

# Michigan Marriage Officiant Guide

**Officiants:** A minister of the gospel who is ordained or authorized by his or her church to perform marriages and who is a pastor of a church in this state, or continues to preach the gospel in this state, may perform marriages. Non-resident ministers with active, valid ordination may perform marriage ceremonies in Michigan without restriction.

You are not required to register with any agency in the state; however, you must present your valid credentials to any legal authority and/or the parties to the marriage upon their request. The Officiant must complete the marriage license certificate and provide a copy to the couple. Another copy of the marriage certificate must be returned to the county clerk's office that issued the license within ten days after the marriage. (See "Certificate" below.)



**Solemnization Authority:** Marriages may be solemnized by any of the following:

- Resident ministers of the gospel, anywhere in the state, "if the minister is ordained or authorized to solemnize marriages according to the usages of the denomination, and is a pastor of a church in this state, or continues to preach the gospel in this state";
- Non-resident ministers of the gospel, anywhere in the state, if the minister is authorized to solemnize marriages by his or her state's laws.

**Solemnization Form:** No particular form or oath is required. The parties merely solemnly declare that they take each other as spouses before the person officiating *and* at least two witnesses. A special law allows "the people called Friends or Quakers" and "people of any other particular denomination, having, as such, any peculiar mode of solemnizing marriages" to solemnize their marriages in their own manner.

**Solemnization Fee:** Mayors of Michigan cities and Wayne County clerks are specifically authorized to collect a fee (set by their city, or county commissioners) for solemnizing marriages. The money is to be turned in to the local government. There are no specific provisions concerning fees charged by others.

**Certificate:** After the wedding ceremony, the person who solemnizes the marriage fills in the certificate (typed or legibly printed) with the time and place of the marriage; the names and residences of the two witnesses; and then signs it. The part marked "duplicate" is given to the newlyweds, and the original must be mailed to the county clerk that issued it within ten days. The clerk records the information in a registration book, and mails it on to the state registrar. The person who performs the marriage must also keep a record "in a book used expressly for that purpose." The license, when fully filled out, thus serves a "double purpose" and becomes the certificate.

## MARRIAGE LICENSE INFORMATION

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

**Marriage License ID Requirement:** Picture ID, such as a driver's license. Both parties should know their Social Security numbers.

**Residency Requirement:** The parties to the marriage are not required to live in Michigan.

**Application Requirement:** Applicants intending to marry must obtain a marriage license from the county clerk in the county in which one of the parties lives (or, if both parties are non-residents, in the county where the marriage is to be performed), *and deliver it to the Wedding Officiant who is to solemnize the marriage, before the marriage can be performed.*

Both applicants are not required to appear in person at the time of applying. However, the person present will be required to complete all information about both applicants:

- A photocopy of the front and back of the other person's driver's license;
- The full names of both parties to the marriage;
- Their addresses, dates and places of birth; and
- Bride's name, if applicable, after marriage.

Identification requirements vary in each county. A valid driver's license or certified copy of birth certificate may be requested.

**Waiting Period:** Three days. A county clerk can waive the three-day waiting period for "good and sufficient cause shown."

**Fees:** \$20 for residents, and \$30 for non-residents. \$15 of the fee is allocated for family counseling services. Wayne County is authorized to charge more. A probate court may waive the marriage license fee in cases of undue hardship.

**Blood Tests:** No tests required.

**Under 18:** Applicants 18 years of age may marry without parental consent.

- Applicants 16 years of age may marry with parental or legal guardian written consent.
- Applicants under the age of 15 with parental consent and probate court permission.

**Marriage of a Minor:** The legal marriage of a minor "shall release such minor from parental control."

**Common Law Marriage:** Not permitted. However, the State does recognize common law marriages that are valid in other states.

**Same-Gender Marriage:** Permitted following U.S. Supreme Court decision of 26 June 2015.

**Valid:** A Michigan marriage license is valid for 33 days. The marriage license can only be used within the State of Michigan.

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

The above information is believed to be 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.