

Transcript Season 2 Episode 7 : Help! I've Lost Some Important Documents!

Would you rather go to the Vital Records office to pick up a copy of your birth certificate or go to the dentist? (Cricket sound) Many young adults would be hard pressed to decide which one they dreaded more.

But, unlike going to the dentist, I can pretty much guarantee that getting a copy of your documents really doesn't hurt. Especially if you use our tips to make it a pain free experience.

Podcast Opener:

Everyone needs some advice now and then. If you are getting ready to leave home or have been on your own for a while, Grown Up U: Facts for Success can give you trusted advice that can take the stress out of adulthood. Listen and find some answers to the questions being constantly bombarded at you.

Podcast Script:

Alison Crane: Hi! I'm Alison Crane with the Garland County Extension Service in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Back in season 1 we had two episodes covering what to do when you lose your keys or wallet, and you can go back and listen to those podcasts. Amy Monk and her son, Will, shared some useful tips for who you need to contact or where to go to replace keys or driver's licenses, etc.

In today's podcast, I'm going to share about how to replace those documents that you don't carry around with you in your wallet but are considered your vital records.

I know that my own grown kids would rather do just about anything than go to or call some government office to request a certificate or even renew their driver's licenses. I'll admit that replacing documents is in not one of my favorite things to do but it is not actually difficult to do, if you check for what is required before you go.

Most likely your parents have a certified copy of all of your vital records but when you are out on your own you need your own set, and it is better to have it available before you need it than when you are suddenly in a time crunch.

Let me start with what is considered your most important document, your birth certificate. Your birth certificate proves your identity and age. You also needed it to get your learner's permit and first driver's license.

You need it to apply for a passport or government benefits, to enroll in school, join the military, claim a pension or insurance benefits. Where you were born determines how to get it.

Basically, to receive a copy, you contact the vital records office in the state or territory where you were born. Follow the instructions for requesting copies and paying fees. If you need the copy fast, check for expedited service options when you place your order, but remember that will add to the cost, so planning ahead will save you money.

In Arkansas, you have to be at least 16 to request a birth certificate and there is a list of who can obtain a copy of someone's birth certificate. There are also several ways obtain a copy.

The cost in Arkansas is \$12 for the first copy and \$10 each for any additional copies that you order at the same time.

Be sure to check the list of acceptable forms of identification and make sure you have the right ID before making your request.

You can request a copy online through healthy.arkansas.gov. Follow the steps to order one and pay using a debit or credit card. There are additional fees for the convenience of online ordering. This usually takes 7-14 business days for you to receive your certificate unless you pay for expedited shipping.

You can request one by mail by completing an application downloaded from the website or picked up at your local health unit. You will need a check or money order and copies of accepted ID before you mail it to Little Rock. Expect it to take 10-14 days.

You can go in person to the Arkansas Department of Health Vital Records office in Little Rock or now many of our county health units are offering the service locally. Be sure to bring your accepted ID. You can pay with cash, check, money order or card. Usually, you can get your certificates on the same day unless you are making a non-routine request.

Finally, you can also call (866) 209-9482 to order your birth certificate. Payment will be the same as for online orders and there will be additional fees.

If no record is found, then the state will keep the certificate cost as a search fee and all online or phone fees are nonrefundable.

Your birth certificate is used to apply for several other vital documents, so it is important to have a certified copy of it on hand.

My go to place for finding out what is needed for replacing documents is usa.gov. It is an official website for our government. When you are going to apply online for any documents it is crucial to make sure you are on an official site and not a webpage spoofing a legitimate site to steal your money or information.

Now let's talk about marriage licenses. In Arkansas, to get married you have to be 18 or older without parental consent. The license cost \$60, cash or credit card and has to be recorded within 60 days of being issued. You have to have a valid government issued picture ID that has your correct name and has your date of birth on it.

You don't have to be an Arkansas resident to get a marriage license and get married in Arkansas. But if you are going to be married out of your state of residence, you do need to check with the requirements for that state.

My husband and I got married in Texas even though we lived in Arkansas. In Arkansas, two witnesses were required to sign the license when you actually got married, but in Texas, you had to bring the two witnesses with you to pick up the license. We didn't know that, so we ended up calling one of my co-workers to run over and sign it and then we found a random person who happened to be walking down the hall to sign for us.

Once you are married, to get a certified copy of your marriage license depends on whether you married in the U.S. or abroad. If you married in the U.S., then you contact that state's vital records office and from there they may direct you to the clerk of the city or county where the license was issued. They will tell you whether the cost, what information you need to supply and if you can get a copy online, by mail, or in person.

In Arkansas, it's the same procedure as getting a birth certificate and the cost is \$10 per copy with the added fees for online or phone ordering.

I don't know why, but it's called a marriage coupon on the official Arkansas Health Department website which I find a little humorous. In my mind, I associate coupons with bargains, and it makes me think that some people may find marriage more than they bargained for.

Another important record is a certified copy of a death certificate or record. Like the other documents there are restrictions on who can order a copy of this record and you have to be able to prove your relation to the deceased person before you can receive any copies. You will have to contact the vital records office for the state where the death occurred.

In Arkansas, the first copy is \$10 and additional copies at the same time cost \$8. I will say that while I hope none of our listeners have to order a death certificate for a loved one any time soon, if you do have a death in your family be sure to order multiple copies. If you are having to handle arrangements and settle an estate, you will need to have official documentation to even be able to talk to someone about utilities, social security, etc.

Since I mentioned Social Security, let's talk about that important number. Your nine-digit Social Security number is your first and continuous connection with Social Security for your whole life.

It is necessary to be able to get a job, collect Social Security benefits and get some other government benefits. It's used to identify you on medical records and insurance and even banking accounts. Your number is also used to open up lines of credit, so it's really important to keep your Social Security card in a safe place with your other important papers.

We do not recommend keeping it in your wallet, because if your wallet is stolen or lost then someone else would potentially have access to that important identification number. Most of the time you do not have to have the actual card with you, just knowing the number is enough. Sometimes you will have to bring it with you but more often, a copy of it is enough.

To replace your card, you can visit ssa.gov and request a replacement card as long as you are not making a name change or any other changes. You can also visit your local Social Security office. Just be sure to check on what forms of identification will be required to order a replacement card.

Another important thing to note is Social Security will replace your card for free. Do not pay any other company a fee to do it for you. This could also set you up for identity theft so be very cautious in who you tell your number.

Now, I've told you about several of your vital records that you need to have available. There are more important records but since I don't want your eyes to totally glaze over from TMI, let's stop by saying you can always contact your local county extension office for help in finding out how to replace your vital records and documents.

Don't forget you can go back to season 1 for plenty of helpful tips for improving your adulting skills. Be sure to keep listening to season 2's great lineup. We are going to be sharing some online dating safety tips next week that you won't want to miss in this digital age.

Podcast Closer:

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