

Driver's Licenses for All Michigan Residents

FAQ

1 Why do driver's licenses for all matter?

Many people who already have access to driver's licenses take them for granted, but driving is essential to everyday participation in society. All Michigan residents need to travel to work, school, church, medical appointments, shop for groceries, and to purchase goods and services out of their immediate areas, but far too many communities lack access to reliable public transportation, making driving a necessity.

We cannot say we need immigrants to participate in our workforce on the one hand, but deny them the means of transportation to do so on the other. It is a matter of fairness, dignity and justice.

Immigrants create so much of what makes our beautiful state one that people want to live in. Driver's licenses for all is about recognizing that immigrants are people who deserve safety, and the ability to move around freely like everyone else. With the ability to drive to work, school, and other beautiful places in our state, undocumented folks can participate in society without the fear of being separated from their families.

3 How will driver's licenses for all make our roads safer?

Driver's licenses will increase safety on the roads. When people are able to get licenses that means that they will:

- Complete driver's license training and testing, improving road safety for all.
- Have access to car insurance, which means that they are more likely to stop when they get into a traffic accident.
- Be able to take driving lessons to learn how to better follow traffic laws.
- Have better interactions with police if they are pulled over for something as simple as a faulty brake light.
- Feel safer running errands without the fear that they will be separated from their families if they are pulled over.

2 Who benefits from driver's licenses for all?

DACA recipients, undocumented immigrants, legal immigrants who haven't received their verification documents because of bureaucratic delays, rural and elderly people who don't have birth certificates, citizens born abroad, and foreign adoptees all directly benefit.

Most importantly, all Michiganders benefit from this legislation. We are all better off when our neighbors are taken care of - and the roads are much safer.

4 How will extending driver's licenses to all Michigan residents impact our economy?

First, undocumented folks already pay taxes.

Second, the influx of fees associated with obtaining a driver's license will actually mean more revenue for the Secretary of State's office to pay for other services that all Michiganders rely on. According to a study done by Michigan League for Public Policy (MLPP) in 2021, Michigan's \$100 billion agricultural industry needs workers with reliable transportation. An estimated 5 percent of the state's immigrants work in this industry. The Michigan Farm Bureau endorses driver's licenses for all.

With reliable transportation, all Michigan residents will be able to secure better jobs, work more hours, travel farther to meet employers' labor needs and purchase goods and services. All that will mean more tax revenue for Michigan.

MLPP's research also found that an estimated 55,000 new driver's licenses will be issued, and 20,000 vehicles will be purchased, resulting in \$13.5 million in revenue in the first three years. In addition, \$12 million in annual revenue will be generated from sales and gas taxes, resulting in \$100 million in revenue over 10 years.



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Sources:
Michigan Immigrant Rights Center,
Michigan League for Public Policy

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FAQ

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5 What will happen to auto premiums if we allow all Michigan residents to obtain driver's licenses?

Current drivers will see a modest decrease by \$20 in their annual auto insurance premiums due to an increased pool of drivers.

A study by the Michigan League for Public Policy has shown that the average auto insurance costs are lower in states that allow all residents, regardless of immigration status, to obtain driver's licenses than in states that do not.

7 Besides immigrants, what other groups in Michigan are impacted by our state not having driver's licenses for all?

Individuals on lapsed visas during the renewal process; the children of U.S. service members who are born on foreign bases; the elderly, the homeless and the previously incarcerated who may have lost records.

9 Why don't immigrants have access to driver's licenses now?

Undocumented immigrants had access to driver's licenses until 2008, so this concept is not new. Our immigration process is complex and burdensome. Many people who are undocumented are in the process of getting work visas and becoming citizens and need driver's licenses for everyday tasks in the meantime.

6 What other non-citizen groups are already allowed to drive in Michigan?

Permanent residents (green card holders), international students, international nationals with work permits, tourists with a valid foreign driver's license from a treaty country along with an international driving permit or a translation of the license with a color photo.

8 How can driver's licenses be restored for all Michigan residents?

Driver's license legislation was first introduced in 2016 and again in 2017. The Drive SAFE bills, which would restore driver's licenses to all Michiganders, regardless of immigration status were introduced in 2019 and again in 2021, but have not passed, despite support from various business, farming, labor union, legal and advocacy groups.

Michigan legislators need to sponsor, reintroduce and vote YES on the Drive SAFE bills in the 2023 legislative term.



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Sources:
Michigan Immigrant Rights Center,
Michigan League for Public Policy