

2025 Vital Records Legislative Proposal

MODERNIZING VITAL RECORDS:

- Data Collection
- Marriage records processes; (i.e. corrections, forms/documentation)
- Consolidating the definition of Marriage Officiant
- Fee structure/schedules

MN Local Registrars are responsible for processing requests related to the issuance of Vital Records (Birth, Death, Marriage Records and recording Notary Public Commissions and Marriage Officiant Registrations.

M.S. 144.223 Report of Marriage:

Proposing to strike-out antiquated data that is no longer used by the state.

1. personal information on bride and groom:
 2. name;
 3. residence;
 4. date and place of birth;
 5. if previously married, how terminated; and
 6. signature of applicant, date signed, and Social Security number; and
 7. information concerning the marriage:
 8. date of marriage;
 9. place of marriage; and
 10. civil or religious ceremony.
- The Office of Vital Records (OVR) has not required counties to report anything more than the marriage certificate counts in over 15 years. These proposed changes are also based upon feedback from OVR.

M.S. 517.10 Certificate; Witnesses:

Recommending language be added that gives clear guidance for marriage certificates:

- Current law is unclear as to who creates and provides marriage certificates.
 - Local Registrars are seeing some Marriage Officiants creating their own documents; these are not compatible with existing record keeping systems; making these non-standardized certificates harder to locate.
- Local Registrars will provide a marriage certificate for Marriage Officiants to use.
- Applicants will sign their “names after marriage” on the marriage certificate; thus affirming that the information is true and correct.

M.S. [517.102] Fees for Marriage Records New Section

Fees for issuing certified and non-certified marriage records and marriage amendments are not specifically defined in Chapter 517 nor are they defined in M.S.144.226.

- Currently, local registrars use M.S. 144.226 to base their fee schedule on.
- We are requesting a local registrar fee increase for each marriage record issued, from the current fee of \$9 to \$20. The last fee changes for issuing marriage records were on August 1, 2005.
- We are requesting a local registrar fee to amend a marriage record be added to Chapter 517.

M.S. [517.103] Amendment to Marriage Records New Section

The process to amend marriage records are not specifically defined in Chapter 517.

- Having a defined process allows all local registrars the ability to correct an error in a marriage record.
- Corrections are needed for constituents to update their legal documents; (i.e. Real ID); which is one document required for air travel by May 7, 2025. Having a defined process could potentially avoid court order action.

M.S. 517.04; 517.05; and 517.18 (Marriage Officials)

Civil marriages can be performed by individuals identified in M.S. 517.04; 517.05; and 517.18

- These statutes are outdated; we are recommending these 3 statutes be consolidated to one statute (M.S. 517.04).
 - This change would provide clear language and expectations that are consistent with the intent of the law.
- M.S. 517.04 Persons authorized to perform civil marriages; was amended in the 2023 legislative session to allow “any person to perform marriages,” yet marriage officiants who file under a religious affiliation have a higher standard to meet by requiring additional documentation.
 - The intent for this change is that everyone wanting to officiate at a marriage must file as a marriage officiant – no exceptions and that the standards of the law are applied equally.

M.S. 517.09 Solemnization

- We are recommending to include language in M.S. 517.09 that the marriage officiant cannot also be an applicant or a witness to the marriage ceremony.

M.S. 517.08 Application for License

Some of the current language in subdivision 1a. is antiquated and no longer used by the state.

- We are recommending to remove the requirement to list the sex of each party applying for a marriage license.

Term of license, removal of in-person requirement

- We recommend M.S. 517.08, subd. 1b be amended to remove the in-person requirement for marriage license applications; allowing us the option to permanently perform these services in-person and/or remotely. This change would allow Minnesota counties to determine how to best service their customers.

Eliminate reduced fee option for marriage licenses

- M.S. 517.08, subd. 1b. allows for a reduced fee marriage license application for \$40; if certain requirements are met. It is our recommendation to eliminate the reduced fee option to provide equality for all applicants and to hinder any potential fraud.

Update and reallocate the marriage license fees;

- The full fee marriage license application is \$115, of which \$25 is allocated to the Local Registrars (counties) and the remaining \$90 is divided amongst the various MN state funds.
- We are seeking a possible fee reduction along with a fee reallocation between the state and county.



On behalf of MN Local Registrars, we thank you and look forward to working together on key issues important to us, our counties and our constituents.

Minnesota Association of County Officers (MACO)
Vital Records Advisory Committee (VAC)