



How long does the name change process take?

Around 2-4 months. Typically, the Clerk will schedule a court date 6-8 weeks after you file your case in Odyssey (the Illinois online filing system). However, recently court dates have been closer to 9-10 weeks after the filing date.

How much does it cost?

Costs vary from county to county. In Cook County, the court filing fee is \$399.21 for a name change petition, and then it costs an additional \$90 to publish with the Daily Herald.

Do I qualify for a fee waiver?

Fee waivers are for individuals and families whose income is less than 200% of the federal poverty level. For a single person, their income must be less than \$25,760 per year. If you have made more than that amount in the past year, but have been unemployed for a significant amount of time, then there is still a chance the fee waiver could be granted, or the judge may even give you a partial fee waiver. Essentially, when in doubt we recommend filling out the fee waiver because even if the fee waiver is denied, you won't need to pay the filing fee until you go to the Daley Center to get certified copies of the name change court order.

Do I need an attorney to complete the name change process?

No, most petitioners complete the process without an attorney. We have this packet of helpful resources to support you through the process!

Are the court documents only available in English?

All of the documents are available in both English and Spanish. Unfortunately, those are the only language options that are available right now.

Are there translation services available?

Yes, the [Illinois Supreme Court Language Interpreter Registry](#) has a list of interpreters available in over 60 languages. Additionally, there is an [Illinois Request for an Interpreter form](#).

Do I have to be a U.S. citizen to change my name?

No, you do not have to be a U.S. citizen to change your name; however, Illinois law requires a person to live in IL for at least 6 months before they qualify to request a name change. ****NOTE: we highly recommend speaking to a lawyer about your situation if you are not a U.S. citizen and want to change your name.**

What if my ID is expired or is out of state?

If you don't have an ID from IL, or if your ID is expired, you will need a lease or some other proof that you live in IL (and that you have lived in IL for at least 6 months).

I don't have access to my birth certificate, what should I do?

If you don't have access to your birth certificate, you can use your passport to file for a name change. If you don't have a passport or access to your birth certificate, you can order a copy of your birth certificate online by Googling "[the state you were born in] birth certificate vital records" and you should be able to find instructions on the state vital records website. If you have any questions about this, would like assistance, and/or if you have a birth certificate from a different state, feel free to reach out to Alexis Martinez from [TJLP](#) at: alexis@tjlp.org or 773-917-1323.



Can I know more about the publication process? Where do I publish? Can I waive my publication? Do minors have to publish?

In IL you are required to publish your name change in a newspaper in your county for 3 consecutive weeks. *Note that the first week that your name is published has to be at least 6 weeks before your court hearing date. You may publish your name change in any newspaper in your county. For Cook County, our clients frequently publish in the Daily Herald because it is only \$90. If a client has a fee waiver, they will frequently publish in the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin. If you would like to explore the option of waiving publication, reach out to [TJLP](#) and/or [LCHJ](#) for assistance. Minors do NOT have to publish their name change unless one parent is not involved for whatever reason (e.g. if you can't get in touch with them, if they disagree, etc.). In the case where one parent is not involved, the minor *would* have to publish their name change. If that applies to you/your child, we recommend reaching out to an attorney.

Do I have to file my name change documents in the county where I live?

Yes, you have to file your name change documents in the county where you live. This is wherever you have current proof of residency. For example, if you are living in Cook County, but your parents are living in DuPage County, and the address on your current state ID is your parents' house, you would need to file in DuPage County because that is the location of your current proof of residency.

What if I have different names on my birth certificate and my state ID?

Go with the name that is on your birth certificate. If you have changed your name before, then go with what is written on the most recent name change order (or the marriage certificate).

How long will the name change hearing be?

The name change hearing usually takes about 15 minutes to complete, but this can vary depending on the judge's schedule and other external factors.

What if my fee waiver has not been accepted yet?

[*insert clerk email/phone #]?

What do I do if my fee waiver is denied?

If your fee waiver is denied, we recommend that you talk to an attorney through [TJLP](#) or [LCHJ](#). The attorney can help you file for a continuance to push off the filing fee payment for 6-8 more weeks.

I just got my name change, what is the next step?

Congratulations! The next step is getting your name change order certified at the Daley Center and updating your identity documents (state ID, birth certificate, etc.). Instructions on how to update your identity documents can be found [here](#) starting on page 25.



NAME CHANGE JARGON

Pro Se

This is a legal term describing someone who is not represented by a lawyer in a legal proceeding -- they are representing themselves. Example: If you are completing the name change process without a lawyer, you are completing it pro se.

Petitioner

A legal term describing the person who is asking the court to grant whatever request they make. In this context, a petitioner is the person who is seeking to change their name, so, you!

Odyssey e-File

An online filing system for the court. Odyssey allows people to file legal paperwork for a court case without having to physically go to the court and file physical copies of the paperwork.

Name Change Petition

The legal document that begins the court process to change a name. Illinois only allows legal name changes if a judge grants the request.

Fee Waiver

A formal request to the court by a petitioner, asking the court to allow them to proceed with the name change proceeding without having to pay court fees and the cost of publication.

Publication Notice

Illinois law currently requires a petitioner to notify the public of their plan to change their name. The notice must appear in a local newspaper for 3 consecutive weeks.

Current Legal Name

We use "current legal name" to describe the name the petitioner is using as the name they want to change. One of those reasons is that not every petitioner is changing their birth name or considers their birth name to be their "dead name". If you've changed your name before, even through marriage, put your *most recent* current legal name.