
NAME CHANGES

DISCLAIMER

The information on this page is intended for educational purposes only. **It is not legal advice.** If you have specific questions, or are experiencing a situation where you need legal advice, you should contact an attorney.

Student Legal Services makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information on this page. However, the law changes frequently and this site should not be used as a substitute for legal advice. It is highly recommended that anyone accessing this page consult with an attorney licensed in the state of Wyoming prior to taking any action based on the information provided on this page.

GENERAL INFORMATION

People change their names for many reasons. If a person wants to change their name as part of a marriage, divorce, or adoption they may not need to follow the procedure outlined in this document. For all other name changes, the person seeking to change their name must petition the court and receive permission. The procedure outlined below explains how to petition the court for a name change.

For more information about name changes click [here](#).

A person can change their first, middle, and/or last names.

The name change process cannot be used to avoid legal obligations, or to harm or defraud another person.

Name changes are not private—they are public records. If someone is seeking to change their name and they fear their safety is in danger there may be options to keep the change confidential. People in this situation should seek the help of an attorney.

Name changes can be expensive. The person seeking the name change will have to pay for the court filing fees, the publication costs, and the cost to change their essential documents following their name change (driver's license, social security card, passport, etc.)

When a person petitions a court for a name change, the process takes time. It could take many months for the court to grant a name change. If someone objects to the name change it will take longer than if no one objects.

PROCEDURE FOR PETITION FOR NAME CHANGE

STEP 1: THE PETITION

The name change process begins by filing a Petition for Name Change with the district court. The person seeking to change their name must be a **bone fide** (genuine) **resident** of the county where they file the name change petition, and must have been a bona fide resident of that county for at least **2 years**.

There are many ways to prove residency including:

- voter registration,
- housing documents (leases, mortgages, etc.),
- employment records, and
- vehicle registration.

The petition must contain an affidavit setting forth:

- petitioner's full name,
- the name desired,
- a concise statement of the reason for the desired change,
- the place of the petitioner's birth,
- the petitioner's residence and the length of time the petitioner has been an actual, bona fide resident of the county where the petition is filed.

STEP 2: PUBLICATION

After the person seeking to change their name files the Petition for Name Change, they must publish a legal notice in the local newspaper. The notice in the newspaper gives anyone who might object to the name change the ability to contest the proposed change. The notice also allows others the ability to find the person seeking a name change after the name change occurs.

The notice must be published once per week for four consecutive weeks in a newspaper published:

- in the county where the complaint is filed; or
- if there is no newspaper published in the county, then in a newspaper published in this state and of general circulation in such county.

The publication must include:

- A summary statement of the object and prayer of the complaint. This means that the summary must state the purpose of the Complaint and what the person seeking to change their name wants the court to do.
- Mention the court wherein it is filed.
- Notify the person or persons to be served when they are required to answer.

- And notify the person or persons to be served that judgment by default may be rendered against them if they fail to appear.

STEP 3: HEARING (MAY NOT OCCUR)

If someone has an issue with (contests) the name change, then the court may schedule it for a hearing. That means that both parties will have to go to court to argue about why the court should or should not grant the name change.

If the name change is contested, the person seeking a name change should seek the advice of an attorney.

STEP 4: AFTER THE NAME CHANGE

After the court grants the name change, the person seeking to change their name should update their essential documents and notify anyone who will need to know about the change. Individuals who receive a name change should think about updating and notifying:

- identification cards
 - passports
 - voter registration
 - passports
 - social security cards
- Important papers
 - wills
 - vehicle titles
 - home titles
 - powers of attorney
 - advanced healthcare directives
- agencies and organizations
 - employers
 - schools
 - insurance companies
 - healthcare providers
 - banks and other financial institutions
 - utility companies
 - tax authorities
 - social service or benefit providers

For more information visit the Equal Justice Wyoming website [here](#).