



# My “Must Have” Papers

Louisiana

*There are some papers that everybody must have. Here are some tips about keeping and protecting your important personal records and information as you move to independence.*

## Get a Binder or File Folder to Keep Your Important Documents

### What to Keep in Your Wallet or Purse

- State ID or driver’s license
- SNAP card (if you have one)
- Health insurance card
- Important numbers
- Appointment book / calendar
- ATM card (only if needed)
- Who to call in case of emergency
- List of medications & the name of prescriber

### What to keep in your Binder

- Education documents
- Medical information
- Housing / utilities information
- Work information
- Financial information
- Learn more about these on the other side of this paper



## Essential Documents to Have

These documents can help you get the other information you may need. Birth Certificates and Social Security Cards may be needed to fill out applications for a job, school or driver’s license.

- Birth Certificate
  - Social Security Card
  - State ID or Driver’s License
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- Passport:** This document can replace all of the essential documents listed above

**If you need to get your birth certificate:** In Louisiana you can get a copy by mail. The order form is available online at [www.vitalrecords.dhh.la.gov](http://www.vitalrecords.dhh.la.gov) and the cost is around \$16.00. You can also go in-person to the Vital Records Central Office at 1450 Poydras St., New Orleans. A photo ID is required and fees must be paid in cash. Birth certificates are available at **some** parish Clerk of Court Offices. Additional processing fees are charged and cost is about \$25.00. For a list of participating Clerk Offices contact the Office of Vital Records at 504-593-5100.

**If you need to get a License/ID/Permit:** Go to your local Office of Motor Vehicles (OMV). For a driver’s license in Louisiana you must complete an approved driver’s education course and live in the state. Applicants must pass a vision, knowledge, and driving skills test. You must bring 2 forms of ID and have proof of insurance. A Driver’s Guide study booklet is available online at [www.omv.dps.state.la.us](http://www.omv.dps.state.la.us). For additional information call 225-925-6146.

**To get a social security card:** You, or your representative, will need to present your ID to the Social Security office and request a new card (there is a limit to the number of cards you can request in your lifetime so keep your card safe). Don’t keep your social security card in your wallet unless you are using it that day. If possible, memorize the number.

**To get a passport:** Call the US Travel Office at 877-487-2778 and ask for a passport office location near your home or go online to [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

***If you keep a social security number or bank information in your phone be sure to password protect it! You want to keep this info safe in case you lose your phone.***

# What to Keep in your Binder or File

**Education Documents** (these are important for school, college, vocational programs, etc.)

- A copy of transcript from all schools attended or GED Certificate
- Most recent IEP or 504 Plan
- Any other certifications (CPR/First Aide), Vocational, CNA, Etc.
- College information: Financial aid information (including passwords), & transcript
- Print copies of any email confirmations you get & keep them too

## **Medical Information**

- Copy of most recent physical & immunizations (important for school & jobs)
- List of doctors' names & numbers (keep a copy in your binder & your wallet)
- List of medications, times, dosages, & who prescribes them (keep a copy in your binder & your wallet)

## **Work Information**

- List of references – first & last names, their position, the company name, phone number, & dates worked
- Copy of letters of recommendations if you have them (don't give your last one away)
- Dates of places you have worked or volunteered & what your responsibilities were
- Work Permit – if you need it (you must get this through your school or city hall)

## **Housing / Utilities Information**

- Phone billing contracts & the most recent 2 bills
- Copy of your lease
- Keep a list with your previous & current landlord's name, contact info, & the dates you lived there
- Most recent 2 gas, electric, cable bills & contracts
- Any housing list / subsidy information, copies of places you have applied
- Start & end dates of where you previously lived, the landlord's name, phone number & a written reference is even better

## **Financial Information**

- A bank book or most recent statement
- Most recent Social Security award letter
- Keep all pay stubs
- Anything Social Security sends you
- All credit/debit card information
- Tax documents: Yearly W-2s, tax documents

**You can also make a folder on your computer or email and keep a lot of this information there – like important emails or confirmations.**

## **What information You Should NOT Give Out?**

- Do not give out passwords (computer, PIN for Bank, Financial Aide, etc.)
- Keep passwords and logins in a safe place for your own personal use
- Social Security numbers (sometimes it's OK, like on a job or housing application or for a bank application)
- Bank account information (unless requested by employer for direct deposit of paycheck)



This tool was developed by the Northeast Massachusetts Community of Practice (Nov., 2011) My Must Have Papers, Worcester, MA: University of Massachusetts Medical School, Department of Psychiatry, Systems and Psychosocial Advances Research Center, Transitions Research and Training Center.  
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