



**LYCOMING COUNTY
ADULT NAME CHANGE
SELF-HELP KIT**

REMEMBER

The law often changes. Each case is different. This self-help kit is meant to give you general information and not give you specific legal advice.

Are You Eligible for a Name Change?

Page 3

Have you ever been convicted of the following offenses?

1. Murder
2. Voluntary manslaughter
3. Rape
4. Involuntary deviate sexual intercourse
5. Statutory sexual assault
6. Sexual assault
7. Aggravated indecent assault
8. Robbery as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3701(a)(1)(i) (relating to robbery)
9. Aggravated assault as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 2702(a)(1) or (2) (relating to aggravated assault)
10. Arson as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3301(a) (relating to arson and related offenses)
11. Kidnapping or robbery of a motor vehicle or criminal attempt
12. Criminal conspiracy or criminal solicitation to commit any of the offenses listed above or an equivalent crime.

YES: You are **NOT** eligible to change your name.

NO

Have you ever been convicted of a felony?

YES

NO

Have 2 calendar years passed since you completed your sentence?

YES

NO

Are you currently subject to probation or parole?

YES: You are **NOT** currently eligible to change your

NO

You are eligible to petition for a name-change

Has your felony conviction been pardoned?

NO: You are **NOT** currently eligible to change your name.

YES

You are eligible to petition for a name-change

If you are eligible to petition for a name-change, please note the following:

- There is no guaranteed constitutional right to change your name. *In re Moser*, 65 Pa. D. & C. 2d 356 (Pa. Ct. Com. Pl. 1974).
- The Court should exercise its discretion in deciding your petition using good sense, common decency and fairness to all parties and to the public. *In re Miller*, 824 A.2d 1207 (Pa. Super. Ct. 2003). Furthermore, a denial must be grounded in some factual basis. *Petition of Alexander*, 394 A.2d 597 (Pa. Super. Ct. 1978).
- The Court can deny your petition if the name change will be harmful to the public or the rights of others. *In re Hurley*, 38 Pa. D. & C.2d 146 (Pa. Ct. Com. Pl. 1965).
- A religion-inspired desire to change your name is a worthy motive. *Petition of Alexander*, 394 A.2d 597 (Pa. Super. Ct. 1978).
- If your intention is to defraud the public by changing your name, your petition will not likely be granted. *In re McIntyre*, 33 Pa. D. & C.4th 79 (Pa. Ct. Com. Pl. 1996).
- The Court is unlikely to permit you to change your name to anything it considers unduly burdensome, lengthy, difficult to pronounce or offensive. *In re Ravitch*, 754 A.2d 1287 (Pa. Super. Ct. 2000).

STEPS IN CHANGE OF NAME PROCESS

[This packet is for changing the name of an adult. If you wish to change the name of a minor child, you will need the Child Name Change Self-Help Kit.]

Detailed instructions are outlined in this packet, but here are the general steps in this process:

1. Go to the Prothonotary's office and get fingerprint cards.
2. Go to the State Police barracks to have your fingerprints made.
3. Fill out Forms 1 and 2 according to the instructions in this packet.
4. Make copies.
5. Take the original forms 1 and 2 and two copies of everything to the Prothonotary's office for filing. Also take the fingerprints. The Prothonotary will file-stamp the documents and return one copy to you. They will send the fingerprints to the State Police in Harrisburg to do a criminal background check.
6. When you get the other copy back in the mail from the Prothonotary, fill out two Notices to be Published (Form #3) and take one to the Sun Gazette and one to the Lycoming Reporter.
7. Just before the hearing, get a Judgment Certificate.
8. Attend hearing. Take the documents as directed in the instructions in this packet.
9. After the hearing, you will get a copy of the Order in the mail and you may thereafter use your new name.

PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME

PART ONE: INSTRUCTIONS

STEPS 1 & 2 - GET THE FINGERPRINT CARDS AND GET YOUR FINGERPRINTS MADE

Go to the Prothonotary's office on the first floor of the Lycoming County Courthouse, 48 West Third Street, Williamsport, PA. Tell them you are filing a name change petition and need fingerprint cards. There is no fee for this. Take the fingerprint cards to the State Police barracks at 899 Cherry Street in Montoursville, PA. Tell them you need your fingerprints taken for a name change petition. They will make your fingerprints on the cards and give them back to you. Take the cards back to the Prothonotary's office when you file your petition, Step 5.

STEP 3 - FILLING OUT FORMS 1 and 2

1. FIRST FORM – MOTION COVER SHEET

Complete the caption (heading) by writing your name in the first blank line (after “In re: Change of Name of”) and also on Line 1 (name of filing party).

In box 6, write your name and address.

Leave the rest of the form blank—this is for the Court to fill out.

2. SECOND FORM – PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME

Again write your name in the first blank line (after “In re: Change of Name of”).

For paragraph 1, write in your name and address, phone number and email address.

For paragraph 2, write in your date of birth.

For paragraph 3, list the addresses where you have lived for the past five years. Put your current address on the first line, with the dates (month and year) you lived there (under “to” write “present”), the address where you lived before that on the next line, with the dates you lived there, etc., going back five years.

For paragraph 5, write the name you wish your name to be changed to.

For paragraph 6, write all the reasons you wish to change your name. This can be a general statement; you will be asked at the hearing to give details.

There are two versions of the second page of this petition. If you believe that publication of notice of the hearing would jeopardize your safety, use the second page of the petition **with** Paragraph 7, and write on the blank lines the reasons why you believe that. If this is not an issue, use the second page of the petition **without** Paragraph 7.

At the end of the form, no matter which second page you use, sign your name and then sign again to verify that the statements are true and correct.

STEP 4 - COPIES

After you have completed forms #1 and 2, clip them together with the Motion Cover Sheet on the front. You will then need to get two copies made. If you do not have any other means of making copies, the Prothonotary can make them for you when you go there to file the petition. They charge \$.50 per page.



STEP 5 – FILING THE PETITION

Take the original and the two copies to be filed, to the Prothonotary's office. Also take the fingerprints. The Prothonotary's office is at the Courthouse at 48 West Third Street, Williamsport, PA on the first floor. It is open Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. You will have to pay a filing fee of \$146.25 unless you are also filing a petition to proceed *in forma pauperis* and you are granted IFP status. (There is a separate packet for this, available at the Law Library or online at www.lyco.org/Courts/LawLibraryforms. IFP status allows you to file something with the Court without having to pay the fee. You must qualify financially for this status. This petition should be filed at the same time as you file the Petition for Change of Name.)

The Prothonotary will file-stamp your original petition and the copies and will keep the original and one copy. You will get back the second copy – keep this for your records. (After the court schedules the hearing, you will receive the other copy in the mail with the date and time of the hearing on the Cover Sheet.)

Give the Prothonotary the fingerprints while you are filing the petition. The Prothonotary sends the cards to the State Police in Harrisburg where a background check is performed. (This takes about two weeks.) The State Police then sends a report of this background check to the Prothonotary and it is placed in the court file. You will also receive a copy of the report in the mail from the Prothonotary. Bring this report to the hearing.

STEP 6 – TAKE THE NOTICE TO BE PUBLISHED TO THE PUBLISHERS

Unless you asked the Court to waive the requirement that you publish notice of the hearing, you will have to publish notice of the hearing. (If you did ask for notice to be waived, and that request was granted by the Court, you may skip this step.)

After you get the copy of your petition back in the mail, fill out the two copies of Form #3. One will be taken to the Sun-Gazette and one will be taken to the Lycoming Reporter. Fill out both of them the same way.

THIRD FORM – Notice to be Published

First blank line - Fill in the Docket No. where it says NO. _____.

Second blank line - Fill in your name after “In re: Name Change of”.

Third blank line - Fill in the date you filed the Petition. This date is stamped on the first page of your petition.

Fourth and Fifth blank lines – Fill in your current name and then the name you want the Court to change your name to.

Sixth, seventh and eighth blank lines – Fill in the date, time and courtroom number. This information will appear on the cover sheet you got back from the Prothonotary.

Take one of the Notices to the **Sun-Gazette** at 252 West Fourth Street, Williamsport, PA and the other one to the **Lycoming Reporter** at 25 West Third Street, Suite 803, Williamsport, PA. You need to have the Notice published once in each of these publications. You will have to pay for the publication. You will receive a Proof of Publication from each place. Bring both of these to the hearing.

Be advised that you will need an appointment at the **Lycoming Law Association Office** to take your Notice to be published in the **Lycoming Reporter**. Call 570-323-8287 to make an appointment. Also be aware that they do not accept credit or debit cards. The fee is \$65.00 and you will need either exact change, a check or money order.

Make sure you take these Notices to the publishers as soon as you get the papers back from the Prothonotary because notice must be published at least 20 days prior to the hearing. *The Lycoming Reporter publishes only on Fridays, and the Notice must be received in their office by 1:00 p.m. Tuesday to be published the following Friday.*

STEP 7 - GET A JUDGMENT CERTIFICATE

The business day before the hearing (go on Friday if your hearing is Monday), go to the Prothonotary's Office and ask for a Judgment Certificate (this is a certificate stating that there are no judgments against you). You will need to pay \$9.00 for this. They will get it for you while you wait, it takes only a minute. You will need to bring this Certificate to the hearing.

NOTE – if you lived in another county during the last five years, you will have to get a Judgment Certificate from the Prothonotary in that county as well as Lycoming County.

STEP 8 – ATTEND HEARING

At the time of the hearing, take with you:

- (1) your copy of the petition with cover sheet that you got back from the Prothonotary
- (2) the Judgment Certificate(s)
- (3) the background check report you got from the Prothonotary
- (4) the proofs of publication from the Sun-Gazette and the Lycoming Reporter (unless the publication requirement was waived).

At the hearing, the Judge will ask you why you want to change your name and will ask to see the Judgment Certificate and the Proofs of Publication. The Background Check report should be in the court file but if it is not, you can show the Court the one you got in the mail.

STEP 9 – AFTER THE HEARING

If your petition is granted, the Court will enter an Order changing your name. That order will be sent to the Prothonotary to be filed, and you will then get a copy of the file-stamped order in the mail. You can then begin using your new name.

PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME

PART TWO: FORMS

**LYCOMING COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
MOTION COVER SHEET**

In re: Change of Name of _____ : Docket No: _____
 :
 : Case Assigned to Judge _____
 : None
 : Family Court Hearing Officer

1. Name of Filing Party: _____
 2. Filing Party's Attorney: _____
 3. Type of Filing: _____ Petition for Change of Name _____

<p>4. The following is/are requested: <input type="checkbox"/> Argument <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evidentiary Hearing <input type="checkbox"/> Court Conference <input type="checkbox"/> Rule to Show Cause <input type="checkbox"/> Entry of Uncontested Order (attach supporting documentation) <input type="checkbox"/> Expedited Consideration. State the basis: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Video conferencing requested. Request form has been submitted. See Lyc. Co. R.G.C.B. L8. <input type="checkbox"/> Attach this cover sheet to original motion previously filed on: _____</p>	<p>6. Name and addresses of all counsel of record and unrepresented parties: <input type="checkbox"/> Continued on a Separate Sheet.</p>
<p>5. Time Required: _____</p>	

ORDER

1. An argument factual hearing court conference is scheduled for _____
 at _____ o'clock ____ M., in courtroom No. _____, Lycoming County Courthouse, Williamsport, PA.
2. Briefs are to be filed by the following dates:
 Filing Party _____.
 Responding party (ies) _____.
3. A rule is issued upon Respondent to show cause why the Petitioner is not entitled to the relief requested.
4. A response to the Motion/Petition shall be filed as follows: _____.
5. See order attached. See separate order issued this date.
6. Other: _____.

 Judge Date

c: **ALL PARTIES OR OTHERS TO BE SERVED WITH NOTICE MUST BE DESIGNATED IN "6" ABOVE.**

NOTICE: The parties are directed to confer for the purpose of resolving any issue raised in the motion/petition. If a resolution is reached prior to the scheduled date, the moving party shall immediately notify the court scheduling technician, the judge or hearing officer assigned to hear the matter, and all counsel of record or parties if unrepresented. Such notice may be in writing or by email.

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF LYCOMING COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

In re: Change of Name of _____ : NO.
:
: Civil Action - Law

PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME

The Petitioner respectfully represents the following:

1. The Petitioner is _____, who resides at _____.
Petitioner's phone number is _____ and email address is _____.
2. The Petitioner was born on _____, and is over the age of eighteen years.
3. During the five (5) years preceding the filing of this Petition, the Petitioner has resided at the following locations:

Address:

Dates of residence: (from) - (to)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4. There are no judgments or decrees pending against the Petitioner.
5. The Petitioner requests that his/her name be changed to: _____.
6. The reasons for this requested change of name are:

7. Petitioner requests the Court waive the requirement of publication of notice because notice would jeopardize Petitioner's safety for the following reasons:

WHEREFORE, the Petitioner requests the Court schedule a hearing on this petition, waive the requirement that notice be given, and enter an Order changing Petitioner's name as requested herein.

Respectfully Submitted,

I verify the statements made in this Petition are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that false statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. §4904, relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

Petitioner's Signature: _____

WHEREFORE, the Petitioner requests the Court schedule a hearing on this petition, direct that notice be given, and enter an Order changing Petitioner's name as requested herein.

Respectfully Submitted,

I verify the statements made in this Petition are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that false statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. §4904, relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

Petitioner's Signature: _____

NOTICE TO BE PUBLISHED

INTENTION TO CHANGE NAME

**IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF
LYCOMING COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

NO. _____

In re: Name Change of _____

Notice is hereby given that on _____ (date), a Petition was filed in the above-named Court, praying for a decree changing the name of _____ to _____.

The Court has fixed _____ (date) at _____ (time) in Courtroom number _____ of the Lycoming County Courthouse, 48 West Third Street, Williamsport, Pennsylvania 17701 as the time and place for the hearing on said petition, when and where all persons interested may appear and show cause, if any they have, why the prayer of the petitioner should not be granted.

NOTICE TO BE PUBLISHED

INTENTION TO CHANGE NAME

**IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF
LYCOMING COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

NO. _____

In re: Name Change of _____

Notice is hereby given that on _____ (date), a Petition was filed in the above-named Court, praying for a decree changing the name of _____ to _____.

The Court has fixed _____ (date) at _____ (time) in Courtroom number _____ of the Lycoming County Courthouse, 48 West Third Street, Williamsport, Pennsylvania 17701 as the time and place for the hearing on said petition, when and where all persons interested may appear and show cause, if any they have, why the prayer of the petitioner should not be granted.