



Proposal

Cost-free change of surname for descendants of enslaved people

During the time of slavery, enslaved people in for example Suriname, Aruba, Curaçao, Bonaire, St. Eustatius, Saba, Indonesia, South Africa and India were stripped of their names. Their slaveholders assigned them names, often ones associated with the slaveholder's own name or the plantation where they worked.

The government has issued an apology regarding the slavery past. Various initiatives have been developed in this connection by the government. One of them is to enable adult descendants (18+) of enslaved people to change their surnames free of charge.



How can you apply for a change of surname under this proposal?

You do not have to prove that you are descended from an enslaved person. All you need to do is declare that you are a descendent of an enslaved person and that you bear that ancestor's name. You must then submit a name change request to the Ministry of Justice and Security (Dienst Justis).



What options for a change of surname does this proposal provide?*

- 1 You can change your surname by changing a few letters;
- 2 You can add a prefix or suffix to your surname;
- 3 Alternatively, you can choose a totally different surname. This surname may be one
 - A that does not yet occur in the Netherlands or that belongs to a parent or ancestor. If you choose the latter option, you must demonstrate that your chosen surname is indeed the name of a parent or ancestor. You can do so, for example, by means of a family tree and documents such as a birth certificate.
 - B



Points for attention

- You cannot change your name by adding a name to your current surname.
- Would you like to change your surname while you have underage children? The names of children bearing your surname and over which children you have parental responsibility will change as well.
- Under the proposal, a name change request due to the slavery past will be free of charge. How long it will remain so is currently uncertain. The matter will be reviewed after no more than three years.
- If you change your surname, you will have to apply for a new identity document and driving licence. These costs will not be paid by the Central Government. Your name may also need to be changed on other documents, e.g. diplomas. You will have to arrange these matters yourself.

* The options in this visual are draft proposals. Options may be altered or supplemented following the Internet consultation. No rights can be derived from this visual in any way.