



## ACCESS Center Name and Gender Change A-Z

### THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE FILING FOR NAME CHANGE

#### **Q: Why would I need to file a name change?**

**A:** Common reasons include:

- Your U.S. government-issued identification documents (birth certificate, social security card, U.S. passport, DMV driver's license or identification card) have different names listed and you want the names listed on all your legal documents to be consistent.
- You want to use a different name other than your current legal name.
- You want to change your name to conform to your gender identity.
- You want to change your name for personal reasons.

#### **Q: I am applying for a Real ID and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is requiring I provide a court order to show what my current legal name is. Why?**

**A:** DMV may require you to provide a court order showing your legal name if your government-issued documentation have different names listed. For more information regarding the Real ID, visit <https://realid.dmv.ca.gov/real-id-fact-sheet/>.

#### **Q: Where do I file my Petition for Name Change for myself and/or for my child(ren)?**

**A:** File your Petition for Name Change in the county where you currently reside. To file in San Francisco County, you must physically reside in San Francisco and provide supporting documentation (e.g. driver's license, lease, utility bill, etc.) at the time of filing. The Civic Center Courthouse is located at 400 McAllister Street, San Francisco, CA 94102. You will be filing your documents in Room 103 at the "New Filings" window.

#### **Q: How much does it cost to file a name change?**

**A:** Please visit the court's webpage for current filing fees:

<https://www.sfsuperiorcourt.org/forms-filing/fees> If you are low income and cannot afford the filing fee, you can file a fee waiver request with the Court. For more information on fee waivers, visit <https://www.sfsuperiorcourt.org/self-help>.

Please note the filing fee does not include the newspaper publication fee. This is a separate fee charged by the newspaper.

#### **Q: I am divorced, and I want to change my name back to the legal name I was using prior to the marriage. Do I have to file a Petition for Name Change?**

**A:** You can request to restore your former name in your divorce case instead of filing a Petition for Name Change. You will need to complete form FL-395, Ex Parte Application for Restoration of Former Name After Entry of Judgment and Order available at <https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/fl395.pdf>. You will need to file this form in the county where your divorce judgment was entered. You are only able to restore to the legal name you were using prior to the marriage with this process. If you want to change your legal name to something else, you will need to file a Petition for Name Change. If your divorce judgment is from San Francisco County, you will file form FL-395 at the Civic Center Courthouse located at 400 McAllister Street, San Francisco, CA 94102. Take the original and a photocopy of the form to the Unified Family Court filing room in Room 402. You will also need to provide a self-addressed stamped envelope. The filing fee is \$20. The court will mail the order to you in 2-3 weeks from the time you file. There is an additional charge for a certified copy.

**Q: I am in the process of applying for U.S. citizenship. Can I change my name through the citizenship process?**

**A:** United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will generally require you to provide a court order showing your name was legally changed. Please visit <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/article/M-476.pdf> for further information.

**Q: Do I need to file a Petition for Name Change if I want to change my last name to my spouse's last name?**

**A:** Please contact the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office and the Social Security Administration office to inquire if will need a court order to change your last name to your spouse's last name on your driver's license or social security card.