

Understanding Florida Name Changes for Adults and Minor Children

An Educational Overview of the Court Process, Fingerprinting Requirement,
Supreme Court Approved Forms, and Updating Records,
with Links to the Florida Statutes, Court Forms, and Federal Agencies

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IMPORTANT NOTICE — PLEASE READ FIRST

Jonathan Rexford is **not an attorney** and is not licensed to practice law in Florida or any other state. He is a nonlawyer document preparer and Florida notary public; he is not a paralegal. He **cannot give you legal advice**, cannot tell you what your rights or remedies are, cannot tell you whether a name change, or any particular approach to one, is the right choice for you, cannot tell you how to testify in court, and cannot represent you in court. Under Rules 10-2.1 and 10-2.2 of the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar (as amended effective October 1, 2026), a nonlawyer may only type the factual information you provide in writing; on forms approved by the Supreme Court of Florida, a nonlawyer may also ask factual questions to fill in the blanks and tell you how to file the form. See the full Nonlawyer Disclosure in the Required Disclosures section.

This report is **educational information only**. It is not legal, tax, financial, or Medicaid-planning advice, and reading it does not create any attorney-client relationship. It is written in plain English and summarizes publicly available law. Every summary is a simplification; the actual statutes, rules, and court decisions control. You are encouraged to **read the linked sources yourself**, do your own research, and, if you want advice about your own situation, consult a Florida-licensed attorney, a certified public accountant, or another qualified professional of your choosing.

Laws change. The links in this report point to official or primary sources. Always confirm you are reading the most recent version.

1. How Names Are Changed in Florida

Florida law recognizes three ways a person's legal name changes:

- **Marriage.** A spouse who adopts the other spouse's surname (or a combination) does so by presenting the certified **marriage certificate** to the Social Security Administration, the driver license office, and other agencies. No court order is needed.
- **Dissolution of marriage.** A spouse may ask the court to **restore a former name** in the divorce petition; the Final Judgment of Dissolution then orders it. No separate case, fee, or fingerprinting is required when this is done as part of the divorce. See the Florida Supreme Court family law forms in the 12.901 series.
- **Court petition under § 68.07.** Every other name change — for an adult, a minor child, or a whole family — requires a **Petition for Change of Name** filed in the circuit court of the county where the person lives, a criminal history check, and a Final Judgment signed by a judge. See [§ 68.07, Fla. Stat.](#)

This report covers the third route. The Florida Supreme Court publishes approved forms for it (Section 5), which is why a nonlawyer document preparer may lawfully assist with filling in the blanks and explain how to file.

2. Who May Petition and Where

Any person **residing in Florida** may petition the circuit court in the **county of residence**. A petition for a **minor child** is filed by the parent or legal guardian. A petition for a **family** (both spouses and/or their minor children changing to the same new surname) may be filed as one case. See [§ 68.07\(1\) and \(7\), Fla. Stat.](#) There is no residency waiting period in the statute, but the petition must state under oath that the petitioner is a bona fide resident and domiciled in the county.

Grounds

Florida does not require a “good reason.” The court must find that the petition is made for **no ulterior or illegal purpose**, that granting it will **not invade the property rights of others**, and that the petitioner is not seeking to evade creditors, avoid a criminal record or sex-offender registration, or defraud anyone. A judge may deny a petition that appears to serve such a purpose.

3. The Petition — What Must Be Disclosed Under Oath

[Section 68.07\(3\), Fla. Stat.](#), requires the sworn petition to state, to the extent known:

- That the petitioner is a bona fide resident of and domiciled in the county;
- Date and place of birth, parents' names (including the mother's maiden name), and whether the petitioner is married or single;
- Whether the petitioner's name has **ever been changed before**, and if so, how, when, and by what court;
- **Every residence since birth**;
- **Occupations** for the preceding five years and where practiced;
- **Education** — schools attended and degrees;

- Whether the petitioner has ever been **adjudicated bankrupt**, and where and when;
- Whether the petitioner has ever been **arrested for or charged with** a felony, convicted of a felony, or had civil rights suspended — and if so, the details, and whether rights have been restored;
- Whether any **money judgment** has ever been entered against the petitioner, and if so, the creditor, court, amount, and whether satisfied;
- Whether the petitioner is required to register as a **sexual predator or sexual offender**;
- That the petition is filed for **no ulterior or illegal purpose** and granting it will not invade the property rights of others.

These disclosures are the court's protection against misuse. A petitioner who omits or misstates them exposes the judgment to being set aside and may face prosecution for perjury. For a minor child's petition, the disclosures are made about the **child** where applicable, and the petitioning parent's own background is checked through fingerprinting.

4. Fingerprinting and the Criminal History Check

Before the hearing, the petitioner must submit **fingerprints electronically** to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) for a **state and national criminal history records check**. See [§ 68.07\(2\), Fla. Stat.](#) In practice:

- Fingerprints are taken by an FDLE-approved **Livescan** service provider (many sheriff's offices, UPS stores, and private vendors). The provider needs the **ORI number** assigned to name-change petitions in the county where the case is filed; clerks publish it. The vendor charges its own fee plus the FDLE/FBI processing fee.
- Results are sent **directly to the Clerk of Court**, not to the petitioner, and are placed in the court file. The judge may not enter a judgment until the results have been received.
- For a **minor child's** petition, the **petitioning parent or guardian** is fingerprinted; a child is not.
- **Exception:** fingerprinting is **not required** when the petition seeks only to **restore a former name** (for example, a maiden name after a divorce was final without a name restoration). See § 68.07(2)(a).

FDLE's information on criminal history checks and Livescan providers is at fdle.state.fl.us.

5. The Florida Supreme Court Approved Forms

All forms are free at the [Florida Courts Family Law Forms page](#) and include step-by-step instructions. Use the current versions.

- **12.928** — Cover Sheet for Family Court Cases.
- **12.982(a)** — Petition for Change of Name (**Adult**).
- **12.982(b)** — Final Judgment of Change of Name (Adult).
- **12.982(c)** — Petition for Change of Name (**Minor Child(ren)**).
- **12.982(d)** — Consent for Change of Name (Minor Child(ren)) — signed by the **other parent** if he or she agrees.
- **12.982(e)** — Final Judgment of Change of Name (Minor Child(ren)).

- **12.982(f)** — Petition for Change of Name (**Family**); **12.982(g)** — Final Judgment (Family).
- **12.900(a)** — Disclosure from Nonlawyer, required whenever a nonlawyer assists with the forms.
- **12.915** — Designation of Current Mailing and E-mail Address.

6. Step by Step — Adult Name Change

- **1.** Complete Form 12.982(a) with every disclosure in Section 3, and sign it under oath before a notary or deputy clerk.
- **2.** File the petition and cover sheet with the Clerk of the Circuit Court in your county, through the [Florida Courts E-Filing Portal](#) or in person, and pay the filing fee set by [§ 28.241](#) (currently about \$400; ask the clerk). A person who cannot afford it may apply for civil indigent status under [§ 57.082](#).
- **3.** Obtain the ORI number from the clerk and have your fingerprints taken electronically by an approved Livescan vendor.
- **4.** After the clerk receives the FDLE/FBI results (often two to four weeks), request a **hearing** under the procedure your circuit uses — some set hearings on request, some require a notice of hearing form, many allow attendance by video.
- **5.** Attend the hearing with photo identification. The judge reviews the petition and background results, may ask about the reason for the change, and signs the Final Judgment (Form 12.982(b)).
- **6.** Obtain **certified copies** of the Final Judgment from the clerk (several — each agency will want one). The clerk also reports the judgment to FDLE (which forwards it to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles) and, if you were born in Florida, to the Office of Vital Statistics, as § 68.07(5)–(6) requires.

7. Step by Step — Minor Child Name Change

A child's name change follows the same path with important additions:

- **Both parents' involvement.** If both parents agree, the non-petitioning parent signs the **Consent** (Form 12.982(d)) before a notary and it is filed with the petition. If a parent **does not consent**, that parent must be **formally served** with the petition under [Chapter 48, Fla. Stat.](#), and given the opportunity to object at the hearing. If a parent's whereabouts are unknown after a diligent search, service by publication under [Chapter 49](#) may be used. A parent whose rights have been **terminated** by court order need not consent or be served; attach the order.
- **Best interests of the child.** The judge must find the change is in the child's best interests. Reasons courts commonly see: conforming the child's name to the custodial household, correcting a birth-certificate error, honoring a step-parent relationship (without adoption), or a child's own strong preference. A contested petition becomes a hearing with testimony.
- **Fingerprinting** of the petitioning parent(s) or guardian (Section 4).
- **Children twelve and older** are often asked by the judge whether they agree, although the statute does not set a specific age of consent.
- **A guardian** petitioning for a ward attaches the Letters of Guardianship.

A name change is **not** an adoption and does not change paternity, parental rights, child support, or inheritance rights. Those require separate proceedings under [Chapter 63](#) (adoption) or [Chapter 742](#) (paternity).

8. After the Judgment — Updating Your Records

The Final Judgment changes your name legally; it does not update anyone's records automatically. The usual order, because each step depends on the one before:

- **Social Security Administration** first — Form SS-5 with a certified judgment and identification; the new card arrives by mail. See ssa.gov.
- **Florida driver license or ID card** — Florida requires notice of a name change **within 30 days** and issuance of a replacement license ([§ 322.19, Fla. Stat.](#)). Bring the certified judgment and REAL ID documents; the office verifies the name with SSA electronically, so SSA must be updated first. See flhsmv.gov.
- **Vehicle titles and registrations** ([§ 319.22](#)).
- **Voter registration** — update under [§ 97.1031, Fla. Stat.](#), through the Supervisor of Elections or RegisterToVoteFlorida.gov.
- **Florida birth certificate** — a person born in Florida may have the birth record **amended** to show the new legal name by filing the certified judgment with the Bureau of Vital Statistics under [§ 382.016, Fla. Stat.](#); see floridahealth.gov/certificates.
- **U.S. passport** — Form DS-5504, DS-82, or DS-11 depending on the passport's age, with the certified judgment; see travel.state.gov.
- **Everything else** — employer and payroll, banks and credit cards, insurance, mortgage and deed records (a deed is not re-recorded for a name change; the judgment is simply referenced at the next transaction), professional licenses, schools, medical providers, utilities, and estate-planning documents.

9. Costs and Timing

- **Filing fee** — set by [§ 28.241](#); approximately \$400, varying slightly by county.
- **Fingerprinting** — Livescan vendor fee plus FDLE/FBI processing, typically \$40 to \$90 total.
- **Certified copies** — a few dollars each; plan on five to ten.
- **Service of process** on a non-consenting parent, if needed — sheriff or process-server fee; publication costs if whereabouts are unknown.
- **Timeline** — from filing to Final Judgment typically runs one to three months, driven mostly by how quickly the FDLE results arrive and the court's hearing calendar.

10. Situations That Need Extra Care

- **Open criminal cases, probation, or outstanding judgments** must be disclosed and may lead the court to deny or delay the petition.

- **Sexual offender or predator registrants** are subject to additional restrictions and reporting requirements under [§ 943.0435](#) and may not use a name change to avoid them.
- **Pending bankruptcy or immigration proceedings** — a name change must be reported in those proceedings and can complicate them.
- **Non-citizens** should confirm how a state-court name change will be reflected on federal immigration documents before filing; this report does not address immigration law.
- **A contested child name change** is litigation. The judge weighs the child's best interests after hearing both parents, and the outcome is not predictable.

11. Do Your Own Research — Primary Sources

Each link below goes to an official or primary source. If you are reading a printed copy, the full web address is shown.

[§ 68.07, Fla. Stat. — Change of name](#)

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2025/68.07>

[§ 28.241 — Clerk filing fees](#)

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2025/28.241>

[§ 57.082 — Determination of civil indigent status](#)

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2025/57.082>

[Chapter 48, Fla. Stat. — Service of process](#)

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2025/Chapter48>

[Chapter 49, Fla. Stat. — Constructive service \(publication\)](#)

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2025/Chapter49>

[§ 322.19 — Change of address or name \(driver license, 30 days\)](#)

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2025/322.19>

[§ 319.22 — Transfer of vehicle title](#)

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2025/319.22>

[§ 97.1031 — Voter registration name and address changes](#)

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2025/97.1031>

[§ 382.016 — Amendment of vital records \(birth certificate\)](#)

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2025/382.016>

[§ 943.0435 — Sexual offenders required to register](#)

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2025/943.0435>

[Chapter 63, Fla. Stat. — Adoption \(for comparison\)](#)

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2025/Chapter63>

[Chapter 742, Fla. Stat. — Determination of parentage](#)

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2025/Chapter742>

[Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Forms \(12.982 series\) — flcourts.gov](#)

<https://www.flcourts.gov/Resources-Services/Office-of-Family-Courts/Self-Help-Information/Family-Law-Forms>

[Florida Courts Self-Help Information](#)

<https://www.flcourts.gov/Resources-Services/Office-of-Family-Courts/Self-Help-Information>

[Florida Courts E-Filing Portal](https://www.myflcourtaccess.com/)

<https://www.myflcourtaccess.com/>

[Florida Department of Law Enforcement — criminal history and Livescan information](https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/)

<https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/>

[Social Security Administration — Change your name](https://www.ssa.gov/personal-record/change-name)

<https://www.ssa.gov/personal-record/change-name>

[Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles](https://www.flhsmv.gov/)

<https://www.flhsmv.gov/>

[Florida Department of Health — Bureau of Vital Statistics](https://www.floridahealth.gov/certificates/)

<https://www.floridahealth.gov/certificates/>

[U.S. Department of State — Change or correct a passport](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/have-passport/change-correct.html)

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/have-passport/change-correct.html>

[RegisterToVoteFlorida.gov](https://registertovoteflorida.gov/)

<https://registertovoteflorida.gov/>

[Rules Regulating The Florida Bar, Chapter 10 — Unlicensed practice of law; nonlawyer form assistance \(Rules 10-2.1 and 10-2.2\)](https://www.floridabar.org/rules/rrtfb/)

<https://www.floridabar.org/rules/rrtfb/>

[In re Amendments to Fla. Family Law Rules of Procedure and Rule Regulating The Florida Bar 10-2.2, No. SC2026-1262 \(Fla. Sept. 10, 2026\) — nonlawyer form-assistance disclosure](https://flcourts-media.flcourts.gov/content/download/2495059/opinion/Opinion_SC2026-1262.pdf)

https://flcourts-media.flcourts.gov/content/download/2495059/opinion/Opinion_SC2026-1262.pdf

12. Required Disclosures

- **Family law forms.** Name-change petitions use Florida Supreme Court approved forms. If Jonathan Rexford assists you in completing them, Rule 10-2.2(c) of the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar requires that you both sign Form 12.900(a), Disclosure from Nonlawyer, before he begins, and that each form state it was completed with his assistance, with his name, title, business name, address, telephone number, and email address. He may ask you factual questions to fill in the blanks and tell you how to file; he may not tell you what name to choose, whether your reasons are sufficient, or how to testify.
- **Nonlawyer disclosure.** Jonathan Rexford is a nonlawyer. He is not an attorney, he is not a paralegal as defined by Rule 10-2.1(h) of the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar, and he cannot call himself a paralegal. He may not give legal advice, cannot tell you what your rights or remedies are, cannot tell you how to testify in court, and cannot represent you in court. He may only type the factual information you provide to him in writing into the blanks on a form. Except for typing, he may not tell you what to put in the form and may not complete the form for you. However, if the form is one approved by the Supreme Court of Florida, he may ask you factual questions to fill in the blanks on the form and may also tell you how to file the form. Before he assists you in completing any form, he will give you a written disclosure containing these terms, signed by both of you, for you to keep. As Rule 10-2.2(c) of the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar requires, as amended by the Supreme Court of Florida in [Case No. SC2026-1262](#) (effective October 1, 2026), any form he helps complete will state “This form was completed with the assistance of:” followed by his name, title, business name, address, telephone number, and email address. This report is general educational information only; reading it is not form assistance and does not create an attorney-client relationship.

- **No recommendation.** Nothing in this report recommends that you sign, file, or not sign or file any particular document, or tells you which legal strategy is right for you. Those decisions are yours, made with whatever professional advice you choose to obtain.
- **No attorney-client relationship; no fiduciary relationship** is created by this report or by any document-preparation service.
- **Not tax, financial, insurance, or Medicaid-planning advice.** Rules in those areas are applied case-by-case, change often, and depend on facts not addressed here.
- **Accuracy and currency.** This report summarizes the law in good faith and in plain English. Summaries are necessarily incomplete. The linked statutes, rules, and decisions control over anything written here. No warranty of any kind is made as to completeness, accuracy, or fitness for any particular purpose.
- **Third-party links** are to government and law-school sources for your convenience; their content is not controlled by the author.
- **Your right to counsel.** You have the right to consult a Florida-licensed attorney at any time, before or after any document is prepared. The Florida Bar Lawyer Referral Service can be reached at 1-800-342-8011.

Respectfully prepared for your education,

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