

# How to Change Your Name (6 steps)

1. Complete Petition for Change of Name
2. Obtain Fingerprints, if Required
3. File Paperwork at Courthouse
4. Publish Notice of Hearing
5. Obtain Certificate of No Judgments
6. Attend Hearing

## 1. Complete Petition for Change of Name

Pennsylvania does not have official statewide name change forms. Some county court systems offer a name change form for use in that county, which may be obtained from the court system's website, or in some cases exclusively from the courthouse. For counties without a specified form, you may use the Petition for Change of Name Form on this page.

In some counties, the petition will contain several forms within it, including an **Order** and a **Decree**, which will ultimately be signed by a judge. Have these ready when you visit the courthouse later on in the process.

## 2. Obtain Fingerprints

Pennsylvania law requires that a name change applicant's fingerprints be provided to the State Police before an application can be approved.<sup>[2]</sup> The cost of this is to be paid by the applicant, and the applicant should obtain a fingerprint card to have ready to include with the application.

Visit your local police department and get your fingerprints taken. The department will provide you with a fingerprint card. In some counties, you can take the card with you to the courthouse when you file the application; in others, you need to use the fingerprints to independently obtain a background check, and cannot advance in the process until you have received the results of the background check.

## 3. File Paperwork at Courthouse

Bring the completed **Petition for Change of Name Form** to the county's court of common pleas. Bring the following items with you:

- A copy of your birth certificate
- A copy of your social security card
- A state-issued photo identification card
- A fingerprint card or the results of your background check, depending on the county

You will need to pay the filing fee, which varies by county. You may also need a **Civil Cover Sheet**, a **Court Administration Cover Sheet**, a **State Cover Sheet**, or some combination of the

three. The court clerk will be able to provide you with the necessary forms. Make copies of all of the forms before providing them to the clerk.

After you file, the court clerk will provide you with a hearing date for your petition. The hearing will take place at least one month, but no more than three months, after you file.<sup>[3]</sup> In some counties, an Order of Publication Form may be included in the **Petition for Change of Name** packet, and will be filled out at this time, and addressed in the following step.

#### **4. Publish Notice of Hearing**

Pennsylvania requires name change applicants to inform the public of their intent. This is done by publishing a **Notice of Hearing** in two newspapers serving the county where you reside.<sup>[4]</sup> You can ask the court to waive the notice requirement and seal your cases' s proceedings if publication would jeopardize your safety.<sup>[5]</sup>

One of the papers must be the one designated by the county as the paper of record for legal notices. (The court clerk can inform you which paper this is.) The other may be in a paper of your choosing, but must be a newspaper of general circulation; the court clerk may have a list of newspapers that qualify.

The court may provide you with a notice form that you can give to the newspapers. If not, you can use a Publication Notice Form. Once the newspapers have accepted the notice and printed it, ask them for proof of publication.

#### **5. Obtain Certificate of No Judgments**

To get a name change in Pennsylvania, you must prove that you have no outstanding judgments or liens pending against you.<sup>[6]</sup> To do this, you must obtain a **Certificate of No Judgments** from each county in the state where you have resided within the last five years.

In some counties, the court clerk may be able to do this for you in the county where you reside; in others, it will be up to you. Regardless, you will need to obtain the certificates for each county where you previously lived. Counties have different procedures for maintaining the records needed to provide a certificate, but common agencies you may need to contact include:

- Clerk of Court
- Recorder of Deeds
- Register of Wills

Do not obtain your judgment certificates more than 30 days before the hearing date, otherwise they will become void.

#### **6. Attend Hearing**

Bring your proof of publication, **Certificate of No Judgments**, and, if you have been provided with one, a Decree for Change of Name for the judge to fill out and sign if your name change is approved. In some counties, the decree will be provided to you by mail after the hearing.

Some counties may also schedule a hearing conference ahead of the hearing date to make sure all requirements are met. If needed, additional certified copies of decree can be obtained from the court clerk or the Prothonotary. Certified copies of the **Decree for Change of Name** can be used to update your name with various state and federal agencies.

## Driver's License

To update your name on your driver's license, visit a local Driver License Center with the following documents:

- Non-Commercial Driver's License Application (DL-80 or DL-143 if expiring in the next six months)
- Certified or original copy of proof of name change (marriage certificate, divorce decree, or court order)

You may be required to present your Social Security Card as well as two other documents with your new name on it. Fees for updating your name with the DMV are \$39.50 for a driver's license.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Voter Registration

Updating your voter registration after a name change can be completed in one of the following ways:

- **Online:** Go to [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com) and click "Update Your Registration." You will be asked a series of questions and you will have to have a driver's license or ID with your new name on it.
  - **In-person:** Visit your county's elections office and register in person. Make sure to bring a valid ID with your new name on it.
  - **By Mail:** Complete the Pennsylvania Voter Registration Application and send it by mail to your county's elections office.
-

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF \_\_\_\_\_, PENNSYLVANIA

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Address*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*City, State & Zip Code*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Telephone Number*

**IN THE MATTER OF  
PETITION FOR CHANGE OF  
NAME OF**

:  
:  
:  
:  
:  
:  
:  
:

**NO.** \_\_\_\_\_

**PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME**

**TO THE HONORABLE, THE JUDGES OF SAID COURT:**

The Petition of \_\_\_\_\_, Petitioner, respectfully  
represents:

1. Petitioner, \_\_\_\_\_, is seeking a change of  
name for the following reasons:

2. Petitioner has resided at the following address(es):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

for \_\_\_\_\_ years prior to filing of this petition.

3. There are no judgments or decrees of like character of record against Petitioner.

**WHEREFORE**, Petitioner respectfully requests this Court, pursuant to the Act of December 16, 1982, P.L. 1309, No. 295, Section 2, 54 Pa. Cons. Stat. Section 702, for the following:

- a. To fix a hearing on this Petition;
- b. To direct that notice be given of this Petition and hearing; and,
- c. To enter a decree changing the Petitioner's name from  
\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

This Petition for Change of Name is respectfully submitted by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Please print name)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Petitioner*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF \_\_\_\_\_, PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE MATTER OF  
PETITION FOR CHANGE OF  
NAME OF

:  
:  
:  
:  
:  
:

NO. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**VERIFICATION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, Petitioner herein, hereby verify that the information contained in the Petition for Change of Name is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. This verification is made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa. C.S. §4904 relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Petitioner

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF \_\_\_\_\_, PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE MATTER OF  
PETITION FOR CHANGE OF  
NAME OF

\_\_\_\_\_

:  
:  
:  
:  
:  
:  
:

NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**ORDER FOR PUBLICATION**

AND NOW, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, on motion of the above named Petitioner, it is **ORDERED** and **DECREED** that the within Petition for Change of Name be heard on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, in the Courtroom of \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_, and that notice of the filing of the within petition and of the aforesaid date of hearing be published in \_\_\_\_\_ and a paper of general circulation.

**BY THE COURT:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
J.

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF \_\_\_\_\_, PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE MATTER OF  
PETITION FOR CHANGE OF  
NAME OF

:  
:  
:  
:  
:  
:

NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTICE OF NAME CHANGE**

**NOTICE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, the Petition for Change of Name, filed by Petitioner,  
\_\_\_\_\_, was filed in the above-named Court,  
praying for a decree to change his/her name to \_\_\_\_\_.

The Court has fixed \_\_\_\_\_, at  
\_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_ .m., in \_\_\_\_\_, Pa.,  
as the time and place for the hearing of said Petition, when and where all persons  
interested may appear and show cause, if any they have, why the prayer of the said  
petition should not be granted.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Petitioner



IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF \_\_\_\_\_, PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE MATTER OF  
PETITION FOR CHANGE OF  
NAME OF

:  
:  
:  
:  
:  
:

NO. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**DECREE FOR CHANGE OF NAME**

AND NOW, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, on hearing of the within Petition, and on motion of Petitioner, and on presentation of proof of publication of notice as required by law together with proof that there are no judgments or decrees of record or any other matter of like effect against the petitioner, and it appearing that there is no legal objection to the granting of the prayer of the petition,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED and DECREED that the name of the Petitioner be and is hereby changed to \_\_\_\_\_.

BY THE COURT:

\_\_\_\_\_  
J.

**PUBLICATION NOTICE**

**(Please publish the information below the dotted line.)**

.....

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Petition has been filed in the Court of Common Pleas of \_\_\_\_\_ County, Pennsylvania, seeking to change the name of (1) \_\_\_\_\_ to (6) \_\_\_\_\_. A hearing on the Petition will be held on (8) \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_.m. in Courtroom No. \_\_\_ at the \_\_\_\_\_ County Courthouse, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Pennsylvania, at which time any persons interested may attend and show cause, if any, why the Petition should not be granted.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Petitioner (Print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone No.

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
CIVIL ACTION - LAW

IN RE: CHANGE OF NAME OF :  
(1) \_\_\_\_\_ : No.  
:

**DECREE FOR CHANGE OF NAME**

AND NOW, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, on hearing of the within Petition and on motion of Petitioner, and on presentation of proof of publication of notice as required by law together with proof that there are no judgments or decrees of record or any other matter of like effect against the Petitioner, and it appearing that there is no legal objection to the granting of the prayer of the Petition,

IT IS ORDERED AND DECREED that the name of the Petitioner is hereby changed to the name of (6)\_\_\_\_\_.

BY THE COURT:

\_\_\_\_\_  
J.

cc: Petitioner

# Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

Court of Common Pleas  
Civil Cover Sheet



County \_\_\_\_\_

*For Prothonotary Use Only:*

Docket No: \_\_\_\_\_

The information collected on this form is used solely for court administration purposes. This form does not supplement or replace the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law or rules of court.

SECTION A

<b>Commencement of Action:</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Complaint	<input type="checkbox"/> Writ of Summons	<input type="checkbox"/> Petition	<input type="checkbox"/> Declaration of Taking
<input type="checkbox"/> Transfer from Another Jurisdiction			
Lead Plaintiff's Name: _____		Lead Defendant's Name: _____	
Are money damages requested? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Dollar Amount Requested: <input type="checkbox"/> within arbitration limits (check one) <input type="checkbox"/> outside arbitration limits	
Is this a <i>Class Action Suit</i> ? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Is this an <i>MDJ Appeal</i> ? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Name of Plaintiff/Appellant's Attorney: _____			
<input type="checkbox"/> Check here if you have no attorney (are a Self-Represented [Pro Se] Litigant)			

SECTION B

<p><b>Nature of the Case:</b> Place an "X" to the left of the <u>ONE</u> case category that most accurately describes your <b>PRIMARY CASE</b>. If you are making more than one type of claim, check the one that you consider most important.</p>		
<p><b>TORT</b> (do not include Mass Tort)</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Intentional <input type="checkbox"/> Malicious Prosecution <input type="checkbox"/> Motor Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Nuisance <input type="checkbox"/> Premises Liability <input type="checkbox"/> Product Liability (does not include mass tort) <input type="checkbox"/> Slander/Libel/ Defamation <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ _____	<p><b>CONTRACT</b> (do not include Judgments)</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Buyer Plaintiff <input type="checkbox"/> Debt Collection: Credit Card <input type="checkbox"/> Debt Collection: Other _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Dispute: Discrimination <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Dispute: Other _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ _____	<p><b>CIVIL APPEALS</b></p> Administrative Agencies <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Elections <input type="checkbox"/> Dept. of Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Statutory Appeal: Other _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning Board <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ _____
<p><b>MASS TORT</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco <input type="checkbox"/> Toxic Tort - DES <input type="checkbox"/> Toxic Tort - Implant <input type="checkbox"/> Toxic Waste <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ _____	<p><b>REAL PROPERTY</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Ejectment <input type="checkbox"/> Eminent Domain/Condemnation <input type="checkbox"/> Ground Rent <input type="checkbox"/> Landlord/Tenant Dispute <input type="checkbox"/> Mortgage Foreclosure: Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Mortgage Foreclosure: Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Partition <input type="checkbox"/> Quiet Title <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ _____	<p><b>MISCELLANEOUS</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Common Law/Statutory Arbitration <input type="checkbox"/> Declaratory Judgment <input type="checkbox"/> Mandamus <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Domestic Relations <input type="checkbox"/> Restraining Order <input type="checkbox"/> Quo Warranto <input type="checkbox"/> Replevin <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ _____
<p><b>PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY</b></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Dental <input type="checkbox"/> Legal <input type="checkbox"/> Medical <input type="checkbox"/> Other Professional: _____ _____		