



***Guide to
Legally Changing
Your Name and
Gender in California***

**Main
Handbook**

This is the primary guide. Start here if you are updating your legal name and/or gender marker in California. All supplementary guides assume you are working through and familiar with the steps outlined in this handbook.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Introductory Information | 1 |
| 1) Planning | 5 |
| 2) County Court | 7 |
| 3) Vital Records | 10 |
| 4) Social Security | 12 |
| 5) DMV | 13 |
| 6) Workplace and Payroll | 15 |
| 7) Passport | 16 |
| 8) Various private, medical, miscellaneous organizations | 21 |

About This Guide

I created californianamechange.org after navigating California's name and gender change process on my own and realizing how difficult it was to find straightforward steps. Many existing resources were outdated, written in dense legal language, or missing crucial information. Without anyone to turn to for support, I began compiling my own notes to make sense of the process. What started as a simple Google Doc gradually evolved into a more comprehensive, dedicated resource designed to be accurate, accessible, and practical.

This is the main handbook, which will walk you through every step necessary for transgender adults with each government agency. I encourage you to read each step in its entirety before starting. There is an additional guide for college students, and I am currently working on further documents for other unique situations. This document will also be updated should there be any policy change, so I strongly recommend saving the link instead of downloading for the most up-to-date version – any changes could be subtle.

I've hyperlinked every form that you will need to fill out, tools for finding agencies' local offices, as well as any other helpful resources. Should a link be inaccessible for any reason, there will be a footnote explaining each one's destination. Please feel free to shoot me an email at californianamechange@gmail.com if you have any questions, and I will do my best to answer.

The information in this document, as well as the website as a whole, is meant as guidance only. Do not consider this legal advice – I am not a lawyer.

For steps involving the federal government, such as Social Security and passports, please double check online for the most recent information on policy, whether that be from the feds or legal advocates. While I endeavor to keep these sections as up to date as possible, bureaucracy at this level is unfortunately in a constant state of flux at the moment.

How It Works

Essentially, you start at the county level and work your way up to the state and federal governments.

You will be filling out lots of forms. Carefully read each one in its entirety before completing, afterwards scanning for your records.

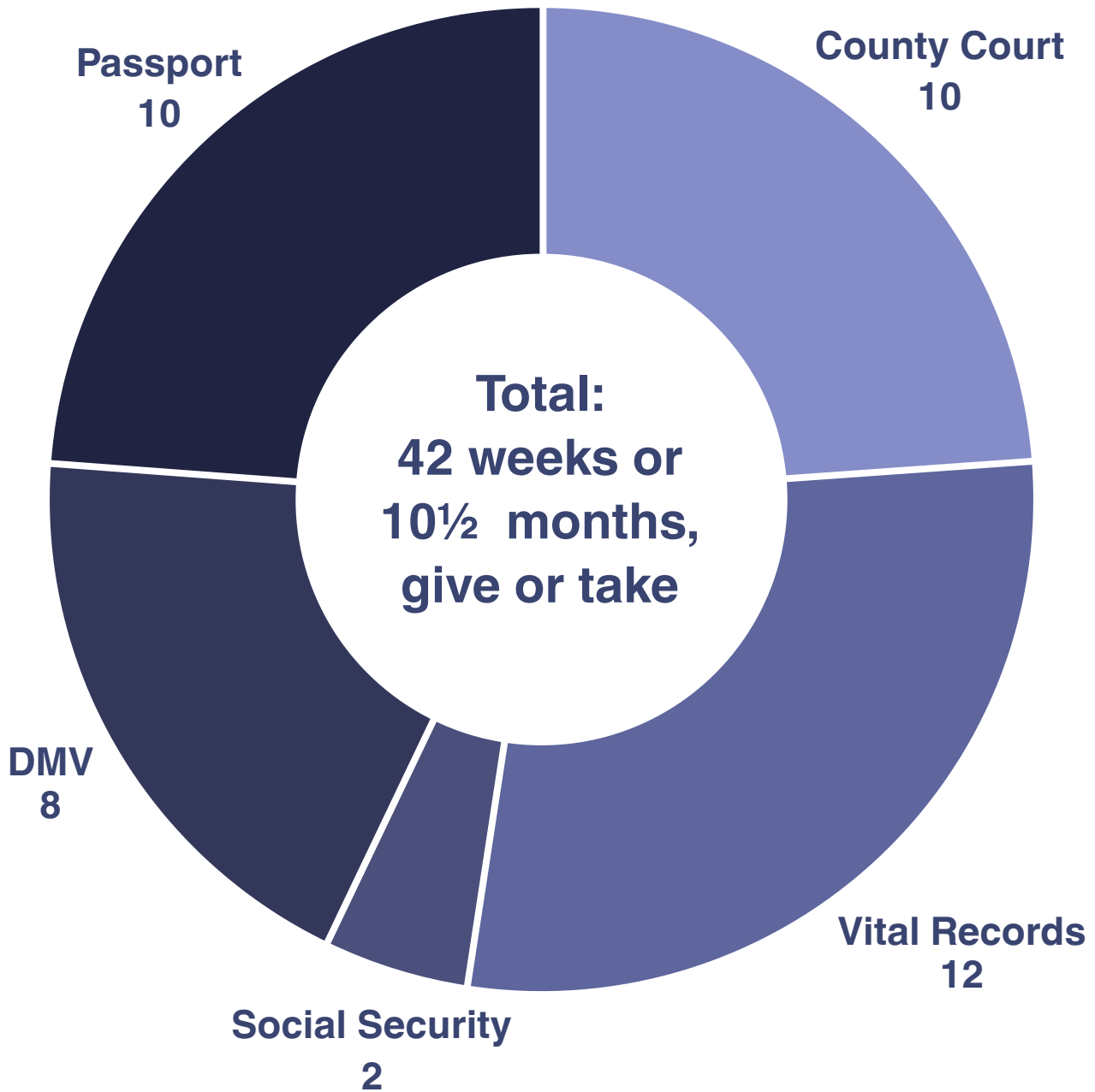
Nearly the entire process will be through mail, so most of your time will be spent going about your normal life waiting for an agency to send you what you need.

At the end of this process, you will have an updated birth certificate, marriage license (if applicable) social security card, driver's license, passport, and voter's registration.



Estimated Timeline

(in weeks)



Extra cushion time was added to this graph to account for varying speeds of mailing/processing, as well as day-to-day life – the average person usually puts off going to the DMV, forgets where they put a form, etc. Your experience could be shorter or longer. This is more of a visual aid to give you a sense of time commitment before you begin.

Disclaimer:

This guide is written with U.S. citizens aged 18+ in mind – especially those born in California. The process differs slightly for others. I can only provide confident guidance based on my own experience, but I’m developing supplemental versions for more specific situations.

If you are not a US citizen, or were born in another country, any changes to the name and gender change process depend on your legal status. If you have any form of USCIS documentation (Green card, Visa, DACA, Certification of Citizenship/ Naturalization), you will need to request a reissued version through them. It is my understanding that this would be after the court order, in place of the birth certificate step. See [this page](#)¹ for details. If you are undocumented, this process will be much shorter. You still complete a court order, but afterwards only need to follow steps 5 and 7.

Regardless of legal status, you will not need to make any changes to your country of origin’s paperwork to change any US-issued documentation.

If you are a minor, or the parent of a minor, the steps will be essentially identical. You will just need to have a parent be the applicant – aka, the one signing everything. Most forms have a dedicated section where you declare your relationship to the applicant – an adult would put “self”, here you would put “parent”. Make sure that said parent is present at all in-person appointments. Please note that if one parent does not consent, it can become a contested legal matter. Should you find yourself in this situation, know that the other parent has to be notified, and can attend the county hearing to oppose it. You can either attend the hearing and make your case to the judge, or, depending on your age, wait until you turn 18 and they do not legally have to be notified.

If you were born in another state, you are bound to that state’s name and gender change policy regarding your birth certificate. Everything else is under either California or federal jurisdiction. So, if you are from a state like Oklahoma, you are unfortunately unable to revise your birth certificate, but can revise everything else. Check online what your birth state’s present policy is regarding these changes.

¹ US Citizenship and Immigration Services Policy Manual, Chapter 3 - *Reissuance of Secure Identity Documents*. Contains directions as well as related fees.

1) *Planning*

Before you begin any legal proceedings, be sure you understand exactly what you need and what is expected of you as an applicant.

a. time to budget

As shown in the timeline on the prior page, this will be a lengthy process. It requires interacting with at least 4 government agencies with their respective bureaucratic processes, so about a year is the absolute minimum amount of time by my estimation. Waiting/processing times will change depending on backlogs, government shutdowns, etc. – when an agency provides a current wait times page, it will be hyperlinked at it's respective step. I recommend starting the next step immediately after completing the last one (ex. scheduling a meeting at the DMV as soon as your new social security card arrives in the mail). This is both so you don't procrastinate, as I did, but also so you spend less time with conflicting records.

b. required documents

Before you start, gather the appropriate documents. You will need your government ID, your original birth certificate, and your social security card on hand throughout this process. You will also want some way of paying the fees via check. Since I did not have a checkbook, I asked someone else to write them out from their account and reimbursed them, which was a bit awkward. It's best to order checkbooks from your bank before you begin, as they're helpful for situations like these, setting up direct deposits, etc.

c. permitted characters

For some reason this doesn't get reported much elsewhere, but if you have a legal middle name, you will need to replace that with a new one – many systems do not have a process for simply removing a name. So, if you haven't already picked one out, give that some thought. Additionally, make sure your chosen name (both first and middle) follow California's restrictions on characters. Only the 26 letters of the English alphabet (a-z), hyphens (-), and apostrophes (') are allowed. Unfortunately, this means no diacritics (á, ü, etc).

d. breakdown of cost

This is the most important part to know about ahead of time. Set aside money for the various fees. These don't hit all at once – there's usually several weeks to months in between having to pay a new one. Assume unless explicitly stated otherwise that whatever government entity you are dealing with only accepts checks or money orders. Below is a table of all the fees you will encounter, in chronological order.

If you have never had a passport and/or driver's license and do not currently intend on getting one, you can subtract those costs from your total. The rest are mandatory.

Be sure that you are in a situation where you can afford these fees when they are due. Order a checkbook if you do not already have one.

| | |
|---|--|
| Petitioning courts* | \$435 |
| Certified copy of name/gender court order* | \$120 for 3 copies (\$40/each) |
| Certification from Notary | \$15 (private entity: you can pay cash, card, etc.) |
| Vital Records Amendment | \$26 |
| Vital Records Additional Copy | \$29 |
| DMV DL/ID* | \$39 (also accepts debit, credit, Apple Pay) |
| Passport | \$165 |
| <i>TOTAL</i> | <i>\$829</i> |

* A low-income waiver/reduced cost is available for this fee. If you receive state or federal benefits, budget around \$250 total, or even just \$90 if you aren't applying for a passport.

2) County Court

a. petitioning the county

The first step is to file a petition with the courts for a name change. This isn't the same thing as a full name change – it's essentially clearing everything with a judge before you go anywhere else. Print out duplicates of each of the following forms and fill them out manually, scanning the completed versions to keep for yourself. Separate each form with paperclips, since they appear very similar and often are multiple pages long.

- *Petition for Recognition of Change of Gender and Sex Identifier, Name Change, and Issuance of New Certificates* ([NC-300](#))
- *Name and Information about the Person Whose Name is to be Changed* ([NC-110](#)) and attach it to the NC-300
- If you are asking to change your information on your child's birth certificate², fill out *Birth Certificate for Child of Petitioner – Attachment* ([NC-311](#)) and attach it to the NC-300. If your child is 18 or older, they must also sign.
- If you are asking to change your marriage certificate, fill out *Marriage License and Certificate – Attachment* ([NC-312](#)) and attach it to NC-300. If your spouse did not sign NC-312, also fill out *Order to Show Cause – Issuance of New Marriage License and Certificate* ([NC-325](#)) (If this applies to you, you will also need to send in an additional request to apply for an updated marriage license alongside your birth certificate on step 3. There will be another fee associated with this.)
- *Civil Case Cover Sheet* ([CM-010](#)) (Some courts do not require this form, as far as I know Alameda County does not. I personally attached it to mine just to be safe)
- *Order Recognizing Change of Gender and Sex identifier, for Name Change, and for Issuance of New Certificate* ([NC-330](#)) (fill out the boxes at the top)
- *Order to Show Cause – Change of Name to Conform to Gender Identity* ([NC-125](#))

If you are under 18, you need the approval of your legal guardian(s). Check your local courthouse's website to ensure there aren't any extra forms they may require.

² As far as I can tell, this is the only additional paperwork a minor would need until step 6. Until then, just be sure to declare "relationship to applicant" as "parent", and as usual have your legal guardian sign everything.

Filing this costs a statewide standard fee of \$435. There are additional surcharges in the counties below:

| County | Surcharge | New Total |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Riverside | \$50 | \$485 |
| San Bernardino | \$35 | \$470 |
| San Francisco | \$10 | \$445 |

This is due to local construction costs, but I was unable to find conclusive information on how long these individual surcharges will be applicable. Should you be a resident of any of these three counties I recommend calling or asking a clerk if it still applies.

This is the most expensive cost of the whole process; every fee afterwards will be considerably less. [Check here](#)³ if you qualify for a fee waiver – if you’re under programs like CalFresh, CalWorks, or MediCal, you likely will. The same should apply for the DMV fee reduction later on. Though, it’s my understanding that court filings and the DMV are the only situations in this process where you would be able to get a waiver, so take that into account if you’re low-income.

Take your original copies of the completed forms with you to the courthouse, as well as some form of government ID and your birth certificate. Find your local courthouse [here](#)⁴ if you’re unsure. As this will be a civil case, you’ll want to make sure you’re going to a court that handles civil cases. I went to the René C. Davidson Superior Court in Oakland. You will tell the civil cases clerk at the front you’re there to petition for a name and gender change, and you’ll likely be given a ticket that will call your number to a window, like the DMV does.

Once called, you will give that clerk your completed paperwork, and then you will pay the fee. The clerk will stamp them before returning a copy to you. They should tell you a date to return to pick up your Order Recognizing Change of Gender and Sex identifier, for Name Change, and for Issuance of New Certificates (NC-330). This is the one where you

³ *Ask for a Fee Waiver if you can't afford filing fees* on the California Courts Self-Help Guide website. You can search “California courts fee waiver” to find this information.

⁴ California Courts’ *Find Your Court* search engine. You only want to go to a courthouse with a tag that has “CIVIL” under the “Matters Served” label. The website provides the courthouses’ operating hours and address.

only filled out the boxes at the top, and I will refer to it in the rest of these instructions as your ***court order***. Remember this, as it's the one you'll be using in future steps.

b. court order

The clerk then sends these stamped forms to a judge, who will make a decision after a waiting period of at least 6 weeks. Most courts do not require you to be present for a hearing, but I recommend asking your clerk just to be safe. Many resources online talk about having to announce this change in a newspaper for a month – don't worry, name and gender changes are exempt from this policy. It's essentially a rubber stamp process, as they just need to make sure you filled out the paperwork correctly and aren't doing this to commit fraud.

When this waiting period is over and the hearing has been held, the clerk will process your court order and return it to you, signed by the judge and filed. You will need at least three certified copies of this form. This means the clerk adds an official stamp to your court order that says the copy is a true copy of the original. Depending on how many legal documents you want to update, you can ask for more than one certified court order. When updating your birth certificate, for example, that agency will take that form without returning it. Plus, these forms could always be lost or damaged. So while one is the absolute minimum, I strongly advise you to request at least three. There's a \$40/copy fee here. Those eligible for a waiver for the initial fee again won't have to pay.

Keep these copies safe! Store them wherever you keep your other official documents, and make sure that you'll have them handy for future steps.

3) Vital Records

There's a good chance you haven't heard of this agency before – I hadn't. Vital Records operates under the California Department of Public Health, and they're in charge of maintaining birth certificates, marriage licenses⁵, etc. Now that you have that court order, they're your next step. This process does not require a visit to the physical government office. Print out and complete the following forms:

- *Application to Amend a Birth Record After a Court Order Name Change* ([VS-23](#))
- *Sworn Statement* ([VS-20](#))

You will need to visit a notary for VS-20. Fill out everything beforehand but the Certificate of Acknowledgement section, as that's for them to complete. Bring your court order and original birth certificate with you. Once the notary has signed off, you can mail these forms, along with the check, to the address given on the first page of VS-23. This has a much longer wait time than any other part of this process – upwards of 10 weeks, check [here](#)⁶ for current estimations. You will be mailed your new birth certificate after this time period. They will, however, keep your court order for their records.

You will get one updated copy of your birth certificate with this amendment, for which there is a \$26 fee. Additional copies afterwards are \$29 each. Again, you should request at least one other copy here. Two is a good idea, keeping the second one in a safe spot. I found that I had to drag these documents all over town during the name and gender change process, so it was much less stressful to know I had another copy safe at home. Below is a chart that breaks down prices for the various vital records you may need.

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Birth Certificate Amendment | \$26 |
| Birth Certificate Additional Copy | \$29 |
| TOTAL CHECK DUE TO CDPH | \$55 |

⁵ Note: if you also filled out form NC-312 in your petition for updating a marriage record, you will need to complete the additional form *Application to Amend a Marriage Record* ([VS-24C](#)), and add an extra \$26. VS-24C has its own requirements, so make sure you provide the stipulated documentation. If you would like an additional copy of the marriage record it is \$17 each.

⁶ The California Department of Public Health's page for Vital Records Processing Times.

While it's not included in the chart to avoid confusion on what sum to write the check, make sure you budget \$15 for the notary's fee. This is the maximum that notaries in California are allowed per signature, and from what I can tell generally what they charge. Additional fees only apply for travel, after-hours service, etc. Most notaries accept cash, debit, and credit, though I recommend double-checking the website of the one you choose just to be safe.

California automatically seals the record on your original birth certificate when you do both a name and gender change, but not if you're only correcting the name. Keep this in mind if you're choosing not to update the gender marker.

4) *Social Security*

At this point in time, gender changes are only possible at the state level, the federal level being limited to name changes only. This affects Social Security and passports.

Here is where we run into the obstacles set by the current administration. You should still complete a name change, as it is needed for the DMV, but also many other matters such as employment, taxes, etc. There is an ongoing lawsuit (Orr v. Trump) against Trump's executive order that mandates this policy, but it is restricted to passports. As far as I can tell, there is no lawsuit specific to Social Security at present. However, should Trump's passport restrictions be overturned by a judge, it would form a solid legal precedent for the restrictions on this step to be removed. If/when it does, repeat this step exactly, just with the change to the gender marker this time instead of name.

After you receive your updated birth certificate, fill out an Application for a Social Security Card ([SS-5](#)) and head down to your local social security office – check [here](#)⁷ if you do not know yours. Bring a copy of your court order, your new birth certificate, and your old SSN card along with the completed SS-5. Though they are unfortunately required to comply with federal-level policy, I consider Social Security to be the most efficient and easy-to-follow agency. There's no fee, and they will mail you a new card in 7-10 business days.

Should you be an individual with a name and gender change at the state level, but only a name change at the federal level, I strongly recommend that you keep certified copies of the name change order on hand, as discussed in Step 2. The inconsistencies at the Social Security level could lead to confusion with employment verification, license renewals, or background checks. Have this documentation ready to clear up any uncertainty. Please also note know that going “stealth” will be harder in workplace contexts, so take that into consideration.

⁷ The Social Security Administration's *Field Office Locator*. They provide the address, and field offices have standard operating hours of 9:00am – 4:00pm, Monday – Friday.

5) DMV

You need to visit the DMV in person. **Before you can go to the DMV, you need to make sure to first update your SSN, as the DMV uses them to verify identities.** Please check dmvwaittimes.org to see how much time you should budget at your local location. You can choose between scheduling an appointment or a walk-in. In my experience, appointments do finish quickly (15-30 minutes in the DMV), but it's very hard to get one that's not weeks to months out. If you don't want to wait that long, you can go in as early as possible (even lining up before they open, depending on how busy yours tends to get), and you will be done anywhere from 45 minutes to a couple hours.

Whether or not you choose to schedule an appointment, you'll need to fill out an application for your new ID or driver's license ahead of time on their website. On your account dashboard, look for the option to change your name and gender. Click on it and enter all necessary information. Take a photo of your confirmation code – the DMV will ask for it during your appointment.

Upload your two proof of residency documents ahead of time. These are needed for Real IDs, which you should definitely sign up for while you're getting a new ID, as it is now required for domestic flights. REALID.dmv.ca.gov lists what's acceptable as proof of residency – I used my unofficial college transcript and my W-2. Bring physical copies of these documents to your appointment. Their system is outdated and may not save the online uploads. Make sure you bring (and scan) every single piece of paper from that document, even if it's blank or doesn't have the relevant information. The DMV only accepts complete versions as proof of identity. Both should be under the same name, whether that's your deadname or your chosen one. You should be fine as long as you have that court order with you proving that this is the same person.

The cost to update and receive a new card is \$39, payable via credit or debit. A fee reduction or waiver is available; you'll need to go to the organization that gives you aid (like CalFresh or CalWORKS) and ask them to give you form [DL-937](#). However, they'll only give you a complete fee waiver if you're homeless. Low-income individuals will only get a reduction, and they unfortunately do not specify online by how much.

As long as you are there specifically for a name and gender change, there is no longer any additional paperwork you need to fill out for this step. When it's time for your appointment, bring with you the following documents:

- A certified copy of the court order
- The last ID you had under your deadname, if applicable
- New birth certificate
- New social security card
- Two proof of residency documents (even if you already uploaded them online)

I also brought my old birth certificate and social security card, but didn't end up needing them.

It's otherwise exactly the same as a normal DMV visit, they'll take your thumbprint and photo, and mail you the card in 1-4 weeks. The time frame seems to vary based on their backlog.

If you have a learner's permit on file (current or expired) but no driver's license, please email me at californianamechange@gmail.com. There's a flaw in the DMV system that may update your name but not your gender. I've figured out how to fix it, and am happy to provide a detailed breakdown if this situation applies to you.

6) *Workplace and Payroll*

This step tends to be less standardized, since the process can look very different depending on the size and structure of your workplace. A good time to start is right after you receive a paycheck, which gives the next pay cycle the best chance of reflecting your updated information. Keep in mind that some systems – especially payroll – may take an additional cycle to fully update. Think back to the identification documents you provided during onboarding, as you will likely be asked for similar materials again. Have the following ready:

- Court order
- Birth certificate
- Driver's license or state ID
- Social Security card

Employers typically only require some of these documents, so provide what is requested rather than assuming you must submit everything. Keeping your supervisor in the loop, reach out to your organization's Human Resources department to request a name update. If your workplace does not have a formal HR office, speak with your supervisor or manager instead. They can coordinate updates across payroll, benefits, directories, ID badges, and other internal records.

If you have concerns about how your employer may handle this process – whether due to workplace culture or general disorganization – it can be helpful to maintain a paper trail. Communicate by email or text when possible, and frame your request as ensuring that your employment records accurately reflect your legal identifying information. You may also note that timely updates help prevent payroll and tax reporting discrepancies on their side, which can encourage the request to be prioritized.

7) *Passport*

At this point in time, gender changes are only possible at the state level, the federal level being limited to name changes only. This affects Social Security and passports.

Unfortunately, there is currently a restriction on updating gender markers on passports. This is just a pause, it does not mean that the decision is final in any way. As mentioned in Step 4, Orr v. Trump is the ACLU lawsuit on this matter that is currently ongoing – I recommend paying attention to its proceedings, as there was a window back in 2025 where said restriction was lifted, and this could happen again. The below information is for changing your name with the Department of State, as that is still fully permitted. Should gender changes become allowed again, I will update this document.

Print all documents associated with your passport application on single-sided paper, as they do not accept double-sided copies. If filling out by hand, use black ink only. If you have any visible facial piercings, either remove them for your photo or attach a written, signed attestation that they are everyday and thus accurate depictions of your appearance.

Below are sections for different categories of applicants – scroll to the one that is relevant to you, after reading each section’s qualifiers in it’s entirety. After you’ve completed your section’s steps, move on to page 19.

Proceed to section a if you:

- Are a first-time adult applicant
- Haven’t had a passport since you were younger than 16
- Your last passport was lost, stolen, or damaged
- Your last passport was issued over 15 years ago

Proceed to section b if you:

- Received a passport AND your court order less than 1 year ago (unlikely)

[categories continued on next page]

Proceed to section c if you:

- Received your passport or your court order more than 1 year ago (most people)

6

Proceed to section d if you:

- Are a minor or the parent of a minor

a. applying for the first time

If you meet the conditions for this section, you are not filing a name change, just requesting a first-time passport. The process will be exactly the same as any other passport application. The steps are available [here](#)⁸, with the instructions below being an explanation of those steps in a more cohesive format.

I recommend using their online form filler for *Application for a US Passport* ([DS-11](#)) and printing it out once you're done, but the blank PDF is also available. Once you've completed that, schedule an appointment at your nearest passport acceptance facility – this will by all likelihood be your local USPS office, you can check [here](#)⁹ for nearby locations. When it's time for your appointment, bring the following with you:

- A printed color photo that meets the passport photo requirements (see page 19 for information on where you can get this done)
- Court order (certified copy only, this will not be returned)
- *Application for a US Passport* ([DS-11](#)), completed BUT do not add signature until in the presence of a State employee
- Birth certificate (This will be mailed back to you separately from your passport)
- B&W copy of your birth certificate
- Driver's license/Identification card (This will be scanned at the office and returned right away, unlike your birth certificate)
- B&W copies of the front and back of your DL/ID
- A check for total fees, minus the \$35 facility acceptance fee – that will be paid separately on location.

Do not staple any pages together. Skip to page 19 to the fees table for the rest of the instructions, including which agency to write the check out to.

⁸ *Apply for Your Adult Passport* on the Department of State's website.

⁹ *Passport Acceptance Facility Search Page*, also on the Department of State's website.

b. correcting a recent passport

Should both your court order *and* your passport be less than a year old (both most apply), you do not have to go to the passport office in person, and can instead mail in your paperwork. Mail the following to the address provided on DS-5504:

- Completed and signed *Application for a US Passport for Eligible Individuals* ([DS-5504](#))
- Your most recent U.S. passport
- Your court order
- One passport photo

You will not have to submit any passport fees unless you want expedited service – see page 19 for details.

c. renewing

Double check that your most recent passport:

- Can be submitted with your application
- Is undamaged (other than normal wear and tear)
- Was issued when you were age 16 or older
- Was issued within the last 15 years

If your passport does not meet all of those requirements, go to section a. If your passport does, mail the following to the address provided on DS-82:

- Completed and signed *US Passport Renewal Application for Eligible Individuals* ([DS-82](#))
- Your most recent U.S. passport
- Your court order
- One color passport photo
- Fees – please use [this tool](#)¹⁰ to calculate total. See page 19 for instructions on which agency to write the check out to, if applicable.

Be sure to mail this via USPS. UPS, FedEx, DHL, and other companies cannot deliver to the PO Box addresses listed on DS-82.

¹⁰ *Passport Fees* on the Department of State's website: *Fee Calculator* link under the *Change or Correct my Passport* section. It will ask questions about your previous passport and what you're updating before determining the fee.

d. minors and parents of minors

This section depends on the exact age of the minor. As both situations are fairly complex, I am not listing the exact steps in the document and am instead linking you to the appropriate Department of State page explaining them. This is so I can be sure that the information you are given is accurate and up-to-date. For both situations, be sure that all involved parents have valid, in-state IDs or some other form of photo identification ready. The parent must be the one writing the checks.

If the minor is under the age of 16, follow the steps [here](#)¹¹. Below are the requirements:

- Both parents or guardians must give their approval for a child to receive a passport and must be present with the child when applying.
- If one or both parents or guardians cannot be present with the child, you will need to bring additional documents.
- Passports for children under age 16 are valid for 5 years only.
- Under-16 passports receive a discount, so be sure to only pay \$100 via check, and write a separate one for \$35 for the facility acceptance fee. Only consult the fee chart on the next page for which agency to make the checks out to, and if you want to pay for expedited service.

If the minor is 16-17, the process is more relaxed. Follow the steps [here](#)¹². Below are the requirements:

- You must apply in person on Form DS-11 for your first adult passport (the same required documents to attach are listed in section a).
- One parent is either present or aware you are applying.
- Passports for applicants 16 and older are valid for 10 years.
- Fees – \$130 plus a \$35 facility processing fee. See the next page for information on which agency to make the checks to.

If you are concerned about getting one or both parents to appear in person for the passport appointment – whether they're out of state, unable to make it, or noncustodial – there is information on each link's instructions on what to do.

¹¹ *Apply for a Child's Passport Under 16* on the Department of State's website.

¹² *Apply for Your Passport as a 16-17 Year Old*, also on the Department of State's website.

fees and associated costs

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Passport Book | \$130 |
| Facility Acceptance Fee – not applicable for sections b and c | \$35 |
| Passport card¹³ | \$30 |
| Passport photo – use a third party service | ±\$15 |
| Optional Expedited Service (2-3 weeks instead of 4-6) | \$60 |
| Optional Expedited Shipping (in 1-2 days) | \$22.05 |

The check payable to "U.S. Department of State" will be the total for the passport book, as well as any extra fees such as the passport card, expedited service and/or shipping. If you are applying in-person (sections a and d), write an additional check payable to the name of the facility: "Postmaster" if USPS Post Office. Ask the clerk if you are unsure.

Though the website says that certain facilities offer photo services in addition to your appointment, I strongly recommend bringing your own. Their equipment is old and often broken, and it's an extra \$20 charge, while you can get the same service elsewhere for cheaper. UPS got mine done in minutes and charged me \$15.

After your documents are accepted, you will be given a ballpark of when to expect your passport to be mailed to you. Check your application status [here](#)¹⁴. It will take up to two weeks to be registered in their system, but you can sign up for email updates in the meantime.

I recommend bringing a certified copy of your court order with you as you travel, keeping it with your passport. It's best to be prepared, as you could be met with anything from an out of date system or an overzealous border agent.

¹³ Do not apply for a passport card in lieu of a book. It is not accepted for international air travel, and can only be used via land or sea travel to Canada, Mexico, and Bermuda. This is only worth getting if you live very close to the border, cross it frequently, and do not plan to fly internationally within the next decade.

¹⁴ *Checking Your Application Status* on the Department of State's website. You will need to provide your last name, date of birth, and the last four digits of your SSN.

7) Various private, medical, miscellaneous organizations

These are organizations such as banks, your insurance providers, and utility companies. Now that you have all your legal documentation updated, you can much more easily update everything else. Private companies all have different policies for updating names, which makes it really frustrating if you don't have every single official record updated. Apple Card just wanted a scan of the court order, but my debit card's bank would only update with a new ID. So, it's best to save this step until you physically have your new birth certificate, social security card, and ID to show them, plus that court order. Find each institution's customer service to ask them to update, and it should generally be a much faster process than government bodies.

I personally have developed a more passive system, now that I've changed my name with important companies such as my bank, medical provider, etc. I just update my name whenever I see the old one is still being used, as it's hard to track down every single organization that may have it. I recommend this approach, so you don't exhaust yourself hunting down each and every one all at once.

Please note that for any joint bank accounts, you will need the other holder to consent/be present for any changes, and that includes name changes. If you are under a parent's insurance, they will need to update your information with their employer, on your behalf, for medical information to update. Keep this in mind if you don't have the most accepting family situation.

One private organization I can give specific instructions for is Kaiser. Their system is very disjointed, there's no clear step-by-step but this is how it works from what I've gathered. If you get Kaiser through an employer, first make sure your name has been updated there. Next, navigate to the "change plan information" page on their website. There's a link to

[Account Change Forms](#)¹⁵, fill these out and mail them to the provided office address. After a while, they'll mail you an updated Kaiser ID card. For me, however, my information on their website didn't update with this. I had to go to my local Member Services office with a copy of the court order for them to scan for their records. After this, the name change was updated.

To update your voter registration card, you will need to re-register. You will also need to de-register your deadname, or you will get duplicate ballots come election season. You can find the form [here](#)¹⁶, though just to be safe I recommend adding a note and an unofficial photocopy of your court order explaining that you would like you de-register your deadname, but not your current name. If possible, time this step to be outside of election season, so you won't need to worry about whether or not you'll get a ballot in time.

¹⁵ *Account Change Form – California*, via Kaiser Permanente website. No form number available.

¹⁶ *California Voter Registration Cancellation Request Form*. No form number available.