



How Do I file to Change the Name of a Minor?

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 the **minor resides**. You will need this information to complete the forms.



Reside is where the minor currently lives.

- ✓ **Prepare** all documents required to file the minor's change of name by using the [Checklist of Forms Change of Name for a Minor](#).
- ✓ **Sign** the **Petition to Change Name of Minor (CJP 25)** in the presence of a **Notary Public**.



Note: On the Petition to Change Name of Minor, the minor is the petitioner.



Note: Any minor, who is 12 years of age or older, petitioning to have their name changed is required to sign the Petition to Change Name of Minor in the presence of a notary. If the minor does not have photo identification, you may use a [Motion \(CJD 400\)](#) to ask the court to waive the notarization requirement.



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

? What is the minor's legal name?

If they 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 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 they were born outside of the United States....

A foreign-born person's legal name is the name shown on his or her immigration document 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 THE NAME OF A MINOR?

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 minor's forms at the Probate and Family Court in the county where the minor **resides**. [Click here for a list of Probate and Family Courts.](#)



Reside is where the minor currently lives.

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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File on-line (E-File) the forms, documents, and pay the fee at www.efilema.com. There is an additional fee to eFile.

For more information on eFiling: [eFiling a Change of Name in Probate and Family Court](#).

STEP 3. SERVE THE CITATION AND PUBLISH IN THE NEWSPAPER

After you have filed all required documents, the court will give you a **Citation on Petition for Change of Name (CJP 28)**. If a family wants to change the name of 2 or more children with the same legal parents or guardians, you will only have 1 citation. For more information on how to provide correct notice, use **Instructions for Notice in Change of Name (CJP 906)**.

- **Mail to Legal Parents and Guardians**

Unless all legal parents and any court appointed guardians have signed the petition or filed assents with the court, you will need to mail a copy of the Petition and Citation to them by certified or registered mail with a [return receipt](#) requested.

- **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) of the Citation. [See the Sample Citation below](#).



Note: If you believe there is a reason why you should not publish the minor's name change in the newspaper, you may file a [Motion \(CJD 400\)](#) asking the court to waive publication. 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. If you need more help with finding out who needs to be notified of the change of name, go to: [Probate and Family Court Petition to Change Name of Minor \(CJP 25\) | Mass.gov](#)



If you were **unable** to complete the required notifications by **mail** or you do not know where a legal parent or guardian reside, you will need to file forms [Motion for Alternate Service and Affidavit of Diligent Search \(CJP 31\)](#) and [Military Affidavit \(TC0002\)](#).

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NOTE: You may be required by the court to file a [Military Affidavit \(TC0002\)](#) before a decree will enter if you have provided proper notice, but the legal parent or court-appointed guardian has not filed an answer or an assent.



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 a person to object to the minor's name change by filing an appearance with the Court.

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).**

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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.

The image shows a Domestic Return Receipt form. It is divided into two main sections: 'SENDER: COMPLETE THIS SECTION' and 'COMPLETE THIS SECTION ON DELIVERY'. The 'SENDER' section includes instructions to complete items 1, 2, and 3, and to attach the card to the back of the mailpiece. Item 1 is 'Article Addressed to:'. Item 2 is 'Article Number (Transfer from service label)'. Item 3 is 'Service Type' with checkboxes for Certified Mail, Registered, Insured Mail, Express Mail, and Return Receipt for Merchandise. Item 4 is 'Restricted Delivery? (Extra Fee)' with a 'Yes' checkbox. The 'COMPLETE THIS SECTION ON DELIVERY' section includes a signature line (marked with an 'X'), checkboxes for 'Apert' and 'Addressed', and a 'Date of Delivery' field. There are also checkboxes for 'Received by (Printed Name)', 'Is delivery address different from item 1?', and 'If YES, enter delivery address below:'. The form number 'PS Form 3811, February 2004' and 'Domestic Return Receipt' are printed at the bottom.



If you were **unable** to complete the required notifications by **mail**, you will need to file forms [Motion for Alternate Service and Affidavit of Diligent Search \(CJP 31\)](#) and [Military Affidavit \(TC002\)](#).

STEP 5. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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

If the minor’s name change was handled administratively, meaning no one had to come to court, you will be mailed a certified Decree of Change of Name and the case is completed. If you requested your original documents back, these will be included.

If you and the minor 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?

[Find legal help](#)

[Contact a Court Service Center](#)

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[Click here for a list of Probate and Family Courts locations.](#)

ADDITIONAL HELPFUL LINKS

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>

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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