Guide to Gender Marker Changes in Illinois for Service Providers:
Following is a guide for medical and mental health service providers in assisting clients seeking legal gender marker changes in Illinois. In order to best assist clients, providers should know that government agencies each have different standards for when and how a gender marker on a government-issued ID can be changed. For example, depending on what state someone was born in, they might not ever be able to change their gender marker on their birth certificate. Thus, this guide is Illinois-specific and is tailored to the following identity documents: Illinois State ID Card, Illinois Birth Certificate, Social Security Card, and U.S. Passport.

Illinois State ID Card
The Illinois Secretary of State’s office does not require a court order to change one’s gender on their State ID (including Driver’s License) however court orders from other states will be considered. Most commonly, clients instead submit a letter from a doctor, nurse, therapist, or social worker indicating that a gender change has taken place or the client is in the process of undergoing the gender change. It is important that the letter from a provider state that they recommend a gender change for their client’s safety. See attached sample.

Illinois Birth Certificate
Starting 1/1/2018, the surgery requirement for correcting gender marker on Illinois birth certificates will no longer be in effect. Folks will be able to change their gender marker on IL birth certificates by submitting a notarized affidavit, and a declaration of "clinically appropriate treatment" from a healthcare professional. http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/birth-death-other-records/birth-records/gender-reassignment

Social Security Card
To change a name with Social Security, an individual must fill out the application for a name change at the social security office and present the application and a certified name change order at a Social Security Administration office. For a gender marker change, an individual must present one of the following: (1) a full-validity, 10-year U.S. passport showing the new sex; (2) a state-issued amended birth certificate showing the new sex; (3) a court order directing legal recognition of change of sex; or (4) a medical certification of appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition in the form of an original letter from a licensed physician). The document must have enough biographical data (e.g., name and date of birth) to clearly identify you. For a sample doctor’s letter, see attached example, or visit the Social Security Administration website at https://faq.ssa.gov/link/portal/34011/34019/Article/2856/How-do-I-change-my-gender-on-Social-Security-s-records.

U.S. Passport
The U.S. State Department details the process for changing a gender marker on a passport at this link: http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/passports/information/gender.html. See attached example of doctor’s letter for the purpose of changing a gender marker on a U.S. Passport (This is a very specific letter, and differs from the letter that is usually issued by providers for the gender marker changes at the DMV). For information regarding a name change on a US Passport, visit this link on the U.S. Department of State website: https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/services/correction.html

1 Updated 1.24.2018
Secretary of State, DMV  
69 W Washington  
Chicago, IL 60601  
Date:  

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to serve the purpose of allowing Jane Doe DOB 1/1/11, a transgender individual, a safe passage through every space. Jane Doe is currently undergoing appropriate clinical treatment for her gender transition. During transition, Jane Doe may appear to have a mixture of male and female characteristics, which may leave some observers confused as to her sex. This is normal during this time.

Since Jane Doe identifies as a transgender individual, she should be afforded the same basic human rights as other women, such as being referred to as “she” and having her state identification reflect her current gender. For this reason I request that the Secretary of State, DMV change Ms. Doe’s gender marker on her state ID to “FEMALE” for her safety and dignity.

If you have any questions regarding the statements I have made or the authenticity of this letter, please don’t hesitate to call me at 312-111-1111 ext. 111. Thank you in advance for the professional treatment you will provide.

Sincerely,

__________________________  
Renee Richards  
Renee Richards, MSW  
Social Service Agency  
1111 W. 11th Street, Suite 11  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
312-111-1111 Ext. 111  
Date:________
LETTERHEAD (with Physician’s Address & Phone Number)

Letter Certifying Applicant’s Gender Change

To Whom It May Concern:

I, Dr. Renee Richards, (physician’s medical license or certificate number), (issuing U.S. State/Foreign Country of medical license/certificate), (DEA Registration number), am the attending physician of Jane Doe, DOB 1/1/1980, with whom I have a doctor/patient relationship and whom I have treated (or “with whom I have a doctor/patient relationship and whose medical history I have reviewed and evaluated”).

Jane Doe has had appropriate clinical treatment for gender transition to the new gender female (specify new gender, male or female).

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the forgoing is true and correct.

Sincerely,

_______________________

Renee Richards
Dr. Renee Richards, M.D.
Public Health Organization
1111 W. 11th Street, Suite 11
Chicago, Illinois 60611
312-111-1111 Ext. 111
Date:_______

*Model Physician’s Letter for SSA & U.S. Passport