



CLIENT SERVICES & POLICY DIVISION Legal Assistance Office



NAME CHANGE

General Information:

Generally, a person may change his or her recorded name by following applicable State law or court procedure. In most States, statutes establish a specific method to change a name, normally by filing an application and receiving court approval. NameChangeLaw.com is a web site that collects information to all State laws, which can be viewed at <http://www.namechangelaw.com/states.htm>.

In some States, these laws do not prohibit an individual from changing their name under common law without resorting to a judicial proceeding. In most cases, however, it is best to use the statutory method as it establishes the new name as a matter of record, and the court order documents make the change legally binding. This is particularly important when applying for government benefits. For example, one may not receive Social Security benefits under a new name unless a court has approved the name change or it otherwise complies with applicable state law (i.e., an administrative procedure). Name changes are not approved if a change interferes with the rights of others or is changed for unlawful or fraudulent purposes.

Official Army Records:

Army Regulation 600-8-104, *Army Military Human Resource Records Management*, Chapter 5, Section IV, outlines Army procedures and documentation requirements (i.e., marriage certificate, naturalization certificate, court order) for changing an individual's name in official Army records. To read more about this process, go to https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/r600_8_104.pdf.

Social Security Card:

For information on how to change your name on a Social Security card, visit <https://faq.ssa.gov/en-US/Topic/article/KA-01981>.

U.S. Passport:

For information on how to get a new U.S. Passport due to a name change, visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/have-passport/change-correct.html>