

Document Prep Checklist

What to bring to a shelter intake, rental assistance appointment, or court date — so you're not turned away for paperwork.

Missing paperwork is one of the most common reasons people get turned away or delayed. This checklist walks through what's usually needed, and — if you're missing something — what to get first.

IDENTIFICATION (bring what you have; most places can work with partial documentation)

- ☐ Photo ID (driver's license or state ID)
- ☐ Social Security card (or your SSN, if the card is lost)
- ☐ Birth certificate
- ☐ ID for each family member coming with you, including children

Missing all of these? Start here: a Social Security card is free and fastest to replace (Social Security Administration). A birth certificate (~\$20, AZ Office of Vital Records) is usually needed before a state ID can be reissued (~\$12, MVD). The Homeless ID Project (602-223-3427) can help you navigate this order and may assist with costs.

INCOME & BENEFITS

- ☐ Recent pay stubs (last 30 days) or other proof of income
- ☐ Proof of any benefits you receive (SNAP, TANF, SSI/SSDI, unemployment)
- ☐ Proof of child support, if applicable
- ☐ If you have no current income, a signed statement of zero income is often accepted — ask your caseworker.

HOUSING HISTORY

- ☐ Current or most recent lease
- ☐ Eviction notice or court paperwork, if applicable
- ☐ Landlord contact information
- ☐ Proof of address (utility bill, mail) if available

HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

- ☐ Names and birthdates of everyone in your household
- ☐ Any custody paperwork, if relevant
- ☐ Immunization records for children (some shelters and schools require this)

OTHER USEFUL ITEMS

- ☐ A working phone number or another way to be reached
- ☐ A folder, envelope, or bag to keep all documents together and safe
- ☐ A copy of your Housing Crisis Contact Sheet

If you truly have nothing — no ID, no documents, nothing in writing — that is okay. Say so. Case managers at Keys to Change, the Family Housing Hub, and CAHRA see this regularly and can still help you start the process.

Requirements vary by organization and program. This checklist reflects commonly requested documents but does not guarantee acceptance or eligibility anywhere listed.