Turning 18: Essential Documents Checklist

For college, travel, and independent life: at 18, parents lose automatic access to medical records and the authority to act for their student. Prepare these together, with your student's consent.

> *Prefer a guided option? Consider Mama Bear Legal Forms. Not required: the forms below are free.*

01 California Advance Health Care Directive

Names a healthcare decision-maker (such as a parent). Notarize or sign with two qualified adult witnesses.

Download California Advance Health Care Directive

02 HIPAA Authorization / Medical Records Release

Lets parents receive medical information. Some providers require their own form. No notary needed.

Download General HIPAA Authorization Form

03 Durable Power of Attorney (Financial)

Optional backup for banking, insurance, and legal matters. Powers can be limited. Notarization recommended.

Select California (or your state) when downloading.

Download Durable Power of Attorney Form

04 College FERPA Authorization

Lets parents see records such as grades. Completed through the college's student portal or Registrar.

No notary needed. Forms vary by college.

What is FERPA?

Before the notary appointment

Fill out forms ahead, but don't sign until the notary says to. Your student brings photo ID; parents usually needn't attend.

If your student moves to another state

Acceptance varies by state. After a move, review the directive and power of attorney under the new state's laws.

College + travel checklist

- [ ] Campus health center release. Ask if it needs its own form.
- [ ] Paper + digital copies. Originals at home; scans in shared cloud storage like Google Drive.
- [ ] Everyday essentials. ID, insurance card, emergency contacts, medications and allergies.
- [ ] International travel. Valid passport, travel medical coverage, and the State Department's STEP program.

General planning recommendation, not legal advice. Requirements vary; consult a qualified attorney for your family's situation.