

CHECKLIST · CHICAGO

Moving to Chicago Checklist: Your First 90 Days

What newcomers should do and in what order, the deadlines, the key numbers and where to do each task. Print it and tick it off.

SHORT ANSWER

If you are subject to the address-reporting requirement, tell USCIS your new address within 10 days. In the first week set up ComEd (electricity) and Peoples Gas in your own name (both accept a foreign passport, and no SSN is needed), book the license appointment and start school enrollment; vaccine papers are due October 15. Within 30 days sort out the car title and plates (\$165 plus \$151) and buy the Chicago city vehicle sticker (\$105.18). If you rent, ask for the deposit receipt; if you have no insurance, note the CareLink discount.

First 10 days

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Report your address to USCIS (AR-11)	As a general rule required for most non-citizens, including green card holders; A and G visa holders and Visa Waiver visitors are exempt. Online account or the free paper AR-11: uscis.gov/addresschange . Moving from one apartment to another in Chicago counts.
☐ If you have an immigration court case, file EOIR-33	Within 5 days: respondentaccess.eoir.justice.gov
☐ If you have an ICE check-in obligation	Update your address on the ICE Portal too: portal.ice.gov
☐ Tell the Secretary of State	If you hold a license or state ID, report the new address to SOS within 10 days. A USPS change of address does not update USCIS: they are two separate steps.

First week

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Electricity: ComEd	A foreign passport, an ITIN and a consular ID are accepted as ID; no SSN needed. Phone 800-334-7661.
☐ Gas: Peoples Gas	A foreign passport and a consular ID count as primary ID. If they ask to see ID in person, do not miss the 14-day window. Customer line 866-556-6001. Gas leaks and emergencies: 866-556-6002. If you smell gas, leave the building and call from outside.

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Driver's license appointment	At all six Chicago facilities driver services are by appointment; the only walk-in site is 191 N. Clark St. (renewals, duplicates, REAL ID only). Do not let the 90 days run out.
☐ Enroll your children	The neighborhood school seat is yours by right, no SSN is asked and a consular ID counts as address proof. Vaccine and health papers are due October 15 . English-learner support: Multilingual Multicultural Education, 773-527-3203.
☐ Ventra card	\$5 from station machines (they take cash); the \$5 comes back as transit value if you register the card within 90 days. No bank account needed.
☐ Chicago 311 and CHI311	311 inside the city, 312-744-5000 from outside. The CHI311 app reports potholes, garbage, rodents and graffiti. If something is happening right now, call 911.
☐ Library card	A Chicago Public Library card is free, applied for in person, and no SSN is asked. A Full Access Card needs a current, valid ID with your name, photo and Chicago address. The pages do not say whether a foreign passport alone is accepted, so take your passport together with a piece of mail showing your Chicago address, and if the branch cannot accept them, ask for a Temporary Access Card (90 days).
☐ Social Security number (if eligible)	Your ZIP code decides which SSA office serves you, not which is nearest: ssa.gov/locator

Within 30 days

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Illinois insurance	Minimum \$25,000 / \$50,000 / \$20,000. Driving uninsured costs at least \$500.
☐ Car title and plates	SOS, by appointment (Chicago Flagship Center, 125 W. Monroe St.): title \$165 plus plates \$151 = \$316. The emissions test is free.
☐ Chicago city vehicle sticker	Owed by any Chicago resident wherever the car is registered. Passenger car \$105.18 (2026), within 30 days; \$60 late fee, tickets from \$200. Third-party sites still quote the old price. ezbuy.chicityclerk.com
☐ I-PASS or Pay By Plate	If you will use the Tollway. Pay a missed toll through Pay By Plate within 14 days.
☐ Cook County Health CareLink	If you have no insurance: ages 19 to 64, a Cook County resident for 30 days or more; immigration status will not stop you. Apply in person, 866-223-2817. It is a discount at Cook County Health sites, not insurance.
☐ If you rent, start a paper file	The deposit receipt, the letter naming the bank and your move-in photos. Your lease also works as proof of address for the license and school and as proof of your move-in date for the city sticker.

Within 90 days

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ End of the Turkish-license window	The 90 days run out: schedule the Illinois license test inside that time.
☐ Türkiye business	Book the Turkish Consulate General in Chicago; it serves 13 states, so slots fill early. konsolosluk.gov.tr
☐ If you bought a home: the Homeowner Exemption	Takes \$10,000 off the taxable value of the home you live in; no SSN asked, and a consular ID is accepted. It starts only when you apply and then renews on its own.

Numbers worth knowing in Chicago

TOPIC	FIGURE
CTA 'L' / bus single ride	\$2.50 / \$2.25 · two free transfers within two hours
CTA 30-day pass (CTA and Pace)	\$75
Boarding at the O'Hare station	\$5 (free with an unlimited pass) · Blue Line runs 24 hours
Metra one-way, zones 1-2 / 1-3 / 1-4	\$3.75 / \$5.50 / \$6.75 (Naperville is Zone 4, Glencoe Zone 3)
Garbage fee (buildings of 4 units or fewer)	\$9.50 per dwelling unit per month · cart free · recycling at no extra charge
Water, sewer and garbage bill	One City bill; most renters never see it, because the water account is in the owner's name and usually included in the rent
Marriage license (Cook County Clerk)	\$60 · both apply in person · effective 1 day after issue · valid 60 days · Cook County ceremonies only
Apostille (Illinois SOS Index Department)	\$2 per document

If you rent

- **Deposit (city ordinance, RLTO):** no dollar cap, but the money goes in a separate interest-bearing Illinois account, the landlord must name the bank in writing within 14 days and pay yearly interest (0.01 percent for 2026), and after move-out an itemized damage statement is due in 30 days and the deposit in 45. A violation costs twice the deposit.
- **Fair Notice:** to raise the rent, decline to renew or end a month-to-month tenancy, the landlord must give 30 days if you have lived in the unit under 6 months, 60 days for 6 months to 3 years, and 120 days for over 3 years.
- **The suburbs have a separate ordinance:** suburban Cook County outside the city limits (Evanston, Skokie, Des Plaines, Schaumburg and others) falls under the county ordinance, where the deposit is capped at 1.5 times the monthly rent and returned within 30 days.

- **No SSN?** Illinois law bars a landlord from screening out an applicant who has no SSN, and an ITIN has to be accepted. Complain to IDHR within one year, free: 312-814-6200.
- **Water:** the account belongs to the owner. Utility Billing Relief (50 percent off) is only for owner-occupants of a single-family home, two-flat or three-flat; **renters are not eligible.**
- Free legal help: Legal Aid Chicago 312-341-1070; for the suburbs 855-956-5763.

If you bought a home: Cook County property tax

- Cook County taxes Chicago homes. The two tax year 2025 instalments fell due April 1 and October 1, 2026; the dates move from year to year, so check the [Treasurer's due-dates page](#) every year.
- The first instalment is 55 percent of the prior year's bill, so the first year can surprise you. Late interest is 0.75 percent a month.
- Payments from foreign banks are returned, so do not pay from an account in Turkey.

IF YOU ARE NOT A U.S. CITIZEN, REMEMBER

- Never tick a "U.S. citizen" box on any form and do not register to vote. If a jury questionnaire arrives, do not ignore it: answer "no" to the citizenship question.
- Before applying for SNAP, Medicaid, All Kids or any other public benefit, talk to an immigration attorney: benefits received after September 18, 2026 can be weighed in a green card application. CareLink is a discount program, not insurance.
- Check your I-94 record at i94.cbp.dhs.gov. Your work authorization, your license and your green card eligibility depend on it.
- If a green card application is pending, do not leave the United States without advance parole.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN CHICAGO

Have a question about your immigration status?

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