



How to Ask the Court to Change the Name of Your Minor Child Under the Age of 18

Superior Court of New Jersey - Law Division - Civil Part

Who Should Use This Packet?

You can use this packet to ask for a court order to change the name of your child if your child is under the age of 18.

Note: Do not use this packet if you want to correct a mistake on a birth certificate or marriage license (for example, incorrect or misspelled name or misstatement of gender). You should contact the **State Registrar of Vital Statistics** directly regarding these changes.

Note: If the minor, either parent, or guardian has been involved in a Family Part case within the past three years, the matter will be transferred to the Family Part.

Note: These materials have been prepared by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts for use by self-represented litigants. The guides, instructions, and forms will be periodically updated as necessary to reflect current New Jersey statutes and court rules. The most recent version of the [forms](#) will be available at the county courthouse or on the Judiciary's Internet site njcourts.gov. However, you are ultimately responsible for the content of your court papers.

Completed forms are to be submitted to the county where you are filing your case. A list of [Superior Court Offices](#) is provided at the customer counter or at njcourts.gov

Things to Think About Before You Represent Yourself in Court

Try to Get a Lawyer

The court system can be confusing and it is a good idea to get a lawyer if you can. The law, the proofs necessary to present your case, and the procedural rules governing cases in the Law Division, Civil Part are complex. Since valuable claims or potentially heavy judgments may be at stake, most litigants appearing in the Law Division, Civil Part have a lawyer. If you are being sued, please contact your insurance company to see if they might provide a lawyer for you. Most likely your opponent will be represented by a lawyer. It is recommended that you make every effort to obtain the assistance of a lawyer. If you cannot afford a lawyer, you may contact the legal services program in your county to see if you qualify for free legal services. Their telephone number can be found online or in your local yellow pages under “Legal Aid” or “[Legal Services](#).”

If you do not qualify for free legal services and need help in locating an attorney, you can contact the bar association in your county. That number can also be found in your local yellow pages. Most county bar associations have a Lawyer Referral Service. The County Bar Lawyer Referral Service can supply you with the names of attorneys in your area willing to handle your particular type of case and will sometimes consult with you at a reduced fee. There are also organizations of minority lawyers throughout New Jersey, as well as organizations of lawyers who handle specialized types of cases. Ask your county court staff for a list of lawyer referral services that include these organizations.

If you decide to proceed without an attorney, these materials explain the procedures that must be followed to have your papers properly filed and considered by the court. These materials do not provide information on the law governing your claims or defenses; information on how to conduct pretrial discovery; information on alternative dispute resolution procedures, such as arbitration or mediation, that may be available or required in your case; information on the kinds of evidence you need to prove your claims or defense at trial; or information on other procedural and evidentiary rules governing civil law suits.

What You Should Expect If You Represent Yourself

While you have the right to represent yourself in court, you should not expect special treatment, help or attention from the court. The following is a list of some things court staff can and cannot do for you. Please read it carefully before asking court staff for help.

- We *can* explain and answer questions about how the court works.
- We *can* tell you what the requirements are to have your case considered by the court.
- We *can* give you some information from your case file.
- We *can* provide you with samples of court forms that are available.
- We *can* provide you with guidance on how to fill out forms.
- We *can* usually answer questions about court deadlines.
- We *cannot* give you legal advice. Only your lawyer can give you legal advice.
- We *cannot* tell you whether or not you should bring your case to court.
- We *cannot* give you an opinion about what will happen if you bring your case to court.
- We *cannot* recommend a lawyer, but we can provide you with the telephone number of a local lawyer referral service.
- We *cannot* talk to the judge for you about what will happen in your case.
- We *cannot* let you talk to the judge outside of court.
- We *cannot* change an order issued by a judge.

Keep Copies of All Papers

Make and keep copies of all completed forms and documents related to your case.

Overview

The following is a brief overview of the process for having your child’s name changed by a court. The details follow. There are three basic steps that you must take to have your child’s name changed by the court:

1. You must fill out forms to send to the court with a filing fee. (If you are changing the names of multiple family members, there is only one fee.) The forms are contained in this packet and include a complaint, an order fixing the date of hearing, a final judgment and a case information statement.
2. When the court returns the complaint and the order fixing the date of hearing to you, the forms will contain a docket number and will tell you in what newspaper you must publish the date of hearing. You must contact the newspaper to have the order fixing the date for the hearing published at least two weeks before the hearing date, and you must notify other interested parties. You will have to provide the court with proof that the appropriate parties have been notified of your intent to change your child’s name.
3. After you appear in court at the hearing, you will have to publish the final judgment in the newspaper. You will also have to send copies of the certified final judgment to the Department of Treasury and the Registrar of Vital Statistics. If your child has a driver’s license, you will have to present a copy of the certified final judgment in person to the Motor Vehicle Commission.

DEFINITIONS OF WORDS USED IN THIS PACKET

Affidavit of Publication - An affidavit of publication is a sworn statement made by a newspaper stating that the newspaper has published the information regarding your name change.

Certification - A certification is a written statement you make when you file your papers with the court in which you state that all the information contained in the papers is true to the best of your knowledge.

Civil Case Information Statement (CIS) The CIS is a form that summarizes your case for the court. Court rules require that a CIS be filed with a verified complaint. The pro se version of the **CIS** which is to be used with this packet can be found on our [Represent Yourself in Court \(Pro Se\) Self-Help Resource Center](#).

Docket Number - A docket number is the number the court assigns to your case so that it may be identified and located easily. Once you have a docket number, you must include it on all your communications with the court.

File - To file means to give the appropriate forms and fee to the court to begin the court’s consideration of your case.

Final Judgment - The final judgment is a document signed by the judge which orders the name to be changed.

Order Fixing Date of Hearing - An order fixing the date of hearing is a signed paper from the judge indicating the date when you must come to court on your case and stating the name of the newspaper in which you will have to publish your hearing date.

Proof of Mailing - Proof of mailing is the green card you get back from the Post Office that proves that the material you sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, was received by the person to whom you sent it.

Verified Complaint - A verified complaint is a document in which you tell the court the facts of your case and state what relief you want the court to give you. You certify that the information is true to the best of your knowledge.

The numbered steps listed below tell you what forms you will need to fill out and what to do with them. Each form should be typed or printed clearly on 8 ½ “x 11” white paper only. Forms may not be filed on a different size or color paper.

Steps to Obtain a Court Order to Change Your Name

STEP 1: Fill out the *Verified Complaint* (Form A).

The *Verified Complaint* (Form A) tells the court what your child’s name is, what you want to change it to, and why you want it changed. If your child has ever been convicted of a crime, or if there are charges pending against your child, you must include this information in your *Verified Complaint*. If the minor, either parent or guardian has been involved in a Family Part case within the last three years, you must advise the court of that fact. If you have the information, you should provide the name of the case, the docket number, and the name of the county where the case was heard. The case will then be transferred to the Family Part. You must sign the certification which states that the information in the complaint is true to the best of your knowledge.

STEP 2: Fill out the *Order Fixing Date of Hearing* and the *Final Judgment* Forms (Forms B and C).

Enter the information requested. Note that there are places on the *Order Fixing Date of Hearing* and *Final Judgment* that the court will complete.

STEP 3: Fill out the *Civil Case Information Statement* (CIS) (Form F).

This form summarizes your case for the court. The case type number for a name change is 151. The prose version of the CIS which is to be used with this packet can be found on our [Represent Yourself in Court \(Pro Se\) Self-Help Resource Center](#).

STEP 4: Make a check or money order payable to *Treasurer, State of New Jersey* in the amount of \$250.00.

This is the fee for filing your papers.

Note: If you are changing the names of multiple family members, the \$250.00 fee covers all name change applications.

STEP 5: Check your completed forms and make copies.

Check your forms and make sure they are complete. Remove all instruction sheets. Make sure you have signed all the forms wherever necessary. You also need to make two copies of each form. One copy

will be sent to the court; the other is for your records.

Checklist - In Step 6 you will be directed to mail your documents to the court. The following checklist will help insure your package is complete:

— The original of each of the forms you filled out: *Verified Complaint* (Form A), *Order Fixing Date of Hearing* (Form B), *Final Judgment* (Form C) and the *Civil Case Information Statement* (Form F).

— One copy of each of these forms: *Verified Complaint*, *Order Fixing Date of Hearing*, *Final Judgment* and the *Civil Case Information Statement*.

— The filing fee in the amount of \$250. It must be a check or money order payable to the *Treasurer, State of New Jersey*.

— A stamped envelope addressed to yourself so that the court will be able to return the forms to you. Be sure to include adequate postage.

STEP 6: Mail or deliver the forms to the court.

You may mail or deliver to the court the original and one copy of all the forms: *Verified Complaint* (Form A), *Order Fixing Date of Hearing* (Form B), *Final Judgment* (Form C) and the *Civil Case Information Statement* (Form F) along with a self-addressed stamped envelope and the filing fee. The court address can be found on the Judiciary’s website, njcourts.gov. If you mail the papers, we recommend that you use certified mail, return receipt requested.

STEP 7: Review copies returned from court.

The court will return copies of the *Verified Complaint* and *Order Fixing Date of Hearing* to you. Once you receive them, there will be a *docket number* written on all the copies. The *docket number* is very important because it identifies your case. It also lets the court know how to find your case. **You must use the docket number on all future papers you send to the court about your case.** The court will fill in the date on the *Order Fixing Date of Hearing*. That is the day you will

appear before the judge to get the final judgment. The court will also indicate the name of a newspaper in which you are to have the notice of your hearing date published.

IF YOUR CHILD DOES NOT HAVE PENDING CRIMINAL OR DELINQUENT CHARGES IN NEW JERSEY, skip to Step 9.

STEP 8: If your child has criminal or delinquent charges pending, notify the State or County Prosecutor of your Application for a Name Change.

If your child has criminal or delinquent charges pending in New Jersey, you must send a copy of the *Verified Complaint* and *Order Fixing Date of Hearing* by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Prosecutor of the county where the matter is being heard. Your post office can tell you how to do this.

STEP 9: Publish the Order Fixing Date of Hearing.

In the *Order Fixing Date of Hearing* that you receive back from the court, the judge will have specified the name of a local newspaper. You must have the *Order Fixing Date of Hearing* published in the newspaper the judge chooses. It must be published in the newspaper **at least two (2) weeks before** the date of the hearing. You should talk to the newspaper about how to publish legal notices. Included in this packet as Attachment E is a sample of the newspaper notice.

STEP 10: Send Affidavit of Publication to the court.

Once you have published the *Order Fixing Date of Hearing*, the newspaper will send you an *Affidavit of Publication*, which is proof that you had the newspaper publish the *Order Fixing Date of Hearing*. You must send the original of this *Affidavit of Publication* document to the court immediately after you get it from the newspaper. Keep a copy of it for your files.

STEP 11: Notify minor child's other parent.

If you are changing the name of a child who is under the age of 18 years and the child's other parent does not reside with you, you must send a copy of the *Verified Complaint* and the *Order Fixing Date of Hearing* to the last known address of the child's other parent. This must be sent by regular mail and certified mail, return receipt requested. Your post office can tell you how to do this.

STEP 12: Complete Proof of Mailing (Form D) and send to court.

After you have mailed the required copies of the *Verified Complaint* and signed *Order Fixing Date of Hearing*, the post office will send you a green card (called a certified mail receipt) that shows the mail was delivered. Once you get it back, fill out the form called *Proof of Mailing* (Form D) and check each entity to whom you sent a copy of the complaint and order. Be sure to attach the original green certified mail receipt(s) to the original proof of mailing. State whether the regular mail sent to the minor child's other parent was returned to you as undeliverable. Send the proof of mailing to the court. Keep a copy of it for your files.

STEP 13: Appear in court on the date set by the judge for your hearing.

STEP 14: Publish the Final Judgment in the newspaper.

After the hearing, the court will record the original *Final Judgment* signed by the judge. As soon as you receive your copy of the *Final Judgment*, you must send it to be published in the newspaper chosen by the judge. However, the newspaper published version of the final judgment shall not include your social security number. The *Final Judgment* must appear in the newspaper **no more than 20 days after** the date on the judgment. After you have it published, the newspaper will send you an original *Affidavit of Publication*.

STEP 15: Send the Affidavit of Publication to the court.

As soon as you receive the *Affidavit of Publication* from the newspaper, send the original to the Court as proof that you had the newspaper publish the *Final Judgment*. Keep a copy for your records.

STEP 16: Order Two Certified Copies With a Raised Seal of the Final Judgment.

You will need a certified copy with a raised seal of the *Final Judgment* to be sent to both the Department of Treasury (Step 17) and the Registrar of Vital Statistics (Step 18). If your child has a driver's license, you must also present a *certified copy* of the *Final Judgment* in person at any Motor Vehicle Agency or Regional Service Center (Step 19). The fee for a certified copy with a raised seal is \$25.00.

STEP 17: Send a copy of the Certified *Final Judgment* to the Department of Treasury.

You must send a certified copy with a raised seal of the *Final Judgment* to the Department of Treasury **within 45 days after** the date of the Judgment. You must include a check or money order payable to the *Treasurer, State of New Jersey* in the amount of \$50. Mail the certified copy of the *Final Judgment* with the check or money order and a stamped self-addressed envelope to:

Department of Treasury
Division of Revenue
Judgment Name Change Unit
P. O. Box 453
Trenton, NJ 08646

STEP 18: Notify the Registrar of Vital Statistics of the State.

You must send a certified copy with a raised seal of the *Final Judgment* to the Registrar of Vital Statistics of the State in which your child was born. The Office of the Registrar is located in the capital city of the State in which your child was born. Check to see if the office requires a fee. If your child was born in New Jersey, the address for this office is:

Bureau of Vital Statistics
Attn: Vital Records Modifications Unit
P. O. Box 370
Trenton, NJ 08625

In New Jersey there is a \$2.00 fee to process the legal name change. There is also a \$25.00 fee if you want to receive a corrected birth certificate. Checks or money orders should be made payable to the *Treasurer, State of New Jersey*. There is a \$2.00 fee for each additional copy of the birth certificate.

STEP 19: Notify the Motor Vehicles Commission.

If your child is a licensed driver, a registered owner of a vehicle, or possesses a handicapped or non-driver identification card, you must present the *Final Judgment* in person at any Motor Vehicle Agency or Regional Service Center within two weeks of the date of the *Final Judgment*. Additional information is available at njmvc.gov regarding the list of acceptable documents to satisfy the 6 points of identification.

FORM A

Name

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Telephone Number

Superior Court Of New Jersey
Law Division

County
Docket No. _____
(To be filled in by the court)

In the Matter of the Application of:

Your Name (first, middle, last)

To Change the Name of:

Name of Minor Child (first, middle, last)

To:

Name you wish your child to assume

CIVIL ACTION
Verified Complaint Including
Certification of Plaintiff for Name
Change of Minor Child

The plaintiff, _____, whose place of residence is
(your name, first, middle, last)
_____, in the city of _____, county of
(street address) (city)
_____, in the State of New Jersey says:

- I am the parent of _____, and make this application to change
(child's name, first, middle, last)
my child's name to _____.
(name you want your child to assume)
- My child (check one) is is not a citizen of the United States of America.
- My child's social security number is _____.
- My child was born on _____, in _____.
(month, day, year) (place of birth)
- My child's other parent is named _____.
- My child is being raised by _____, and
_____.
- Since birth, my child has been identified by the following names: (first, middle, last)

- My child (check one) has has not been married.

9. There (check one) are are no unsatisfied judgments of record, or suits pending against my child, except: (enter any recorded judgments or pending suits)

10. My child (check one) has has never been convicted of a crime or delinquent behavior, and has no criminal or delinquent charges pending, except: (please supply county, municipality, nature, date of crime and/or pending charges)

11. a. I (check one) have have not been involved in a case in the Family Part in the past three years.

b. My child (check one) has has not been involved in a case in the Family Part in the past three years.

c. My child's other parent or guardian (check one) has has not been involved in a case in the Family Part in the past three years.

If the parent(s) or child **have** been involved in a Family Part case, please describe the case and, if you can, provide the name of the case, the docket number, and the county where the case was heard

12. This application (check one) is is not being made with the intent to avoid creditors or criminal prosecution or for other fraudulent purpose.

13. My child (check one) has has not made any previous applications to assume another name.

14. I desire my child to have the name of: _____
(first, middle, last)

15. I request this name change for the following reasons:

WHEREFORE, plaintiff demands judgment pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 2A:52-1 to -4*.

Signature of Plaintiff

Certification

I certify that the foregoing statements made by me are true. I am aware that if any of the foregoing statements made by me are willfully false, I am subject to punishment.

Dated

Signature of Plaintiff

FORM B

Name

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Telephone Number

Superior Court Of New Jersey
Law Division

County
Docket No. _____
(To be filled in by the court)

In the Matter of the Application of:

Your Name (first, middle, last)

To Change the Name of:

Name of Minor Child (first, middle, last)

To:

Name you wish your child to assume

CIVIL ACTION
Order Fixing Date of Hearing

Application being made to the Court by _____,
(your name, first, middle, last)
for a judgment authorizing (check one) his her minor child to assume another name and for
the entry of an order fixing a date for the hearing of such application,

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE THE COURT WILL COMPLETE

IT IS ON THIS ____ day of _____, 20 __, **ORDERED** that the ____ day of
_____, 20__, at ____ a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, at the courthouse
in the City of _____, County of _____, State of New Jersey, be fixed as the
time and place for the hearing of such application and of any objections that may be made thereto.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a notice of such application be published in
_____ once, at least two (2) weeks preceding the
date set for the hearing.

J.S.C.

NOTE: Copies of the verified complaint and order fixing the date of the hearing must be sent to the
parent of the minor child via regular mail and certified mail, and to the newspaper for publication and
served on the County Prosecutor if the minor has charges pending.

FORM C

Name

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Telephone Number

Superior Court Of New Jersey
Law Division

County
Docket No. _____
(To be filled in by the court)

In the Matter of the Application of:

Your Name (first, middle, last)

To Change the Name of:

Name of Minor Child (first, middle, last)

To:

Name you wish your child to assume

CIVIL ACTION

Final Judgment

_____, having made application to this Court by duly
(your name, first, middle, last)
verified complaint for a judgment authorizing (check one) his her minor child to assume the
name of _____, and it appearing to the Court that all the
(name you wish your child to assume)
provisions of *N.J.S.A. 2A:52-1-4* and the Current *N.J. Court Rules* relating thereto have been complied with:

IT IS ON THIS ____ day of _____, 20____, **ORDERED** and **ADJUDGED** that
(leave blank for the court to complete)
_____, who was born on _____, and whose social
(your child's name, first, middle, last) (month, day, year)
security number is _____, be and hereby is authorized to assume the name of
(your child's social security number)
_____, from and after _____, and
(name you wish your child to assume) (leave blank for the court to complete)

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE THE COURT WILL COMPLETE

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that within twenty days hereof plaintiff shall cause a copy of this Final
Judgment to be published once in _____; and within forty-
five days after entry of Judgment, plaintiff shall file proof of publication of this Final Judgment with the deputy
Clerk of the Superior Court (in which you filed your verified complaint) and a certified copy of this Final
Judgment with the Department of Treasury pursuant to the provisions of the Statute and Rules in such case made
and provided; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the published version of the final judgment shall not contain the
minor child's social security number.

Dated

J.S.C.

FORM D

Name

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Telephone Number

In the Matter of the Application of:

Your Name (first, middle, last)

To Change the Name of:

Name of Minor Child (first, middle, last)

To:

Superior Court Of New Jersey
Law Division
_____ County

Docket No. _____
(To be filled in by the court)

CIVIL ACTION
Proof of Mailing

On _____, I, the undersigned, mailed a copy of the Complaint for Name Change and Order Fixing Date of Hearing in accordance with the rules of Civil Practice and Procedure to:

(check all that apply)

the Prosecutor of _____ County, via regular mail and certified mail, return receipt requested;

the non-party parent of the minor child at his or her last known address, via certified mail, return receipt requested;

NOTE: Attached are the green return mail receipt(s) for (check all that apply)

the Prosecutor of _____ County.

the non-party parent of the minor child;

I certify that the foregoing statements made by me are true. I am aware that if any of the foregoing statements made by me are willfully false, I am subject to punishment.

Dated

Signature

ATTACHMENT E
Sample Newspaper Notice

In the Matter of the Application of:

Your Name (first, middle, last)

To Change the Name of:

Name of Minor Child (first, middle, last)

To:

Name you wish your child to assume

To Whom it May Concern,

Take notice that the undersigned will apply to _____ County Superior Court
(county where the name change action is filed)
on the ____ day of _____, 20____, at 9 o'clock in the morning at the courthouse
in the city of _____, New Jersey, for a judgment
(name of city)
authorizing _____, to assume the name of
(name of child, first, middle, last)

(name you wish your child to assume, first, middle, last)

Your name

Street address

City, State, Zip