

The background of the graphic is a textured, watercolor-like wash. The top half is a vibrant pink, and the bottom half is a bright blue. The colors blend into each other, creating a soft, artistic effect. The text is overlaid on this background.

Name and Gender Marker Legal Clinics at the Public Library

A Better Practices Guide

Created by Jeanie Austin
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Acknowledgments

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Why a Name and Gender Marker Legal Clinic?

For transgender people, making a decision to change legal documents to reflect their name and gender often involves not only self-assessment but also a commitment to remaining patient despite hurdles, pitfalls, and encounters with systems that were not designed with transgender people in mind. Legal processes vary by state (and for federally recorded information) and require quite a bit of navigation. Needless to say, these processes are often daunting.

In many places, the policies for legal name changes have changed rapidly to reduce barriers to the process (such as making a newspaper announcement as a required part of the legal name change process for transgender people). Even in instances where impediments to the process have been reduced, the announcements of policy changes can be convoluted and difficult to understand. A legal clinic provides transgender patrons with the opportunity to receive informed assistance in completing the documents required to undertake the process of legally changing their name or gender marker on their driver's license or other legal documents.

For some transgender people, obtaining the correct legal documents provides a confirmation and sense of legitimacy to their experiences. For people who do not want to be known publicly as transgender, incorrect identity documents may be one of the ways that they are revealed to be transgender in public spaces. Having the desired identity documents is one way that transgender people might choose to better protect themselves from being revealed to be transgender without their consent.

Hosting a name and gender marker legal clinic at the public library, or at an off-site location with public library support, communicates to transgender patrons that the library is a place where they will be recognized and respected. This type of program conveys to patrons that the library is actively available as a resource to all members of the community. The majority of this guide is focused on the practical aspects of hosting a name and gender marker legal clinic.

Before You Begin

Step 1: Inventory Your Library

Before moving forward with a legal clinic in the library, assess your library environment. Consider whether or not the library functions in a way that reflects the reality that there are transgender library patrons. Some areas to assess include:

- Library card applications and records (see recommendations from the GLBTRT Resources Committee of ALA at <https://tinyurl.com/yc67jlgu>).
- Bathroom access (see recommendations from the GLBTRT Resources Committee of ALA at <https://tinyurl.com/y55r9254>).
- Collections (there are many, many resources online that provide lists of books with transgender topics or characters or that are written by transgender authors).

If your library doesn't create an inviting environment for transgender people, you may want to identify a community center or other LGBTQ+ organization to work with as a partner on the legal clinic. Ideally, this partner will have access to a physical space for the legal clinic.

Please see Appendix A at the end of this guide for other resources related to library services to transgender people.

Step 2: Identify a Legal Partner

Various lawyers and organizations across the United States have experience providing some form of legal assistance regarding the completion of documents required for legal recognition of a person's name or gender. If you are not aware of this type of service in the community surrounding your library, these resources will help you to identify a legal partner:

- The **National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE)** maintains a network directory of individuals and organizations who provide name and gender marker change legal assistance. The directory is arranged by state and is available at <https://transequality.org/issues/resources/trans-legal-services-network-directory>.
- **Transgender Law Center (TLC)** hosts name and gender marker change (and other) legal clinics across the United States. Their legal calendar is located at <https://transgenderlawcenter.org/resources/id/trans-legal-clinic-calendar>. **TLC** also provides many identity documents resources at <https://transgenderlawcenter.org/resources/id>.

Most likely, clinic participants will be working with volunteers trained by legal staff or legal staff themselves. Discuss the distribution of roles in early conversations with the legal partner.

Planning

Prior to the clinic, evaluate the capacity for participants and the expected level of interest in the clinic. Even a small capacity clinic can create needed opportunities for transgender people in the library's community. Discuss the levels of interest in and enrollment capacity of previous name and gender legal clinics with a group in your area or state who regularly hosts this type of clinic (see the NCTE list earlier in this document).

Clinic participants should reserve their time at the clinic in advance (most likely in two hour blocks). This is to gauge capacity and assess the number of legal assistants that should be available at the clinic. Requiring reservations also allows librarians to estimate the number of supplies necessary for the clinic.

Legal partners and legal assistants will be focused on the documentation and required paperwork aspects of the clinic. Librarians and library staff will likely be the front-end encounter for enrollment. Librarians should work with the legal partner to create an easy way to share enrollment information directly with the legal partner (see Appendix B for example tracking spreadsheets).

During the enrollment process, librarians will likely ask specifically for information about the types of documents to be completed during the clinic. These may be name and gender markers on government issued identification (driver's licenses or city IDs), birth certificates, or social security information. Be sure to include a field for tracking additional questions that may arise around name changes (for instance, how a name change on a state-issued ID might result in changes needed on documents for property rights, etc.). Inform attendees of the scope of services available at the clinic during enrollment (see Appendix C for forms that reflect possible types of and scope of services).

Discuss whether or not it is possible to provide legal assistance to transgender youth as part of the clinic. It may be possible that youth are able to attend without a guardian. If this is the case, librarians or the legal partner will need to communicate to the youth that a guardian's signature will be required for the submission of the paperwork (unless the youth is emancipated).

Planning Timeline

Four months prior:

- Identify partner organizations and designate roles

Three months prior:

- Designate number of available sessions for clinic
- Discuss promotions strategy with partners
- Develop promotional materials (see section on Promotions)

Two months prior:

- Begin promotions!
- Create a tracking spreadsheet for tracking enrollments (see Appendix B for example tracking spreadsheets)

One month prior:

- Support legal partner in locating a venue for volunteer training (if applicable)
- Review clinic RSVPs and adjust promotions strategy accordingly
- Secure adequate library staffing for the clinic
- Submit any needed work orders (custodial, engineering, IT) for the clinic

Two weeks prior:

- Assess balance of RSVPs against number of legal volunteers (with legal partner)
- Designate number of spots open on the waitlist (if necessary or possible)
- Check functionality of all technology used during the clinic (including loading drivers to computers for printers and having back-up printer toner on hand)
- Continue promotions

One week prior:

- Locate all needed materials for the clinic
- Create library displays relevant to the clinic
- Alert front-end staff to the clinic and its location
- Create directional signage for the clinic
- Create fliers that promote trans-inclusive policies at the library
- Purchase refreshments (dependent on budget and length of clinic)

Day of (alongside legal partner):

- Arrive one hour prior to clinic to set-up and test technology
- Assemble room as described in the Room Layout section
- Greet and prepare volunteers thirty minutes prior to clinic start time
- Create a system for tracking participants from registration through the completion of legal documents
- Be prepared for the possibility that clinic participants will arrive early

Promotions

Promotions for the legal clinic should balance ensuring that interested participants learn about the event against any possible safety concerns for participants. Promoting the event in ways that communicate a concern for attendees and their well-being indirectly communicates competency about the experience of being a transgender person and can build trust between transgender people and the library.

For that reason, it may be best to limit promotions to official library communications and the LGBTQ+ media. Materials released in public venues (such as LGBTQ+ newspapers) should not include the physical location of the event. Rather, they can state that the clinic will be held at the public library and the location of the event can be provided to potential participants when they contact organizers to RSVP.

RSVPs should be accepted by email and by phone. If the librarian organizing the clinic has a direct line, it may be best to list that number in promotional materials distributed to LGBTQ+ community spaces. These can include community centers, sexual health services centers, GSA groups, and more.

One option to consider is purchasing a temporary phone number through an application such as Burner (<https://www.burnerapp.com/>). This temporary phone number can be listed on promotional materials to both facilitate communication with people interested in the clinic and to ensure that the librarian's information is not made publicly available beyond their control.

Burner and other applications include the option of purchasing text messaging plans. Text messaging can ease the anxiety that interested participants may face when making contact with a librarian they do not know. As many cisgender people understand the tone of a person's voice to indicate their gender, transgender patrons face an additional barrier to enrollment if enrollment by phone call is the only available option. Email requires a level of access and technological expertise that interested patrons may or may not have. The option to RSVP by text message reduces these barriers.

Consider the types of imagery that will be utilized on fliers. Is it best to use explicitly transgender imagery (or even the language of "trans" or "transgender"), or is there another way to signal to transgender people that the clinic is for their use? Consider imagery that utilizes the colors of the transgender flag or other signifiers of inclusion rather than explicitly utilizing symbols that are easily identified with transgender people.

The librarian can create a Google Alert (or similar search alert) for the legal clinic if there are concerns regarding information about the legal clinic being promoted in mainstream media or on other platforms. This will allow real-time tracking of mentions of promotions. If information that was not intended for mainstream publications, the librarian can reach out to the publication to have that information removed.

Physical Logistics

Location

Identify a location that allows for participant privacy. In addition to attending an event specific to transgender people, which can possibly lead to a person being identified as transgender without their consent, legal information is very personal, protected information. Locate a room away from the general public.

If a branch of the library is located near an LGBTQ+ Center or organization, it may make most sense to host the clinic in that branch. Alternately, the librarian from that branch can collaborate with the LGBTQ+ Center to hold the clinic at the center as a form of library outreach.

Equipment

Legal assistants will likely assist participants to complete their legal forms digitally, with the option for clinic participants to take home a copy of the digital documents as well as a printed copy. In order for a clinic to be successful, there needs to be equipment to support this process, including:

- Clipboards for use during registration
- Manila envelopes for completed documents and USBs
- One laptop or desktop computer for every legal assistant/participant pair
- Outlets and electrical equipment (surge protectors, extension cords) to support the number of legal assistant/participant pairs
- Paper for printing legal documents
- Pens and pencils
- Printers that can be utilized during the clinic
- Printed originals of legal forms (in case there are issues with technology)
- Pronoun badges
- USBs for saving the completed paperwork (one per legal assistant/participant pair)

Technology

Wi-Fi capability allows legal assistants to retrieve legal files and forms that have been emailed by the legal partner prior to the clinic and to retrieve other files and legal information from the internet as needed. As regulations for legal name and gender marker changes vary by state and types of identification, access to Wi-Fi allows legal assistants to confirm regulations and requirements.

Consider the option of having legal assistants utilize their personal laptops in order to reduce the need for the library to support all equipment needs. Legal assistants should be reminded to save information created during the clinic only to the USB that the clinic participant will keep.

Note: It is possible to hold the clinic without utilizing the technology described in this section. If hosting a paper-only clinic, plan to have all possible forms on hand and access to a copier. Participants can work with legal assistants to complete the physical documents and should be provided with at least three copies (the original and two copies) of the physical documents before leaving the clinic.

Room Layout

Place a registration table at the door to the room. Use this space to gather the basic information needed for the clinic and to introduce participants to the legal assistant designated to assist with their paperwork. Write the participant's name (their actual name, not their legal name) on a USB designated for their use during and after the clinic.

Include the option of participants creating pronoun badges for themselves. Legal assistants should wear pronoun badges.

Individuals participating in the clinic will be sharing sensitive personal information. Design the room so that the legal assistant/ participant pairs are far enough apart that there is some level of privacy for participants.

Include a table for a printing station in a secure area away from the tables where participants are completing their legal paperwork. Place printed documents and the USBs that contain individuals' digital legal documents in the manila envelopes for safe-keeping.

Note: legal documents should only be printed one-sided.

Staffing

If possible, recruit staff from across the public library system. Since staff who are transgender or who have close relationships with transgender people may be especially interested in staffing the clinic, this helps to ensure that participants at the clinic have interactions with library staff who are respectful of their identities. Locate funding sources from within the library for extra hours for staff, if needed.

Legal partners and volunteers will be focused on legal interactions with clinic participants. Library staff will be in charge of logistics. Have enough staff to greet and register participants, monitor refreshments (if available), and assist with printing materials.

Staff should develop a script to discuss the clinic with any curious patrons who happen to see, but not understand, why there might be a legal clinic. This allows staff to deflect the responsibility for explanation away from legal clinic participants and to legitimate the clinic as part of library programming.

Can't Host a Legal Clinic? Consider These Options.

- Partner with individuals from other community organizations to receive training on completing name and gender marker change legal paperwork. Collaborate to provide repeating (weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly) staffed name and gender marker legal assistance open hours at a local LGBTQ+ organization or establishment. Rotating the staffing with other community and public service groups will ease the workload of all organizations involved, will provide opportunities for connecting attendees of the clinics with resources at each organization, and provides the face-to-face opportunity to welcome transgender people directly into public spaces.
- Approach LGBTQ+ community centers and other potential partners with resources at the library and inform them that you are available to support their programming as part of library outreach.
- Create resource guides specifically for transgender patrons (and keep them updated!). These might be print or online resources. If in an environment where there is a high likelihood that transgender people will be harassed or that physical access may out transgender patrons, consider creating online resource guides and place QR codes or tinyURL web addresses that link to the guides inside of transgender-specific resources in the library's collection.

Appendix A: Resources for Librarians

Adolpho, K. (2018). Gender Diversity and Transgender Inclusivity in Libraries. Paper presented at the 3rd National Joint Conference of Librarians of Color, Albuquerque, NM. Materials available at <https://tinyurl.com/jclctrans101>.

Austin, J. (2019). Lines of Sight and Knowledge: Possibilities and Actualities of Trans and Gender Non-conforming Youth in the Library. In Bharat Mehra (ed.) *LGBTQ+ Librarianship in the 21st Century: Emerging Directions of Advocacy and Community Engagement in Diverse Information Environments (Advances in Librarianship, volume 45)*. Emerald Publishing Limited, 167-196.

Jardine, F. M. (2013). Inclusive Information for Trans* Persons. *Public Library Quarterly*, 32, 240-262.

Kim, S., Garber-Pearson, R., Kehrein, M., Yogi, B. (2019). Transgender Inclusion in Libraries. Retrieved from <https://ischool.sjsu.edu/webcasts/transgender-inclusion-libraries>.

Krueger, S. G. (2019). Supporting Trans People in Libraries. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Thompson, K. J. (2012). Where's the "T"? Improving Library Services to Community Members who are Transgender-Identified. *B Sides*. Retrieved from <https://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1032&context=bsides>.

Appendix B: Example Tracking Spreadsheets

Participant Information

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	First Name	Last Name	Pronouns	Email	Address	Phone	Primary Language	Legal Service Requested	Additional Legal/ Notes	Birth Name
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										
11										
12										
13										

Confirmation and Follow-up

	A	B	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
1	First Name	Last Name	RSVP'd	Letter sent	Reminder Call (confirm receipt of letter/ Qs)	Second Reminder Call	Reminder Call	Paperwork Assistant Assigned	Clinic Forms Signed
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									

Legal Assistant Information

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	First Name	Last Name	Confirmed Y/N	Affiliation (Partner Organization)	Email	Spanish Language Capacity	Other Language Capacity	Notes
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								

Day of Logistics

	A	B	C	D
1	Day of Logistics	Who	When	What/ Notes
2	Set Up			
3	Arrange furniture			
4	Display materials			
5	Refreshments			
6	Registration			
7	Day of telephone reminders			
8	Signage w/ directions to room			
9	Gender-neutral signage for restrooms			
10	Clipboards			
11				
12	Volunteers - Arrival			
13	Greet volunteers			
14	Have volunteers sign-in			
15				
16	Welcome/ Refresher training			
17	Welcome; Introductions; Overview of day			
18				

Day of Logistics (continued)

	A	B	C	D
1	Day of Logistics	Who	When	What/ Notes
19	Materials to Print/ Email (Legal)			
20	Manual			
21	Guide			
22	Checklists			
23	Clinic participant forms			
24	Nametags (volunteers; staff; participants)			
25	Sign-in Sheet (volunteers)			
26	Sign-in Sheet (participants)			
27	Court forms			
28	Other identity applications			
29	Resource materials			
30				
31	IT needs/ Compliance			
32	Outlets and extension cords			
33	Electronic forms to participants			
34	Printers			
35	Tech assistance day of			
36	Surge protectors			
37	Laptops for printers			
38				
	A	B	C	D
1	Day of Logistics	Who	When	What/ Notes
39	Follow-Up			
40	Send waitlist / attendees that didn't show flier for other upcoming name and gender marker legal clinics			

Appendix C: Types of and Scope of Services

Example forms from Bay Area Legal Aid



Name and Gender Change Clinic

Legal

Name: _____
Last Name First Name Middle Name

Chosen

Name: _____
Last Name First Name Middle Name

Pronouns: _____

Address: _____
Street Name City Zip Code

What services are you wanting assistance with today at the clinic? Put a mark next to all that apply.

- Obtain court order for: name change, gender change, name and gender change. (circle which of the 3 describes what kind of court order you would like to obtain)
- Change your Social Security records and get a new Social Security card
- Change of name and/or gender on your California driver's license or state ID
- Name and/or gender change on your California Birth Certificate
- Change your name and/or gender on your United States Passport
- You are experiencing issues or have questions related to your health coverage



Clínica de Cambio de Nombre y Género

Nombre

Legal: _____

Apellido

Primer Nombre

Segundo Nombre

Nombre

Elegido: _____

Apellido

Primer Nombre

Segundo Nombre

Pronombres: _____

Dirección: _____

Nombre de Calle

Cuidad

Código Postal

¿Con cuales servicios necesita ayuda en la clínica de hoy? Marque todas que aplican

- Obtener orden de la corte para: cambio de nombre, cambio de género, cambio de nombre y género. (Circule cuál de los tres describen el tipo de orden de corte que usted le gustaría obtener)
- Cambiar su registros de seguro social y obtener una nueva tarjeta de seguro social
- Cambio de nombre y/o género en su licencia de conducir de California o identificación del estado
- Cambio de nombre y/o género en su certificado de nacimiento de California
- Cambio de nombre y/o género en su pasaporte de los estados unidos
- Tiene problemas o tiene preguntas sobre su cobertura de salud

Notice of Scope of Services

1. I am my own attorney/advocate in my name and gender marker change case.
2. No staff or volunteer at the Name and Gender Marker Clinic ("Clinic") is my attorney.
3. No staff or volunteer at the Clinic will represent me in court.
4. My conversations with staff and volunteers at the Clinic are not confidential.
5. There is NO attorney-client relationship between me and staff or volunteers at the Clinic
6. No staff and/or volunteer may offer to help me with non-clinic related services without the prior written consent of Bay Area Legal Aid.
7. I will receive all services from the Clinic for free. No staff or volunteer may accept anything from me.

I have read the above notice or have had it read to me. I understand and agree with this notice.

Signature

Date

Aviso de Alcance de Servicios

1. Soy mi propio abogado / defensor en mi caso de Cambio de Nombre y Género Marcador.
2. Ningún personal o voluntario en la Clínica ("Clínica") de Cambio de Nombre y Género Marcador es mi abogado.
3. Ningún miembro del personal o voluntario de la Clínica me representará en la corte.
4. Mis conversaciones con el personal y los voluntarios de la Clínica no son confidenciales.
5. NO hay una relación abogado-cliente entre mí y el personal o los voluntarios en la Clínica
7. Ningún miembro del personal y / o voluntario puede ofrecerse para ayudarme con servicios no clínicos sin el consentimiento previo por escrito de Bay Area Legal Aid.
8. Recibiré todos los servicios de la Clínica de forma gratuita. Ningún miembro del personal o voluntario puede aceptar nada de mí.

He leído el aviso anterior o me lo han leído. Entiendo y estoy de acuerdo con este aviso.

Firma

Fecha de firma