

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE: HOW TO SELF-CERTIFY YOUR HOMELESS STATUS

If you are currently experiencing homelessness and need housing assistance, you are often asked to provide a "homeless verification letter" from a shelter or case worker. However, if you cannot get one, **federal law allows you to write your own sworn statement**. This is called a **Self-Certification of Homelessness**, and it is your legal "documentation of last resort."

This guide will show you exactly how to complete this process yourself so no agency can give you the runaround.

STEP 1: Understand Your Legal Right to Self-Certify

Under U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines, public housing agencies and emergency programs **must accept a self-certification** if third-party documentation is unavailable or unsafe to get.

You qualify to self-certify if you fit into either of these categories:

- **Category 1 (Literal Homelessness):** You are living in a place not meant for human habitation (like a car, a park, an abandoned building, or on the street) or staying in an emergency shelter.
- **Category 2 (Fleeing Abuse):** You are fleeing a domestic violence situation, have no safe place to go, and lack the money or support to get a new home. **Note:** For your own safety, intake workers are strictly prohibited from contacting your abuser for proof.

STEP 2: Choose and Fill Out the Correct Form

Depending on where you are located, you should use specific documents to make your file as strong as possible:

- **If you are in Georgia:** Complete the official **Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Self-Certification Form**.
- **If you are outside of Georgia:** Use the **Generic Statement of Facts / Self-Certification Form**.
- **The Double-Form Strategy:** For the strongest protection, you can complete **both** forms together. This ensures that no matter what rule an agency throws at you, you have covered your bases.

How to fill out the forms:

1. **Print Your Full Legal Name, Date of Birth, and County.**
2. **Check Only One Box** that perfectly matches your current living situation (e.g., living on

the street/car, fleeing domestic violence, or facing eviction within 14 days).

3. **Sign and Date the Document.** > ⚠️ **CRITICAL WARNING:** These forms are signed under penalty of perjury. All information you write down must be 100% true and accurate. Falsifying this information can result in a loss of assistance, civil liability, or criminal penalties.

STEP 3: Collect Photographic Proof (Your Visual Evidence)

To prevent an administrative office from delaying your case, you should back up your written statement with simple, undeniable photo evidence.

- **If you are staying in a car or truck:** Take a clear photo of the vehicle. Make sure to capture a shot of your belongings inside the vehicle to prove it is being used as a living space.
- **If you are staying outdoors:** Take a photo of your campsite, tent, or the area where you are sleeping.

Attach these printed photos directly to your self-certification forms.

STEP 4: Get Your Document Notarized (If Required)

While standard HUD guidelines do not always require a notary, having your generic **Statement of Facts** notarized turns it into a powerful, sworn legal affidavit that cannot easily be dismissed by a bureaucrat.

- Take your completed form and a valid ID to a local bank, library, or shipping store (like UPS) to sign it in front of a Notary Public. A library will notarize your statement free of charge and can also scan your statement to your email, for quick electronic access.
- If you are an EHV or transitional participant working with **Tell The World Ministries Inc.**, you can coordinate directly with us for assistance with your documentation.

STEP 5: Submit Your Complete "Proof Package"

Hand in your paperwork as a complete bundle. Never give them just one page at a time. Your submission package should include:

1. The Completed Georgia DCA Form (if applicable)
2. The Notarized Generic Statement of Facts Form
3. Your Printed Photographic Evidence

Advocacy Tip: Always keep a duplicate copy of this entire package for your personal records. If an agency claims they "lost" your paperwork, you can instantly hand them a backup copy.

STATEMENT OF FACTS
Self-Certification of Homelessness

I DECLARE UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF _____ THAT THE STATEMENTS BELOW ARE TRUE AND CORRECT.

(Please provide a true and accurate statement of when you became homeless and where you have been sleeping/sheltering. If staying with family or a friend, please provide a letter of your last date to move out. Letter must be dated within 14 days of move-out)

_____ CONTINUED TO BACK OF PAGE _____

The above statements are true and correct, and contain no material omissions of fact to the best of my knowledge and belief.

_____/_____/_____
PRINT OR TYPE NAME DATE OF BIRTH COUNTY

Mailing Address

City State Zip

Primary Phone Alternate Phone Email

Dated: _____ 20_____

SIGNATURE

State of _____
County of _____

On _____, before me, _____,
a Notary Public, personally appeared _____,
who proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence to be the person whose name is
subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that he/she/they executed the
same and that by his/her/their signature on the instrument, the person executed the same.

I certify under PENALTY OF PERJURY under the laws of the State of _____
that the foregoing paragraph is true and correct.

WITNESS my hand and official seal

SEAL

Signature of Notary Public