

Supporting people experiencing disadvantage

Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria
February 2022



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 helps 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, this might include where they were born.

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

Birth certificates are the most common certificate requested by someone experiencing disadvantage. However, the advice in this document is relevant for our other certificates, too.

For people born outside Victoria, contact the [Registry in the state or territory](#) where they were born.



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 bdmapplicationmanagement@justice.vic.gov.au
- In the subject line, mention '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 someone 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 don't have the standard documents. It provides guidance on what documents to provide.

For more information:

- email bdmapplicationmanagement@justice.vic.gov.au or
- 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 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

You can apply on your client's behalf, or help them to apply themselves.

If you have questions, please email bdmapplicationmanagement@justice.vic.gov.au

In the subject line, mention 'assisting a client who is experiencing disadvantage'.
You can either apply offline (via post), or online via our website.

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

Apply offline

- 1 Request a paper application form**
 - Email bdmapplicationmanagement@justice.vic.gov.au
 - Tell us what type of certificate and/or registration you are applying for.
- 2 Download a fee waiver application form**

Download and fill out a [fee waiver application form](#), print and sign it.
The form is available at bdm.vic.gov.au/about-us/financial-hardship-and-fee-waiver
- 3 Attach the fee waiver form**

Attach the form to your paper application.
- 4 Attach evidence**

Attach the evidence required.
For more information, see bdm.vic.gov.au/about-us/financial-hardship-and-fee-waiver.
You do not need to pay to submit the application.
- 5 Submit your application**

Post the forms to:

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria
GPO Box 4332
Melbourne, VIC, 3001

or visit a Justice Service Centre.

Apply online

The fastest way to apply for a certificate or registration is online.

If applying online, you will need to pay up front. We will then assess whether your client is eligible for a fee waiver.

- 1 Apply online**
Apply online for the certificate and/or registration.
- 2 Download a fee waiver application form**
Fill out a [fee waiver application form](#), sign it and save it electronically.
The form is available at bdm.vic.gov.au/about-us/financial-hardship-and-fee-waiver
- 3 Upload the fee waiver form**
Upload the form to your online application.
- 4 Upload the evidence**
Upload the evidence required.
For more information, see bdm.vic.gov.au/about-us/financial-hardship-and-fee-waiver
- 5 Pay**
Pay the fee to submit the application.
- 6 Note**
Note the order number in case you need to follow up with us.

Has your client already applied?

If they didn't apply for a fee waiver at the time, they may be able to apply for a refund.

To learn how to do this within four weeks of applying, see bdm.vic.gov.au/about-us/financial-hardship-and-fee-waiver.

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

 bdmapplicationmanagement@justice.vic.gov.au

 bdm.vic.gov.au