

Rhode Island Legal Name/Gender Marker Change

Available online at www.QueerRI.com/legal

Please be aware this information is a guide, not legal advice. If you have an experience that is different than what is listed below, please let us know so we can adjust this resource. If you feel you have been wrongfully denied a name or gender marker change, please contact the [Transgender ID Project](#) through GLAD for legal assistance.

If you are a minor, your parents will need to complete the steps below. Adults complete name/gender marker changes with Probate Court, minors and their parents complete name/gender marker changes in Family Court.

This process is slightly different for each city/town, including cost. The first step is changing your name legally. After that is complete, you will be able to change BOTH your legal name and gender marker (if you desire) on all additional documents. To complete the legal name change process, it can cost \$100-200, depending on your city/town/county. You will generally have to complete the steps listed below.

Legal Name Change

1. Obtain a certified copy of your birth certificate (\$22-\$62.50)

The Change of Name Petition Form in step 2 requires you to attach a certified copy of your original birth certificate. If you were born in RI, you can obtain a certified copy of your birth certificate online or by mail (details below). If you were born in another state, please check your state's Vital Records website to determine how you can obtain a copy of your birth certificate.

a. **In Person** by appointment only (\$22 – check or money order only – same day).

You can do this in person at the Center for Vital Records in Cranston, RI or any city or town clerk's office. To schedule an appointment with the Center for Vital Records, you must call 401-222-5960.

- i. While there, you can complete the [Application for a Certified Copy of a Birth Record](#) form. In box 3 you can check "other use" and specify "name change."
- ii. Bring a valid, government issued picture ID. If you do not have government-issued picture ID, you may submit two other documents that have your name

and current address (utility bill, bank statement, car registration, copy of income tax return).

- iii. Bring a check or money order (you can get money orders for free at the Post Office).
- b. **By Mail** (\$25 – check or money order only – 8 to 12 weeks) Complete the [Application for a Certified Copy of a Birth Record](#) form. In box 3 you can check “other use” and specify “name change.”
 - i. Attach a photocopy of valid, government issued picture ID.
 - ii. Include a check or money order (you can get money orders for free at the Post Office).
 - iii. Mail to Center for Vital Records, Simpson Hall, 6 Harrington Rd, Cranston, RI 02920.
- c. **Online or by phone** at www.vitalchek.com / 888-388-1032 (\$45-\$62.50 debit, credit, or check – 1 to 7 weeks). VitalChek recommends UPS Air Shipping for security and delivery time of about 1 week (it’s free for regular mail, but not secured, and it can take 30-45 *business days* in regular mail). If you choose UPS Air Shipping, you or another resident must be home to sign for the delivery.

2. Fill out a [Change of Name Petition \(PC-8.1\)](#)

- a. Complete all information on **Page 1** (except for the “Estate of” line in the top left box)
- b. A line asks you to state a “reason” for the name change and to “be specific.” You do not have to disclose your gender identity to change your name! You can answer with “preferred name” or “common usage.” Be aware this form and your answers will become part of the public record.
- c. **Page 2:** This needs your signature to be notarized. If you are a minor, both parents need to sign as the “petitioner(s)” and have their signature notarized. You can either have both parents sign at the top (squeeze it in next to each other), have one sign at the top and one in the blank space at the bottom, or print out two copies of Page 2 and submit both. Most banks, shipping stores, and libraries will notarize a signature. The maximum cost for having something notarized is (\$25).

3. **ADULTS ONLY: Call Probate Court & Obtain a Background Check**

The Change of Name Petition Form requires you to attach a background check (BCI) of the person who is changing their name. Some probate courts will include the process of obtaining a BCI as part of their name change procedure. Minors no longer need a BCI for a name/gender marker change.

- a. Call the [Probate Court in the city or town](#) where you currently reside and ask them for clear instructions on their legal name change process, including:
 - i. Ask: If you need obtain your own BCI or if the Probate court will obtain it for you
 - ii. Ask: If publication of name change in the newspaper is required;
 1. If publication is required, ask: if you must publish it or if the court will publish it;
 - a. If you must publish it, ask: if there is a newspaper or specific deadline for you to publish the announcement.
 2. You can also request that the publication requirement be waived.
 - iii. Ask: What are all fees involved & acceptable payment methods. The fees vary by city/town, but it is usually less than (\$100).
 - b. If the court says you must complete your own BCI, follow these steps (\$5)
 - i. Go to <https://riag.ri.gov/i-want/get-background-check> or your local police station or town website. Make sure you get an original copy of the BCI report.

4. **File the petition**

- a. Once you have your notarized Name Change Form, Certified copy of your birth certificate, and if needed, BCI report or proof of publication, you are ready to file your petition!
- b. For adults: Go to the Probate Court office in the city/town you currently reside in. Provide all paperwork and pay required fee. The court clerk will provide you with a date for you to return to the courthouse and either attend a hearing or pick up your signed decree. This date is usually 30 days from the filing date.
- c. For minors: Go to the Family Court office in the county you currently reside in with whoever is listed on your birth certificate. Your guardians need to be present

in person and should bring a government issued photo ID (license preferred) and social security card. Provide all paperwork and pay required fee. The court clerk will either provide you a same day hearing or provide you with a date for you to return to the courthouse to either attend a hearing or pick up your signed decree.

5. Attend hearing & get copies of name change decree

- a. You will most likely be required to attend a hearing in front of a judge. The judge may ask you a couple of questions, or they may want you to give an official statement. If they grant the change of name, they will sign the Decree section of the Petition Form.
- b. **Purchase at least 2 certified copies of the Decree** so you can change your name on other legal documentation. It is usually less expensive to get an extra copy while you are there in person than to have to go back again later.

Next steps

Once your name change is complete, you will need to change your name on all other documents as soon as possible. You can change your gender marker at the same time on your remaining documents if you desire. You should change your birth certificate first, then Social Security, then wait 24 hours before going on to update your Driver's License, Passport, health insurance, credit cards, etc.

Birth Certificate

1. Amend your birth certificate in person or by mail. (\$32-35)

a. **In Person** by appointment only (\$32). You can do this in person at the Center for Vital Records in Cranston, RI. To schedule an appointment with the Center for Vital Records, you must call 401-222-5960. Or you can **mail** (\$35) the below documents to the Center for Vital Records.

- While there, you can complete the [Application for a Certified Copy of a Birth Record](#) form. In box 3 you can check “other use” and specify “name change” or “name/gender marker change.”
- Bring a valid, government issued picture ID (or for mail, a copy)
- Bring a check or money order made out to the General Treasurer, State of Rhode Island (you can get money orders for free at the Post Office).
- For name change, bring a certified copy of name change decree (they will mail it back to you)
- For gender marker change, bring a notarized self-attestation letter signed by person whose birth certificate will change (if they are age 18 or older), or the applicant's legal guardian(s). If you choose to complete the process in person, the Health Department will create an affidavit for you or your guardian to sign and they will notarize it for you during the appointment.

Social Security

You can update name and gender marker at the same time. However please note, as of 12/2023 the SSA does not allow gender marker 'X.'

1. Amend your social security card in person or by mail.

- a. Complete the [Application for a Social Security Card](#) form.
- b. Gather supporting documentation:
 - Proof of citizenship: U.S. birth certificate or U.S. passport.
 - Proof of name change: Court order approving name change.
 - Proof of identity: Current driver's license, state-issued ID or passport. If you do not have one of these documents, you will be asked to submit another type of document, such as an employee ID, school ID, health insurance card, or US military ID.
 - Mail** in the application and necessary documents OR bring it **in person** to your local SSA office. You can find the nearest SSA office online at:
<https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>

Driver's License

You can update your Rhode Island driver's license at any DMV branch location. You can update your name and gender marker at the same time (\$27.50).

Note: Name change must be done with Social Security first. It will take 24 hours for changes at Social Security to become effective for the DMV to process your transaction.

1. Name/Gender Marker Change

a. Gather required documents:

- Current RI license or ID card
- Original government issued document indicating name change.
- Completed [License/ID/Permit Application \(LI-1 Form\)](#)
- Form of payment (cash, money orders, personal checks, bank checks, and credit card).
- If you are also doing gender marker change: Completed [Gender Designation for License/Identification Card](#) form

Passport

1. If you are applying to change your gender marker, submitting a passport application for the first time, or applying for a passport when your old passport has expired, you must apply [in person](#). You may need to schedule an appointment. Bring the following documents:
 - A completed [DS-11](#) U.S. Passport Application form.
 - Proof of U.S. citizenship, such as a birth certificate. You will need an original or certified copy **and** a photocopy.
 - A valid photo ID **and** photocopy of the ID, such as a driver's license or government employee ID. If you have already legally changed your name, your ID should reflect that change.
 - Recent color photo of yourself. [Review the photo requirements](#).
 - Applicable fee – check or money order. Passport book with standard delivery is \$165.

2. If you are only changing your name and already have a valid U.S. passport that was issued more than a year ago, you can apply by mail with a [DS-82](#) form. You will need to mail the following documents, which will be mailed back to you after they are processed. Processing usually takes 3-4 months.
 - A completed [DS-82](#) U.S. Passport Renewal Application for Eligible Individuals form.
 - Your current, unexpired passport
 - A certified copy of your name change order
 - Recent color photo of yourself. [Review the photo requirements](#).
 - Applicable fee: Personal check or money order for \$130 made out to the “U.S. Department of State.”

Don't forget!

Once your name change is complete, you will need to change your name on all other documents as soon as possible. Here is a list of some common places you will need to ensure you change your name/gender marker with.

- Health insurance
- School records / school ID
- Employer
- Bank accounts
- Local post office
- Health Source RI if you get SNAP, TANF, WIC, etc.
- Memberships and subscriptions
- Professional licensing boards / certifications
- Rental and lease agreements
- Utility companies
- Doctors / Electronic health records