

Changing Your Name

How to file for a legal name & gender marker change in Michigan

1

PETITION

File a [Michigan Petition to Change Name](#) with your local circuit court

2

NOTICE

Publish a hearing notice in legal news or a local newspaper

3

HEARING

Bring all documents to your court hearing on the scheduled date

4

PASSPORT

Apply before or after your name change, just bring our doctors note

At Youthville, we recognize that not all individual circumstances are the same. This guide is not intended to replace professional legal advice.

1 Once you've filled out your petition, make a copy of it. File the original with the circuit court in the county where you live. You must have lived in that county for at least one year before you file your petition. It will cost \$150 to file, but if you cannot afford to pay this you may ask the judge to waive the fee.

2 The court will schedule your hearing. All notices of name change hearings must be published in a local newspaper, giving anyone the change may affect a chance to object.

Some courts work with the local Legal News for publication. The Legal News will bill you \$80.25 and mail you the original Affidavit of Publication, which you must file with the court.

Other courts require you to contact a local newspaper in order to publish your notice. Ask the newspaper to publish it as soon as possible. The cost will vary depending on the newspaper.

After the local newspaper publishes your name change notice, submit a copy of the published notice and Affidavit of Publication to the court.

The newspaper must complete the Affidavit of Publication, not you. The Affidavit of Publication must list the qualifications of newspaper and the date or dates the notice was published.

The notice must be published before your name change hearing. Depending on the county you live in, the notice needs to be published two to eight weeks before the hearing. You can contact your local circuit court to find out its publication requirements.

If publishing the notice could put you in physical danger, ask the judge to keep the record of the proceedings confidential. If the judge orders the case be kept confidential, you do not have to publish anything about your name change.

3 On the day of your hearing, bring any documents that are related to your name change. It's a good idea to have two copies of each document, so you can give the judge one.

At the hearing, the judge will likely ask you questions about the information in your petition. The judge will also give anyone who objects to your name change a chance to talk about their reasons for objecting.

If your petition is approved, the judge will complete and sign the order changing your name. There is a \$10 fee to have the court enter the order, and if you want a certified copy of the order it'll cost another \$10.

Not all documents that have your old name on them will automatically change. To learn more about what your next step should be, please read the more detailed [After Your Name Change](#) article on michiganlegalhelp.org

4 To change your gender marker on a state ID or driver's license, you will need a letter from the care provider that you've seen for medical transition or hormone therapy. This letter should be on official letter head. You will also need a copy of their state license.

Once you have these documents, you can apply for a passport card. There is an application fee of \$30. An application can be filed online at www.travel.state.gov/passports or at your local post office.

Complete the application as instructed, selecting the gender marker that reflects your gender identity. The application requires supporting documentation including evidence of citizenship, legal identification, and proof of relationship for filing parents of applicants under 16 years old. Documents that can be used for these purposes are listed on the application.

You will also need to have a passport photo taken. This can usually be done at a local drug store for \$5-7, or in some cases right at the post office. You must include two copies of the photo with the form.

Once you've completed the application and gathered the documentation & photos, you can schedule an appointment at the post office to submit it. The staff will verify your application is complete before submitting it.

NEED BASED FEE WAIVERS

If you cannot afford the \$150 petition filing fee, the judge may waive this on an individual basis.

WITHOUT PUBLICATION

Under some circumstances, the court may order that no publication of the hearing take place. Reasons include any safety concerns that could result from the publication.

ACLU ASSISTANCE

If you're unable to afford the fees or need assistance filing the applications, the ACLU may be able to help www.aclu.org/affiliate/michigan

SUMMARY OF FEES

Name change petition:	\$150
Legal news publication:	\$80.25
Name change order entry:	\$10
Certified copy of name change:	\$10
<i>Name change total</i>	<i>\$250.25</i>
Passport card application fee:	\$30
Photo fee:	\$5
<i>Passport card total</i>	<i>\$35</i>
Combined Total:	\$285.25

FILING REQUIREMENTS FOR MINORS AGES 14 - 17 YEARS OLD

- ▶ If you are a minor who is at least 14 years old, you are able to ask a judge to change your name but both of your parents must agree to it. If your non-custodial parent objects to the name change, the judge may still approve it on an individual case basis.
- ▶ If you do not know your noncustodial parent's address, or your noncustodial parent is missing, you must include their name in the Notice of Hearing to be published. The notice must include:

"The result of the hearing may be to bar or affect the interest of [parent's name] in the matter."
- ▶ If one of your parents is deceased, and your other parent has custody of you, that parent must agree to your name change. If that parent does not have custody of you, you must still notify your parent about your proposed name change and the hearing date.
- ▶ If both your parents are deceased, your legal guardian must agree to your name change and you must submit letters of guardianship with your Petition to Change Name.