

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · ILLINOIS

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

For newcomers to Illinois, applicants without an SSN, and drivers arriving with a Turkish license: appointments, documents, tests and fees.

SHORT ANSWER

Illinois licenses come from the Secretary of State (SOS), under the same rules everywhere in the state. Every application needs one document from each of four groups: signature, date of birth and lawful status, Social Security number, and Illinois residency. Appointments are required. A 4-year license costs \$30 for ages 21 to 68. The Temporary Visitor Driver's License (TVDL) no longer exists: since July 1, 2024 an applicant with no SSN signs a declaration and gets a standard 4-year license marked "Federal Limits Apply", after 12 months of Illinois residency. A Turkish license is not exchanged and the written exam is in English.

What to know before you start

- **Appointments are mandatory.** Since September 1, 2023, driver services at the state's 44 busiest facilities, including every Chicago and suburban office, run by appointment only: license, ID, REAL ID and road tests. Book at apps.ilsos.gov/dlexamcheck and check which office offers which service on the [facility finder](#).
- **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 The Secretary of State's own TVDL web page still shows the repealed rules, so do not plan around it.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 the SOS accepts are from Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico. A Turkish applicant relies on a passport.
- **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 foreign license for 90 days, and an IDP alone 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; check the calendar early.

- 2 Collect one document from each group.** A standard license needs one each from Groups A, B, C and D; a REAL ID needs one each from A, B and C and two from D. Bring originals, not copies. One document can satisfy more than one group.
- 3 Surrender any other license.** The SOS requires all out-of-state and foreign licenses and ID cards 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, if the SOS requires it, a road test. The exam fee covers up to three attempts within a year. Bring the insurance card for the car you use on the road test.
- 5 Wait for the card.** You leave with a secure paper license valid 90 days; the permanent card is mailed within 15 business days (status line 217-782-7044). A license is valid 4 years for ages 21 to 86, a State ID 5 years. Report an address change within 10 days.

The four document groups

GROUP	WHAT IT PROVES	COMMON CHOICES FOR A FOREIGN NATIONAL
A	Written signature	Passport, credit card, signed bank card
B	Date of birth and lawful status	Green card (I-551), employment authorization card (I-766), I-797A, I-94 with a valid passport, U.S. visa. A foreign passport is accepted only together with another Group B item.
C	Social Security number	Social Security card, W-2, SSA-1099, pay stub showing the full number
D	Illinois residency	A lease, utility bill, bank statement, credit card statement or official mail dated within 90 days. A REAL ID needs two, in original hard copy.

The full list is in the [SOS acceptable-identification booklet of June 17, 2025](#).

If you cannot get an SSN

- **What changed:** in place of the TVDL, people who are not eligible for an SSN apply for the standard 4-year license and sign a declaration that they are ineligible for an SSN instead of presenting Group C. The card is marked "Federal Limits Apply", so it is not REAL ID compliant and does not work as ID for domestic flights or federal buildings.
- **Cost:** \$30. The same documents get you a standard State ID for \$20 with no tests.
- **If you have USCIS documents:** the statute lets an applicant who is ineligible for an SSN and has DHS or USCIS documentation authorizing their presence present that documentation instead of an SSN.
- **If you do not:** per the SOS leaflet of June 17, 2025, a first standard license requires proof of 12 months of Illinois residency, a passport that is valid or expired by no more than 2 years, proof of auto insurance and a proof of residency dated within 90 days, plus the vision, written and behind-the-wheel tests.
- **If you still hold an old TVDL:** switching it to a standard license costs \$5, online or at a facility, with no testing.
- **If you have lawful status:** the statute also defines a "Limited Term REAL ID" tied to your authorized stay. A consular ID cannot be used to get a REAL ID.

Fees (2026)

ITEM	FEE
Driver license (ages 21-68, 4 years)	\$30
Driver license (ages 18-20 and 69-80)	\$5
Class D instruction permit (first / renewal)	\$20 / \$10
State ID card (ages 18-64, 5 years)	\$20
Duplicate license	\$5
Certified driving record	\$20

A State ID is free at 65 and older. Current amounts are on the [SOS driver fee page](#).

Do I need REAL ID?

Domestic flights and some federal buildings require REAL ID or another accepted document such as a passport. A REAL ID card has a gold star in the top right corner. TSA accepts only the permanent printed card, not the temporary paper license you leave the counter with.

Chicago facilities

FACILITY	ADDRESS · NOTE
REAL ID Supercenter	191 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60601 · weekdays 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. · walk-in, but only renewals, duplicates and REAL ID; no first-time licenses or testing · the walk-in arrangement runs through the end of 2026
Chicago Flagship Center	125 W. Monroe St., Chicago, IL 60603 · weekdays 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. · first-time license, permit, REAL ID, written test (no road test); vehicle work needs an appointment
Chicago North	5401 N. Elston Ave., Chicago, IL 60630 · weekdays 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 7:30 a.m. to noon
Chicago West	5301 W. Lexington St., Chicago, IL 60644 · weekdays 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. · road tests offered
Chicago South	9901 S. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr., Chicago, IL 60628 · weekdays 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 7:30 a.m. to noon
Chinatown	2250 S. Canal St., Chicago, IL 60616 · weekdays 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

IF YOU ARE NOT A U.S. CITIZEN

- Your license is issued around your authorized stay, so bring original status documents and any I-797 receipts to the appointment.
- If you are offered voter registration at the counter and you are not a U.S. citizen, decline it and do not fill in the form.
- A wrong or expired I-94 can break a license application too; check your record at i94.cbp.dhs.gov beforehand.

Driving on a Turkish license

- **New arrivals:** a valid Turkish license is good for 90 days. An IDP on its own does not help.
- **Visitors:** people who do not plan to become Illinois residents may use their foreign license for their whole stay, and so may the spouse and children of someone attending an Illinois college.
- **Once you settle:** the Turkish license is not exchanged. You surrender it, pass the vision screening and take the written exam. We found no official statement waiving the road test for foreign-license holders, so plan on taking it.
- **Moving from Texas or another state:** the window is the same 90 days and the same testing route.

Common mistakes

- Planning around the TVDL. The program closed on July 1, 2024.
- Turning up without an appointment.
- Bringing photocopies. The SOS wants originals.
- Expecting a Turkish license to be swapped without tests, or expecting a Turkish-language exam.
- Waiting until the 90 days run out. Appointments and the 12-month residency proof take time.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN ILLINOIS Have a question about your immigration status?

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