

## **General Legal Name Change Instructions for Adults – Lycoming County, Pennsylvania**

**Disclaimer:** The Eastern PA Trans Equity Project is not a provider of legal services and neither it or any of its representatives are licensed attorneys. The information contained in this document concerning name change procedures has been taken from public sources and is meant to give general information to the public for educational purposes only. All such information is provided as-is with no warranty, express or implied, regarding its accuracy. The information was obtained 1 Jan 2020, but laws, regulations and court procedures change and Eastern PA Trans Equity Project is under no obligation to monitor these changes or to update this information. It is your responsibility to seek out and comply with all applicable laws, regulation and court procedures then in effect in order to properly change your name. Please also note that the information provided is not specific to your individual situation. If you have any questions or concerns, including any questions or concerns regarding your individual circumstances, you should speak with an attorney licensed to practice law and actually practicing law in the court jurisdiction in which you live. Use of the Eastern PA Trans Equity Project's services does not, in and of itself or in conjunction with any other circumstance, create an attorney-client relationship between you and Eastern PA Trans Equity Project or any of its representatives. By using this information, you acknowledge and consent to the above and knowingly and intentionally waive and release any claims, causes of action, losses or damages you may have against Eastern PA Trans Equity Project arising out of the information made available to you.

**Important note:** Although the instructions provided herein are compliant with State law, some counties may use a different process. Process also change over time. It is highly recommended that you ***check with your local court clerk or Prothonotary's office to make sure you are following the proper filing procedures.***

### **Step One – Fill out the forms in this packet**

If you have Adobe Acrobat you will see blue or grey boxes that you should complete. If hover your mouse over the boxes you will get a tool tip telling you what to enter. If you do not have Acrobat, you can fill these items in by hand – print neatly!

Make three complete copies of these forms. Two will go to the Court and one will be kept by you.

Use a paper clip to clip the forms together with the cover sheet on top.

### **Step Two – Petitioning the Court**

Take all three copies of the the completed forms you have downloaded from the Eastern PA Trans Equity Project to the Prothonotary’s Office at the county courthouse located at Courthouse at 48 West Third Street, Williamsport, PA on the first floor. Tell the Prothonotary that you want to file a “petition for change of name and a motion to waive publication.” The Prothonotary will examine the paperwork for accuracy and provide additional guidance as needed. You will be required to pay a filing fee.

While you are at the Prothonotary’s Office, ask them for a fingerprint card(s).

### **Step Three – Fingerprints**

Take the fingerprint cards to the State Police barracks at 899 Cherry Street in Montoursville, PA. Tell them you need your fingerprints taken for a name change petition. They will make your fingerprints on the cards and give them back to you.

Take the cards back to the Prothonotary’s office. You must also take with you your birth certificate, social security card and a photo ID (such as driver’s license) and the second copy of your petition. The Prothonotary sends the cards with the copy of your petition to the State Police in Harrisburg where a background check is performed. (This takes about two weeks.) The State Police then sends a report of this background check to the Prothonotary and it is placed in the court file. You will also receive a copy of the report in the mail from the Prothonotary. Bring this report to the hearing.

### **Step Four - Publishing**

Unless you asked the Court to waive the requirement that you publish notice of the hearing, you will have to publish notice of the hearing. (If you did ask for notice to be waived, and that request was granted by the Court, the “Order Scheduling Hearing and Directing Notice by Publication” will not be signed by the judge, or the part directing notice will be crossed out. If this is the case, you may skip this step.)

After you get the copy of your petition back in the mail, fill out the two copies of the “Notice to be published”. One will be taken to the Sun-Gazette and one will be taken to the Lycoming Reporter. Fill out both of them the same way.

- First blank line - Fill in the Docket No. where it says NO.\_\_\_\_\_.
- Second blank line - Fill in your name after “In re: Name Change of”.
- Third blank line - Fill in the date you filed the Petition. This date is stamped on the first page of your petition.
- Fourth and Fifth blank lines – Fill in your current name and then the name you want the Court to change your name to.
- Sixth, seventh and eighth blank lines – Fill in the date, time and courtroom number. This information will appear on the cover sheet you got back from the Prothonotary.

Take one of the Notices to the Sun-Gazette at 252 West Fourth Street, Williamsport, PA and the other one to the Lycoming Reporter at 25 West Third Street, Suite 803, Williamsport, PA. You need to have the Notice published once in each of these publications. You will have to pay for the publication. You will receive a Proof of Publication from each place. Bring both of these to the hearing.

Make sure you take these Notices to the publishers as soon as you get the papers back from the Prothonotary because Notice must be published at least 20 days prior to your final name change hearing.

### **Step Five – Judgement/Name Search**

The business day before the hearing (go on Friday if your hearing is Monday), go to the Prothonotary's office and ask for a Judgment Certificate (this is a certificate stating that there are no financial judgments against you). The fee is usually under \$20. You will need to bring this Certificate to the hearing.

Note: If you have lived in any other counties within the past 5 years you will need to get judgment searches done in those counties as well. This can be done as soon as you file the paperwork in step two.

***Court to waive the publication requirement.*** You will need to pay the publications for the advertisements.

### **Step Six – Your Name Change Hearing**

Dress in clothes you would wear to a job interview and appropriate to your gender.

Bring a copy of all paperwork with you including:

- 1) your copy of the petition with cover sheet that you got back from the Prothonotary
- (2) the Judgment Certificate(s)
- (3) the Background check report you got from the Prothonotary
- (4) the proofs of publication from the Sun-Gazette and the Lycoming Reporter (unless this requirement was waived).

Go to the assigned Courtroom at least 15 minutes before the scheduled hearing. Check-in with the Court Officer to ensure your case is on the docket and then wait for your case to be called.

Address the Judge as "Your Honor" Example: "Good morning Your Honor, if it please the Court I am requesting consideration of my name change petition. The Judge may ask you why you want to do this, and you can tell him/her the reasons why you want this to happen.

Assuming no one objects and the paperwork has been properly completed, the Judge should sign an order granting your petition. It is possible that you will be able to obtain certified copies of the Order the same day.

### ***Step Seven – Obtaining Copies of Your Name Change Order***

It is recommended that you obtain a minimum of five copies of your Name Change Order as you will need official copies for changing your identification documents (Driver's License, Social Security Card, Passport, Birth Certificate). You should also retain a copy for your personal records that is kept in a safe place. You may want additional copies for changing your medical records at the hospital, your bank records, your employer and various other entities with which you may need to have records changed to reflect your new name and gender.

## **CHANGING YOUR IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS**

1. Physician's Letter: Attached to this document is a template of a letter for completion by the physician who is treating you for gender dysphoria, i.e. Hormone Replacement Therapy and/or gender confirmation surgery. This is needed to effect gender change on your Pennsylvania birth certificate.
2. Pennsylvania Driver's License/State ID: Complete Form [DL-32](#). Take that form, a certified copy of your name change and your existing driver's license to the PennDOT office where you will apply for your new driver's license (typically form [DL-80](#)). Assuming no problems, you will be issued a new license, with a new photo and it will reflect your new gender. Congratulations!
3. Social Security: Complete form [SS-5](#). Go to the local Social Security Office with your existing Social Security Card, a certified copy of your name change court order and your current birth certificate (can be in your old name) or immigration documents. You will be processed for a new card with your new name and will receive it in the mail in about a week. We strongly recommend that you do this in-person as Social Security often loses paperwork in the mail. Note: Social Security no longer requires a doctor's certification to change the gender marker ([see this link](#)), however this is a new policy and many agents may not be aware of this policy change. Therefore, we recommend bringing a copy of the doctor's letter with you to be safe.
4. Passport: If you are applying for your first passport, or if you already have a full-validity passport, use Form [DS-11](#) and select "M" or "F" or "X" for your gender. You do not need to provide a medical certification or physician's letter. Follow the steps listed on the State Department's [Apply in Person page](#). Please download your form and complete it by hand in black ink.
5. Pennsylvania Birth Certificate: Here is the information regarding acquisition of a corrected Pennsylvania Birth Certificate:

To modify information, complete the appropriate form, based on the age of the individual whose record needs to be amended.

- Request to Modify an Infant's Birth Record (Age Less Than 1 Year Old)
- Request to Modify a Child's Birth Record (Age 1 Year to Less Than 7 Years Old)
- Request to Modify a Child's Birth Record (Age 7 Years to Less Than 14 Years Old)
- Request to Modify a Child's Birth Record (Age 14 Years to Less Than 18 Years Old)
- Request to Modify an Adult's Birth Record (Age 18 Years Old and Above)

Mail the completed form, your identification, payment, and documentary evidence (see each form for specific details) to:

PA Department of Health

Bureau of Health Statistics and Registries

ATTN: Birth Registry

555 Walnut Street, 6th Floor

Harrisburg, PA 17101-1934

To improve the processing time for your application, ensure the following:

- That you have completed Part 1 of the form in its entirety
- That you have included an acceptable form of ID as outlined in Part 2
- That you have included payment if applicable as outlined in Part 3
- That you have completed Part 4 in its entirety. Please ensure that you have provided the full and correct spelling of the individual's name as it currently appears on the individual's birth certificate.
- That you have only completed information in Part 5 that needs modified on the individual's birth record. Please do not complete fields in this section that do not need modified.
- That you have signed and notarized (if applicable) the form as outlined in Part 6.
- That you have provided acceptable documentary evidence as outlined in Part 7.
- Please note that the specific requirements for Parts 1, 6, and 7 vary based on the form you are submitting. The forms submitted must align with the age of the subject at the time you are completing the form and submitting to BHSR.

SAMPLE PHYSICIAN LETTER (Must be on Physician letterhead)

Letter Certifying Applicant's Gender Change

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
(Physician's Full Name)

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
(Physician's medical license/certificate number) (Issuing State/Country of license/certificate)

am the attending physician of and have a doctor/patient relationship with

\_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_.  
(Name of Patient) (Date of Birth of Patient)

\_\_\_\_\_, has had  
(Name of Patient)

appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition to the new gender of

male female.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the foregoing is true and correct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Physician

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Physician's Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Typed Name of Physician

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Physician's Phone Number



IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF LYCOMING COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

In re: Change of Name of \_\_\_\_\_ : NO.  
:   
: Civil Action - Law

**ORDER SCHEDULING HEARING AND DIRECTING NOTICE BY PUBLICATION**

And Now, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, upon motion for the Petitioner, it is Ordered that a hearing on the Petition for Change of Name is hereby fixed for \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ .m. in Courtroom number \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lycoming County Courthouse, 48 West Third Street, Williamsport, PA 17701.

The Petitioner is directed to give notice of the filing of the Petition and of the date of the hearing by publication in two newspapers of general circulation in the County, one of which may be the official paper for the publication of legal notices in this County.

BY THE COURT:

\_\_\_\_\_  
J.



IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF LYCOMING COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

In re: Change of Name of \_\_\_\_\_ : NO.  
:   
: Civil Action – Law

**ORDER**

AND NOW, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, after a hearing on the Petition for Name Change filed by \_\_\_\_\_, and upon presentation of proof that there are no judgments or decrees of record or any other matter of like character against \_\_\_\_\_, upon finding there is no lawful objection to the name change, upon finding that there has been full compliance with the fingerprint requirements of 54 Pa.C.S. Section 702, upon good cause shown, it is Ordered and Decreed that the Petition is GRANTED.

The name of \_\_\_\_\_ shall be and is hereby changed to:  
\_\_\_\_\_.

BY THE COURT:

\_\_\_\_\_  
J.

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF LYCOMING COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

In re: Change of Name of \_\_\_\_\_ : NO.  
:   
: Civil Action - Law

**PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME**

The Petitioner respectfully represents the following:

1. The Petitioner is \_\_\_\_\_, who resides at \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

2. The Petitioner was born on \_\_\_\_\_, and is over the age of eighteen years.

3. During the five (5) years preceding the filing of this Petition, the Petitioner has resided at the following locations:

Address:	Dates of residence: (from) - (to)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4. There are no judgments or decrees pending against the Petitioner.

5. The Petitioner requests that his/her name be changed to: \_\_\_\_\_.

6. The reasons for this requested change of name are:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Petitioner requests the Court waive the requirement of publication of notice because notice would jeopardize Petitioner's safety for the following reasons:

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WHEREFORE, the Petitioner requests the Court schedule a hearing on this petition, waive the requirement that notice be given, and enter an Order changing Petitioner's name as requested herein.

Respectfully Submitted,

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I verify the statements made in this Petition are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that false statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. §4904, relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

Petitioner's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

WHEREFORE, the Petitioner requests the Court schedule a hearing on this petition, direct that notice be given, and enter an Order changing Petitioner's name as requested herein.

Respectfully Submitted,

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I verify the statements made in this Petition are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that false statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. §4904, relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

Petitioner's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTICE TO BE PUBLISHED**

**INTENTION TO CHANGE NAME**

**IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF  
LYCOMING COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

**NO.** \_\_\_\_\_

**In re: Name Change of** \_\_\_\_\_

Notice is hereby given that on \_\_\_\_\_(date), a Petition was filed in the above-named Court, praying for a decree changing the name of \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

The Court has fixed \_\_\_\_\_(date) at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) in Courtroom number \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lycoming County Courthouse, 48 West Third Street, Williamsport, Pennsylvania 17701 as the time and place for the hearing on said petition, when and where all persons interested may appear and show cause, if any they have, why the prayer of the petitioner should not be granted.

**NOTICE TO BE PUBLISHED**

**INTENTION TO CHANGE NAME**

**IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF  
LYCOMING COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

**NO.** \_\_\_\_\_

**In re: Name Change of** \_\_\_\_\_

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