

# TRANSGENDER PEOPLE AND



# PASSPORTS

A Resource from the National Center for Transgender Equality  
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# PASSPORTS

## INFORMATION ON PASSPORTS FOR TRANSGENDER PEOPLE.



As with many identification documents, obtaining accurate and up-to-date passports can be a particular challenge for transgender people. This resource has been developed to help transgender people navigate the issues involved with passports.

### WHEN DO YOU NEED A PASSPORT?

- Leaving the Country. You will need a passport to go anywhere other than the American territories of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Island, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa.
- Going on a Cruise. You now need a passport to go on an international cruise unless it is leaving from and ending in the same American port. If you do not have a passport, such cruises do still require a government-issued photo ID and birth certificate, Consular Report of Birth Abroad, or Certificate of Naturalization. Foreign nationals on such a cruise should carry a passport.
- Identification. Passports can be used as identification within the United States, fulfilling both ID document and proof of citizenship requirements.

### TYPES OF PASSPORTS

Recently, Americans' options for passport documents have expanded. There are some other choices for some Americans beyond the traditional passport book.

- Passport Books. This is the traditional option that gives the most access and is still the right choice for most people.
- Passport Cards. Targeted for people living in border areas, this license-sized card is only valid for travel across land and sea between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Bermuda and the Caribbean islands.
- Enhanced Driver's Licenses. For residents of states that do or will offer the Enhanced Driver's License (EDL), these will provide another travel document option for those wishing only to cross into Mexico, Canada, Bermuda, or the Caribbean by land or sea. The fees for these vary by state but are generally more expensive than regular driver's licenses and less expensive than a passport book.
- Enhanced Tribal Card. Some federally recognized American Indian tribes can issue enhanced identification cards that can be used like Enhanced Driver's Licenses.

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## APPLYING FOR A PASSPORT FOR THE FIRST TIME

To apply for a passport for the first time, you will need:

- Two 2x2 inch photographs of yourself
- Proof of U.S. citizenship such as a birth certificate or enhanced driver's license
- A valid form of government-issued photo identification such as a driver's license or tribal identification card
- A completed Application for Passport, Form DS-11, available online at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/79955.pdf>.
- Relevant fees

	Application Fee	Execution Fee	Total
Passport Book (Age 16 & Older)	\$75	\$25	\$100
Passport Book (Under Age 16)	\$60	\$25	\$85
Passport Card (Age 16 & Older)	\$20	\$25	\$45
Passport Card (Under Age 16)	\$10	\$25	\$35

When applying at a Passport Agency, both the application fee and the execution fee are combined as one payment to the "U.S. Department of State." When applying at an Acceptance Facility, pay the application fee to the "U.S. Department of State" and the execution fee to the facility where you are applying.

Take your required documents and fees in person to any acceptance facility. These include courthouses, post offices, some public libraries and certain county and municipal offices. Additionally, there are thirteen regional passport agencies and one Gateway City Agency, which serves those who need expedited service. To find the acceptance facility closest to you, visit the State Department's website, "Passport Acceptance Facility Search Page," at <http://iafdb.travel.state.gov/> or call the National Passport Information Center at 1-877-487-2778. Your U.S. Senator's office can also be a useful way to expedite the passport process.

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## RENEWING A PASSPORT

There are two ways to renew a passport—in person or by mail. You may only renew by mail if...

- You can submit your most recent passport with your application
- You were at least sixteen years old when it was issued
- It was issued no more than fifteen years ago
- You presently use the same name printed on the last passport OR had your name changed by marriage or court order and can submit legal documentation to prove the change.

### **To renew a passport by mail, you will need:**

- A form DS-82, available online at [http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/ds82/ds82\\_843.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/ds82/ds82_843.html)
- The previous passport
- Two 2x2 inch photographs of your face
- The fee, which is currently \$75 for regular processing speed for passport books and \$20 for passport cards, and should be made payable to “U.S. Department of State.”
- Legal documentation of name change if applicable.

All of these together should be mailed to the following address at regular delivery speed:

National Passport Processing Center  
Post Office Box 90155  
Philadelphia, PA 19190-0155

**To renew a passport in person**, fill out a form DS-11 available online at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/79955.pdf>, and follow the instructions on the previous page for applying for a new passport, additionally bringing along your old passport.

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## **CHANGING YOUR NAME ON YOUR PASSPORT**

You can have the name changed on your current passport if

- Your name has been legally changed through marriage or a court order, AND...
- It has been less than one year since your passport was issued [If you have a current passport that was issued more than one year ago, you must fill out a DS-82 renewal form (see renewal instructions above) and pay all associated renewal fees.]

You will need:

- A Form DS-5504, “Application for a U.S. Passport: Name Change, Data Correction, and Limited Passport Book Replacement Form,” available from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/80142.pdf>
- A certified copy of your name change documents, either a marriage certificate or name change court order (Photocopies and notarized copies of your name change documents are not accepted)
- Two 2x2 inch passport photographs
- Your current valid passport

All of these together should be mailed to the address on the form.

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## **CHANGING YOUR GENDER MARKER ON YOUR PASSPORT**

Unfortunately, at this time, it appears that there is not a single process for changing name and sex marker at once. Also, the State Department will only change the sex marker on your passport if you have completed sex reassignment surgery (you'll get a regular passport) or are planning to undergo surgery in the near future (you'll get a temporary passport).

### **Regular Passports**

Individuals who can document transition-related surgical procedures and who seek to change the gender marker should submit a certified letter from their attending surgeon or the hospital, simply stating that sex reassignment surgery has been completed. No further medical details are required by the policy and NCTE encourages trans people to neither seek nor offer clarification as to what is meant by "sex reassignment surgery." Passport processors sometimes misinterpret the policy to require genital surgery. People who encounter this problem should notify NCTE immediately.

Some people who have applied for amended passports have reported having bad experiences such as being sent a new copy that has a note in the back outing the person as being transgender. Please contact NCTE if this happens to you.

You will need to mail

- The letter from your surgeon
- proof of identity and citizenship (such as a driver's license or birth certificate),
- 2x2 inch passport photo
- passport application or renewal form,
- associated fee

Mail it to:

Charleston Passport Center  
Attention: Amendments  
1269 Holland Street  
Charleston, SC 29405

### **Temporary Passports**

If you have not had qualifying surgery but you plan to soon, and you wish to obtain a passport that reflects your gender identity, you should submit a detailed summary from your attending medical physician outlining your past medical history, including psychology and hormone treatment, your current treatment stage, and the expected date of sex reassignment surgery. With this information, the passport agency may issue you a temporary passport that is valid for one year and is not renewable.

### **Under Age 18**

Transgender people under 18 face a particularly difficult situation in terms of getting an appropriate passport. Because of the Passport Office requirement for "sex reassignment surgery" and the medical profession's unwillingness to recommend most surgeries for most trans people under 18, it can be very difficult or impossible for most minors to receive a passport with an appropriate gender marker. The exception to this may be those minors who have been able to change the gender marker on their birth certificates—though this is not possible for many trans people.

## PASSPORT APPLICATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH SAME SEX PARENTS

The DS-11 passport application for a new passport requests information about your “father” and “mother,” and, if you are under 16 years of age, asks for parental signatures from “father” and/or “mother.” Unfortunately, until these outdated forms can be amended through advocacy with the government, it is necessary applicants with two legal parents of the same sex to assign one as mother and one as father. Deciding based on who is listed as each parent on the applicant’s birth certificate may be least likely to cause delays, but that is not appropriate for all applicants.

## PASSPORTS AND PRIVACY

For transgender people concerned about their privacy—as we all should be—the Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) technology used to scan information embedded in new passport cards and books is problematic. The Department of State has assured the public that no personal information will be contained on the passports’ computer chips themselves. Rather, the chips will contain a unique number that corresponds to personal identification information contained in government databases. Therefore, in theory, only government officials can access private information.

### Other Resources

- US State Department Passport Home  
[http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport\\_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html)
- US State Department’s “How to Change Your Name in Your Passport”  
[http://travel.state.gov/passport/fri/ChangeName/ChangeName\\_851.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/fri/ChangeName/ChangeName_851.html)
- US State Department’s FAQ Frequently Asked Questions: Passports and Citizenship Documents [http://travel.state.gov/passport/fri/faq/faq\\_1741.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/fri/faq/faq_1741.html)
- National Passport Information Center, 1-877-487-2778
- NCTE’s resource, Air Travel Tips for Transgender People,  
<http://www.nctequality.org/Resources/airtravel.pdf>