

Province of British Columbia

Person Name Data Standard

Version 1.0

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Table of Contents

Purpose	1
Description	1
Application	2
Authority	3
Advice on this standard	3
Requirements	4
Standard specification	5
Element: Person Name Components	5
Element: Person Name Types	7
Element: Data Object Identifier	10
Element: Person Name Label	12
Guidance – Putting it together	15
Person Name Examples	16
Person Name Schema	19
Definitions	21
Revision History	22

Purpose

The Person Name Data Standard provides technical specifications on how to input, store, and display people's names accurately and respectfully while considering the technology required for effective information exchange and usage.

This standard was developed by researching existing person name standards, consulting with various federal and provincial government public bodies, and inviting feedback on several drafts from across government¹.

Description

Many computer systems were built on assumptions of certain structure, length, and character domains for person names. For example, they may require that a person have both a first name and a last name, and that these name components can be no more than an arbitrary number of characters in length². They may also use labels that reflect a certain culture – e.g., “maiden name”, “family name” or “surname”. Government systems need to shift to support more diverse naming practices.

A person may have several [Types](#) of names at a single point in time or over their lifetime. For example, every individual has a single current legal name; some people may have previous names; many have preferred name(s). Regardless of its type, a particular name might be considered to have several [Components](#) – e.g., first, middle, and last.

While the Standard applies to all person names, it is particularly important for [Action item 3.15](#) of the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Action Plan](#) that commits the Province to supporting Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) language names in

¹ Existing standards consulted were the National Routing System schema, ICAO Machine Readable Travel Document (passport) standards, Interoperable Europe Core Person Vocabulary, Beneficial Ownership Data Standard, New Zealand Person Name Data Standard, the Government of Canada Data Reference Standard on Person Name Architecture, and the Province of Alberta Data Exchange Standard – Person Name. Federal public bodies consulted were Service Canada, Canada Revenue Agency, Indigenous Services Canada, and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. NC provincial bodies reviewing the document included the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Citizens' Services, Ministry of Education and Childcare, Ministry of the Attorney General, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, the Vital Statistics Agency, ICBC, and Service BC.

² These limitations may apply to both the internal storage of names in a system and to the presentation of names on physical artifacts such as forms, reports, and cards.

government systems. This standard supports completion of Action 3.15 and should be used in conjunction with the [Indigenous Languages Technology Standard \(ILTS\) which outlines the technical requirements for technical systems to include Indigenous languages.](#)

The successful exchange of name data across systems is essential to the delivery of connected services many of which impact the health and wellness of people. Implementation of this data standard will help guarantee successful exchange and deliver seamless services across organizational boundaries.

The Person Name Data Standard applies to all person names used in BC Government systems, not just Indigenous language names; however, support for Indigenous language names adds additional considerations. While government and other sectors are updating their systems to be compatible with Indigenous languages, services need the ability to exchange data between systems that can, and systems that cannot, include all characters found in Indigenous languages. During this transition, an alternate spelling of an Indigenous name that is similar in sight and/or sound, using a limited character set (English alphabet) will be added to B.C. issued ID, starting with the BC Birth Certificate, BC Change of Name Certificate, BC Services Card, BC Identification Card (BCID), and BC Drivers' Licence. The use of alternate spellings will be in place while systems are updated to include Indigenous languages and until Indigenous Peoples in collaboration with the B.C. government decide it is no longer needed to mitigate barriers to accessing services, provincial, federal, international or otherwise. The remainder of the standard is intended to apply beyond the transition period.

An effective data standard must provide explicit guidance on how data should be collected, stored, represented, formatted, transmitted, and described, creating a unified framework for users. To this end, the Person Name Data Standard provides:

- Definitions for name terminology.
- Constraints on name data elements.
- Guidance for how to label person name fields in computer systems and on paper forms.
- Guidance for how to name digital artifacts such as program variables, database objects, and data exchange elements in CSV, JSON, XML, etc. files.

Application

All entities identified in [Core Policy and Procedures Manual Chapter 1, section 1.2.4.](#)

Authority

[Core Policy and Procedures Manual Chapter 12.](#)

Advice on this standard

For questions or comments regarding this standard, please contact:

[Connected Services BC, Ministry of Citizens' Services](#)

Requirements

This standard contains four person name elements: Person Name Components, Person Name Types, Data Object Identifiers, and Person Name Labels that build upon each other, as illustrated in the following diagram.

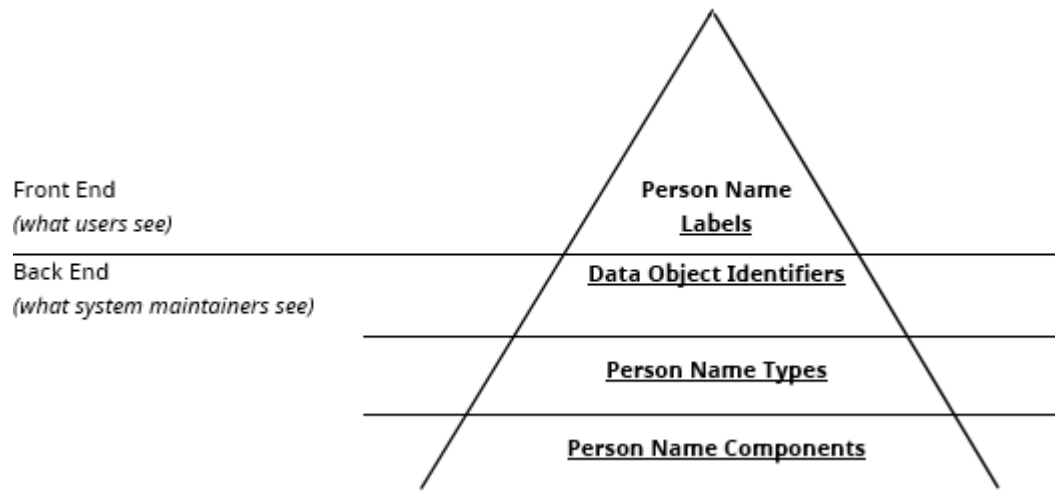


Figure 1: Elements of the Person Name Data Standard

Throughout this document element names (e.g., **[Person Name Component](#)**) are shown hyperlinked, bolded and in title case, as are their sub-elements (e.g., **[First Name](#)**, **[Given Names](#)**).

- **[Person Name Labels](#)** define the user-facing visual presentation (e.g. online and paper forms, etc.).
- **[Data Object Identifiers](#)** are used to label name types and components when names data are stored (e.g., database column names, XML tags, spreadsheet headings, etc.).
- **[Person Name Types](#)** distinguish the names that a person may use in different contexts (e.g., a current legal name for legal purposes, an alias for informal situations, etc.)
- **[Person Name Components](#)**, are used to structure the words that form a name (e.g. the full name, or the first, middle, and last names)

While the Person Name Data Standard applies to all person names, foundational to using these elements for Indigenous language names is the **[Indigenous Languages Technology Standard](#)** which outlines technical requirements for systems to read, write, store, process and display Indigenous languages.

Standard specification

Each standard element is described in terms of its purpose and usage; guidance for each standard element is provided.

Element: Person Name Components

Purpose

To define how a person's name may be represented as a full name or split into component parts for operational use, ensuring consistency across systems.

Definition

Person Name Components: Elements used to represent a person's name either as a single unit (Full Name) or divided into ordered parts (either First Name, Middle Names, Last Name or Given Names, Last Name).

Terms

Full Name: the entire name of the person, not split into parts.

First Name: the first word or words in the full name; this may include multiple words (see [Person Name Examples](#)).

Middle Names: all words between the first name and the last name; this may include multiple words.

Last Name: the final word or words in the full name; this may consist of more than one word (see [Person Name Examples](#)).

Given Names: all words except the **Last Name** (see [Person Name Examples](#)).

Note that **First**, **Middle**, and **Last** simply refer to the **order** in which these words appear in the **Full Name**.

Optional components

Additional components may be included to reflect particular business area needs and to facilitate interoperability with other systems:

- 1) Prefix: A title that appears at the beginning of the name, typically acquired due to academic, legal, employment, or notable status (e.g., Dr., Mr., Hon.).
- 2) Suffix: A title that appears at the end of the name, also acquired due to academic, legal, employment, or notable status (e.g., Jr., PhD, Esq.).

Guidance

Splitting a name into parts

When practical, provide and report person names in a single field using just the **Full Name** component.

It's preferable not to split a person's name into parts (e.g., either **First Name, Middle Names, Last Name** or **Given Names, Last Name**), as splitting-into-parts to reflect family names does not fit all naming and correspondence practices. For example, using just the first word of a name in an email greeting may not be appropriate in cases where a person's name is a polynym or has multiple words making up their first name. Rather than assume the order of names indicates which to use in a greeting, use the ["Name Used" Person Name Type](#). Therefore, do not split a name into parts unless there are specific operational requirements to do so (for example, where your systems exchange data with an external system that needs them). Each program area will have specific circumstances to consider.

In cases where a name does need to be split into parts, there are two approaches that can be taken:

- 1) The data provider (connected system or system user) provides the name in parts, and a full name is automatically generated, or
- 2) The data provider (connected system or system user) provides a full name, which is automatically or manually split into parts and the client validates or edits to ensure the split is accurate and respectful.

Sample code for splitting a name into parts is provided in [DevHub](#).

Mononyms/ Polynyms

When a **Full Name** component is available, a [mononym](#) or [polynym](#) should be placed in the **Full Name** component.

When a **Full Name** component is not available, a mononym or polynym should be placed in the **Last Name**, and if a value is required in the **First Name** component a non-alphabetic [ASCII-127](#) character such as a period or comma may be entered. The requirements of older systems vary, and other approaches may be used (for example, repeating the name in both the first and last name field). Use of a period or comma is preferred, and all of these approaches should be phased out as systems are upgraded to support mononyms and polynyms.

Limit collection

Collect only what data is necessary and ensure consistency between Full Name and any component parts stored.

Element: Person Name Types

Purpose

Defines the categories of names that may be associated with a person for legal, administrative, and operational purposes.

Definition

Person Name Types: Categories used to classify names associated with a person, including Legal (limited), Name Used, Alias, Previous, and Legal (whole).

Terms

The terms in this standard define how to record names, it does not define what constitutes a legal name.

Legal (limited): A person's current **legal** name is typically recorded on [foundation identification](#) (e.g., birth certificate or linking document such as a certificate of change of name) or may be established through other practices, such as assumed through marriage. This version of the legal name includes any alterations necessary for it to work in systems that aren't yet capable of including Indigenous languages. Examples of such alterations are:

- removal of accents or diacritical markers;
- shortening of the name so that it can be printed on a card;
- transliteration of an Indigenous language name to the Latin character set.

Legal (whole): The full legal name recorded using UTF-8 encoded Unicode characters when the name includes characters outside the English alphabet (A-Z), such as Indigenous language names. See [Use of Legal \(whole\) and Legal \(limited\)](#) in the **Usage** below.

Name Used: The usual (full) name a person goes by when addressing or referencing themselves. This may include nicknames, language-specific alternatives, and names that affirm gender identity, with or without associated personal pronouns. In health service delivery contexts, the Name Used represents the name the client wishes to be called and have recorded accurately in their patient record. Using the Name Used helps ensure respectful interactions and reduces potential harm caused by misnaming. Name Used may contain non-[ASCII-127](#) characters if supported by the technology used.

Alias: Another name that the person is known by, different from both their **Legal** name and **Name Used** name. This might be a nickname, or a name that the person is also known as. Alias may contain non-[ASCII-127](#) characters if supported by the technology used.

Previous: A legal (limited or whole) name that the person has used in the past. Previous may contain non-[ASCII-127](#) characters if supported by the technology used. Non-legal previous names may be stored using the **Alias** type.”

Usage

Program code documentation and metadata shall use these definitions for clarity for system users and maintainers.

Values for **Legal (limited)** and **Legal (whole) name** types shall be provided if a legal name is required.

- The **Legal (limited)** name field stores the ASCII-127 character set compatible version of a name and any truncated versions of names. This field is intended for integration with legacy or external systems that cannot support Unicode, and data migrations where character limitations apply.
- The **Legal (whole)** name field stores the accurate spelling of the legal names including any accents, or diacritical marks. This field is intended for integration with systems that can support Unicode. [UTF-8](#) shall be used end-to-end (UI, APIs, storage) unless a documented exception exists.

A value for **Name Used** should also be provided.

- If a person’s name used requires Unicode UTF-8 or extended ASCII, then the **Name Used** name field can be used, in cases where system capabilities permit.

The **Person Name Type** shall be used with the [Person Name Component](#), to label form fields and create program variables and database identifiers.

Guidance

For examples of how the Person Name Types and Person Name Components are used, see [Guidance: Putting it together](#).

Migrating data between systems

If the source system and all relying systems already support names that use Unicode or non-[ASCII-127](#) characters, use Legal Name (Whole) as the primary value as information trading partners are capable of receiving Legal (Whole) data that is compatible and this maximizes the accuracy of how names are represented.

If the source system, or any relying systems, do not already support Unicode non-[ASCII-127](#) characters, use Legal Name (Limited) as the primary value to ensure backward compatibility and continuation of downstream integrations.

If a system that is a relying system does not support names that use Unicode or non-[ASCII-127](#) characters, the source system should receive the Legal (limited) name from the source system.

Inclusion of Indigenous Language Names

In B.C., some legal names are written in an [Indigenous language](#) and require the use of Unicode characters. To support data exchange, these names are registered with a corresponding alternate spelling that uses a limited English character set³ and length. The required practice⁴ for storing the two versions is:

- The **Legal (limited)** name fields store the alternate spelling that uses the limited character set and length.
- The **Legal (whole)** name stores the accurate spelling of the Indigenous language name, including any accents and diacritical markers and reflects all characters of the individual's legal name.
- If a person's name used contains Indigenous language characters, then the **Name Used** name field can be used to store the Indigenous language (or other non-ASCII-127) spelling, in cases where system capabilities permit.

It is essential to assess data exchange with partners prior to transferring names in Indigenous languages. If the system to system exchange supports the Unicode character set and UTF-8 encoding, then the **Legal (whole)** name type should be used and the accurate spelling of a legal name using Indigenous language characters should be recorded in the **Legal (whole)** name.

Regardless of which **Person Name Types** are used to store an Indigenous language name and its alternate spelling, if no Name Used is provided, display the Indigenous language name, whenever possible in client-facing interactions.

³ The limited character set typically includes the letters a-z, A-Z, [ASCII single quote](#), [ASCII space](#), and the [ASCII hyphen-minus](#), specific requirements are established organizations that issue foundation ID

⁴ The rationale for continuing to use the alternate spelling in the **Legal (limited)** name fields for applications that send name information to not-yet-updated systems is to allow those connected systems to continue to operate correctly.

Record of Previous Names

Business requirements determine the extent of records related to previous names that a system must maintain. Individuals who have completed a legal change of name are responsible for notifying service providers to update their records. If it isn't essential to your service to maintain a record of previous names, ensure that current legal names are propagated across all systems within your business area and do not retain the previous legal name. If there is a business requirement to maintain a record of previous legal names, utilize audit and logging functions and enable easy access to the relevant audit records. Appending a numeral to the Name Type (e.g. PreviousName1, PreviousName2) can be used in scenarios where an individual has more than one previous legal name.

Multiple Aliases

In cases where knowledge of multiple aliases is important, append a numeral to the Name Type (e.g. Alias1, Alias2, Alias3) including the number of alias fields that meet the business requirements.

Element: Data Object Identifier

Purpose

To ensure computer system code is understandable, maintainable, and usable by defining clear and meaningful names for variables and data elements.

Definition

Data Object Identifier: A name assigned to a variable or data element for the purpose of identification within a system or program.

Usage

- Data Object Identifiers are built from the [Person Name Type](#) and [Person Name Component](#) elements, as illustrated by the examples in the following table.
- The prefix "pn_" can be used to indicate their association with this data standard.
- In systems that track multiple previous or alias names, a suffix *n* can be added.
- See [Splitting a name into parts](#) above for advice on specifying Full Name versus First/Middle/Last names or Given/Last names.

	Person Name Components				
Name Type	Full Name		First Name	Middle Name(s)	Last Name
Legal (limited)	pn_full_name_legal_limited		pn_first_name_legal_limited	pn_middle_names_legal_limited	pn_last_name_legal_limited
Previous	pn_full_name_previous		pn_first_name_previous	pn_middle_names_previous	pn_last_name_previous
Alias	pn_full_name_alias		pn_first_name_aliases	pn_middle_names_aliases	pn_last_name_aliases
Name Used	pn_name_used		pn_first_name_used	pn_middle_names_used	pn_last_name_used
Legal (whole)	pn_full_name_legal_whole		pn_first_name_legal_whole	pn_middle_names_legal_whole	pn_last_name_legal_whole

Or

	Person Name Components			
Name Type	Full Name		Given Name(s)	Last Name
Legal (limited)	pn_full_name_legal_limited		pn_given_names_legal_limited	pn_last_name_legal_limited
Previous	pn_full_name_previous		pn_given_names_previous	pn_last_name_previous
Alias	pn_full_name_alias		pn_given_names_alias	pn_last_name_alias
Name Used	pn_name_used		pn_given_names_used	pn_last_name_used
Legal (whole)	pn_full_name_legal_whole		pn_given_names_legal_whole	pn_last_name_legal_whole

Table 1: Data object identifiers for Person Type/Person Component Combinations

Metadata

The metadata elements in the [Core Metadata Standard](#) shall be included for any dataset containing Person Name elements.

Guidance

Data object identifiers shall be descriptive and reflect the purpose or content of the data element. Identifiers shall follow established naming conventions for consistency across systems. Avoid ambiguous or generic names that do not convey meaning. Use standardized abbreviations only where necessary and ensure they are documented.

The exact structure of these names may depend on other standards that are in place for the specific programming language or database management system. For example:

- Underscores between words, e.g., previous_name
- Upper case, e.g., PREVIOUS_NAME
- Camel case, e.g., previousName
- Title case, e.g., PreviousName

Examples using camel case are provided in the Person Name JSON Schema described in [Person Name Schema](#).

In cases where an individual has multiple names for a given type, e.g. multiple previous names, follow the existing pattern of pn as a prefix and a numeral as a suffix, for example, pn_full_name_previous1, pn_full_name_previous2.

Note that in the preceding examples of data object identifiers, the component precedes the name type – e.g., “full_name” comes before “previous.” There may be cases where this order can cause confusion, especially when there is an additional qualifier for the name – e.g., “child”, for the name of a child, “guardian”, for the name of the guardian, etc. In cases such as these an ordering that minimizes ambiguity should be used. However:

- Consistency within a system should be maintained
- The object identifiers should be clearly and completely defined in the system’s metadata and any data catalogues (e.g., the BC Data Catalogue)

Element: Person Name Label

Purpose

To ensure clarity and accuracy in forms and reports by providing standardized labels for fields related to a person’s name.

Definition

Person Name Label: A descriptive label applied to a field on a form or report that captures or displays a person’s name.

Usage

- Labels shall be constructed from the Person Name Type and Person Name Component elements.
- If a form or report includes more than one type of name, the label shall include the name type (e.g., “Legal Last Name,” “Name Used First Name”).
- Where it is important to indicate that a specific type of name must be entered or displayed (e.g., legal name vs. name used name), the label shall explicitly state the name type.
- Person name labels and their definitions shall also be used in associated help screens and tooltips to ensure consistency and user understanding.
See Splitting a name into parts above for advice on specifying Full Name versus First/Middle/Last names.

	Person Name Components			
Name Type	Full Name	First Name	Middle Name(s)	Last Name
Legal (limited)	Legal (limited) full name	Legal (limited) first name	Legal (limited) middle name(s)	Legal (limited) last name
Previous	Previous full name	Previous first name	Previous middle name(s)	Previous last name
Alias	Alias full name	Alias first name	Alias middle name(s)	Alias last name
Name Used	Name used - full name	Name used - first name	Name used - middle names	Name used - last name
Legal (whole)	Legal (whole) full name	Legal (whole) first name	Legal (whole) middle name(s)	Legal (whole) last name

or

	Person Name Components		
Name Type	Full Name	Given Name(s)	Last Name
Legal (limited)	Legal (limited) full name	Legal (limited) given name(s)	Legal (limited) last name
Previous	Previous full name	Previous given name(s)	Previous last name
Alias	Alias full name	Alias given name(s)	Alias last name
Name Used	Name used - full name	Name used – given names	Name used - last name
Legal (whole)	Legal (whole) full name	Legal (whole) given name(s)	Legal (whole) last name

Figure 2: User interface labels (shown in body) for Person name type/Person name component combinations (shown in headings)

Guidance

Omitting the Person Name Type from the label

If the name type is evident based on the context, or a low level of confidence is required, then the name type can be omitted and labelled as shown below.

	Person Name Components			
Name Type	Full Name	First Name	Middle Name(s)	Last Name
all	Full name	First name	Middle name(s)	Last name

Or

	Person Name Components		
Name Type	Full Name	Given Name(s)	Last Name
all	Full name	Given name(s)	Last name

Figure 3: Table that describes how to omit the field person name type

Use of Full Name vs. First, Middle, and Last or Given Names, Last Name

Reminder – Guidance for the Person Name Component is to use full name whenever possible, and to only use first/middle/last or given/last when there is a business requirement. For more information, see [Element: Person Name Component](#).

Use of tool tips and descriptions

The terms Legal (limited) and Legal (whole) will be new to most users. When these name types are used, include the following descriptions to support usability.

- Legal (limited) – the spelling of your name that **uses the letters A-Z**, and is typically **on your government issued identification**
- Legal (whole) – If the full spelling your name uses characters **beyond A-Z** and is recorded on your government issued identification

Optional data entry for Legal (whole)

Many users won't have a Legal (whole) name, the user interface should indicate that entry of data into this field should be optional.

Guidance – Putting it together

Person Name Examples⁵

[Person Name Types](#) and [Person Name Components](#) enable a person's name record to evolve to reflect their identity through different life events.

The examples in the tables below demonstrate how these two elements are linked and create a framework to account for diverse naming practices, business requirements and service ecosystems.

Examples 1 and 2 are of English names with a first and last name structure. These examples highlight how a person's name can evolve over time through life events and preferences.

Examples 3 and 4 show Indigenous language names with characters that require systems that align with the Indigenous Languages Technology Standard for accurate representation.

⁵ Examples of names used in this section are either fictionalized or obtained through the public domain.

Example 1

A person who has a last name with three segments, an alias for the last name, and a name used name.

	Person Name Components			
Name Type	Full Name	Given Name(s)		Last Name
		First Name	Middle Name(s)	
Legal (limited)	Oliver Daniel van der Heide	Oliver	Daniel	van der Heide
Legal (whole)	Oliver Daniel van der Heide	Oliver	Daniel	van der Heide
Alias	Ollie Vanderheide	Ollie		Vanderheide
Name Used	Ollie van der Heide	Ollie		van der Heide

Example 2

A person who has changed their name twice – first through a legal change of name to their first name and then a legal change of name to their last name. They also have an Alias which is their Name Used name.

	Person Name Components			
Name Type	Full Name	Given Name(s)		Last Name
		First Name	Middle Name(s)	
Legal (limited)	Sandra Lee Lenius	Sandra	Lee	Lenius
Legal (whole)	Sandra Lee Lenius	Sandra	Lee	Lenius
Previous	Sandra Lee Mason	Sandra	Lee	Mason
Previous	Alex Lee Mason	Alex	Lee	Mason
Alias	Sandy Lee	Sandy Lee		
Name Used	Sandy Lee Mason	Sandy Lee		Mason

Example 3

Person: A First Nations person whose first name is recorded in their language, lək̓ʷáŋən

	Person Name Components				
Name Type	Full Name		Given Name(s)		Last Name
			First Name	Middle Name(s)	
Legal (limited)	Stahlo George		Stahlo		George
Legal (whole)	stáʔləw George		stáʔləw		George
Name Used	stáʔləw		stáʔləw		

Example 4

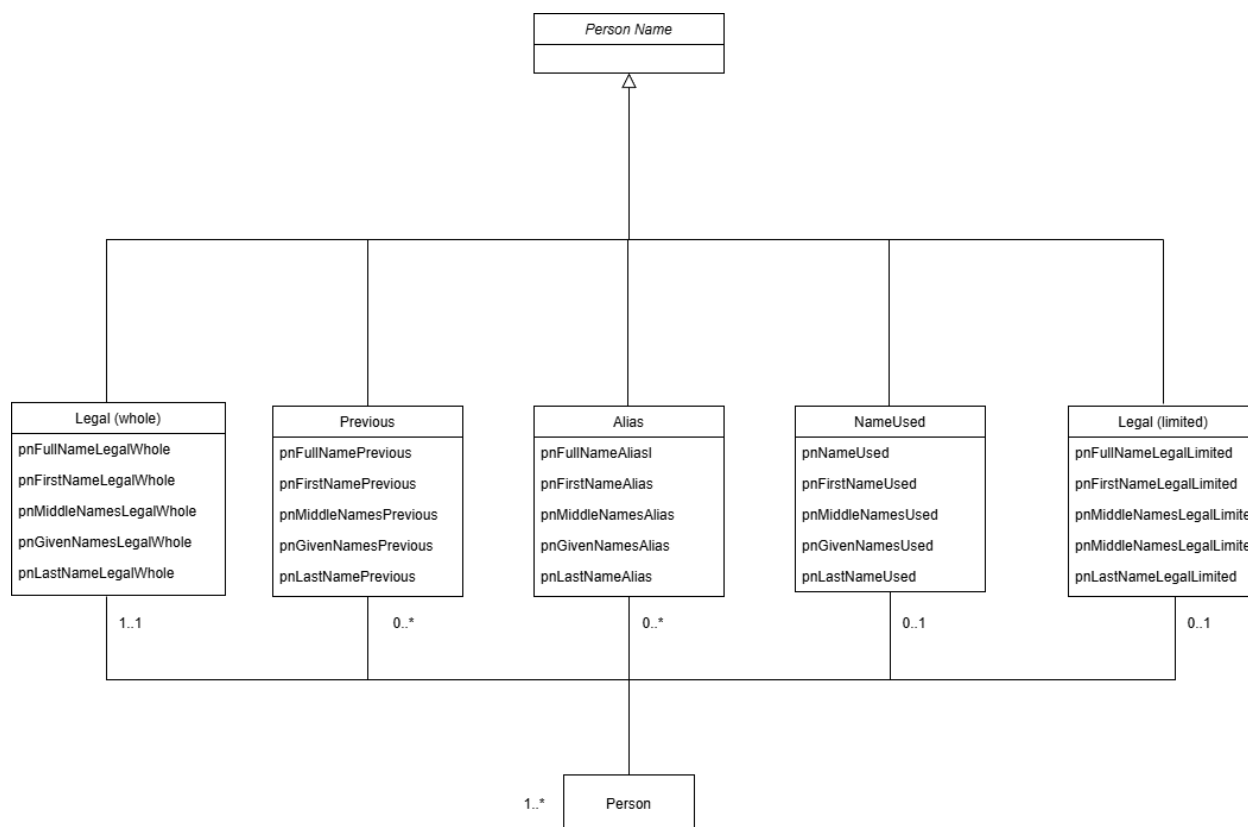
Person: A First Nations person who has changed their name to a mononym, recorded in their language, Nēhiyawēwin.

Note that this example displays that the preferred method for entering a mononym or polynym is to record the name in the Last Name component and use a period to fill in any other required name components, such as First Name. Any fields that are not mandatory remain blank.

	Person Name Components				
Name Type	Full Name		Given Name(s)		Last Name
			First Name	Middle Name(s)	
Legal (limited)	Wikaskwa		.		Wikaskwa
Legal (whole)	Δ·bʱᐱ·				Δ·bʱᐱ·
Previous	Ira Williams		Ira		Williams
Name Used	Δ·bʱᐱ·		Δ·bʱᐱ·		

Person Name Schema

A [Unified Modeling Language](#) (UML) diagram can be used to illustrate the relationship between the elements described in the standard and between these elements, a person name, and a person having that name.



The diagram shows the five types of PersonName and the associated attributes of each. Any of these names can be shared by many persons (denoted by the “1..*” above the person box). In the other direction, an individual person has:

- Exactly one current (whole) legal name (“1..1”)
- Zero or more previous names (“0..*”)
- Zero or more aliases (“0..*”)
- Zero or one Name Used names (“0..1”)
- Zero or one alternate spellings (limited legal) (“0..1”)

[JSON Schemas](#) provide a way of documenting the structure and constraints of data types, such as “PersonName”. Given a PersonName instance provided as JSON text, the JSON Schema for PersonName can be used to validate that instance.

A JSON Schema for PersonName can be found [here](#). Also provided are [four sample PersonName JSON data files](#) that mirror the examples given in [Guidance – Putting it together](#). There are utilities available for validating a JSON data file against a JSON Schema file. One such utility can be found [here](#).

Definitions

ASCII-127: is both a character set and an encoding. It includes lower and upper-case Latin alphabet (a-z, A-Z), numeric digits (0-9) and some punctuation characters. This very basic set is encoded as integers between 1 and 127 and each character is stored in a single byte, using 7 of the 8 bits in a byte. (Source: [Indigenous Languages Technology Standard](#))

Extended ASCII: There are extended ASCII sets that include accented Latin characters as well as additional punctuation symbols (e.g., è, smart quotes, m-dash). Two commonly used extended ASCII character sets are Windows-1252 and ISO-8859-1. These extended ASCII characters use all 8 bits of a byte. (Source: [Indigenous Languages Technology Standard](#))

Foundation Identification (ID): a credential that establishes the foundation of an individual's identity in Canada. For individuals born in Canada, their foundation identity credential is a birth certificate. For individuals that immigrated, or are temporary visitors, to Canada, their foundation identity credential is a Permanent Resident Card, a Canadian Citizenship Card, a Student or Work Permit or similar document. (Source: [B.C. Evidence of Identity Standard](#))

Indigenous languages: refers to the languages used by Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) peoples in B.C. (Source: [Indigenous Languages Technology Standard](#))

Mononym: a person name consisting of a single word, for example "Madonna", "Prince", "Humishuma", "stá?ləw"

Polynym: a person name consisting of multiple words that are not considered to be first name / middle names / last name, for example "Grey Eagle Feathers."

Primary ID: a document that serves as "Accepted Primary Identification," as defined in [Ministerial Order 15/2020](#). Examples are the BC driver's licence, BC services card, and the Canadian birth certificate.

Unicode: an international standard character set maintained by the [Unicode Consortium](#) that currently defines over 140,000 characters, with the goal of encompassing characters from all living and historic language scripts worldwide, including the Indigenous languages used in B.C. This standard is updated annually to include additional characters. (Source: [Indigenous Languages Technology Standard](#))

UTF-8: a standard for encoding Unicode characters that uses 1-byte encoding for all [ASCII-127](#) characters, and 2, 3, or 4-byte encoding for non-ASCII-127 characters (e.g., characters found in European and some Indigenous languages). Because UTF-8 is very space efficient

for applications that use mostly ASCII-127 characters, it is the preferred encoding to use in B.C. government systems. (Source: [Indigenous Languages Technology Standard](#))

UTF-16: a standard for encoding Unicode characters that uses 2 or 4-byte encoding for all characters. Characters found in most writing systems (including those used for Indigenous languages) require 2 bytes. UTF-8 is the preferred encoding to use in B.C. government systems. (Source: [Indigenous Languages Technology Standard](#))

Revision History

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	June 22, 2026	