



Fact Sheet: Driver's Licenses for All

Updated as of February 12, 2021

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 undocumented immigrants do not have safe, legal access to our shared roads. Currently, [fifteen states](#), Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico allow undocumented immigrants access to driver's licenses.

How does issuing driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants benefit Minnesota?

It makes our roads safer for everyone

- Undocumented drivers would need to pass a written and driving test to obtain a license, ensuring all drivers are certified to drive.
- Licenses for undocumented immigrants means fewer accidents. Issuing licenses to undocumented immigrants 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, [New Mexico saw its rate of uninsured drivers drop by 24%. Utah saw a similar drop of 20%.](#)

It benefits families and the economy

- In Minnesota, an undocumented immigrant's annual income would increase an estimated [\\$2,000-6,000](#) for full-time workers 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 undocumented immigrants access to driver's licenses.
- In Oregon, research found that barring undocumented immigrants from receiving driver's licenses would likely cause the state to [lose \\$134-201.9 million in gross domestic product](#) due to the difficulty undocumented immigrants 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 undocumented neighbors and friends

- As of 2018, [30,700 U.S. citizen children in Minnesota](#) have undocumented parents, 2.4% of all children under 18 in the state. For these mixed-status families, issuing licenses to undocumented immigrant 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 undocumented immigrants access to licenses would grant greater ability to enforce laws in immigrant communities. Allowing undocumented immigrants 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.
- Undocumented 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 undocumented immigrants 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 undocumented immigrants, 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 undocumented immigrants, but also those experiencing homelessness, the elderly, and other groups who may have difficulty obtaining hard-to-access documentation.

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ILCM is a member of the Freedom to Drive Coalition. Visit the [Freedom to Drive Minnesota website for a full list of Freedom to Drive Coalition members.](#)