

**PIERCE COUNTY DISTRICT COURT**  
**930 Tacoma Avenue S., Room 239**  
Tacoma, WA 98402

**NAME CHANGE INFORMATION**

**WHERE TO FILE**

Any person desiring to change his/her name or that of his/her child may apply to the District Court in which they reside. Pierce County District Court ex parte hours for processing name changes are 9:00 am to 11:30 and 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm, Monday through Thursday. Name Changes are processed at Pierce County District Court, 930 Tacoma Avenue S., Room 239, Tacoma, WA 98402.

**FILING**

To petition the Court you must complete a **Petition for Change of Name and Order Changing Name**. **The forms, with interview questions, are available online:**

[www.piercecountywa.org/districtcert](http://www.piercecountywa.org/districtcert) . Birth certificates must be provided. The petition must contain a statement as to why the name change is in the best interest of the child.

The filing fee is \$157.00 CASH OR CREDIT CARD (VISA or MASTERCARD), payable at the time of filing the Petition and Order. The breakdown of the fee is as follows:

\$63.00 - Filing Fee	\$15.00 - Certification Fee
\$62.00 - Auditor's Recording fee	\$ 7.00 - Administrative Fee
\$10.00 - DRC Fee	

**MINOR CHILD NAME CHANGE**

If you are requesting a name change for a minor (under 18 years of age), and both birth parents are present, both must sign the Petition for Change of Name. If there is an absent birth parent, they must provide an affidavit stating agreement with and consent to the minor's name change. A blank affidavit form is available from the clerk. If the absent birth parent does not consent to the name change, a hearing is set and petitioner must serve the other birth parent and provide proof of service to the court.

If the whereabouts of the other birth parent is unknown, the Court will require the petitioner to publish a notice of hearing in the newspaper where the absent parent was last known to reside. The petitioner is also required to mail a copy of the notice to the last known address of the absent birth parent, by certified return receipt.

District Court has adopted the following policy for persons requesting a name change:

1. Persons under ten (10) need not be present at the hearing.
2. All persons between the ages of 10 and 17 years must be present.
3. Persons 18 years and older either must be present or have a waiver of appearance approved by the judge hearing the request.

**CRIMINAL CONVICTION**

If you have been convicted of a felony, you must supply the court with a certified copy of the judgment and an order vacating judgment or restoration of civil rights before your petition will be considered by the judicial officer.

If you are still subject to the penalties of said conviction and your civil rights have not been restored, you are not eligible for a name change.

## **FAMILY NAME CHANGE**

If a family name is changed (i.e., father, mother, minor children), each person must submit the following: Petition for Change of Name; Order Changing Name; birth certificate.

A family name change is filed under one case number and one \$157.00 filing fee. However, there is an additional \$77.00 charge for each person changing their name beyond the first petitioner to cover certification and recording costs.

## **COPIES**

Immediately after the Order is signed, the Court provides two certified copies of the Order Changing Name. Additional certified copies are \$5.00 each.

## **REQUIRED NOTIFICATION TO OTHER AGENCIES**

One certified copy will be recorded with the Pierce County Auditor. The \$62.00 recording fee and \$5.00 certification fee is included in your filing fee. After recording at the Auditor's office, this copy will be mailed to the petitioner.

If you or your minor child were born in Washington State, the **Department of Vital Records requires a certified copy of the name change**. You must mail the certified copy to the State Department of Vital Records, P.O. Box 9709 ET-14, Olympia, WA 98504-9709. Approximately four (4) weeks after you have sent the **certified** copy of the Order Changing Name to the Department of Vital Records, you may request a copy of the birth certificate reflecting the name change from the local office. The charge for this is \$20.00 cash, credit card, or certified check. Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The local Vital Records Department is located at 3629 South D, Tacoma, WA 98408; counter hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number is 253-798-6413. If reverting to a maiden name after a divorce, there is no need to change your name through Vital Records.

The Social Security Department requests and keeps a certified copy of the name change. The address of the local office is: 2608 South 47<sup>th</sup> Street, Tacoma, WA 98408.

You must change the name on your driver's license. The Department of Licensing requires a copy, not certified, to issue a new license.

If you are in the military service, you will need an additional certified copy for your military records.

## **HEARING AND COURTROOM PROCEDURE**

Name Changes may be heard immediately depending on courtroom availability. If the courtroom schedule does not allow for this, the clerk will set your Name Change hearing on the next available date. When the Judge calls your name, report to the front of the Courtroom. The Judge will ask you questions regarding the name change. If the Judge allows the name change, you will return to the counter and your certified copies will be made.

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**MINOR NAME CHANGE INFORMATION**

The absent parent must agree to change the name(s) of the minor child(ren) or be notified of your intent to change the names and given an opportunity to appear at the hearing. **PLEASE NOTE:** This agreement or notification is required even if the absent birth parent is not named on the child's birth certificate.

If there is **written consent** from the absent birth parent to change the minor's name, the hearing on the name change may be presented ex parte as soon as a Judicial Officer is available. The written consent **MUST** be in the form of a notarized affidavit. If you are unsure about the format of the written consent, please ask the clerk.

If there is no written consent from the absent birth parent, notice must be given to the absent parent. The Court will provide you with a **Notice of Hearing** form. This notice will advise the absent parent of your intent to change the minor child's name and the date and time of the hearing. You must file a statement (proof) at the time of the hearing that the notice was served on the absent birth parent.

**Personal service** means that the absent parent is personally given a copy of the Notice of Hearing and Petition. These documents **MUST** be given to the absent parent at least twenty (20) days prior to the hearing date. **YOU CANNOT PERSONALLY SERVE** the absent parent. Service of the Notice and Petition can be accomplished by a **Process Server** who will give the documents to the absent parent and provide the Court with an affidavit of service stating when and where the absent parent was served. You can find a Process Server in the yellow pages under Process Servers. There will be a charge for this service.

You may serve the absent parent **by mailing** a copy of the Notice and Petition by **CERTIFIED MAIL, RESTRICTED DELIVERY, with a RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**. Restricted delivery tells the post office that only the addressee may sign for the mail. You will receive the return receipt bearing the absent parent's signature which you must present to the court at the hearing. If someone other than the absent parent signs for the Notice and Petition or the absent parent refuses to sign for the certified mail, personal service must be made which is explained above.

If you do not know the address of the absent parent, you may serve through **Publication** of the notice in the newspaper. Before publication is allowed, **every effort must be made to locate the absent parent**. You should contact relatives, friends or associates of the absent birth parent to find him/her. You must file a Motion and Declaration in support of Publication in Lieu of Personal Service which they judge must approve before publication. This form is available from the clerk.

The clerk will provide you with a copy of the Notice of Hearing form which must be published in a newspaper. There are several newspapers to choose from in any city and they can be found in the yellow pages. Some newspapers specialize in publishing legal notices. You may wish to compare rates for publication in different newspapers as publishing this notice can be expensive. You must choose a newspaper that will provide an **AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION**. This is the proof that the Notice of Hearing was published. The Notice **must** be published once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks. The Notice **must** be published in a newspaper in the city of the last known address of the absent birth parent.

If the absent parent is the father, his whereabouts cannot be found, and/or his name is **not** listed on the minor's birth certificate, the Notice of Hearing must be published where the child was born.

Proof of publication **must** be provided to the Court. Be sure to choose a newspaper for publication that will give you an **AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION**. The affidavit must have a copy of the notice published by the newspaper included and must show the dates the notice was published.

On the scheduled hearing date, **YOU MUST APPEAR** at the Court at 930 Tacoma Avenue S., Room 239, Tacoma, 98402. **If the minor child is over ten (10) years of age, he/she must appear with you.** At the hearing, **YOU MUST provide:**

- A copy of the birth certificate of the minor child.
- The affidavit of service on the absent birth parent OR affidavit of publication.

**If proof of service is not provided or found to be insufficient, the name change for the minor child will not be granted.**