

Youth Law: Change of Name

This factsheet is designed to help young people understand their rights and the process for legally changing their name in the ACT. If you are a young person with questions or concerns about changing your name, please call the **Youth Law Centre ACT** on **6173 5410** or **1300 654 314** for assistance and advice.

Note: The Youth Law Centre (YLC) is Legal Aid ACT's dedicated service for young people under the age of 25. It is a free and confidential legal service.

What is Change of Name?

A **change of name** is a legal process that allows an individual to officially alter their name on government and legal records, such as birth certificates, passports, and driver's licences. People may choose to change their name for various reasons, including personal preference, marriage, or divorce, cultural or religious practices, or to reflect their gender identity.

In the ACT, this process is managed by Access Canberra's **Births, Deaths, and Marriages (BDM)** office. The new name becomes your legally recognised name once the process is completed, ensuring it is reflected in official documentation and records.

Changing your given name:

If you are under 18, you can only change your given name which includes your first and middle name.

You can change your name in the ACT if:

- You were born in the ACT; or
- Are a permanent resident of the ACT and have lived here for at least three months before making the application.

You can only apply for one change of name to be registered within a 12-month period.

Changing your name when you are aged 14-17

You do not need consent of your parents to change your given name. You can fill the relevant forms (depending on where you were born) along with proof of identity and residency requirements. You can either submit the documents by email to bdm@act.gov.au, by post or deliver in-person.

Changing your name when you are aged 12 or 13

If you are 12 or 13 years old, you can change your name in 2 ways:

1. You will need **consent of both parents** to change your given name, unless it is not possible to get consent of from one of them. For example, because they have died, they are incapacitated, or only one parent is named in the birth certificate.

Your parents will need to declare their consent on the application form.

2. If your parents do not allow you to change your name, you can apply to ACAT to seek permission to apply for change of name.

Changing your name when you are under 12

You will need consent of one of your parents, AND permission from ACAT. Alternatively, your parents can apply to change your name.

If you need help or want to talk to someone about your application, contact us on **1300 654 314** for assistance and advice.

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Alternatively, if you would like to read about the ACAT process, click [here](#).

Is there a fee to get my name changed?

There are no application fees for changing your name if you are under 18.

After changing your name, you may need to update other legal documents, such as your driver's licence, passport, or Medicare card. These updates may involve separate fees set by the issuing organisations.

When can I not change my name:

You can not change your name if you have already done it within the last 12 months. Further, you can not change your name if you are involved in police investigation or have previously broken the law.

Changing your surname:

If you are under 18, only your parents can apply to change your surname. They apply for change of surname as long as:

- Both parents consent to the change of surname;
- Only the applying parent is listed on the birth certificate;
- Only the applying parent is living;
- The applying parent has an order for sole parental responsibility; or
- If both parents do not agree to the change of surname, the applying parent has an order from Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia allowing the change of surname

If you are over 12 years old, your parents will need your consent as well before they can apply to change your surname.

Useful Contacts

Legal Aid ACT

Monday to Thursday: 8:30am to 7:00pm

Friday: 8:30am to 5:00pm

www.legalaidact.org.au

Phone: **1300 654 314**

Youth Law Centre

Monday to Friday: 8:30am to 5:00pm

ylc@legalaidact.org.au

Phone: **(02) 6173 5410**

Access Canberra

www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au

Phone: **13 22 81**

Kids Helpline

www.kidshelpline.com.au

Phone: **1800 55 1800**