

Know Your Rights: Turning 18

This fact sheet is for educational purposes only. Nothing here should be considered legal advice. Please consult a lawyer for more specific information.

Updated as of March 2025

General Rights and Responsibilities

- **Vote**
 - If you are a citizen/green card holder
 - To vote, you must register
- **Sign a contract, apply for a loan, and get married, have an attorney if suing/getting sued**
- **Register with Selective Services**
 - If you are a male or male assigned at birth
 - Within 30 days of your 18th birthday
 - Failure to register: penalties such as fines or jail time
 - Even if you are undocumented (but not if admitted on non-immigrant visas)
- **You CANNOT purchase/consume alcohol, tobacco, or nicotine products if under 21**
 - Includes vape
 - Cannot purchase from someone else (ex: a friend or family member)
 - Cannot lie about your age
- **Just because you have these rights and you are 18, does not mean you cannot or should not seek advice from adults you trust, especially because not everything on the internet is true.**

Foster Care

- **If you are already in the care of DCF when you turn 18, you can continue getting help**
 - After you turn 17, your DCF caseworker should work with you to develop a plan for continuation of services and to determine if you meet the eligibility requirements.
- **If you were in the custody, care, or responsibility of DCF when you turned 18, you can apply to re-enter foster care or get services from DCF until you are 22**

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DCF Financial Assistance

- If you continue to get services or re-enter, you may be eligible for Young Adult Support Payments (there are certain eligibility requirements)
- You may receive YASP twice per month for rent or college room (housing) and board (food) up to age 22

Websites/Other Resources

- **MA Appleseed Homeless Youth Handbook:**
 - <https://www.homelessyouth.org/en/us/massachusetts>
- **Resources if you are Experiencing Homelessness:**
 - <https://www.mass.gov/masshire-career-centers>
 - To learn about resources in your area, call 211
- **Enroll in MassHealth:**
 - <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/enroll-in-a-masshealth-health-plan-individuals-and-families-younger-than-65>
- **Help Seal Your Criminal (CORI)/Delinquency Record:**
 - <https://www.gbls.org/what-we-do/cori-and-reentry>
- **Register to Vote**
 - <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/>
- **Learn About Native American and Tribal Laws**
 - <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-law-about-american-indians>
- **Foster Care Bill of Rights:**
 - <https://www.mass.gov/doc/foster-child-rights-0/download>
- **MassHire Career Centers:**
 - <https://www.mass.gov/masshire-career-centers>

