

CHANGING NAMES



If you are married and getting a divorce, changing your last name to your maiden name is generally as simple as making the request in the divorce proceeding. Absent a divorce case, however, a person (or a child's parent or guardian) may also seek to change his/her first, middle, and last name for other reasons. Every state has its own laws on this process. The general requirements in Iowa are as follows:

1. File a Verified Petition in the district court of the county where the applicant resides and state: (a) the name at the time the petition is filed of the person whose name is to be changed. If the name change is for a minor child, the petition must state the name of the petitioner and the petitioner's relationship to the minor child; (b) the person's weight, color of hair, color of eyes, race, sex, and date and place of birth; (c) address and any prior residences for the past five years; (d) reason for change of name; (e) all real property in Iowa owned by the applicant; and (f) the name the petitioner proposes to take.
2. A certified copy of the birth certificate must be attached to the petition.
3. If the petitioner is married, the petitioner must give legal notice of the Petition to the spouse. If the petition involves a minor child who is at least 14 years old, the child's written consent to the change of name is required. If the petition involves a minor child under age 14, both parents must file their written consent to the name change. If a parent does not consent to the name change, a Court hearing is set and the other parent's consent may only be waived if the Court finds that: (a) the parent has abandoned the child; (b) the parent has, without good cause, failed to comply with a Court order that he/she support of financially assist the child; or (c) the parent does not object to the name change after having been given proper notice.
4. When the court grants a decree of change of name, the court gives the petitioner a certified copy of the decree and mails an abstract of the decree requiring a name change to be reflected on the birth certificate. The court also sends a certified copy of the decree to the recorder's office in every county in Iowa where the petitioner owns real estate.