

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

## What are Essential documents?

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

**Essential 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.

Interested in knowing more?

Check out this great resource: [Vital Docs Tip Sheet](#)



## PRO TIPS:

- Advocate for yourself! If you are still in care, the first step is to ask your caseworker about receiving a copy of each of your essential 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 **key essential documents**:

- **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.

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

**TALK TO US!**

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