



Life Partnership Qualification Guidelines

Overview

This guide outlines the laws and forms necessary to register your Life Partnership with the City of Philadelphia.

Definition of Life Partnership

According to **Section 9-1102(1)(r)** of the City's Fair Practices Ordinance, a Life Partnership is defined as:

A long-term committed relationship between two unmarried individuals who:

1. **Residency/Employment:** Are residents of the City of Philadelphia, or one is employed in the City, owns real property, operates a business, or has vested interests in employee benefits from the City.
2. **Age & Competence:** Are at least 18 years old and competent to contract.
3. **No Blood Relation:** Are not related by blood in a way that prohibits marriage in Pennsylvania.
4. **Exclusivity:** Have no other Life Partner but each other.
5. **Previous Partnerships:** Have not been a member of a different Life Partnership for the past twelve months unless the prior Life Partnership ended due to the death of the other Life Partner.
6. **Interdependence:** Agree to share the common necessities of life and to be responsible for each other's common welfare.
7. **Common Residence:** Share at least one residence with the other Life Partner.
8. **Notification Requirement:** Agree under penalty of law to notify the Commission of any change in the status of the Life Partnership.

Limitations of Life Partnership

It's important to note that Life Partnership does not confer all the rights and benefits available to married couples. Including but not limited to:

- Your Life Partner does not automatically have the right to make financial and medical

decisions on your behalf.

- If either partner is the biological or legal parent of a minor child, additional legal steps are needed to establish parental rights for the non-biological or non-legal parent.
- Please note that if you are employed by the City of Philadelphia or an entity that participates in a City-Administered Health Plan (CAP)-as of December 31, 2016, Life Partnership letters or certificates are not accepted for benefits coverage of a Life Partner as an eligible dependent.

Verification of Life Partnership

Section 9-1123 of the Fair Practices Ordinance describes how to verify your Life Partnership. Members must file a Verification Statement with proof of interdependence for at least three months before filing. Proof must include at least two of the following, and show dates of interdependency for 90 days or more:

- Common ownership of real property or a leasehold interest.
- Common ownership of a motor vehicle.
- Driver's licenses or state-issued identification listing a common address.
- Proof of joint bank accounts or credit accounts.
- Proof of designation as a beneficiary for life insurance or retirement benefits.
- Proof of appointment as attorney-in-fact or agent under a durable power of attorney or health care power of attorney.

Termination of Life Partnerships

One or both members of a Life Partnership may elect to terminate the partnership. According to **Section 9-1124**, if a Termination Statement is signed by both Life Partners, it becomes effective sixty (60) days from the date of filing. If not signed by both, it becomes effective sixty (60) days from the filing of the Termination Statement Proof of Service.

Required Forms

The following forms must be used pursuant to **Sections 9-1123 and 9-1124** of the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance:

1. Life Partnership Verification Statement
2. Joint Life Partnership Termination Statement
3. Individual Life Partnership Termination Statement
4. Termination Statement Proof of Service

Fees

- Those applicants whose Verification Statements are accepted will be charged a Forty Dollars (\$40.00) filing fee and may request a ceremonial certificate evidencing the

verification of their Life Partnership for a fee of Ten Dollars (\$10.00).

Contact Information

- **Email:** Lifepartnership@phila.gov
- **Marriage License Bureau:**
Location: Philadelphia City Hall
Address: Room 415 City Hall, JFK Blvd, Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: (215) 686-2233
Hours: Life Partnership is by appointment only



Glossary

Durable Power of Attorney for Finances

This document allows you to designate your Life Partner to manage your financial affairs in the event that you become incapacitated due to illness or injury and are unable to make decisions regarding your finances.

Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care (Health Care Proxy)

This document enables you to appoint your Life Partner to advocate for your medical care, consult with healthcare providers, and make decisions regarding your treatment if you become unable to make healthcare decisions for yourself.

Last Will and Testament (Will)

A Will outlines your wishes regarding the distribution of your property and assets after your death. By creating a Will, you can appoint your Life Partner to manage your assets, handle debts, care for your minor children, and execute any other rights you may have.

Living Will

This document specifies your preferences for medical treatment and life-prolonging measures in the event that you are in the final stages of a terminal illness or in a persistent vegetative state.

Standby Guardianship Designation

This document allows you to appoint your Life Partner as the guardian for your child in the event that you become terminally ill or incapacitated.

Cohabitation Agreement (Domestic Partnership Agreement)

This agreement outlines the financial responsibilities and obligations between you and your Life Partner, both during the relationship and in the event of separation.

Real Estate Agreement

This document details the financial and property rights you and your Life Partner have concerning a specific piece of real estate.

Mental Health Power of Attorney

This document allows you to designate your Life Partner to make decisions related to your mental health care. It also permits you to express your preferences regarding mental health treatment in advance should you become incapable of making such decisions.

Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) Authorizations

By executing a HIPAA authorization, you grant your Life Partner access to specific health information that is protected under federal law.

References

- Garner, B. A. (2019). *Black's Law Dictionary* (11th ed.). Thomson Reuters.

