

Vital Documents: What are they and why do you need them?

What are vital documents?

Documents with important personal information needed for life as an adult.

Vital documents are critical as you enter adulthood to:

- establish identity.
- empower financial and emotional independence.
- access many services or opportunities like employment, housing, health care, education, financial aid, banking and travel.



PRO TIPS:

- Ask for them! If you are still in care, the first step is to ask your caseworker about receiving a copy of each of your essential documents. It's the law that they provide your vital documents.
- As part of your Transition Plan, your caseworker should provide you with your essential documents and/or provide you with information on how to access them.
- If you find yourself without any of these documents after care, there are resources available for you to acquire them. Ask for help when you need it! We're here.

Here are the documents you need:

- **Birth certificate:** An official or certified copy of your birth certificate.
- **Social Security card:** Official card, not just your number.
- **State identification card or driver's license:** State-issued ID card or driver's license.
- **Health insurance:** Info about your health insurance, including any cards needed for care - know how to renew your medicaid coverage.
- **Medical records:** A copy of your medical records including your immunization history.
- **Documentation of foster care:** Official documentation that proves you were in foster care, how long you were in care and at what ages (sometimes called a verification letter).
- **Transition plan:** A personalized transition plan that includes options for housing, education, health insurance, and more is required by every state 90 days before you exit care.

****You can request these documents from your case worker before leaving foster care!**

TALK TO US!

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