

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PETITION AND AFFIDAVIT FOR CHANGE OF NAME OF AN ADULT IN WYOMING

Read these instructions carefully.

In Wyoming, a person's name can be legally changed if a Court approves the change. In some situations, the process of getting a name change is very simple, but in other cases it can be complicated. It also might be expensive.

You can learn more about the process and the forms that are involved by reading the Overview of the Process, which is available on the Wyoming Judicial Branch website's Self-Help Forms page at <https://www.wyocourts.gov/self-help-forms/>.

The first step in the legal process of changing your name is filling out the Petition and Affidavit for Change of Name of an Adult. These instructions can help you fill out that form.

Before You Get Started

It's important to know that a person under the age of 18 (a minor child) must use a different process and different forms to ask a court for a name change. The Wyoming Judicial Branch website's Self-Help Forms page has forms and instructions for Change of Name of a Minor.

If you are an adult and you want to change your own name, keep reading to learn how to get started.

Where Do You Start

Wyoming law has a residency requirement for name change cases. You are required to have lived in Wyoming for at least six months immediately before you file your case. If you haven't lived in Wyoming for at least six months, you can't start your name change case yet, even if you used to live here.

You will start this process by filing the Petition and Affidavit with the Clerk of District Court in the county where you live. (It's okay if you haven't been in that county for six months. If it's the county you live in now, it's the right place to file your case.)

The top of the page on the Petition and Affidavit.

The top of the page has blanks for the name of the county that the Court is in (for example, County of Big Horn) and the number of the judicial district (for example, Fifth Judicial District). When you file the Petition and Affidavit, the Clerk of District Court can give you this information.

The next blank is for your name. Write your current full legal name on the line labelled Petitioner.

The next blank is for the Case Number. When you file the Petition and Affidavit, the Clerk of Court will give you the case number. (The Case Number might contain letters.)

Next you will see the title of the document. It's written between the two long bars on the page. The title tells the Court that you are starting a name change case.

Section 1.

This section is your statement that you are the Petitioner (the person who is asking for permission) and that you are an adult.

Section 2.

In this section, you will write where you were born.

Fill this section in completely. If you were born in a state that uses Parishes or Townships instead of counties, you can write that information on the line for County. If you were born in a country that doesn't have states or counties, you can write "does not apply" on those lines.

Section 3.

In this section, write your current full legal name.

Section 4.

This section starts with your statement about why you are starting a name change case. On the blank line, write the full name you want to have.

Important Note: If you fill in this form by hand, make sure you write very clearly. If there are any punctuation marks in the name, make sure those are also very clear. For

example, O'Conner or Diaz-Smith.

Section 5.

In this section, you will tell the Court why you want to change your name. On the blank lines, write the honest and clear reason you want to change your name.

Section 6.

This section is a statement telling the Court that no one will be harmed by you having a new name. It's important for the Court to know this because the Judge cannot approve the name change if it will harm someone.

Do not change anything in this section.

Section 7.

Read the choices here carefully. They are about the name that is on your birth certificate now. Mark the checkbox for the correct statement.

Section 8.

If you were born in Wyoming, mark the first checkbox. Then read the information in the gray box and move to Section 9.

If you were not born in Wyoming, mark the second checkbox. Then move to Section 10.

Section 9.

If you were born in Wyoming, read the three options in this section carefully. Choose the option that is right for you. Only mark one checkbox in this section. If you choose the third option, write the reasons on the blank lines.

Section 10.

If you were not born in Wyoming, read this section carefully. Mark the checkbox to tell the Court you understand the information that is written in this section.

Section 11.

If you are a victim of domestic abuse and you want to have confidentiality in this case, mark the first checkbox and carefully read the instructions there.

If you are not a victim of domestic abuse or you don't plan to request confidentiality in this case, mark the second checkbox. Then write your complete home address on the blank lines.

Section 12.

In this section, write the name of the county where you live. Then fill in the blanks for the length of time (in years and months) that you have lived in that county.

Section 13.

Write the length of time (in years and months) that you have lived in Wyoming.

If you moved away from Wyoming and then moved back, only count your most recent time in Wyoming.

Wyoming law requires you to have lived in Wyoming for at least six months immediately before starting the name change case. This is called a residency requirement. The second part of this section is how you tell the Court that you understand that rule.

Gray Box: Information About Notice by Publication.

Read the information in the gray box very carefully. Notice by Publication is required in most name change cases.

Section 14.

The two situations described in the gray box will help you understand your options in this section. Mark the checkbox for the option that fits this case.

The Signature Section.

Do not sign this form until you are in front of the Clerk of Court or a Notary. The Clerk or Notary must witness you signing the form.

By signing the form, you are telling the Court that everything you wrote on the form is true. If the information is not true, you might be criminally charged with perjury. Perjury is a felony punishable by imprisonment or a fine or both.

Review your answers carefully before you sign the Petition and Affidavit.

On the line labelled DATED, write the date you are signing the form.

Sign your name on the signature line.

Print your current name neatly. Write in your email address. If it is safe to do so, write your phone number and your mailing address. The Court will use this information to contact you and keep you aware of what is happening in the case.

The Clerk or Notary will fill out the bottom of the page.

Filing the Petition and Affidavit.

You must file the Petition and Affidavit with the Clerk of District Court.

It's a good idea to take extra copies of the Petition and Affidavit with you. One will be a copy that you keep. If you do not take copies with you, the Clerk can make copies.

Important Note: The Clerk's Office will charge you for copies. Expect to pay at least \$1.00 per page.

Other Forms.

When you go the Clerk's Office to file the Petition and Affidavit, it might make sense for you to take other forms too. Read the Overview of the Process to figure out which forms you will need for your next steps. You can find the Overview, forms, and instructions on the Wyoming Judicial Branch website's forms page.

Important Things You Need to Know

What happens after I file my Petition and Affidavit?

You will probably need to file other forms to keep this case moving. Read the Overview of the Process to figure out which forms you will need for your next steps. You can find the Overview, forms, and instructions on the Wyoming Judicial Branch website's forms page.

What is a Notary and where can I find one?

A Notary Public (usually just called "a notary") is a person who has a license to witness people signing legal papers and to confirm that the signatures are authentic (which means the signatures are real and were done on purpose). **A notary will probably require you to show your driver's license or some kind of photo ID to prove that you are really you.**

Some notaries charge for their services, but it is usually easy to find a notary who will

witness your signature and sign your paper for free. If you have an account at a local bank, you can probably get free notary services at that bank. Most libraries also offer free notary services.

Who can help me with these forms?

It is important for you to know that Court Clerks are not allowed to help you fill out these forms.

Here are some free resources that can help people with limited income and limited assets:

- Legal Aid of Wyoming Hotline. This Hotline gives you an opportunity to talk with a lawyer. 1-877-432-9955.
- Wyoming Free Legal Answers. This website gives you a chance to privately ask questions about your situation and then receive answers from a lawyer.
<https://wyoming.freelegalanswers.org/>
- Volunteer Reference Attorney Program. This program lets you have a short informational meeting with a lawyer. You can learn about the locations and dates by checking the calendar on the Wyoming Judicial Branch website at
<https://www.wyocourts.gov/find-legal-services/>

If you do not qualify for the free services above, you can contact the Wyoming State Bar at 307-432-2107 for referral to Wyoming lawyers. (Those lawyers charge for their services.)

Where can I read the Wyoming laws about name change cases?

These laws are found in Wyoming Statutes Title 1, Chapter 25.

You can read them online by visiting the Wyoming Legislative Service Office website (<https://wyoleg.gov/>) or you can look at statute books at your local library.