

# 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](https://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](mailto: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](http://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/](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](http://dps.texas.gov/DriverLicense/ApplyforLicense.htm) for more information. If you are under 18 you must also visit [dps.texas.gov/DriverLicense/teenDriver.htm](http://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](mailto: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](#)

ver. 2-13-2020

Developed by Texas RioGrande Legal Aid-Texas Foster Youth Justice Project

[TexasFosterYouth.org](http://TexasFosterYouth.org)

# Certification of Homeless Status for Texas Birth Certificate and Texas Identification Card and Driver's License



Full Name of Homeless Child/Youth: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify, to the best of my knowledge and belief, that on the date listed below, the above named individual is a homeless child or youth, as defined by 42 U.S.C. Section 11434a, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. I provide this certification in my capacity as (check one below):

- A designated district liaison with the school district where the child/youth listed above is enrolled
- The director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funding by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
- The director of a basic center for runaway and homeless youth
- The director of a transitional living program

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

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# **Definition of Homeless Child or Youth,** **as Defined by 42 U.S.C. Section 11434a, the McKinney-Vento**

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## **Homeless Assistance Act**

### **The term “homeless children and youths”—**

- A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
- B) includes—
- (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
  - (ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
  - (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
  - (iv) migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this part because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii) above.

### **Birth Certificates**

Effective September 1, 2019: Texas Health and Safety Code §191.0049: State and Local Registrars and County Clerks shall provide birth records (birth certificates) to homeless children and youths as defined by 42 U.S.C. Section 11434a, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, without fee or parental consent.

### **Texas Identification Cards and Driver’s Licenses**

Effective September 1, 2019: Texas Transportation Code §521.1015 states that a homeless child or youth, as defined by 42 U.S.C. Section 11434a, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, may provide a copy of their birth certificate as proof of their identity and U.S. citizenship, provide a letter from one of the entities listed on this form, certifying the child or youth is homeless and does not have a residence or domicile, and obtain a personal identification certificate (Texas ID) without the signature, presence of or permission from the parent or guardian of the child or youth and be exempt from payment of the ID card fee. Texas Transportation Code §521.1811 waives the fee for a driver’s license for a homeless youth.

Certification of Homeless Status for Texas Birth Certificate and Texas Identification Card and Driver’s License Form ver. 1-29-2020 Developed by Texas RioGrande Legal Aid-Texas Foster Youth Justice Project [TexasFosterYouth.org](http://TexasFosterYouth.org)