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# How do I change my legal name?

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Changing your legal name begins with getting a court order. With that court order, you can update your official IDs like your driver's license, birth certificate, passport, and Social Security card so they match who you are.

This is a standard procedure and the court system is only involved to prevent fraud or harm, like changing your name to avoid debts or defame someone.

All name change records are confidential. In 2021, the NJ Supreme Court ordered that all records of name changes be excluded from public access to respect the rights and privacy of transgender individuals. In addition, you DO NOT need to publish your name change request in a newspaper.

Getting a court order involves a few steps: [filling out several forms](#) and sending them to the courts online or by mail, paying a \$250 administrative fee, and appearing in-person before a judge (detailed instructions below).

For minors, the process is the same, but those under 18 years old must use a different set of forms, which can be found [here](#).

Most name changes can be done by yourself, but you can get a lawyer if you have a complicated criminal or credit history – or if you just want some help navigating the process. [Free LGBTQIA+ friendly legal services are available](#).

## Getting A Court Order To Change Your Legal Name

### Step 1: Fill Out Court Documents

You will need to complete five forms [found in this packet](#):

1. *Verified Complaint*: This form provides the court with basic information like your birth name, preferred name, and why you are changing your name. You can write something like: "This is my preferred name and I wish to obtain proper documentation."
2. *Certification of Confidential Information for Name Change*: This form provides the court with basic, confidential information like your Social Security number.
3. *Order Fixing Date of Hearing*: This form is used to schedule your hearing at the courthouse. You only need to complete the personal information in the top section of the form. The court will fill out the bottom portion.
4. *Final Judgment and Final Judgment Addendum*: These forms finalize your name change. You only need to complete the personal information in the top section of the form. After your hearing, the court will sign and complete the bottom portion of these forms, and you can then use certified copies of the Final Judgment to update your official IDs and documents.
5. *Civil Case Information Statement (CIS)*: This form summarizes your case for the court, but can be a little confusing to fill out. For detailed instructions, refer to this [step by step guide from the NJ Courts](#).  
*Note: The case type number for a name change is 151.*

*Note: Those under 18 years old must use [this set of forms](#).*

### Step 2: Pay the Administrative Fee

Make a check or money order payable to "Treasurer, State of New Jersey" for \$250 – or you can pay online (see step 3). This is the fee to cover the cost of filing your papers with the courts.

If you can show financial hardship, you may not need to pay the fee. To apply for a hardship waiver, complete the [Fee Waiver Request Form](#) and send it along with your documents.

*Note: The Fee Waiver Request requires documentation like pay stubs, welfare documents, unemployment documents, and bank statements.*

### **Step 3: Send Your Documents To The Court**

Once you have prepared and carefully reviewed all necessary forms, you will need to send your documents to the Superior Court either online or by mail.

#### *Sending your documents online*

You can submit digital versions of your documents through the [NJ Courts' online system](#).

For detailed instructions on how to use the system, [visit the NJ Courts JEDS \(Judiciary Electronic Document Submission\) page](#).

Note: You can pay the filing fee online by credit card, debit card, or ACH transfer.

#### *Sending your documents by mail*

Before mailing your documents, remove all instruction sheets, make sure you have signed all the forms wherever necessary, and make copies for your records.

In your envelope, make sure to include:

- Two signed copies of each form (one is for the courts and one is returned to you)
- A check or money order for \$250.00 or a Fee Waiver Request form
- A stamped envelope addressed to yourself so the court can return your documents.

Once you have everything together, mail your packet to the [Superior Court in your county](#). If you can, use certified mail so you can request a return receipt for proof of delivery.

### **Step 4: Review Returned Copies**

If you mailed your documents, the court will return copies of the Verified Complaint, Certification of Confidential Information for Name Change, and Order Fixing Date of Hearing forms using the self-addressed envelope you provided.

These documents will now have a docket number written on them. This number is important as it identifies your case and you will need to use it on all future papers you send to the court about your case.

Carefully review the Order Fixing Date of Hearing form. It should now have the date filled in. This date is critical as it is the day and time you need to appear before a judge at the courthouse to finalize your case.

#### *If you have pending criminal charges in New Jersey:*

- You must send copies of the Verified Complaint, Certification of Confidential Information for Name Change, and the Order Fixing Date of Hearing forms by certified mail to the prosecutor of the county where the criminal matter is being heard. You must send these forms at least 20 days before your name change hearing.
- If the Office of the Attorney General brought charges against you, you must send copies of the Verified Complaint, Certification of Confidential Information for Name Change, and Order Fixing Date of Hearing forms by certified mail to the Director of the Division of Criminal Justice at least 20 days before the date of the name change hearing. Use the following address: Director, Division of Criminal Justice R.J. Hughes Justice Complex 25 W Market Street P.O. Box 085 Trenton, NJ 08625-0085
- After you have mailed the necessary forms using certified mail, the post office will send you a green card. This is your certified mail receipt. Make a copy of the receipt and mail the original along with a completed copy of the Proof of Mailing form ([Form D from this packet](#)) to the court where you are changing your name. Note: If you are a minor, [use Form J from this packet](#).

### **Step 5: Go To The Courthouse**

Head to the courtroom and see the judge on the day and time listed on the Order Fixing Date of Hearing form. Here's what you can expect at your hearing:

- The judge may ask you questions about your name change and whether you are trying to avoid debt or a criminal history. This is a routine part of the process.

- If the judge asks why you want to change your name, you can say this is your preferred name as stated in your application, or you can provide more details if you feel comfortable.
- If the judge asks about your transition, you can answer if you are comfortable or you can respectfully say that is private medical information. You DO NOT need to provide any personal medical information or documentation for a name change.
- At the end of the hearing, the judge should sign the Final Judgment form and provide you a copy.

Note: Bring proof of your birth name for identification purposes.

#### **Step 6: Get Certified Copies of the Final Judgment**

To legally change your name on your state and federal IDs, you need to order certified copies of your Final Judgment and send them to different agencies. You cannot use photocopies.

To get a certified copy of the Final Judgment form, complete NJ Courts' [Records Request Form](#).

You can submit your completed form through the [NJ Courts' online system](#), email it to [SCCOMailbox@judiciary.state.nj.us](mailto:SCCOMailbox@judiciary.state.nj.us), or mail it to the following address: Superior Court Clerk's Office P.O. Box 971 Trenton, NJ 08625-0971

Order at least 3 certified copies. The fee for each copy is \$25.

#### **Step 7: Update Your State and Federal IDs**

With the certified copy of your Final Judgment, you can now update official IDs like your birth certificate, Social Security card, and passport. For detailed instructions on how to update your IDs, refer to these step-by-step guides:

- [Changing Your Name on Your NJ Driver's License](#)
- [Updating Your Gender Marker On Your NJ Driver's License](#)
- [Updating Your NJ Birth Certificate](#)
- [Updating Your Social Security card](#)
- [Updating Your U.S. passport](#)

#### **Step 8: File Name Change With the NJ Treasury Department**

Within 45 days of getting your court ordered name change, you must send a certified copy of the Final Judgment and a filing fee of \$50 to the [NJ Treasury Department's Division of Revenue](#).

Your copy of the Final Judgment will be returned to you.

Mail your certified copy of the final judgment and \$50 filing fee to the following address: Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services Judgment Name Change Unit PO Box 453 Trenton, NJ 08646

*Note: To reduce barriers for transgender individuals, the NJ Legislature has [introduced a new law](#) to waive the filing fee. This article will be updated as more information becomes available.*

Sources:

- <https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562022/approved/20221116b.shtml>
- [https://www.njcourts.gov/sites/default/files/forms/10551\\_namechg\\_adult.pdf](https://www.njcourts.gov/sites/default/files/forms/10551_namechg_adult.pdf);  
[https://www.njcourts.gov/sites/default/files/forms/10552\\_namechg\\_family.pdf](https://www.njcourts.gov/sites/default/files/forms/10552_namechg_family.pdf)
- <https://www.njcourts.gov/self-help/name-change/name-change-adults>
- <https://www.state.nj.us/treasury/revenue/namechange.shtml>

 Open Public  
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