

Tracking Down Missing Documents

Where to Get Important Documents



MISSING SOMETHING? DON'T WORRY.

As you gather important documents into one place for future reference, you may find that some are missing. Most vital records can be tracked down or replaced if you know who to contact. See the list below for common sources of vital records.

Bank statements



Your bank should be able to provide statements for previous months, either electronically where you bank online or by visiting a branch office.

Birth certificate



Contact the [vital records office](#) in the state where you were born to get a copy of your birth certificate. Follow the instructions for requesting copies and paying fees.¹

Car title



If you own your car, free and clear, you should have its title. To replace a lost car title, contact your [state motor vehicle agency](#).

Child care payment records



Ask your child care provider to provide receipts for each payment. If you pay with a debit card, credit card or check, these expenses will appear on your bank statements, as well.

Child support documents



Check with your [state or tribal child support office](#) to get records related to child support orders or other records.

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Divorce certificate or divorce decree



A divorce decree is an official document from the court that grants the termination of a marriage. It includes specific details of the divorce and can be obtained from the [county clerk's office](#) or [clerk of the court](#) for the county or city where the divorce was granted. A divorce certificate is issued by a state vital records office. It shows that a divorce happened but does not state all the same information as a divorce decree. It can be obtained from the [state vital records office](#) in the state where the divorce was granted. ²

Driver's License or State ID



Visit your [state motor vehicle agency](#) to obtain or replace your state ID or driver's license.

GED/HiSET



If you have lost your GED/HiSET certificate, start by contacting the agency or organization where you took your test. You can also check with your [state department of education](#).

High school diploma



Request a certified copy of your high school diploma from the school district where your high school was located.

Immunization records for children



You can get an immunization tracking card from your child's doctor or from your [state health department](#) to keep record of your child's vaccines. If you need official copies of immunization records, check with your child's doctor or clinic, or their school. You can also contact your [state's health department](#). ³

Lease rental agreement



You'll be given a copy of this document when you first sign your lease. Later, you should be able to obtain a copy of this from your landlord.

Marriage certificate



For a certified copy of your marriage certificate, contact the [vital records office](#) in the state where you were married for instructions on how to request a copy and information on any fees. ⁴

Military ID



If you need to replace a military ID, first report the missing card to your base security officer. Then use the [Real Time Automated Personnel Identification System \(RAPIDS\)](#) to get a replacement. ⁵

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Pay stubs



Pay stubs should be provided along with each paycheck or electronically through your employee dashboard. Your employer should be able to give you copies of recent pay stubs if you did not keep them.

Proof of Citizenship or Legal Residency



This might be a U.S. passport, a birth certificate, a naturalization/citizenship certificate, a permanent resident card (green card), or an employment authorization card. The last three of these can be obtained from [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services \(USCIS\)](#).

Record of rent payment



Ask your landlord to provide a receipt for each month's rent payment. In addition, if you pay with a check, this expense will appear on your bank statements.

Social Security Card



Visit the [website of the Social Security Administration \(SSA\)](#) to see if you can apply for a replacement card online. If you don't meet the requirements, follow the instructions to submit the correct documents to the SSA.

Tax returns



You should keep copies of your tax returns for at least three years. To get a copy of a previous tax return, check with your software provider or tax preparer. Prior year tax returns are available from IRS for a fee.⁶ Tax transcripts, however, are free from the IRS, and instructions are at www.irs.gov/individuals/get-transcript. A transcript summarizes return information and includes Adjusted Gross Income (AGI).

Utility bills



Call or visit the website of the utility or service provider to get copies of previous months' bills or statements. This also applies to other bills like cell phone service and insurance.

GATHERING AND STORING ALL YOUR IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS IN ONE PLACE WILL MAKE ITEMS EASIER TO FIND WHEN YOU NEED THEM.