

Do You Want To Change Your Name? Pay Attention To The Details For Success.

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Adults in New Jersey seek to change their names for various reasons; they dislike their current name, couples want to combine or hyphenate their surnames to form one surname, there is a desire for a more or less ethnic name, for religious reasons, or to reflect a change in gender. Some adults wish to change only their first, middle or surname while others wish to change their entire name. In matters of divorce, spouses sometimes want to return to a former or maiden name. Courts freely grant name change requests if the process is done properly, and provided the name change request is not for fraudulent or criminal purposes.

Although the name change process appears to be simple, it is not. Due to the details involved in this process, there are numerous errors that can be made at each step. Therefore, it is critical that you retain an experienced attorney to get you through the process smoothly.

There are four steps required to change your name:

1. You to have to petition the Court for permission to change your name. This is done by filing a Verified Complaint. In your Verified Complaint you must state your present name and the name change you are seeking. You must also state, under oath, the reasons for the name change and that you are not seeking to change your name for any inappropriate purposes, such as to defraud any creditors or to avoid criminal prosecution.
2. You must provide public notice of your name change request by publishing it in a designated local newspaper for a specific period of time. The Court will direct you in which publication your notice must be published, and the length of time. Proof that you complied with this notice requirement, must be provided to the Court.
3. You will have a hearing before a judge. You will have to provide testimony to address the various factors that the Court must consider in determining a name change petition, such as judgments, criminal history, prior name changes, reason for the change, bankruptcies, and if there is an attempt to defraud or avoid creditors or criminal prosecution.
4. After the hearing, if you are granted your name change request, then the Court's Order granting you the name change must be published in a designated newspaper to provide the public with notice of your name change. Your name change Order must also be filed with the

Department of Treasury.

If, however, you want to change your name because you are getting divorced, then you do not need to file a petition for a name change in Civil Court and engage in the aforementioned process. Instead, you can ask to legally change your name at your final divorce hearing. If you have not included your name change request in your Complaint or Answer /Counterclaim, then your attorney can ask the Court to amend your pleadings to permit you to change your name. If your request is granted, then you can use your Judgment of Divorce to change your name on legal documents such as your social security card, passport, birth certificate and driver's license.

Changing a first, middle or surname, or a full name, is a significant request and requires close attention to the details required within the name change process. If you are considering a name change, and would like to discuss legal representation, please contact [Jennifer Fortunato](#).