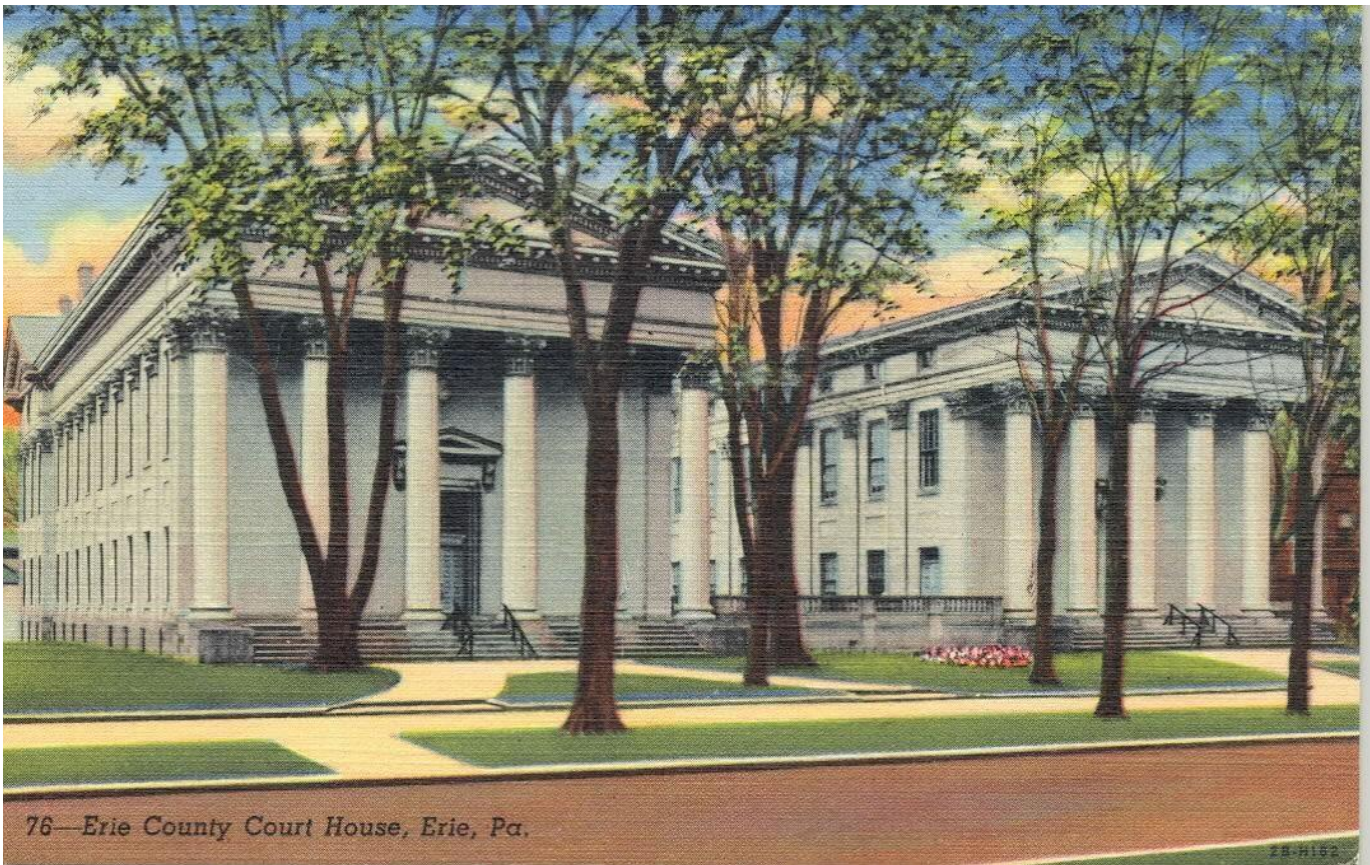


NAME CHANGE PROCEDURE

[Minor: Under the age of 18]

ERIE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

SELF HELP GUIDE



Revised 3/1/2024

**PLEASE NOTE: YOU MUST RESIDE IN
ERIE COUNTY IN ORDER TO FILE A
PETITION FOR A NAME CHANGE IN
ERIE COUNTY**

**IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT
YOU CONSULT AN ATTORNEY**

Obtaining the services of an attorney is recommended because this process has very specific requirements. If any of them are not met, your name change will not be successful.

DISCLAIMER

THE STAFF IN ANY COURT OFFICE ARE NOT PERMITTED TO GIVE YOU LEGAL ADVICE. THE INFORMATION IN THIS PACKET IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR PROFESSIONAL LEGAL ADVICE. THE COURT ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCEPTS NO LIABILITY FOR ACTIONS TAKEN BY USERS OF THESE DOCUMENTS, INCLUDING RELIANCE ON THEIR CONTENTS. IF YOU WANT TO OBTAIN THE SERVICES OF AN ATTORNEY BUT DO NOT KNOW WHOM TO CONTACT, YOU SHOULD CONTACT THE ERIE COUNTY COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION LAWYER REFERRAL & INFORMATION SERVICE AT (814) 459-4411.

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UNDERSTANDING THE NAME CHANGE PROCESS

A. INTRODUCTION

An adult may seek to have the court enter a decree changing his/her name by following certain procedures set forth by Pennsylvania law. In general, a court will grant such a request if the reason for the change is lawful and proper procedures had been completed.

A parent may also seek to have a child's name changed in a manner that is similar, but not the same, as the procedure for an adult.

B. PETITION

The filing of a petition starts the name change process. The petition must be in a form as provided by the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 204.1, concerning format and Rule 206.1, regarding the content and form of petitions. The petition must include the following information:

1. name of petitioner;
2. address of the petitioner's current residence;
3. addresses of the places where the petitioner has resided during the past five (5) years;
4. statement indicating the petitioner's desire for change of name;
5. statement of the reasons for the request;
6. statement indicating whether the petitioner has a prior record of criminal convictions;
7. statement indicating whether there are any judgments or liens of record filed against the petitioner;
8. if the petitioner is seeking a name change for a minor, a statement indicating why such a change is in the best interest of the child; and
9. the name which the petitioner would like to adopt.

C. NOTICE

Once a petition is filed, the court will enter an order requiring that notice of a hearing be provided by publication in one newspaper of general circulation in Erie County and in one edition of the *Erie County Legal Journal*. The notice will be in the form designated by the court.

If a parent is seeking to change the name of a minor, it is necessary to serve a copy of the petition and notice of hearing on a parent who is not joining in the name change request. Other potential parties such as the Office of Children and Youth may also need to be served.

D. PRIOR TO DATE OF HEARING

Before a hearing is conducted, the petitioner must do the following:

1. Cause a search to be conducted by the Erie County Clerk of Records and any other county where petitioner resided in the past five (5) years to determine if there are any judgments or like decrees of record listed against the petitioner on the official records of the county. You must contact other counties to obtain the certified judgment searches or hire an agency/company to do the searches for you; and
2. Request that the Pennsylvania State Police verify the petitioner's criminal record. This is accomplished by providing the Pennsylvania State Police with a set of fingerprints in the manner required by law. (Note: This process is likely to require several weeks to be completed.)

E. HEARING

A hearing will be conducted at the time and place designated by the court and as set forth in the notice. At the time of the hearing, the court will do the following:

1. Determine if the petitioner has complied with all notice requirements;
2. Receive testimony from the petitioner with regard to those matters set forth in the petition and any other matters that may be relevant to the determination of the request;
3. Review the certificate of the Clerk of Records to determine if any liens or judgments appear of record;
4. Review the report from the Pennsylvania State Police to determine if the petitioner has a criminal record;
5. Consider the testimony of any person who is objecting to the name change; and
6. Decide whether the petitioner's request should be granted.

F. DECREE / ORDER

If the petitioner's request is granted, the court will enter an order specifying the petitioner's new name. This document must be filed with the Prothonotary Office of the Clerk of Records.

G. HOW TO FILE A NAME CHANGE PETITION FOR A MINOR

THESE ARE IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS - PLEASE PRINT OR WRITE LEGIBLY

1. Fill out the Name Change Petition (pg. 1), along with a signed and dated Verification (pg. 2).
2. Take the completed forms with the Notice of Hearing Order (pg. 3), to Judge David Ridge's Chambers, Room 221, on the 2nd Floor of the Erie County Courthouse where you will get a hearing date and 3 extra copies, one for yourself to keep and the other two to use for publication. (See below for publication instructions). The law library on the ground floor has a copy machine for public use if needed.
3. Take your completed forms to the Prothonotary Office in Room 120 on the 1st floor of the Erie County Courthouse, you will pay a filing fee and be given a docket number.
4. While at the Prothonotary office ask for a fingerprint card (an example of one is attached to your packet).
 - a. Take that card to the Pennsylvania State Police for your fingerprints to be taken.

- b. Bring the fingerprint card back to the Prothonotary office, and they will request a criminal records check from the Pennsylvania State Police.
 - c. After the records check is complete in approximately two to three weeks, a report is sent back to the Prothonotary office and your file will be prepared for the rest of the name change procedure;
5. As soon as possible after filing your petition take a copy of your Name Change Petition to two newspapers of general circulation such as the **Times Publishing Company** at 205 W 12th St or your local newspaper and one to the **Erie County Bar Association**, 429 West 6th Street, and ask to have your petition published. **Notice must be received at the Erie County Bar Association/Erie County Legal Journal office by 3:00 p.m. the Friday preceding the desired publication date. (The Erie County Legal Journal is only published on Fridays.)** You will pay a fee for this service.
 - a. Your petition will be published and you should receive a copy of the proofs of publication from each of these businesses within a few weeks.
 - b. Take these proofs of publication to the Prothonotary office for filing.
6. On the day that your hearing is scheduled the court will obtain your completed file from the Prothonotary office, which will include an up to the minute "lien search" which determines if you have any liens filed against you. This will be made a part of the record. **If you have resided in another county in the past five (5) years, you will also need to provide a certified judgment/ lien search from that jurisdiction.**
7. **Your day in court**: You will appear in court at the scheduled time and provide testimony as required. The Judge will determine whether your name change request will be granted. If it is granted the Judge will sign the Order
8. You must then take all of your paperwork, along with the Signed Name Change Order to the Prothonotary for filing.

H. **LEGAL ADVICE**

If you have any questions regarding legal issues about the name change process, you are encouraged to seek the advice of an attorney.

Erie County court employees are not allowed to give legal advice.

IN RE: THE NAME : IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
CHANGE PETITION OF: : OF ERIE COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA
:
: DOCKET NO:

[Name of Parent or Guardian of the Minor Child] _____ of _____

PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME

The Petitioner _____ hereby files this Petition for Change of
(Name of Parent or Guardian of the Minor Child)
Name for a minor pursuant to 54 Pa.C.S section 701 et seq, and in support thereof
represents as follows:

1. I _____ verify that the minor is a resident of Erie County,
(Name of Parent or Guardian of the Minor Child)

Pennsylvania with a current address of _____
_____, and that all addresses the minor has lived at for the
past five years are listed on the **Affidavit Of Residency** form which
accompanies this Petition.

2. The Petitioner's current telephone number is (____)_____.

3. The Minor's date of birth is _____.

4. The Petitioner seeks to change a minor's name from

_____ [Initials of Minor. Do NOT write minor's current name]
to _____ . [New Initials of Minor. Do NOT write minor's new name]

5. The reason the Petitioner seeks to change the minor's name is: _____

6. Are there any judgments or liens filed against the minor? If yes, please list: _____

7. Has the minor ever been convicted of a criminal offense? (not including
summary offenses). If yes, please list: _____

Wherefore the Petitioner requests this Honorable Court to enter a Decree changing
the name of the minor.

Respectfully Submitted by

[Signature of Parent or Guardian of the Minor Child]

IN RE: THE NAME : IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
CHANGE PETITION OF: : OF ERIE COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA

[Name of Parent or Guardian of the Minor Child] :
: DOCKET NO.
_____. : _____ of _____
[Initials of Minor (Do NOI write minor's name)] :

VERIFICATION

I, _____, verify that the statements made in this
[Name of Parent or Guardian of the Minor Child]

Petition on behalf of the minor are true and correct to the best of my knowledge,
information and belief. I understand that the statements herein are made subject to the
penalties of 18 Pa. C.S. section 4904 relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

Signature of Petitioner
[Name of Parent or Guardian of the Minor Child]

Printed name of Petitioner
[Name of Parent or Guardian of the Minor Child]

Date: _____

IN RE: THE NAME	:	IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
CHANGE PETITION OF:	:	OF ERIE COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA
	:	
_____	:	
[Name of Parent or Guardian of the Minor Child]	:	
	:	DOCKET NO.
_____	:	_____ of _____
[Initials of Minor (Do <u>NOT</u> write minor's name)]	:	

NOTICE OF HEARING ORDER

AND NOW, this ____ day of _____, 20____, a hearing on the Petition for Change of Name is scheduled for the ____ day of _____, 20____, at _____ o'clock __. M. in Courtroom No. ____ on the 2nd floor at Erie County Courthouse, 140 W. 6th St., Erie, Pa. 16501

Petitioner is directed to give notice of the filing of the Petition for
 (Parent or Guardian of the Minor)
 Change of Name and the date and time set for the hearing by publication once in the **Erie Times News** and once in the **Erie County Legal Journal** (Erie County Bar Association), and submit proof of publication to this court.

BY THE COURT

 J.

IN RE: THE NAME : IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
CHANGE PETITION OF: : OF ERIE COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA

[Name of Parent or Guardian of the Minor Child] :
: DOCKET NO.
_____. : _____ of _____
[Initials of Minor (Do NOT write minor's name)] :

ORDER OF NAME CHANGE

AND NOW, this _____ day of _____, 20____, upon consideration of the within
Petition for Change of Name, and upon presentation of proof of publication of notice as
required by law, together with proof that there are no judgments or decrees of record or any
other matter of like character against said minor in all counties identified as a previous
residence,

And it appearing that there is no lawful objection to the request of the
Petitioner, it is hereby **ORDERED, ADJUDGED and DECREED** that the name of
_____ is hereby changed to
[Current Full Name of Minor]
_____.
[New Full Name of Minor]

BY THE COURT,

IN RE: THE NAME : IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
CHANGE PETITION OF: : OF ERIE COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA

[Name of Parent or Guardian of the Minor Child] :
: DOCKET NO.
_____._____._____. : _____ of _____
[Initials of Minor (Do NOT write minor's name)] :

AFFIDAVIT OF RESIDENCY

I, _____, The Parent of Guardian of the minor in the above-captioned matter do depose and say that, for the past five (5) years prior to filing the Petition for Change of Name in the above-captioned matter, the minor has lived at the following residences (City/Town, County, and State):

****If you have resided in another county in the past five (5) years, you will also need to provide a certified judgment/ lien search from that jurisdiction****

Date Petitioner
[Name of Parent or Guardian of the Minor Child]

I verify that the statements made in this Affidavit are true and correct. I understand that false statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. 4904, relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

Date Petitioner
[Name of Parent or Guardian of the Minor Child]

Erie County Legal Journal.

Proof of Publication of Notice

STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA }
COUNTY OF ERIE } SS:

Paula J. Gregory, Associate Editor of the Erie County Legal Journal, being duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that the Erie County Legal Journal is the duly designated legal newspaper for Erie County, Pennsylvania, which legal newspaper was established in 1945, and is published by the Erie County Bar Association, 302 West 9th Street, Erie, Erie County, Pennsylvania 16502; and that a copy of the printed notice of publication is attached hereto exactly as printed or published in the issue of issue of said legal newspaper on the following date or dates:

COPY OF NOTICE

CHANGE OF NAME NOTICE
In the Court of Common Pleas of Erie County, Pennsylvania In re Change of Name of [redacted] to [redacted] Notice is hereby given that on [redacted] the Petition of [redacted] was filed with the above identified court, requesting the order authorizing Petitioner to change the name of [redacted] to [redacted]. The court has fixed [redacted] before the [redacted] Courtroom of the Erie County Courthouse, Erie, Pennsylvania, as the time and place for hearing on said Petition, when and where all persons interested may appear and show cause if any, why the prayer of relief of the said Petition should not be granted. [redacted] Esquire Renaissance Centre [redacted] Erie, PA 16501 [redacted] Mar 17

Friday, [redacted], 2006

The affiant further states that s/he is the designated agent of Erie County Bar Association, the owner of said legal newspaper, that s/he is not interested in the subject matter of the aforesaid notice or advertising, and that all the allegations of the aforesaid statement as to time, place and character of publication are true.

Handwritten signature: KEITH PATRICK

[Handwritten signature] Associate Editor

Sworn to and subscribed before me this ___ day of ___

[Handwritten signature] Notary Public

MY COMMISSION EXPIRES

NOTARIAL SEAL
NORA BRYDON SMITH, NOTARY PUBLIC
ERIE, ERIE COUNTY, PENNA.
COMMISSION EXPIRES ON JULY 14, 2006

ERIE COUNTY PROthonotary
APR 27 P 4:28
ERIE, PA
BK 5/5/06

THE ERIE TIMES-NEWS

COMBINATION EDITION

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] ST
ERIE PA [REDACTED]

Jmy

REFERENCE: L0961528
0000804148 INTHEMATTEROFTHECHAN

STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA)
COUNTY OF ERIE) SS:

James E. Dible being duly sworn, deposes and says that he is the Publisher of the Times Publishing Company, which publishes: the Erie Times-News, established October 2, 2000, a daily newspaper of general circulation, successor, by consolidation, of the Morning News, established January 1957, and the Erie Daily Times, established April 1888, daily newspapers of general circulation, and published at Erie, Erie County, Pennsylvania, and that the notice of which the attached is a copy published, in the regular editions of said newspaper of the dates referred to below. Affiant further deposes that he is duly authorized by the TIMES PUBLISHING COMPANY, publisher of The Erie Times-News to verify the foregoing statement under oath, and affiant is not interested in the subject matter of the aforesaid notice or advertisement, and that all allegations in the foregoing statement as to time, place and character of publication are true.

EXAMINE

IN THE MATTER OF THE
ERIE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that
on 06/07/2007, the Petition
of James E. Dible, on
behalf of Ethan Hester,
was presented to the
Court for the County of Erie,
Erie County, Pennsylvania,
for the purpose of having
the same admitted to the
records of said County.
The Court has ordered that
the same be admitted to the
records of said County.
Date: 06/07/2007
Time: 11:52 AM
Notary Public
Tami J. Brown
150 West 11th Street
Erie, Pennsylvania 16507
(814) 451-2657
Attorney for Petitioner
(6-05416-NT-7)

PUBLISHED ON: 06/07
TOTAL COST: 99.60 AD SPACE: 36 LINE
FILED ON: 06/07/07

Sworn to and subscribed before me this
7th day of June 2007 Affiant: James E. Dible
NOTARY Tami J. Brown

NOTARIAL SEAL
TAMI J. BROWN, NOTARY PUBLIC
ERIE, ERIE COUNTY, PENNA.
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES ON MARCH 30, 2010

THOSE FILING PETITIONS FOR NAME CHANGE
MUST GET FINGERPRINTED AT STATE POLICE
AND FILE THEIR FINGERPRINT CARDS HERE.

LEAVE BLANK		TYPE OR PRINT ALL INFORMATION IN BLACK			FBI		LEAVE BLANK			
		LAST NAME NAM	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME						
SIGNATURE OF PERSON FINGERPRINTED		ALIASES AKA	<input type="checkbox"/> PA0251600 <input type="checkbox"/> R IERTE CO PROTHONOTARY							
RESIDENCE OF PERSON FINGERPRINTED		ERIE PA			AGE	DATE OF BIRTH DOB		Year		
DATE	SIGNATURE OF OFFICIAL TAKING FINGERPRINTS		SEX	RACE	HGT.	WGT.	EYES	HAIR		
EMPLOYER AND ADDRESS		APPLICANT			LEAVE BLANK					
REASON FINGERPRINTED					SOCIAL SECURITY NO. SOC					
					MISCELLANEOUS NO. MNU					

1. R. THUMB		2. R. INDEX		3. R. MIDDLE		4. R. RING		5. R. LITTLE			
6. L. THUMB		7. L. INDEX		8. L. MIDDLE		9. L. RING		10. L. LITTLE			
LEFT FOUR FINGERS TAKEN SIMULTANEOUSLY				L. THUMB		R. THUMB		RIGHT FOUR FINGERS TAKEN SIMULTANEOUSLY			

EXAMPLE