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**IDENTITY DOCUMENT  
UPDATES**

We regularly use identity documents (IDs) in many ways, from driving a vehicle, traveling by plane, picking up prescription medication, opening a bank account, applying for a job or voting. Whether we have an ID that accurately reflects our identity and appearance can have an effect on how easily we are able to participate in public life. For transgender and non-binary individuals, obtaining IDs that align with the name we use, with our gender identity and with our physical appearance or expression can be challenging. Each update to an ID will come with a fee. The available gender markers offered by most states are limited, often to “M” or “F,” but increasingly states are offering a third, sometimes non-binary, option. Some states’ laws require “proof” of completed medical or surgical procedures that can be costly, difficult to access and may be unwanted by the individual.

A 2015 survey by the National Center for Transgender Equality found that just 11% of respondents surveyed had their preferred name and gender on all of their identification documents.

*(National Center for Transgender Equality, 2015 - U.S. Transgender Survey, National Center for Transgender Equality - <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>)*

Transgender and non-binary individuals are changing their names and gender markers on official IDs and other important documents with increasing frequency. Government agencies generally provide instructions on their websites for updating IDs. Business entities that have records about you generally also provide a procedure to update your name or gender marker, such as bank accounts, credit cards, school records, home mortgages or health insurance providers.

Many trans or non-binary individuals will complete these ID updates on their own, and some others prefer to seek assistance from community advocates and sometimes from lawyers. You may contact FORGE for advice or assistance with name or gender marker updates in Wisconsin. (See “How to Contact FORGE” in the Introduction.)

**NOTE:** A lawyer is not **required** for any of the ID updates discussed here.

## Selecting Your Name

Changing your name is a unique opportunity to choose a name that best represents you and your identity. Is there a relative, role model or parental figure that you greatly respect? A favorite character in a book, show or film? Some trans people select a name that their parent(s) would have given them if they had been assigned a different sex at birth, and others ask their parent(s) to rename them. Find the name that best fits you. You may wish to consider the following decisions, as well: Do you want a middle name? Would you like your initials to remain the same? Do you want to change your last name, too?

## CHANGING YOUR NAME BY COURT ORDER

To update your name on your government-issued IDs, either from the federal or state government, you will need to obtain a court-ordered name change. Court-ordered name changes in Wisconsin may take several months to be processed and granted, especially in counties with larger populations.

**TIP:** If you have not obtained a court-ordered **name** change, or if you wish to change **only** your **gender marker** on your IDs, you may apply to change **only the gender marker** on any of your IDs.

However, if you also want to change your name, you will later need to update your identity documents **again** once the court issues your order.

### Overview of the Court Process

The court-ordered name change process in Wisconsin involves you taking the following steps, which are explained in detail below:

1. Get Your Forms and Fill Them Out
2. Decide Whether to Request a Confidential Proceeding
3. File Your Forms & Pay the Fee or Request a Fee Waiver for Financial Hardship
4. Satisfy the Publication Requirement
5. Attend a Court Hearing

### **1. Get Your Forms & Fill Them Out**

In Wisconsin, you petition the county court where you live by filing a Petition for Change of Name. There is a form adults and a form for minor children.

- *Petition for Change of Name - Form CV-450*  
<https://www.wicourts.gov/formdisplay/CV-450.pdf?formNumber=CV-450&formType=Form&formatId=2&language=en> if you are over the age of 14, or...
- *Petition for Change of Name - Minor - Form CV-455*  
<https://www.wicourts.gov/formdisplay/CV-455.pdf?formNumber=CV-455&formType=Form&formatId=2&language=en> if you are younger than 14.

**TIP:** Note that the form must be signed in the presence of a notary public, who you can find at most banks or legal offices or other professional agencies.

You also need fill out the following additional forms, whether for an adult or a minor child:

- ***Notice & Order for Name Change Hearing - Form CV-460***  
<https://www.wicourts.gov/formdisplay/CV-460.pdf?formNumber=CV-460&formType=Form&formatId=2&language=en>
- ***Order for Name Change - Form CV-470***  
<https://www.wicourts.gov/formdisplay/CV-470.pdf?formNumber=CV-470&formType=Form&formatId=2&language=en>

## 2. Decide Whether to Request a Confidential Proceeding

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Wisconsin state law requires you to publish a notice of the hearing time and place in a local newspaper where you reside, once per week for 3 weeks.

You may request that the court waive the publication requirement if you believe, for a specific reason, that publication of the name change hearing could endanger you.

To request a confidential process, complete the following form:

- ***Petition for Confidential Name Change - Form CV-451***  
<https://www.wicourts.gov/formdisplay/CV-451.pdf?formNumber=CV-451&formType=Form&formatId=2&language=en>

## 3. File Your Forms & Pay the Fee or Request a Fee Waiver for Financial Hardship

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Make at least **3 copies** of every form you will file with the court.

Take your forms to the county court where you live and file them with your local Clerk of Court. The Clerk will also receive your payment of the filing fee.

If you are not able to pay the filing fee, you may request that the court waive or not charge you the filing fee.

To request a fee waiver, fill out the following form:

- ***Petition for Waiver of Fees and Costs – Affidavit of Indigency – Form CV-410A***  
<https://www.wicourts.gov/forms1/circuit/ccform.jsp?FormNumber=CV-410A>

The Clerk will assign you a date and time for a name change hearing. Some of your copies will be stamped by the court and returned to you for your records.

## 4. Satisfy the Publication Requirement

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If you do not proceed under a confidential process, you will be responsible for ensuring that you publish a notice of the hearing time and place in a local newspaper where you reside, once per week for 3 weeks. Many cities and towns have “official” newspapers, but generally you can use any newspaper that is regularly published at least once a week in the city or town where you live. Be prepared to pay a fee to the newspaper for publication.

After the publication is completed, the newspaper should provide you with an *“Affidavit of Publication.”* You will need to file the Proof of Publication with Clerk of Courts before your hearing date or you may present it at the name change hearing.

## 5. Attend a Court Hearing

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Finally, you will need to attend your name change hearing. Bring a certified copy of your birth certificate for the judge to review. You should be prepared for the possibility of speaking in court, as you may be placed under oath and asked to respond to the judge’s questions about the information provided on your petition.

Once your name change petition is granted, you must file the *Order for Name Change - Form CV 470* with the Clerk of Courts office according to local court procedures. You must also follow local procedures to record a certified copy of the order with the Register of Deeds in the county in which the name change was ordered.

## Additional Resources

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Wisconsin Circuit Court Directory

[https://www.wicourts.gov/contact/Circuit\\_Courts.html](https://www.wicourts.gov/contact/Circuit_Courts.html)

National Transgender Center for Equality – ID Document Center

<https://transequality.org/documents>

## MILWAUKEE MUNICIPAL ID

Any resident of the City of Milwaukee may apply for a Milwaukee-issued Municipal ID. Applying for the Municipal ID is a quick, easy and inexpensive alternative to obtaining or updating your existing IDs issued by the federal or state government. What’s great about the Milwaukee Municipal ID is that it allows you to use your name of use (rather than your “legal” name) and it permits people to identify themselves as non-binary or non-disclosed!



The City and the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) consider this ID a valid, official government-issued photo ID within the City of Milwaukee. You may present this ID to any City official or agency and to the **police** if you are asked to show your government ID. (Private businesses, like stores or gyms, may voluntarily accept the ID.)

The Municipal ID is has **many** benefits for anyone who may face challenges getting an ID or getting an ID that aligns with their identity, expression or appearance.

Contact FORGE for assistance with the application or with paying \$10 fee. (See “Affording the Municipal ID” below.)

### Benefits of Municipal ID

1. You may put your **name of use** on the ID (rather than your legal name).
2. You may choose one of **four gender makers** (proof of gender-affirming health care is **not required**):
  - a. Female
  - b. Male
  - c. Non-binary
  - d. Other/Non-disclosed
3. You’ll take a **current photograph**.
4. The ID costs only **\$10** and is valid for **5 years** (see “Affording the Municipal ID” below).
5. The **Milwaukee Police Department must accept** your Municipal ID as official government-issued identification.

If you do not have a government-issued photo ID, or if you are unable or don’t want to update federal- or state-issued IDs, the Municipal ID is for you!

FORGE strongly supports use of the Municipal ID by local community members – it’s a quick and easy way to put an ID in your pocket that aligns with your identity, expression or appearance!

## Affording the Municipal ID

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FORGE is committed to offering financial assistance to any transgender or non-binary individuals for whom the \$10 fee would cause financial hardship.

Please contact FORGE to speak to a staff member about FORGE paying the \$10 fee for your ID. (See “How to Contact FORGE.”)

## How to Apply for Municipal ID

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Follow these instructions to request a Municipal ID:

**1. Fill out the application.** You must be 14 years or older to apply. (Minors must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.)

The application is available in-person at City Hall or online, in English, Spanish and Hmong:

### Licensing Division (First Floor)

Milwaukee City Hall  
200 E. Wells St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53202  
(414) 286-2238

### Milwaukee Municipal ID:

<https://city.milwaukee.gov/cityclerk/license/Municipal-Identification.htm#.XPkxv4hKiiw>

**2. Provide documents.** You must provide documents that establish (1) that you reside in Milwaukee, and (2) that verify your identity.

Milwaukee allows applicants to select from a range of documents to establish residency and identity:

### Accepted Proof of Residency & Identity:

<https://city.milwaukee.gov/cityclerk/license/Municipal-Identification.htm#.XPkqjlhKiiw>

**3. Submit your application** to the Licensing Division at City Hall. You **must apply in-person**, and the process takes around 30 minutes once it’s your turn.

**4. Pay the \$10 fee.** Please contact FORGE if paying the \$10 fee would create financial hardship for you. FORGE is committed to providing financial assistance to transgender and non-binary individuals applying for the ID.

**5. Take your photograph!** Your photo will be taken by the staff in the Licensing Division at time of application.

**6. Receive your new ID in the mail within 2 weeks!!!**

## UPDATING STATE IDs

### Wisconsin Driver's License or State ID

To update your Wisconsin driver's license or state ID you will first need to update your Social Security Card (see below). After you have updated your Social Security card, you will need to provide the Department of Motor Vehicles with the following:

- *A Driver's License Application Form - MV3001*  
<https://wisconsin.gov/Documents/formdocs/mv3001.pdf>
- *A valid US passport or Court Order of your legal name change (Form CV-470)*

Due to the Federal REAL ID program, you may also need to provide a certified birth certificate. If you are updating your gender information you will need to provide either an affidavit from a licensed physician certifying your gender change, or a court order for gender change.

### Wisconsin Birth Certificate

Wisconsin will issue an amended birth certificate upon receipt of a court-order to "change the name and sex of the registrant on the certificate due to a surgical procedure." The certificate will be marked as "amended" unless the court orders the state registrar to "prepare a new certificate."

Applicants should submit a *Birth Certificate Request Form-F05291*

(<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/forms/f0/f05291.pdf>)

along with a certified copy of the court-ordered name and/or gender change, a notarized letter from the doctor that performed gender confirmation surgery, and payment of any fees. The Wisconsin Office of Vital Records

(<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/vitalrecords/index.htm>) has, upon request, a form to request a gender change court order and updated certificate.



If you were not born in Wisconsin, you will need to follow your birth state's laws and procedures to change your birth certificate. For more information, see the National Center for Transgender Equality's ID Center at <https://transequality.org/documents>.

## UPDATING FEDERAL IDs

### Social Security Card

Your Social Security card does not bear a gender marker, but the Social Security Administration maintains gender information in its records, which may be queried for identity verification, most commonly when starting a new job. Trans, non-binary, or gender-expansive folks may be outed if they do not update their gender markers with the Social Security Administration. This could affect you if you are applying for a job or are receiving assistance through a Federal program such as Medicaid. Changing your name or gender on your Social Security card will not affect the amount of benefits you will receive.

Changes to your name or gender marker must be made in-person at your local Social Security Administration office. Visit <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp> to find the Social Security office or Social Security Card Center that serves your area. You do not need to make an appointment. If you are under 18, you will need a parent or guardian to come to your appointment unless you are emancipated.

You will need to fill out an *Application for Social Security Card Form - SS5* (<http://www.ssa.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf>)

The form should be filled out using your new name and your current gender marker if you are applying for a gender marker change as well.

You will need to bring the following documents:

- Current proof of U.S. citizenship or immigration status, such as a birth certificate or U.S. passport, Certificate of Naturalization or Certificate of Citizenship. This does not need to have your current name or gender marker as long as you can also provide records that document any change.
- A certified copy of your court-ordered legal name change. The Social Security Administration may also accept proof of a name change through marriage, divorce, adoption or based on a Certification of Naturalization.
- Proof of identity, such as a valid driver's license, state ID, U.S. passport, military ID or other photo ID, such as an employer identification card, school ID or health insurance card. This does not need to be in your current name or gender.

If you are planning to update your gender marker with the Social Security Administration you will need to bring any one of the following:

- Court-ordered gender change
- State issued birth certificate with correct gender
- An updated and valid (i.e. 10 year) passport
- Declaration from a physician

## Additional Resources:

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NCTE's *"Transgender People and the Social Security Administration"*:

[https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/kyr/SSAResource\\_June2013.pdf](https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/kyr/SSAResource_June2013.pdf)

SSA Gender Change Policy:

<https://secure.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0110212200>

SSA FAQ on How to Change Gender on Social Security Record:

<https://faq.ssa.gov/en-us/Topic/article/KA-01453>

## U.S. Passport

Thinking of traveling abroad? Your U.S. Passport is good for 10 years and allows you to travel outside the US. You can amend your United States passport in a few different ways. There are 3 forms you can use to change your passport.

***Form DS-5504 – Application for US Passport Name Change, Data Correction, Limited Passport Replacement*** (<https://eforms.state.gov/Forms/ds5504.pdf>)

This form can be used to change your name only on a valid passport issued within the last year. You can submit the form to the National Passport Processing Center by mail without a processing fee.

***Form DS-82 – Passport Renewal Application*** (<https://eforms.state.gov/Forms/ds82.pdf>)

This form is also to change your name only on a valid passport issued more than a year ago. You can submit the form by mail, but there is processing fee.

***Form DS-11 – Application for a US Passport*** (<https://eforms.state.gov/Forms/ds11.pdf>)

This is the basic passport application and can be used to update your name AND gender.

This is the form you should use if any of the following are true about you:

- Never had a passport
- Are under the age of 16, or were under the age of 16 when your previous passport was issued.
- Your most recent passport was issued more than 15 years ago.
- Your most recent passport was lost or stolen.
- You are requesting a gender marker change.

- Your name has changed since your previous US passport was issued, but you are unable to document the change.

The DS-11 Form can be filled out online, but must be printed out and submitted in person with a fee.

**Here is a check-list of items you will need to have in order to update your name/gender on your US Passport:**

- DS-11 form filled out
- A certified copy of your court-ordered legal name change
- Two 2x2 inch photos of yourself
- Proof of US Citizenship such as birth certificate or a government-issued photo ID
- Letter from an attending physician on office letterhead that states you have had “appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition”
- Any fees

The US Department of State allows you to use a photo that looks like you, regardless of your gender marker.

## U.S. Immigration Documents

So what about changing your name and gender on US immigration documents such as an Employment Authorization Card, Permanent Resident Card (also known as a Green Card) or US Naturalization certificate? With any of these documents, it is a good idea to consult with an immigration attorney prior to any application request.

To update your name/gender on immigration documents you will need:

- A court ordered name change or other proof of legal name change, and/or...
- A letter from a licensed healthcare professional certifying you have undergone “appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition”, or a driver's license, birth certificate, passport, court order, or other official government-issued document reflecting the requested gender designation.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will accept gender designation letters from licensed health care professionals, including licensed counselors, nurse practitioners, physicians (M.D. or D.O.), physician assistants, psychologists, social workers, and therapists. All certifications should include the information in the below letter. Proof of gender-affirming surgery or other specific medical treatment is not required.

The health care professional must provide their registration number from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in the letter, if applicable.

The format and language below is one example of an acceptable health care certification letter.

**Health Care Certification**

[Date]

To Whom It May Concern:

*I am a licensed [counselor, nurse practitioner, physician, physician assistant, psychologist, social worker, or therapist], and I have treated or evaluated [patient's name] in relation to [patient's name]'s gender identity. In my professional opinion, [patient's name]'s gender identity is consistent with a designation of [male or female].*

**Patient's Information:**

Full Name:

Date of Birth:

**Health Care Professional's Information:**

Full Name:

Organization (if any):

Address:

Phone Number:

License Type: [counselor, nurse practitioner, physician, physician assistant, psychologist, social worker, or therapist]

License Number:

Issuing State, Country, or other Jurisdiction of License:

Sincerely,

[Health Care Professional's Signature]

[Health Care Professional's Printed Name]

## Employment Authorization Card

To update the name/gender marker on your Employment Authorization Card, you will need:

- To fill out an *Application for Employment Authorization - Form I-765* (<http://www.uscis.gov/i-765>)
- A filing fee of \$495 (subject to change) or a Fee Waiver
- Two passport-style photographs
- Supporting documentation
  - Your court ordered name change or other proof of legal name change and/or...

- A birth certificate, passport, driver's license, court order, or other official government-issued documentation recognizing the new gender, OR a letter from a licensed health care provider certifying the change in gender, as shown in the sample letter.

## Permanent Resident Card

To update the name/gender marker on a Permanent Resident Card, you will need:

- An *Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card - Form I-90* (<http://www.uscis.gov/i-90>)
- Filing fee of \$465 (subject to change) or a Fee Waiver
- Supporting documentation
  - Your court ordered name change or other proof of legal name change and/or...
  - A birth certificate, passport, driver's license, court order, or other official government-issued documentation recognizing the new gender, OR a letter from a licensed healthcare provider certifying the gender change, as shown in the sample letter.

## Naturalization Certificate

To change the name and/or gender marker on a naturalization certificate, you will need:

- An *Application for Replacement Naturalization/Citizenship Document - Form N-565* (<http://www.uscis.gov/n-565>)
- Filing fee of \$555 (subject to change) or a Fee Waiver
- Two passport-style photographs
- Supporting documentation
  - Your court ordered name change or other proof of legal name change and/or...
  - A birth certificate, passport, driver's license, court order, or other official government-issued document recognizing the new gender, OR a letter from a licensed health care provider certifying the change in gender, as shown in the sample letter.

## OTHER IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS & RECORDS

Remember to consider whether you want to change your name or gender marker on any important documents or records that are **not** your IDs.

Some examples include:

- educational records, certificates or diplomas
- records about your minor child/ren
- financial records (bank accounts, credit card accounts, loans, mortgages)
- property records or mortgages
- vehicle title or loans
- health insurance or other insurance policies
- medical provider records
- employment/payroll records
- professional licenses
- wills, estate plans, trusts, power-of-attorneys or living will
- other IDs, such as military or tribal IDs

If you are changing any ID or other documents, you may contact FORGE for assistance. (See “How to Contact FORGE” in the Introduction.)