

Filing your court papers

Once your papers are all filled out, you'll need to file them with the court. This page describes that process and what you need to be aware of.

What to bring

- Fill out and bring all the court forms described in the pages before this one, including any county-specific forms, plus at least one extra copy of each form.
- Bring a payment method (Cash, Card, or Check). If you're using a card, try to bring multiple cards or alternative payment methods in case the transaction doesn't go through.

See instructions for [filling out checks](#).

Where to file

You should file your name and gender change in the nearest courthouse to where you live that handles civil cases (most of them do). To find your nearest courthouse if you don't know which one it is, you'll need to find your county's court locator. For example, here's Los Angeles County's [Filing Court Locator](#).

How to file

If you can't go to a courthouse to file your case for whatever reason, you can have a friend or trusted person file the case for you.

To file your papers, you'll need to show up at the courthouse in person with your documents, or mail your documents to the courthouse. It's recommended that you show up in person so that the court clerk can look over your documents and ensure that they're all filled out correctly.

Make sure you don't have any items prohibited by the court when you show up. Look up the prohibited items list for your county. For example, here's the list for [Los Angeles County](#).

When you get to the courthouse, you'll have to go through a metal detector. There will be containers for any metallic items you have, such as your car keys, phone, watch, etc. Place your items in the containers and put them on the conveyor belt that goes through the scanner, and then

walk through the metal detector. If it goes off, a guard will use a metal detecting wand to determine what caused it to go off, and may ask you to remove an item and go through the detector again.

Once you get through security, you'll need to find the court clerk's office. There will usually be separate civil and criminal clerk's offices. You'll want to find the civil clerk's office, which is often located on the second floor. When you enter the courthouse, there are typically signs telling you where to go. If you can't find the office, ask a guard or other employee where the civil clerk's office is located.

In the clerk's office, there will be a window with a court clerk behind it. Ask the clerk to file your case and give them all your documents. The clerk will look over your documents to make sure they're filled out correctly, assign a case number, stamp all the documents, and then return your copies. These copies are called "conformed" copies, and serve as proof of what you filed in court, in case you ever need to provide that.

Fees

For all new court cases in California, you have to pay a filing fee of \$435 to \$450. See the [Statewide Civil Fee Schedule](#) to figure out what the fee will be for you. The entry you're looking for is under "Unlimited Civil Cases", and it's called "Petition for a decree of change of name or gender". Make sure to check for any asterisks as the fee will vary in some counties.

Once your petition is granted, you'll need to request certified copies of your decree at the courthouse where you filed. Each certified copy costs \$40.50. You can get away with two certified copies, but it's best to get at least three just in case.

You can also ask the court to waive the fees by filling out a [Fee Waiver request](#). If you're eligible and the court approves your request, you won't have to pay a filing fee, and you'll receive three free certified copies of your decree.

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