

Name Change

For children under the age of 13, their parents must file a petition to change their name in a district court. Each parent has to receive notice of the proposed name change. Forms are available at district courts and at the New Mexico Courts website.

Children 14 years old or older may petition a court on their own to change their name. When a child turns 14 they do not have to notify their parents of their name change but they must run an advertisement in the local newspaper prior to a hearing on the name change. A name change is permitted so long as the name change is not for an unlawful purpose. Generally a Judge will ask a child requesting a name change if they are trying to avoid a debt, criminal prosecution, or child support by changing their name. The Judge will generally ask why the child is changing their name and so long as it is not for an unlawful purpose, and the newspaper advertisement is sufficient, the child's name change is granted.

After a name change is granted, the child must then take their name change documents to each state agency and program and have their name changed on the official and unofficial documents. Examples include birth certificate, social security card, school records, medical records, public benefits, and any other places where the child's name must be documented as their legal name. Generally, there are timeframes after a name change order is signed that it will be accepted by state and federal agencies. Be sure to verify how long a child has to change their name before the name change is granted.