

2025 Vital Records

Legislative Platform



Modernizing Vital Records

Standardizing data collection and reporting

Codify marriage application process and certificate creation, performing ceremonies, and amending marriage records.

Consolidating the definition of Marriage
Officiant

Update and reallocate marriage 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 no longer collected or 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:

Current law is unclear as to who creates and provides marriage certificates.

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

Local Registrars will provide a marriage certificate for Marriage Officers 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.
- 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 is 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 Officiants)

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.



517.08 Application for License

Some of the current language in this statute is antiquated and needs updating.

We are recommending removing or revising the following subdivisions.

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 in subdivision 1c.*

Marriage License Fee Breakdown

\$115 license fee

License without education \$115:

\$25 retained by the county

\$90 to the Commissioner of Management and Budget as follows:

\$55 general fund

\$3 - Commissioner of Public Safety for parenting time centers
section 119A.37

\$2 - Commissioner of Health for MN ENABLE program section
145.9225

\$25 - Commissioner of Employment & Economic Development for
MN Family Resiliency Partnership section 116L.96

\$5 - Board of Regents University of MN for MN couples on the
brink project section 137.32

Marriage License Fee Breakdown

\$40 license fee with
proof of premarital education

License with education \$40:

\$25 retained by the county

\$15 to the Commissioner of Management and Budget as follows:

\$3 - Commissioner of Public Safety for parenting time centers
section 119A.37

\$2 - Commissioner of Health for MN ENABLE program section
145.9225

\$10 - Commissioner of Employment & Economic Development for
MN Family Resiliency Partnership section 116L.96

MN Stat. 517.08 Subd. 1C

Application for License

Distribution of Fees

License without education \$115:

\$25 retained by the county

\$90 to the Commissioner of Management and Budget as follows:

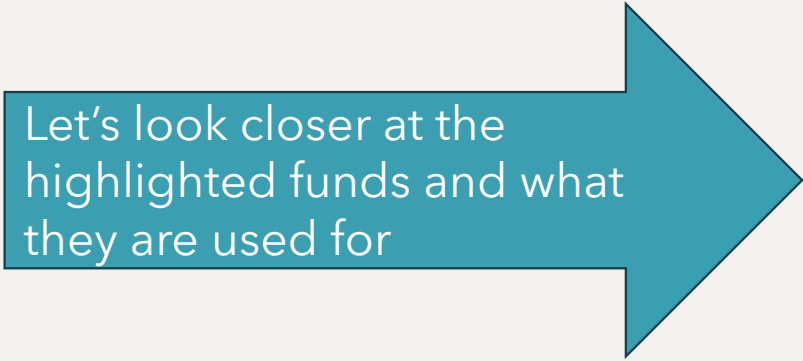
\$55 general fund

\$3 - Commissioner of Public Safety for parenting time centers
section 119A.37

\$2 - Commissioner of Health for MN ENABLE program section
145.9225

\$25 - Commissioner of Employment & Economic Development for
MN Family Resiliency Partnership section 116L.96

\$5 - Board of Regents University of MN for MN couples on the
brink project section 137.32



Let's look closer at the
highlighted funds and what
they are used for

\$3 - Commissioner of Public Safety for parenting time centers section 119A.37

\$3 in the state government special revenue fund to be appropriated to the commissioner of public safety for parenting time centers under section 119A.37;

Parenting Time Centers are locations used for supervised parental visits for children to provide a healthy interactive environment for parents who are separated or divorced and for parents with children in foster homes to visit with their children.

\$2 - Commissioner of Health for MN ENABLE program section 145.9225

\$2 in the special revenue fund to be appropriated to the commissioner of health for developing and implementing the MN ENABL program under section 145.9255;

Minnesota education now and babies later (MN ENABL) program, targeted to adolescents ages 12 to 14, with the goal of reducing the incidence of adolescent pregnancy in the state and promoting abstinence until marriage.

\$25 - Commissioner of Employment & Economic Development for MN Family Resiliency Partnership section 116L.96

\$25 in the special revenue fund is appropriated to the commissioner of employment and economic development for the Minnesota Family Resiliency Partnership under section 116L.96; and

Funding provides training, counseling, career development service, guidance on child support, etc. for homemakers who need to return to the job market due to divorce/separation/death of the working spouse.

\$5 - Board of Regents University of MN for MN couples on the brink project section 137.32

\$5 in the special revenue fund, which is appropriated to the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota for the Minnesota couples on the brink project under section 137.32.

The purpose of the project is to develop, evaluate, and disseminate best practices for promoting successful reconciliation between married persons who are considering or have commenced a marriage dissolution proceeding and who choose to pursue reconciliation.

On behalf of the VAC, we would like to thank you for taking the time to meet today, discuss and provide feedback on the Vital Records Legislative Proposal.

Thank you!

