

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · CHICAGO

How to Get a Driver's License in Chicago: No-SSN Applications and Turkish License Rules, 2026 Guide

For newcomers to Chicago, applicants without an SSN, and drivers arriving with a Turkish license: appointments, documents, tests, fees and the six Chicago driver services facilities.

SHORT ANSWER

Licenses come from the Illinois Secretary of State (SOS), which runs six driver services facilities inside Chicago. Appointments are mandatory for driver services; the one exception is the walk-in REAL ID Supercenter at 191 N. Clark St., which handles renewals, duplicates and REAL ID only and is extended through the end of 2026. A four-year license is \$30 for ages 21 to 68. The Temporary Visitor Driver's License (TVDL) ended on July 1, 2024: an applicant with no SSN now gets a standard four-year license marked "Federal Limits Apply", and without a USCIS or DHS document must show 12 months of Illinois residency. A Turkish license is not exchanged and the written test is in English.

What to know before you start

- **Appointments are mandatory.** Under Skip-the-Line, in force since September 1, 2023, every Chicago and suburban facility requires an appointment for license, state ID and REAL ID services and for in-car road tests. Book at apps.ilsos.gov/dlexamcheck. The Chicago facilities share one phone line, 312-793-1010; the statewide line is 800-252-8980.
- **The TVDL is gone.** Illinois has issued no Temporary Visitor Driver's License since July 1, 2024 (Public Act 103-0210). The Secretary of State's own TVDL web page still shows the repealed rules, so do not plan around it.
- **Türkiye is not on the consular ID list.** The only consular IDs SOS accepts are from Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico. A Turkish applicant relies on a passport, and a consular ID cannot be used for a REAL ID anyway.
- **A Turkish license is not exchanged.** Türkiye is not among the countries whose licenses Illinois swaps without testing. You surrender it and take a vision screening and the written exam.
- **The International Driving Permit (IDP) is not recognized.** New arrivals may drive on a valid Turkish license for 90 days, and an IDP does not extend that.
- **The written exam is in English.** We found no Turkish exam and no Turkish Rules of the Road. A facility supervisor may provide an interpreter "if readily available"; otherwise you bring your own.

How to apply, step by step

- 1 Book an appointment.** Do not leave it until the 90 days are nearly up; look at the calendar in your first weeks.
 - 2 Bring one document from each of four groups.** Signature (A), date of birth and lawful status (B), Social Security number (C) and Illinois residency (D). A REAL ID needs two residency documents. Originals only, no photocopies. The full list of what counts in each group is in our [Illinois guide](#).
 - 3 Surrender your old license.** SOS asks for every out-of-state and foreign license and ID to be handed in.
 - 4 Take the tests.** A vision screening, a written exam of at least 35 questions for Class D (80 percent to pass) and a road test if SOS requires one. The fee covers up to three attempts within a year. In Chicago the car road test is given at **Chicago West**; bring the insurance card for the car you drive. We found no official statement that foreign-license holders are exempt from the road test, so plan on taking it.
 - 5 Wait for the card.** You leave with a secure paper license valid 90 days; the permanent card arrives by mail within 15 business days. Licenses run four years, state ID cards five. Report an address change to SOS within 10 days.
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If you cannot get an SSN

- **What changed:** in place of the TVDL, people who cannot get an SSN apply for the standard four-year license. The card is printed "Federal Limits Apply", so it is not a REAL ID and does not work as ID for domestic flights or federal buildings.
 - **If USCIS or DHS gave you a document** authorizing your presence in the United States, you present it instead of an SSN.
 - **If you have no such document**, the SOS leaflet of June 17, 2025 requires proof of **12 months of Illinois residency** for a first license.
 - **Cost:** \$30. The same documents get you a standard state ID for \$20 with no tests.
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Chicago driver services facilities

FACILITY	ADDRESS · HOURS · NOTES
REAL ID Supercenter	191 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60601 · Mon-Fri 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. · walk-in, no appointment; renewals, duplicates and REAL ID only, no first-time licenses and no testing · walk-in service extended through the end of 2026, check again for 2027
Chicago Flagship Center	125 W. Monroe St., Chicago, IL 60603 · Mon-Fri 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. · first-time license, permit, REAL ID and the written test; no road test · vehicle title and plates and apostilles are here too
Chicago North	5401 N. Elston Ave., Chicago, IL 60630 · Mon-Fri 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sat 7:30 a.m. to noon · appointment required
Chicago West	5301 W. Lexington St., Chicago, IL 60644 · Mon-Fri 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. · appointment required · car and motorcycle road tests

FACILITY	ADDRESS · HOURS · NOTES
Chicago South	9901 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr., Chicago, IL 60628 · Mon-Fri 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sat 7:30 a.m. to noon · appointment required
Chinatown	2250 S. Canal St., Chicago, IL 60616 · Mon-Fri 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. · appointment required

The old "Chicago Central" and "Chicago Public Service" facilities are permanently closed, and the printed SOS facility list is out of date, so use the [Facility Finder](#). Chicago West, Chinatown, the REAL ID Supercenter and the Flagship Center are closed Monday, October 12, 2026 for the holiday. If you live in the suburbs, Des Plaines (1533 Lee St.), Schaumburg (1227 E. Golf Rd.) and Naperville (1771 W. Diehl Rd., Unit 110) use the same appointment system.

Fees (2026)

SERVICE	FEE
License (ages 21 to 68, 4 years)	\$30
License (ages 18 to 20 and 69 to 80)	\$5
Class D instruction permit (first / renewal)	\$20 / \$10
State ID card (ages 18 to 64, 5 years)	\$20
Duplicate license	\$5

Current amounts are on the [SOS fee page](#).

Do I need a REAL ID?

Domestic flights and some federal buildings require a REAL ID or another accepted document such as a passport; a REAL ID carries a gold star in the top right corner. Per the [SOS REAL ID page](#), TSA accepts only the permanent printed card, not the temporary paper license.

IF YOU ARE NOT A U.S. CITIZEN

- Your license is issued to run with your authorized stay. Bring the originals of your passport, visa, I-94 record and any I-797 receipt notices. A wrong I-94 can derail the application, so check it first at i94.cbp.dhs.gov.
- If anyone at the facility offers to register you to vote and you are not a U.S. citizen, decline and do not fill in the form. Registering or voting as a non-citizen is a federal crime.
- If you are subject to the address-reporting requirement, tell USCIS your new address within 10 days of moving (Form AR-11). A and G visa holders and Visa Waiver visitors are exempt.

Common mistakes

- Planning around the TVDL. It ended on July 1, 2024, and the old SOS page does not say so.
- Turning up without an appointment. The only walk-in site is the REAL ID Supercenter, and it does not issue first-time licenses.
- Expecting a Turkish license to be swapped without tests, an IDP to be enough, or a Turkish exam to exist.
- Bringing photocopies. SOS wants originals.
- Waiting for the 90 days to run out. Appointments and documents take time, and without an SSN the 12-month residency rule applies.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN CHICAGO

Have a question about your immigration status?

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