

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 form lists 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. However, 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. **Texas Vital Statistics has a helpful website with information:** <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/vs/reqproc/Birth-Certificate-for-Foster-or-Homeless-Youth.aspx#youth>.
- 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 - 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. Tell them to check the Texas Vital Statistics [website about Birth Certificates for Foster or Homeless Youth](#). 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 are 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. DPS considers this a **secondary identity document**.
 - 3. Social Security card, IRS W-2 form or 1099 form (tax forms that your employer gives you in January), or paycheck stub with your name and your Social Security number on it to prove your Social Security number.
 - 4. At least two **supporting identity documents** to show your identity, but three is better in case DPS rejects one of the documents. You must have originals, **not photocopies**. DPS has a long list of documents you can use listed [here](#). Some of the ones you are most likely to have are:
 - a. Social Security Card (If you have this, it works as both a document to prove your Social Security number and support your identity)
 - b. School ID
 - c. School report card or transcript
 - d. Immunization records
 - e. Medicaid Card

- f. Hospital issued birth record
 - g. IRS W-2 form or 1099 form (tax forms that your employer gives you in January) (If you have this than it works as both a document to prove your Social Security number and support your identity.)
 - h. Voter registration card (You can register to vote at age 17 and 10 months.)
 - i. Selective Service card (Males 18 or older who have completed registration)
5. You will not need to bring documents to show your Texas Residency because you have the Certification Form.
 6. You also don't need your parent to sign the form for you to get the ID card because you have the certification form.
- 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 where the ID should be sent, it should look like this:
- Jane Doe**
c/o Maria Garcia
1234 Privet Drive
Austin, TX 78705.
- c. If you have a Certification Form, you do not have to pay the fee for the ID.
 - 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 youth and that there are laws that make it simpler for you to get your ID card. Print out and take with you or have ready on your phone a copy of the DPS Homeless Child or Youth Identification Card Fact Sheet. You can find it under [Identification Documents](#) on TexasFosterYouth.org.
 - f. If there are problems, show them the information about the laws on the Certification Form under *Texas Identification Cards and Driver's Licenses* and the DPS Homeless Child or Youth Identification Card Fact Sheet. 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 1-877-313-3688 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 or 1099 form (tax forms that your employer gives you in January), or paycheck stub with your name and your Social Security number on it to prove your Social Security number.
 4. At least two supporting identity documents to show your identity, but three is better in case DPS rejects one of the documents. You must have originals, **not photocopies**. DPS has a long list of documents you can use listed [here](#). Some of the ones you are most likely to have are:
 - a. Social Security Card (If you have this, then it works as both a document to prove your Social Security number and support your identity)
 - b. School ID
 - c. School report card or transcript
 - d. Immunization records
 - e. Medicaid Card
 - f. Hospital issued birth record
 - g. IRS W-2 form or 1099 form (tax forms that your employer gives you in January) (If you have this than it works as both a document to prove your Social Security number and support your identity.)
 - h. Voter registration card (You can register to vote at age 17 and 10 months.)
 - i. Selective Service card (Males 18 or older who have completed registration)
 5. You will not need to bring documents to show your Texas Residency because you have the Certification Form.
- b. If you are under 18, you will need an adult to go with you and sign for you to obtain the license. This adult does not need to be your parent. Until you are 18, this adult will also have the authority to notify DPS to take away your license.
 - c. Ask the caring adult who is helping you if you may use their address for your license This is where the license 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 where the license should be sent, it should look like this:

Jane Doe
c/o Maria Garcia
 1234 Privet Drive
 Austin, TX 78705.
 - d. Print out and take with you or have ready on your phone a copy of the DPS Homeless Child or Youth Driver's License Fact Sheet. You can find it under [Identification Documents](#) on [TexasFosterYouth.org](#).
 - e. If you have the Certification Form, you do not have to pay the fee for the license.
 - f. There are many other requirements for a driver's 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.
- g. When you go to get your license, if there are problems, show them the information about the laws on the Certification Form under *Texas Identification Cards and Driver's Licenses* and the DPS Homeless Child or Youth Driver's License Fact Sheet. 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.**
 - h. If you think you were wrongly denied your license, you can contact the Texas Foster Youth Justice Project at 1-877-313-3688 or info@texasfosteryouth.org for guidance and possible legal assistance from a lawyer.

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Developed by Texas RioGrande Legal Aid-Texas Foster Youth Justice Project
TexasFosterYouth.org