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 directory below covers counties for the city hubs on West Michigan Wedding Planner and Eastern Michigan Wedding Planner.

Layout (matches Allen Sheet2 example): Each county is three rows. Row 1 = **County** + **hub cities** (bold, shaded) | clerk office | phone. Row 2 = clickable **County Clerk Marriage License Link** in the hub column | online info merged across the right two columns. Row 3 = fees note merged across the right two columns. Phones checked on official sites on **November 5, 2026 (America/New_York)** where pages loaded; otherwise marked as provided that day. **Fees and hours change** — confirm with the clerk before you travel.

County	Hub cities	Clerk office / License page / Fees	Phone / Online / Verification
Allegan	**Allegan; Saugatuck & Douglas**	Allegan County Clerk	(269) 673-0450
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Confirm on official page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Alpena	**Alpena**	Alpena County Clerk	(989) 354-9520
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Confirm on official page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Bay	**Bay City**	Bay County Clerk	(989) 895-4280
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online Marriage License Application	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Berrien	**Benton Harbor & St. Joseph**	Berrien County Clerk	(269) 983-7111
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Confirm on official page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Branch	**Coldwater**	Branch County Clerk	(517) 279-4306
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Online application form on county page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Calhoun	**Battle Creek**	Calhoun County Clerk and Register of Deeds	(269) 781-0718
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: No online application found — in-person / worksheet at clerk office	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Emmet	**Petoskey & Harbor Springs**	Emmet County Clerk	(231) 348-1744
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online Marriage License Application	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Genesee	**Flint**	Genesee County Clerk — Vital Records Division	(810) 257-3225
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Online application portal linked from Genesee marriage page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Grand Traverse	**Traverse City**	Grand Traverse County Clerk — Vital Records	(231) 922-4760
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Online application available from county marriage page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Gratiot	**Alma**	Gratiot County Clerk	(989) 875-5215
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Confirm on official page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	

Ingham	**Lansing & East Lansing**	Ingham County Clerk	(517) 676-7201
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Online Marriage License Application linked from Ingham marriage page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Isabella	**Mount Pleasant**	Isabella County Clerk / Trial Court marriages info	(989) 317-4070
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Confirm apply process on clerk services pages	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Jackson	**Jackson**	Jackson County Clerk — Vital Statistics	(517) 788-4265
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Apply Online linked from Jackson marriage page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Kalamazoo	**Kalamazoo; Portage**	Kalamazoo County Clerk / Register of Deeds	(269) 383-8840
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Online application available via county marriage license page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Kent	**Grand Rapids**	Kent County Clerk	(616) 632-7640
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Online application available on county page (start from marriage license page)	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Lenawee	**Adrian**	Lenawee County Clerk — Vital Records	(517) 264-4606
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Online application linked from Lenawee Marriage Applicants page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Livingston	**Brighton / Howell area (Metro Detroit planning)**	Livingston County Clerk	(517) 546-0500
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Online marriage application linked from county marriage license page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Macomb	**Detroit & Metro Detroit (Macomb County cities)**	Macomb County Clerk / Register of Deeds — Vital Records	(586) 469-5205
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Online application linked from Macomb marriage licenses page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Manistee	**Manistee & Frankfort**	Manistee County Clerk	(231) 723-3331
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Confirm on official page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Mason	**Ludington**	Mason County Clerk	(231) 843-8202
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online Marriage License Application	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Mecosta	**Big Rapids**	Mecosta County Clerk	(231) 592-0783
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Confirm on official page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Midland	**Midland**	Midland County Clerk	(989) 832-6739
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Confirm on official page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Monroe	**Monroe**	Monroe County Clerk	(734) 240-7000
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Monroe County License Portal linked from marriage page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Muskegon	**Muskegon; Whitehall & Montague**	Muskegon County Clerk	(231) 724-6221

	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Online Affidavit for License to Marry linked from county marriage page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Oakland	**Detroit & Metro Detroit (Oakland County cities)**	Oakland County Clerk — Vital Records	(248) 858-0571
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Apply online via Oakland County marriage license page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Ottawa	**Holland & Zeeland; Grand Haven & Spring Lake**	Ottawa County Clerk / Vital Records	(616) 994-4531
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online Marriage License Application	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Saginaw	**Saginaw**	Saginaw County Clerk — Vital Records	(989) 790-5251
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Confirm on official page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Shiawassee	**Owosso**	Shiawassee County Clerk	(989) 743-2242
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Confirm on official page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
St. Clair	**Port Huron**	St. Clair County Clerk	(810) 985-2200
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online Marriage License Application	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
St. Joseph	**Sturgis**	St. Joseph County Clerk	(269) 467-5626
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Confirm on official page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Washtenaw	**Ann Arbor & Ypsilanti**	Washtenaw County Clerk / Register of Deeds — Vital Records	(734) 222-6720
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Marriage license info: https://www.washtenaw.org/286/Marriage-Licenses (confirm online apply on that page)	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Wayne	**Detroit & Metro Detroit (city of Detroit / Wayne County cities)**	Wayne County Clerk — Vital Statistics	(313) 967-6938
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online Marriage License Application	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	
Wexford	**Cadillac**	Wexford County Clerk	(231) 779-9450
	County Clerk Marriage License Link	Online: Confirm on official page	
		Fees: Confirm current fee & hours with clerk (county fees vary; not listed as fixed here).	

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.