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Identity Document Laws and Policies: Name Change Laws

No updates required since June 18, 2024

MAP often relies on research conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) to support this map and the statutes found below. For more information about each state's process and requirements, see NCTE's [ID Documents Center](#).

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- (0) State law has unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement
- (-1) State law requires publication of name change announcement, and/or includes only narrow option to waive requirement

Alabama

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- "An applicant must submit a petition to the probate court for a name change order. No publication is required." ([Ala. Code §12-13-1](#), or [Form PS-12](#))

Alaska

- (0) State law has unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement
- "An applicant must submit a petition to the court for a name change order. Both the verified petition and hearing must be published in a newspaper once a week for four weeks. However, individuals can request to waive the publication requirement with a personal safety court order." ([Form VS-405](#) to change name, [Form CIV-708](#) to waive requirement, [Alaska R. Civ. P. 84](#))

Arizona

- (0) State law has unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement
- "An applicant must submit a petition to the court for a name change order. The court may give notice to interested parties if deemed necessary, except in circumstances where there is a protective order in place OR if the applicant is the victim of a stalking offense." ([Ariz. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§ 12-601 & 12-602](#), and forms [here](#))

Arkansas

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- "An applicant must submit a petition to the court for a name change order. The petition may be listed in public court records." ([Ark. Code Ann. §§ 9-2-101 & 9-2-102](#))
 - Note: "The petition may be listed in public court records" is not the same as requiring an individual to publish an announcement in a local newspaper or other venue.



California

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- An applicant must submit a petition to the court for a name change order. If the name change is related to gender, the applicant should not have to attend an in-person hearing and does not need to publish notice of their name change in the newspaper. (See [here](#).)
- “As of September 2018, people who are incarcerated in California can apply for legal name changes without prior approval by correction officials (See [SB310](#)). The courts will deny registered sex offender petitions unless they determine it will not adversely affect public safety.” ([Cal. Civ. Proc. Code §§1275-1279.6](#))

Colorado

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- “A petitioner need not give public notice of a name change as required by subsection (1) of this section if the petitioner is changing the petitioner’s name to conform with the petitioner’s gender identity.” [C.R.S. § 13-15-102\(4\)](#)
- Formerly, a name change was only granted for adults with felony convictions if they could show “good cause” ([C.R.S. 13-15-101](#)). This was updated by [HB 1071](#) (2024), which explicitly defined “good cause” to include name changes related to gender identity. However, individual courts are still allowed to require, at their discretion, that a person with a felony conviction must publish a name change announcement.

Connecticut

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the Superior Court of their judicial district. No publication is required. Registered sex offenders must notify the supervising Commissioner of their intent and update the sex offender registry upon petition approval.” ([Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 52-11](#))

Delaware

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- See [HB274](#) (2022)
- Formerly, (-1) State law requires publication of name change announcement, and/or includes only narrow option to waive requirement. Former language: “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. The applicant must publish notice of the name change in a newspaper at least once a week for three weeks before filing the petition, and then include the Affidavit of Publication with their court petition.” ([Del. Code Ann. tit. 10, §§ 5901-5905](#))

District of Columbia

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court and notify creditors and other interested parties of the upcoming name change via certified mail. No publication is required.” ([DC ST §§16-2501 to 16-2503](#))



Florida

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. No publication is required. The applicant must be fingerprinted. No name change will be issued if the applicant's civil rights have been suspended.” ([Fla. Stat. Ann. § 68.07](#))

Georgia

- (-1) State law requires publication of name change announcement, and/or includes only narrow option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. Within seven days of filing the petition, the applicant must publish notice of the name change in the county’s ‘official legal organ’ once a week for four weeks.” ([Ga. Code Ann. § 19-12-1](#))

Hawaii

- (0) State law has unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement
- “Once an online name change application is approved, the applicant must publish notice of the name change once in a general circulation newspaper and submit proof of publication to the Office of the Lt. Governor. The publication requirement can be waived if a prosecutor files an affidavit attesting the need to waive publication for an applicant’s safety. Applicants who have sex offender convictions cannot get a name change unless the court finds the name change to be in the best interest of justice and that the name change won't adversely affect public safety.” ([Haw. Rev. Stat. §§ 574-1 to 574-6](#))

Idaho

- (-1) State law requires publication of name change announcement, and/or includes only narrow option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. The applicant must publish notice of the petition hearing in a county newspaper for four weeks OR in three of the most public places in the county for four weeks. Registered sex offenders are permitted to change their name long as the granting court gives notice to the sex offender registry with the identifying information.” ([Idaho Code Ann. §§ 7-801 to 7-805](#))



Illinois

- (0) State law has unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court and the petition must be verified ‘by the affidavit of some credible person.’ The applicant must publish notice of the petition in the newspaper for three consecutive weeks, starting at least six weeks before the hearing.” The publication requirement may be waived, at the court’s discretion, if applicant can “provide evidence to support the claim that publishing notice of the name change would put the person at risk of physical harm or discrimination.” ([2019 SB0574](#)) “Individuals who are not currently incarcerated but have a felony conviction within the last ten years are not permitted to change their name. Registered sex offenders are not permitted to change their name.” ([735 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 5/21-101 to 5/21-105](#))

Indiana

- (-1) State law requires publication of name change announcement, and/or includes only narrow option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. The applicant must publish notice of the petition in the newspaper for three weeks and the last week’s publication should be at least 30 days before the hearing. The applicant should file a copy of the published name change notice verified by affidavit of a disinterested person. Individuals who are currently confined in a Department of Corrections facility cannot receive a name change, and individuals who are not currently incarcerated but have a felony conviction within the last ten years have additional notification requirements.” ([Ind. Code Ann. §§ 34-28-2-1 to 34-28-2-4](#))

Iowa

- (0) State law has unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement
- An applicant must submit a petition to the court. Subject to the court's discretion, the applicant may need to publish the petition docket information once in a daily newspaper in that county. ([Iowa Code Ann. § 618.13](#) & [§§ 674.1-674.14](#))

Kansas

- (0) State law has unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. Subject to the court's discretion, the applicant may need to send notice of the hearing to interested parties by mail or publish in a newspaper once a week for four weeks.” ([Kan. Stat. Ann. §§ 60-1401 to 60-1403](#))

Kentucky

- (-1) State law requires publication of name change announcement, and/or includes only narrow option to waive requirement
- An applicant must submit a petition to the court. No publication is required; the court keeps the name change in a book of records. ([Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§ 401.010-401.040](#))



Louisiana

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. No publication is required. Individuals who have a felony conviction may change their name once the sentence has been satisfied, with the exception that individuals who have a felony conviction for a violent crime are not permitted to change their name.” ([La. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§ 13:4751 to 13:4755](#))

Maine

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- See [HP1407/LD1900](#) (April 4, 2022)
- Formerly, (0) State law had unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement. Former language: “An applicant must submit a petition to the probate court. There is a publication requirement which can be waived if the applicant is a victim of abuse or is currently in reasonable fear for their safety.” ([Me. Rev. Stat. tit. 18-A, § 1-701](#))

Maryland

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- See [HB39/SB581](#) (2021), enacted [without governor’s signature](#)
- State previously left publication requirement to discretion of court. See now-out-of-date [MD R SPEC P Rule 15-901](#) and [Whitman Walker’s Legal Guide](#) (2018).

Massachusetts

- (0) State law has unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. The applicant must give public notice of the petition, however the publication requirement may be waived for a good cause ([Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. ch. 210, §§ 12-14](#)), and is generally waived if an individual is changing their first name only.”

Michigan

- (0) State law has unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. The applicant must publish notice of the petition, but the court may waive the publication requirement for a good cause and seal the court proceedings. Applicants over the age of 22 must provide two sets of fingerprints. Applicants with a criminal record have the burden of proof to rebut a presumption of fraudulent intent.” ([Mich. Comp. Laws Ann. §§ 711.1-711.3](#))



Minnesota

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court and bring two witnesses to the court as proof of identity. There is no general publication requirement for adults, but there are publication requirements if the applicant has interest in land or is a minor. The order is filed in a judgment book and auditor’s records, however the court records can be sealed if the applicant is in the witness and victim protection program. Applicants with a felony conviction may request a name change only once. Upon petition approval, applicants with a criminal history must report the name change to Bureau of Apprehension within ten days or will be guilty of a gross misdemeanor.” ([Minn. Stat. Ann. §§ 259.10-259.13](#))

Mississippi

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. No publication is required.” ([Miss. Code. Ann. §§ 93-17-1 to 93-17-31](#))

Missouri

- (-1) State law requires publication of name change announcement, and/or includes only narrow option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. The applicant must publish notice of the name change at least once a week for three weeks in a newspaper within 20 days of the court order. The publication requirement may be waived for victims of domestic violence or child abuse.” ([Mo. Ann. Stat. § 527.290](#))

Montana

- (0) State law has unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. The applicant must publish notice of the hearing time and place in a county newspaper for four weeks. The applicant may request the petition and hearing to be sealed for their safety.” ([Mont. Code Ann. §§ 27-31-101 & 27-31-201 to 27-31-204](#))

Nebraska

- (-1) State law requires publication of name change announcement, and/or includes only narrow option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court and show reasonable cause for the name change. Applicants over the age of 19 must publish notice once a week for four weeks; applicants under the age of 19 must publish notice once a week for two weeks.” ([Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 25-21,271 and 25-21,273](#))



Nevada

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. If you are changing your name to conform with your gender identity, you do not have to publish the name change in a newspaper. If all of the required forms are filed and the steps are correctly followed, the judge will typically approve of the name change without a hearing.” ([Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§ 41.270-41.290](#)) “If you were convicted of a felony, you must get a copy of your fingerprints to submit to the Court with all your paperwork.” ([NV Courts “Name Changes for Adults”](#))

New Hampshire

- (0) State law has unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. Subject to the court's discretion there may be a publication requirement, but generally no publication is required” ([N.H. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§ 547:3-i & 550:4](#)). Individuals in prison or on probation or parole must additionally have the sheriff's department serve a copy of the name change petition to the department of corrections (Name Change Petition, [Form NHJB-2175-P](#)).

New Jersey

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- In November 2020, the New Jersey Supreme Court amended the state's rule previously requiring publication. See the [decision here](#).

New Mexico

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- See [HB31](#) (2023), removing former publication requirement
- Formerly, state required publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement (0): “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. Before filing the petition, the applicant must publish notice of the petition at least once a week for two weeks; the publication requirement can be waived for the applicant's safety.” ([N.M. Stat. § 40-8-1 to 40-8-3](#))

New York

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- Previously, state required publication but allowed court discretion to waive requirement. Requirement removed by [A.5465D, “The Gender Recognition Act”](#) (signed June 2021, effective December 2021).



North Carolina

- (-1) State law requires publication of name change announcement, and/or includes only narrow option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. Before filing the petition, the applicant must publish notice at the courthouse door for ten days, however the publication requirement can be waived with evidence that the applicant is a victim of domestic violence, sexual offense, or stalking. Along with the petition, the applicant must submit proof of the applicant’s good character by two county citizens and FBI and State Bureau of Investigations Record Checks. Registered sex offenders are not permitted to obtain a legal name change.” ([N.C. Gen. Stat. Ann. §§ 101-1 to 101-8](#))

North Dakota

- (0) State law has unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. At least 30 days before filing the applicant must publish notice of intended application in a newspaper, however the publication requirement can be waived for victims of domestic violence or individuals only seeking to change their first name. Individuals with a felony conviction must provide additional information with their petition and must notify Bureau of Crime Investigation within ten days of the order granting the name change.” ([N.D. Cent. Code Ann. § 32-28-02](#))

Ohio

- (0) State law has unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. At least 30 days before the hearing, the applicant must publish notice of the hearing in a newspaper, though publication requirements can be waived for the applicant’s personal safety. Depending on the nature of the offense, applicants with prior criminal convictions may not be eligible for a name change.” ([Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 2717.01](#))

Oklahoma

- (0) State law has unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. At least 10 days before the hearing, the applicant must publish notice of the hearing in a newspaper, however publication requirements can be waived and records can be sealed with good cause.” ([12 OK Stat § 12-1631](#) to [12-1637](#))

Oregon

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court in the county where you live. There will only be a hearing if the court tells you or sends you a hearing notice. The court will send a Notice of Entry of Judgement when the name change is granted... Applicants can petition the court to recognize their name and gender change at the same time.” ([Or. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 33.420](#))



Pennsylvania

- (0) State law has unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. The applicant must publish notice of the hearing in two newspapers, but publication requirements can be waived and records can be sealed for the applicant’s safety. Individuals with a felony conviction may change their name if more than two years have passed since the end of the sentence and if not under probation or parole, or if the individual has been pardoned. Individuals who have been convicted of violent crimes are not eligible to change their name. Upon approval of the name change, the court will notify the Attorney General and the State Policy who keep the name change information in a central repository.” ([54 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. §§ 701-705](#))

Rhode Island

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- See [S2667](#) (2024)
- Formerly, (0) State law required publication but allowed a broad option to waive requirement: “An applicant must submit a notarized name change petition to the court. Along with the petition, the applicant must submit a certified copy of their birth certificate and a copy of their Bureau of Criminal Identification records. A waiver can be requested for the publication requirement or to waive the public notice of the hearing in a local newspaper once a week for two weeks. The advertising requirements may differ by county.” ([R.I. Gen. Laws Ann. §§ 33-22-11 & 33-22-28](#), and [Form PC-8.1](#))

South Carolina

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. The applicant must be fingerprinted and undergo a background check for criminal convictions or financial obligations. The court may require a hearing. No publication is required.” ([S.C. Code Ann. § 15-49-10 to § 15-49-50](#))

South Dakota

- (-1) State law requires publication of name change announcement, and/or includes only narrow option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. The applicant must publish notice of the hearing and petition details in a legal newspaper once a week for four weeks.” ([S.D. Codified Laws §§ 21-37-1 to 21-37-10](#))

Tennessee

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. No publication is required. Individuals who have prior felony convictions must provide additional documentation, and individuals who have been convicted of first-degree murder, second-degree murder, or sex offense are not eligible to change their name. ([Tenn. Code Ann. § 29-8-101 to § 29-8-105](#))



Texas

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. No publication is required. The applicant must be fingerprinted and submit documentation of their criminal record. Individuals with a felony conviction may change their name if more than two years have passed since the end of the sentence and if not under probation or parole, or if the individual has been pardoned. Registered sex offenders must notify local law enforcement of the proposed name change.” ([Tex. Fam. Code Ann. §§45.101 to 45.106](#))

Utah

- (0) State law has unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. Subject to the court's discretion, the court may issue notice of the hearing” ([Utah Code Ann. § 42-1](#)). The court may also choose to order petitioners to notify other parties of the name change ([Utah Courts Name Change Information](#)). There are numerous criminal-related restrictions on requesting name changes ([UT Courts](#)).

Vermont

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. No publication is required. Registered sex offenders may not be eligible to change their name unless the court finds a compelling purpose.” ([Vt. Stat. Ann. tit. 15, § 811 to § 817](#))

Virginia

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. No publication is required. The application and public record can be sealed for the health and safety of the applicant and their immediate family. Individuals who are currently incarcerated or are on probation may be eligible for name change at the discretion of the court.” ([Va. Code Ann. § 8.01-217](#))

Washington

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. No publication is required. The court case file can be sealed for the applicant's safety if the individual is a victim of domestic violence. Individuals under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections must give the department a copy of the application at least five days before the order is entered. The court can deny the application except for legitimate religious, cultural, or marital reasons.” ([Wash. Rev. Code Ann. § 4.24.130](#))



West Virginia

- (-1) State law requires publication of name change announcement, and/or includes only narrow option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. At least ten days before the hearing, the applicant must publish notice of the hearing time and place in a Class I legal advertisement. A certified copy of the order will be filed in the county clerk’s office. Individuals who are currently incarcerated or registered as sex offenders are not eligible to change their name. Individuals convicted of murder are not eligible to change their name until 10 years after discharge from prison or parole, whichever occurs later.” ([W. Va. Code Ann. §§ 48-25-101 to 48-25-107](#))

Wisconsin

- (0) State law has unclear publication requirement, or requires publication but allows individual court discretion and/or broad option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the court. The applicant must publish a notice of the hearing in a newspaper once a week for three weeks prior to the hearing date. However, the publication requirement can be waived for the applicant’s safety. Any person required to register as a sex offender may not change their legal name.” ([Wis. Stat. Ann. § 786.37](#) & [Wis. Stat. Ann. § 985.07](#))

Wyoming

- (-1) State law requires publication of name change announcement, and/or includes only narrow option to waive requirement
- “An applicant must submit a petition to the District court in the county where you live. Please note you must be a resident of the county for at least two years before you can file. The applicant must publish notice in a newspaper once a week for a required period, however the publication can keep an applicant’s address confidential if the individual is a victim of domestic violence.” ([Wyo. Stat. Ann. §§ 1-25-101 to 1-25-104](#))

U.S. Territories

American Samoa

- (-1) State law requires publication of name change announcement, and/or includes only narrow option to waive requirement
- Name changes are possible, but “[The High Court of American Samoa lacks statutory guidelines for name change proceedings.](#)” Additionally, “notice of the court proceeding should be published in a newspaper with general circulation. The court supports publishing a notice of the proceeding in a newspaper with general circulation in order to afford a degree of notice to those who may be negatively affected by a change of name. (See Application of Mase CA No. 97-02. (Trial Div. 2004)).”



Guam

- (-1) State law requires publication of name change announcement, and/or includes only narrow option to waive requirement
- Requires a legal petition including detailed family information, [according to NCTE research](#). “Upon review [of the petition], the court will set a hearing date, and a copy of the notice of the petition and the hearing date must be posted in three public places in Hagåtña and three public places in the applicant’s home village. The notices must be posted for at least four weeks prior to the hearing.”

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

- (-1) State law requires publication of name change announcement, and/or includes only narrow option to waive requirement
- Requires a legal petition, which can include a request to legally change sex as well (with proof of surgery from a physician). [A public hearing is required, and public notice of the requested name change is required](#) in both "a newspaper of general circulation at least once prior to the hearing," and at the courthouse for a period of ten days prior to the hearing. The publishing requirement may be waived if petitioner can demonstrate they would be significantly harmed by publishing this notice.

Puerto Rico

- (1) State law does not require publication of name change announcement
- [Requires a legal petition and hearing, but does not require publishing public notification of the court proceeding.](#)

U.S. Virgin Islands:

- (-1) State law requires publication of name change announcement, and/or includes only narrow option to waive requirement
- [Requirements include a court hearing and two periods of public notice in a local newspaper.](#) “The first notice is referred to as the notice of intent, which will be published for four consecutive weeks... At the hearing the court may, in the absence of a compelling reason from the public, issue a tentative consent to the proposed name change. A final certificate of name change is issued upon receiving proof that a second public announcement of the name change is made in a local newspaper for an additional two consecutive weeks.”