Marriage License Process - Michigan Requirements

Quick answer
In Michigan, **county clerks**—not cities—issue marriage licenses (MCL 551.101). Apply in the county where either of you lives; if both of you live outside Michigan, apply in the county where you will marry. The statute sets a **3-day waiting period** (including the application date) and a **33-day** window to use the license (MCL 551.103a). The statutory fee is **$20**, or **$30** if both applicants are nonresidents; Wayne County may charge different amounts under MCL 551.103(3). Bring photo ID, Social Security numbers (or an allowed exemption), and any prior-marriage documents your county requires. After the wedding, the officiant returns the license within **10 days** (MCL 551.104).

Cities Do Not Issue Michigan Marriage Licenses

Couples sometimes call a city clerk or city hall first. In Michigan, marriage licenses are a **county** function. For example, the City of Kentwood directs residents to the Kent County Clerk for licenses. Always start with the county clerk for the county where you live (or where you will marry, if both of you are out-of-state).

Where to Apply: Residents vs Nonresidents

Under MCL 551.101:

- **Michigan residents:** Obtain the license from the county clerk of the county in which either applicant resides, then deliver it to the officiant before the ceremony.
- **Both applicants nonresidents of Michigan:** Obtain the license from the county clerk of the county in which the marriage will be performed.

County pages commonly add that a license issued to Michigan residents may be used **anywhere in Michigan**, while a license issued to two out-of-state applicants is typically valid **only in the issuing county**. Confirm that rule on your clerk's page.

Eligibility and Age

MCL 551.103 states that an individual who is **18 years of age or older** may contract marriage. When requested by the county clerk, applicants must submit a birth certificate or other proof of age in addition to the age statement on the application.

Required ID, Social Security Numbers and Prior-Marriage Paperwork

State law and county checklists overlap. Plan to bring:

- **Photo ID** showing current address (driver's license or state ID is the usual residency proof on county sites).

- **Social Security numbers** for both applicants on the application (MCL 551.102). You often do not need the physical card. The statute allows exemptions if you are legally exempt from obtaining an SSN or from disclosing it for religious convictions—the clerk must inform you of possible exemptions.
- **Proof of age** (birth certificate or other proof when the clerk requests it under MCL 551.103). Many counties ask for birth certificates for both parties; some accept copies, others require certified copies—follow your county page.
- **Prior marriage documents:** County pages (for example Mason County and Bay County) commonly require a **judgment of divorce** for prior marriages and, in some cases, a **death certificate** of a prior spouse. Requirements vary—confirm with your clerk.

Foreign-language documents are often required in English translation; Wayne County's clerk page, for example, spells out certified translation and notarization rules. Ask early if any document was issued outside the United States.

Fees (Resident vs Nonresident) and Validity Period

Under MCL 551.103, the application fee is **$20.00**, paid into the county general fund, with **$15.00** of each fee allocated to circuit court family counseling services. If **both** parties are nonresidents of Michigan, the applicant pays an **additional $10.00** (statutory total **$30.00**). A probate court may order a hardship waiver of the fee.

A charter county with a population over 1,500,000 may set different marriage license fees by ordinance (MCL 551.103(3)). **Wayne County** currently lists **$30** when one or both applicants are Wayne County residents and **$40** when both are out-of-state residents on its marriage licenses page—confirm before you apply.

MCL 551.103a provides that a marriage license **is void unless a marriage is solemnized under the license within 33 days after the application**. Some counties note a shorter window if the waiting period is waived—read your license and county instructions.

The Three-Day Waiting Period (and Waivers)

MCL 551.103a says a license shall **not be delivered within a period of 3 days including the date of application**. The clerk may deliver it immediately for **good and sufficient cause shown**, with a **waiver fee set by the county board of commissioners**. Waiver amounts differ (examples published on county sites include Oakland $5, Macomb $10, Jackson $20, Livingston $100, Bay $100, Calhoun $25—always confirm current amounts).

Counties publish pick-up schedules (for example apply Monday, pick up Thursday). A few counties describe how they count the three days differently in practice—**ask your clerk which calendar day your license will be ready**.

Officiant and Witness Requirements

Deliver the license to the person who will solemnize the marriage before the ceremony (MCL 551.101). Michigan law lists categories of people who may solemnize marriages (see MCL 551.7), including certain judges, magistrates, mayors, county clerks, and ministers/clerics authorized under denominational rules. It is the couple's responsibility to confirm their officiant is authorized.

When the license is returned, it must include signatures of **two witnesses who are 18 or older**, the individuals being married, and the officiant, with the officiant's certificate that the marriage was performed (MCL 551.103).

Returning the License and Getting Certified Copies

Under MCL 551.104, the officiant must complete the certificate (time, place, witness names and residences, signature), give the duplicate half to one of the parties, and **return the original to the issuing county clerk within 10 days**. The officiant must also keep a record of marriages solemnized.

After filing, buy a **certified copy** from the issuing county clerk if you need proof for name changes, benefits or travel. You may also order a Michigan marriage record through MDHHS Vital Records (state search fees are listed on that site and can change).

Name-Change Notes After Marriage

Michigan does **not** require anyone to change a name after marriage. Many county clerks note that if you plan a traditional last-name change or hyphenation, you may sign the license with the new last name. Typical next steps, after you have a **certified** copy:

1. Update Social Security (SSA forms and instructions: ssa.gov).
2. Update your Michigan driver's license or state ID at a Secretary of State office with the certified marriage record and required ID.
3. Then update banks, employer, insurance and other accounts.

How The Wedding Planner Helps You Stay Organized

Once the license timeline is clear, use your vendor shortlists and ceremony plan to stay on schedule. Browse local vendors and track tasks in the free planner tools:

▶ Plan your Michigan wedding
West Michigan Planner · Eastern Michigan Planner
Looking for ceremony help? Browse miscellaneous vendors (often includes officiants and related services): Grand Rapids Miscellaneous · Metro Detroit Miscellaneous

County Clerk Directory for Wedding Planner Hub Areas

Michigan marriage licenses come from **county clerks**, not city halls. The table below covers counties that include the city hubs on West Michigan Wedding Planner and Eastern Michigan Wedding Planner. Phone numbers and online application links were taken from each county's official site on **November 5, 2026 (America/New_York)** where the page could be read.

Fees and hours change. Confirm with the clerk before you travel.

County	Hub cities (site)	Clerk office	Phone (verified today)	Marriage license page	Online application

Kent	Grand Rapids	Kent County Clerk	(616) 632-7640	www.kentcountymi.gov/… https://www.kentcountymi.gov/804/Get-a-Marriage-License	Online application available on county page (start from marriage license page)
Ottawa	Holland & Zeeland; Grand Haven & Spring Lake	Ottawa County Clerk / Vital Records	(616) 994-4531	miottawa.org/… https://miottawa.org/clerk/vital-records/marriage-license/	miottawa.fidlar.com/… https://miottawa.fidlar.com/MIOttawa/Apex.WebPortal/applications
Muskegon	Muskegon; Whitehall & Montague	Muskegon County Clerk	(231) 724-6221	https://co.muskegon.mi.us/562/Marriage-Licenses https://co.muskegon.mi.us/562/Marriage-Licenses	Online Affidavit for License to Marry linked from county marriage page
Kalamazoo	Kalamazoo; Portage	Kalamazoo County Clerk / Register of Deeds	(269) 383-8840	www.kalcounty.gov/… https://www.kalcounty.gov/clerk/apply-marriage-license.html	Online application available via county marriage license page
Calhoun	Battle Creek	Calhoun County Clerk and Register of Deeds	(269) 781-0718	www.calhouncountymi.gov/… https://www.calhouncountymi.gov/departments/clerk_and_register_of_deeds/marriage_license.php	No online application found — in-person / worksheet at clerk office
Allegan	Allegan; Saugatuck & Douglas	Allegan County Clerk	(269) 673-0450	www.allegancounty.org/… https://www.allegancounty.org/departments/county-clerk/vital-records/marriages/apply-for-a-marriage-license	Confirm on official page
Berrien	Benton Harbor & St. Joseph	Berrien County Clerk	(269) 983-7111	www.berriencountymi.gov/… https://www.berriencountymi.gov/228/Marriage-License-Application	Confirm on official page
Grand Traverse	Traverse City	Grand Traverse County Clerk — Vital Records	(231) 922-4760	https://www.gtcountymi.gov/257/Marriage-Licenses https://www.gtcountymi.gov/257/Marriage-Licenses	Online application available from county marriage page
Emmet	Petoskey & Harbor Springs	Emmet County Clerk	(231) 348-1744	www.emmetcounty.org/… https://www.emmetcounty.org/departments/clerk/index.php	miemmet.fidlar.com/… https://miemmet.fidlar.com/MIEmmetVS/Apex.WebPortal/applications
Mason	Ludington	Mason County Clerk	(231) 843-8202	www.masoncountymi.gov/… https://www.masoncountymi.gov/departments/clerk/marriage_license.php	fidlar.masoncounty.net/… https://fidlar.masoncounty.net/MIMasonVS/Apex.WebPortal/applications
Manistee	Manistee & Frankfort	Manistee County Clerk	(231) 723-3331	www.manisteecountymi.gov/… https://www.manisteecountymi.gov/departments/county_clerk/index.php	Confirm on official page

Wexford	Cadillac	Wexford County Clerk	(231) 779-9450	https://wexfordcounty.org/county-clerk/ https://wexfordcounty.org/county-clerk/	Confirm on official page
Mecosta	Big Rapids	Mecosta County Clerk	(231) 592-0783	www.mecostacounty.org/... https://www.mecostacounty.org/government/county_clerk/index.php	Confirm on official page
Branch	Coldwater	Branch County Clerk	(517) 279-4306	branchcounty.gov/... https://branchcounty.gov/departments/county-clerk/apply-for-a-marriage-license/	Online application form on county page
St. Joseph	Sturgis	St. Joseph County Clerk	(269) 467-5626	www.stjosephcountymi.org/... https://www.stjosephcountymi.org/government/county_clerk/	Confirm on official page
Wayne	Detroit & Metro Detroit (city of Detroit / Wayne County cities)	Wayne County Clerk — Vital Statistics	(313) 967-6938	www.waynecountymi.gov/... https://www.waynecountymi.gov/Government/Elected-Officials/Clerk/General-Office/Marriage-Licenses	https://evitals.waynecounty.com/onlinefiling https://evitals.waynecounty.com/onlinefiling
Oakland	Detroit & Metro Detroit (Oakland County cities)	Oakland County Clerk — Vital Records	(248) 858-0571	www.oakgov.com/... https://www.oakgov.com/government/clerk-register-of-deeds/life-events-services/marriage-license	Apply online via Oakland County marriage license page
Macomb	Detroit & Metro Detroit (Macomb County cities)	Macomb County Clerk / Register of Deeds — Vital Records	(586) 469-5205	www.macombgov.org/... https://www.macombgov.org/departments/clerk-register-deeds/marriage-licenses	Online application linked from Macomb marriage licenses page
Washtenaw	Ann Arbor & Ypsilanti	Washtenaw County Clerk / Register of Deeds — Vital Records	(734) 222-6720	https://www.washtenaw.org/vital-records https://www.washtenaw.org/vital-records	Marriage license info: https://www.washtenaw.org/286/Marriage-Licenses (confirm online apply on that page)
Livingston	Brighton / Howell area (Metr	Livingston County Clerk	(517) 546-0500	https://milivcounty.gov/clerk/marriage-license/ https://milivcounty.gov/clerk/marriage-license/	Online marriage application linked from county marriage license page

	o Detroit planning)				
Ingham	Lansing & East Lansing	Ingham County Clerk	(517) 676-7201	ingham.org/... https://ingham.org/departments_and_officials/county_clerk/vital_records_marriage_license.php	Online Marriage License Application linked from Ingham marriage page
Genesee	Flint	Genesee County Clerk — Vital Records Division	(810) 257-3225	www.geneseecountymi.gov/... https://www.geneseecountymi.gov/departments/county_clerk/vital_records_division/apply_for_a_marriage_license.php	Online application portal linked from Genesee marriage page
Saginaw	Saginaw	Saginaw County Clerk — Vital Records	(989) 790-5251	saginawcountymi.gov/... https://saginawcountymi.gov/departments/county-clerk/vital-records-division/marriage-licenses/	Confirm on official page
Bay	Bay City	Bay County Clerk	(989) 895-4280	www.baycountymi.gov/... https://www.baycountymi.gov/departments/clerk/marriage_information.php	apex.baycountymi.gov/... https://apex.baycountymi.gov/MIBayVS/Apex.WebPortal/applications
Midland	Midland	Midland County Clerk	(989) 832-6739	midlandcountymi.gov/... https://midlandcountymi.gov/index.php?cas_cscid=96&casid=612&section=clerk-vital-records	Confirm on official page
Monroe	Monroe	Monroe County Clerk	(734) 240-7000	https://www.co.monroe.mi.us/425/Marriage-License https://www.co.monroe.mi.us/425/Marriage-License	Monroe County License Portal linked from marriage page
St. Clair	Port Huron	St. Clair County Clerk	(810) 985-2200	stclaircountyclerk.org/... https://stclaircountyclerk.org/Page/Affidavit_For_Marriage_License	stclaircountyclerk.org/... https://stclaircountyclerk.org/Application/Affidavit_For_License_To_Marry
Jackson	Jackson	Jackson County Clerk — Vital Statistics	(517) 788-4265	www.mijackson.org/... https://www.mijackson.org/344/Applying-for-a-Marriage-License	Apply Online linked from Jackson marriage page
Lenawee	Adrian	Lenawee County Clerk — Vital Records	(517) 264-4606	https://www.lenawee.mi.us/171/Marriage-Applicants https://www.lenawee.mi.us/171/Marriage-Applicants	Online application linked from Lenawee Marriage Applicants page
Isabella	Mount Pleasant	Isabella County Clerk / Trial Court marri	(989) 317-4070	www.isabellacounty.org/... https://www.isabellacounty.org/law-justice/trial-court/divisions-services/marriages/	Confirm apply process on clerk services pages

		ages info			
Gratiot	Alma	Gratiot County Clerk	(989) 875-5215	https://www.gratiotmi.com/231/County-Clerk https://www.gratiotmi.com/231/County-Clerk	Confirm on official page
Shiawassee	Owosso	Shiawassee County Clerk	(989) 743-2242	https://www.shiawassee.net/Clerk/ https://www.shiawassee.net/Clerk/	Confirm on official page
Alpena	Alpena	Alpena County Clerk	(989) 354-9520	www.alpenacounty.org/... https://www.alpenacounty.org/county_clerk/index.php	Confirm on official page

Marriage License Checklist (Michigan)

☐ Confirm which county issues your license (resident county vs ceremony county for two nonresidents)
☐ Read that county's marriage page for ID, birth records, divorce/death docs and fees
☐ Complete online affidavit if offered; note confirmation/application number
☐ Apply early enough for the 3-day wait (or ask about a waiver fee)
☐ Pick up the license; verify names, dates and county before the wedding day
☐ Give the license to your authorized officiant; arrange two witnesses age 18+
☐ Ensure the officiant returns the original within 10 days
☐ Order a certified copy before SSA / Secretary of State name updates
☐ Track vendors and timeline in the West Planner or East Planner

Frequently Asked Questions

Who issues marriage licenses in Michigan?

County clerks issue marriage licenses. Cities and townships do not. Under MCL 551.101, Michigan residents apply to the clerk of the county where either applicant lives. If both applicants are nonresidents of Michigan, they apply in the county where the ceremony will be performed.

How long is the waiting period and how long is a Michigan marriage license valid?

MCL 551.103a says a license shall not be delivered within a period of 3 days including the date of application, unless the clerk waives the wait for good cause and a county-set fee is paid. The same section says a license is void unless the marriage is solemnized within 33 days after the application.

How much does a Michigan marriage license cost?

MCL 551.103 sets a $20 fee, plus an additional $10 if both applicants are nonresidents of Michigan ($30 total under the statute). A charter county with a population over 1,500,000 may set different fees by ordinance; Wayne County currently lists $30 / $40 on its clerk page. Waiting-period waiver fees vary by county. Always confirm the fee with your county clerk before you apply.

What ID and paperwork do we need?

Expect government photo ID showing current address, Social Security numbers for both applicants (or an allowed exemption under MCL 551.102), and proof of age such as a birth certificate when the clerk requests it (MCL 551.103). County clerks commonly also ask for certified divorce judgments or death

certificates if either party was previously married—check your county's marriage page for its document list.

Who can officiate, and do we need witnesses?

Michigan law lists who may solemnize marriages (see MCL 551.7). MCL 551.103 requires two witnesses who are 18 or older to sign the returned license. The officiant must complete the certificate and return the original license to the issuing county clerk within 10 days (MCL 551.104).

How do we get a certified copy or change a name after the wedding?

After the signed license is filed with the county clerk, request a certified copy from that clerk (fees vary) or order a Michigan marriage record through MDHHS Vital Records. Use the certified copy with the Social Security Administration and Michigan Secretary of State if you change your name. Michigan does not require a name change after marriage.

Ready to Finish Your Wedding Timeline?

▶ **Next steps**
Start your free Planner (West) · Start your free Planner (East)
Advertise your wedding business (West) · Advertise (East)

Legal citations are to the Michigan Compiled Laws as published by the Michigan Legislature. County phones, fees and online links were checked on official county sites on November 5, 2026 (America/New_York) where pages were readable. Fees and procedures vary by county and can change—confirm with your county clerk before applying. This article is general information for The Wedding Planner sites, not legal advice.