

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · EVANSTON

How to Get a Driver's License in Evanston: the Office in Town Will Not Do, 2026 Guide

Why the Levy Senior Center facility does not help you, booking at Chicago North or Deerfield, the four document groups, the tests, the fees and the 90-day window.

SHORT ANSWER

There is no general-public driver services office in Evanston. The facility in town (Levy Senior Center, 300 Dodge Ave.) appears on the Secretary of State list as a seniors-only walk-in facility. For a first license, a road test or a REAL ID, the nearest full-service offices are Chicago North (5401 N. Elston Ave.) and Deerfield (405 Lake Cook Rd.), and both require an appointment. A four-year license is \$30 for ages 21 to 68. The Temporary Visitor Driver's License (TVDL) has been abolished.

THERE IS AN OFFICE IN TOWN, BUT IT IS NOT OPEN TO YOU

On the Secretary of State (SOS) facility list, Evanston reads: "Evanston: Levy Senior Center, 300 Dodge Avenue, Evanston, IL 60202 - Seniors Only Walk-in Facility." The facility's own page also describes it as serving seniors on a walk-in basis. **Seeing an SOS building in the city you live in does not mean you can get your first license there.** The first job of this guide is to point you at the right office.

What to know before you start

- **Pick the right office first.** For a first license, an instruction permit, the written test and REAL ID you book at Chicago North or Deerfield. Both carry the words "Drivers Appointment Required"; the SOS Skip the Line arrangement put driver services on an appointment basis across Chicago and the suburbs.
- **Booking:** apps.ilsos.gov/dlexamcheck or the Chicago-area line, 312-793-1010. The Evanston facility's line is 800-252-8980.
- **The TVDL is over.** Public Act 103-0210 barred the issue of a Temporary Visitor Driver's License after July 1, 2024. Applicants who cannot get an SSN now apply for the standard four-year license.
- **Türkiye is not on the consular ID list.** The consular IDs the SOS accepts belong to five Latin American countries only. A Turkish applicant's document is a passport.
- **A Turkish license is not exchanged and the IDP is not recognized.** Türkiye is not on the SOS no-test exchange list. New residents may drive on a valid Turkish license for 90 days, and an International Driving Permit does not extend that.
- **The written test is in English.** The rule allows other languages, but we found no Turkish test and no Turkish Rules of the Road book. A facility manager may provide an interpreter if one is readily available; otherwise you bring your own, and interpreters are not allowed on commercial license tests.

- **A car is not essential here.** Evanston is one of the few cities in this series you can live in without one: the CTA Purple Line has seven stations in town and the Metra UP-N line has three. A license is still useful identification.

Step by step

- 1 Book the appointment.** Plan the 90 days early, because the nearest full-service office is out of town; check the calendar in your first week.
- 2 Bring one document from each of four groups.** Signature (A), date of birth and legal status (B), SSN (C) and Illinois residency (D). REAL ID needs two documents from group D, and originals are required.
- 3 Surrender your old license.** The SOS requires you to hand in every license and ID issued by another state or another country.
- 4 Take the tests.** Vision screening, the written test for a Class D license and a road test if required. Bring the insurance card for the car you take the road test in.
- 5 Plan how you will pay.** Cash, check and credit or debit cards are accepted (cards carry a transaction fee).
- 6 Wait for the card.** You leave with a temporary paper document and the real card arrives by mail. Report any address change to the SOS within 10 days; [the online address change page](#) is for that.

The four document groups

GROUP	WHAT IT PROVES	COMMON DOCUMENTS FOR FOREIGN NATIONALS
A	Signature	Passport, credit card, signed debit card
B	Date of birth and legal status	Green card (I-551), employment authorization card (I-766), I-797A, Form I-94 with a valid passport, U.S. visa. A foreign passport alone is not enough; a second group B document is required with it.
C	Social Security number	SSN card, W-2, SSA-1099, pay stub showing the full SSN
D	Illinois residency	A lease, a ComEd or Nicor bill, the city's two-monthly water bill, a bank statement or a letter from a government agency dated within the last 90 days. Two originals for REAL ID. Full list in the SOS acceptable documents brochure dated June 17, 2025 .

Offices in and around Evanston

OFFICE	ADDRESS · HOURS · NOTE
Evanston (seniors only)	Levy Senior Center, 300 Dodge Ave., Evanston, IL 60202 · weekdays 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., closed weekends · walk-in service for seniors; on the page, the license, ID, REAL ID, instruction permit and written test lines are all marked appointment only · 800-252-8980 · closed Monday, October 12, 2026

OFFICE	ADDRESS · HOURS · NOTE
Chicago North (nearest full service)	5401 N. Elston Ave., Chicago, IL 60630 · weekdays 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 7:30 to noon · first license, instruction permit, REAL ID, commercial license, written test · driver services by appointment · 312-793-1010
Deerfield (northern alternative)	Deerfield Park Plaza, 405 Lake Cook Rd., Deerfield, IL 60015 · confirm hours, the page capture we read is from 2025 · driver services by appointment · 312-793-1010
Distance, and one open question	The SOS does not publish the distance from Evanston and we could not measure it from an official source, so no mileage is printed here; check the facility finder for current addresses and hours. On the Evanston facility page the address change, disability placard, temporary renewal and plate lines carry no appointment marking, so in theory they look like walk-in business; but the page heading describes the facility as serving seniors and we could not confirm whether a driver who is not a senior gets those services there. Call 800-252-8980 before you set out

If you cannot get an SSN

- **What changed:** instead of the TVDL, applicants who cannot get an SSN now apply for the standard four-year license. The card is marked "Federal Limits Apply" and is not a REAL ID.
- **If you have a USCIS or DHS document:** you present the document showing you are permitted to be in the United States in place of an SSN.
- **If you have no such document:** the SOS requires proof of **twelve months of Illinois residency** for a first license.
- **Fee:** \$30. The same documents also get you a \$20 state ID card with no test.
- **It is not voting eligibility:** the card is identification and a driving permit. If voter registration is offered at the counter and you are not a U.S. citizen, do not fill in the form.

Fees (2026)

TRANSACTION	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

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 card has a gold star in the top right corner. The Evanston facility marks the REAL ID line

appointment only and the facility serves seniors, so booking at [Chicago North or Deerfield](#) is the realistic route. TSA accepts only the printed card, not the temporary paper document you leave the counter with.

IF YOU ARE NOT A CITIZEN

- Your license is issued to match the period you are permitted to stay. Bring the originals of your passport, visa, I-94 record and any I-797 receipts to the appointment; a wrong I-94 can sink the application. Check your record at i94.cbp.dhs.gov beforehand.
- An application that meets REAL ID requirements also counts as a voter registration application. If you do not want to be registered, check the decline box. Evanston is a university town and registration tables appear on campus during election seasons: if you are not a citizen, do not take a form from them.
- If you are subject to the address-reporting requirement, you must also report your new address to USCIS within 10 days of moving (Form AR-11); holders of A and G visas and Visa Waiver visitors are exempt. Telling the SOS does not satisfy that.

Common mistakes

- Going to the Levy Senior Center expecting a first license. The facility serves seniors and first licenses are not done there.
- Turning up at Chicago North without an appointment. Driver services are by appointment.
- Planning around the TVDL. The program ended on July 1, 2024.
- Assuming a Turkish license converts without a test, or that an IDP is enough.
- Bringing photocopies. Originals are required.
- Waiting for the 90 days to expire. The appointment is out of town, and without an SSN the twelve-month residency rule also applies.



TRKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN EVANSTON

Have a question about your immigration status?

Attorney Asim Clinch serves clients in Evanston and the surrounding area, in Turkish and English.

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