



INSTRUCTIONS FOR A SEALED NAME CHANGE

In King County Superior Court

These instructions are for informational purposes only and do not constitute legal advice. If you do not understand this information, please contact an attorney.

General Information

In Washington State, if you are eighteen or older, you can choose and use any name you want, as long as you are not trying to defraud (cheat) someone. Example: it is not legal to change names to avoid paying creditors or child support.

You may ask the court for a sealed name change **for yourself, your child, and/or a person for whom you've been appointed guardian**, if the reason you are seeking the name change is:

- Related to gender expression or identity; or
- Due to an experience or reasonable fear of domestic violence, stalking, harassment, or coercive control.

OR

You may ask the court for a sealed name change **for yourself** if:

- You are an emancipated minor; or
- You have received asylum, refugee, or special immigrant juvenile status.

The court will seal the file to protect the privacy of the person whose name is changed. Once sealed, there is generally no public access to any court record of the name change, even if the court does not allow the name to be changed. Access to the name change filing will only be open upon a showing of good cause, or upon request by the person whose name was changed or their guardian/representative. RCW 4.24.130.

Disclaimer: This Guide is intended as general information only. Your case may have factors requiring different procedures or forms. The information and instructions are provided for use in the King County Superior Court. Please keep in mind that each court may have different requirements. If you need further assistance, consult a lawyer.