Blackburn Center Services

- 24-Hour Hotline for crisis counseling and referrals
- Emergency Shelter for survivors/victims of Intimate Partner Violence
- Counseling and Therapy
- Support Groups
- Support during emergency room visits and legal proceedings specific to type of victimization
- Community Education Programs
- Student Awareness Programs
- In-service Trainings for professionals

24-HOUR HOTLINE

888-832-2272

People who are deaf and hard of hearing may use Video Relay Service to contact the hotline

ADMINISTRATIVE & COUNSELING OFFICE

724-837-9540

FAX: 724-837-3676

WEBSITE

www.BlackburnCenter.org www.Facebook.com/BlackburnCenterPA





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Notes

How Blackburn Center Can Help

Blackburn Center responds to the issues of violence or crime. All client services are provided at no cost to our clients.

Our services are provided regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation.

24-Hour Hotline: 888-832-2272. The 24-hour hotline provides crisis counseling to survivors/victims of domestic and sexual violence, and all other types of violence and crime. People who are deaf and hard of hearing may use Video Relay Service to call the hotline.

Shelter: Temporary emergency shelter is available to survivors/victims of intimate partner violence and their children.

Counseling and Therapy: Crisis counseling and therapy services are available in-person and through tele-communication.

Support Groups: Blackburn Center's staff facilitates weekly support groups for survivors/victims of violence or crime to explore their strengths, resources and options.

Emergency Room Visit Support: Medical advocates can connect with survivors/victims of domestic and sexual violence, and human trafficking at medical facilities in Westmoreland County to provide support 24/7.

Legal System Support: Legal advocates can accompany survivors/victims of violence and crime and their significant others during PFA hearings, Magisterial District Justice hearings and trials, and provide support, encouragement, and information about available options.

Blackburn Center Legal: Our attorneys can represent clients in matters that are directly related to their victimization.

Your Rights as a Survivor/Victim of Crime

Survivors/Victims of a crime have the right to:

- Be told about services they can receive.
- Be told about court hearings.
- Have someone accompany them to court hearings.
- Be told if the person who committed the crime has been arrested or released for this crime.
- Be told if the person who committed the crime escapes from custody.
- Have their input considered for sentencing decisions.
- Tell the courts how the crime has affected them before the judge sentences the person who committed the crime. This is called a Victim Impact Statement.
- Be told what happens at the end of the case.
- Be paid back by the person who committed the crime for any money they lost as a result of the crime.
- Special notification if they are a survivor/victim of sexual assault and have reported the assault to law enforcement.

How Can I Support Someone Who Has Experienced Violence?

Sincerely listen. Talking about a traumatic experience can be distressing. If someone shares their experience, give them your time and attention.

Provide options and resources. A Blackburn Center hotline counselor may be able to help offer support in learning more about options and local resources.

Validate their experience and support their decisions.

Accepting someone else's experience and choices as valid and understandable can be very empowering since survivors/victims are often not believed.

Offer support in contacting assistance. Since it can be difficult to ask for help, you can help by being with them if they choose to receive any available resources and support.

If possible, follow up. Taking time to reach out after an initial conversation shows a survivor/victim that you are there to continue to support them.

Practice your own self care. Sometimes trauma can affect our own lives so much so that we can no longer be effective at supporting others. It is okay to take time to reach out for support and care for your needs.

Resources for Those Impacted by Human Trafficking

Blackburn Center 888-832-2272

Blackburn Center's 24-hour hotline is available for options, resources, and support. Blackburn Center also provides trainings to professionals and groups who are interested in learning more about human trafficking and how they can support the anti-trafficking movement.

National Human Trafficking Resource Center 888-373-7888

The National Human Trafficking Hotline is a 24/7 hotline that allows survivors/victims or concerned parties to request services.

Westmoreland County Human Trafficking Task Force

The Westmoreland County Human Trafficking Task Force is facilitated by Blackburn Center. The task force's mission is to increase awareness and enhance education about trafficking.

Your Rights as a Survivor/Victim of Crime (continued)

To learn more about your rights as a survivor/victim, you can:

- Ask a Blackburn Center legal advocate or call Blackburn Center at 888-832-2272.
- Visit the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency website at www.pccd.pa.gov.
- Contact the Westmoreland County Victim/Witness Services office at 724-830-3272.

Do you have concerns about your rights?

If you are concerned that your rights have been violated, the resources listed below may be able to provide assistance.

- Westmoreland County District Attorney's office:
 724-830-3949
- Pennsylvania Commission on Crime/Delinquency: 800-692-7292
- Department of Justice Crime Victims' Rights Ombudsmen:
 877-574-9302 (only for survivors/victims of federal crimes)

An advocate from Blackburn Center can help you express your concerns.

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Community Resources

Blackburn Center	
Hotline	888-832-2272
Office	724-837-9540
Addictions/Substance Abuse	
Al-Anon	888-425-2666
Alcoholics Anonymous	724-836-1404
Clear Day	724-834-7000
Gateway Rehabilitation	724-853-7300
Medmark Treatment Centers	724-834-1144
Westmoreland Co. D&A Case Mgmt	800-220-1810
Charitable Organizations	
Catholic Charities	724-837-1840
Christian Layman Corps	724-834-4464
Feeding the Spirit	724-757-2533
Salvation Army	724-834-3335
St. Vincent DePaul	724-836-1077
Westmoreland Co. Food Bank	724-468-8660
YWCA of Greensburg	724-834-9390
Children's Services	
ChildLine	800-932-0313
Children's Bureau	724-830-3300
Domestic Relations	724-830-3200
Early Learning Resource Center	724-836-4580

Human Trafficking

(continued)

Are you or someone you know impacted by human trafficking?

- Is anyone asking you to do sexual acts that you do not want to do?
- Can you leave your job or situation at any time if you want?
- What were you told about a job before you started?
- What promises were made about a relationship?
- Have you or your family been threatened if you try to leave?
- Have your identification documents been taken from you?

Some signs of human trafficking may include:

- Survivor/victim of physical, sexual, or mental abuse
- Withdrawn or fearful
- 'Branded' with large unwanted tattoos
- Always accompanied by a 'friend' or 'translator'
- Lack of personal identification documents

If you have answered "yes" to any of these questions, there is support available. Please call the Blackburn Center's 24-hour hotline at 888-832-2272 for options, resources and support.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act. It is a worldwide crime that exploits the rights of men, women, and children to generate billions of dollars each year.

Two types of trafficking include:

Sex Trafficking -

Sex trafficking survivors/victims are manipulated or forced to engage in sex acts for money.

Labor Trafficking -

Labor trafficking survivors/victims are exploited for work through domestic servitude, debt bondage, or slavery.

Contrary to popular belief, human trafficking happens throughout the United States, including in Westmoreland County. Survivors/victims of sex trafficking may be forced to sell sex in everyday places such as truck stops, rest areas, clubs, street corners, or private homes. Survivors/victims of labor trafficking can be found on farms, in factories, hotels, or working within homes. However, it often goes undetected as people who are traffickers use methods such as violence, manipulation, or false promises of well-paying jobs or romantic relationships to gain and maintain control of their survivors/victims.

Community Resources

(continued)

Domestic Violence Shelters

Alice Paul House (Indiana) 800-435-7249
HOPE Center (Westmd./Allegheny)724-244-1266
The Center for Victims (Allegheny)866-644-2882
Women's Center and Shelter (Allegheny) 412-687-8005
Employment
Career Link 724-755-2330
Private Industry Council724-836-2600
Health/Behavioral Health
988 Crisis/Suicide Hotline 988
Allegheny Health Network Hempfield 412-362-8677
Behavioral Health Crisis Resp. Center 724-832-4465
Independence Health System Frick 724-547-1500
Independence Health System Latrobe 724-537-1000
Independence Health System OB/GYN 724-850-3150
Independence Health System Westmoreland 724-832-4000
National STD and AIDS Hotline 800-227-8922
Planned Parenthood (Westmd.) 724-552-0352
RESOLVE Crisis Hotline (Allegheny) 888-796-8226
Westmoreland Case Mangement (WCSI) 724-837-1808
Homeless Shelters
Union Mission (men only) 724-539-3550
Welcome Home (women, families) 724-838-9133

Community Resources

(continued)

Housing

Homes Build Hope	724-838-0752
Section 8	724-832-7258
SPHS Connect, Inc	724-684-4777
Westmoreland Co. Housing Authority	724-832-7248
Human Services	
Achieva (Westmoreland)	724-837-8159
Area Agency on Aging	724-830-4444
East Suburban Citizen Advocacy	724-325-3344
Mothers Making More (WCA)	724-834-1260 x136
Persad	412-441-9786
Public Utilities Commission	800-692-7380
United Way	211
Westmoreland Comm. Action	724-834-1260
Westmoreland Co. Assistance Office	724-832-5200
Legal	
Constable Services	724-836-8686
Courthouse	724-830-3000
Crime Victim Compensation	800-233-2339
District Attorney's Office	724-830-3949
Family Court	724-830-3665
Lawyer Referral (Westmd. Bar Assoc.)	724-834-8490
Summit Legal Services	800-253-9558
PFA Office	724-853-2207

Survivor/Victim Notification of Forensic Rape Exam Testing Status

Survivors/victims of sexual assault who had an FRE completed and consented to evidence testing have the right to be notified during different phases of examination of evidence.

- You have the right to be notified throughout all, some, or none of these phases.
- You can choose how you would like to be notified by phone, in-person, or by mail.
- While an officer will provide you with a notification, you
 have the right to have an advocate from Blackburn Center
 with you during these notifications to provide you with
 information, support, options and resources.

If any contact information changes, please contact the police officer or department with whom you made the report with.

This can help the police officer or department to provide you with notification and other information as quickly as possible. An advocate from Blackburn Center can assist you with contacting the police officer or department.

Anonymous Reporting Options for a Forensic Rape Exam

For evidence from a forensic rape exam (FRE) to be tested, a report must be made to law enforcement.

Anonymous reporting may be an option, meaning that no identifying information will be given for the report. If someone is under 18 years old, they are not able to choose the anonymous reporting option and a ChildLine report will need to be made.

There are three different anonymous reporting options that a nurse or advocate can discuss with a survivor/victim before any decisions are made.

The anonymous reporting option gives survivors/victims the choice to have evidence collected without committing to next steps in the legal process.

A Blackburn Center medical advocate can support you through the process and explain the options and resources available.

Community Resources

(continued)

Legal (continued)

Prothonotary's Office	724-830-3502
Sheriff's Department	724-830-3822
Victim Witness Office	. 724-830-3272
Transportation	
GO Westmoreland	724-832-2706
Medical Assistance Transportation	800-242-2706
Traveler's Aid	412-281-5474
Veteran's Cab Company	. 724-537-7708
Westmd. Co. Transit Authority	. 800-221-9282

Additional contact information of people or places that may provide support:

name: _	 	 	

Organization: _____

Name: _______Organization: ______

Phone Number:

Victim Compensation Assistance Program

If a survivor/victim incurs any of the following expenses as the result of a crime committed against them, PA's Victim Compensation Assistance Program (VCAP) may be able to reimburse what they paid. VCAP considers each claim individually to determine eligibility. Some expenses VCAP may cover include:

- Lost Wages
- Transportation Costs
- Medical Expenses
- Medical Equipment/Supplies
- Additional Related Expenses

You can call the Victim Compensation Assistance Program directly at 800-233-2339 or visit their website at https://www.dave.pa.gov to file a claim.

If you have questions or need help filing a claim, Blackburn Center can help. To request Blackburn Center assistance in filing a claim, call Blackburn Center's hotline at 888-832-2272.

Sexual Assault Survivors/Victims Have Options

Sexual assault survivors/victims have several options available to them and there is no one choice better than any other. Some options that a survivors/victims may wish to consider are:

- Calling Blackburn Center's hotline for support and additional information about options. Our hotline is answered 24/7. The phone number is 888-832-2272.
- Going to a hospital's emergency room, especially if the assault took place within the last two weeks. One of Blackburn Center's medical advocates can support you through this process. They can tell you more about what you can expect if you make the decision to be seen at the hospital. The hospital can request a medical advocate by calling 888-832-2272.
- Reaching out to a trusted family member or friend for support.
- Contacting the police to report the assault.

It is always up to a survivor/victim who they decide to tell about the assault. Safety and support are important considerations for survivors/victims of sexual violence. No one should be pressured to report an assault for any reason.

Resources for Children who Experience Abuse

If you suspect child abuse, you can report the abuse to:
ChildLine

800-932-0313 hildLine is part of a mandated statew

ChildLine is part of a mandated statewide Child Protective Services program that accepts child abuse referrals and concerns. ChildLine sends reports of abuse to the law enforcement agency in the county where the abuse occurred.

A Child's Place 412-232-7200

A Child's Place is an advocacy center where professionals investigate child abuse by speaking to the child about suspected abuse in a safe and child-friendly environment. Medical professionals can also conduct forensic exams. Any findings may be used in legal proceedings.



Common Reactions to Trauma

Everyone reacts differently to being the survivor/victim of a crime or the act of violence. There is no "right" way or "normal" way to feel or react, and a person may have multiple reactions to a traumatic experience. Some people report feeling or experiencing:

- Shock, disbelief, disorientation, fear, anxiety, sadness, anger
- Crying or laughing, even when they think it's not appropriate
- Nightmares or flashbacks (feeling like the traumatic incident is happening all over again)
- Disturbing thoughts about the traumatic incident, or not being able to stop thinking about it
- Blaming themself for the assault
- Feeling a loss of control

- Sleeping too little or sleeping all of the time
- Inability to process
 information, or recall an
 exact timeline of the events
- Eating too little or too much
- Feeling jumpy or easily startled
- Not being able to feel anything
- Using drugs or alcohol to feel better
- Not feeling well physically
- Suicidal thoughts

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Common Reactions to Trauma (continued)

Experiences that are traumatic often involve a threat to our life or safety, but any situation that causes a person to be under great stress or to have feelings of isolation may be traumatic, even if it doesn't involve physical harm.

Many of the reactions that were described on the previous page may be reduced or go away completely with time, support and healing. Recovery from a traumatic event can take time.

Blackburn Center counselors and therapists can help you, and the important people in your life, to understand what you are going through. Our services are provided at no cost to clients and can be anonymous.

At Blackburn Center, all of our services to those we support are trauma-informed. This means that we meet people who have experienced violence or crime where they are, mentally and emotionally, to support their needs for safety and independence. Through developing trust and working together to empower the choices of those we work with, this approach helps survivors/victims understand the trauma they have experienced and rebuild a sense of control in their lives.

Sexual Abuse of Children

(continued)

Most people who abuse are someone the child knows, such as a family member, authority figure, babysitter, or friend. Children often don't or can't tell anyone about the abuse. Some reasons a child may not tell about abuse are:

- They are afraid that no one will believe them.
- They are afraid to upset family members.
- The person abusing them may have threatened to harm the child, their family, or pets if the child tells.
- They may think they will be blamed for the abuse.
- They may not have the words to explain what is going on.

Sexual contact with a child or teen is against the law even if the abuser believes the young person agreed to the sexual activity. Children and young teens are afforded legal protection from any sexual contact by adults and older teens because when there is such a difference in power, sexual contact is harmful.

If you suspect that a child is being abused, you can report the suspected abuse to ChildLine at 800-932-0313.

Sexual Abuse of Children

Child sexual abuse is any sexual contact with a child, including sexual touching, intercourse, using a child for pornography, exposing a child to pornography, or other sexual acts.

All forms of child sexual abuse are illegal. Abuse can happen to children of any gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, or economic background.

Sexual abuse is never the child's fault. The only person responsible for the abuse is the perpetrator of the abuse. People who abuse children often do not use physical force. Instead, child abusers may "groom" children for sexual assault by befriending them and drawing them into secretive, emotional relationships.

Signs of sexual abuse are not always clear. However, some indicators a child is experiencing sexual abuse include:

- Bruises, pain or itching in the genital area
- Genital or urinary tract infections
- Torn, stained or bloody undergarments
- Problem with bedtime or fear of going to sleep
- Fear of certain people or places
- Bedwetting
- Unusual interest in sex or knowledge of sexual matters

What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of coercive behavior used by one person to gain power and control over an intimate partner or family member.

Domestic violence is sometimes referred to as intimate partner violence, dating violence, relationship abuse, and/or family violence.

Tactics used by people who abuse are not always illegal and abuse is not always physical. Other forms of violence that can occur in domestic violence situations can include:

- Emotional Abuse
- Financial Abuse
- Stalking

- Reproductive Coercion
- Sexual Violence
- Verbal Abuse

It can be very difficult to acknowledge that you or someone you are close to is experiencing domestic violence. People who abuse may be perceived as a trusted or even "nice" person by others. They will often go to great lengths to control the survivor/victim, their interactions, and daily life.

Abuse is never the survivor's/victim's fault.

Why is it hard to leave?

Domestic violence often follows a repeating cycle within a relationship. Not every abusive relationship follows this pattern, but many survivors/victims describe their relationships in this way:

Tension Builds Honeymoon Phase The person who As tension begins to abuses may be build, the affectionate or The majority of survivor/victim apologetic. survivors/victims may feel that They may they have to will leave promise walk on **7-12 Times** that the 'eggshells'. abuse will before they leave for never happen the final time again. Each phase of the cycle **Abuse Occurs** can last for any amount of time

Tensions break, and the person who abuses makes threats, harms the survivor/victim, or denies them from basic necessities.

By understanding this cycle we can understand why people who abuse can make it difficult to leave. The most dangerous time in an abusive relationship can be when the survivor/victim tries to leave. The only person who can safely make the decision to leave a person who abuses is the survivor/victim themself.

Sexual Assault and the Law

Sexual assault is referred to by many terms under the law.

Some of these terms include rape, statutory sexual assault, indecent assault, and incest. There are differences between these crimes but they all include unwanted or inappropriate sexual contact.

In Pennsylvania, it is against the law when:

- Someone forces you to have sexual contact when you do not want to
- Someone threatens to hurt you or punish you if you will not have sex
- Your spouse forces you to have sex
- Someone has sex with you when you cannot consent because of alcohol or drug use or a mental or medical condition
- Someone has sexual contact with a person under 13 years old
- Someone has sexual contact with a person between 13 and 16 years old and that person is four or more years older
- Someone has sexual contact with a blood relative or an adopted family member

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What is Sexual Assault?

Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual contact or activity to which you do not consent. Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

Sexual assault is a crime. It is *not* motivated by sexual desire; it is about power and control. Perpetrators of sexual violence use sex as a weapon to dominate, degrade, embarrass, and humiliate others.

Many people believe that sexual assault only happens to certain types of people or in certain situations, but sexual violence happens to people of all ages and backgrounds, and regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Perpetrators can also be any age, gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Most perpetrators are someone that the survivor/victim already knows.

Survivors/victims of sexual assault may experience shame, grief, anger, and fear as the result of a sexual assault. These feelings may impact a survivor/victim regardless of their gender or gender identity.

Sexual violence is NEVER the survivor's/victim's fault. It does not matter what the survivor/victim did or did not do, the perpetrator is always responsible for the assault.

Common Signs of Abuse

This list is not comprehensive, and people who abuse may often use a variety of methods to gain and maintain power and control. Every experience is different.

Some common signs of abuse can include but are not limited to:

Physical Abuse

- Pushing, hitting, biting, kicking, or scratching you
- Twisting, slapping,
 punching, or burning you
- Choking or strangling you
- Throwing things at you or at your children
- Using a weapon to hurt you
- Hurting your family members or pets
- Not allowing you to sleep

Sexual Abuse

- Physically forcing you to have sex
- Doing sexual things to you without your consent
- Grabbing or groping you
- Threatening or forcing you to do sexual things that you don't want to do or that hurt you
- Refusing to use birth
 control or protection
 against sexually
 transmitted infections OR
 making you use birth
 control or abortion

Common Signs of Abuse

(continued)

Emotional Abuse

- Calling you names, insulting you, or putting you down
- Yelling or screaming at you or your children
- Threatening to hurt you, your children, pets, or anyone who tries to help you
- Accusing you of being unfaithful
- Isolating you from family and friends
- Threatening to have you put in jail or the hospital
- Following, stalking, or doing things to scare you
- Ignoring your feelings or making fun of you for being angry or upset

Financial Abuse

- Controlling all of the money
- Withholding money that you need to care for yourself and/or your children
- Taking money that you earned or that belongs to you
- Harassing you at work or causing you to miss work so that you get in trouble at work or lose your job
- Destroying your personal property
- Using your credit without permission or ruining your credit

Protection Orders

(continued)

In Westmoreland County, you can file for a PFA/PSVI in the County Courthouse. For times and availability you can reach the **PFA Office** at **724-853-2207**. In the evening and on weekends or holidays, you may file for an Emergency PFA or PSVI by contacting your local police department. Your local police will tell you what to do to get the Emergency PFA/PSVI.

Who can obtain a PFA Order?

- Spouses and ex-spouses, current or former sexual or intimate partners, which may include dating relationships
- Family members through blood or marriage and household members

Who can obtain a PSVI Order?

 Survivors/victims of sexual violence, harassment, stalking, and intimidation when the person abusing them is not a member of their family or household

Blackburn Center hotline counselors can answer your questions about PFAs and help you decide if a PFA or PSVI may be a safe option for you. Our legal advocates may be able to support you during this process.

Protection Orders

A Protection from Abuse (PFA) or Protection from Sexual Violence and Intimidation (PSVI) Order is a civil order of the court signed by a judge. If the protection order is granted, the court will order the abuser to stop all contact with the person who is being abused. A violation of the judge's order could result in criminal charges for the abuser.

Pennsylvania's state law defines abuse as:

- Causing or attempting to cause physical injury
- Placing another in fear of bodily injury
- Sexual assault
- False Imprisonment (restrains you against your will)
- Stalking

Who can file for a PFA/PSVI Order?

To file for a PFA/PSVI Order you must be at least 18 years old or an emancipated minor. If you are under 18, a parent, guardian or adult household member may file on your behalf.

There is no cost to file a PFA/PSVI.

Domestic Violence and Children

Domestic violence can affect children too. Even when it seems like a child doesn't notice, they may be a witness to the violence. Children who live in homes where domestic violence is happening may:

- Hear threats or the sounds of physical abuse
- Become fearful or anxiousFind it difficult to feel safe
- Observe the aftermath of physical abuse
- Copy the behaviors they see or hear
- Think violence is normal

You can help your child to feel safer by talking with them about what they are experiencing and helping them to come up with a safety plan for when violence occurs. Having a supportive relationship with a parent or adult who is not violent can make a difference. Here are some ideas you may want to consider:

- Let your child know that the violence is never their fault.
- Let your child know it is not their job to protect the adult.
- Make sure your child knows when and how to call 911.
- Make sure your child knows their address.
- Make sure there is a safe place or a safe person for your child to go to or call when violence is happening.

Creating a Safety Plan

Knowing ahead of time what to do when you are in danger can help to keep you safe. A safety plan is a personalized plan that may help you react if a situation becomes dangerous for you or those you care for.

Here are some ideas that might help:

- Call 911 if there is an emergency.
- If there is a threat of danger, try to avoid rooms like the kitchen and bathroom, where there may be weapons and hard surfaces that could harm you.
- Know places where you can be safe if you need to leave in a hurry; some options could be a neighbor's house, a nearby store or restaurant, or the hospital emergency room.
- Keep emergency phone numbers in a safe location in case the person who abuses you damages your cell phone.
- Turn off the location sharing settings in your cell phone.
- Tell someone you trust what is going on, so they are able to check on you.

To learn more about strategies to help keep you and those you care for safe, please call Blackburn Center's hotline at 888-832-2272. Counselors are available 24/7.

Creating a Safety Plan

(continued)

If you are in danger and decide that leaving is the best option for your situation, here are some items to consider taking:

Identification

- Driver's license
- Birth certificate and children's birth certificates
- Social security card and children's social security cards
- Financial information
- Money and/or credit cards (in your name)

Other Essential Items

- Medications
- Extra clothing for yourself or any children
- Cell phone and charger
- Extra cash
- Toys, blankets, and other items for children

Legal Documents

- Protection From Abuse
 (PFA) Order
- Divorce or custody documents
- Passport or work permits/green card/visa
- Copies of any lease or rental agreements, or the deed to your home
- Car registration and insurance papers
- Health and life insurance papers
- Medical records for you and your children
- School records