



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

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Applying for Declaration of Domestic Partnership Begins August 3rd

State officials announce the first day to apply for a Declaration of Domestic Partnership begins on August 3, 2009. The Declaration is a new vital record created under state law that the Department of Health Services (DHS) will maintain, along with other vital records such as birth and death certificates. The Department has also been providing training and technical assistance for the county clerks in preparation for August 3rd.

“The Declaration will provide same-sex couples a document that formalizes their relationship and can be used in a variety of ways,” said Secretary Timberlake. “For example, the document will be proof of the relationship that can be shown at a hospital or nursing home to ensure visitation rights or may be taken to their employer if they need to take medical leave to care for an ill partner.”

Application Process

Two unmarried adults of the same sex who are living together may apply for a Declaration at their local county clerk’s office. The couple must apply in their county of residence, and one of the individuals must be a resident of that county at least 30 days prior to date of application.

To apply, an individual must bring their certified birth certificate, not a photocopy or the “footprint” certificate issued at the hospital. Without a certified copy the county clerk will not be able to process the application.

Along with a certified copy of their birth certificate, an applicant should also bring:

1. A current, non-expired photo ID
2. Proof of residence – at least one applicant must have resided in the county 30 days or more prior to application
3. Social Security Number – applicants will not need to show the card, but must know their number
4. If applicable, proof of how any former legal marriage or domestic partnership ended (example: divorce decree)

People will apply for the Declaration at the County Clerk’s Office and pay the application fee. Applicants will receive the Declaration five days or more after the application is made, but an expedited fee can be paid to receive it sooner.

The Declaration must be signed in front of a notary and then be filed with the Register of Deeds Office in the same county as residence. The date the Declaration is filed at the Register of Deeds Office is the date the domestic partnership becomes effective. The Register of Deeds will then file the Declaration with State Vital Records Office in DHS.

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