

Massachusetts-Specific Name and Gender Marker Changes Quick-Guide

This guide accompanies the more detailed ID Documents Center of the National Center for Transgender Equality found [hereⁱ](#), and the Transgender Law Center's Quick Guide to Changing Federal Identity Documents found [hereⁱⁱ](#). These links can be used by people in any state, and by people who are not U.S. citizens. Forms and another quick-guide for Massachusetts are also available on the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition website [hereⁱⁱⁱ](#).

The Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund's Name Change Project provides free legal name change services to low-income trans and non-binary individuals who meet their eligibility guidelines. For more information on this program and eligibility, see their website [here^{iv}](#).

For additional legal guidance, Ropes & Gray LLP has partnered with GLAD and MTPC on the Pop-Up Transgender ID Project. For more information, assistance, or advice, visit their website [here^v](#).

1. **Name Change.** Anyone can petition for a change of name for any reason (except to get out of debts or legal obligations). Name changes are done through a person's county probate court. Please find your local MA probate court [here^{vi}](#). It costs between \$200 and \$500 to change one's name. It may be possible to petition for support or removal of these fees. Please see the notes below regarding the Affidavit of Indigency. A name change takes different amounts of time depending on what jurisdiction a person lives in. It may be worth waiting to complete this process to reduce costs of replacing documents once for gender and again for name changes.
2. **Social Security Name and/or Gender Change.** We recommend people get a court ordered name change first, then take both the certified copy of your court ordered change of name and a medical provider's gender change certification letter to Social Security. This will allow a person to change their name and gender marker at the same time.
 - a. Social security gender marker change requires a certification letter from a medical provider. Fenway providers have this letter template available to them at each site. Contact your medical team case manager to request this letter.
 - b. After changing information with Social Security, wait 24-48 hours. The government computer system needs 24-48 hours to update all records within it. Waiting will help the process go more smoothly at the RMV. After the system updates with the change made at Social Security, the federal record and the requested changes to one's license/ID will match.
3. **DMV/RMV/State License Name and/or Gender Marker Change.** *(This information is for MA residents.)* Go to the MA RMV with the certified copy of your court ordered change of name, proof of address, your Social Security Card with your new legal name change, and the [MA RMV's Application^{vii}](#) for a state license/ID. Request a new license/ID and photo if needed at this time. *(We do not have forms or information for what is required for other states. You must find out what is needed in your state before contacting us for help to change out-of-state licenses. See above for resources for documents originating outside of Massachusetts.)*

4. **Passport Name and/or Gender Marker Change.** Please refer to the accompanying National Center for Transgender Equality [ID Documents Center](#)^{viii} for information and forms for passport changes.
 - a. People *must* appear in person for changes to gender on a passport. There are multiple passport offices. You can search for the office nearest you [here](#)^{ix}.
 - b. The passport gender marker change requires a certification letter from a medical provider. Fenway providers have this letter template available to them at each site. Contact your medical team case manager to request this letter.

5. **Birth Certificate Name and/or Sex Designation Change.** Most all jurisdictions allow a change of name on birth certificates. However, not all states or countries allow people to change their sex designation regardless of medical or surgical gender affirmation treatments.
 - a. Changing the sex designation on a MA birth certificate requires that a medical provider complete a state form ***that must be notarized***. The form is available [here](#)^x. Contact your medical team case manager to request this form be completed and notarized.
 - b. For people born in other states outside MA, please research what is possible and required for amending birth certificates in that location using this [link](#)^{xi}, and get any needed forms or documentation information together *before* requesting help with completion of any needed materials. Contact your medical team case manager to request help getting any documents needed from your medical provider. If you need legal assistance for amending birth certificates, we recommend contacting [GLAD](#)^{xii} or [Lambda Legal](#)^{xiii} and requesting referrals for legal assistance.

6. **Everything else.** After legal documents are changed, you may need to update health and auto insurance, medical records, etc. Another major document that used gender markers is health insurance. *It is important to update every service and location of care with your updated information. There is no system that will inform a person's contacts, medical providers, subscriptions, services, mail, utilities, landlords, banks, etc. with this information. Updates are dependent on the individual who is responsible for providing needed documentation for each change needed.*
 - a. **A note about health insurance gender markers:** Unless someone has already completed gender affirming surgery, and no longer retains the organs from the sex originally listed on their health insurance, we recommend keeping their health insurance gender marker the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. It is possible to work out most billing issues, however, this may cause delays or denials in services needed for natal body parts and organs for some individuals based on what insurer they have. Unless someone has Medicare, which is linked to Social Security records, they can change their gender marker everywhere else and in all places that are public (license, passport, etc.) while still keeping the gender with their health insurance related to the body parts and organs for which they will need ongoing medical treatment and routine screenings.

Please Note: If someone in MA is unable to afford the cost of these amendments to their documents, and it can be expensive, they can fill out an **Affidavit of Indigency** that will serve to waive some or all of the fees associated with these processes. This form available [here](#)^{xiv}.

**Please contact your medical team case manager for assistance with any of these needs.
Call 617-267-0900 and ask to speak with your provider's case manager.**

-
- ⁱ <https://transequality.org/documents>
- ⁱⁱ <https://transgenderlawcenter.org/resources/id/id-please-quick-guide>
- ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.masstpc.org/get-help/identity-documents>
- ^{iv} http://www.transgenderlegal.org/work_show.php?id=7
- ^v <https://www.glad.org/id/>
- ^{vi} http://www.mass-doc.com/probate_court_dir.htm
- ^{vii} <https://www.mass.gov/doc/learners-permit-drivers-license-and-id-card-application/download>
- ^{viii} <https://transequality.org/know-your-rights/passports>
- ^{ix} <https://iafdb.travel.state.gov/>
- ^x <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/07/rc/r-115-physician-statement-birth-certificate-amendment-following-sex-reassignment.pdf>
- ^{xi} <https://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/article/trans-changing-birth-certificate-sex-designations>
- ^{xii} <https://www.glad.org/>
- ^{xiii} <https://www.lambdalegal.org/helpdesk>
- ^{xiv} <https://www.mass.gov/lists/court-forms-for-indigency>