

Texas Education of Homeless Children and Youth Summit 2021

Help! I Need Birth Certificate and ID

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Without a birth certificate, Texas ID card or license, and Social Security card you cannot function in our society. They are especially critical for those experiencing homelessness as they are needed to access many services and supports. But many youth and families experiencing homelessness lack these important documents and face numerous barriers obtaining them including required documentation, fees, and parent authorization. The requirements and processes to obtain these documents is overwhelmingly complex and many have difficulty providing the needed items to obtain these documents. Education professionals working with homeless students are routinely called upon by students and families for assistance in obtaining these important documents. They are needed to connect to youth and family services, housing services, and other community providers and resources, as well as to assist older youth in pursuing educational opportunities and employment and self-sufficiency.

A new 2019 law provides that children and young people who are experiencing homelessness or are in foster care can get a **free** Texas birth certificate, state ID or drivers license and encounter less restrictive requirements about proof of residency and not need a parent to obtain to obtain their birth certificate. The presentation will highlight these new provisions, the basics requirements for applying and what supporting documents might be most readily available to a youth, the procedures at agencies and how education professional to help youth prepare to apply.

You can find the PowerPoint from this training session, as well as all materials, [here](#).

For over a decade, Texas RioGrande Legal Aid's Texas Foster Youth Justice Project (TFYJP) has represented youth overcoming ID document barriers and led advocacy efforts with state agencies to implement these procedures. TFYJP developed a certification form that school homeless liaisons and other providers can use to document the young adult's eligibility that has been adopted by the agencies and detailed guidance for youth and those that assist them. Numerous education professionals and students have obtained assistance from the TFYJP in navigating obtaining ID document barriers utilizing the new law. In addition, TFYJP has conducted training sessions about the new law and overcoming ID documents barriers.