



A Trans Guide to Changing Your Name in Cook County

If you are trans or non-binary, legally changing your name can be an affirming and necessary part of your transition. But it can be really complicated! We're here to walk you through it. Thankfully in Cook County there are a number of organizations that have lawyers who will help you walk through this process pro-bono. But if those resources aren't accessible to you, or don't work for your schedule, and you decide to do this on your own, we've got you.

Criteria for Changing Your Name in Cook County

- You must have lived in Illinois for 6 months before applying.
- You must be a resident of Cook County before applying in Cook County.
- If you have a felony conviction, there is a 10-year waiting period between the completion of your sentence and when you are allowed to apply.
- You are not allowed to apply for a name change if you have been convicted of any felonies that require you to register as a sex offender or if you have a conviction of identity theft.

Do It Yourself E-Filing

If you work with one of the great projects in the city like the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund, Chicago Houses Translife Care, John Marshall Law School's Gender Marker and Name Change Process, or the Transformative Justice Law Project's Name Change Mobilization, they will help you with this in person and you will not have to file this paperwork online. But if you are doing this yourself...

1. Go to this website, download, and fill out the name change documents:
http://www.illinoiscourts.gov/forms/approved/name_change/name_change.asp
2. Then you upload the documents online. You can use several sites to file online with Cook County Court, but we have had good luck with this one: <https://illinois.tylerhost.net/ofswab>
3. Gather a friend, love, or family member, because you will need a witness signature!
4. It costs \$400 to e-file.
5. After you have completed uploading your documents, call to schedule your court date!!! They will confirm your paperwork has been received, and assign you a court date, courtroom, and judge.
(312) 603-5514

*NOTE! This is the information we learned through experience. After you e-file, they will **not** email you this information. You will have to have this number, and remember to call!!!!*

HOT TIP

When filing through "Odyssey File & Serve" select the following:

"Location"
Cook County
County Division
District 1
Chicago

"Category"
Miscellaneous

"Case Type"
Name Change

Field Trip #1: Posting Your Name Change to the Bulletin

1. Print out all your documents. (Request for name change and Order for name change from e-filing, and the Courtroom and Judge Assignment from the phone call.)
2. Go to the 8th Floor in the Circuit Court of Cook County (Richard J. Daley Center, 50 W. Washington St., Chicago, IL 60602).
3. Ask to post your name change to the Daily Law Bulletin for 3 consecutive weeks. This costs \$185.
4. They will give you a copy of the receipt. After 3 weeks, a certificate will be sent to the address you provide them. Keep these things!!!

Field Trip #2: Going to Your Court Date

What you will need:

- 3 copies each of the name change documents. (Request for name change and Order for name change from e-filing).
- The receipt and certificate you got after posting your name change in the Daily Law Bulletin.
- Your birth certificate.
- Your state i.d.

HOT TIP
Arrive early! This process can be scary, but you got this!!!

The Court Process:

- Sit in your assigned courtroom at your assigned time.
- Eventually the judge will call for you and you will approach the bench. (Warning: they will be using your deadname when they call you up.)
- Explain what you are there to do. The judge will have to access your file, and you can hand them the paperwork you brought.
- Even though you have done all this work, and even though this is unfair, the final decision is up to the judge to make.
- If your judge seems hostile, say, “Your Honor, at this time I would like to ask for a continuance,” before a decision is made on your case. Then, get an attorney to come back with you for your next court date.

What's next? Change your documents!

To get a new driver's license you need to go to a Secretary of State facility in person. Other government documents to change include the title of your car if you have one, a new birth certificate, a new passport, and a new social security card. Some other things to think about might include a new debit or credit card, changing your name on your lease, and changing your name with any organizations you are a member of. Maybe even with your gym!

TOTAL COSTS:
\$400 to e-file
\$185 to post in the Bulletin
\$20 for new driver's license
\$15 for new car title
\$15 for new birth certificate
\$110 for new passport

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR NEW NAME!!!!

This document was written by Clark Hazel, Noelle Petrowski, and Tessa Courtney, with source material from Transformative Justice Law Project of Illinois.