



Center for Adolescent and Young Adult Health

Name and Gender Marker Change Guide

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WHO SHOULD USE THIS GUIDE?

Transgender, non-binary, and other gender-diverse people living in Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, and surrounding counties who wish to change their legal name and/or gender marker on identity documents and other records. We have provided guidance for other areas where possible.

This guide is written with as much detail as possible, aimed at an audience who is doing the process alone, but we strongly recommend consulting with a local legal representative or reaching out to the Name Change Project to make the process as easy as possible, especially if there are financial limitations (see section 4 or contact the Name Change Project at: <https://transgenderlegal.org/our-work/name-change-project/>).

WHAT IS IN THIS GUIDE?

Step by step, how to change your or your child's legal name and gender marker. This guide will work for most people, but if you have questions, needs, or goals that are different, we would strongly recommend contacting an attorney (see section 4.).

HOW DO I USE THIS GUIDE?

If you are a minor (17 years old or younger) or are an adult who wants to change a minor's name, begin at Section 1 of the Guide. If you are an adult (18 years old or older) please see section 2 (You should note that while we attempt to maintain the accuracy of this document, it's possible that some state and federal laws, policies, or other specific steps might have changed since the most recent update.).

DO I HAVE TO PAY/HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

There are court fees and other expenses. Total costs will vary based on individual steps, transportation costs, etc. but are estimated around \$600 within Allegheny County, with many of the fees being able to be waived with additional forms based on your financial status (see section 2.)

In addition, there may be attorney fees. If you decide to work with one (recommended), many of the local attorneys offer their services on a sliding scale or pro bono (free). If you live in Allegheny County you can apply to The **Name Change Project** who may be able to connect you to a participating attorney if you meet their eligibility criteria. See page 3 for details.

I WANT TO CHANGE MY NAME AND MY GENDER MARKER – DO I NEED COURT ORDERS FOR BOTH?

Changing your name and gender marker involves two different processes, but you can work on both at the same time.

In Pennsylvania the court of common pleas, in the county you reside in, can give you a Name Change Order. While you are working on your name change, you can request a physician's statement on their letterhead saying that you have had appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition. You do **not** need a letter to change your state ID or Driver's License, but you will need it to change your birth certificate and possibly some federal IDs and records (such as a passport.) Otherwise you simply need to fill out the appropriate forms (see sections 1 and 2 below.)

You do **not** need **Gender Affirmation Surgery** to update your Pennsylvania or federal IDs and records.

If you were born in a state that requires a proof of surgery to update your birth certificate, please visit the National Center for Transgender Equality's ID Documents Center to learn more: <http://www.transequality.org/documents>.

I HEARD THAT I HAVE TO PUBLISH MY NAME CHANGE IN THE NEWSPAPER – IS THAT TRUE?

Pennsylvania State law requires that you must publish (at your expense) notice of the hearing in two newspapers (includes dead name, chosen name, and case number), but publication requirements can be waived and records can be sealed for your safety. This notice is meant to alert the public that someone is changing their name to prevent people from committing fraud or avoiding debts or other legal obligations they may have. However, the law also recognizes that publishing this type of notice can put some people in danger, so you can ask the Court to waive the publication requirement (and seal your court records) if you think that publishing that information in a newspaper would jeopardize your personal safety. This request is standard practice in Allegheny County. Some of the risks associated with publishing the change are documented in a later section.

*NOTE: 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 Police who keep the name change information in a central repository. (54 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. §§ 701-705).

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS, OR FEEL OVERWHELMED, OR CAN'T DO THIS ALONE?

This process can be challenging for some members of our community. If you feel you need help, or just have questions, we strongly recommend reaching out to one of the attorneys listed in section 4 who all have experience working with trans, non-binary, and gender nonconforming clients through the name change process.

For minors requiring court orders it is highly recommended you work with an attorney. Lawyers have had success waiving the criminal background check, judgment search, and publication requirement for minors. This makes the process very quick and efficient, especially in Allegheny county.

I LIVE IN ANOTHER STATE – WHAT SHOULD I DO?

You can find basic information regarding a name and gender marker change in other states at www.TransEquality.org/documents. If you live in the Western PA Tri-State area section 3.

THE NAME CHANGE PROJECT

The Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund (TLDEF) is committed to ending discrimination based upon gender identity and expression and to achieving equality for transgender people through public education, test-case litigation, direct legal services, community organizing, and public policy efforts.

The TLDEF's Name Change Project provides pro bono legal name change services to low-income transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary people through partnerships with some of the nation's most prestigious law firms and corporate law departments.

In Allegheny County and Pittsburgh the law offices of Reed Smith and the Pro Bono Center of the Allegheny County Bar Foundation spearhead this work. Many of the attorneys listed in section 4 also work, or have worked with the project.

<https://transgenderlegal.org/our-work/name-change-project/>

There are income-eligibilities and a months-long waiting list. If you do not qualify, or cannot wait, many of the attorneys listed in section 4 offer pro-bono or sliding-scale name change service.

If you are doing this alone in a county without specific policies, or working with an attorney who has not done name changes before, the Attorney Handbook may provide additional guidance:

Attorney Handbook - Allegheny County, PA

<https://www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/id/PA%20Name%20Change%20Project%20Attrny%20Handbook%20for%20Allegheny.pdf>

Minor born in Pennsylvania

Change Name/Gender Marker on Birth Certificate

Parent Will Need:

- Birth Certificate With Requested Changes
- Application for Certified Copy
- Copy of Government ID, (Name/Address)
- Check or Money Order for Fee
- Official Statement of Treatment from Physician (only needed to change gender marker)
- Certified Birth Certificate

If not accepted by other organizations, go to Section 2

ID/License

You Will Need:

- Form MV-44
- Current Photo ID
- Certified Copy of Name Change Order (if needed)
- "Request for Gender Change" form (if needed)
- Fee (see DMV's website for current rates)

Schools/Banks/etc.

Social Security

Passport

Parent Will Need:

- Steps will vary by organization (contact each separately)

Parent Will Need:

- Form SS-5
- Valid Government Issued Photo ID
- Certified Copy of Name Change (for name change)
- "Request for Gender Change" form (if needed)
- Letter of support from treating doctor (for gender marker change)

Parent Will Need:

- Form DS-11
- Valid Government Issued Photo ID
- 2 2"x2" photos of yourself
- Certified Copy of Name Change (for name change)
- Letter of support from treating doctor (for gender marker change)

SECTION 1: MINOR

USING PA BIRTH CERTIFICATE TO UPDATE LEGAL RECORDS

If a minor was born in Pennsylvania, no court order is required to change their legal name on their birth certificate. The parent(s) listed on the birth record can request the name and sex designation of their child under 18 years old be updated using the correction form on the back of the certificate.

Follow these instructions to update the birth certificate:

<http://www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/PA-BC-Policy.pdf>.

Please keep copies of all records of the old certificate and the request for an updated certificate. You should be able to use the newly issued birth certificate along with those records to update your child's name on other documents and records. If you have trouble getting other documents and records updated, you can still petition the court for an official name and gender change order using the instructions below.

COURT ORDER / INDIVIDUAL BORN OUTSIDE PENNSYLVANIA

If a minor was not born in Pennsylvania, or otherwise needs a court order to change their legal name on documentation, follow the steps below:

- At least one parent or guardian must file a petition in the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the minor resides, setting forth the reasons for the name change. This usually requires that notice be given to all parents/guardians, but this can be waived for a parent/guardian who is not agreeable to the change.
 - Common Phrasing for the petition “The Petitioners request this change of name because the Minor Petitioner would like the Minor Petitioner’s name to be consistent with the Minor Petitioner’s identity and appearance.
- Included with the petition should be a copy of the minor's birth certificate and official set of fingerprints (Allegheny and Westmoreland counties do not require a birth certificate).
- State-specific forms for a minor name change are not available, but certain counties have minor name change forms available online, generally including:
 - a Name Change Petition;
 - a Criminal Background Check (able to be waived in some cases); and
 - an Order scheduling a hearing date.
- In addition to obtaining fingerprints of the minor at the state police station (or IdentGO), publishing notice, and providing notice to the non-petitioning parent, the applicant must search offices of the counties in which the petitioner has resided for the prior five years to confirm that there are no judgments, decrees, or other similar matters against the petitioner (this can be waived in some cases). County-specific forms can be found at the applicable courthouse or, in some instances online.

- At the hearing, the petitioner must present proof that notice of the change was published. This step can often be waived.
 - If the publishing requirement is not waived you must publish notice of the petition in two newspapers of general circulation in the county where the minor resides or in a contiguous county and give notice to any non-petitioning parent. The court may waive notice requirements if it determines such notice would jeopardize the safety of the minor
 - You may want to include a request to waive publication and seal the record, as well as to have a hearing that is not held in open court, for the privacy of the minor. Philadelphia and Allegheny counties do often grant publication waivers, other counties may depend on the judge.
- The court will set a hearing date for the name change (In Allegheny County, if waiving publication and/or sealing the record of the change this hearing is not necessary and instead you would attend a special public name change when ready).
- The court may then enter a decree approving the name change after it is satisfied that there are no lawful objections (Within Allegheny County there is rarely an issue with names changes for transgender individuals and much of the process has been streamlined with specific judges).
 - Judges have a lot of discretion in granting name changes. Some may have lots of questions and want to see lots of evidence regarding the name change of the child, others may grant a name change as long as there are no objections. The judge will consider the best interests of the child.
 - They typically evaluate the best interest of the child by looking at a variety of factors, which may include the child's preference (taking into consideration their age and experience), the length of time a child has used that name, the difficulties, harassment, or embarrassment a child may experience from the present or proposed name, and the motives or interests of the parent.
 - To demonstrate that the name change is in the best interests of the child, along with the name change petition you may want to submit supporting evidence to the judge showing this, especially outside of Allegheny County.
 - Examples of such evidence would be letters from teachers, family, or friends confirming their use of affirmed name*, letters from providers confirming the child's gender identity, etc.

File the petition in the Court of Common Pleas for the county in which the minor resides. You can find an interactive map of these courts and their applicable counties at:

<http://www.pacourts.us/courts/courts-of-common-pleas/>

NOTE You may want to request more than one certified copy of the name change order, since certified copies may be required to update the minor's legal name with other agencies (5 is the amount normally requested).

PA DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

Next, go to the DMV. You can apply for an amended PA ID or driver's license with the PA DMV with the following items:

- Complete the appropriate DMV form(s) for your name/gender change
 -
- Current photo ID (if you do not have a current ID, and the ID you have has been expired for more than two (2) years, you will need to bring additional proof of identification and proof of birth date).
- If Updating Your Legal Name: A certified copy of name change Order
- If Updating Your Gender Marker: A "Request for Gender Change" form DL-32
 - Be sure to mark 'X' for Non-Binary, M' for male or 'F' for female if/whenever you're ready to correct the gender marker too
 - While the 'X' designation can be used for state ID (including REAL ID,) it is not yet available for PA birth certificates or federal ID.
 - <https://www.dmv.pa.gov/Driver-Services/Driver-Licensing/Pages/Gender-Neutral-Designation.aspx>
- Fee (see DMV's website for current rates)

You do not need to show proof of gender-affirming surgery in order to amend the gender marker. Ask to speak to a supervisor about this if the DMV representative insists that you do.

* We use the term affirmed, or chosen name to differentiate from the legal name. You may also see 'preferred name', but this language is discouraged as it implies that using a name that is congruent with a child's gender identity is optional, which it is not.

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

It is a good idea to update the minor's name with the Social Security Administration (SSA), as many other agencies utilize the SSA's database for identity verification purposes. If possible, it is easier to also update the gender marker at the same time. Updating the SSA record is free, and only one new Social Security card will be issued with the name change. The Social Security number will not change – only the name on the card. Please visit your local SSA office with the following documents:

- Form SS-5 (see Appendix A for blank copy)
- Be sure to mark 'M' for male or 'F' for female, whenever you're ready to correct the gender marker too
- Government-issued photo ID/ driver's license
- Proof of U.S. citizenship (i.e. birth certificate, naturalization certificate, or passport, even if they show old name and gender marker)
- If Updating Your Legal Name: A certified copy of name change Order

- If Updating Your Gender Marker: A letter of support from your treating doctor (see Appendix A for a template letter your doctor can use) If all goes well, you should receive a new card within about 10 business days.

Please Note: Updating the gender marker with Social Security may also have implications for obligations to register for the draft. Additional information is available from the Selective Service website (<https://www.sss.gov/QA>) or from the National Center for Transgender Equality (<https://transequality.org/issues/resources/selective-service-and-transgender-people>)

Minor born outside Pennsylvania, or an Adult in Pennsylvania

File for a Court
Order with
Court of Pleas

You Will Need:

- Petition for Name Change
- Photo ID
- Application for Index Number
- Fee or Waiver
- RJI
- Proposed Sealing Order (optional)
- Official Set of Fingerprints
- Certified Birth Certificate

Hearing Date Set

During Court, Provide Proof of Publication
or Prior Waiver of Publication

File Court Order with
Department of Court Records

ID/License

You Will Need:

- Form MV-44
- Current Photo ID
- Certified Copy of Name Change Order (if needed)
- "Request for Gender Change" form (if needed)
- Fee (see DMV's website for current rates)

Schools/Banks/etc.

Social Security

Passport

You Will Need:

- Steps will vary by organization
(contact each separately)

You Will Need:

- Form SS-5
- Valid Government Issued Photo ID
- Certified Copy of Name Change
(for name change)
- "Request for Gender Change" form
(if needed)
- Letter of support from treating doctor
(for gender marker change)

You Will Need:

- Form DS-11
- Valid Government Issued Photo ID
- 2 2"x2" photos of yourself
- Certified Copy of Name Change
(for name change)
- Letter of support from treating doctor
(for gender marker change)

SECTION 2: ADULT / MINOR BORN OUTSIDE OF PENNSYLVANIA

STEP-BY-STEP OVERVIEW OF CHANGING YOUR NAME IN COURT

If you are 18 years old or over, you will need a court order to complete this process. To get started you will need the following documents:

- A petition (application) for your name change
- A form of photo ID
- “In Forma Pauperis” (IFP) Application (also known as “Poor Person Status” Application), if you need the court to waive the filing fee because you cannot afford to pay this cost
- This is basically a form that asks the Court to hear and decide your petition. You must prepare and file at least one copy of the RJI with the County Clerk’s Office, as well as the Court
- A proposed Sealing Order (if you request a waiver of publication and sealing)
- A proposed Final Order that grants the name change, publications waiver, and record sealing

Next, go to the appropriate location to file all of your paperwork, generally the filing office is the Prothonotary’s office, but in Allegheny County, the filing office is now called the Department of Court Records – Civil/Family Division. You will need to pay a fee (amount depending on your location) to file the name change application. If you cannot afford this fee, you should ask for an application to waive the fee – called “Poor Person’s Status” or “In Forma Pauperis” (IFP). Every county’s forms are slightly different, and they will likely require that you provide proof of your income, assets (like home or car), and monthly expenses. Fill out the application and give it to the Prothonotary.

A judge will decide if you have to pay the fee before considering your name change petition. If your fee waiver application is granted, the judge will then decide your case. If your fee waiver application is denied, you will need to pay the fee in order for the judge to consider your case. If you think your fee waiver should have been granted given your personal financial situation, contact an attorney for help (see section 4.) When you file your name change petition, the Prothonotary should stamp all documents to say when they got them. The Prothonotary should give you a receipt – save the receipt and write the case number on all your documents, if the Prothonotary does not do it for you.

At this point, the Prothonotary will give your name change paperwork to the Court for you or they will tell you to bring the paperwork to the Supreme Court Clerk’s office in your County. The Court Clerk will need: a copy of your petition (with a copy of your birth certificate attached), and a copy of the Name Change Order(s) you want them to sign. Make sure the Court Clerk also timestamps your papers as received. Within a few days of filing, the Court will assign a judge to decide your name change. Someone from the Court may reach out to you to update you about your fee waiver application, the Sealing Order, or a decision on your case.

Normally, name changes must be published in a newspaper, but you can ask the judge to not have to do that (a “waiver of publication”) because of fear of harassment. Your next steps depend on whether you have to publish:

- If you do not request a waiver of publication, then you must publish a notice of your name change in the local newspaper, as specified in your Order within the required time frame. These are very important steps and you must meet the time deadlines in the Court’s Order so your name change can become final.
- If you do request a waiver of publication, and that request is granted, then you are not required to publish in a local paper. In that case, you still need to file the Final Order with the County Clerk’s Office in order for your name change to be final.
- If you request a waiver of publication, and your request is denied (in other words, the Court still requires you to publish in a newspaper), you may want to contact an attorney immediately to learn about your right to challenge the Court’s decision or appeal.
- Now you just need to pay for one or more certified copies of your Name Change Order, which you will use to update your legal name on identity documents and records. It is much easier to get these copies at the same time you file the Order with the County Clerk’s Office.
 - You can always go back there later to purchase more copies if you need them. Please note that some counties may also require that you notify other agencies, such as the Board of Elections, prior to obtaining your certified copies. The Court Clerk or County Clerk should be able to tell you what your particular county requires.
- The following section provides more details about the petition, requesting a waiver of publication, and other documents you need to file for this process.

You will then appear in Court and the judge will usually decide your name change without any additional information. Sometimes the judge will ask for more information, requiring that you notify other people about your intent to change your name (like creditors or law enforcement agencies). If this happens, you may want to contact an attorney to help you understand what is being asked of you, or to help you with the rest of the process (See section 4.) If you move forward without an attorney, be sure to respond to the Court’s requests to keep the name change process moving forward.

Name changes are generally granted and the judge will normally sign the Name Change Order at this point. If your name change is not granted for any reason, you may want to contact an attorney to figure out your options (See section 4.) Even if the judge signs your name change Order, your name change is not done yet! The signed Final Name Change Order must be filed with the County Clerk (where you brought the original petition). Sometimes the Court will send the Order there for you, but in most counties the Court will mail the Order to you or call you and tell you to pick up the Order so you can bring the Order to the County Clerk yourself.

PREPARING THE PETITION

The basic adult name change petition is a formal application that includes a lot of your personal information. In addition to explaining your reasons for the name change, it also includes questions about your finances, family history, debts, criminal convictions, other court cases, and more. Some of this information is used to demonstrate to the Court that you are not trying to avoid legal or financial obligations or commit fraud with this name change. You must fill out the petition completely, truthfully, and accurately. By law, you must include the following information in your petition:

- Your given/birth name, and any other names or aliases (nicknames) you have been known by
- Your new, proposed name
- Your date and place of birth
- Your current residential address (which must be in the same county as the court where you are applying for the name change)

*Note: Even if you have certain financial or legal obligations, or a criminal record, that will not necessarily stop you from getting your name change approved by the Court in many cases. In some cases, it might slow down the name change process, but it should not stop the process entirely. If you are concerned that your answers to these questions will cause issues for your name change, it might be a good idea to contact an attorney. You must sign your completed petition using your given/birth name.

****DO I HAVE TO PUBLISH MY NAME CHANGE IN A NEWSPAPER?**

Normally, everyone has to publish their name change in 2 local newspapers. This is a long-standing rule that is meant to give general notice to the public that someone is changing their name and to prevent people from committing fraud (such as avoiding creditors or law enforcement). For many transgender people, the idea of alerting your local community that you are transgender and where you live is really scary. Some folks may be fearful because they have a direct history of violence, abuse, threats, harassment, or bullying from family members, current or former intimate partners, co-workers, neighbors, classmates, or acquaintances. Other folks may have endured abusive and frightening incidents at the hands of strangers. As a transgender person, you may not have experienced any direct threats or incident, but you are fearful of what may potentially happen if someone learns that you are transgender.

Fortunately, you can ask the Court to waive (excuse) the publication requirement and seal your court records. To get this protection, you need to tell the Court why you are scared about publishing your name change and explain how it puts you at risk of harm. You can include examples of times that people have harmed, threatened, or discriminated against you for being transgender or because of your gender expression.

For example: times when someone publicly accused you of having a fake ID, run-ins with law enforcement officers, threats, or actual violence, being denied medical care or coverage for medical treatment because of your identity or mismatching IDs, being called the wrong name in a

doctor's office or pharmacy, being told you can't use a certain restroom, being called names or other offensive terms. These personal examples make your request really strong. If you do not have any personal experiences to share with the Court, that is OK, too. In that case, you should give the Court information about violence, threats, and discrimination against transgender people generally to help the Court understand the experience of transgender people's lives like yours.

The Court is required to look at many aspects of your life (the "totality of the circumstances") to determine whether to grant you this added protection, but it's fairly standard for Allegheny County. This is an important added layer of protection that many transgender name change applicants benefit from. Not everyone who seeks this relief is granted a waiver of publication or sealing of their record, but it is always worth asking for it if you are concerned for your safety.

The request to seal the record can be included with the request to waive publication, but they are two separate requests that both need to be made.

UPDATING IDENTIFICATION CARDS AND RECORDS, POST-NAME CHANGE

Now you have your Name Change Order, but no one knows. You need to tell everyone – DMV, school, work, insurance, Social Security, etc. You may also want to update your birth certificate. Here are some details about how to update common IDs and records. Remember – if you want to and it's more convenient for you, you can update your name and gender marker at the same time! But you don't have to – you can do one at a time. At this time, there is not a gender neutral marker for a Pennsylvania Birth Certificate, but there is for State ID/Driver's License (please bear this in mind when considering your options). If and when you want to update your gender marker for some of the documents listed below, you will need an original letter (not photocopies of the same letter) from your doctor. Some places may need the doctor's letter to be notarized.

PA DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES

Next, go to the DMV. You can apply for an amended PA ID or driver's license with the PA DMV with the following items:

- Form DL-32
- Be sure to mark 'X' for Non-Binary, M' for male or 'F' for female whenever you're ready to correct the gender marker too
 - While the 'X' designation can be used for state ID, it is not yet available for PA birth certificates or federal ID yet.
- Current photo ID (if you do not have a current ID, and the ID you have has been expired for more than two (2) years, you will need to bring additional proof of identification and proof of birth date).
- If Updating Your Legal Name: A certified copy of name change Order
- If Updating Your Gender Marker: A "Request for Gender Change" form
- Fee (see DMV's website for current rates)

You do not need to show proof of gender-affirming surgery in order to amend the gender marker. Ask to speak to a supervisor about this if the DMV representative insists that you do.

BIRTH CERTIFICATE

If you were born in Pennsylvania you can change your name on your birth certificate regardless of your age. For birth certificates issued in Pennsylvania the Dept. of Health (DOH) Bureau of Vital Records allows adults to amend birth records with the following:

- The birth certificate with the requested changes on the reverse side, or Application for Correction of Certificate of Birth, Form H105.133
- An Application for Certified Copy of Birth Record;
- A copy of your government-issued photo ID that verifies legal name and mailing address (listed gender does not matter), or two other forms of identification;
- A check or money order for \$20;
- If you're updating the gender marker, a physician's statement on the office letterhead saying that the applicant has had appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition.

Mail completed affidavit form, documents, application, fee and ID to:

Division of Vital Records
101 S. Mercer Street P.O. Box 1528
New Castle, PA 16103

You may call the PA DOH Bureau of Vital Records at (844) 228-3516 with questions.

If you were born outside of Pennsylvania, each state has different requirements for amending the name and/or gender marker on birth certificates. For the most updated information, check out the ID Center of the National Center for Transgender Equality's website:

<http://www.transequality.org/documents>

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

It is a good idea to update the minor's name with the Social Security Administration (SSA) first, as many other agencies utilize the SSA's database for identity verification purposes. If possible, update your gender marker at the same time. Updating the SSA record is free, and only one new Social Security card will be issued with the name change. The Social Security number will not change – only the name on the card. Please visit your local SSA office with the following documents:

- Form SS-5 (see Appendix A for blank copy)
- Be sure to mark 'M' for male or 'F' for female, whenever you're ready to correct the gender marker too

- Government-issued photo ID/ driver's license (it is ok if it still shows your old name and gender marker)
- Proof of U.S. citizenship (i.e. birth certificate, naturalization certificate, or passport, even if they show old name and gender marker)
- If Updating Your Legal Name: A certified copy of name change Order
- If Updating Your Gender Marker: A letter of support from your treating doctor (see Appendix A for a template letter your doctor can use) If all goes well, you should receive a new card within about 10 business days.

Please Note: Updating the gender marker with Social Security may also have implications for obligations to register for the draft. Additional information is available from the Selective Service website (<https://www.sss.gov/QA>) or from the National Center for Transgender Equality (<https://transequality.org/issues/resources/selective-service-and-transgender-people>)

PASSPORT

Amending your U.S. passport is fairly easy to do, though it is often the most expensive identity document to update. If the state where you are born doesn't allow you to update your gender on your birth certificate, you should really try to update your passport or get a passport for the first time. If you have a passport, you can often avoid showing your birth certificate. If you are planning to apply for a passport with a new name and gender marker, you will generally need to take the following to your local passport agency (often located in post offices):

- Form DS-11 (see Appendix A for blank copy)
- Be sure to mark 'M' for male or 'F' for female whenever you're ready to correct the gender marker too
- Two 2x2 inch photographs of yourself (you can get these at some passport agencies, or at pharmacies like CVS or Walgreens)
- Valid government-issued photo ID
- Proof of U.S. citizenship (i.e. birth certificate, naturalization certificate, or passport, even if they show old name and gender marker)
- If Updating Your Legal Name: A certified copy of name change Order
- If Updating Your Gender Marker: A letter of support from your treating doctor (see Appendix A for a template letter your doctor can use)
- Fee (see Dept. of State's website for current rates)

We also recommend that you check out the National Center for Transgender Equality's guide on passports for transgender people, which provides detailed instructions about how to go through this process: <https://www.transequality.org/know-your-rights/passports>.

CREDIT REPORTING BUREAUS, CREDIT CARDS, BANK ACCOUNTS, LOANS, HEALTH INSURANCE, UTILITIES, ETC.

You need to update your name and gender marker at each place that has your name on record, but isn't a government agency listed above. Sometimes you can do this in person, but you might have to write a letter to update your name and gender (including your "title preference," such as "Mx." instead of "Mr."). Plan to call each company to ask whether they require a certified copy or regular photocopy of the Order. If you write a letter, include your address, any account or student numbers, and request they change your name and gender marker.

We advise creating a list of companies, organizations, websites, etc. that you commonly work with and then adjust those first and make changes to others as they occur.

SCHOOL RECORDS

Give a copy of your name change Order to the school secretary or Registrar (and any other relevant offices, such as the IT Department) to request that your name be updated in all school records, including the students' school ID card, school email address, and Net ID. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) also provides a right for transgender current or former students to update the name and gender marker in their school records. If you have problems with the school not recognizing your name change or gender change, contact a lawyer.

SECTION 3: NON-ALLEGHENY COUNTY RESIDENTS

LINKS FOR GENERAL PA GUIDE/FORMS FOR NAME OR GENDER MARKER CHANGE

- Court of Common Pleas Petition
 - https://www.palawhelp.org/files/A50D42DC-FCAA-1883-E79C-9619DF2007FA/attachments/0A10DBDF-029E-3DA1-1061-FF11A9678364/128721PA_midpenn_NameChange.pdf
- How To Change Your Name: A Self-Help Guide (PILP)
 - <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/589b4d9f725e250f864b8d07/t/59e4dead4c0dbf18791feb6c/1508171441506/Name+changing+info.pdf>

PENNSYLVANIA REGIONS

For those counties that are highlighted, specific petitions or guides could not be found in these counties currently. For those, we recommend referring to the above section or seeking local legal expertise. Additionally, we have included links to those counties' own websites

SOUTHWEST

- **Allegheny County**
 - See sections 1 and 2.
- **Armstrong County**
 - <https://co.armstrong.pa.us/index.php/departments-m/prothonotary-clerk-of-courts-m>
- **Beaver County**
 - http://www.beavercountypa.gov/Depts/Courts/LawLib/Documents/NAME_CHAN GE_PETITION-Adult.pdf
- **Butler County**
 - <https://www.butlercountypa.gov/243/Prothonotary>
- **Cambria County**
 - <https://www.cambriacountypa.gov/prothonotary-office.aspx>
- **Fayette County**
 - <https://www.fayettecountypa.org/434/Prothonotary>
- **Greene County**
 - <https://www.co.greene.pa.us/department-prothonotarays-office>
- **Indiana County**
 - Adult
https://www.indianacountypa.gov/wp-content/uploads/MINOR_Name_Change_Petition_Scheduling_ORDER_.pdf
 - Minor
https://www.indianacountypa.gov/wp-content/uploads/ADULT_Name-Change_Petition_Scheduling_ORDER_.pdf

- **Lawrence County**
 - <https://co.lawrence.pa.us/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Procedure-for-Name-Change.pdf>
- **Mercer County**
 - <https://www.mcc.co.mercer.pa.us/prothonotary/default.htm>
- **Somerset County**
 - <http://www.co.somerset.pa.us/department.asp?deptnum=36>
- **Washington County**
 - <http://www.washingtoncourts.us/189/Prothonotary>
- **Westmoreland County**
 - <https://www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/323/Prothonotary>

NORTHWEST

- **Cameron County**
 - http://www.cameroncountypa.com/government/prothonotary_and_clerk_of_courts.php
- **Clarion County**
 - <http://www.co.clarion.pa.us/Dept/Prothonotary/Pages/default.aspx>
- **Clearfield County**
 - <https://clearfieldco.org/prothonotary-clerk-of-courts/>
- **Crawford County**
 - <https://www.crawfordcountypa.net/Prothonotary/Pages/home.aspx>
- **Elk County**
 - <https://www.co.elk.pa.us/index.php/prothonotary>
- **Erie County**
 - <https://eriecountypa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Name-Change-Procedures.pdf>
- **Forest County**
 - <http://www.co.forest.pa.us/departments/prothonotary.php>
- **Jefferson County**
 - <https://www.jeffersoncountypa.com/prothonotary/>
- **McKean County**
 - https://www.mckeancountypa.org/other_elected_officials/prothonotary_and_clerk_of_courts/index.php
- **Potter County**
 - <https://pottercountypa.net/post.php?pid=12>
- **Venango County**
 - <https://co.venango.pa.us/276/Prothonotary-Clerk-of-Courts>
- **Warren County**
 - <https://warrencopa.com/prothonotary-clerk-of-courts/>

SOUTHEAST

- **Bucks County**
 - <https://www.patransequity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Bucks-Complete.pdf>
- **Chester County**
 - Minor
<https://www.chesco.org/DocumentCenter/View/50589/Name-Change-Minor-Judicial-Ages-0-to-17>
 - Adult
<https://www.chesco.org/DocumentCenter/View/50588/Name-Change-Adult-Judicial>
- **Delaware County**
 - <https://delcopa.gov/ojs/index.html>
- **Montgomery County**
 - <https://www.patransequity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Montgomery-complete.pdf>
- **Philadelphia County**
 - <https://www.courts.phila.gov/pdf/forms/civil/01-101A-Name-Change-Petition-Package.pdf>
 - Additional Resources:
 - <https://www.mazzonicenter.org/health-care/gender-affirming-services>

EAST

- **Berks County**
 - <https://www.patransequity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Berks-Complete.pdf>
- **Carbon County**
 - <https://www.patransequity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Carbon-Complete.pdf>
- **Lancaster County**
 - <https://www.court.co.lancaster.pa.us/DocumentCenter/View/96/Petition-for-Name-Change?bidId=>
- **Lebanon County**
 - <http://www.lebcounty.org/depts/Prothonotary/Pages/default.aspx>
- **Lehigh County**
 - <https://www.lccpa.org/selfhelp/namechange/>
- **Northampton County**
 - <https://www.nccpa.org/self-help/name-change>
- **Schuylkill County**
 - <https://www.patransequity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Schuylkill-Complete.pdf>

Forms and Financial Assistance for Eastern Pennsylvania:

<https://www.patransequity.org/legal-name-change/changing-your-name-in-pennsylvania/>

Automated forms for Northampton, Lehigh, Monroe Counties

<https://www.patransequity.org/legal-name-change/download-name-change-forms/>

CENTRAL

- **Bedford County**
 - https://www.bedfordcountypa.org/courts/prothonotary_clerk_court/index.php
- **Blair County**
 - <http://www.blairco.org/Dept/Prothonotary/Pages/default.aspx>
- **Centre County**
 - <https://www.centrecountypa.gov/384/Prothonotary-Clerk-of-Courts>

SOUTH CENTRAL

- **Adams County**
 - Minor
<http://www.adamscounty.us/Dept/CourtofCommonPleas/CourtAdministration/Documents/PetitionforChangeofNameofaMinorChild.pdf>
 - Adult
<http://www.adamscounty.us/Dept/CourtofCommonPleas/CourtAdministration/Documents/PetitionforChangeofNameofanAdult.pdf>
- **Cumberland County**
 - <https://www.ccpa.net/121/Prothonotary>
- **Dauphin County**
 - https://www.dauphincounty.org/government/publicly_elected_officials/prothonotary/index.php
- **Franklin County**
 - https://www.franklincountypa.gov/index.php?section=judicial_prothonotary-office
- **Fulton County**
 - <https://www.co.fulton.pa.us/prothonotary.php>
- **Huntingdon County**
 - <http://www.huntingdoncounty.net/Dept/CommonPleas/PCC/Pages/default.aspx>
- **Juniata County**
 - <https://www.juniataco.org/elected-officials/prothonotary/>
- **Mifflin County**
 - <http://www.co.mifflin.pa.us/dept/Prothonotary/Pages/default.aspx>
- **Perry County**
 - <https://perryco.org/departments/prothonotary/>

York County

- Minor
<https://yorkcountypa.gov/forms/download/112-name-change-form/243-minor-name-change-packet.html>
- Adult
<https://yorkcountypa.gov/forms/download/112-name-change-form/574-adult-name-change.html>

NORTHEAST

- **Bradford County**
 - <https://bradfordcountypa.org/prothonotary/>
- **Clinton County**
 - <https://www.clintoncountypa.com/government/prothonotary>
- **Columbia County**
 - <http://columbiapa.org/prothonotary/>
- **Lackawanna County**
 - <https://www.lackawannacounty.org/uploads/Forms/Name%20change%20petition%20and%20instructions.pdf>
- **Luzerne County**
 - <https://www.luzernecounty.org/DocumentCenter/View/3895/Petition-for-Adult-Name-Change-With-Instructions-PDF>
- **Lycoming County**
 - <http://www.lyco.org/Portals/1/Courts/Documents/Name%20Change%20Packet.pdf>
- **Monroe County**
 - Refer to Automated Forms link under **Eastern PA**
- **Montour County**
 - <http://www.montourco.org/Pages/Prothonotary.aspx>
- **Northumberland County**
 - <https://www.norrycopa.net/documents/courts/forms/Adult.Name.Change.Petition.pdf>
- **Pike County**
 - <https://www.pikepa.org/prothonotary>
- **Snyder County**
 - http://www.snydercounty.org/Depts/Prothonotary_Clerk_of_Courts
- **Sullivan County**
 - <https://www.sullivancounty-pa.us/offices/prothonotary>
- **Susquehanna County**
 - <http://susqco.com/Dept/Courts/Documents/Name%20Change%20instructions%20forms%20packet.final.pdf>
- **Tioga County**
 - http://www.tiogacountypa.us/Departments/Prothonotary_Clerk_of_Courts

- **Union County**
 - <https://www.unioncountypa.org/departments/prothonotary-and-clerk-of-courts/prothonotary-and-clerk-of-courts/page.aspx?id=1299>
- **Wayne County**
 - <https://waynecountypa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/713/Adult-Name-Change-PDF>
- **Wyoming County**
 - <https://wycopa.org/prothonotary/>

TRI-STATE AREA – NON-PENNSYLVANIA RESIDENTS

WEST VIRGINIA

Overview (from <http://fairnesswv.org/>, full pdf below)

- STEP 1 File the Petition for Change of Name with your county circuit courthouse*
- Name change forms and fees varies by county
 - Obtain hearing date from judge's secretary
 - Obtain and fill out fee waiver form if applicable
- STEP 2 Submit notice of name change for publication in local journal
- Obtain Order of Publication from court clerk
 - Some counties will process publication for you
 - Some counties designate a particular paper for publication
 - You will have to pay for the publication
- STEP 3 Return to the court on the date of your scheduled hearing and obtain Final Order
- STEP 4 Go to Social Security Administration to change name and gender
- Bring original copy of court order for name change
 - Bring letter signed by physician for gender marker change
 - Request new SSA card
- STEP 5 Go to DMV to get new ID/License with correct name and gender
- Bring original copy of court order for name change
 - Bring proof of name change with Social Security
 - Bring gender designation form signed by physician
 - Bring proof of identity such as birth certificate or passport
 - Request new card and pay related fee
- STEP 6 Change your information with private institutions
- Banks, retirement accounts, and other financial institutions
 - Creditors such as credit card companies and loan servicers
 - Employers or currently attended school
 - Insurance carriers
- STEP 7 Apply to change your Birth Certificate with correct name and gender

Links and Additional Assistance

- **Minors**

- <https://www.lawv.net/Resources/Self-Help-Library/Individual-Rights/Changing-Your-Childs-Name>
- <https://eforms.com/name-change/wv/#MinorNameChange>
- <https://www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/id/NameChangesforMinors/NCTE%20Minor%20Name%20Change%20West%20Virginia.pdf>

- **Adults**
 - <https://www.lawv.net/Resources/Self-Help-Library/Individual-Rights/Changing-Your-Name-Adults>
 - <https://eforms.com/name-change/wv/#AdultNameChange>
- **General**
 - <https://transequality.org/documents/state/west-virginia>
 - <http://fairnesswv.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/WV-Name-Gender-Change-Guide.pdf>

OHIO

(As of December 2020, Ohioans are able to have the gender marker on their birth certificates)

- *Overview (Transequality, EqualityOhio, and ACLU)*
 - <https://transequality.org/documents/state/ohio>
 - <https://equalityohio.org/legal-clinic/trans-know-your-rights/>
 - <https://www.acluohio.org/trans/gender-name-change-id>
- *Instructions for Minors*
 - <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/id/NameChangesforMinors/NCTE%20Minor%20Name%20Change%20Ohio.pdf>
 - https://equitashealth.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Name-and-Gender-Change-Guide_Minors.pdf (2018)

MARYLAND

- *Overview (Transequality, TranslawDC, Whitman-Walker Health, TransLAW, Freestate Justice)*
 - <https://transequality.org/documents/state/maryland#:~:text=In%20order%20to%20update%20the,days%20of%20the%20name%20change.>
 - <https://www.translawdc.org/resources/maryland-guide>
 - [https://www.whitman-walker.org/Guides%20PDF/MD%20NGC%20Guide_English%20\(09-12-2018\).pdf](https://www.whitman-walker.org/Guides%20PDF/MD%20NGC%20Guide_English%20(09-12-2018).pdf)
- *Instructions for Minors*
 - <https://www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/id/NameChangesforMinors/NCTE%20Minor%20Name%20Change%20Maryland.pdf>
- *Frequently Asked Questions*
 - <https://freestate-justice.org/maryland-administrative-gender-change-faq/>

SECTION 4: NAME CHANGE ATTORNEYS

Stefan A. Dann, Counsel

Pronouns: He/Him

Firm: McGuireWoods LLP

<https://www.mcquirewoods.com/people/d/stefan-a-dann>

Email: sdann@mcquirewoods.com

Phone: (412) 667-7922

County Experience: Allegheny, Westmoreland, Butler, Washington

Services: Pro Bono Name Change, Sliding Scale, Limited Representation

Notes:

Stefan works with families that do not qualify for pro bono representation through the Name Change Project. He takes a flexible approach and will work with clients or families to find a solution that works for each person or family. He typically offers pro bono representation outside of the Name Change Project.

Contact: Happy to have people reach out to me and communicate with them directly.

Kathleen D. Schneider, Attorney/CPA

Pronouns: She/Her

Firm: Law Offices of Kathleen D. Schneider

www.kdschneiderlawoffice.com

Address:

Regent Square Professional Building
1227 South Braddock Ave
Pittsburgh, PA 15218

Email: office@kdschneider.law

Phone: (412) 371-8831

Fax: (412) 247-4037

County Experience: Allegheny, Washington, Westmoreland, Beaver, Butler

Services: Cost based on individual needs. (Estimated \$500 for joint Name and Gender Change)

Diane E. Clark, Attorney

Pronouns: She/Her

Firm: Law Office of Diane E. Clark

Address:

60 W Chapel Ridge Rd
Pittsburgh, PA 15238-1828

Phone: (412) 963-8857

County Experience: Allegheny

Services: Estimated \$500 for joint Name and Gender Change

Sam Hens-Greco, Attorney

Pronouns: He/Him

Firm: Cole & Hens-Greco, P.C.

Email: samhensgreco@gmail.com

Phone: (412) 391-0800

Address:

429 4th Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

County Experience: Allegheny

Services: Estimated \$1500 for joint Name and Gender Change

Nicholas Ripley

Pronouns: They/Them

Firm: Hugh Lane Legal

<https://hughlane.org>

Address:

925 Brighton Rd
Pittsburgh, PA 15233

Email: nick@hughlane.org

County Experience: Allegheny

Services: Pro bono LGBTQ+ legal services for low-income applicants

Notes:

Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation offers in-house LGBTQ+ legal services with referrals starting in May 2021. Primary services provided will include eviction defense, utility services restoration, public benefits assistance, and civil expungement of criminal records.

Contact: Direct email is fine. Online intake will be up soon (May 2021)

Additional Resources

Allegheny County Bar Association – LGBT Rights Committee

<https://www.acba.org/committees-divisions-sections/lgbt-rights-committee>

The LGBT Rights Committee brings together lawyers, judges, law professors, law students, and other legal professionals interested in addressing discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity and expression and advancing equality for sexual minority persons and their families. The Committee seeks to create educational, networking, and mentoring opportunities for LGBT individuals and their allies. The Committee will monitor, make recommendations, and conduct educational programming on issues and developments in the law having an impact on LGBT people in the public and in the legal profession.

University of Pittsburgh School of Law (Pitt Law) - OUTLaw

<https://www.law.pitt.edu/student-resources/student-organizations/pitt-law-outlaw>

OUTLaw's mission is to create a supportive community within the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and to raise awareness of law-related issues specific to the LGBTQ community. In order to achieve that mission, OUTLaw coordinates professional development activities, educational programs, and social events geared towards LGBTQ students and allies at Pitt Law