

INSTRUCTIONS FOR NAME CHANGE – ADULT

These standard instructions are for informational purposes only and are not meant to be legal advice about your specific case. If you choose to represent yourself, you are bound by the same procedures and rules as an attorney. These forms are intended for an adult wishing to change her/his name. If you wish to change the name of a child, you should use other forms and there may be different procedures involved.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Any person wishing to change his or her name may file a petition in the District Court in the county in which the person resides so long as that person has been a bona fide resident of that county for at least **two (2) years** before filing the petition for a name change.
2. You may change your first name, middle name, and/or your last name.
3. You cannot change your name to avoid legal obligations, or to harm or defraud another person.
4. A legal notice of your Petition for Name Change must be published once a week for four (4) consecutive weeks in a local newspaper, which will add cost to the process of your name change. Before filing paperwork you should be sure that you have all the money you will need to complete the process. You should call the newspaper and ask the cost of filing a Legal Notice for four consecutive weeks (costs differ from newspaper to newspaper) and have that money available before you file your petition.
5. For additional information, please review W.S. 1-25-101 through 1-25-103.

NOTE FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: Any information placed in a name change file will be accessible to the public. However, you may request certain information be kept confidential, such as your address, city or state of residence and other information identifying your residence by filing a motion at any point during the proceedings. If the order is granted, you *will not* be required to provide notice by publication. A motion for domestic violence victims to request confidentiality of this information is included in the available forms.

NOTE FOR IMMIGRANTS: You do not have to be a citizen of the United States to have your name changed, but you must contact the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service, www.uscis.gov, to determine any special requirements they may have.

FEES

A filing fee of \$70.00-100.00 is required. Call the local court clerk in your county for the exact amount. You will also need to pay the newspaper for the legal publication of your name change, which may be substantial.

FORMS

Read these instructions carefully to determine what forms you may need, as you may need all or some of the listed forms. Check with the District Court where you plan to file your case to determine if they have any special requirements.

STEPS TO FILING YOUR CASE

Step 1: Complete the cover sheet, petition and notice forms.

- **Civil Cover Sheet**
- **Verified Petition for Adult Change of Name:**
 - ✓ You can leave the case number blank. The court clerk will give you a case number when you file the Petition.
 - ✓ Where the forms ask for your **current** full name, give your current first, middle and last names.
 - ✓ Where the forms ask for your **desired** full name, write your new first, middle, and last names.
 - ✓ For your physical address, give your complete physical address including street number, city and county of residence. Do not give just a P.O. box.
 - ✓ For your place of birth, give the city, county, state, and country of birth.
 - ✓ After your signature, print your name and give a valid telephone number and mailing address (you can give your P.O. box here).
 - ✓ The “Verification” part of the form **must be signed in the presence of a Court Clerk or Notary Public.**
- **Notice of Publication for Change of Name**
 - ✓ Fill out the top portion, but **leave the dates blank**. The newspaper will give you these dates.

For victims of domestic abuse:

- **Motion for Entry of an Order Providing for Confidentiality**
 - ✓ You should attach a copy of any protection order you have in place. If you do not have a protection order in place, you must fill-out the affidavit described below.
- **Affidavit in Support of Motion for Confidentiality (if you do not have a protection order).**
 - ✓ Fill-out this form if you do not have a protection order in place.
 - ✓ You must explain to the court why you are a victim of domestic abuse, and why you think it might happen again if you do not get a confidentiality order.
- **Order Providing for Confidentiality**
 - ✓ Fill out the top portion only. The Judge will complete the rest of the order.

Step 2: File your forms with the Clerk of District Court.

Make a copy of the forms. Take the originals and copies to the Clerk of District Court's office in the county where you live. A directory of district courts can be found here:

<http://www.courts.state.wy.us/DistrictCourtDirectory.aspx>

You will need to pay the filing fee. You can call the District Court Clerk's office to find out the fee amount (usually \$70-100).

The Clerk's office will date stamp your petition and will give you a case number. *You must include the case number on any other papers you file in this case.*

Step 3: File your *Notice of Publication* with the local newspaper.

Note to Domestic Violence Victims: If the Court has granted your Order Providing for Confidentiality, you do not have to publish a notice in the newspaper. You can skip this step and go to step 4 to finish your case. Your Court may or may not require you to schedule a hearing.

After you file with the court, you will take a copy of the filed petition and notice to your local newspaper office. The newspaper must publish notice of your name change request in a local newspaper for four (4) consecutive weeks. You will have to pay a publication fee. You can call your local newspaper to find out the publication fee.

When the four weeks are finished, the newspaper will mail you an *Affidavit of Publication*, which verifies that the notice was published as required. Make a copy of this affidavit.

Step 4: Finish your case

You must wait **30 days after the last publication date** before you can finish the process.

If no one filed an objection, you must fill-out:

- **Order Granting Change of Name**
 - ✓ Fill out everything except the **date and the signature** where the Judge will sign the order.

Take the *Order* **and** the *Affidavit of Publication* (that you received from the newspaper) to the Clerk's office.

If the Judge determines that the name change is proper, the Judge will sign the order and the Clerk's office will mail you the Judge's order with your new name.

Step 5: Requesting a Hearing Date

Some Judges may require you to schedule a hearing even if no one files an objection. The Clerk will tell you if a hearing is required. Your court may have forms to request a hearing. If not, you can fill out these forms:

- **Request to Set Hearing**
- **Notice of Hearing**
 - ✓ The court clerk or judicial assistant will fill in the date, time and Judge for the hearing.

You will file the forms with the court. Individual courts have differing policies on scheduling, so it is important to contact the court where your case is filed to determine when to appear in front of the judge. You may need to send notice of the hearing to anyone the Judge or Clerk instructs.

If someone filed an objection, you will have to schedule a hearing to prove that your name change is proper. Your court may have forms to request a hearing. If not, you may fill out these forms:

- **Request to Set Hearing**
- **Notice of Hearing**
 - ✓ The court clerk or judicial assistant will fill in the date, time and Judge for the hearing.

You will file the forms with the court. Individual courts have differing policies on scheduling, so it is important to contact the court where your case is filed to determine when to appear in front of the judge.

You will need to send the notice of the hearing to the person(s) who made the objection and to anyone else the Judge or Clerk instructs.

*If someone files an objection, **you should strongly consider speaking to a lawyer.** You can get information about finding a lawyer at: www.legalhelpwy.org.*

Step 6: To prepare for the hearing, you should bring:

- **Order Granting Change of Name**, completed except for the date and Judge's signature, and
- The *Affidavit of Publication* the newspaper gave you.

The court may ask to review your **Order Granting Change of Name** before the hearing, so have that document prepared before the hearing, along with one copy.

Step 7: Instructions for the hearing:

When the Judge or court clerk calls your case, you will be asked if you are ready to proceed. You must tell the court that you are ready and would like to testify. Make sure to speak clearly.

You will be asked to take the stand and the Judge will give you an oath to tell the truth. You are then ready to go forward with your case.

Be prepared to testify to the following:

1. My name is (current full name)_____.

2. I have lived in (city) _____,(county)_____ County, Wyoming since (date) _____, which is at least two years before I filed this petition to change my name.

3. I wish to change my name from

(current full name) _____, my current name, to

(desired full name) _____, my new name.

4. I am changing my name for the following reason(s):

5. I ask the court to take judicial notice of the Affidavit of Publication.

6. I have nothing further your Honor.

The Judge may ask you some additional questions. You must answer truthfully. Click here for more information about preparing for your day in court.

Step 8: After the Hearing

If the Judge determines that the name change is proper, the Judge will sign the order and the Judge or clerk will give or mail you the Judge’s order with your new name.

It is your responsibility to notify all interested people, businesses, employers, schools, etc. of your new name. You may be required to provide them with a certified copy of the Order granting your name change. Certified copies of court orders can be obtained by the court clerk's office for a fee.

Recommended Steps:

1. Get new identification cards.

After you change your name, it is important that you get new identification documents. Each organization will have its own process for updating records. **The first thing you'll want to do is update your Social Security card and driver's license or I.D.** with your new name so you can show them to other agencies along with the court order granting your name change. Places you may need to contact for new identification cards:

- Social Security Administration (Social Security Card)
- Wyoming Department of Transportation (driver's license and I.D. card)
- WY Secretary of State (voter registration)
- U.S. State Department (passports)

2. Notify other agencies and organizations, such as:

- Employers
- Schools
- Insurance companies
- Doctor, dentist, pharmacist
- Banks and other financial institutions
- Utility companies (telephone, cable, gas, electric, etc.)
- State and federal tax authorities
- Social service or benefit programs

3. Update important papers.

You should also think about important papers that have your name on them, like titles to motor vehicles or real estate, a will, health care directive, power of attorney, etc. You may want to update those documents with your new name to avoid any confusion in the future.