PLANNING

Set up your system

Organize without making sensitive data easier to steal.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS ORGANIZER

USE THREE LAYERS

Separate originals, working copies, and secure digital backups. Create an index that identifies a document and location without listing full account, identification, or password details.

- ☐ Store originals in a protected, lawful location.
- ☐ Use access controls for digital copies.
- ☐ Limit access to people who genuinely need it.
- ☐ Record review date and responsible person.

EXAMPLE

Index: ·Passport · original: secure home storage; digital copy: encrypted archive; review: June.·

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

What document would be hardest to replace?

Who needs access during an emergency?

General organization information, not legal, tax, financial, or identity-security advice. Protect sensitive records. For document validity, benefits, taxes, estates, or disputes, use official agencies and qualified professionals.

PLANNING

Identity and civil records

Know what proves key facts.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS ORGANIZER

CORE RECORD CHECKLIST

Gather documents such as birth records, identity documents, citizenship or immigration records where applicable, marriage or name-change records, and social insurance records. Requirements vary by jurisdiction; request replacements only through official channels.

- [ ] Check names and dates for errors.
- [ ] Keep certified copies distinct from ordinary copies.
- [ ] Never send sensitive images through an unverified request.
- [ ] Note issuing agency and renewal or replacement process.

EXAMPLE

Index note: ·Birth certificate · certified copy, issuing county; replacement instructions bookmarked from official county site.·

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Which record has an upcoming expiration date?

Which agency issued each original?

PLANNING

Home, work, and education

File records people ask for repeatedly.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS ORGANIZER

ACTIVE-LIFE RECORDS

Group lease or deed records, insurance policies, vehicle documents, employment agreements, pay records, diplomas, transcripts, and professional licenses. Keep only what you need and follow retention requirements from official sources or professionals.

- [ ] File newest policy or contract at the front.
- [ ] Record employer or school portal contacts, not passwords.
- [ ] Keep repair, deposit, and major purchase receipts together.
- [ ] Mark records that require renewal or a response deadline.

EXAMPLE

Folder label: ·Housing · lease, move-in report, renter policy, repair requests, receipts.·

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Which document would I need to prove a current address or job?

What old version can be securely discarded?

PLANNING

Money and tax records

Use categories, dates, and official retention guidance.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS ORGANIZER

MAKE RETRIEVAL EASY

Separate statements, tax filings, receipts, debt records, and benefit correspondence by year. Retention periods and requirements differ; consult your tax authority, provider, or qualified adviser for your situation.

- [ ] Keep a list of institutions and official contact routes.
- [ ] Redact or secure identifiers on working copies.
- [ ] Match digital file names to year and document type.
- [ ] Do not throw away a record while a question, claim, or audit is unresolved.

EXAMPLE

File name: ·2025-tax-return-submitted.pdf·; index location only, not a tax identification number.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

What is the official source for retention rules where I live?

Which open issue means a record must stay available?

PLANNING

Health and care records

Keep a concise, privacy-aware reference.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS ORGANIZER

WHAT TO KEEP ACCESSIBLE

Maintain insurance contacts, immunization records, provider information, medication list, and care directives where applicable. Protect these records carefully and update them after provider, coverage, or medication changes.

- ☐ Use the provider portal or official office for copies.
- ☐ Keep emergency information separate for quick access.
- ☐ Do not rely on this organizer for medical instructions.
- ☐ Ask a qualified professional about forms that have legal or medical significance.

EXAMPLE

Care index: ·Insurance card copy: secure folder; primary clinic: official phone; medication list verified: date.·

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Who has permission to access health information?

When was this summary last confirmed?

PLANNING

Create a document map

A map is safer than a pile.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS ORGANIZER

INDEX EACH ITEM

For every category, record document name, holder, location, date issued, expiration or review date, and action needed. Avoid including secret answers, passwords, or full identification numbers in the map.

- [ ] Use ·original,· ·copy,· or ·digital· as location types.
- [ ] Flag documents needed for travel, school, benefits, or claims.
- [ ] Set calendar reminders 90 and 30 days before expiration.
- [ ] Keep a small ·to file· tray and process it weekly.

EXAMPLE

Map row: ·Driver license | original | secure wallet | expires 08/2028 | renew through official motor agency.·

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Which three documents need reminders now?

What is currently sitting unfiled?

PLANNING

Maintain and respond

Update calmly after a life change.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS ORGANIZER

QUARTERLY AND LIFE-EVENT REVIEW

Review the index after a move, new job, marriage, separation, birth, death, major purchase, or policy change. Securely destroy duplicates only after confirming they are unnecessary. If records are lost or identity misuse is suspected, use official reporting and recovery resources promptly.

- [ ] Confirm backups can actually be opened.
- [ ] Remove access for people who no longer need it.
- [ ] Record replacement request dates and reference numbers.
- [ ] Ask official agencies or qualified professionals for unclear requirements.

EXAMPLE

Life-change list: update address, insurance, employer records, emergency contacts, beneficiaries where appropriate, and the document map.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

What changed since my last review?

What is the safest next action for a missing record?