

NAME CHANGES FOR MINORS IN DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



What are the legal requirements?

The parent(s) or guardian of the child must file an application with the Superior Court explaining the reasons for the change request along with the new proposed name. *D.C. Code, Title 16 – Particular Actions, Proceedings and Matters, Chapter 25 – Change of Name, § 16-2501.*

Where should I file and what forms should I use?

You can file the petition either in the Civil Actions Branch, Room 5000 of the District of Columbia Superior Court located at 500 Indiana Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20001 or in Family Central Intake Center, Room JM-540 of the District of Columbia Superior Court.

You can find full instructions and forms on applying for a name change at:

[https://www.dccourts.gov/sites/default/files/2017-11/Minor%20\(Name%20Change\).pdf](https://www.dccourts.gov/sites/default/files/2017-11/Minor%20(Name%20Change).pdf)

Does the process require parental consent?

The process does require parental consent. A minor cannot file an application without the consent or knowledge of their parent(s). Unless both parents are requesting that the minor's name be changed, the filing parent must obtain the consent of the other parent.

What will the judge consider?

Judges have a lot of discretion in granting name changes. Some may have lots of questions and want to see lots of evidence regarding the name change of the child, others may grant a name change as long as there are no objections. Judges may consider whether to grant a name change for a minor according to what is in the 'best interests of the child'. They typically evaluate the best interest of the child by looking at a variety of factors, which may include the child's preference (taking into consideration their age and experience), the length of time a child has used that name, the difficulties, harassment, or embarrassment a child may experience from the present or proposed name, and the motives or interests of the parent.

To demonstrate that the name change is in the best interests of the child, along with the name change petition you may want to submit evidence showing the judge why this is in the child's best interest. Examples of such evidence would be letters from teachers, family, or friends confirming their use of preferred name, letters from providers confirming the child's gender identity, etc.

National Center for Transgender Equality

transequality.org | ncte@transequality.org | 202-642-4542

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