

**WHO CAN CHANGE A NAME? HOW DIFFICULT IS THE PROCESS?**

In Washington State any person over eighteen years of age can choose and use any name he or she wishes as long as the purpose of the change in the name is not to defraud another. An example of defrauding another would be to change names to avoid paying bills or other creditors or to escape obligations such as child support. Otherwise, changing names is legal. The process to change your name is simple and straightforward. The process to change the name of you minor child (a "minor" is a person under the age of eighteen years) is a little more involved. It is the purpose of this informational brochure to explain the procedure for changing a name, either your name or the name of a minor child. **Note:** A name changed by *marriage* does not need a court order. The married name becomes the legal name. If the marriage ends, a name change may be included in the *divorce* decree, or by filing a petition for the name change.

**HOW DO I OBTAIN A COURT ORDER TO CHANGE MY NAME?**

To get a court ordered name change, you must first file a petition in the District Court of the county or the judicial district in which you live. If you live in Adams County, you may file your petition for a name change in either location of District Court:

Ritzville Office:  
210 W. Broadway Ave.  
Ritzville, WA 99169  
Tel: (509)659-1002  
Fax: (509)659-3245

Othello Office:  
425 E. Main Street  
Suite #400  
Othello, WA 99344  
Tel: (509)488-3935  
Fax: (509)488-3480

Contact the district court nearest you to file your petition or to obtain further information.

**HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO FILE FOR A NAME CHANGE?**

If you file your petition in Ritzville District Court, you will need to pay \$73.00. This must be paid in cash, or by money order or certified check. Personal checks are not acceptable for court filing fees. If you live in another county, check with that county's district court for the amount of the required fees. It may be a different amount.

**WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED TO INCLUDE IN THE PETITION FOR NAME CHANGE?**

A petition for name change should state your current full name, your requested new name, and the reasons for the change. A petition should also state that you are not changing your name for fraudulent purposes and that changing your name will not be detrimental to the interest of any other person.

**HOW DO I CHANGE THE NAME ON A BIRTH CERTIFICATE?**

Mail a certified copy of the Court order to:  
Washington State Department of Health  
Center for Health Statistics  
PO Box 47814  
Olympia, WA 98504-7814

A fee is charged to purchase a copy of the amended Birth Certificate. Contact the Center for Health Statistics at (360) 236-4300, if you have any further questions about this process. For out-of-state births, contact the Vital Records office of that state to determine that state's procedures.

**NAME CHANGE REQUIREMENTS per Ritzville District Court policy 02/21/2001**

If a person is requesting a name change for a minor child, this Court requires that the child's parent whose name it is being changed from be present for court. If unavailable due to distance problems, then a signed, notarized sworn affidavit needs to be supplied to the Court.

If the child's name is being changed to another person's last name, that person also needs to be present. The child needs to be present.

This Court is also requiring copies of the following forms if applicable:

Birth Certificate of the minor child; Copy of the divorce decree; Proof that the other parent has been served notice of the hearing  
If a person is requesting a name change for themselves, and they are over 18 years of age, again, this Court requests as much information as possible. Examples:

A copy of the divorce decree; Copy of their birth certificate; Proof of previous names, etc  
Also, if the name to be change could affect another person, that person needs to be present for court.

**RITZVILLE DISTRICT COURT, STATE OF WASHINGTON, ADAMS COUNTY**

In the Matter of : ) NO.  
 )  
 ) PETITION FOR NAME CHANGE  
 )  
\_\_\_\_\_)  
Petitioner

1. I am applying for a court order which will change:

My name from \_\_\_\_\_  
(FULL NAME)  
to \_\_\_\_\_  
(NEW NAME DESIRED)

The name of my child or ward from \_\_\_\_\_  
(FULL NAME)  
to \_\_\_\_\_  
(NEW NAME DESIRED)

2. I reside in Adams County: YES ( ) NO ( )  
I am a citizen of the United State YES ( ) NO ( )  
Are you a registered sex offender? \* YES ( ) NO ( )  
Are you under jurisdiction of the  
Department of Corrections? YES ( ) NO ( )

\*(If you are required to register, you shall submit a copy of this petition to the Adams County Sheriff and the Washington State Patrol not fewer than five days before the entry of an order granting the name change under RCW 4.24.130)

3. This application is made for the following reasons: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. This application is not made for any illegal or fraudulent purpose.

5. The change of name will not be detrimental to the interests of any other person.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the foregoing statements in this petition are true and correct.

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_  
City and State Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_