

# Completing the Name Change Petition

## Arkansas Legal Services Partnership Family Law Series

This fact sheet provides an example of a Name Change petition and instructions to complete the petition. A petition is a formal request to the court to take an action. In this case, your petition will ask the court for a name change either for you or your minor child.

The petition should be on 8 1/2 x 11 size paper with 1" margins. **Judges prefer petitions to be typed.** If it is not possible to type the document then the judge must be able to read your handwriting.

### INSTRUCTIONS TO COMPLETE A PETITION

**1** Enter in the name of the county that you live in and the division of the court that you are filing the petition in. The Circuit Clerk will assign the division and case number.

**2** In the blank beside **IN RE** enter your name as it is today. It doesn't matter here what you want your name to be, it is important that you enter your full name as it is right now.

**3** You are the petitioner; so enter your name in the space provided following the word **petitioner**.

**4** In paragraph 1, enter in the name of the county that you live in. For example, if you live in Clinton, Arkansas, you would put Van Buren County.

**5** In paragraph 2, enter the reason that you want to change your name. This should be complete and understandable. For example, if you are now divorced and you want to return to your maiden name, but didn't do so in your divorce proceedings, then state this as the reason for your name change. Just remember that your stated reason will be the primary factor the judge considers in determining whether or not to grant your petition.

**6** Also in paragraph 2 enter the new name that you are requesting. **CHECK YOUR SPELLING.** If you misspell the new name, so will the judge and you will have to go back to court to get it corrected.

**7** In the final paragraph, after the word **WHEREFORE**, enter, in full, the name that you currently have in the first space and the full name that you want to be known by in the second space. Again, **CHECK YOUR SPELLING.**

**8** Then, take the petition to a notary public and sign it in front of that notary. Get the notary to notarize the petition and give it back to you. This will probably cost you around \$10.00.

**9** Take the petition and three (3) copies to the court clerk in the county in which you live and file it with the court. You will need a cover sheet for Circuit Court that you can get either from the Clerk, or from the court forms section at [www.courts.state.ar.us](http://www.courts.state.ar.us). The filing fee will be \$140. If service is needed the fee will vary. Keep a copy of the petition for your personal records.

**10** Once the judge rules on the petition he or she will issue an order of name change. You must provide this document. See an example order below. Check it closely when you get it for spelling errors and let the clerk know of any that you find. Complete the order by using the same instructions you used with the petition.

**11** After filing the petition the clerk can then tell you when the hearing will be. The clerk can also tell you what that particular court's actions are on name change petitions, and when and how you should get the Order. Be nice to the clerks, they can help you understand the system, but they don't have to.

*The Family Law Series is produced by the Center for Arkansas Legal Services, Legal Aid of Arkansas, Inc., and Arkansas Volunteer Lawyers for the Elderly. These agencies provide free legal services to eligible Arkansans who meet income, asset and other guidelines. Legal services may include advice and counsel, brief services, or full representation depending on the situation. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.arlegalservices.org> or call 1-800-9LAW AID.*

*The information and statements of law contained in this fact sheet are not intended to be used as legal advice. Local courts interpret things differently. This fact sheet is given to you as a guide to help you understand the way family law matters are handled in general. Before you take any action, talk to an attorney and follow his or her advice. Always do what the court tells you to do.*

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**Petition For Name Change**  
**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF 1 COUNTY, ARKANSAS**  
**1 DIVISION**

2

IN RE: 2

3

**PETITION FOR CHANGE OF NAME**

The petitioner, 3, hereby states:

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1. Petitioner is over the age of eighteen (18) years and is a resident of 4 County, Arkansas.

5

2. Petitioner wishes to change his/her last name because 5.

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Therefore, she/he would like to be known henceforth as 6.

**WHEREFORE**, petitioner requests that an order be entered changing his/her name from

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7 to 7.

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Respectfully submitted

8  
Petitioner

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**ORDER FOR NAME CHANGE**

On this date, the petition of \_\_\_\_\_ is presented, the petitioner appearing in person, *pro se*, and the Court, from the petition filed herein, the testimony given, and other proof before the Court, finds:

The petitioner has shown reasonable cause for changing his/her name.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that petitioner's name be changed from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ and that petitioner shall hereinafter be known as \_\_\_\_\_, and IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that he/she shall sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, by the name \_\_\_\_\_.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the petition filed here in and this order be entered by the Clerk upon the record of this Court.

\_\_\_\_\_  
CIRCUIT JUDGE

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

PREPARED BY:  
\_\_\_\_\_