

Welcome!

This is intended to be a quick and easy guide for changing your legal name and gender marker in Knox and Blount Counties. This was compiled by volunteers and contains the very best info we could find locally.

We know everyone is at a different points in their journey, so we have listed items in the order we recommend. Our recommendation is to focus on legally changing your name, procuring a physician letter and using these documents to get a U.S. Passport in a correct name and gender marker, since that document can be used in place of a birth certificate.

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Name Change

If you require reference of TN state law in case of refusal of service (which is unusual, but it's important to have), see Tennessee Department of Safety Rule addressing name and gender marker changes 1340-1-13-.12 (5) and (6) [here](#). The Tennessee Department of Safety & Homeland Security website addresses name change [here](#).

For **Blount County** a name change can be done in Chancery, Circuit and General Sessions courts. Court Fees are \$170 (at the time this document was written in 2016) and due at the time you submit the petition. This does not require a lawyer. You will be asked to fill out a Pro Se Petition form (which states that you are representing yourself and if you file inappropriately you will not be refunded that fee). You will take a notarized [Petition for Change of Name of Adult](#) and a copy of your birth certificate to the [Blount County Justice Center](#) and go to the Blount County Court and Master's Office (directly to the left as you enter). Chancery Court meets only once a month and Circuit Court meets everyday; you can request to file your petition in either one. Once they file it, they will give you a case number and the contact info for your judge's secretary. Call this number to set a court date and time. On the day of court, bring this [Order Granting Change of Name of Adult](#) for the presiding judge to sign.

During your court hearing the judge will ask you why you want to change your name; this does not require a physician's letter or for you to disclose that you are trans. You can just state that you would like to change your name for common usage or because that is what people call you and you would like it to be official. Your hearing will either be in the general courtroom or the judge's chambers depending on the day. You will have to swear yourself in, the judge will ask you some questions regarding your paperwork and legal standing (very minimal). Once the judge signs this order, the secretary or bailiff will take you downstairs to get copies of your order. You can pay \$5.50 for additional copies of the order to take to the Social Security Office, DMV and other places.

In **Knox County** (work in progress!)

NOTE: (2018, 2019, 2020, currently) Knox County has been causing challenges for trans folks trying to change their name if they do not have a physician's letter. Though a physician letter is NOT a requirement in TN to change your name, this particular court INSISTS that if you are trans you have to have a physician letter and will not process your name change without a letter if they know or suspect you are trans. If you have a physician letter, your life will be easier. If you do NOT have a letter from a professional, you may be denied if you disclose your trans status.

There are two ways to do this in Knoxville:

Method 1:

Contact the Knoxville Chancery Court to make an appointment.

Knox County Chancery Court
City County Building Suite 125
400 Main Street
Knoxville, TN 37902
Phone: 865-215-2555
<https://www.knoxcounty.org/chancery/>

Not much preparation is needed. Make the appoint and show up about 15 minutes before your scheduled time. Bring your birth certificate, photo ID, and social security card. When you arrive check in at the front desk and let them know you are there. When you are called back you will meet with a clerk that will take your information and collect the fee (\$216.50 at the time this document was written). After filling the form and collecting the fee you will be sent to wait before going before the chancellor. You will be asked very standard questions about why you are changing your name such as if you are avoiding a debt. All you need to say is that your name better suits you and is how you are known to your friends and family. After the brief interview your documents will be stamped and you will be given 3 certified copies. You may request more if you feel you will need them. They will provide you with an envelope addressed to the vital

records office to update your birth certificate if you were born in Tennessee, but double check the address since the one I was given had an old one that is no longer valid.

Method 2:

Knoxville Circuit
City County Building
400 Main Street
Knoxville, TN 37902
Phone: 865-215-2400

<https://www.knoxcounty.org/circuit/>

This method is slightly cheaper than the first, but we have no first hand experience. The filing fee listed on the website is 186.50.

You may file a motion for name change in the Knoxville Circuit Court. The forms do not seem to be easy to find online (if at all) so you may need to go in person to pick them up. You should call the number listed above to learn more information about getting your form filed and a court date set on the docket.

- No matter where you get your name changed, we recommend paying for several certified copies of your court order if possible. You will be presenting and mailing your name change document all over the place in order to get your information changed, and it could get worn out pretty quickly. It is a good idea to keep at least one additional copy stored safely in case you need it later.
- For other counties, the procedure for a name change should be very similar to the counties above, and name changes generally take place in chancery and/or circuit courts or in the judge's offices of those courts. If you would like help finding county-specific information not listed here, please reach out to us at the contacts listed at the beginning of this document.

For **other counties**:

Check out [this link](#) with an editable "Name Change Petition" and "Name Change Final Decree".

Sample Physician Letters

- [Official State Dept Physician Letter](#) (recommended)

U.S. Passport ([U.S. Passport Website](#))

Passport book: \$135

Passport ID Card: \$55

Both passport ID Card and Book: \$165

[You will need these documents in order to apply for a U.S. Passport with the correct name and gender markers.](#)

- If you do not have a copy of your birth certificate, see the [steps below](#) in order to request a copy. Your birth certificate does NOT have to reflect your correct name or gender marker in order to get a U.S. Passport with your correct name and gender marker.

You can [fill in a form on the website](#) and print it from there already filled out, or you can access a [printable passport application \(PDF\) here](#) that you can hand fill. Both versions have to be printed and mailed to the same location.

- According to the passport website, even if you have had all domestic documents amended to the correct gender already (birth certificate, driver license, etc), you must still submit the physician's letter in order to receive a passport with the correct gender marker.

TN Driver's License

You must visit a DMV office in order to update your name and/or gender marker, and you will have to pay a replacement fee (\$6 to \$20) in order to receive your new license.

To change your name, you will need to bring an original court ordered name change to the DMV and present it. The DMV will not accept copies, but they will give you back your original court-issued document once you are done.

It is worth noting, that it will be easier to get your driver's license gender marker changed if you already have a passport in the correct gender (so if you can, do the passport acquisition first, but this is not at all required).

To change your gender marker, you will need to bring your physician's letter. There are many stories of folks being hassled at the DMV about changing their gender markers on their license, so we have provided the official wording from the rules documentation stating requirements to change gender on driver licenses. Note that the requirements for the physician letter only state "necessary medical procedures to accomplish the change" and do not state that a specific procedure/surgery need be completed.

Below is the wording of requirements in order to change the name and/or gender marker:

**Rules of Tennessee Department of Safety Division of Driver License Issuance:
Chapter 1340-1-13 Classified and Commercial Drivers Licenses and Temporary Driver Licenses:**

1340-1-13-.12 PROOF OF DATE OF BIRTH, RESIDENCY, LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENCY, AND IDENTIFICATION.

(5) The following documents are acceptable for name changes:

- (a) Certified or original Marriage Certificate
- (b) Certified Court Order
- (c) Certified Divorce Decree
- (d) Military Identification
- (e) Any other documentary evidence which confirms to the satisfaction of the Department the applicant's name change.

(6) The following document is required for gender changes:

- (a) A statement from the attending physician that necessary medical procedures to accomplish the change in gender are complete.

Social Security Administration

In order to update your social security information, you can either mail in your documents or visit a local office, located at *8530 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN 37919* for Blount and Knox county residents.

You will need to fill out a social security application and either mail it and your documents to the office above, or take them in person and present them at the above office. [Printable application for social security.](#)

[If needed, you can print the pages here to take with you to the office in order to present the requirements for gender change, should you encounter any ignorance or trouble.](#)

You will need the following documents in order to update your social security card/information:

Identity (1 of the following):

- o U.S. driver's license;
- o State-issued non-driver identification card; or
- o U.S. passport.

Gender (1 of the following):

- o Full-validity, 10-year U.S. passport showing the new gender;
- o State-issued amended birth certificate showing the new gender;
- o Court order directing legal recognition of change of gender; or
- o Medical certification of appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition in the form of an original letter from a licensed physician.

U.S. citizenship (1 of the following, if needed)

If you haven't established your citizenship with us, and you were born in the US, we need to see proof of U.S citizenship. We can only accept certain documents as proof of U.S. citizenship. These documents include

- o U.S. birth certificate; or
- o U.S. passport.

TN Birth Certificate

Unfortunately, TN is currently one of the only states that explicitly prohibits amending a TN-born birth certificate to the correct gender marker for trans people. We recommend bypassing the

birth certificate as a form of ID and applying for a corrected U.S. Passport to present in all circumstances where a birth certificate would be required.

- [Info from the TN.gov website pertaining to birth certificate amendments.](#)
- [Application for Certified Copy of Certificate of Birth](#)

To change only your name on your TN birth certificate, you must submit an original copy of your court order name change and a check for the [amendment fee](#). If you want a certified copy of the birth certificate sent to you, you must also submit an [additional fee](#) for that copy. Please note that an amended TN birth certificate will have your old name visibly struck out, with your new name typed above it on the certificate.