

# NAME CHANGES FOR MINORS IN New Hampshire



## What are the legal requirements?

A petitioner must file a Petition for Change of Name along with the minor's birth certificate and the Assent Form with the probate court. Generally, no notice or publication is required for this process. *N.H. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§ 547:3-i & 550:4*

## Where should I file the petition?

File the petition in the probate division of the Circuit Court. Contact information, including helplines, for each court may be found at:

<https://www.courts.state.nh.us/courtlocations/index.htm#probate>

## What is the process and what forms should I use?

You can find the required documents using the following links:

- Petition for Change of Name: <https://www.courts.state.nh.us/forms/nhjb-2175-p.pdf>
- Assent Form: <https://www.courts.state.nh.us/forms/nhjb-2121-p.pdf>

You will also need to submit a certified copy of the minor's birth certificate. The filing fee is \$110. The form to file for a partial or full waiver of the filing fee is here:

<https://www.courts.state.nh.us/forms/nhjb-2314-p.pdf>

You may want to request more than one certified copy of the name change order, since certified copies may be required to update the minor's legal name with other agencies.

## Does the process require parental consent?

There is no clear guidance as to whether a judge will approve a name change without both parent's consent. After filing the petition both birth parents will receive a Notice of Hearing in the mail and, if the court approves the name change, then they will receive a Notice of Decision.

## What will the judge consider?

Judges have a lot of discretion in granting name changes. Some may have lots of questions and want to see lots of evidence regarding the name change of the child, others may grant a name change as long as there are no objections. Judges may consider whether to grant a name change for a minor according to what is in the 'best interests of the child'. They typically evaluate the best interest of the child by looking at a variety of factors, which may

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include the child's preference (taking into consideration their age and experience), the length of time a child has used that name, the difficulties, harassment, or embarrassment a child may experience from the present or proposed name, and the motives or interests of the parent.

To demonstrate that the name change is in the best interests of the child, along with the name change petition you may want to submit evidence showing the judge why this is in the child's best interest. Examples of such evidence would be letters from teachers, family, or friends confirming their use of preferred name, letters from providers confirming the child's gender identity, etc.