

How Homeless and Unaccompanied Youth Can Get Their Texas Birth Certificate and Texas ID Card and Texas Driver's License

Step 1: Get a Certification Form

- a. Get a **Certification of Homeless Status for Texas Birth Certificate and Texas Identification Card and Driver's License** form (*Certification Form*) completed by your school, shelter, transitional housing or living program. The forms list who can complete the form for you. You can find the form at [TexasFosterYouth.org](https://www.texasfosteryouth.org) in the [Identification Documents](#) section.

Step 2: Get Your Birth Certificate – This will only work if you were born in Texas!

- a. The Certification Form lets you get your birth certificate without a parent's signature and you won't have to pay for the birth certificate. But you will still need to provide documents that show you are the person listed on the birth certificate. Have a caring, older adult help you figure out what you need to take with you.
- b. Gather needed documents to show who you are. [Texas Vital Statistics](#) has a long list of what you can use. If you have a Primary Acceptable Document, it is easy. Primary documents are:
 1. Driver's license from a U.S. state
 2. Federal or state ID card
 3. Military ID card
 4. U.S. passport

If you have a Primary Acceptable Document, you are ready to go get your birth certificate.

- c. If you don't have a Primary Acceptable Document, you must have:
 1. One Secondary Acceptable ID. The type of thing youth might have as a Secondary Acceptable ID are:
 - a. Current School or Work ID
 - b. Social Security Card - Must be Signed
 - c. Medicaid card
 - d. Health Insurance card
 2. You will also need two supporting documents. These can include:
 - a. Official School Transcript
 - b. Library Card
 - c. Social Security Letter
 - d. Recent Medical Record or Bill
 - e. Recent Paycheck Stub
 - f. Recent Cell Phone Bill with Current Address
 - g. Public Benefits Letters or Applications (Examples: SNAP (Food Stamps) letter, Medicaid letter, TANF letter)
 - h. Voter Registration Card (You must be 17 and 10 months old to register to vote)
 - i. Bank Account Statement
 - j. Lease Agreement or Recent Rent Receipt

- k. Religious Record with Signature of Religious Official (Example: certificate of baptism)
- d. Find out where you can go to get your birth certificate. You can find a list of places at dshs.texas.gov/vs/local.aspx. Some counties, cities and districts in Texas can issue your birth certificate no matter where you were born in Texas. If you were not born in the place where you live, be sure to select the **Local Birth Certificate Issuers** so you can find a place near where you live that will have your birth certificate.
- e. Take your documents and the Certification Form to your local birth certificate issuer office. Having a caring, older adult go with you is also a good idea. You don't need parental consent, but they can help you talk to the people at the office and assist if there are any problems.
- f. Give the office your documents and the Certification Form. **Because you have the Certification Form, you should not be charged a fee for the birth certificate and don't need a parent to sign to apply for it.**
- g. If there are problems, show them the information on the Certification Form about the laws that allow you to get your birth certificate. Ask to speak to a Supervisor. If there are still problems, ask them to call the State Vital Statistics office. **If you are still denied, ask them to write down why you were denied and write down the name of the person you talked to and the date.**
- h. If you think you are wrongly denied your birth certificate, you can contact the Texas Foster Youth Justice Project at 877-313-3688 or info@texasfosteryouth.org for guidance and possible legal assistance from a lawyer.

Step 3: Get Your Texas ID

- a. Gather the documents you need. When you have a homeless/unaccompanied youth and have a Certification Form, you need the following to get your Texas ID.
 - 1. Certification Form
 - 2. Certified birth certificate (not a photocopy!) from Texas or another U.S. state.
 - 3. Social Security card, IRS W-2 form, 1099 form, or paycheck stub with your name and your Social Security number on it.

You won't need additional documents to show you are a U.S. citizen, that you are a Texas Resident or to prove your identity. You also don't need your parent to sign the form for you to get the ID card.

- b. Ask the caring adult who is helping you if you may use their address for your ID. This is where the ID card will be mailed. Possible addresses are your school, the shelter, or the home of a caring adult who agrees you can use their address for mail. If you are using someone else's address be sure to list "c/o" followed by the person's name in the first line of the mailing address on the application. For example: If your name is Jane Doe and you are staying with your friend and her mother, Maria Garcia, when you put the address to where the ID will be sent, it should look like this:

Jane Doe
c/o Maria Garcia
1234 Privet Drive

Austin, TX 78705.

- c. Have \$16 to pay for your Texas ID card.
 1. There is a law about waiving the fee for youth with the Certification Form but the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) has not yet set this up. Check the identification documents section at TexasFosterYouth.org for updated information in **How Homeless and Unaccompanied Youth Can Get Their Texas Birth Certificate and Texas ID Card** to see if the system to waive fees has been set up.
- d. Find a (DPS)office at dps.texas.gov/DriverLicense/
- e. Go to the DPS office with a caring older adult; you will need them with you to help explain that you are a homeless and that there are laws that make it simpler for you to get your ID card.
- f. If there are problems, show them the information on the Certification Form about the laws that allow you to get your ID Card. If there are still problems, ask to speak to a supervisor. **If you are still denied, ask them to write down why you were denied and write down the name of the person you talked to and the date.**
- g. If you think you were wrongly denied your Texas ID card, you can contact the Texas Foster Youth Justice Project at 877-313-3688 or info@texasfosteryouth.org for guidance and possible legal assistance from a lawyer.

Step 4: Get Your Texas License/Learner's Permit

- a. If you have a Certification Form, you will need the same identity documents you needed to get your Texas ID including the following:
 1. Certification Form
 2. Certified birth certificate (**not a photocopy!**) from Texas or another U.S. state.
 3. Social Security card, IRS W-2 form, 1099 form, or paycheck stub with your name and your Social Security number on it.

You won't need additional documents to show you are a U.S. citizen, that you are a Texas Resident or to prove your identity.

- b. If you are under 18 you will need an adult to go with you and sign for you to obtain the license.
- c. Ask the caring adult who is helping you if you may use their address for your ID This is where the ID card will be mailed. Possible addresses are your school, the shelter, or the home of a caring adult who agrees you can use their address for mail. If you are using someone else's address be sure to list "c/o" followed by the person's name in the first line of the mailing address on the application. For example: If your name is Jane Doe and you are staying with your friend and her mother, Maria Garcia, when you put the address to where the ID will be sent, it should look like this:

Jane Doe

c/o Maria Garcia

1234 Privet Drive

Austin, TX 78705.

- d. You will need \$16 for the license if you are under 18 or \$25 if you are over 18.
 1. There is a law about waiving the fee for youth with the Certification Form but the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) has not yet set this up. Check the identification

documents section at TexasFosterYouth.org for updated information in **How Homeless and Unaccompanied Youth Can Get Their Texas Birth Certificate and Texas ID Card** to see if the system to waive fees has been set up.

- e. There are many other requirements for a driver license. Visit dps.texas.gov/DriverLicense/ApplyforLicense.htm for more information. If you are under 18 you must also visit dps.texas.gov/DriverLicense/teenDriver.htm. Have a caring, older adult help you figure out what you will need to do to get the license.
- f. If there are problems about your identity, residence and citizenship, show them the information on the Certification Form about the laws that allow you to get your license with your certification and form and birth certificate. If there are still problems, ask to speak to a supervisor. **If you are still denied, ask them to write down why you were denied and write down the name of the person you talked to and the date.**
- g. If you think you were wrongly denied your license because they would not accept the certification form, you can contact the Texas Foster Youth Justice Project at 877-313-3688 or info@texasfosteryouth.org for guidance and possible legal assistance from a lawyer.

[How Homeless and Unaccompanied Youth Can Get Their Texas Birth Certificate and Texas ID Card and Texas Driver's License](#)

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TexasFosterYouth.org