

# HOW TO CHANGE YOUR NAME (for an Adult)

## Who can ask the court for a name change?

To change your name, you **MUST**:

- Be at least 18 years old; AND
- Have lived in Illinois for at least 6 months.

You **CAN NOT** change your name if you have been convicted of:

- A felony and have not been pardoned or you finished your sentence less than 10 years ago; OR
- Identity theft or aggravated identity theft and have not been pardoned; OR
- Felony or misdemeanor: criminal sexual abuse when the victim at the time is under 18 years of age, sexual exploitation of a child, indecent solicitation of a child, or indecent solicitation of an adult, or any other offense that requires you to register as a sex offender, and have not been pardoned.

## What forms do I need to fill out to change my name?

- **Request for Name Change:** gives the court the information needed to decide if you can change your name. A person who knows you must also sign the form.
- **Publication Notice of Court Date for Request for Name Change:** tells the public you are asking the court to change your name and is published in a newspaper for 3 weeks.
- **Order for Name Change:** is used by the judge to say your *Request for Name Change* is granted or denied.

## What costs will I need to pay to change my name?

- **Filing Fee:** to file your forms with the Circuit Clerk.
- **Publication Fee:** to put your notice in the newspaper.
- **Certified Copy Fee:** if your name change is granted and you need certified copies of the court order.

If you cannot afford these fees, you may apply for a fee waiver with the court. This is a separate set of forms you can find at:

<http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/Forms/approved/>.

## What do I do after I fill out the forms?

### Step 1: File the forms with the court where you live.

- Find the courthouse in the county where you live: [www.illinoiscourts.gov/circuitcourt/circuitmap/map1.asp](http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/circuitcourt/circuitmap/map1.asp)
- You must electronically file (e-file) court documents unless you qualify for an exemption from e-filing.
  - You will qualify for an exemption if: (1) you do not have internet or computer access at home and it would be difficult for you to travel to a place where you could use a computer, (2) you have a disability that keeps you from e-filing, or (3) you have trouble reading or speaking in English.

- Fill out a *Certification for Exemption from E-Filing* found here: [www.illinoiscourts.gov/Forms/approved/default.asp](http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/Forms/approved/default.asp).
- File the original and 1 copy of your form, and the *Certification*, with the clerk's office in person or by mail.
- To e-file, create an account with an e-filing service provider.
  - Visit <http://efile.illinoiscourts.gov/service-providers.htm> to select a service provider. Some service providers are free while others charge a processing fee.
  - For instructions on how to e-file for free with Odyssey eFileIL, see the self-help user guides here: [http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/CivilJustice/Resources/Self-Represented\\_Litigants/self-represented.asp](http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/CivilJustice/Resources/Self-Represented_Litigants/self-represented.asp)
- If you do not have access to a computer, or if you need help e-filing, take your form to the Circuit Clerk's office where you can use a public computer terminal to e-file your form.
  - You can bring your form on paper or saved on a flash drive.
  - The terminal will have a scanner and computer that you can use to e-file your form.

### Step 2: Publish your *Publication Notice of Court Date for Request for Name Change* in a newspaper in the county where you live once a week for 3 weeks in a row.

- Contact a newspaper in your county and set up publication of the notice.
- If there is no newspaper in your county, contact a convenient newspaper published in Illinois.
- Give a copy of the *Publication Notice of Court Date for Request for Name Change* to a newspaper.
- The notice must appear in a newspaper for the first time at least 6 weeks before your hearing date.
- Newspapers may charge you a publication fee.

### Step 3: Get a Certificate of Publication from the newspaper and file it with the court.

- After the notice appears in a newspaper for 3 weeks get a Certificate of Publication from the newspaper.
- Ask the newspaper how you will get the Certificate of Publication. The newspaper will either:
  - Send the Certificate directly to the Circuit Clerk;
  - Mail the Certificate to you; OR
  - Tell you to pick up the Certificate in person.
- Take the Certificate of Publication to the courthouse and file it with the Circuit Clerk before your court date.
- If the newspaper sends the Certificate directly to the Circuit Clerk, make sure it arrives before your court date and ask the newspaper to send you a copy.

### Step 4: Go to your court hearing.

- Get to the court 45 minutes before your hearing time.

Find Illinois Supreme Court approved forms at: <http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/Forms/approved/>.

- Bring these items to your court hearing:
  - Photo I.D.;
  - Stamped copies of: *Request for Name Change*, *Publication Notice of Court Date for Request for Name Change*, and *Certificate of Publication*; *Order for Name Change*; AND
  - Other papers related to your *Request* (like papers showing that at least 10 years have passed since completion and discharge of your sentence).
- Confirm the court room number and go to that room.
- Check in quietly with the judge's clerk, court assistant, or court bailiff. Wait for your name and case number to be called.
- You may be placed under oath, answer the judge's questions truthfully.
- The judge will either GRANT or DENY your *Request*. The judge will write this on the *Order* and sign it.
- File the signed *Order* with the Circuit Clerk.
- If GRANTED, get certified copies of the *Order* from the Circuit Clerk. You need a certified copy of the *Order* to change your name on records like birth certificate, social security card, and a driver's license.
- There may be a fee for the certified copies.