

What is the difference between a “certified” and an “uncertified” copy of a marriage certificate?

A **certified** copy of a marriage certificate issued by the Local Vital Records Office will have a raised seal, will show the signature of the Local Registrar, and will be printed on security paper. A certified copy may be required to change your last name or to obtain benefits.

State law restricts who may obtain a **certified** copy of a marriage certificate. A **certified** copy can only be issued to those people with a “direct and tangible interest” categories A – E) which means the following people:

- A. The bride or groom named on the marriage certificate.
- B. An immediate family member defined as a parent (whose name is on the bride or groom’s birth certificate and whose parental rights have not been terminated), brother, sister, grandparent, or child of the subject of the record .
 - a. NOTE: Grandchildren, step-parents, step-children, step-brothers and step-sisters can only obtain certified copies as categories C – E.
- C. The legal custodian or guardian of the bride or groom named on the marriage certificate. Legal proof, *e.g.*, a court order of custody or guardianship, is required.
- D. A person authorized in writing by one of the above. A written and notarized authorization must be attached to this application and the authorization must clearly state the relationship of the authorizing party to the subject of the record.
- E. A person who can demonstrate that the marriage certificate is required to determine or to protect a personal or property right. Proof is required.

If you do not meet one of the above criteria, you cannot receive a **certified** copy of a marriage certificate.

An **uncertified** copy will contain the same information as a certified copy but it is **not** acceptable for legal purposes, such as claiming insurance benefits.