



Departmental
Administration

Office of the
Assistant Secretary
for Administration

Office of Human
Resources
Management

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TO: Mission Area Chief Operating Officers
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THROUGH: Gary Washington
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SUBJECT: Uniform Application of Legal Name Changes in Official Records and Preferred Employee Names in USDA Systems

Purpose

This memorandum provides guidance for effectuating legal and preferred name changes available to Federal and non-Federal employees in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) official records and information technology systems in alignment with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) requirements and guidance.

Background and Authority

The Office of the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer (OCDIO), Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), and the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) are collaborating to provide technical solutions for issues identified in the processing of employee name changes and to ensure uniform and equitable application in the various circumstances that initiate such requests. OPM's [Guidance Regarding Gender Identity and Inclusion in the Federal Workplace](#) advises Agencies to revise and implement their policies, practices, and any associated trainings so that they provide a non-discriminatory and inclusive work environment to applicants and employees regardless of their sex, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation, consistent with current law and executive policy.

The guidance covers employee name change requests that are official legal changes and non-legal (preferred name) requests to ensure applicant and employee records, along with USDA systems reflect the names employees use to refer to themselves and

seeks to ensure confidentiality and privacy. Applicants and employees may choose to openly discuss their name change or keep those matters private, consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and policies. There may be instances where applicants or employees are required to disclose some aspects of this information, such as during a background security investigation that requires listing formerly used names or during the onboarding process where this information is captured. In protecting this information, the agency is responsible for complying with any applicable laws, regulations, and policies (e.g., [Privacy Act of 1974 \[5 U.S.C. 552a\]](#)). Even if there is no restriction on disclosure, staff should be aware of the potential sensitivity and avoid disclosing such information to the greatest possible extent.

Policy

OPM provides the rules for documenting and processing legal name changes in the [Guide to Processing Personnel Actions, Chapter 20](#).¹ If an employee seeks to change their legal name throughout their OPF, including historical personnel records, instructions for doing so are set forth in [OPM's Guide to Personnel Recordkeeping](#).

Non-legal, preferred names (i.e., first or given name) may be reflected in USDA systems (e.g., Outlook/e-mail address, Microsoft Teams, AgLearn, applications that display username in the system or reports) that do not require a legal name be used. With the exception of a requested preferred name incorporating vulgar, profane or offensive language or content incompatible with USDA or OCIO system's naming conventions or rules of use, preferred name change requests may be processed for all employees.

Process Name Changes

Should an employee wish to request a legal or preferred name change within USDA systems (e.g., Outlook/e-mail address, Microsoft Teams, displays, etc.) they must:

1. Submit a request to their servicing Human Resources Office, and
2. Submit a System Authorization Access Request (SAAR) to the Client Experience Center (CEC) via their respective office's Information System Security point of contact (ISSPOC) so they may effectuate the change for desired name in displays.

Such request must be made in writing (hardcopy or electronically), clearly demonstrating that it came from the employee themselves with signature and/or from work email account to substantiate and include the person's full legal name and their new legal or preferred name.

¹ Chapter 20, Section 2. Rules on Processing Name Changes:

- a. **Mandatory changes.** The employing agency *must* accept and process an employee's request for change in name when:
 - i. the change results from marriage or gender transition or;
 - ii. court action, such as a divorce or legal name change due to gender transition or any other reason. (emphasis in original)

Also, non-Federal staff and contractors can similarly request their preferred name be reflected in systems by submitting a SAAR update ticket to CEC via the appropriate ISSPOC. SAAR requests should note that this name change request is for a non-Federal employee. All requests are to be processed in a timely manner, with consideration given to system updating cycles.

The Servicing HR Office will update the EmpowHR system record to capture both the legal name and preferred name. CEC will determine which systems are to be updated after verifying the Update SAAR request. Afterwards, the SAAR request will notify teams across the servicing IT staff to ensure updates occur in all systems and services as appropriate.² The servicing CEC staff will guide the employee and/or requester through any aspect of the process they are involved in, such as remaining logged off during system processing. CEC staff assigned the Remedy request will acknowledge receipt of preferred name change request and in which systems it will be updated. In addition, they will confirm changes are complete and have the requesting employee review for accuracy, including changes being visible to them as a user. These updates will be readily noticeable by the employee and others with whom they interact through the enterprise systems.

Enhancements

Future enhancements are being identified to leverage multiple data feeds to the Enterprise Identity Management Service (EIMS) and Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM) system to better streamline and potentially automate the process for updating and retaining employee preferred name changes and to include more IT systems (e.g., AgLearn). As these updates are implemented, staff will be advised accordingly.

Employee questions about requesting a legal or preferred name change should be directed to their servicing human resources office. Please direct any questions about the policies or SAAR process as explained in this Advisory to the following based on area of query:

HR policy including OPM requirements: OHRM-HRpolicy@usda.gov

CEC SAAR or Remedy process: CECTechnicalSupport@usda.gov

² For additional information on the SAAR process, please visit this [Knowledge Based Article](#) and CEC's [SAAR-Information Site](#).