

## Candidate Name and Gender Changes

When a candidate (such as a candidate for rostered ministry) in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) needs to change their name, the process can be completed by following the steps below. This ensures that the candidate's new name is reflected in all official documents and communications.

### 1. Notify the Synod Office

The candidate should first contact their **synod office** to inform them of the name change. The synod will guide the candidate through the next steps and update its records accordingly.

### 2. Provide Legal Documentation

The candidate will likely need to provide official legal documentation supporting the name change. This could include:

- A **court order** for a name change.
- A **marriage certificate** (if the name change is due to marriage).
  - Name of spouse
  - Birth date of spouse
- Other official documentation, such as a **divorce decree** or **adoption records**, if applicable.

In cases where legal name changes may be prohibited, such as for trans individuals, exceptions may be made to change the name in ECIS without such documentation. Considering the **anti-transgender legislation** many states and the federal government have enacted or are considering, it is nevertheless understandable if you are uncomfortable answering these requests.

The ELCA encourages inclusivity and diversity and may provide additional resources to help navigate gender identity transitions in ministry. For candidates who feel the need, there may be additional support networks such as [ReconcilingWorks](#) (a ministry that supports LGBTQIA+ individuals within the ELCA), which can provide pastoral care, advice and connection to others navigating similar transitions.

The ELCA strives to be a welcoming and inclusive church, and this process is intended to be one of support and respect for the candidate's identity.

A candidate may request to have their gender changed in ECIS without any documentation. Pronouns are also available.

### 3. Update Churchwide Records

Once the synod office has processed the name change, it will be forwarded to the **ELCA churchwide office** ([candidacy@elca.org](mailto:candidacy@elca.org)), which will update the official records in ECIS.

### 4. Communicate the Change

The candidate should also notify any related parties or entities about the name change, such as their seminary, field education supervisors or other relevant contacts.

### 5. Data and Security

Sensitive information submitted via one of our forms is encrypted while in transit and while at rest on ELCA servers.

- All ELCA servers are maintained in a secure fashion and assessed on a regular basis to ensure security standards are maintained.
- Information stored within ECIS is secured to only those staff who have roles requiring access to sensitive information.