

# North Carolina Marriage Officiant Guide

**Marriage Officiants:** Any ordained minister of any faith who is authorized to solemnize marriages by his or her church, including legally-ordained non-resident ministers, may perform marriage ceremonies anywhere in North Carolina without restriction.

The Officiant must complete the marriage license and return it to the register of deeds that issued it.

## *MARRIAGE LICENSE INFORMATION*

*Much of the information below is state law in North Carolina; however, this information can vary by location, and is subject to change. We recommend contacting your local county clerk's office before applying for your marriage license.*

**Application Requirement:** Both parties to a marriage should appear in person to obtain the marriage license. If one of the parties is unable to appear, the other party to the marriage must appear in person and present a sworn and notarized affidavit from the other member of the party, prior to the issuance of the marriage license. (Affidavit forms are available in the Register of Deeds Office.)

North Carolina law requires all applicants to show proof of a Social Security number, or documentary proof of their Social Security number; i.e., W-2 form, payroll stub, or a statement from the Social Security office that includes their Social Security number.



If a Social Security number has never been issued or the applicant is not eligible for a Social Security number, the applicant will be required to present a completed affidavit, signed and notarized, at the time of applying for the marriage license. The affidavit form is available in the Register of Deeds Office.

**Under Age 18:** All applicants, including those not present, must provide a form of identification.

- Applicants age 21 and over may use a valid driver's license, military ID, state ID, passport or certified birth certificate.
- Applicants ages 18 to 20 must present a certified copy of their birth certificate. Applicants ages 16 and 17 must present a consent form signed by the parent, individual, agency or institution having legal custody or serving as the legal guardian of the underage party. A certified copy of the birth certificate is also required. The consent form must be notarized.
- Applicants ages 14 and 15 must provide a certified copy of the court order authorizing the marriage. A certified copy of the birth certificate is also required.

A marriage license *may not* be issued to applicants under 14 years of age.

**Marriage License ID Requirement:** Picture ID is required of each; i.e., driver's license or certified copy of birth certificate.

**Residency Requirement:** You do not have to be a resident of North Carolina.

**Fees:** \$60 (Cash Only).

**Waiting Period:** No waiting period is required. (The marriage license may be used immediately.)

**If Divorced:** If either party to the marriage has been divorced, he or she must know the month and year of the last divorce. If there has been a divorce within the last 60 days, the state requires a copy of the divorce decree signed by the judge.

**Blood Tests:** No tests required.

**Marriage Ceremony:** Marriage ceremonies may be either religious or civil. (A religious ceremony is performed by an ordained minister; a civil ceremony is conducted by a magistrate, the only civil officer authorized to perform marriages.) There must be two witnesses at any marriage ceremony, whether it is civil or religious.

**Common Law Marriage:** Common law marriage, which is recognized in some states, involves a couple living together and holding themselves out to everyone as man and wife. Even though there is no marriage ceremony or certificate, this marriage is considered valid in those states that recognize common law marriage. North Carolina is not one of those states, and no amount of living together in this state can result in a valid marriage, without a valid marriage ceremony.

**Cousin Marriage:** Permitted. First cousins *may* marry, but *double* first cousins may not. Double first cousins are very rare, as the couple must be related as cousins through both parents.

**Same-Gender Marriage:** Permitted since October 14, 2014.

**Valid:** A North Carolina marriage license is good immediately upon issuance and is valid for 60 days. If not solemnized and returned to the issuing clerk's office within 60 days, the couple must re-apply for a new marriage license and pay all applicable fees. The marriage license can only be used within the State of North Carolina.

*For additional information, please visit  
[FirstNationMinistry.org/us/north-carolina](http://FirstNationMinistry.org/us/north-carolina)*

*The above information is believed to be current and correct, but does not purport to be legal advice, is not all-inclusive and shall be used only as a guide. Under the terms specified in your ordination, you are solely responsible for becoming familiar with and complying to all current laws and regulations in effect within the jurisdiction in which you will conduct ceremonies.*

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