



**Developmental
Disabilities
Planning Council**

Easy Read Edition

A Self-Advocate's Guide to Gender- Affirming Health Care

**Part 5: How can I change my
name and gender marker
legally?**

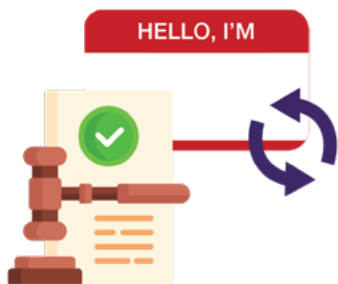
How can I change my name and gender marker legally?



Many transgender and nonbinary people change their names.



They do this so they can have a name that fits who they are.



Some transgender and nonbinary people change their names legally.



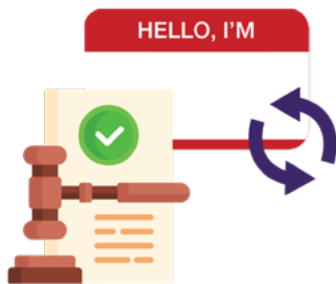
This means they go to court.



They ask the judge to give them a court order changing their name.



A **court order** is a legal document.



It says that someone legally changed their name in court.



It also says that other people, like parts of the government or private businesses, must recognize the person's name change.

For example:



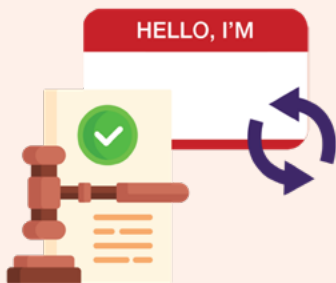
Hamid is nonbinary.



Hamid uses the name Hamid in their everyday life.



But Hamid's legal name is not Hamid.



Hamid wants to legally change their name to Hamid.



Hamid needs to get a court order to change their name.



So Hamid goes to court.



They fill out the paperwork they will need to change their name legally.



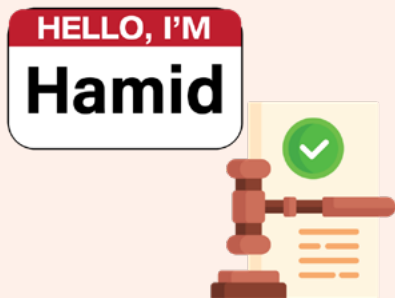
Then they go to the judge of the court.



Hamid asks the judge to give them the court order to change their name to Hamid.



The judge gives Hamid the court order.



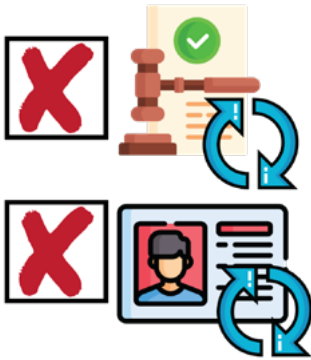
Now, Hamid's name is legally Hamid.



Once people change their name legally, they can change their name on their identification.



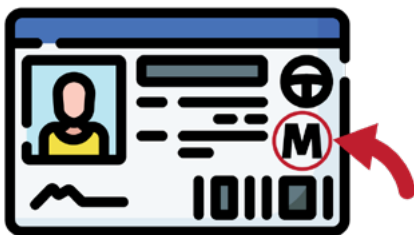
Identification is things like a driver's license, passport, or Medicaid card.



Without a legal name change, you usually cannot change your name on identification.



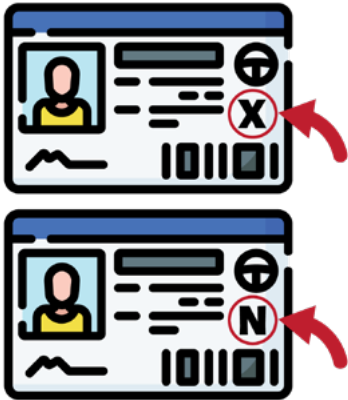
Some transgender and nonbinary people also want to change the **gender marker** on their identification.



A gender marker is a letter on your identification that tells people if you are male, female, or something else.



Some states let you have a **nonbinary gender marker** on your identification.



A nonbinary gender marker is a letter on your identification, like X or N, that tells people you are nonbinary.



Other states do not let you have a nonbinary gender marker on your identification.



The process to change your gender marker on your identification depends on the type of identification.



For some kinds of identification, you need a court order to change your gender marker.



For some other kinds of identification, you need a doctor's letter to change your gender marker.

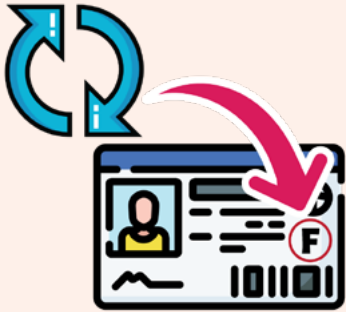


For other kinds of identification, you just need to fill out a form to change your gender marker.

For example:



Margaret is a transgender woman.



Margaret wants to change her gender marker on her driver's license to female.



In Margaret's state, people are allowed to self-certify their gender marker on their driver's licenses.



That means that Margaret just has to fill out a form to change her gender marker on her driver's license.



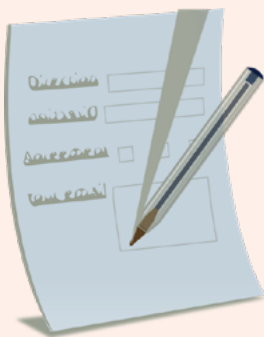
She does not have to get a court order.



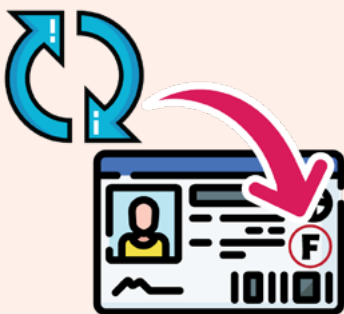
She does not have to get a doctor's letter.



Margaret goes to her local Department of Motor Vehicles office.



She fills out the form to self-certify her gender marker.



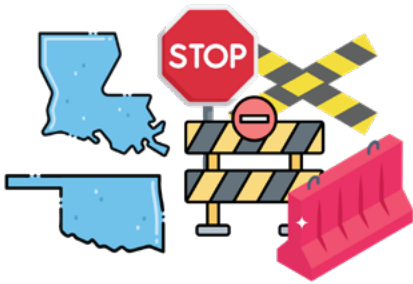
Margaret gets her gender marker changed on her driver's license.



The process to legally change your name and gender marker through a court order depends on where you are.



Some states make it very easy to change your name and gender marker.



Some states make it very hard by putting up lots of barriers.

Some kinds of barriers are:



- Making you pay a lot of money to change your name and gender marker



- Making you get a letter from a doctor saying you have gotten hormone replacement therapy



- Making you get surgery to change your body



All these kinds of barriers are unfair.



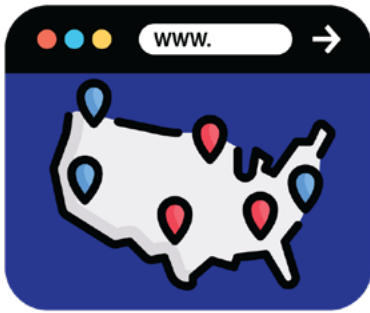
Transgender and nonbinary people should not have to go through these barriers to change our names or gender markers.



To find out what you need to do to legally change your name and gender marker, do a web search for “change name and gender marker **[your state]**.”



You can also check out the National Center for Transgender Equality’s [ID Documents Center](#).



That is a website that tells you what you need to do to change your name and gender marker in every state.

A note about changing your name and gender marker and getting health care



When you legally change your name and gender marker, you usually change it with your health insurance as well.



But sometimes health insurance will only pay for certain procedures if you have the “correct” gender marker.



Your health insurance may say they only pay for certain kinds of care for people who have female gender markers.



Your health insurance may say they only pay for certain kinds of care for people who have male gender markers.

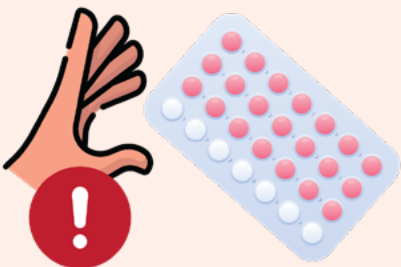
For example:



Hayden is a transgender man.



His gender marker says he is male.



Hayden needs to get birth control pills.



But his health insurance will only pay for birth control pills for people whose gender markers say they are female.



Hayden's health insurance says they will not pay for the birth control pills because Hayden's gender marker says he is male.



If you get a letter saying your health insurance will not pay for a medication or procedure, call your health insurance.



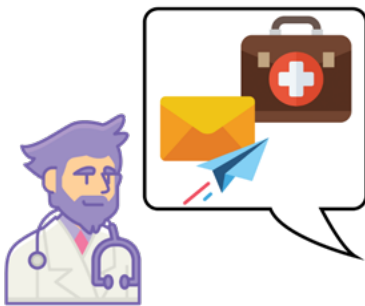
Call the number on the back of your health insurance card.



Tell them that you are transgender and that you still need the procedure, even if you have the “wrong” gender marker for it.



You may need to get your doctor to send your health insurance a letter saying you are transgender.



If that happens, ask your doctor to send your health insurance a letter.