



# How Do I File a Change of Name for an Adult?

Massachusetts Trial Court  
Probate and Family Court

## STEP 1. PREPARE ALL FORMS AND GATHER DOCUMENTS

- Find the [Probate and Family Court](#) in the county where you **reside**. You will need this information to complete forms.



**Reside** is where you currently live.

- **Prepare** all documents required to file your case by using the checklist of forms and documents found at: [Probate and Family Court Petition to Change Name of Adult \(CJP 27\) | Mass.gov](#)
- **Sign** the **Petition to Change of Name Adult (CJP 27)** in the presence of a **Notary Public**.



**Notary Public** is an official who is commissioned by the state to witness documents.



**Note:** To sign in the presence of a notary, you are required to provide photo Identification. If your photo identification has a name that does not match your **legal name**, you may use a [Motion \(CJD 400\)](#) to ask the Court to waive the notarization requirement.



### What is my legal name?

#### If you were born in the United States....

In general, a US born person's legal name is the name shown on his or her U.S. birth certificate (includes hyphens and apostrophes) unless the person's name has changed based on certain events, such as a marriage or a valid court order for a name change.

#### If you were born outside of the United States....

A foreign-born person's legal name is the name shown on his or her immigration document (includes hyphens and apostrophes) unless the person's name has changed based on certain events, such as a marriage or a valid court order for a name change.

**This document gives information not legal advice. Ask a lawyer for legal advice about your situation.**



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## STEP 2. FILE THE FORMS WITH THE COURT AND PAY THE FEE

### IS THERE A COST TO CHANGE YOUR NAME?

Yes, the **fee** for filing a name change petition is:



**\$150** Filing Fee + **\$15** Surcharge Fee + **\$15** Citation Fee = **\$180** Total Filing Fee



**Note:** If you are financially unable to pay the fee go to [Indigency \(waiver of court fees\) | Mass.gov](#) to see if you qualify to have your fees waived. If you qualify, you will need to file your Affidavit of Indigency with the forms required on the checklist.



**Note:** If an entire family seeks a name change or two or more children who have the same legal parents seek a name change, a separate petition must be filed for each person whose name is seeking to be changed, but you will only have to pay one fee for the entire family (unless the filing fee is otherwise waived by the Court pursuant to G. L. c. 261).

### WHERE DO I FILE?

You **must** file the forms at the Probate and Family Court in the county where you **reside**. [Click here for a list of Probate and Family Courts.](#)



**Reside** is where you currently live.

### WHAT ARE MY FILING OPTIONS?



**Bring** the forms and documents to the courthouse in person.  
You can pay by **bank check**, **money order**, or **credit card** at the courthouse **OR**



**Mail** the forms, documents, and a **bank check** or **money order** for the entire fee to the court **OR**

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**eFileMA** File on-line (eFile) the forms, documents, and pay the fee at [www.efilema.com](http://www.efilema.com).

There is an additional fee to eFile.

**For more information on eFiling your change of name go to:**

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/probate-and-family-court-e-filing-change-of-name>

## STEP 3. SERVE THE CITATION AND PUBLISH IN THE NEWSPAPER

After you have filed your petition and all required documents, the court will give you a **Citation on Petition for Change of Name (CJP 28)**. You will be required to:

- **Publish in the Newspaper**

You will be required to publish the top section of the Citation in a **newspaper** that the court lists on page two (2) of the citation. You will need to publish at least seven (7) days **before** the return date listed on page one (1) on the Citation. [See the Sample Citation below.](#)



**Note:** If you believe there is a reason why you should not publish your name change in the newspaper, you may file a Motion ([CJD 400](#)) asking to waive publication with the court. A judge will review your request and allow or deny it.

- **Depending on your circumstances**, you may be **required** to notify additional persons or organizations. Go to [Probate and Family Court Petition to Change Name of Adult \(CJP 27\) | Mass.gov](#) for help identifying who needs to be notified of your change of name petition.



### SAMPLE CITATION

Looking at the image of the example citation below, you would contact the Nantucket Current newspaper and ask that the citation be published **before** 4/8/2023 which is 7 days **before** 4/15/23, the return day listed on the Citation.



**Return Day** is the deadline for people to object to your petition by filing an appearance with the Court.

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## IMPORTANT NOTICE

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: **Nantucket Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/15/2023.** This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.

### 1) Notice by Publication

Unless waived by the court, a copy of page 1 of this citation shall be published **ONCE** in:

Nantucket Current, Nantucket

the publication to be at least seven (7) days before the return day.

## STEP 4. FILE THE CITATION RETURN OF SERVICE WITH THE COURT

You **must** file the Citation with a completed page three (3), the **Return of Service**, with the court showing that you provided the correct notice of your name change.

You will be required to file proof that you followed the court's order. **Proof of service** may include:

- **Copy of the posting in the newspaper where the citation was published (must include the date).**



If the publication was in Massachusetts, you can print a copy of the posting in the newspaper which published your citation at:

[https://www.masspublicnotices.org/\(S\(tn1v1a2bt3agzyh4v4xlnh1p\)\)/default.aspx](https://www.masspublicnotices.org/(S(tn1v1a2bt3agzyh4v4xlnh1p))/default.aspx)

- **Return receipts for any mailing.**



### What is a Return Receipt?

If you are required to mail your petition and citation to an interested person, you will need to do so by certified and registered mail, return receipt requested. You will need to ask the Post Office to provide you with the return receipt for the mailing. You will file the return receipt (green card) with the court showing that you completed the mailing correctly.

SENDER: COMPLETE THIS SECTION	COMPLETE THIS SECTION ON DELIVERY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete items 1, 2, and 3. Also complete item 4 if Restricted Delivery is desired.</li> <li>Print your name and address on the reverse so that we can return the card to you.</li> <li>Attach this card to the back of the mailpiece, or on the front if space permits.</li> </ul>	A. Signature <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agent <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Address
1. Article Addressed to:	B. Received by (Printed Name) <input type="checkbox"/> C. Date of Delivery <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Article Number (Transfer from service label)	D. Is delivery address different from item 1? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If YES, enter delivery address below: <input type="checkbox"/> No
	3. Service Type <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Express Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Registered <input type="checkbox"/> Return Receipt for Merchandise <input type="checkbox"/> Insured Mail <input type="checkbox"/> C.O.D.
	4. Restricted Delivery? (Extra Fee) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

PG Form 3811, February 2004 Domestic Return Receipt 10095-02-M-1549

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## STEP 5. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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The court may allow your change of name without you having to appear at the courthouse **OR** you may receive a notice that a hearing will be held.

**If your change of name was handled administratively**, meaning you did not need to come to court, you will be mailed a certified Decree of Change of Name and your case is completed. If you requested your original documents back, these will be included.

**If you are required to attend a hearing**, you will receive a notice in the mail that includes a date, time, and location where you need to appear. Bring copies of all documents with you, including any proof of service to the hearing.

## WHAT DO I DO IF I NEED MORE HELP?

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[Find legal help](#)

[Contact a Court Service Center](#)

[Click here for a list of Probate and Family Court Locations.](#)

## ADDITIONAL HELPFUL LINKS

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Information from the Registry of Motor Vehicles about name changes, Real ID, and gender changes on your license:

<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/change-information-on-your-drivers-license-or-id-card>

Information on the Social Security website for changing your name on your social security card

<https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10513.pdf>

Information about changing the sex on a birth certificate

<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/amend-a-birth-certificate-following-medical-intervention-for-the-purpose-of-sex-reassignment>

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## **WHERE CAN I GO IF I WANT MORE INFORMATION ON NAME CHANGES?**

[G. L. c. 210, § 12-14](#)

[Uniform Probate and Family Court Practice XXXV: Change of Name Actions](#)

<https://www.mass.gov/name-changes>

Information on eFiling: [eFiling in Probate and Family Court](#)

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