

CHECKLIST · CAMBRIDGE

Moving to Cambridge Checklist: The First 90 Days

What a newcomer has to do, in order, with the deadlines and where to do it. Print it and tick it off.

SHORT ANSWER

If you are subject to the address-reporting requirement, report your new address to USCIS within the first 10 days. In the first week open the electricity and gas with Eversource (no deposit may be required from a residential customer) and register your children at 459 Broadway; no SSN and no immigration document is asked for. Book the learner's permit appointment right away, because the exam is offered in Turkish. If you arrived with a car the order is insurance, registration, inspection within 7 days, then the city parking permit. Put one date in your calendar: after December 1, 2026 that permit costs \$75 instead of \$25.

First 10 days

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Report your address to USCIS (AR-11)	Generally, most noncitizens, including Green Card holders, must report within 10 days of moving; A and G visa holders and Visa Waiver visitors are exempt. A move from Harvard Square to Kendall Square counts. uscis.gov/addresschange
☐ If you have an immigration court case, Form EOIR-33	Within 5 days: respondentaccess.eoir.justice.gov
☐ If you have an ICE check-in obligation	Report the address to ICE too, within 5 business days: portal.ice.gov
☐ Update your RMV address	Excise and toll invoices go there, and the city parking permit looks at the same address.
☐ Change of address with the post office	A USPS change does not update your USCIS record; they are two separate things.

First week

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Electricity and gas	In Cambridge both come from Eversource: eversource.com or 1-800-592-2000. No deposit may be required from a residential customer (220 CMR 27.00). Without an SSN, a passport number or online identity verification is accepted. If you are coming from Boston, this is the difference: there, two gas companies split the streets; here it is one company.
☐ The electricity supplier	The city's own program, Cambridge Community Electricity, is the default, with Direct Energy as supplier. Standard Green is 14.48 cents per kWh, Economy 13.77 and 100% Green 14.90; the price is fixed from January 2026 to January 2029 and leaving is free (844-379-9934). Sign nothing for anyone who knocks on your door about switching suppliers; the city also warns that Eversource does not call about shutoffs.
☐ Water and trash	The city runs its own Water Department (250 Fresh Pond Parkway, 617-349-4770) and the Tax Collector bills quarterly (617-349-4220). In the first block, water is \$4.15 per 100 cubic feet while sewer is \$18.12 for the same amount , so most of the bill is sewer rather than water. Trash, recycling and food waste are city services with no separate bill.
☐ Register the children for school	Student Registration Center, 459 Broadway, 617-349-6551, src@cpsd.us . No SSN and no immigration document; an address proof, a 30-day proof of occupancy, an immunization record and the health form are asked for. Meals are free for all students.
☐ If you rent, know your rights	Up front only the first month, the last month, a one-month deposit and the lock cost. The deposit has to sit in a separate interest-bearing account; a landlord who breaks that rule owes triple damages. Charging a tenant a broker fee has been illegal since August 1, 2025. Cambridge adds its own rule: the landlord must hand you the city's tenant rights guide at lease signing, and the penalty is \$300 a day. Housing Services Center, 362 Green St, 617-349-6340.
☐ City services	Cambridge has no real 311 line: requests go through SeeClickFix , the phone is 617-349-4300 and the system is not monitored around the clock. Police non-emergency 617-349-3300, and 911 in a life-threatening emergency.
☐ Library card	Cambridge Public Library, 449 Broadway, 617-349-4040. Free; a photo ID (a passport works) plus one address proof is enough, no SSN is asked for, and children aged 5 to 14 need no documents at all. You must live, work, study or own property in Massachusetts, or have lived here at least two months.
☐ Apply for an SSN (if eligible)	Cambridge has its own SSA field office in the north of the city; we could not confirm the street address, so verify it through ssa.gov/locator . The general line is 1-800-772-1213.

Within 30 days

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Book the learner permit appointment	It is \$30 and the written exam comes in Turkish (25 questions, 18 correct). Haymarket (136 Blackstone St., no parking) or Watertown (550 Arsenal St.). The road test is only in Watertown, \$35, and the sponsor must hold a U.S. state license. A Turkish license is not exchanged.

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ If you arrived with a car, insurance first	No agent stamp on the RMV-1 means no registration, and you must have Cambridge entered as the garaging code . Minimum coverage is \$25,000 / \$50,000 bodily injury, \$30,000 property damage and \$8,000 PIP. No SSN is needed to register.
☐ Inspection within 7 days	Within seven days of registering, \$35, then annually. The excise tax is \$25 per \$1,000 of value and the city sends the bill.
☐ The city parking permit	It is \$25 (\$75 after December 1, 2026), at 344 Broadway, 617-349-4700. If you have not transferred the registration: a temporary permit, \$20 for one week or \$30 for two. Every permit expires on March 31.
☐ E-ZPass MA account	The transponder is free. Without an account, every plate invoice adds \$0.60 and a tunnel crossing costs \$2.05 instead of \$1.50.
☐ CharlieCard and transit	Subway \$2.40, local bus \$1.70, monthly LinkPass \$90, free under 11. Since September 1, 2026 transfers are unlimited within two hours on the same payment method. Red Line to Park Street is 4 minutes from Kendall/MIT and 10 from Harvard.

PUT THESE THREE DATES IN YOUR CALENDAR

- **December 1, 2026:** the parking permit goes from \$25 to \$75, the age-65 waiver ends and online renewals open. First-time online applicants wait for January 1, 2027, and in-person renewals at 344 Broadway for January 4, 2027.
- **March 31:** every parking permit expires on this date no matter which month you bought it.
- **April 1, 2027:** if you own your home, this is the deadline for the FY2027 residential exemption. Miss it and you give up more than \$3,000 in savings.

Health and insurance

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Life-threatening emergency	Call 911 or go to an emergency room: a hospital with an emergency department must screen and stabilize you regardless of your ability to pay (EMTALA).
☐ The two hospitals in the city	CHA Cambridge Hospital , 1493 Cambridge St., 617-665-1000, emergency department open 24 hours; financial assistance 617-665-1100. Mount Auburn Hospital , 330 Mount Auburn St., 617-492-3500; financial counselor 617-499-5560, with charity care up to 400 percent of the poverty level. Both hospitals have free financial counselors who will file the MassHealth and Health Safety Net application with you.
☐ What is actually free	The city health department's vaccine clinics: its flu page says the vaccines are free and that you do not need insurance, a Social Security number or an ID. The 2026 clinics end on October 30; registration at cambridgepublichealth.org/flu . The mobile Family Van is also free but has no Cambridge stop (Roxbury, Dorchester, East Boston).
☐ Reduced fee, not free	Federally supported centers must discount by income and household size, with no discount above 200 percent of the poverty level. So the care is discounted, not free.

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Health Safety Net	It is not insurance; it is a fund that pays acute care hospitals and community health centers, and there is no member card . You have to ask at the registration desk: "I would like to apply for Health Safety Net." MassHealth 800-841-2900.
☐ Insurance is mandatory	Massachusetts has an individual mandate; for tax year 2026 the penalty runs from \$26 to \$211 a month, with no penalty at or below 150 percent of the poverty level. Health Connector open enrollment is October 23, 2026 to January 23, 2027 ; for a January 1 start, choose and pay by December 23, 2026 (1-877-623-6765).
☐ Dates	From October 1, 2026 some lawfully present immigrant groups lose comprehensive MassHealth; from January 1, 2027 financial help and ConnectorCare are limited to green card holders, Cuban and Haitian entrants and COFA migrants. Read every notice you get, because you may have an appeal window.
☐ Crisis line	988 around the clock, and the state's free Behavioral Health Help Line at 833-773-2445.

60 to 90 days and beyond

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Taxes	Cambridge has no income tax of its own. The state income tax is a flat 5 percent, with an extra 4 percent above \$1,107,750. The personal exemption is \$4,400 single and \$8,800 married filing jointly, and the filing deadline is April 15. Sales tax is 6.25 percent, and restaurants add the city's 0.75 percent local meals tax. Half the rent you pay, up to \$4,000, is deductible on the state return. For an ITIN, file Form W-7; Cambridge has no IRS office, and the nearest one is in the JFK building in Boston, by appointment only (844-545-5640).
☐ If you bought a home, property tax	The FY2026 residential rate is \$6.67 per \$1,000 (against \$12.40 in Boston). The 30 percent residential exemption took \$510,208 of value out of the tax in FY2026 and saved \$3,403. Cambridge issues two bills a year, so each one is a large amount. The FY2027 deadline is April 1, 2027, and ownership and occupancy are measured as of January 1. Assessing, 795 Massachusetts Ave., 617-349-4343.
☐ The city's immigration commission	Commission on Immigrant Rights and Citizenship, 689 Massachusetts Ave, 617-349-4396, circ@cambridgema.gov. A free online immigration law screening clinic on the third Wednesday of every month ; call 617-405-5479 to take part. It is a short assessment and the office does not take on cases.
☐ Marriage license	City Clerk, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, 1st Floor, 617-349-4260. Both applicants apply in person, \$50, a three-day wait, valid 60 days and usable only in Massachusetts. The city page mentions no appointment requirement for the license, but applications stop half an hour before closing. A copy of the certificate is \$15.
☐ Birth certificate	Same office, Room 103. A certified copy is \$15 and, in the Clerk's own words, "usually identification is not necessary". Order at least two copies: one stays with the U.S. passport application and one goes for the apostille and the consulate.
☐ Consular business for Turkish citizens	The Turkish Consulate General is just across the river at 31 Saint James Avenue, Suite 840; from Harvard it is a little over half an hour on the Red and Green lines.

TASK

WHERE / HOW

- ☐ **Military service registration for men** Those born in 2007 and anyone without a deferral: by **December 31, 2026**.

IF YOU ARE NOT A CITIZEN, REMEMBER

- Registering and voting are for citizens only. Answering "yes" to the citizenship question at the RMV registers you automatically; if you are not a citizen, say no. MassHealth and Health Connector applications fall under the same automatic registration.
- **A jury summons can reach a noncitizen.** Massachusetts builds its jury list from each city's annual census of residents rather than from the voter rolls or the RMV file, and Cambridge residents are called for Middlesex County. Do not ignore it: answer, state that you are not a citizen, and send your alien card number, visa status or a copy of your passport. Office of Jury Commissioner, 560 Harrison Avenue, Suite 600, Boston, 1-800-THE-JURY, jurorhelp@jud.state.ma.us.
- Talk to an immigration attorney before you apply for, or drop, any public benefit: the new public charge rule has been in effect since September 18, 2026 and MassHealth, SNAP and housing assistance can be weighed in some green card cases.
- The city's Welcoming Community Ordinance and the February 5, 2026 executive order bind only city staff and city property; they do **not bind ICE or CBP** and they give you no private right of action. The police chief's report says that of three ICE detainer requests between August 2025 and February 2026 none were honored, but that in the same period one person was taken into ICE custody outside the police station door after being released on bail. Do not read it as a promise of protection.
- Check your I-94 record at i94.cbp.dhs.gov. Your license term and your work authorization can depend on it.
- If you have a pending green card application, do not travel abroad without advance parole.

TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN CAMBRIDGE

Have a question about your immigration status?



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