



D.C. Superior Court Expands Marriage Bureau To Accommodate Increase Of Marriage License Applications



Photo by Caroline Angelo.

After the historic ruling of *U.S. v. Windsor* a few months ago, wherein the Supreme Court struck down the part of the Defense of Marriage Act that prohibited married same-sex couples from receiving federal benefits extended to spouses, the D.C. Superior Court reports that marriage license applications are coming in faster than they can keep up.

So much so that they've had to add staff and new space in order to keep up.

According to a press release, the revamped Marriage Bureau has, along with an increased staff, a new dedicated marriage license application center and a second marriage ceremony room, which will open on September 16.

Although "the number of applications the Family Court receives can fluctuate seasonally and in response to statutory changes," Leah H. Guowitz, director of governmental and public relations for D.C. Courts, tells DCist, it was "following the Supreme Court decision in the *Windsor* case in late June, which extended federal benefits to same sex couples, that the court saw a significant increase in marriage license applications."

But this isn't the biggest increase in marriage license applications the Superior Court has ever seen. Guowitz says that after same-sex marriage was legalized in District in March of 2010, they received the largest amount of marriage license applications—an estimated 683 in the first few weeks—that they'd ever received in a month.

By adding staff and space, the Marriage Bureau "hopes this will double the number of courthouse marriages each day."