

YOUR PUBLIC RECORDS CHEAT SHEET

TYPE OF RECORD	WHERE TO FIND IT	WHAT TO DO
Your Voter Registration (you are registered, right?)	<p>Your secretary of state's website. Most states have a voter lookup tool to check where you're registered.</p> <p>If your state's webpage doesn't have an easy way to locate your registration, check your county board of elections.</p>	<p>Not finding yourself there? Get registered, baby! Voting is the most important thing you can do as a citizen!</p> <p>Registered with the incorrect party? Call your board of elections and get that corrected.</p> <p>Does this remind you that you might still be registered in another state where you used to live? Check that state's registration page. You should not be registered to vote in more than one state.</p>
Your Voter History (showing when you voted, but not who you voted for)	<p>This information is usually not online but can be requested at the county board of elections.</p>	<p>Did you miss elections? It happens.</p> <p>If you can request it, get a copy of your voter history mailed to you so you have it for your records.</p> <p>Check which elections the record says you missed: Did you actually vote and it's an error? Was it a presidential election or a local one?</p>
Your Political Giving History (which candidates did you contribute money to?)	<p>If you've contributed to federal candidates, you can search your name in the Federal Election Commission's online database. Anyone who has given more than \$200 to a congressional or presidential candidate is recorded and posted online.</p> <p>States localities also track campaign donations. Check your secretary of state's or the local board of elections website to see who you've given money to in the past.</p>	<p>Does the FEC show you gave \$500 to former pizza shop owner-turned presidential candidate Herman Cain in 2011?</p> <p>Be thoughtful about how you'd respond if asked about your donation. Perhaps you felt strongly about Cain's 999 plan, or maybe you've rethought your allegiance to it. Either way, obtaining your contribution records is the first step before you can move forward.</p>
Property Records (mortgages, deeds, land trusts, property taxes)	<p>These are typically found online at the county recorder of deeds, the registrar, or the tax collector.</p>	<p>Make sure you're up to date on your property taxes—note the next due date, and bookmark the page so you can easily find it again.</p> <p>Are you taking any tax exemptions? Are those exemptions correct?</p> <p>Have you bought or sold property in another state? Find those records and make sure they are up to date.</p>

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Personal Income Taxes	Unless you accidentally put your income tax filing on Instagram, these are not online. (But if you've been issued a lien or judgment to pay, the court record filed by the IRS will be publicly available.)	Are you up to date on your taxes? If not, can you work out a payment plan? Do you know an accountant or lawyer who can help?
Criminal or Civil Court Records (arrests, lawsuits, liens and judgments, marriages and divorces, probate issues . . . there are myriad reasons to check your name in the courthouse database)	Most cases can be found online via courthouse websites, but for older records, you might have to go to the courthouse in person and request copies.	<p>If you have outstanding legal issues, consider hiring a lawyer—perhaps someone in your Inner Circle who can help? Get her up to speed on any legal issues you find and see what she can do to help get your case cleared.</p> <p>Records that were sealed in the process of the case (unless otherwise indicated) should remain sealed and should not be available to the public.</p>
Debt (student loan payments, credit card debt, mortgage payments, car loans, etc.)	Unless you were taken to court to pay your debts, this information is typically not available to the public.	Some elected offices require you to file personal financial disclosure reports. These reports usually require a statement about your debt (how much you owe and to whom).
Medical Records	More and more of our medical histories (relating to both our mental and physical health) are moving out of paper files and into the digital world. But breathe easy; this doesn't mean they are online.	Unless any of your medical history is pertinent to a court case and is included in court records, it is unlikely that your medical records are available to the public.
Military Service Records	<p>Some records pertaining to a veteran's dates of service, awards given and received, personnel documents, or medical history are available to the public and can be requested online from the National Personnel Records Center of the National Archives.</p> <p>But almost all records are released only to the veterans themselves or their next of kin and are not available to the public.</p>	If you're a veteran and running for office, get a backup copy of all your records. That way you have the proper documentation should the press or anyone else ask for it.