

**STATE OF GEORGIA**

**NAME CHANGE**

**MINOR PACKET**

**Control Number - GA-14000-A**

This packet contains the following:

1. Instructions;
2. Forms List; and
3. Access to Georgia Law Summary.

## **I. EXPLANATION OF PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME**

- A. In Georgia, an action for a court ordered Change of Name begins with the filing of a Petition in the Superior court. The Petition must contain certain information. The forms in this packet include the necessary information for an Adult Name Change in the State of Georgia.
- B. You can use this packet if:
- You are less than 18 years of age and have been a resident of the county in which you will file the Petition.
  - You have proper and reasonable cause for the requested change of name.
  - You are not changing your name to avoid debts or defraud creditors.

## **II. WHAT FORMS ARE INCLUDED**

- A. Civil Case Filing Information Sheet (GA-NC-14000-1)
- B. Petition for Change of Name - This document states the reasons and other required details for your name change. (GA-NC-14000-2A)
- C. Verification - This document verifies the information presented in the Petition for Change of Name to the best of your knowledge. (GA-NC-14000-3A)
- D. Notice of Publication - Notice that your Petition for Change of Name has been filed and the matter has been set for hearing. This should be published in the newspaper prior to the hearing. (GA-NC-14000-4A)
- A. Consent form - This document provides the written consent of any necessary individuals such as each parents or the minor's guardian if one has been appointed. Two copies are included in the package. (GA-NC-14000-5A and 5A-1)
- B. Final Decree Changing the Name of a Minor - This is the final statement of the legalities and terms of your name change. Once this form is signed by the Judge and filed with the court, the name change is effective and a Certificate of Name Change can be issued. (GA-NC-14000-6A)
- C. Certificate of Change of Name - This certifies that the name change has been ordered. This is signed by the clerk and can be used as proof of the Judgment. (GA-NC-14000-7A)
- E. Certificate of Service - if the non-party parent is unwilling to complete the Acknowledgement of Service and the Petitioner must serve then

either by mail or in person, the serving party then completes this form and files with the court to establish that the non-party parent was in fact sent or given a copy of the Petition. (GA-NC-14000-8A)

- F. Affidavit in Support of Name Change Petition - This form is completed in order to provide the court with information regarding the non-party parent. (GA-NC-14000-9A)
- D. Acknowledgement of Service - This form is completed by the non-party parent and merely acknowledges receipt of a copy of the Petition. (GA-NC-14000-10A)
- E. Domestic Relations Case Filing Information Form - (GA-NC-14000-9) Form that provides the court with information regarding the nature of the case and the parties involved. **NOTE: Not used in all counties but included to be used if needed.**
- F. Domestic Relations Case Final Disposition Information Form - (GA-NC-14000-10) - Form used by the courts to track the disposition or end result of domestic relations cases. **NOTE: Not used in all counties but included to be used if needed.**
- G.

If you did not order a completion package and need access to the download page again for any of the above forms, please check your email for a link to that will redisplay the page for you.

### III. **PROCEDURE FOR CHANGE OF NAME (MINOR) FOR THE STATE OF GEORGIA**

- A. Preliminary Note:
  - 1. The attached forms may be completed by:
    - a. Printing the forms and completing by hand. Use black ink and print neatly.
    - b. Printing the forms and completing using a typewriter.
    - c. By completing the forms on your computer using a word processing program and then printing the forms.
  - 2. Use complete names and not initials. Check your spelling carefully, a misspelled word can delay your name change.
  - 3. Print at least two (2) complete sets of forms.
  - 4. All forms with a heading - the name of the court, the Petitioner's name, the case number, and the name of the document - require that the heading be completed. You will need to add the name of the court and the full name of the Petitioner. The "Civil

Action File No.” will be assigned by the court clerk at the time of filing.

5. Forms that require your signature and include a notary block MUST be signed in the presence of the notary or court clerk who will complete the acknowledgement. Use your complete name – first name, middle name, last name.
6. When a form is filed with the court, request the clerk “file-stamp” one copy of the form for your file.

B. Procedure

STEP 1: Fill out the Petition to Change Name (of a Minor):

- Print or type the current name of the minor child next to the word, “Children”. Then fill in your name next to the word “Petitioner”. Fill in the name of the other parent or guardian next to the word “Respondent”. You should not fill in the blank next to “Civil Action File No:” because the clerk will assign your case a number when you file the Petition, and the clerk will fill that number in for you. This top part of the form is called the “style” of the case.
- Paragraph 1: Print or type your current, full name.
- Paragraph 2: Print or type the name or names of the child(ren) whose name or names that you want to change.
- Paragraph 5: Explain why you want to change the child(ren)’s name where indicated.

STEP 2: Fill out the Verification form to go with the Petition:

- Following “I” in the first paragraph, print or type your name next to the word “Petitioner”.
- Where it says: This \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, fill in the date, month and year where indicated.
- Sign your name on the line indicated while before a notary. Then print or type your name on the following line, and fill in your address and telephone number.
- You will need to have a notary notarize the verification form for you.

STEP 3: The petitioning parents should execute one consent form and have it notarized. If there is a non-party parent and they are available and will

consent to the name change have them execute the form along with the petitioning parent or, if it is more convenient, have the non-party parent execute the other consent form and have it notarized.

- STEP 4: Fill out the Notice of Petition to Change Name form.
- STEP 5: Make duplicate originals of the forms. One original will be filed and the other file-stamped and kept as a file copy for later use. Your retained original will be needed later when you appear in court to request your name change.
- STEP 6: Within seven (7) days of filing the Petition, the Notice of Petition to Change Name must be published in that newspaper in the county designated for publication of legal notice once a week for four consecutive weeks. This provides a time period during which interested parties may file objections to the Petition for Change of Name. The time limit for filing objections can vary. See O.C.G.A. §19-12-1. There is a fee for the publication of the Notice that you must pay.
- STEP 7: File the forms you just filled out. To begin the process, the Petition, the Verification, and the Notice of Petition to Change Name forms must be filed in the clerk's office in the county of the Petitioner's residence. There is a filing fee to be paid at the time you file.
- STEP 8: Thirty (30) days after the petition is filed, and after the notice has been published once a week for four weeks, you can go to court to ask the court to enter a decree of name change. When you get to court, ask the Clerk what you must do to bring your Petition before the Court. Follow the Clerk's directions.

You must bring with you the following documents:

1. Your signed and notarized original copy of the original petition filed with the court and a copy of all the other forms
2. Proof that the notice was published. This is a form supplied by the newspaper called "Affidavit of Publication".
3. The Final Decree Changing the Name of an Adult form for the judge to sign. You should first fill out the "caption" above the title of the document. Also, complete the body of the form by inserting the old name of the child(ren) and the new name in the appropriate blanks. DO NOT FILL OUT THE REST. THE JUDGE WILL DO IT FOR YOU.

When you appear before the Judge, either in chambers or in open court, the judge will have you swear to the truth of what you will say, then tell the judge the following:

- your name
- your county of residence
- that you are asking the judge to grant a name change
- what your birth date is and that you are 18 years old or older
- that you want to change your name from what to what
- the reason you want to change your name
- that you are not changing your name with the intent to defraud any one

Then ask the judge to sign the form decree for you.

- STEP 9: File the Final Decree. Take the decree to the clerk's office and ask for a certified copy. This is proof that your name has officially changed.
- STEP 10: Certificate of Change of Name. After the entry of the final order of change of name, you may request the clerk of the court granting the same issue to the petitioner a certificate of change of name, under the seal of the court, upon payment to the clerk of the necessary fee. The certificate is then accepted as evidence of the facts contained in the certificate.
- STEP 11: Changing your birth certificate. If you were born in Georgia and you wish to have your birth certificate amended to reflect your name change, you must provide a certified copy of the Decree to the Georgia Department of Vital Records. You may also want to notify your creditors (for example, your landlord, credit card companies, your bank, Social Security, etc.) of your name change so that there will be no confusion at a later time.

**NOTE: The Georgia Code is clear in terms of the requirements of consent of and notice to an absent or non-party parent. The written consent of the child's parent or parents if they are living and have not abandoned the child, or the written consent of the child's guardian if both parents are dead or have abandoned the child, must be filed with the petition. The exception to the written consent requirement is in cases where the non-party/non-consenting parent has not contributed to the support of the child for a continuous period of five years or more immediately preceding the filing of the petition. In such cases the Affidavit included in the package must be completed and filed with the Petition.**

**In all cases, including those where the Affidavit above is filed, the parent or parents of the child must be served with a copy of the petition. If the parent or parents reside within this state, service of the petition shall be made in person, except that if the location or address of the parent is unknown, service of the petition on the parent shall be made by publication of the notice in the appropriate legal newspaper in the county in which the minor resides. If the parent or parents reside outside this state, service**

**of the petition on the parent or parents residing outside this state shall be made by certified mail or statutory overnight delivery if the address is known or by publication as if the address is not known.**

## **NOTES ON COMPLETING THESE FORMS**

The form(s) in this packet contain "form fields" created using Microsoft Word. "Form fields" facilitate completion of the forms using your computer. They do not limit your ability to print the form "in blank" and complete with a typewriter or by hand.

It is also helpful to be able to see the location of the form fields. Go to the View menu, click on Toolbars, and then select Forms. This will open the forms toolbar. Look for the button on the forms toolbar that resembles a "shaded letter a". Click in this button and the form fields will be visible.

In order to use the form fields properly, it is necessary to "lock or protect" the document. If you wish to make any changes in the body of the form, it is necessary for you "unlock" or "unprotect" the form.

This is done by clicking on "Tools" in the Menu bar and then selecting "unprotect document". You may then be prompted to enter a password. If so, the password is "uslf". That is uslf **in lower case letters without the quotation marks**.

It is very important to understand that, once the document is unprotected, any data entered in the form fields will be lost when the document is again protected. If changes are necessary, unlock the document, using the password "uslf" if necessary, and make any changes that you feel are required. Then protect the document once again.

**After any required changes and re-protecting the document, click on the first form field and enter the required information. You will be able to navigate through the document from form field to form field using your tab key. Tab to a form field and insert your data. Inserting data will result in the default line disappearing. You will have sufficient space to enter any required information.**



## **LAW SUMMARY**

**You may access the law summary by going to this URL address:**

<http://www.uslegalforms.com/ga/GA-14000-A.htm>

## **DISCLAIMER**

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