

INSTRUCTIONS Adult Name Change

Laws and rules regarding this process can be found at [SDCL ch. 21-37](#), [SDCL 34-25-51](#), and [ARSD 44:09:05:02](#). These authorities have also been interpreted by the South Dakota Supreme Court in various cases. It is up to you to decide whether and how you use a lawyer in your case. The law allows you to do the case without a lawyer, which is also known as proceeding *pro se* (pronounced “pro-say”).

REQUESTING A NAME CHANGE IN SOUTH DAKOTA

- You may change your first, middle and/or last name. You may also seek to amend your birth certificate to reflect the changed name, if granted by a court.
- Once you file the verified petition, the case will be assigned a case number. This number must be on all documents filed with the court.
- You should be aware that there may be costs associated with any required publication of the notice of your name change.

If you file a Verified Petition for Adult Name Change without the assistance of an attorney, **you** must complete all the forms necessary. The clerk of court’s office cannot assist you in preparing any legal documents, or advise you of the process. However, you may contact the **Legal Form Help Line at 1-855-784-0004 or e-mail the UJS for help with forms at this link--** <https://ujslawhelp.sd.gov/emailstaff.aspx>--if you have questions regarding completion of the forms. **If you have any questions of a legal nature, please contact an attorney of your choosing.**

READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS PRIOR TO FILLING OUT ANY OF THE FORMS.

*These forms can be used only for **ADULT** name changes!*

In order to legally change a name you must file a Verified Petition For Adult Name Change form with the clerk of court’s office in the county where you reside provided you have resided there for more than six months. You will also be required to pay the civil case filing fee. You will be referred to as the petitioner in this Adult Name Change proceeding.

You must also submit a completed **Civil Case filing Statement form (UJS-232)** to the clerk of court’s office at the time of filing your verified petition. The case name should appear in the “*In the Matter of*” caption. For example, if John Smith is requesting to change his legal name to John Johnson, “John Smith’s Petition for Adult Name Change to John Johnson” should be printed in the “*In the Matter of*” caption. Since you are initiating a civil action, you must check the Petitioner participant role box under the Civil case type. Please provide your personal information as requested on the form as well as the name and contact information the attorney representing you in this proceeding (if you have one).

Captions: All of the forms for this proceeding have a caption at the top that, except the name of the form, appear as follows:

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA)
)
COUNTY OF _____)

IN CIRCUIT COURT
_____) JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION RE: _____ (Current Name) FOR A CHANGE OF NAME TO: _____ (Proposed Name)	FILE NO: _____ VERIFIED PETITION FOR ADULT NAME CHANGE
--	--

Each form will be completed identically using the following instructions:

- On the top left, enter the name of the county where you are filing the Verified Petition.
- On the top right, enter the judicial circuit number (First through Seventh) in which the county lies. This information can be obtained from the clerk of court's office or on the UJS website.
- Enter your current legal name (first, middle, and last name) in the "(Current Name)" blank.
- Enter your proposed first, middle, and last name in the "(Proposed Name)" blank.
- The clerk of court's office will give you a case number when you file the Verified Petition. You must include the case number on all papers you file, which is documented above the name of the form (File No. _____).

FORM UJS-025: VERIFIED PETITION FOR ADULT NAME CHANGE

- Complete the caption as set forth in the Instructions on pages 1-2.
- Use the numbers below for completing the numbered paragraphs with the same numbers in the Verified Petition.

- Paragraph 1. Fill in your current legal first, middle, and last name.
- Paragraph 2. Enter your first, middle, and last name as it appears on your birth certificate.
- Paragraph 3. Enter your date of birth.
- Paragraph 4. Circle your gender at birth.
- Paragraph 5. Enter the city, county, and state where you were born.
- Paragraph 6. Enter the first, middle, and maiden name of your mother, as it appears on your birth certificate.
- Paragraph 7. Enter the date of birth of your mother as well as the city, county and state where she was born.
- Paragraph 8. Enter the full name of your father as it appears on your birth certificate. If your father is not listed on your birth certificate, enter "N/A."
- Paragraph 9. Enter the date of birth of your father as well as the city, county, and state where he was born.
- Paragraph 10. Enter your current street address, city, and county name.
- Paragraph 11. Enter the name of the South Dakota county where you currently reside and have resided for the 6 months before filing this Verified Petition.
- Paragraph 12. Enter the reasons you want to change your name. This must be completed or the Verified Petition will not be accepted.

If you are changing your name to protect yourself from someone who made you a human trafficking victim, check the first check box. Otherwise, leave blank.

If you are changing your name to protect yourself from someone who made you a victim of domestic abuse, check the second box. Otherwise, leave blank.

Paragraph 13. Nothing is required, just verification that you are not submitting this Verified Petition for fraudulent or illegal purposes.

Paragraph 14. Enter your current name (first, middle, and last) as well as your proposed name (first, middle, and last).

Paragraph 15. This entry is optional. Pursuant to SDCL 34-25-51 and relevant regulations contained in ARSD 44:09:05:02, you are able seek an amendment to your birth certificate if your current birth certificate reflects incorrect information to your name. You may be required to prove this by providing evidence of the incorrect information. If you do not want your birth certificate amended, leave this portion blank.

- Date the Verified Petition with the day, month, and year.
- On the first line, sign your first, middle, and last names.
- On the remaining lines, enter your personal information.

Do not fill out the verification (page 3) until you are in the presence of a notary public or clerk of court. Make sure to bring identification to show the notary public or clerk of court. A notary public can usually be found at the bank and sometimes at the courthouse.

WARNING: By signing your name, you are telling the court that you are telling the truth and that you have a good faith reason for your requests. If you are not telling the truth, if you are misleading the court, or if you are serving or filing this document for an improper purpose, the court could find you in contempt or you could be prosecuted for not telling the truth.

All references to “your birth certificate” are to your CURRENT birth certificate.

FORM UJS-026: NOTICE OF HEARING FOR ADULT NAME CHANGE

Pursuant to [SDCL 21-37-4](#), the general public generally needs to be provided notice of your name change. This means that a notice must be published in the newspaper.

The only exceptions are if you are changing your name to protect yourself from someone who has made you a victim of human trafficking or domestic abuse, as provided in [SDCL 21-37-5.2](#).

If neither exception applies to you, you must fill out, file, and publish the **Notice of Hearing for Adult Name Change (UJS-026)**. It must be published one time each week for four successive weeks in any legal newspaper in the county where you reside. **If you are unsure whether a newspaper is considered to be a legal newspaper for your county, contact the county Auditor’s Office.**

To begin this process, you need to contact the clerk of court or court administrator’s office and request that a hearing be scheduled approximately six weeks in the future. When scheduling, make sure you have a copy of your filed Verified Petition to refer to. Additionally, make sure you allow enough time for publication and the receipt of the newspaper-provided **Affidavit of Publication** prior to the hearing (described further below). In order to do this, you should know the day of the week the newspaper has to receive the **Notice of Hearing for Adult Name Change** by in order to begin publication in the next

circulation and in what form. It is suggested you ask about the expense of publication as well so you are prepared for that expense in advance.

- Complete the caption as set forth in the Instructions on pages 1-2.
- In the Notice portion fill in your current name in two blanks--after “*filed by*” and “*name from*”--and your proposed name after “*to.*”
- The court clerk will provide you with a date and time, at least six weeks in the future, for a hearing. Fill in the day, month, and year, followed by the time and circle am or pm.
- A judge or clerk of court must sign the notice, not the petitioner.

Once you have filed the **Notice of Hearing for Adult Name Change (UJS-026)** with the clerk of court, the clerk will give you a filed copy. You must publish this once each week for four successive weeks in any legal newspaper of the county of petitioner's residence. Once completed, the newspaper will provide you with an **Affidavit of Publication**. You must file this Affidavit with the clerk of court office on or before the day of the scheduled hearing.

If another hearing has to be scheduled because enough time was not allowed for publication, the court may order that another **Notice of Hearing for Adult Name Change** be published again. This would be an additional expense for you. You will not be refunded any fees or expenses.

FORM UJS-027: ORDER FOR ADULT NAME CHANGE

Before the hearing date, you must prepare the **Order for Adult Name Change**.

- Complete the caption as set forth in the Instructions on pages 1-2.
- Fill in the day, month, and year of your hearing.
- Fill in your name (first, middle and last) following “*the Petitioner.*”
- Fill in the county where you currently reside and the county where you resided for the six months prior to filing the Petition.
- If you are not excepted from publishing the notice of hearing per [SDCL 21-37-5.2](#), check the first box and enter the name of the legal newspaper in which the **Notice of Hearing (UJS-026)** was published. If you are excepted, skip the checkbox and its blank.
- If you are a victim of human trafficking and are changing your name to protect yourself from the perpetrator, check the second box. If not, skip.
- If you are a victim of domestic violence and are changing your name to protect yourself from the perpetrator, check the third box. If not, skip.
Note—One of the three boxes must be checked. Only the second and third boxes might both be checked.
- Fill in your first, middle, and last name as it appears on your birth certificate.
- Fill in your date of birth.
- Fill in the state, county and city where you were born.
- Fill in your mother’s first, middle and maiden name as it appears on your birth certificate.
- Fill in your current first, middle, and last name.
- Fill in the form of official identification containing your current full name.
- If you seek an amendment of your birth certificate to reflect a court-approved legal name change, check the box. If not, skip.
- Fill in your current first, middle, and last name, and then fill in your proposed full name after the phrase “shall be changed to.”

- If you are a victim of human trafficking or domestic violence and are changing your name to protect yourself from the perpetrator, you may check both boxes. If the court so orders, this will restrict public access to the case file for this name change proceeding and for the file surrounding any new birth certificate you might choose to obtain with your new name on it.
- If you seek an amendment of your birth certificate to reflect a court-approved legal name change, check the box. Then provide the full name on the birth certificate in the first blank, and fill in the changed full name you seek in the second.

Give the **Order for Adult Name Change** to the judge when they ask for it.

You need to bring to the hearing a copy of your current birth certificate (and if your current legal name is different than your name on your birth certificate, a current official identification with that name), and two copies of the Order for Adult Name Change.

The judge may sign and date the **Form UJS-027 Order for Adult Name Change**. If signed, the **Form UJS-027 Order for Adult Name Change** will need to be filed as well. The judge will return the signed order to the clerk of court office for filing. Once the **Form UJS-027 Order for Adult Name Change** is filed, you are eligible to receive a certified copy of the order and you will be legally known by your new name.

OBTAINING A NEW/AMENDED BIRTH CERTIFICATE: If your original birth certificate is from South Dakota, you need to submit a certified copy of the Order for Adult Name Change along with \$8.00 check or money order, payable to the Department of Health, Office of Vital Records, to the following address:

Office of Vital Records
 South Dakota Department of Health
 211 W Capitol Avenue
 Pierre, SD 57501

This fee and submission will amend the birth certificate, but you will not be provided with an informational or certified copy of the birth certificate. Please contact your Register of Deeds office to obtain a certified copy of the birth certificate for \$15.00.

If you were born in a different state, you need to contact the vital records office of that state to determine the process and applicable fee to amend your birth certificate.

NOTE: South Dakota law allows certain family members to have more than one name change request brought in a single petition. See [SDCL 21-37-3.1](#). You must fill out a separate **Form UJS-025 Verified Petition for Adult Name Change** for each person; however, they may be filed together and addressed at the same hearing.

Again, if you have questions regarding the change of name procedure, you may contact the Legal Form Help Line at 1-855-784-0004 or e-mail the UJS for help with forms at this link--<https://ujslawhelp.sd.gov/emailstaff.aspx>. If you have any questions of a legal nature, please contact an attorney of your choosing.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE HEARING

1. As the Petitioner, you must attend the hearing and testify under oath about the issues raised in the Verified Petition for Adult Name Change. Make sure you are prepared.
2. Bring a copy of your birth certificate with you to court, along with any official identification that shows your current legal name if your birth certificate does not provide your current name. The judge may want to review it to ensure that your pleadings are consistent with the birth certificate.
3. Dress appropriately for court.
4. If you need to publish the notice, you should take a file stamped copy of the Affidavit of Publication to the hearing in case the judge wants you to have it marked as an Exhibit at the hearing. If you did not have to provide notice of hearing by publication, please disregard this step.
5. You should bring two copies of the Order for Adult Name Change to the hearing. The judge may keep the original signed Order for the court file and will give you a copy for your records.
6. Refer to *A Guide for Representing Yourself in South Dakota Courts* or the UJS website for additional helpful hints before your hearing. The Guide can be found at any clerk of court office or on the UJS website in many spots.
7. If the court grants your request for the minor child's name change and has signed the Order for Adult Name Change, you should get 2 certified copies of the Order from the clerk of courts office. One copy goes to Vital Records and one is for your records.