

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR NAME CHANGE OF AN ADULT

**Free to Download; \$2.00 for paper copy.**

### Instructions Summary

- STEP 1: Complete the *General Civil Case Filing Information* and *General Civil Case Final Disposition* Forms.
- STEP 2: Complete the *Petition to Change Name of Adult*.
- STEP 3: Complete the *Verification* form.
- STEP 4: Complete the *Notice of Petition to Change Name*.
- STEP 5: Complete the caption of the *Final Order*.
- STEP 6: Make one copy of all the forms after they are completely filled out.
- STEP 7: Take both copies to Superior Court Clerk's Office and pay the Filing Fee. Keep the file-stamped copy for your records.
- STEP 8: Within seven (7) days of filing your papers, publish the *Notice of Petition to Change Name* in the official legal newspaper of your county (for a list of official legal newspapers, see <http://sos.georgia.gov/elections/2009%20Legal%20Organs.pdf>).
- STEP 9: You may schedule your final hearing as early as 31 days after you filed your petition, as long as the required newspaper notices have all been published.
- STEP 10: Schedule and attend the court hearing.
- STEP 11: File the *Final Order* and get a certified copy of it.
- STEP 12: (Optional) Amend the birth certificate(s).

### Instructions Detail

**Please type or print neatly all forms in black ink.**

#### **STEP 1: Complete the *General Civil Case Filing Information* and *General Civil Case Final Disposition* Forms.**

These forms are required by Georgia Law, at O.C.G.A. § 9-11-133. They help the Clerk of Court keep statistical information about the number and types of cases decided in our local courts. The clerks use this information to prepare case management reports for the Chief Judge of each circuit and for the Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court. In short, having this information helps us to run the court system more efficiently for you.

#### The General Civil Case Filing Information form

- a. In the top line, fill in the county where you are filing and the date filed.
- b. Check the box beside the word Superior and under the word Court.
- c. In the second line, write the Petitioner's name where it says "Plaintiff(s)."
- d. Where it says "Plaintiff/Petitioner's Attorney," check the box which says  Pro Se. This indicates that you are representing yourself without an attorney.
- e. In the left-hand box at the bottom of the page, check where it says " Other General Civil Specify." In the blank provided, write "name change for adult."

## The General Civil Case Final Disposition form

The purpose of this form is to tell how your case ends. Since your case is far from over, you should NOT fill in the information in the three big boxes at the bottom of the page. At this point, we do not know how the case will end.

- a. In the top line, fill in only the county where you are filing.
- b. Leave the blank beside "Date Disposed" blank.
- c. Leave the blank beside "Docket #," blank. The clerk will assign this number.
- d. Write your name where it says "Reporting party."
- e. Write the Petitioner's name where it says "Name of Plaintiff/Petitioner(s)."
- f. Where it says Plaintiff/Petitioner's Attorney, check the box which says  Pro Se. This shows that you are representing yourself. Since you are not a licensed attorney, you do not have a Bar #, so leave those blanks empty.
- g. Leave the four boxes at the bottom of the page blank.

### **STEP 2: Complete the *Petition to Change Name of an Adult.***

#### Caption (Heading)

1. Type or print the name of the county in which you are filing.
2. Type or print your current name underneath "In re the name change of."

#### Paragraph 1

1. Type or print your name in the first blank.
2. In the second blank, type or print the name of the county in which you live.

#### Paragraph 2

1. In the first blank, fill in your date of birth.
2. If you were born in the United States, check the first box. Then enter name of the county of your birth in the first blank, and enter the state of your birth in the second blank.
3. If you were not born in the United States, check the second box. Enter the city and country of your birth in the blank provided.

#### Paragraph 3

1. Write your current name in the first blank, and write the new name in the second blank.

#### Paragraph 4

1. Type or print neatly the reason(s) for the name change(s).

#### Paragraph 5

1. Check the box beside this sentence to show that you are not changing your name in order to deceive anyone.

Prayer for Relief

1. Write your current name in the first blank, and write the name you want to go by in the second blank.

Date Line

1. Write in the date on which you file the petition.

Signature and Address

1. Sign your name on the line above "Petitioner *pro se*." You do not need a Notary Public to witness this signature.
2. Write down your address on the next two lines.
3. Write down your telephone number(s) on the last line.

**STEP 3: Complete the Verification form.**

Caption (Heading)

1. Type or print the name of the county in which you are filing.
2. Type or print your current name in the blank provided.
3. Write down the date on which you signed the verification.
4. Sign your name while a Notary Public is watching you. They will check your photo I.D. and sign and stamp the document after they watch you sign.

**STEP 4: Complete the *Notice of Petition to Change Name*.**

Caption (Heading)

1. Type or print the name of the county in which you are filing.
2. Type or print your current name on the blank under the phrase "In re the name change of."

Body of the Document

1. Write down the name of the Petitioner (your name).
2. Write down the name of the county where you live.
3. Write down the day on which you filed the petition.
4. Sign your name.
5. Print your name.
6. Neatly print your address and telephone number(s).

**STEP 6: Complete *Final Order*.**

1. Type or print the name of the county in which you are filing.
2. Type or print your current name on the blank under the phrase "In re the name change of."
3. Sign your name on the blank provided at the bottom of the page, above "Petitioner *pro se*."

**STEP 7: Make copies of all the forms.**

Make at least one extra copy for yourself.

**STEP 8: File the forms at the Superior Court Clerk's Office and pay the Filing Fee.**

The Clerk's Office will file stamp all copies of your papers. The Clerk will keep the original, and will give you back your personal copy.

**STEP 9: Within 7 days after you file the Petition, publish the *Notice of Petition to Change Name(s)* in the official legal newspaper of your county.**

You can find a list of Georgia's official legal newspapers at <http://sos.georgia.gov/elections/2009%20Legal%20Organs.pdf>. Call your county's legal newspaper and ask how to publish the Notice of Petition to Change Name(s). The newspaper will charge a fee for this service.

As the newspaper ads appear, please photocopy the ads. In addition, get an *Affidavit of Publication* from the newspaper. You will file the photocopies and the Affidavit of Publication with the Clerk of Court in order to show that you published the notice as required by Georgia law.

**STEP 10: Wait the required time (31 days), and prepare the forms for the final hearing.**

O.C.G.A. § 19-12-1 says that the Court can set a hearing in the Judge's office thirty days after the petition if filed, and after you show proof that the Notice was published in the legal newspaper as required. Be sure to bring the *Affidavit of Publication* and the photocopies of the newspaper ads with you to the final hearing.

**STEP 10: Schedule and attend the court hearing.**

Contact the assistant for the Judge assigned to your case. Make sure you have your court papers (including the Case Number) in front of you when you make the call, so you can answer any questions the clerk may have about your case. Schedule your final hearing.

When you come to the court for your hearing, bring with you all of your court papers, including:

- Petition to Change Name of Adult
- Notice of Petition to Change Name of Adult
- Publisher's Affidavit of Publication (obtained from the newspaper)
- Final Order Changing Name of and Adult
- General Civil Case Final Disposition Information Form

When you get to the Judge's office, tell the staff that you are there for a name change hearing. The staff may ask you for your Final Order form. When you go to the Judge's office, the Judge will have you swear to the truth of what you are about to say. Then, tell the Judge the following information:

- Your name
- The county where you live
- That you are asking the Judge to grant a name change for you from \_\_\_\_\_ [list current name] to \_\_\_\_\_ [proposed new name]
- The reasons you want to change the name.

If you didn't already give the Final Order form to the Judge's staff, offer it to the Judge now. The Judge may ask you some additional questions. Then, if the Judge approves the name change, he or she will sign the Final Order form. Read the order to make sure that it is correct.

**STEP 11: File the *Final Order* and get a certified copy of it.**

Take the signed Final Order to the Clerk's Office and file it with the Clerk. Ask for a certified copy of the Order. There is a charge for the certified copy. This is your proof that the name has been legally changed.

**STEP 10: (Optional) Change the birth certificate(s).**

If you were born in the state of Georgia, you may have the birth certificate changed to show the new name. The new birth certificate will be marked "amended."

To change the birth certificate, take or mail the following documents to the Georgia Bureau of Vital Records, 2600 Skyland Drive N.E., Atlanta, GA 30319-3640; telephone (404) 679-4702:

- Certified copy of Final Order
- Copy of your current birth certificate
- Money order made out to "Vital Records Services."

Tell the Vital Records staff that you have done a name change and want to amend the birth certificate. If you do it by mail, be sure to provide them with your name and address, so they can send you the amended birth certificate.

**Your Name Change of an Adult is complete!**