Pens, although they usually can get you at least one.

The Process

You can go to any post office for this, but I always take people to the post office downtown at 330 W 2nd St N, Wichita, KS 67202 right after filing the paperwork. You will need to bring the copies of the Notice of Suit to mail to all your creditors. If you have envelopes to put them in before you go in that is fine, or you can walk in and they will give you envelopes to fill out.

Once you get through the line, tell them you need to mail [number of creditors] letters via certified mail with return receipts. You will need to fill out the envelope (if you haven't already), a mailing receipt, and the return receipt (it's a green cardstock thing) for each creditor—you can fill these out with your real name instead of your dead name. Make sure the address you use is the general correspondence address if your creditor has more than one mailing address. Bring a friend or two to help write if you have a lot of creditors!

Once you fill everything out, the postal worker will need to spend a few minutes getting all the letters ready since they are certified mail. Once you pay for them and get your receipts—one for each letter and one for the total paid—it's time to wait. Make sure you check your mail and look for the green return receipts; you'll need to bring them to your hearing, so keep them safe!

Newspaper Ad

What you need

- About \$130
- Notice of Suit
- About 30 minutes to an hour

The Process

Go to the office of the Sedgwick County Post at 400 N Woodlawn Suite 10 Wichita, KS 67208. The building is weird, but you just park under it (still at ground level) and then go to the west entrance (closest to Woodlawn). Go up one floor (the elevator is big) and find Suite 10. Go in and tell the clerk you need to place an ad for a name change running three consecutive weeks. You'll give them some information and then they will write up the ad and charge you \$130 (this number might go up over time).

Once the ad has run for three weeks, you will receive a letter in the mail from the Sedgwick County Post confirming that you did, in fact, run the ad for three weeks. Make sure you keep it safe because you need it for your hearing! Don't worry about finding a copy of the ad though, unless you want to!

The Hearing

What you need

- Money for parking
- About 20 minutes
- Return receipts and/or ad letter
- All the paperwork you filled out when filing

The Process

Head up to the judge's office in the county courthouse with your receipts and/or letter. Tell you're your case number—it's on your Notice of Suit—and they'll have you fill out a name change order. The judge will review it as well as your receipts and/or letter and then sign off on it.

Next, head back to the civil office to file your name change order. This one doesn't cost anything, and they will give you two copies of your name change order for free. Make sure you keep your case number somewhere handy though in case you need to get another copy for some reason.

Congratulations!! You've got your legal name changed!

Social Security

What you need

- Name change order
- Photo ID
- Time varies depending on when you go. Shortest wait time is usually arriving 15 minutes before opening during the middle of the week or in the middle of the afternoon during the middle of the week. Avoid Mondays, Fridays, and the beginning and end of each month.

The Process

Go to the SSA Office at 3216 N Cypress Dr, Wichita, KS 67226. You'll need to leave all your weapons in your car again, as this office also has metal detectors and security guards. Once you get through the security checkpoint, you will sign in at the machine in the front. Follow the prompts for a replacement social security card, and take the number it prints out. Wait until your number is called, then tell the clerk that you have a name change via court order.

The clerk will have you fill out some paperwork, and will need to see your photo ID and the name change order. The photo ID must be plastic, so make sure you do this BEFORE going to the DMV unless you want to wait two or three weeks to get your new plastic ID. This whole process should take about 5–10 minutes, and you will get a receipt with the address they are sending the card to (you tell them where, so don't worry if your ID has an old address). Keep this receipt because it can be used as proof of address at the DMV.

And then you just wait for the card to come in the mail, woot!

DMV

What you need

- Proof of address
- Name change order
- Photo ID
- \$35 or \$16 (\$35.88 or \$16.40 by card)
- 15-30 minutes if you avoid Tuesdays (they aren't open on Mondays), Fridays, and the beginning and end of each month.
- A picture ready face—It'll be on your ID for a while!

The Process

The DMV is located at 1873 W 21st St, Wichita, KS 67203. The entrance is on the South side of the building (farthest from 21st), which is at the bottom of a big hill in the parking lot. Sign into the system for needing to update your license, take the ticket, and wait until the number is called. Once it's called, tell the clerk you have a name change via court order, and get out your ID, name change order, and proof of address. The proof of address needs to be something mailed to you that has your address inside the envelope (the outside of the envelope doesn't count), or the receipt from the SSA Office.

They'll have you verify that they spelled your name correctly, and then pay the fee. Then you get your picture taken and sign your name—the real one, not the dead one. Then, they will print out your temporary ID and you're all set, just gotta wait for the plastic in the mail!

Important notes:

- If your driver's license is suspended, you will need to unsuspend it before being able to update it. Depending on why it was suspended, this can be a simple process or a painful one.
- If your ID is expired, you'll need to get a whole new one, but you can include the name change with that process I believe.
- If you are planning on getting your sex marker changed and decide to wait until you get both the name change order and the sex marker change letter, you will only need to pay the \$16 fee once instead of twice by doing them separate. I would recommend not waiting if you can afford it though because having the right name on your ID makes legal things a lot easier to handle.

Other stuff

Businesses

A lot of businesses will need to know you changed your legal name. Banks, post-paid phone plans, creditors, insurance; anybody who has your legal name on file. This process varies by business, but for the most part you will need to bring in, mail, fax, or email a copy of the name change order and a copy of your corrected ID (but not the temporary paper ID). You can either go into the business and ask what you need to do to change name via court order, or call their customer service number.

If you do need to mail the copies in, make sure you ask the customer service representative for the correct address, sometimes it isn't the general correspondence address—although it should probably get to the right spot. Anything that has your legal name on it will need to be replaced, but most businesses waive any replacement fees for legal name changes.

Work

If you've got a job, you'll need to bring the name change order (or a copy of it), your corrected permanent ID, and your corrected Social Security card in to HR. They'll make you fill out all the legal paperwork again in your real name, and get everything changed in their systems as quickly as they can.

School

Any school you are/have attended from high school onward will need the name change order (or a copy of it), your corrected permanent ID, and your corrected Social Security card. Most school districts have a specific Office of the Registrar, and all colleges will. If you take the 3 items to them, they can get you corrected diplomas, correct your name in the systems, correct email addresses, etc.

Important Note

All of these places are legally obligated to correct your name in their system as quickly as they can. While you might have to deal with some ignorant remarks, any refusal or unnecessary delay of your name change is illegal.

CONGRATS!