



Fact Sheet: Driver's Licenses for All

Updated as of January 3, 2023

Driver's licenses, issued by Minnesota's Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), allow individuals to navigate our roads safely and legally. In Minnesota, only individuals who pass the driver's test and prove legal immigration status are allowed to receive a driver's license. That means immigrants without immigration status do not have safe, legal access to our shared roads. Currently, [eighteen states](#), Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico allow undocumented immigrants access to driver's licenses.

How does issuing driver's licenses without regard to immigration status benefit Minnesota?

It makes our roads safer for everyone

- Minnesotans without immigration status would need to pass a written and driving test to obtain a license, ensuring all drivers are certified to drive.
- Driver's licenses for all means fewer accidents. Issuing licenses to immigrants without immigration status led to a [9% decrease](#) in hit-and-runs in Connecticut and a [7-10% decrease](#) in California.
- With licenses, undocumented drivers will also be required to purchase auto insurance. After passing laws that allow undocumented drivers access to licenses, [Utah and New Mexico both say significant drops in their rates of uninsured drivers.](#)

It benefits families and the economy

- In Minnesota, annual income would increase an estimated [\\$2,000-6,000](#) for full-time workers lacking immigration status if permitted to obtain a driver's license. That means more spending, boosting Minnesota's economy for all of us.
- [Greater Minnesota and the agricultural sector depend on immigrant workers](#), who need safe and legal access to roads in rural areas with little to no existing public transit.
- All drivers benefit from [lower auto insurance rates](#) in states that grant driving privileges regardless of immigration status.
- In Oregon, research found that barring immigrants lacking immigration status from receiving driver's licenses would likely cause the state to [lose \\$134-201.9 million in gross domestic product](#) due to the difficulty they would have in accessing their jobs without driving.
- In New York, research showed that [newly licensed immigrants would buy and register more cars.](#)
- Research in New York and Massachusetts found that [government revenue increases created by permit and license fees and license renewal fees easily exceed any costs.](#)
- [Connecticut's DMV collected \\$7.5 million in license fees over four years](#) – offset by just \$300,000 to ramp up the new license program

It makes life safer for our immigrant neighbors and friends

- As of 2018, [30,700 U.S. citizen children in Minnesota](#) have parents who lack immigration status, 2.4% of all children under 18 in the state. For these mixed-status families, issuing licenses to parents means giving U.S. citizen children safer access to essential services like education and healthcare.
- [Law enforcement supports](#) creating access to driver's licenses for all immigrants to be able to verify everyone's identity, giving them greater ability to protect public safety.

- Allowing immigrants to obtain licenses regardless of immigration status would grant greater ability to enforce laws in immigrant communities. Allowing them access to a license, a way to drive legally, and a way to identify themselves to law enforcement would increase trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement, leading to greater collaboration and cooperation.
- Immigrants with access to driver's licenses are able to help their citizen children go to school, to the doctor, and to activities and employment, building stronger families and communities for all.

It keeps our communities healthy in the fight against COVID-19

- [69% of individuals without immigration status work in front-line jobs](#) considered “essential” to the U.S. fight against COVID-19. We need to ensure they have safe, reliable transportation to work.
- [Driver's licenses improve healthcare access](#) and health outcomes for Minnesotans lacking immigration status, which strengthens our entire community's health.

How would it work?

- Driver's licenses could be used as proof to drive and of identity but could not be used to vote or for REAL ID purposes. Issuing licenses without proof of immigration status would not only benefit immigrants, but also those experiencing homelessness, the elderly, and other groups who may have difficulty obtaining hard-to-access documentation.



ILCM is a member of the Freedom to Drive Coalition.

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