

NAME CHANGES FOR MINORS IN Wyoming



What are the legal requirements?

The parent or guardian must file a petition on behalf of the child under oath requesting a name change with the local district court in the county in which the child has resided for the previous two years. If the court is satisfied that the desired change is proper and not detrimental to the interests of any other person, then it will order the name change, and will record the proceedings in the records of the court. *W.S. 1-25-101 through -104*

Where should I file the petition?

Petitions for name changes are filed in the District Court in which the minor has resided for at least two years. *W.S. 1-25-102*

You can find information on and the location of Wyoming's District Courts at:

<https://www.courts.state.wy.us/district-courts/>

What is the process and what forms should I use?

You can find a sample petition and further information on legal requirements through Equal Justice Wyoming at: <http://www.legalhelpwy.org/index.php/get-legal-help/self-help-2/family-law/name-changes/child-name-change/>

1. Complete the cover sheet, petition, consent, notice and service forms
 - Civil Cover Sheet
 - Petition for Name Change of Minor
 - Parental Consent to the Name Change of a Minor
 - Public Notice by Publication
 - Service Forms (if both parents do not consent or do not jointly file petition)
2. File the forms with the Clerk of District Court.
 - Pay the filing fee (\$70.00-100.00 depending on the county)
3. File the public notice with the local newspaper
4. Provide notice to the non-filing parent
5. Wait for the response time to expire (30 days from the last publication date)
6. Entry of default judgment if the non-filing parent was served but did not respond
7. Complete an Order Granting Change of Name
8. Request a hearing date if someone filed an objection, or if the judge orders a hearing
9. Attend hearing

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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?

The process does require parental consent. If both parents do not file jointly, then the petitioner must provide notice to the other parent of the minor, who has the right to object to the name change.

Does the process require publication?

The process does require publication. The petitioner must publish a legal notice of the Petition for Name Change once a week for four (4) consecutive weeks in a local newspaper. The petitioner is responsible for paying any publication fees. *W.S. 1-25-103*

Additionally, the information in the petition will generally be accessible to the public unless the court has issued a confidentiality order pursuant to *W.S. 35-21-112* or any other court order allowing a party to maintain confidentiality of addresses, city or state of residence, or other information identifying the residence of the party. If the court grants a confidentiality order, then publication is not required.

What will the judge consider?

The judge may consider the child's age, whether the other parent agrees, the relationship with the other parent, and what is in the best interests of the child.

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. They typically evaluate the best interest of the child by looking at a variety of factors, which may 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.

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