

CHECKLIST · BUFFALO

Moving to Buffalo Checklist: The First 90 Days

What newcomers should do, in order, with deadlines and where to do it. Print it and check items off.

SHORT ANSWER

If you are subject to the address-reporting requirement, report your new address to USCIS within 10 days. In the first week, call National Grid (in Buffalo one company usually supplies both electricity and gas, and its online form asks for an SSN, so phone first), enroll your children in school, and settle who holds the water account. Within 30 days, get New York insurance, register your car and open an E-ZPass account; a New York driver's license is also due within 30 days of becoming a resident. From November 15, remember the overnight parking ban on bus routes.

First 10 days

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Report your address to USCIS (AR-11)	As a general rule, required for most noncitizens, including green card holders; A and G visa holders and Visa Waiver visitors are exempt. USCIS online account: uscis.gov/addresschange
☐ In immigration court? File EOIR-33	Within 5 days: respondentaccess.eoir.justice.gov . The Batavia court has closed; former Batavia cases are now with the Buffalo court, so give your new address there.
☐ ICE check-in obligations?	Update ICE too: portal.ice.gov
☐ Change your address with USPS	Separate from USCIS; one does not update the other.

First week

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Electricity and natural gas	In Buffalo and Erie County both usually come from National Grid: 1-800-642-4272 (weekdays 7 a.m.-7 p.m.). The online start-service form asks for a Social Security number; if you have none, call before you move and ask what they accept. Power outages 1-800-867-5222, gas emergencies 1-800-892-2345 or 911.
☐ Winter gas protection	From November 1 to April 15, National Grid suspends residential gas-heating shut-offs when the forecast is below 32 F. A deposit is usually asked of short-term or seasonal customers.

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Water	In the City of Buffalo it is Buffalo Water (281 Exchange St, 716-847-1065), billed every 3 months. If you rent, check your lease to see who holds the account. The Town of Tonawanda runs its own water department: 716-871-8843. Preventing a frozen water meter is the owner's responsibility.
☐ Trash and bulk items	Buffalo supplies totes for garbage, recycling and food scraps; set them out after 7 p.m. the evening before. Up to 3 bulk items are picked up every week; TVs, computers, tires and paint are not accepted.
☐ City line 311	Dial 311 inside the city or (716) 851-4890; reports can be anonymous.
☐ DMV license appointment	Erie County Auto Bureau reservations: erie.gov/clerk/reservations · learner permit testing requires an appointment
☐ Children's school enrollment	Buffalo Public Schools Central Registration, 33 Ash Street · 716-816-3717
☐ SSN application (if eligible)	Find your nearest Social Security office at ssa.gov/locator

Within 30 days

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ New York car insurance	25/50/10 liability plus \$50,000 no-fault and uninsured-motorist coverage; ask for the FS-20 card
☐ Vehicle registration	Title and registration at an Erie County Auto Bureau office; no MCTD surcharge in Erie County. Details: dmv.ny.gov
☐ Vehicle inspection	Yearly combined safety-and-emissions inspection
☐ E-ZPass account	e-zpassny.com · tag \$25 · works on the Peace Bridge, the Thruway and the Grand Island bridges
☐ Winter parking rule	In Buffalo, overnight parking (1:30-7:00 a.m.) is banned on bus routes from November 15 to April 1; the route list is on buffalony.gov
☐ Library card	Buffalo & Erie County Public Library: a lease or an ID with your address works; if you lack ID, call the Central Library at 716-858-8900
☐ New York driver's license	Due within 30 days of becoming a resident (living in the state 90 days counts as evidence of residency). Knowledge test, 5-hour course and road test
☐ If renting	The security deposit is capped at one month's rent and must be returned within 14 days after you move out (state law). In Buffalo, non-owner-occupied 1-2 family rentals must hold a Certificate of Rental Compliance; a property that fails inspection cannot be operated as a rental.

Within 90 days

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Turkish citizens: consulate services	Turkish Consulate General in New York (there is no consulate in Buffalo), appointments at konsolosluk.gov.tr; you will need to travel to New York City, so plan ahead
☐ Bought a home? Property tax programs	Buffalo Assessment & Taxation Department, City Hall, 65 Niagara Square, Room 101 · 716-851-5739; STAR and other exemptions are handled there

IF YOU ARE NOT A U.S. CITIZEN

- Never check "U.S. citizen" on any form and never register to vote. New York's law letting noncitizens vote in city elections was struck down by the state's highest court in March 2025 and is not in effect.
- Talk to an immigration attorney before applying for Medicaid, the Essential Plan, or any public benefit: a new public charge rule took effect on September 18, 2026. ECMC hospital (462 Grider St) offers an income-based discount regardless of immigration status: (716) 898-5566.
- Check your I-94 at i94.cbp.dhs.gov. Your work authorization and green card eligibility depend on it.
- With a green card application pending, do not travel abroad without advance parole; this includes short trips to Canada, so ask an attorney first.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN BUFFALO

Have a question about your immigration status?

Attorney Asim Clinch serves clients in Buffalo and the surrounding area, in Turkish and English. Free evaluation: clinchlaw.com/free-evaluation · +1 866-491-7669
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