

Supporting people experiencing disadvantage

Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria



About this resource

This resource is for organisations who support people experiencing disadvantage. It has been created by the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria (BDM) to help you help your clients get their life event certificate (e.g. a birth certificate).

We have also created resources for specific client groups, such as people experiencing homelessness. For more information on these, turn to the last page of this resource.

Why a birth certificate is important

A birth certificate is the primary identity document used to establish a person's identity. Everyone needs a birth certificate to access:

- Government benefits
- Education
- Childcare
- Employment
- Opening a bank account
- Help with housing.

Access to a birth certificate is a universal human right. A birth certificate can form part of a person's connection to their birth family and their cultural identity. It can also provide someone with information they may not already know — for example, where they were born.

We record life events for the Victorian community and issue certificates.

While this resource references birth certificates (as the most common certificate requested by someone experiencing disadvantage) the advice is relevant for our other certificates, too.

For people born outside of Victoria, contact the Registry in the state or territory where the birth occurred. If you cannot contact the relevant Registry, email vicbdm@justice.vic.gov.au and we can help.



The Department of Justice and Community Safety acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of the land and acknowledges and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.



The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria values diversity and equality, and is committed to the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, and intersex Victorians and their families.

Get the right information

We are here to help! If in doubt, contact us to discuss. It's important you have the right information.

To contact us:

- Email vicbdm@justice.vic.gov.au
- In the subject line, reference 'assisting a client who is experiencing disadvantage'. This helps us manage these enquiries so that you get information you need.

Types of help available

The ways we can help people experiencing disadvantage include:

- Help with proof of identity exceptions
- Help by waiving fees (free certificate).

Proof of identity exceptions

The easiest way for a person to prove their identity is with their driver licence (if it confirms residential address) and passport.



However, some customers can't meet BDM's standard proof of identity requirements.

For these customers, we have a proof of identity exception policy. The policy supports organisations to help clients who can't meet the standard requirements. It provides guidance on what documentation to provide.

To request more information, email vicbdm@justice.vic.gov.au

For more information on our requirements, visit bdm.vic.gov.au/proving-your-identity

Fee waiver

People experiencing hardship and disadvantage may be entitled to a free legal certificate.

BDM's financial hardship and fee waiver policy outlines the circumstances and evidence you may need to provide.

For more information, visit bdm.vic.gov.au/about-us/financial-hardship-and-fee-waiver

Help your clients apply

- 1 Apply offline**
If requesting a fee waiver, your client will need to apply using a paper or emailed form. Request one by emailing vicbdm@justice.vic.gov.au
- 2 Print and sign**
You may need to help your client print and/or complete the forms.
- 3 Attach**
Your client must attach all the required attachments at the time of applying. Refer to the instructions for specific groups, below.
- 4 Email**
Email all documents together to vicbdm@justice.vic.gov.au

Following these steps does not guarantee that BDM will issue a certificate. The Registrar decides whether to grant or deny applications.

Help for specific client groups

There are specific steps you should follow if you are helping people experiencing homelessness. Visit bdm.vic.gov.au/service-partners for more information.

We have general advice on our website for the following groups:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander prisoners
- Refugees
- Survivors of family violence
- People affected by natural disasters.

Visit bdm.vic.gov.au/service-partners for more information.

You can also visit bdm.vic.gov.au for:

- Information in other languages about BDM's services
- Information in other languages about registering a birth.

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Need help? Contact us

 vicbdm@justice.vic.gov.au

 bdm.vic.gov.au

