

# Legal name change resource guide

## For NYC residents

### Step 1. Getting All the Papers

Papers needed:

- Petition (Available on NY County Civil Court website)
- Original Birth Certificate

### Step 2. Fill out the petition

The petition asks for a lot of personal information, just answer truthfully and if you have questions, consult a lawyer.

### Step 3. File the papers at the NY County Civil Court

### Step 4. Paying the Fee or Getting a Fee Waiver

The clerk will tell you that you need to pay a \$65 fee. You may also be able get a fee waiver. After you pay the fee, you will get a date for the name change hearing.

### Step 5. The Name Change Hearing

The hearing is usually straightforward. The judge or court attorney will ask a few questions. You should answer briefly and honestly. Your name might not even be called because they don't have questions for you!

Name changes are usually approved the first time. If yours is denied, don't panic, you can try again. Get a copy of what the judge wrote explaining why it was denied. Contact the **Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund (TLDEF)** or another legal service provider if you need help appealing or filing again.

## Step 6. Approval

Congratulations!

## Step 7. Publication and Service

If the judge approves your name change order, you usually need to publish your name change in a newspaper and serve paperwork on agencies. The clerk will give you instructions on how to do this. Sometimes, waivers are available so that your name change does not need to be published. If you have questions about how to request this requirement to be waived, ask an attorney.

## Step 8: Requesting certified copies of your name change order

If publication was not waived, once your proof of publication has been accepted, your name change is complete!

Certified copies of your name change cost \$6 each. GET MULTIPLE COPIES of documents of the original decree, (ask your attorney if they can make copies for you). Do not remove the receipt or the staples on the certified copy!

These certified copies can be used to change the following documents, if you are otherwise eligible:

- Immigration documents (such as a work permit, Form I-766)
- Social Security Card
- State ID
- Driver's License
- Passport
- Medicaid Card
- Birth certificate



Legal organizations that help with legal name changes TLDEF intake form:

- <https://www.transgenderlegal.org/our-work/name-change-project/>
  - **Sylvia Rivera Law Project: <https://srlp.org/legal-services/> 212-337-8550**
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- For help with accessing healthcare and immigration legal services, contact NYLPI's UndocuCare TGNCI+ Project: (212) 244-4664. NYLPI has consolidated the information for this guide from resources published by the **Sylvia Rivera Law Project** and **Arrowood Law**.