

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · INDIANA

# How to Get a Driver License in Indiana: 2026 Guide

No credential at all is issued without proof of lawful status, not even an ID card. There is only one option, so the decision is not the card type but whether your document is ready.

## SHORT ANSWER

There is no way to soften this: **Indiana issues no credential at all without proof of lawful status.** Not a driver license, not a learner permit, not even a plain identification card. The statute requires, for an ID card as well, that the applicant has **presented valid documentary evidence of lawful status in the United States**, and status is checked through a federal verification service. If your status is temporary, the credential you receive meets the federal identification standard, carries a **Restriction 9** notation, and **expires on the last day of your lawful stay**. The privacy trade-offs you may have read about in our other state guides do not exist here, because **there is only one option**. This guide carries **no fee figure at all**, and we explain why below.

## The fifth pattern in this series, and the most closed

You may have read a different answer in one of our other state guides, so let us be explicit about the difference. Some states issue a credential that does not depend on status but carries a distinguishing band; some issue the ordinary license itself and forbid by statute any marking that reveals status; one created a separate driving card; another makes you choose between two cards. **Indiana is none of these.** Here the door opens with a status document and stays shut without one, which is why this guide offers you no table of choices.

| QUESTION                                      | ANSWER                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| License without a status document             | <b>No.</b> The statute requires documentary evidence of lawful status                                                        |
| Identification card without a status document | <b>No.</b> The ID card section imposes the same requirement                                                                  |
| How status is checked                         | Through the federal SAVE program, which the agency describes as a service allowing it to verify an applicant's lawful status |
| Credential for someone with temporary status  | A federally compliant credential, with <b>Restriction 9</b> placed on the credential and on the driving record               |
| How long it lasts                             | <b>Until the end date of your lawful stay.</b> Documents are requested again at every renewal                                |

| QUESTION              | ANSWER                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What is printed on it | Full legal name, date of birth, <b>principal residence address</b> , hair and eye color, issue and expiration dates, gender, a unique number, weight, height, signature and a digital photograph |
| Fees                  | <b>We could not verify a single one</b> and we print no figure in this guide                                                                                                                     |

We read the ID card requirement in [the statutory section on identification cards](#): the card is issued only to a person who applies, resides in Indiana, and has presented valid documentary evidence of lawful status. What appears on a license is listed in [a separate section](#). **One source warning up front, because it governs this whole guide**: the official publication site for the Indiana Code returned an empty shell during this research, the statutory text could only be read through a secondary legal database, and that text is stamped **current as of January 1, 2026**. Anything enacted in the 2026 session therefore does not appear in the text we read.

#### RESTRICTION 9: WHAT WE KNOW AND WHAT WE DO NOT

- **The agency's own wording is clear**: all applicants with temporary or permanent lawful status are issued a federally compliant credential, and if you present an acceptable document for temporary lawful status and that status is verified, **a Restriction 9 is placed on your credential and driver record**.
- **What is not clear**: we could not verify how that notation actually appears on the card. On the face, in the restriction code field, or only in the machine-readable portion, no reachable official page says. **So this guide makes no definite claim about what is printed on your card**.
- **What is certain is the expiration date**: a credential issued to a person with temporary lawful status ends on the last day of that lawful stay. The practical consequence: the day your extension or change of status is approved, **you need a second appointment at the license branch**.
- **An error on your I-94 feeds straight through to your card**. If the period of stay on your arrival record is wrong, your card's end date is wrong too, so check the record early.

## What to bring to the appointment

- The agency lists four things for a new credential: **one identity document, one lawful status document, proof of your full Social Security number, and two Indiana residency documents**.
- Acceptable status documents include **an approved arrival record, an unexpired permanent resident card, and an unexpired employment authorization card**.
- **A Turkish passport on its own is not enough**; it is asked for together with the arrival record and visa, and where relevant a student or exchange program document. That is **different from the vital records counter**, where a passport alone is sufficient; do not mix the two rules.
- While your documents are being verified you are issued an **interim license valid for thirty days**, with the permanent card arriving later by mail.
- **We give that list with a caveat**: the agency's document appendix is a PDF that could not be downloaded in any way during this research, so we read it only indirectly. Confirm it from [the motor vehicle bureau's own pages](#) before your appointment.

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## Fees: we publish none, and here is why

You will not find a fee figure in this guide for a license, an ID card, a learner permit or a duplicate. The reason is simple: the agency's official fee schedule never opened during this research, and the third-party guides that remained contradict one another. Publishing conflicting numbers would not help you, it would make you budget wrongly. **Get the fees from the agency's own fee page before your appointment** and ask about accepted payment methods on the same call.

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## The language of the test, and the unanswered question about a Turkish license

- The agency offers the knowledge test in several languages besides English; the first group of translations included Arabic, Burmese, German, Japanese, Chinese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish and Vietnamese.
  - **The sources conflict on how many languages:** one says eleven, another fourteen, a third eighteen including sign language. We could not resolve it, so we publish no number.
  - **Is there a Turkish test?** Turkish does not appear in any language list we read, but none of those lists is current or complete. **We are not saying there is none; we are saying we could not find one.** An applicant who speaks a language not on the list is reported to be able to take the test with an interpreter. Ask the language and interpreter question openly when you book, and ask for the answer in writing.
  - **We could not find out whether a Turkish license brings a waiver.** We found no official page showing that Indiana grants a test waiver to the holder of a foreign license, we could not confirm any exchange arrangement with Türkiye, and we could not establish how many days a newcomer may drive on a Turkish license.
  - Third-party guides say a new Indiana resident has **sixty days** and cite a statutory section for it, but **the text of that section as we read it contains no such period**; the citation appears to be wrong and we could not find the correct one. So that figure does not go in this guide.
  - **The only waiver we could verify applies to arrivals from another US state:** someone with a valid out-of-state license is not asked to take the written test, only a vision screening. Someone whose license has expired takes the knowledge test, and if it expired more than five years ago, or was held for less than a year, a driving test as well.
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## Commercial licenses: a separate and narrower rule

On the commercial side the rule is different: Indiana does not issue a new commercial license or commercial learner permit to someone who is neither a US citizen nor a lawful permanent resident, and an existing commercial license holder with temporary status may hold only an ordinary operator license. Reporting describes a 2025 to 2026 measure that cancelled commercial licenses outside certain visa categories. **We could not confirm that measure's effective date or full scope from the statutory text**, because the text available to us is a January 1, 2026 snapshot, so we do not set out its details. If you plan to work on a commercial license, ask the agency directly before you apply.

- 1 **Prepare your status document first, then book.** In Indiana a license is a status question, and an appointment before the document is in hand wastes time.

- 2 **Establish your Indiana residence address** and start collecting the two residency documents now; a lease, a utility bill and a bank letter are the easiest to obtain.
- 3 **Download and check your I-94 record before the appointment**, because your card's end date is tied to the period of stay recorded there.
- 4 **Ask the agency for the fee and the payment method**, not this guide; there is deliberately no figure here.
- 5 **Ask about the test language and an interpreter in writing**. Turkish is not on the lists, but we also know the lists are not current.
- 6 **Put the card's end date in your calendar the day you receive it** and plan the renewal in the same file as your status extension.
- 7 **Do not try this door just to obtain identification**. The ID card carries the same requirement; the doors that do open without a number or a status document are the library card, vital records and school enrollment.
- 8 **Carry your passport for flights** and remember that the document you use on an international flight is a passport.



#### TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN INDIANA

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