



# ID PLEASE!

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*Quick guide for  
changing federal identity  
documents to match your  
gender identity*



**Transgender Law Center**

*Making Authentic Lives Possible*

## About ID Please: Quick Guide to Updating Federal Identity Documents

This is the quick-guide version of our comprehensive resource, *ID Please: A Guide to Changing California & Federal Identity Documents to Match Your Gender Identity*. This quick guide includes the information you need for changing records with the Social Security Administration, passports, consular report of birth abroad, and documents issued by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

For the full resource addressing this issue in greater detail, please visit:

<http://transgenderlawcenter.org/resources/id/id-please>.

## I. Social Security Administration

### Name Change

The following steps are required to amend your name with Social Security:

1. Complete an Application for a Social Security Card, [Form SS-5](#) (when completing Form SS-5, list your new court-ordered name).
2. Pay the small fee SSA generally requires to issue a new Social Security card.
3. Show proof of your:
  - o U.S. citizenship or immigration status (e.g., a birth certificate or passport. This document does not need to be in your current name/gender as long as you can document the change.)
  - o Legal name change (e.g., a certified copy of your court order; the SSA may also accept proof of name change through marriage, adoption, divorce, or Certificate of Naturalization)
  - o Identity (e.g., a driver's license or other photo ID. This document does not need to be in your current name/gender as long as you can document the change.)
4. Take your completed application and documents to your [local SSA office](#) or mail them to the SSA.
5. Provide additional documentation to verify identity, if necessary.

If the SSA cannot match your old name with your current identity, it may require you to show additional identification. If you experience difficulty because of this policy, please contact Transgender Law Center. Consult the [SSA website](#) if you would like further information.

### Gender Change

To change your gender on your Social Security records, [the SSA](#) requires you to fill out the Application for a Social Security Card (Form SS-5) and present **one** of the following:

- A medical certification of "appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition" in the form of an original signed statement from a licensed physician, e.g., an M.D. or D.O. (a model physician's statement is provided below);
- A full-validity 10-year passport with the new gender marker;
- A state-issued birth certificate with the new gender maker; or
- A court order directing legal recognition of the new gender.

As in most other situations, if you are under 18 and are not emancipated, you will need the permission of your parents or guardians in order to change your name on your SSA account.

For people who receive SSI/SSDI: Changing your name and/or gender marker in your SSA account will not change your information on your SSI/SSDI (Social Security Insurance/Disability Insurance) account. If you have an SSI/SSDI account, you should tell the SSA to change your name and/or gender on this account as well.

If you have the misfortune to encounter an SSA employee who does not understand the SSA's policies or who has some bias against transgender people, do your best to keep calm. We would recommend asking for a supervisor, and if that does not help, you should not hesitate to try another office if there is one nearby.

## II. United States Passport

To change your name and/or gender on your U.S. Passport, you will use one of three forms, DS-5504 ("Application for a U.S. Passport - Name Change, Data Correction, and Limited Passport Replacement"), DS-82 ("U.S. Passport Renewal Application for Eligible Individuals"), or DS-11 ("Application for a U.S. Passport"). You can download each form at: [http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/forms\\_847.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/forms_847.html)

The following guide will help you determine which form is appropriate for your situation.

### DS-5504

This form should only be used for making a data change (name change, printing error, etc.) for a previously issued, currently valid U.S. Passport within one year from the date of issue. You may submit this application by mail and there is no accompanying fee for routine processing. It may **not** be used to change your gender marker.

You must use the DS-5504 form if **any** of the following are true and the passport is valid and has been issued within the past year:

- You need to change your name on your valid U.S. Passport
- You need to extend the validity of a limited validity passport or upgrade it to a full-validity passport
- You need to correct a printing error in your valid U.S. Passport

The DS-5504 is available at: [http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/ds5504/ds5504\\_2663.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/ds5504/ds5504_2663.html)

### DS-82

You should use this form if your passport meets **all** the following conditions and has expired or was issued more than one year ago:

- Your passport is undamaged and can be submitted with your application;
- Your passport was issued when you were age 16 or older;
- Your passport was issued within the last 15 years; and
- Your passport was issued in your current name or you can legally document your name change (with a court order or marriage certificate changing name).

This form also may **not** be used to change your gender marker. You will have to submit a fee along with your application, but you can apply by mail. Keep in mind that if you are asking for a name change, you will need to submit a certified copy of your court order.

The DS-82 is available at: [http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/ds82/ds82\\_843.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/ds82/ds82_843.html)

### DS-11

The DS-11 application is the basic application for a U.S. Passport and it must be used if **any** of the following are true:

- You have never been issued a U.S. Passport;

- You are under age 16;
- You were under age 16 when your previous passport was issued;
- Your most recent U.S. Passport was issued more than 15 years ago;
- Your most recent U.S. Passport was lost or stolen;
- **You are requesting a gender marker change;** or
- Your name has changed since your previous U.S. Passport was issued but you are unable to legally document your name change.

The DS-11 application must be submitted in person. You can fill out the DS-11 online, but you must then download it and submit it in person with a fee. It is available at [http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/ds11/ds11\\_842.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/ds11/ds11_842.html)

A list of places where you can submit the DS-11 is available at: <http://iafdb.travel.state.gov/>

### **Checklist for Changing Your Name and Gender on a U.S. Passport**

- Form DS-11
- A certified copy of a court order or other proof of legal name change
- Two 2x2 inch photographs of yourself
- Proof of U.S. citizenship, such as a previous passport or a birth certificate
- A valid form of government-issued photo identification such as a previous passport or driver's license
- A letter from your attending medical physician on office letterhead that states that you have had "appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition." A model declaration is included below.
- Fees

### **Checklist for Changing Your Name on a U.S. Passport**

- Form DS-5504, DS-82, or DS-11 (see guide above)
- A certified copy of a court order or other proof of legal name change
- Two 2x2 inch photographs of yourself (if submitting DS-82 or DS-11)
- Proof of U.S. citizenship, such as a previous passport or a birth certificate
- A valid form of government-issued photo identification such as a previous passport or driver's license
- Fees (if submitting DS-82 or DS-11)

### **Checklist for Changing Your Gender on a U.S. Passport**

- Form DS-11
- Two 2x2 inch photographs of yourself
- Proof of U.S. citizenship, such as a previous passport or a birth certificate
- A valid form of government-issued photo identification such as a previous passport or driver's license
- A letter from your attending medical physician on office letterhead that states that you have had "appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition." A model declaration is included below.
- Fees

The new U.S. Passport policies instruct officials to be respectful, use the appropriate pronouns, and not ask further medical questions if the correct documentation is provided. If you encounter any of these problems, please contact us.

A list of current passport fees is available at: [http://travel.state.gov/passport/fees/fees\\_837.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/fees/fees_837.html)

The U.S. Department of State allows you to use a photo that represents the way you look, regardless of whether the photo stereotypically corresponds to the gender marker on your passport.

If you are applying for a passport for the first time, you must also include proof of U.S. citizenship (generally a birth certificate). If you have changed your birth certificate, in most cases you do not need to submit any gender change paperwork such as a surgeon's letter or court order. Instead, you should fill out the standard application form and include a copy of your changed birth certificate. If you are applying for a U.S. Passport for the first time and you have *not* changed your birth certificate, you must submit an affidavit from your attending physician or surgeon stating that you have had "appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition."

Individuals can also get a renewable two-year limited validity passport if they are just beginning their gender transition. It has the effect of a full passport, but it is only valid for two years. To receive a limited validity passport, individuals must submit the same materials as noted above. However, the second paragraph of the physician's letter must read: "(Name of patient) is in the process of gender transition to the new gender (specify new gender male or female)." During the two-year limited validity period, the passport can be converted into a full passport by submitting via mail a DS-5504 and a physician's statement indicating that the person "has had appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition." Submit these documents to the address specified on the form. Unless you request expedited service, no new fee is required. If you have questions about the requirements for obtaining a limited validity passport, you may want to check with the U.S. Passport Agency at 1-877-487-2778.

### III. Consular Report of Birth Abroad

If you are a U.S. citizen born to American parents in another country, then your birth certificate is a Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA). The standard for changing your gender marker on your CRBA is the same as changing your gender marker on your U.S. Passport, which is discussed below. To learn more about changing the gender marker on a CRBA, visit the State Department's website at <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/abroad/events-and-records/birth/replace-or-amend-consular-report-of-birth-abroad.html>.

### IV. Documents Issued by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

In general, you can change your *name* on any document issued by US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) if you provide supporting documentation such as a court order. You can usually [obtain a name change](#) from the court of the jurisdiction where you live.

You can receive an initial or amended document reflecting your post-transition *gender* by presenting one of the following documents:

- An amended birth certificate, passport, or court order recognizing the new gender (court orders recognizing legal change of gender are only available in some jurisdictions); or
- Medical certification of the change in gender from a licensed physician (a Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) or Doctor of Osteopathy (D.O.)). Specific language is required; a model declaration is included below.

You may also be asked to present evidence of your identity reflecting your new legal gender.

Submit this documentation along with the form that corresponds to the document you wish to update: for instance, [Form I-90](#) is the application form to replace a foreign national's "green card," [Form N-565](#) is the application form for a replacement naturalization certificate.

You may want to contact an immigration attorney who is knowledgeable about transgender issues in the state where you live. If you don't have contact information for such an attorney, the organization "Immigration Equality" in NY can help you find an attorney. They can be reached at (212) 714-2904 or [www.immigrationequality.org](http://www.immigrationequality.org).

### **Model Physician's Letter for SSA & U.S. Passport**

[On letterhead providing Physician's Address and Telephone Number]

I, *(physician's full name)*, *(physician's medical license or certificate number)*, *(issuing U.S. State/Foreign Country of medical license/certificate)*, am the physician of *(name of patient)*, with whom I have a doctor/patient relationship and whom I have treated (or "with whom I have a doctor/patient relationship and whose medical history I have reviewed and evaluated").

*(Name of patient)* has had appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition to the new gender *(specify new gender, male or female)*.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the forgoing is true and correct.

Signature of Physician

Typed Name of Physician

Date

### **Model Physician's Letter for Documents Issued by USCIS**

Identical to the model letter provided for the SSA/Passport, but *must* include the DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) registration number or a comparable foreign designation after the physician's medical license number and issuing state/country of medical license. It should also be on office letterhead, and must follow the given language *exactly*.