



# Marriage in Minnesota

## How do I get married in Minnesota?

To be legally married in Minnesota you have to apply for a marriage license. It doesn't matter what MN county you get your license from as long as you get married in Minnesota. You have to be married by someone authorized to perform marriages. Then you get a marriage certificate that shows you are legally married.

Since 2015, same sex marriage is legal in the United States.

Are you a married or undocumented immigrant? You may need to know some other things. See our fact sheets [Immigrants, Marriage and Divorce in Minnesota](#) and [Can Undocumented Immigrants Marry in Minnesota?](#)

## How old do I have to be to get married in Minnesota?

- You have to be over 18 and able to make your own decisions to enter into a legal marriage in Minnesota
- Minnesota does not recognize marriages involving a minor who traveled out of state to get married.

## What marriages are not allowed in Minnesota?

- If you want to get married, you can't be married to anyone else.
- If you were married before, you must have a **valid** divorce from your previous spouse. A valid divorce is one that follows the divorce laws in the state or country where the divorce happened. In Minnesota, a divorce must go through the court systems and an order needs to be signed by a judge before it is a valid divorce.
- Minnesota doesn't let certain blood relatives get married. You can't marry:
  - Your biological or adopted children.
  - Your biological or adopted grandchildren.
  - Your nieces or nephews if there is any blood relation.
  - Your first cousins. First cousins are the children of an aunt or uncle that you are related to by blood.



## **Where do I get a marriage license?**

To get married in Minnesota you apply for a marriage license. You can apply for a license in any county. You don't have to apply in the county where you want to get married. Because each county is different, contact your local license center about where to apply for a marriage license. Check if your county has a general information line or do an internet search for your county and "license center" to find it.

Many counties have application forms you can print out on their websites. Some also let you start the application process online. Check your county website.

You have to go together to the license center to apply for a marriage license. If for some reason you can't both go, ask the license center what you need to do to be able to apply for the license.

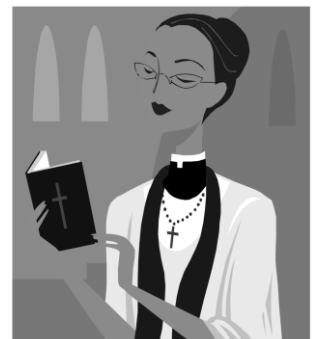
## **How much does it cost for a marriage license?**

The fee for a marriage license application is \$115. If you take at least 12 hours of premarital education classes, the application fee is \$40. You have to take a class from:

- a licensed or ordained minister
- a person authorized to perform civil marriages, or
- a person authorized to practice marriage and family therapy

Talk to your minister or look online for pre-marital counselors. Make sure you ask about cost before you sign up.

You need proof that you did the classes. The person giving the classes should have the necessary forms or wording for a letter to show that you did the classes. The form or letter has to be notarized. Take it when you apply for your license.



## **What information do I need to apply for a marriage license?**

- Names
- Social security numbers
- Addresses / County of residence
- Ages / Dates of birth
- Genders
- Government ID (driver's license, identification card, passport)
- If you want to change your name when you get married, what that name will be
- If you were married before, you need information about your ex-spouse or ex-spouses including name, when and where the marriage was ended or, if your ex-spouse died, the date and place of death.
- Your relationship by blood or adoption, if there is a relationship

## **Name changes**

If either of you want to change any or all of your names, you can do that on your marriage license application. If you decide to do a name change after you are married, you have to do it through the courts.

If you have a felony conviction in any state and you want to change your name when you marry, there is another form you have to do before you can get your marriage license. Check with the county attorney about the process and how to get the form. The county attorney has 30 days to object to your name change. So, make sure you do this at least 30 days before you plan to bring your marriage license application into the county.



## **How long do I have to wait to get my marriage license?**

There is no longer a waiting period for your marriage license. Usually, you make an appointment to go to the licensing office and you'll get your license at the appointment.

## **Once I have my license, how soon do I need to get married?**

Your marriage license is valid for 6 months from the date on it. If you don't get married within 6 months, you have to reapply.

If you didn't get married within the 6 months because of illness or some other big problem, you may not have to pay the fee again. Ask at the county.

## **Who can marry us?**

After you get your marriage license, you can be married by the following people who are over the age of 21 AND are a

- Judge, including retired judges
- Court administrator, including a retired court administrator with approval from the chief judge of their judicial district
- A former court commissioner who is employed by the court system or is acting on the order of the chief judge of the commissioner's judicial district
- The residential school superintendent of the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf and the Minnesota State Academy for the blind
- Licensed or ordained minister of any religious denomination

If you want to get married by a court official, contact the county where you want to get married for information. You can find contact information for each county's court at [www.mncourts.gov](http://www.mncourts.gov). Click on "Find Courts" and choose your county.

## Where can the ceremony take place?

If you applied for a marriage license in Minnesota, your marriage ceremony must be in the state of Minnesota.

## Are there rules about what needs to happen at the ceremony?

Besides having an authorized person perform the ceremony, you need to have 2 witnesses at the ceremony. The witnesses need to be at least 16 years old. They sign your marriage certificate to prove they were there.

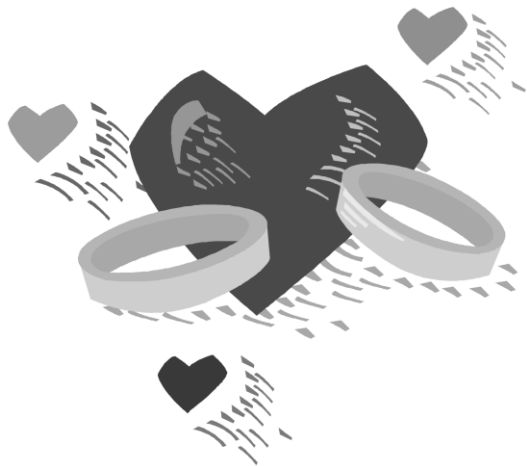
If your ceremony is being performed by a religious official, the ceremony must follow the traditions of your religion.

If the ceremony is being performed by a judge, court administrator, or other non-religious individual, you must declare that you take the other person as your husband, wife, or spouse at some point in the ceremony.

## What happens after the ceremony?

After your ceremony, the person who performed your ceremony has 5 days to send a certificate to the county where you applied for your license. The county records your marriage and sends you a certified copy of your marriage certificate.

If you changed your name, you have to update all records with your name on them. This includes applying for a new social security card, telling your banks, employers, and getting a new driver's license or state ID card. You need to contact each of those offices to find out what to do.



**Fact Sheets are legal information NOT legal advice. See a lawyer for advice.**

*Don't use this fact sheet if it is more than 1 year old. Ask us for updates, a fact sheet list, or alternate formats.*

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