

MARRIAGE LICENSES - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the difference between a Marriage License and a Marriage Certificate?

A Marriage License is the legal document which one must have to *get* married. A Marriage Certificate is the legal document that proves that you have *been* married.

What are the requirements for entering into a marriage?

Anyone at least 18 years of age or older can get married so long as they are not a party to another civil union, domestic partnership or marriage in this state or recognized by this state.

How do I obtain a Marriage License?

The first step is to select an Officiant. An Officiant is the person who performs the actual marriage ceremony. Once you have confirmed both the Officiant and the date of the ceremony, you must schedule an appointment with the City Clerk's Office to apply for your Marriage License. ***You should book your appointment at least two (2) weeks in advance of your ceremony.***

How long is a Marriage License valid?

Marriage Licenses, once they are issued, are only valid for thirty (30) days and you must get married by an Officiant within that timeframe so you must plan accordingly.

Do I have to apply for the Marriage License in person?

Yes. You, your partner ***and*** one (1) witness must be present in the City Clerk's Office to apply.

I don't live in New Jersey and neither does my partner. Can we still apply for a Marriage License in Jersey City?

Yes, but if neither applicant lives in New Jersey, then you must get married in Jersey City.

Both my partner and I are New Jersey residents but neither of us lives in Jersey City. Can we apply for a Marriage License in Jersey City?

No. New Jersey residents can only apply for a Marriage License in the municipality where either party resides.

I live in Jersey City but my partner doesn't. Can we apply for a Marriage License in Jersey City? If so, must we get married in Jersey City?

Yes. You can apply for a Marriage License in the New Jersey municipality where either party resides. Once you are issued a Marriage License in Jersey City, the license is valid throughout the State so while you need not get married in Jersey City, you must get married somewhere in New Jersey; A Marriage License issued by Jersey City will not be valid in any other State.

Can the City Clerk marry us?

No. According to State law, only certain public officials such as judges and religious ministers are legally permitted to serve as Officiants. The City Clerk only issues Marriage Licenses and Marriage Certificates.

Will the City Clerk's Office arrange for one of the local judges to marry us?

No. If you wish to have a municipal judge serve as your Officiant, you must arrange for that on your own. To schedule a wedding ceremony at the Jersey City Municipal Court, send an email to weddings@jcnj.org. Once you have scheduled your wedding ceremony at the Municipal Court, you must schedule your appointment with the City Clerk's Office to apply for your Marriage License at least two (2) weeks in advance of your ceremony. The Municipal Court will not schedule your Marriage License appointment for you and scheduling a wedding ceremony at the Municipal Court does not mean you have been automatically granted a license to get married. Fees for a ceremony at the Municipal court are **\$75 for residents of Jersey City and \$100 for non-residents.**

I already have an Officiant. He is a minister from my church. Does he have to register with the City Clerk's Office in order to marry me?

No. The City will not ask for proof that the Officiant you have chosen is qualified to perform marriages.

My Officiant was not ordained in New Jersey and he is the pastor of a church located in another state. Must the Officiant be based in New Jersey in order to marry me?

No. Anyone qualified to perform marriages in any other jurisdiction is qualified to perform marriages in New Jersey. But remember: You must get married in New Jersey and if *neither* you nor your partner are New Jersey residents but were granted a Marriage License by Jersey City, then you **must** get married in Jersey City.

I've selected an Officiant and confirmed a date for my marriage ceremony. How do I schedule a Marriage License appointment?

Simply call our office, 201.547.5150 between 9AM-4:30PM Monday through Friday to schedule your appointment. Please be sure to have your date & location of your ceremony confirmed before reaching out to us. *And make sure you give yourself at least 2 weeks before your ceremony to make your appointment.*

I've scheduled an appointment with the City Clerk's Office to apply for my Marriage License. What will my partner and I need to bring to the appointment?

1. Both you and your partner must bring a valid government-issued photo I.D. such as a driver's license, passport or State/Federal I.D. **PLEASE NOTE:** An expired I.D. is not considered valid and any identification documents printed in a foreign language must be accompanied by a certified English translation.
2. Proof of Jersey City residency by at least one (1) of the applicants, (if your government-issued photo I.D. doesn't indicate a Jersey City address a utility bill, bank statement or residential lease is sufficient to provide proof of residency.) **PLEASE NOTE:** As noted previously, two non-New Jersey residents may obtain a Jersey City Marriage License but the marriage ceremony **must** take place in Jersey City in order to be valid.
3. One (1) witness, who is 18 years of age or older. The witness must also present a government-issued photo I.D. The witness need not be a resident of Jersey City or of New Jersey

PLEASE NOTE: Before leaving the Clerk's Office, you and your partner will both be given an opportunity to review the Marriage License in order to confirm that all the information on the Marriage License is true and spelled correctly. If, after having left the City Clerk's Office, you and your partner subsequently discover that any of

the information provided on the Marriage License is incorrect or spelled incorrectly, you will have to pay **a \$20 fee for the correction**, you will have to produce additional Vital Records such as a Birth Certificate to process the correction, and the finalization of your marital status will be delayed. **It is your responsibility to ensure that all the information on the Marriage License is both factually correct and spelled correctly.**

Is there a waiting period after we complete the application before we can get the License and go to get married?

Yes. There is a 72-hour waiting period before the Marriage License can be issued. The waiting period begins when the application is filed in the City Clerk's Office. The Marriage License application is valid for six (6) months from the date it is filed. After the 72-hour waiting period has expired, you may arrange to pick up your Marriage License from the City Clerk's Office. Once you pick up the License you must use it within thirty (30) days. If the License expires before being used, you must complete a new application.

Do I need to have witnesses for the actual marriage ceremony itself?

Yes. You must have two (2) witnesses. The Officiant cannot serve as a witness.

Once the marriage ceremony is over, and the Officiant and both witnesses have signed the Marriage License, where do I bring it?

You must file the first two pages of the Marriage License with the city or town where the ceremony took place. For example, if you obtained your Marriage License in Jersey City, but your marriage ceremony took place in Hoboken, then you must file it in Hoboken. Only submit the first two pages; you should retain the fourth page for your records. The third page is for the Officiant's records.

Jersey City issued my Marriage License but my marriage ceremony took place in Hoboken. How do I obtain my Marriage Certificate?

You must apply to the city or town where your marriage ceremony took place; in this example, it would be Hoboken. **PLEASE NOTE: Marriage Certificates are not provided automatically; you must request them separately and pay the corresponding fee.**

I was married in Jersey City. How do I obtain my Marriage Certificate?

You must complete an Application for a Certified Copy of a Vital Record, also known as a Reg 37A Form. A copy of the Reg 37A Form will be provided for you during your license appointment. If you need the form, simply call us at 201.547.5185 and provide us with an email address.

Simply mail the completed Reg 37A Form, along with a photocopy of your Driver's License (or some other Government-issued photo ID) and a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

City of Jersey City
Office of the City Clerk/CCML
City Hall - 280 Grove Street, Room 118
Jersey City, New Jersey 07302

You must include a check or Money Order made out to *City of Jersey City*. The cost is **\$20.00 for the first copy and \$10.00 for each additional copy**.

Now that I am married, I want to take my spouse's last name. Do I apply to the Clerk's Office to change my name?

No. The City Clerk's Office does not process name changes. Name changes are processed by the Social Security Administration. Go to www.socialsecurity.gov or dial 1-800-772-1213; TTY:1-800-325-0778.

If you are a New Jersey resident, you can also process your name change through the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (NJMVC). Name change applications processed by the NJMVC cannot be completed through the mail; you must visit a Motor Vehicle Agency branch office and present a Marriage Certificate or Civil Union Certificate in order to process the change. If you have any questions, you should contact the NJMVC directly by visiting www.njmvc.gov or call the MVC's Customer Support Line at (609) 292-6500 weekdays (except holidays) from 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

My partner and I are already married in another country. Do we have the option to get re-married here?

Yes. For individuals who are currently married in New Jersey or who are married in another state or country, the option exists to reaffirm your relationship/vows by registering a remarriage.

To apply for a remarriage, the couple must provide proof of their existing marriage, meet the requirements for entering into a marriage in New Jersey and follow the guidelines above to completing the license application. The process for a remarriage license is the same as for the marriage license, except that the remarriage license must be accompanied by the proof of existing marriage. There is no waiting period before the license is issued.

If you have any questions or need further clarification, call our office at 201.547.5150 9AM-4:30PM Monday through Friday or email marriagelicenses@jcnj.org

For more information on New Jersey's marriage regulations check out:
<https://www.nj.gov/health/vital/registration-vital/marriage-licenses/>