

Name Change



Can you change your name without going to court?

Yes, a person can change their name through usage. However, changing your name in this way is not recommended because there is no official record of the change.

What do I need to say in a Petition for Change of Name?

Missouri requires you to include the following in a Petition for Change of Name:

1. The person's current name and new name desired
2. The reason for the change
3. That the person lives in the county where they are trying to change their name
4. The birthday of the person trying to change their name, along with their father's name and mother's maiden name
5. If the person is married, they must include the name of their spouse and the names and ages of any children they have and where they live
6. If their name was previous changed, when and where and by what court
7. Whether there are any judgments for money that have not been paid, and if so, the case information about the judgment
8. Whether there are any lawsuits involving money against the person seeking to change their name and, if so, in what court
9. That the name will not be detrimental to anyone else

An example “Petition for Name Change” can be found here.

How much does it cost to file a petition?

Costs are different depending on the county where the petition is filed. It will likely cost between \$150.00 and \$200.00.

If I'm a step-parent, can I change my step-child's name to my name?

Yes, but you must either get a signed consent from both of the natural parents, or serve the non-consenting parent with a copy of the petition and a notice of when the court will hear your petition. In the case of a non-consenting parent, the circuit clerk must send the petition and notice of hearing by registered or certified mail.

How does the court decide whether to change the name of a child?

The court first considers whether the change will be in the child's best interest. It will also consider: 1) the child's age, 2) how the change will affect the child's relationship with the parents, and 3) whether the child may be embarrassed by the change.

Can I change my name as part of a divorce?

Yes, but the divorce petition must include the same statements as a Petition for Change of Name.

What will a judgment granting a name change say?

It will say that the petitioner's name is now officially changed. It must also say that the name change "will not detrimentally affect the interests of any person.”

Is a name change final after the court enters its judgment?

No. The court must publish notice of the name change in a local newspaper at least once a week for three consecutive weeks. The circuit clerk will make arrangements for publication in the newspaper. After publication, the clerk must file proof of the publication in the court's record.

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