



# **BECOMING ME**

MONTANA TRANSGENDER  
NAME CHANGE GUIDE

# Montana State Name Change Process for Transgender Individuals

## Table of Contents

Name Change Process Overview  
Page 2 – 3

“Order for Name Change With Sealed Record”  
Page 4

“Petitioners Affidavit in Support of Motion for Name Change”  
Page 5 - 6

“Petition for Name Change”  
Page 7 - 8

“Re the Matter of Name Change”  
Page 9 - 11

“Order Setting Hearing”  
Page 12

Montana Birth Certificate Affidavit  
Page 13

Montana Gender Designation Form  
Page 14

Drivers Licenses Services  
Page 15

Montana Judicial Court Listing  
Page 16

Legal Disclaimer  
Page 17

Resources Information  
Page 17

## I. Introduction

The information included in this packet follow the standards of Montana State Law as outlined in the Montana Code Annotated. The information included in this packet has been modified to provide a successful and safe change in name and gender, and utilizes a sealed record basis to ensure the utmost privacy and to ensure the safety of transgender individuals in the state of Montana. This article will outline the name change process, as well as driver's license services, social security services, and will discuss current passport, social security and birth certificate issues.

## II. Montana State Legal Name / Gender Change

To facilitate a safe and successful change in name and gender, please use the specific forms provided in this packet, as their wording is transgender specific and ensures safety and privacy. The forms included are based on the assumption that the petitioner is pre-operative, and suggest that the petitioner has intentions of proceeding with surgical procedure, however, in no way, legally obligate the petitioner to have any surgical procedure performed. These forms may be modified to more specific to a particular individual's needs or situation as see fit. If changes occur outside of basic wording changes, it is highly recommended that the forms be looked over by an individual of legal capacity practicing within the State of Montana to ensure an efficient name change process.

The forms used in the name change process are as outlined.

- 1) *"Order for Name Change With Sealed Record"*  
The purpose of this form is to state the reasoning for a sealed record and to ensure that privacy and safety are taken into consideration with utmost respect.
- 2) *"Petitioners Affidavit in Support of Motion for Name Change"*  
The purpose of this form is outline the reasoning for the name change, and to ask the court to support and honor the request for name change
- 3) *"Petition for Name Change"*  
The purpose of this form is to outline the required information and reasoning of the name change, and to petition for actual name change.
- 4) *"Re the Matter of Name Change"*  
The purpose of this form is to outline and brief the court on the basis of the name change in question and of the sealed record basis and waiver of publication.
- 5.) *"Order Setting Hearing"*  
The purpose of this form is to order the placement and setting for a court hearing for name change.
- 6.) *"Affidavit of Inability to Pay"* (Optional)  
The purpose of this form is to assist with filing fees associated with a court hearing and filing of name change. This form should only be used if you are not financially capable of paying the associated fees.

Once paperwork is completed, the petitioner may approach the county courthouse of the county in which they reside to file the name change process. Initial filing of the name change process is generally no longer than a fifteen to thirty minute process.

All hearings for name changes on a sealed record basis are done in a closed courtroom, to ensure the complete privacy and safety to the petitioner, as outlined in the court order documents. Once this process is complete, the petitioner will file the completed documents with the county courthouse records department. At this time, the petitioner can request notarized copies of the legal name change. It is suggested that multiple notarized documents be made, one for each instance of documentation change where a notarized copy would be required, i.e. drivers license services, vital statistics department, social security department, etc.

### III. Montana Drivers License Services

The State of Montana Department of Motor Vehicles drivers license services has transgender specific policies in place which will change the name, sex marker, and associated information on any Montana State Drivers license prior to surgical procedure to ensure utmost safety for transgender individuals. Though not required, a letter of support from either a therapist, medical doctor, or both is highly recommended to ensure efficiency of this process.

### IV. Montana Vital Statistics

As of December 17, 2017, Montana will issue a new birth certificate with an updated name and gender upon receipt of an affidavit from the individual. No court order or medical documentation is required. The department will also accept a government-issued ID showing the correct gender or a court order.

To apply for an updated birth certificate, an applicant must submit:

1. **Correction Affidavit** signed by the applicant.
2. Copy of your photo ID.
3. Check or money order for the applicable fees (\$27 for one amended certificate, additional copies are \$5 each)
4. One of the following items as documentation of gender:
  1. A completed **Gender Designation Form**, signed by the individual or their parent or representative (no medical signature required); or
  2. A government-issued identification displaying the correct gender designation; or
  3. A certified copy of an order from a court with appropriate jurisdiction indicating that the gender has been changed.

Submit the application to:

**Montana Vital Records**

PO Box 4210

Helena, Montana 59604

You can call Vital Records at 406-444-9039 or 406-444-4226 for additional assistance.

### V. Social Security

The social security department will replace the sex marker on social security information once one of the following has been met; an individual can provide a full-validity 10-year U.S. passport showing the correct gender, a state-issued birth certificate showing the correct gender, a court order recognizing the correct gender, or assigned letter from a provider confirming you have had appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition

Your Old Name and Address

Court Information Here – I.E. “Montana Fourth Judicial District Court, Missoula County”

In re the matter of  
A name change for  
Your Old Name Here  
Petitioner

Dept. No.  
Cause No.  
Order for name change with sealed record

The petition for name change with sealed record, filed herein on the \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_\_, came for hearing this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_\_ on the motion of the petitioner. Petitioner appeared in person and gave testimony.

This court granted petitioner’s name Old Name Here be hereby changed to New Name Here, and that the petitioner shall be entitled to request a substitute birth certificate be issued to reflect the new name, without reference to the former name. Further, upon Petitioner’s request a new birth certificate should be generated reflecting the change in name and gender. All records of this change of name are to be kept confidential, and shall not be released to any person other than the petitioner. Petitioner shall be entitled to apply for a new social security number and new driver’s license under this new name.

The court hereby ORDERS that this record shall be sealed, and that no person other than the petitioner, shall be permitted access. The court further ORDERS that any request for access by a person or agency other than the petitioner be heard by the court only after notice to the petitioner.

Dated this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Court Judge

Old/Current Name

Current Address

Here

Court Information Here – I.E. “Montana Fourth Judicial District Court, Missoula County”

In re the matter of  
A name change for  
Old/Current Name  
Petitioner

Dept. No.  
Cause No.  
Petitioner’s affidavit in support of motion for  
name change with sealed record

I, Old/Current Name , being of lawful age, and being duly sworn upon, depose and say:

1. I am the petitioner in this matter.
2. I request that the court waive the publication requirement because of concerns for my safety.
3. The only reason for this name change is because I am undergoing gender reassignment:
  - a. I am transitioning from Male/Female to Male/Female.
  - b. I am not requesting this name change for the purpose of concealment of my identity or for any fraudulent or illegal purpose.
4. I am not attempting to hide a criminal record or to avoid criminal prosecution.
5. I am not attempting to avoid any creditors with this name change action.
6. Once granted a name change I will promptly notify all appropriate state and federal government agencies, including the State Department of Motor Vehicles and the Social Security Administration.
7. I have resided in Montana for my entire life and it is my permanent home.

Dated this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Old / Current Name

State of Montana     )  
                                  ) ss  
County of County     )

**Old/Current Name** , being first duly sworn on oath, says that he is the petitioner in the above-entitled proceeding; that he has read the forgoing affidavit and knows the contents thereof; and that the matter, facts and thing stated therein are true to the best of his knowledge and belief.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Old/Current Name**

Signed and sworn to before me on this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_\_\_, by  
**Old/Current Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public for the State of Montana  
Residing at \_\_\_\_\_  
My commission expires \_\_\_\_\_

Old / Current Name

Current Address

Here

Court Information Here – I.E. “Montana Fourth Judicial District Court, Missoula County”

In re the matter of  
A name change for  
Your name here again  
Petitioner

Dept. No.  
Cause No.  
Petition for name change with sealed record  
and waiver of publication

COMES NOW THE PETITIONER, **old name here**, and asks the court to grant his petition for name change with sealed record and waive the requirement for publication. The request is based on the following:

1. The petitioner is a natural born citizen, born at **City and State of Birth Here**
2. The petitioner currently resides at **current address here**
3. The petitioner’s current full name is **old / current name here**
4. The petitioner proposes to change his name to **new name here**
5. The petitioner request the court to order the name change because **she/he** is in the process of gender reassignment procedures, and a name change will allow the gender reassignment process to proceed.
6. The petitioner does not bring this name change action to avoid or defraud creditors, to hide a criminal record, to avoid criminal prosecution, or for any other reason than he is transitioning from male to female and wishes to change his name.
7. The petitioner requests the name change action to proceed on a sealed-record basis due to the risks to his safety. The request to seal the record is permitted under 27-31-201(3) M.C.A.
8. The safety of the petitioner is at risk if publication is required.
9. A brief in support of the petitioner for sealed record and waiver of publication is filled with this petition.
10. The petitioner request the court order a new birth certificate should be generated reflecting the change in name and gender. The name change and new birth certificate will allow the petitioner to continue wit the process of gender reassignment.
11. If the petitioner’s request to seal the record is denied and if the waiver of publication is denied, members of the community at large will learn of the petitioner’s gender reassignment and name change. The petitioner fears this will result in harassment or physical harm.
12. The petition for name change with sealed record and waiver of publication is supported by petitioner’s affidavit, filed simultaneously.



WHEREFORE, Petitioner respectfully prays that the court grant the following relief:

1. Enter a decree changing petitioner's name.
2. Order that the record be sealed and that no person other than the petitioner be permitted access.
3. Order that any request for access by a person or agency other than the petitioner be heard by the court after notice to the petitioner.
4. Order that a new birth certificate should be generated reflecting the change in name and gender.
5. All other relief which the court deems proper.

DATED this **current date here**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**old / current name here**

Your Old/Current name  
Current Address  
Here

Court Information Here – I.E. “Montana Fourth Judicial District Court, Missoula County”

In re the matter of  
A name change for  
Old/Current name here  
Petitioner

Dept. No.  
Cause No.  
Brief in support of petition for sealed record  
and waiver of publication and proposed order

Comes now the Petitioner, Old/Current name here, and moves the court to order that the name-change action proceed on a sealed-record basis due to safety risks to the petitioner. Petitioner moves the court order that the requirement for publication be waived, due to the safety of the petitioner being at risk from publication.

#### BRIEF

Petitioners request to seal the record is specifically permitted under the name change statute 27-31-201(3) M.C.A., which provides in pertinent part: “The court may allow a petition to proceed on a sealed-record basis when probable cause is shown that the safety of the petitioner is at risk and the judge is satisfied that the petitioner is not attempting to avoid debt or to hide a criminal record.”

In the case, the petitioner is undergoing gender reassignment procedures. Due to the cultural stigma associated with such procedures, the petitioner is fearful for his safety if the general public is aware of his undergoing gender reassignment procedures. Petitioner’s situation is exactly what this provision of the statute was meant to address. It is appropriate and fitting to seal the record to protect the petitioner’s safety.

However, sealing the record is not a complete protection to discovery by the public. A name change must generally be published in a newspaper in the county for four successive weeks, 27-31-201(1) M.C.A., in this situation publishing in a newspaper would pose an extreme risk, due to the cultural stigma associated with gender reassignment. Therefore, in order to give the petitioner better protection through the name change process, and to more fully carry out the clear legislative intent in 27-31-201(3) M.C.A., the requirement to publish the name should be waived.

Finally any request for access by a person or agency to the sealed record should be heard by the court after notice to the petitioner. This will give the petitioner advance notice if anyone is attempting to track him down.

Date this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_\_

---

Old/Current name here

Order

The court having reviewed petitioner's motion and affidavit hereby orders that,

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The petitioner's motion is hereby GRANTED, and this name change action shall proceed on a sealed-name basis with all documents sealed.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The petitioner's motion is hereby GRANTED, in that any request for access to this file by a person or agency other than the petitioner shall be heard by the court only after notice to the petitioner.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The petitioner motion to waive the requirements of publication of the name change is hereby GRANTED, and there shall be no requirement to publish this name change.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Court Judge

Court Information Here – I.E. “Montana Fourth Judicial District Court, Missoula County”

In re the matter of  
A name change for

Dept. No.  
Cause No.

Old name here  
Petitioner

Order Setting Hearing

This court orders:  
Name Change Hearing

The hearing on the petition for name change with sealed record and waiver of publication filed in this case is set for:

- Date \_\_\_\_\_
- Time \_\_\_\_\_
- Place \_\_\_\_\_ County Courthouse

The petitioner, **Old Name here**, requests that waiver of publication be granted for said requested hearing on the grounds that if the waiver of publication is denied, members of the community at large will learn of the petitioner’s gender reassignment and name change. The petitioner fears this will result in harassment or physical harm.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Court Judge

**Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services**  
**Office of Vital Records (PO Box 4210, Helena, MT 59604)**

**AFFIDAVIT**  
**For Correction of a Vital Record**

I hereby swear that the record of BIRTH for \_\_\_\_\_  
(Current Name on Record)  
who was born in the city of \_\_\_\_\_ County of \_\_\_\_\_  
on \_\_\_\_\_ is incorrect or incomplete as follows:  
(Current date on record)

**The record now shows:**

**The true facts are:**

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I have the consent of all parties concerned in stating these true facts. I further declare that if the corrected certificate is questioned, I will assume the responsibility of furnishing proof of the corrected item to the questioning agency. It is recommended to retain copies of all supporting documents.

The probative value of an altered certificate of birth is determined by the judicial or administrative body before whom the certificate is offered as evidence. 50-15-204(5) M.C.A.

I further swear that I represent the individual as:  Self  Parent  Attorney  Other \_\_\_\_\_  
(Check one) (Specify)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

**Verification of Signer's ID Is Mandatory**

State of \_\_\_\_\_

County of \_\_\_\_\_

This record was signed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me on \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Applicant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Notary's Signature)

[Official Stamp]

**Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services  
Office of Vital Records (PO Box 4210, Helena, MT 59604)**

**Gender Designation Form**

I hereby submit this Gender Designation Form for the record of BIRTH

for \_\_\_\_\_  
(Current Name on Record)

who was born in the city of \_\_\_\_\_ County of \_\_\_\_\_  
(City of Birth) (County of Birth)

on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Date of Birth)

This individual has undergone gender transition or has an intersex condition, and the gender designation on this birth certificate should be corrected to \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Updated Gender Designation)

This request for gender designation is for the purpose of ensuring the birth certificate accurately reflects their gender and is not for any fraudulent or other unlawful purpose.

This form should be submitted with a completed Affidavit for Correction of a Vital Record, and may be submitted with a court order for change of name if the applicant also wishes to change the name on the birth certificate.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Registrant:

- Self
- Parent
- Guardian
- Legal Representative
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Date

Montana Driver's Services

Re: Name and Gender Designation for Patient / Client Name

Patient / Client Name has been a client of mine since Date for treatment of Gender Identity Disorder (DSM-IV 302.85). Patient / Client Name is under both medical and counseling treatment to achieve a change of both sex and gender as per the International Standards of Care as defined by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health. He/She is currently receiving hormone replacement therapy and will eventually acquire sex reassignment surgery.

As defined by the medically accepted Standards of Care, Name must begin a period of living in her new gender role in all aspects of her life for a period of at least one year prior to his/her surgery. This is to determine the psychological and physiological suitability of her making a permanent and irreversible change of sex.

To facilitate this he/she had completed a legal change of name in Insert County Here County District Court which designated that his/her birth certificate and all other legal documents be changed to reflect his/her new legal name and legal gender status as male/female.

His/Her acquisition of a new Driver's License reflecting these changes will greatly facilitate this process for Patient / Client Name and helps protect him/her from undue harassment and possible harm.

Prompt attention to this matter is essential.

Sincerely,

Physician / Counselor Name  
Contact Information

# Judicial Courts of Montana

## **1<sup>st</sup> Judicial District Courts**

Lewis & Clark / Broadwater County

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District Courts**

Butte / Silverbow County

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District Courts**

Deer Lodge / Granite / Powell County

## **4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Courts**

Missoula / Mineral County

## **5<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Courts**

Madison / Beaverhead / Jefferson  
County

## **6<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Courts**

Park / Sweetgrass County

## **7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Courts**

Dawson / McCone / Richland / Prairie  
Wibaux County

## **8<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Courts**

Cascade County

## **9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Courts**

Glacier / Pondera / Teton / Toole  
County

## **10<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Courts**

Fergus / Judith Basin / Petroleum  
County

## **11<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Courts**

Flathead County

## **12<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Courts**

Liberty / Hill / Chouteau County

## **13<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Courts**

Yellowstone County

## **14<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Courts**

Golden Valley / Meagher / Musselshell  
Wheatland County

## **15<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Courts**

Daniels / Sheridan / Roosevelt County

## **16<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Courts**

Carter / Custer / Fallon / Garfield  
Power River / Rosebud / Treasure  
County

## **17<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court**

Blaine / Phillips / Valley County

## **18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court**

Gallatin County

## **19<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court**

Lincoln County

## **20<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court**

Sanders County

## **21<sup>st</sup> Judicial District Court**

Ravalli County

## **22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District Court**

Big Horn / Carbon / Stillwater County



For more information about specifics regarding courthouse location, please contact us  
TransHealth@gaymontana.org or 406-543-2224

## Legal Disclaimer

The information contained within this guide is to be regarded as suggestions or guidance, and shall not be construed as formal legal advice. The Western Montana Community Center (WMCC) cannot provide legal services or advice to individuals, and furthermore, cannot provide information directly on how to go about changing one's name. The process of changing one's name and documentation can vary from state to state. We can provide suggestions, but are unable to provide legitimate legal advice, and as such, with any legal work, we highly suggest that you seek the help of an attorney or other legal service to help with the process of changing one's name and legal documentation.

## Resources

The Western Montana Community Center is in the process of collecting and compiling a list of trans-friendly legal services throughout the State of Montana. If you have suggestions for potential resources, please contact us at [transhealth@gaymontana.org](mailto:transhealth@gaymontana.org)

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127 N. Higgins, Suite 202  
Missoula, MT 59801  
(406) 543-2224  
<http://gaymontana.org>  
[info@gaymontana.org](mailto:info@gaymontana.org)