

Georgia Marriage Officiant Guide

Marriage Officiants: Any minister, 18 years of age or older, who is authorized by his or her church, including legally-ordained ministers not residing in the state, may perform marriage ceremonies anywhere in Georgia without restriction.

Officiants are not required to register with any agency in the state, but must present their credentials upon the request of any legal authority and/or the bridal couple. The Officiant must also complete the certificate of marriage and return it to the issuing county clerk's office within 30 days after the marriage ceremony.

Solemnization Authority: Per the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Title 19, Chapter 3 (O.C.G.A. §19-3-30 (c), "Issuance, return, and recording of license"):

The [marriage] license shall be directed to the Governor or any former Governor of this state, any judge, including judges of state and federal courts of record in this state, city recorder, magistrate, minister, or other person of any religious society or sect authorized by the rules of such society to perform the marriage ceremony; such license shall authorize the marriage of the persons therein named and require the Governor or any former Governor of this state, judge, city recorder, magistrate, minister, or other authorized person to return the license to the judge of the probate court with the certificate thereon as to the fact and date of marriage within 30 days after the date of the marriage. The license with the return thereon shall be recorded by the judge in a book kept by such judge for that purpose.



MARRIAGE LICENSE INFORMATION

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

ID Requirement: Two valid forms of ID, such as driver's license, birth certificate, U.S. passport, Armed Forces ID card, or Resident Alien ID card. Applicants will also be asked to fill out a brief form.

Residency Requirement: You do not have to be a resident of Georgia. However, if you are not a resident, you must apply in the county where the marriage ceremony is to be performed.

Fees: Depending on the county you apply in, the marriage license fee is \$16 to \$27 with Certification of Premarital Counseling. Without Certification of Premarital Counseling, the fee is \$56 to \$67.

Premarital Education: Under House Bill 378, a "qualifying premarital education program" shall include at least six hours of "instruction involving marital issues, which may include but not be limited to conflict management, communication skills, financial responsibilities, child and parenting responsibilities, and extended family roles." The program must have been completed within twelve months prior to the application and the couple must have undergone the premarital education together.

To qualify, the premarital education must have been performed by: (1) a professional counselor, social worker, or marriage and family therapist; (2) a psychiatrist; (3) a psychologist; or (4) an active member of the clergy when in the course of his or her service as clergy, or the designee of such active member of the clergy, provided the designee is skilled and trained in premarital education.

In order to qualify for the reduced fee, the couple must provide the Court a signed and dated certificate of completion of a qualifying premarital education program. The Court has an acceptable certificate which you may take to the premarital education provider.

Application Requirement: Both parties to the marriage must appear in person at the time of applying.

Proxy Marriages: Not permitted. Both parties to the marriage must appear in person at the time of applying.

Previous Marriage: If divorced within six months, you will need to show a copy of your divorce decree.

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

Other Tests: As of July 1, 2003, blood tests are no longer required in Georgia.

Under 18: If you are 16 or 17 years old, you may apply if accompanied by both parents who have given written consent. If the bride is pregnant, no parental consent is required if you submit a statement from a licensed physician certifying that the bride is pregnant.

If underage applicants already have a child, they should present a certified copy of the birth certificate for the child at the time of application. If parental consent is not required, the court will notify parents or guardians that you have been issued a marriage license. There is an additional fee of \$1.00 per letter.

Cousin Marriages: Permitted.

Common Law Marriages: Permitted.

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

Valid: A Georgia marriage license has no specified timeframe for solemnization. The marriage license can only be used (solemnized) within the State of Georgia.

***For additional information, please visit
FirstNationMinistry.org/us/georgia***

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.