

NAME CHANGES FOR MINORS IN Rhode Island



What are the legal requirements?

An applicant must file a Change of Name form with the appropriate probate court. After a hearing, the court may sign a decree granting the request for name change.

Where should I file the petition?

You should file the petition in the Probate Court of the city or town in which the minor resides.

What is the process and what forms should I use?

A general state Change of Name form is available here:

<http://sos.ri.gov/assets/downloads/documents/PC8.1-change-of-name.pdf>

Some probate courts have their own Change of Name forms, for example the County of Providence: https://www.providenceri.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Name_change_form.pdf.

Fill out the Change of Name form, and attach a copy of the minor's birth certificate along with and state background check (BCI Report) to the application. Information on how to obtain a BCI Report can be found here: <http://www.riag.ri.gov/BCI/index.php#>.

You may want to request more than one certified copy of the name change order, since certified copies may be required to update the minor's legal name with other agencies.

Does the process require parental consent?

Parental consent is generally required.

Does the process require publication?

The requirement of publication is town and city specific.

What will the judge consider?

The judge will consider if the name change is consistent with public interest.

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

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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.

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