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GETTING MARRIED IN THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY: A GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

Background Information

The process of getting married or entering into a civil union in the State of New Jersey is governed by statute, specifically N.J.S.A. 37:1-1 et. seq. The process involves *three key steps*, each of which will be discussed. The three steps are:

1. Obtaining a Marriage or Civil Union License;
2. Having a Qualified Individual Perform a Valid Marriage or Civil Union Ceremony;
3. Having the Marriage or Civil Union Certificate and the Marriage or Civil Union License Properly Recorded

Step One: Obtaining a Marriage or Civil Union License

The parties must obtain a valid marriage or civil union license.

Q: Who is eligible to obtain a marriage or civil union license?

A: To obtain a license, it is necessary that you satisfy the following criteria:

- Not be a party to another civil union, domestic partnership or marriage in this State or recognized by this State;
- Be of the same sex for civil union; marriages can be same or opposite sex couples;
- Be at least 18 years of age, except that applicants under the age of 18 may enter into a Marriage/Civil Union with parental consent. Applicants under the age of 16 must obtain parental consent and have the consent approved in writing by a judge of the Superior Court.

Q: Where can I obtain a valid marriage or civil union license?

A: If *one or both parties is a resident* of the State of New Jersey, the parties must obtain a marriage or civil union license from the Registrar's Office in the municipality in which either



Party resides. For a list of municipalities in Cumberland, Salem, and Gloucester Counties and their respective phone numbers, please see attached Appendix A. You **should** contact the municipality in advance of requesting a license, as some municipalities have limited hours and some require appointments to be scheduled.

If **neither party is a resident** of the State of New Jersey, the marriage or civil union license must be issued by the Registrar in the municipality in which the marriage or civil union ceremony is to be performed.

Q: What must the parties bring when applying for a marriage or civil union license?

A: The parties must provide the following when applying for a marriage or civil union license*.

1. Proof of Identity by either a current driver's license, passport, or state/federal I.D.;
2. Proof of Residency by one applicant if a N.J. resident;
3. Social Security Cards or Social Security Numbers;
4. A witness of at least 18 years of age to verify the testimony before the licensing officer;
and
5. The \$28.00 application fee.

The following documents are helpful but not required:

1. A copy of your birth certificate to establish your parents' names and related birth information;
2. If you are divorced, have had a previous civil union dissolved, domestic partnership terminated or have had a marriage or a civil union annulled, please bring the decree(s) or the annulment documents;
3. If your former spouse/civil union or domestic partner is deceased, please bring the death certificate.

*Any documents in a foreign language must be accompanied by a certified English translation.

Q: Once I have applied for a license, how long will it take before my license is issued?

A: In New Jersey a marriage or civil union license **may not** be issued sooner than 72 hours after the application is made. The waiting period begins when the application is filed with the local registrar. That means that if the ceremony is scheduled for a Saturday or Sunday, the application should be made **no later** than the preceding Tuesday. If the application is made on a Wednesday or Thursday, the 72 hours will end on Saturday or Sunday but the registrar **will probably not be available** on those days or any public holiday. The Superior Court may issue an order waiving the 72-hour waiting period **only in** cases of emergency.

On average, it usually takes a minimum of one week for the municipality to issue the license; however, that time frame can be shortened when absolutely necessary.

Q: How do I obtain certified copies of my marriage license?

A: Certified copies can only be obtained from the municipality where the event occurred or the state office via in person, online, or mail in request.

Step Two: Having a Qualified Individual Perform a Valid Marriage or Civil Union Ceremony

Once you have obtained your license the next step is to have a qualified individual perform a valid marriage or civil union ceremony.

Q: After my license is issued, how long do I have before the ceremony must be performed?

A: Once a license is issued, it is good for 30 days from the date of issuance. The marriage or civil union ceremony must be performed within 30 days after the issuance of the applicable license.

Q: Who is qualified to perform a valid marriage or civil union ceremony?

A: The following is a list of individuals who are qualified to perform a valid marriage or civil union ceremony. Many of them can be contacted via the telephone numbers on Appendix A:

1. A judge of a New Jersey municipal court;
2. A sitting or retired judge of the New Jersey Superior Court;
3. A sitting or retired judge of a Tax Court;
4. The surrogate of any county;
5. A county clerk or any county;
6. Any mayor or deputy when authorized by the mayor, or chairman of any township committee or village president of this State;
7. Every minister of every religion, every religious society, institution or organization in this State;
8. A judge of the United States Court Appeals for the Third Circuit;



New Jersey Courts

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Lawrence Township	856-447-4554	CS Regional Mun. Court	856-455-8722
Logan Township	856-467-3424	Logan Mun. Court	856-467-3425
Lower Alloways Creek	856-935-1549	Lower Alloways Creek & Elsinboro Intergovernmental Mun. Ct.	856-935-1957
Mannington Township	856-935-2359	Mid Salem County Mun. Court	856-769-2424
Mantua Township	856-468-1500	Mantua Joint Mun. Court	856-468-3078
Maurice River Township	856-785-1120	Maurice River Mun. Court	856-785-1120
City of Millville	856-825-7000	Millville Mun. Court	856-825-7000
Monroe Township	856-728-9800	Monroe Township Mun. Court	856-728-9800
Borough of National Park	856-845-3891	West Deptford Joint Mun. Court	856-845-3891
Borough of Newfield	856-697-1100	Elk Joint Mun. Court	856-881-6631
Oldmans Township	856-299-0780	Mid Salem County Mun. Court	856-769-2424
Borough of Paulsboro	856-423-1500	Paulsboro Mun. Court	856-423-3888
Borough of Penns Grove	856-299-0098	Penns Grove Mun. Court	856-299-0975
Pilesgrove Township	856-769-3222	Pilesgrove Joint Mun. Court	856-769-1275
Borough of Pitman	856-589-3522	Mantua Joint Mun. Court	856-468-3078
Pittsgrove Township	856-358-2300	CS Regional Mun. Court	856-455-8722
Quinton Township	856-935-2325	Mid Salem County Mun. Court	856-769-2424
City of Salem	856-935-0373	Salem Municipal Court	856-935-0373
Borough of Shiloh	856-455-5054	CS Regional Mun. Court	856-455-8722
South Harrison Township	856-769-3737	South Harrison Township Mun. Court	856-478-4049
Stow Creek Township	856-451-8822	CS Regional Mun. Court	856-455-8722
Borough of Swedesboro	856-467-0202	Woolwich Joint Mun. Court	856-467-1555
Upper Deerfield Township	856-451-3811	CS Regional Mun. Court	856-455-8722
Upper Pittsgrove Township	856-358-8500	Pilesgrove Joint Mun. Court	856-769-1275
City of Vineland	856-794-4000	Vineland Mun. Court	856-794-4214
Washington Township	856-589-0520	Washington Township Mun. Court	856-589-0520
Borough of Wenonah	856-468-5228	Mantua Joint Mun. Court	856-468-3078
Borough of Westville	856-456-0030	Westville Mun. Court	856-456-1040
City of Woodbury	856-845-1300	East Greenwich Joint Mun. Court	856-423-3010
Borough of Woodbury Heights	856-848-2832	Mantua Joint Mun. Court	856-468-3078
Woolwich Township	856-467-2666	Woolwich Joint Mun. Court	856-467-1555

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