



City of Concord, New Hampshire

City Clerk's Office

41 GREEN STREET

Concord, NH 03301

(603) 225-8500

Marriage License Policy

Marriage is the legally recognized union of two people. Any person who meets the eligibility requirements as outlined below may marry any other eligible person. Couples wanting to be joined in marriage, whose ceremonies will be occurring in the State of New Hampshire, may obtain a marriage license from any New Hampshire city/town clerk's office. The state-set fee for a marriage license is \$50.

Residency Requirements

A couple wishing to marry in the State of New Hampshire, regardless of their place of residence, may file their intentions to marry at any New Hampshire city/town clerk's office.

Required Documents

In order to obtain a marriage license, the couple must appear together in person to fully complete a marriage application worksheet. Worksheets cannot be taken home or off-site to complete. To accurately complete the worksheet, each person must present the following documents:

- Government issued photo ID
 - i.e. Driver's License, Non-Driver Identification, United States Passport
- Certified Copy of Birth Certificate
- Individuals having had legal name changes since birth and prior to marriage must provide a certified copy of the legal name change.
- If either party was married previously, a certified copy of the document ending their most recent marriage is required.

Photocopies or faxes of required documents are **not** accepted. Documents in languages other than English require a certified translation.

Required documents provide vital information and eliminate errors. Errors or falsification can cause great hardship and may make either party liable for criminal prosecution.

Names at Birth

Since our office requires certified birth certificates and certified legal name change documentation, there are instances where an individual may be unsure of what to enter for on the marriage intention worksheet section "Last Name at Birth."

Per the State Bureau of Vital Records, when an individual has had a legal name change and chosen to amend their birth certificate, then the former name ceases to exist. Therefore, the new or current legal name per the legal name change can then be entered in the section "Last Name at Birth." However, in some cases, an individual may choose not to amend the birth certificate and instead use the legal name change to update their current, legal name. In such instances, an individual's current last name will be from the legal name change and the name at birth will differ from the current legal name.

In cases of adoption, if the adoptive parents have chosen to amend a birth certificate, then the “Last Name at Birth” section shall indicate the name selected by the adoptive parents and the biological name ceases to exist. Additionally, the adoptive parents are to be listed on the marriage intentions worksheet rather than biological parents.

Names Used Following Marriage

When completing the marriage application worksheet, both parties must indicate what their middle and surnames will be following marriage. Either party may:

- Retain their middle and surnames prior to marriage.
- Retain their middle name and change their surname to the surname of the other party.
- Retain their middle name and change their surname to a hyphenated combination of the full surnames of both parties.
- Change their middle name to their surname prior to marriage and change their surname to that of the other party.

Name changes other than those listed above must seek approval of the court.

Inability to Appear Due to Medical Reasons

If, due to medical reasons, a party is unable to physically enter the City Clerk’s Office, the marriage application worksheet can be completed within the municipal complex of City Hall located at 41 Green Street in Concord, NH. Locations within the municipal complex include:

- The sidewalk in front of 41 Green Street in Concord, NH
- The courtyard located between 39 – 41 Green Street in Concord, NH

Members of the Armed Forces Unable to Appear in Person

If either party (or both) is a member of the armed forces and is unable to appear in person, the following shall apply. The armed services' legal representative shall prepare the marriage application worksheet. The completed application worksheet shall be signed by the service person. The armed services' legal representative, company commander, or other superior officer, shall sign a statement attesting that the information provided is correct. The service person, if unable to appear, shall submit a signed statement authorizing the non-service person to sign for both parties. The completed application, and signed release if applicable, shall then be forwarded to the city/town clerk who issued the application. When the application worksheet is received by the city/town clerk, it shall then be used as an acceptable substitute for the personal appearance of the service person. The license shall then be prepared pursuant to RSA 5-C:41 with the non-service applicant being permitted to sign the license for both parties. The application worksheet received from the service person shall be retained permanently by the city/town clerk.

Parties Under the Age of 18

Per State law, no person below the age of 16 years shall be capable of contacting a valid marriage, and all marriages contracted by such persons shall be null and void.

Any person below the age of 16 years may apply for an age waiver by contacting the Judicial Branch Family Division having jurisdiction in the location in which one of them resides for permission to contract such marriage.

License Validity

If all requirements are met, a marriage license may be issued the same day. Marriage licenses are valid for 90 days from the date of issuance and may be used for a ceremony occurring anywhere in the State of New Hampshire.

Marriage Ceremonies

Signing the marriage license does not signify the couple is married as a ceremony must occur. The ceremony is to be officiated by a party deemed appropriate, and witnesses to the ceremony are not required.

After the ceremony, the officiant must complete the officiant section of the marriage license and return the license and any special solemnization licenses issued by the New Hampshire Secretary of State to the city/town clerk of issuance within six days.

Officiants

Per State law, in a civil ceremony, the ceremony may be officiated by a Justice of the Peace as commissioned by the State, a State Supreme Court Justice, a Superior Court Judge, a Circuit Judge, by Judges of the United States appointed pursuant to Article III of the United States Constitution, by Bankruptcy Judges appointed pursuant to Article I of the United States Constitution, or by United States Magistrate Judges appointed pursuant to federal law.

In a religious ceremony, the ceremony may be officiated by: any Minister of the Gospel in the state who has been ordained according to the usage of their denomination, resides in the state, and is in regular standing with the denomination; by any member of the clergy who is not ordained but is engaged in the service of the religious body to which they belong, and who resides in the state, after being licensed therefore by the Secretary of State; or within their parish, by any minister residing out of the state, but having a pastoral charge wholly or partly in this state.

The persons joined in marriage by a Minister or Justice of the Peace shall pay the Minister or Justice a minimum of \$5.

Special Licensing from New Hampshire Secretary of State

A special solemnization license must be obtained from the NH Secretary of State for the following officiants: Unordained Clergy residing in New Hampshire; Non-resident Ordained or Non-Ordained Minister; Non-resident Justice of the Peace; Non-resident Jewish Rabbi, or non-resident Quaker/Friend; United States Judge, United States Bankruptcy Judge, United States Magistrate Judge, New Hampshire Supreme Court Justice, New Hampshire Superior Court Judge or a New Hampshire Circuit Court Judge residing in New Hampshire.

Questions regarding special solemnization licenses should be addressed directly with the Secretary of State's Office, State House, 107 North Main Street, Room 204, Concord, NH 03301. They can be reached by phone at (603) 271-3242. For more information visit: <https://sos.nh.gov/administration/administration/special-marriage-license/>.

Certified Copies of Marriage Certificates

Certified copies cannot be issued until the completed license along with any special solemnization licenses have been returned to the city/town clerk's office where it was obtained. Please allow approximately two weeks from the date of the ceremony before requesting certified copies. You may then contact *any* New Hampshire city/town clerk to obtain certified copies. The state-set fee for one certified copy is \$15. Additional copies issued at the same time are \$10 each.

Accepted Forms of Payment

Cash and debit/credit cards are accepted as payment for marriage licenses. Cash, check and debit/credit cards are accepted forms of payment when obtaining certified copies.

