

## **Instructions for Uncontested Name Change of a Minor Child**

The procedure for legally changing the name of a minor child is complicated. Some 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.

If you file a Verified Petition for Name Change of a Minor Child 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 [ujssrlhelp@uj.s.state.sd.us](mailto:ujssrlhelp@uj.s.state.sd.us). If you have questions regarding completion of the forms you should contact an attorney.

**THE USE OF THESE FORMS IS LIMITED TO UNCONTESTED CASES** where the minor child's other parent consents to the change of the minor child's name. The other parent will ideally appear at the hearing as well, although it is not required.

### **YOU CANNOT USE THESE FORMS IF:**

1. You do not know if the minor child's other parent will consent to the change of the minor child's name; or you know the minor child's other parent will contest the change of the minor child's name.
2. If the other parent appears at the hearing and contests the name change, the name change will be denied.
3. There are no forms offered for a contested name change of the minor child action. That is a matter in which you are strongly encouraged to consult an attorney.

### **REQUESTING A NAME CHANGE IN SOUTH DAKOTA**

1. In South Dakota, a "minor" is a child who has not yet turned age 18.
2. You may change the minor child's first, middle and/or last name.
3. Unless otherwise provided below, if you have more than one minor child in your custody, they have the same biological parents and you want to change their names at the same time, you may do so by including all of the children on the same verified petition. You need open only one file.
4. If the parents of the minor children are NOT the same and/or you are requesting different name changes for more than one child, you will need to file a separate verified petition for each child. This will involve paying a separate filing fee for each child. They will be considered separate actions. For example, you are a single mother who has more than one minor child in your custody whose names you want to change, but there is more than one father involved you will need to file a separate verified petition for each child. This will involve paying a separate filing fee for each child. They will be considered separate actions.

5. 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 additional costs associated with providing notice that you intend to change a minor child's name.

## COMPLETION OF FORMS

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

In order to legally change a name, you must file a **Verified Petition for Name Change of a Minor Child form (UJS-030)** with the Clerk of Court office in the county where you reside, provided you and the minor child have resided there for more than six months immediately before the filing of the verified petition. You will also be required to pay the civil case filing fee. You will be referred to as the petitioner in this 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 daughter's legal name from Emma Doe to Emma Smith, he should print in the "*In the Matter of*" caption: *John Smith's Petition Regarding a Name Change of Emma Doe, Minor Child, to Emma Smith*. 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. If you have an attorney representing you in the proceeding, provide their information as well.

**Captions:** All of the forms for this proceeding have a caption at the top that appear as follows:

1. On the top left, enter the name of the county where you are filing the Verified Petition.
2. On the top right, enter the judicial circuit of the county. This information can be obtained from the Clerk of Court's office or on the UJS website.
3. Enter the name (first, middle, and last name) of the minor child as it appears on their birth certificate.
4. Enter the proposed first, middle, and last name of the minor child.
5. 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 further filings.

### FORM UJS-030: VERIFIED PETITION FOR NAME CHANGE OF A MINOR CHILD

1. Complete the caption as set forth in the previous instructions.
2. Use the numbers below for completing the numbered paragraphs with the same numbers in the verified petition.
  - a) **Number 1.** As the Petitioner, enter your first, middle, and last name.

- b) **Number 2.** Enter the minor child's name (first, middle, and last name) as it appears on their birth certificate.
- c) **Number 3.** Enter the minor child's date of birth (month, day, and year).
- d) **Number 4.** Check the child's gender at birth.
- e) **Number 5.** Enter the city, county, and state where the minor child was born.
- f) **Number 6.** Enter your relationship to the minor child (mother, father, or guardian).
- g) **Number 7.** Enter your physical address, including city and county.
- h) **Number 8.** Enter the name of the county where you reside, and the date you began residing in that county.
- i) **Number 9.** Enter the minor child's physical address, including city and county, and how long the minor child has resided in that county.
- j) **Number 10.** Enter the first, middle, and last name of any other parent or guardian as well as the other parent or guardian's last known physical address. If the other parent pays child support, enter the address last provided to the Clerk of Court or Office of Child Support Enforcement, unless you are aware of a more current address.
- k) **Number 11.**
  - a. (a) Indicate where the child has lived during the past five years, who the minor child has lived with, and the dates the child lived in each location. If the child has not lived with anyone but the parents or guardian, please write out in the boxes provided: "With the parents only" or "With the guardian only" and then simply provide the county/state and date information for the past five years.
  - b. (b) Indicate whether there have been previous court hearings concerning the custody of the child. If so, indicate in which county, state and year(s) those proceedings happened, and provide a copy of the most current custody order).
  - c. (c) Indicate whether anyone other than the parents has ever had legal custody (court-ordered) of the child.
- l) **Number 12.** Enter the first, middle, and last name of the minor child's mother's maiden name as it appears on the minor child's birth certificate.
- m) **Number 13.** Enter the first, middle, and last name of the minor child's father as it appears on the minor child's birth certificate. If the father's name is not listed on the birth certificate, enter "N/A" in the blank.
- n) **Number 14.** Enter the mother's date of birth as well as her place of birth, including city, county, and state.
- o) **Number 15.** Enter the father's date of birth as well as his place of birth, including city, county, and state.
- p) **Number 16.** Enter the child's name (first, middle, and last) as it appears on their birth certificate in the first blank, the proposed name for the child (first, middle, and last) in the second blank, and the reasons you desire the name change in the third blank.
  - a. If you are seeking to have the child's name changed without publishing notice or having a hearing in open court, and the child is a victim of human trafficking, you may check the box.
- q) **Number 17.** Nothing is required, just verification that you are not submitting this Petition for fraudulent or illegal purposes.

- r) **Number 18.** This entry is optional. If you seek amendment of the child's birth certificate, in the event the child's legal name change is granted, you must check the box here and provide a reason for why you want the child's birth certificate amended in addition to the child's name changed. If you do not want the child's birth certificate amended, leave this portion blank.

In the final paragraph, enter the minor child's name (first, middle, and last), as it appears on their birth certificate, followed by the minor child's proposed first, middle, and last name.

1. Date the verified petition with the day, month, and year.
2. On the first line, sign your first, middle, and last names.
3. On the remaining lines, enter your personal information.

**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.

### **FORM UJS-031: NOTICE OF HEARING FOR CHANGE OF NAME OF MINOR CHILD**

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 prior to the hearing. In order to do this, you should know the day of the week the newspaper has to receive the **Notice of Hearing on Change of Name of a Minor Child** to begin publication in the next circulation and in what form. It is suggested you ask about the expense of publication, so you are prepared for that expense in advance.

The original, signed **Notice of Hearing for Change of Name of a Minor Child** must be filed with the Clerk of Court. Keep a photocopy for your records. Once the forms have been filed, the clerk will give you a copy of the filed **Notice of Hearing for Change of Name of a Minor Child**.

1. Complete the caption as set forth in the Instructions, beginning.
2. Next, in the first blank, enter your name (first, middle, and last), as the petitioner.
3. In the second blank, enter the name (first, middle, and last) of the minor child, as it appears on the birth certificate.
4. In the third blank, enter the proposed first, middle, and last name of the minor child.
5. In the second sentence, enter the hearing date (day, month, year) and the time. Check a.m. or p.m. Enter the name of the Judge who will be presiding over the hearing. Enter the courtroom information, and the county, and city of the location of the hearing.
6. A Judge or the Clerk of Court must date and sign the notice of hearing, not the petitioner. The Clerk of Court must put a seal on the document.

## **PUBLICATION**

Pursuant to SDCL 21-37-5.1, if the following three items are true, you can skip this step and begin working on the section entitled "Service to the Other Parent":

1. The minor child has been a resident of the county where you are filing your petition for at least six months.
2. The minor child's parents or legal guardians give written consent to the name change.
3. If the minor child is twelve years or older, the minor child consents in writing to the name change.

If even one of the three items listed above is not true, then pursuant to SDCL 21-37-4, you must publish the **Notice of Hearing on Change of Name of a Minor Child**. The notice must state the time and place and object thereof with the current and proposed names of the minor child. It must be published one time each week for four successive weeks in any legal newspaper of the county of petitioner's residence. If you are unsure whether a newspaper is considered to be a legal newspaper for your county, contact the county Auditor's Office

**Publication can also be waived if the minor child is a victim of human trafficking.**

You must publish the **Notice of Hearing for Change of Name of a Minor Child** once a week for four successive weeks in any legal newspaper of the county of the petitioner's residence. If you are unsure whether a newspaper is considered to be a legal newspaper for your court, contact the county Auditor's Office.

Upon completion of the publication, the newspaper will provide you with an **Affidavit of Publication**. You must file the original signed affidavit with the Clerk of Court on or before the day of the scheduled hearing.

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

## **SERVICE TO THE OTHER PARENT**

A copy of the **Verified Petition for Name Change of a Minor Child and Notice of Hearing** must be sent to the other parent by certified mail a minimum of 10 days prior to the hearing.

If the other parent pays child support, the documents must be sent to the other parent at the address last provided to the Clerk of Court or the Office of Child Support Enforcement, unless you are aware of a more current address.

Service on the other parent may be accomplished in one of the ways provided below. **You may choose which of the following methods of service you prefer.**

## **1. HAND-DELIVER OR MAIL**

In an uncontested name change of a minor proceeding, the other parent will often agree to accept service, avoiding the need to have a Sheriff or private process server serve them. As the petitioner, you may choose to hand-deliver or mail a copy of the **Verified Petition for Name Change of a Minor Child** to the other parent by:

- a) Referring to UJS-032A and B Instructions and Forms for Notice and Admission of Service of Verified Petition for Name Change of a Minor Child.
- b) Once you have mailed the Petition and Notice of hearing you will need to complete a Statement of Service (UJS-036) and file that with the Clerk of Court.
- c) Once you receive the signed Admission of Service (UJS-032B) back from the other parent you will then need to file the original copy with the Clerk of Court. **Failing to file this document may result in a denial of the proposed name change.**

**When you go to the post office to mail the documents, ask the post office to send it by certified mail to the other parent.** You do not need to send the documents by registered mail, nor do you need to insure it. Also, you do not need to have the other parent sign for the documents when it is delivered; it is ok if any adult signs for the documents when they are delivered. Keep the green card that the post office sends back to you in the event that the court wants to see it.

**2. SERVICE BY SHERIFF OR PROCESS SERVER** - If attempts to achieve hand-delivered or mail service failed, you may request that the Sheriff's Office or private process server serve the Verified Petition to the other parent. Under this scenario, you deliver one full copy of the Verified Petition for Name Change of a Minor Child to the Sheriff's Office, along with a document containing the other party's current physical address, telephone number, place of employment, and any other relevant information. If you had to do publication, you must also include the Notice of Hearing. Typically, the cost of service (the service fee and mileage reimbursement) is pre-paid. After service, the Sheriff or process server has their own form that they use to prove service and that form is usually mailed to you. Make sure you make a copy of this form for yourself and file the original with the Clerk of Court's office.

## **FORM UJS-033: CONSENT**

This form is to be signed by the non-petitioning parent.

- a) Complete the caption as set forth in the Instructions above.
- b) Enter the consenting parent's full name in the first line in the body of the **Consent**. This paragraph does not have a number.
- c) Use the numbers below for completing the numbered paragraphs with the same numbers in the verified petition.
- d) **Paragraph 1.** If the consenting parent is the minor child's mother, check mother. If the consenting parent is the minor child's father, check father.
  - i. In the first line, enter the minor child's name (first, middle, and last name) as it appears on their birth certificate.
  - ii. In the second line, enter the minor child's date of birth.
  - iii. In the third through fifth lines, enter the city, county, and state where the minor child was born.

- e) **Paragraph 2.** In the first line, enter the minor child's name (first, middle, and last name), as it appears on their birth certificate. In the second line, enter the minor child's proposed first, middle, and last name.
- f) **Paragraph 3.** Enter why you are consenting to the name change.
- g) Leave the remainder of the page for the consenting parent to sign and date under penalty of perjury.
- h) The consenting parent will have to provide back to you to file the original with the Clerk of Court.
- i) **Failing to file this document may result in a denial of the proposed name change.**

### **FORM UJS-037: CHILD'S CONSENT FOR NAME CHANGE OF MINOR CHILD**

If you did not have to complete publication per [SDCL 21-37-5.1](#), and the minor child is twelve years of age or older, the minor child will need to complete **Consent of Minor Child**. The form **must** be completed by the minor child. If you had to complete notification and/or the minor child is under twelve years of age, skip to the section entitled "Form UJS-034: Order for Name Change of a Minor Child".

1. Complete the caption as set forth in the Instructions, beginning on page 3.
2. On the first line, the minor child should enter their name (first, middle, and last) as it appears on the birth certificate.
3. On line 2, the minor child should enter their age.
4. On line 3, the minor child should enter their address.
5. On line 5, the minor child should indicate what they would like the requested name change (first, middle, and last).
6. On the last lines, the minor child should sign and date the form.

Make a photocopy for your file and file the original Consent of Minor Child with the Clerk of Court. Failing to file this document may result in a denial of the proposed name change.

### **FORM UJS-034: ORDER FOR NAME CHANGE OF A MINOR CHILD**

Before the hearing date, you must prepare the **Order for Name Change of Minor Child**. If you are changing the name of more than one child, you must prepare an **Order of Name Change of a Minor Child** for each child for whom you are requesting a name change.

1. Complete the caption as set forth in the Instruction above.
2. Enter the day, month and year of the hearing.
3. Enter your name as having filed the petition and on the next line, the name of the minor child as it appears on the birth certificate.
4. Enter the name of the county where you and the child resided at the time of filing the Verified Petition and then enter the name of the county where you and the child resided for a minimum of 6 months before filing the Verified Petition.
5. If publication was required, check the first box and enter the name of the newspaper where the notice of hearing was published for 4 consecutive weeks. If you did not have to publish notice because the conditions in [SDCL 21-37-5.1](#) were met, check the second box. If you did not have to publish notice because the conditions in [SDCL 21-37-5.2](#) were met, check the third box.
6. Enter the child's full name (first, middle, and last) as it appears on their birth certificate.

7. Enter the child's date of birth (month/day/year).
8. Enter the state, county, and city or town where the child was born.
9. Enter the child's mother's full maiden name (first, middle, and last name) as it appears on the child's birth certificate.
10. Enter the name of the child's father (first, middle, and last name) as it appears on the child's birth certificate. If the child's father is not listed, enter "N/A".
11. Enter the name of the child (first, middle, and last) as it appears on the birth certificate.
12. If you seek an amendment of the child's birth certificate to reflect a court-approved legal name change, check the box. If not, skip.
13. Again, enter the name of the child (first, middle, and last) as it appears on the birth certificate. On the next line, enter the proposed name (first, middle, and last) for the minor child.
14. If you or the child is a victim of human trafficking and the child's name is being changed to protect yourself or the child 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 the child's new name on it.
15. 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.
16. If the court grants the name change, the Judge will sign and date the Order. You will need to obtain three certified copies of the Order from the Clerk of Court's office after it has been signed.

### **FORM UJS-035: NOTICE OF ENTRY OF ORDER FOR NAME CHANGE OF MINOR CHILD**

**A Notice of Entry of Order for Name Change of a Minor Child** is a document that notifies the other parent that the Judge has signed the **Order for Name Change of a Minor Child**. This document must be sent to the other parent.

1. Complete the caption as set forth in the Instructions above.
2. Fill in the date that the Judge signed the **Order for Name Change of a Minor Child** (day, month and year).
3. Fill in the name of the Judge who signed the **Order for Name Change of a Minor Child**.
4. Fill in the city where the courthouse is located where all the documents are filed.
5. Sign and date under penalty of perjury.
6. Make two copies of the **Notice of Entry**, one for you and one to mail to the other parent. **The original must be filed with the Clerk of Court.**
7. Mail a copy of the Notice of Entry and a certified copy of the Order for Name Change of a Minor Child (obtained from the Clerk of Court) to the other parent and complete the Statement of Service with the following instructions below.

### **FORM UJS-036: Statement of Service**

1. Complete the caption as set forth in the Instructions above.
2. Mark the box next to Notice of Entry of Order for Name Change of a Minor Child and Order for Name Change of a Minor Child.
3. List the name and address to the parent you mailed to.

4. List the city and state where you mailed the Notice of Entry from.
5. Sign and date under penalty of perjury.
6. Make a copy of all the documents for your records.
7. Mail a copy of the Notice of Entry, Order for Minor Name Change, and Statement of Service to the other parent.
8. File the original copy of the Statement of Service (UJS-036) with the Clerk of Court. Filing to file these documents may extend the time an appeal may be filed.

### **OBTAINING A NEW BIRTH CERTIFICATE**

If you require the birth certificate of the minor child to be changed, you will need to submit to the Vital Records Office with both a certified copy of the "Order for Name Change of a Minor Child" and the applicable filing fee for amending a birth certificate to the following address:

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

In South Dakota, the Vital Records filing fee to amend a birth certificate is currently \$8.00. This fee does not include the amount necessary to obtain an informational copy or a certified copy. You can obtain those at any Register of Deeds Office in South Dakota once the amendment is complete.

If the child was born in a state other than South Dakota, you need to check with the Vital Records Office of that state to determine the applicable fees associated with amending the birth certificate and obtaining a certified copy of the new birth record.

### **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 Name Change of a Minor Child. Make sure you are prepared.
2. Bring a copy of the minor child's birth certificate with you to Court. The Judge may want to review it to ensure that your pleadings are consistent with the birth certificate.
3. It is ideal if the consenting parent appears at the hearing as well. The consenting parent should be prepared to testify that they do consent to the proposed name change and why.
4. Dress appropriately for court.
5. 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.

6. Before the hearing date, you should also check with court personnel to see if the minor child will be allowed in the courtroom during the hearing and whether the Judge will want the minor child present during the hearing. Do not just assume that the Judge will allow the minor child to be present.
7. You should bring two copies of the Order for Name Change of a Minor Child to the hearing. The Judge may keep the original signed Order for the court file and will give you a copy for your records.
8. 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.
9. If the court grants your request for the minor child's name change and has signed the Order for Name Change of a Minor Child, you should get three certified copies of the Order from the Clerk of Courts office. One copy goes to Vital Records, one copy goes to the other parent, and one is for your records.