

GREEN LIGHT NY: Driving Together

We won access to driver's licenses for all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status! What's next?



What does the Green Light bill do?

The Green Light bill, officially known as the Driver's License Access and Privacy Act, allows those without lawful status in the United States to apply for a Standard New York State Driver's License—provided they go through the same application process, take the same tests, and pay the same fees as all other Standard License applicants.



What is a Standard Driver's License?

A Standard License is one type of driver's license already offered by the State of New York. It is clearly marked "Not for Federal Purposes" and cannot be used for domestic air travel or for any other federal purpose. Many New Yorkers have Standard Licenses. It is not a separate type of license just for undocumented people.

When can undocumented people start applying for licenses?

The new law will go into effect 180 days from the time it was enacted. This means the DMV must have a system by then to accept applications from people who can't prove their immigration status.

What are the requirements for obtaining a Standard Driver's License?

Applicants will have to pass both a written test and a road test, as well as provide documents proving their identity. Applicants will no longer be required to provide a social security number if they don't have one, but will have to sign an affidavit stating that they have not been issued an SSN. Over the next several months, the Department of Motor Vehicles Commissioner will create new procedures in compliance with the "Green Light" law. Once those guidelines have been made public, the Green Light NY Coalition will work to educate the community about the new DMV rules and how newly eligible driver's license applicants can obtain a license.

Is there anything newly eligible drivers can do to prepare now?

Although we cannot yet provide specific information about application guidelines at this time, there are a few things that newly eligible license applicants can do to prepare.

- ✓ Study the [NYS Driver's Manual](#) and take practice written tests (offered only in English).
- ✓ Save money to pay for a driver education course and application fees.
- ✓ Make sure your passport and/or consular ID card are not expired and will be valid at the time you intend to apply for a driver's license.
- ✓ Begin gathering other documentation you can provide to the DMV as additional proofs. Some examples include: a school photo ID with a report card or transcript, pay stubs, bank statements, a health insurance card, utility bills, a current lease agreement, and an income tax W-2.

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Will the DMV share my personal information with immigration enforcement agencies?

The Green Light bill includes several important privacy protections. The new law specifically restricts access to DMV data by immigration enforcement agencies and prohibits anyone receiving DMV records or information from using that data for immigration enforcement purposes. However, individual applicant information can be disclosed in response to a court order, judicial warrant, or validly issued subpoena (an administrative “warrant” from ICE would not suffice). While the bill contains strong protections, we don't know all of the ways that immigration authorities might attempt to obtain a person's information from the DMV, so each individual applicant should make an informed decision about the risks and benefits associated with applying for a license based on their own circumstances. For additional information, [see our privacy protections fact sheet](#).

What about County Clerks who say they will not issue licenses to undocumented people?

Some County Clerks who run local DMV offices have stated publicly that they do not intend to comply with the Green Light law. However, they are required to do so and will likely face legal consequences—possibly even removal from office—if they do not comply. We recognize that it may not be safe for undocumented people to apply for driver's licenses at certain local DMV offices until these issues are resolved. As a coalition, we will be working to provide support to communities in those regions facing backlash from County Clerks to ensure access to licenses.

What is happening with the Green Light NY coalition?

Our coalition will continue our advocacy to ensure full implementation of the Driver's License Access and Privacy Act and accessibility to licenses across the state. We are also committed to ongoing community education and outreach effort to ensure directly impacted people and their allies remain informed about new developments related to Green Light implementation.

What can allies do?

Allies to undocumented community members should work at the local level in coordination with groups representing directly impacted communities and your local Green Light steering committee representative. In regions where local DMV offices may not be safe places for undocumented people, allies may be called upon to provide transportation to other DMV locations and/or accompany applicants to the DMV. Allies should also continue educating the public—including voters—about the benefits of the Green Light bill and thanking legislators who voted in support of our bill. Some allies may want to opt to obtain a Standard License rather than a Real ID or Enhanced License as a gesture of solidarity with those in our state who will only be eligible to apply for a Standard License.

Columbia County Sanctuary Movement organizes with (im)migrants and allies to collectively support, empower and defend our communities. We are the Upper Hudson Valley and Capital District Regional Coordinator for the Green Light NY Campaign. www.sanctuarycolumbiacounty.org | www.greenlightnewyork.org



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