

CHECKLIST · MICHIGAN

Moving to Michigan: A First Thirty Days Checklist

What newcomers should do in order, the deadlines, and which office handles what. Print it and tick the boxes.

SHORT ANSWER

Get your bearings first: Michigan has **every layer of government** and **all 83 counties are real government**, with a city, village or **township** on top, plus a school district, an intermediate school district, a library district, a transit authority, a community college and a regional park authority. But **you never go to the county for a vehicle matter**: licensing and registration are entirely the state's work. Deadlines: if you are subject to the reporting duty, **10 days** to USCIS and **5 days** to the immigration court. For the license **no day count was found**; the trigger is not a calendar but **becoming a Michigan resident**.

Who handles what?

MATTER	WHO HANDLES IT IN MICHIGAN
Driver's license, vehicle registration, plates	The state: Secretary of State branches. There is no county motor vehicle office.
Marriage license, birth and death certificates, trade name (DBA)	The county clerk
Immunization waiver, hearing and vision screening	The county health department
Property assessment and the principal residence exemption	The city or township assessor
Property tax collection	The city or township treasurer; appeals go to the local Board of Review
Schools	An independent school district with its own elected board and tax lines, with an intermediate school district above it at county level
Library	A library district with its own tax line, and its boundary does not have to follow the city boundary
Buses	A regional transit authority with its own tax line
Potholes, street lights, a missed trash pickup	The city's own channel. Ann Arbor has no 311 ; it uses A2 Fix It, and general questions go to 734.794.6320

And there is a township trap. Michigan's distinctive layer is the **township**: outside city limits, a township does everything a city does. The assessor who takes your principal residence exemption affidavit is the township's, and so is the treasurer who collects the tax. **A city name in your postal address does not mean you are governed by that city**, and filing your exemption form at the wrong office can cost you the deadline. Answer two questions before you move: **is this address inside a city or in a township**, and **is this address in a city that levies an income tax**. The answer also sets your school district, your library district and your trash arrangements.

The first 10 days

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Report your address to USCIS (AR-11)	10 days after you move. USCIS prefers the online report to the paper form: uscis.gov/addresschange . Mail forwarding does not substitute for this.
☐ Update the address on a pending case separately	The AR-11 duty and updating the address on a pending application are not the same thing ; do both and keep the confirmation for both . That matters especially in Michigan, because it is that notice that tells you which office and which biometrics center to go to
☐ EOIR-33 if you have a pending court case	Within 5 days , on the EOIR's own form. Do not mix the two deadlines
☐ Print your I-94	i94.cbp.dhs.gov · Your permitted stay is the date on the I-94, not the expiry of the visa. In Michigan that carries an extra meaning: even a day trip to Canada is a new admission record , so check that the record was created correctly on your return
☐ Update your contact details in MI Bridges	This item is specific to Michigan. The state human services department sends coverage changes by post , and from January 1, 2027 some coverage will be reviewed every six months, which makes a missed letter more expensive after that date

The first week

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Electricity and gas: take your passport	For the companies the state regulates, the accepted identification is not on a help page but in a written rule : a driver's license, a state-issued ID card, a US military card, a military dependent's card, a Native American tribal document, a passport , or other government-issued identification carrying a photograph. A Social Security number is not on that list . For proof of tenancy, the rule says the property manager's, landlord's or owner's written or verbal confirmation is sufficient evidence
☐ If a deposit is asked for, ask why	The grounds on which a residential deposit may be required are a closed list (an undisputed unpaid bill from the last six years, misrepresenting identity or credit standing, failing to provide positive identification on request, requesting service for an address you do not occupy, unauthorized use, a returned check or declined card payment in the last 12 months, bankruptcy, or having shared a home with a person who still owes an undisputed bill), and "no US credit history" is not among those grounds . Read that as the rule's closed list, not as a promise. There is a guarantor route : name a customer in good standing with the company and the deposit drops. The cap is twice the address's average monthly bill, it earns 5 percent a year , and it comes back after 12 months of prompt payment

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Learn where the protection stops	These rules bind only the companies the state regulates. Municipally owned electric utilities are not subject to Commission regulation and set their own rules through their own boards; for cooperatives the authority is partial. Ask first about the address you are moving to: is the provider here a regulated company, a municipal utility or a cooperative? Ann Arbor addresses are within the regulated set, but for places like East Lansing the provider type has to be checked separately. Internet sits outside these protections entirely
☐ Water, sewer and trash	Ann Arbor provides all three through its own department, the water bill comes quarterly and all three are on it; set-up 734.794.6333 , customer service 734.794.6320 , 301 E. Huron Street, first floor. Trash is not a bill, it is a property tax line , and the first 64-gallon cart of each kind is free. If you live in an apartment the arrangement differs: curbside compost collection is not provided to multi-unit properties
☐ Ask two questions before you sign the lease	Whose name is the water account in? In Ann Arbor a consumer deposit is triggered not by the utility but by the property owner , and only through a signed and notarized statement , at a \$17 charge. Second: does the building have compost collection?
☐ With no paperwork at all, start at the library	The card is issued in person at one of five branches; the accepted photo IDs include a passport , and a Social Security number appears nowhere in the card requirements . If you have no proof of address either, ask at the information desk: the library will mail a form letter to your local address to establish residency . One geography trap: the district boundary is not the city boundary, and a county resident outside it pays \$150 a year . Ask which library district an address is in before you rent
☐ Enroll the children in school	An SSN cannot be required and status cannot be asked , but the district may ask for two proofs of residency and a notarized lease . Get the lease notarized on signing day
☐ Apply for an SSN (if you are eligible)	National line 1-800-772-1213 , weekdays 08:00 to 19:00; find the office through secure.ssa.gov/ICON with your ZIP code. This guide carries no Social Security office address , because we could not verify the Michigan offices. Ask for a Turkish interpreter and say so at the start of the call. Wait a few days after your arrival; immigration records take time to reach the system

IF YOU ARE RENTING: SIX DEADLINES, AND TWO OF THEM ARE YOURS

- **7 days:** complete and return the move-in inventory checklist. The landlord gives you **two blank copies**, you record the condition and return one, and **you have the right to ask for the previous tenant's move-out checklist:** that is how you see what was charged last time.
- **4 days:** on moving out, give the landlord a **written forwarding address**. Missing it removes the landlord's duty to notify you of damages, though it does not kill your claim to the deposit.
- The landlord's deadlines: **14 days** to give written notice of the institution holding the deposit, **30 days** to mail an itemized list of damages with cost estimates and the balance, and **45 days** to sue for the damages claimed. If the landlord misses the 30 days, **no damage claim arises at all;** a landlord who does not comply fully can be liable for **twice** the amount wrongfully retained.
- Reply by ordinary mail within **7 days** of receiving the list: **silence forfeits the amount claimed.**
- **The cap is one and a half months' rent**, and "last month's rent in advance" counts toward that cap. The deposit **remains the tenant's property** until the landlord establishes a right to it, and the statutory rights cannot be waived by contract.
- **Source of income has been a protected class statewide since April 2, 2025**, and its most useful provision is this: a landlord applying an income threshold **may not leave a rental voucher or subsidy out of the calculation. But the second subsection of the same section says the provision does not apply to a landlord with fewer than 5 rental units in Michigan**, counting all related entities together. Read both halves: if you rent from a small private owner, this protection does not cover you. The statute also protects the **source**, not the **amount**. **Ask the landlord how many units they own before you sign.**
- Inside Ann Arbor city limits three more local rules apply: **application fees are capped at \$50, pre-tenancy fees are prohibited** (waitlist, holding, option, lease-preparation and move-in fees), and **mandatory tenancy fees are prohibited**, meaning no fee the tenant cannot reasonably avoid. The landlord must also hold a **Certificate of Compliance**, and **the tenant has the right to see it**. Contact: (734) 794-6264.
- **And a contradiction we print.** The city's right-to-renew guide says the landlord may not show the unit to prospective tenants **until 210 days into the current lease**. The city's **March 2026 tenant booklet** says the landlord may not show it **until 150 days before the end** of the lease. Both are current city publications and we do not resolve it: **go by the 210-day rule**, and ask the city's rental housing unit for the exact date in writing.
- Keep your expectations realistic: **there is no cap on rent increases in Michigan and local rent control is prohibited by statute** (MCL 123.411). The protection you do have is that a mid-lease unilateral change is limited to **30 days' notice and a closed list of costs**. One thing is certain though: if the landlord cuts your electricity or water, changes your locks or removes your belongings, that is a violation carrying **treble damages**, not a matter for negotiation.

Once you are a resident: license, plates, insurance

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Insurance first, plate second	No registration happens without a Michigan policy and another state's policy is not accepted . Getting insurance quotes should be one of the first items on your moving calendar
☐ Choose your PIP tier yourself, before you sign	If you do not choose, the law assigns the most expensive option (unlimited PIP) and charges the premium. The choice is made on a signed form, not verbally
☐ Thirty days if your health coverage ends	If qualified health coverage ends, put PIP back on the auto policy within 30 days ; if you do not, a person injured in that gap receives no PIP benefits. Put it in your calendar, nobody will remind you
☐ Know the limits of your Turkish license	Türkiye is on the treaty-country list and no proof of status is asked for, but that is a visitor rule ; once you intend to settle you take a Michigan license. If the license is not printed in English you must carry an International Driving Permit obtained in Türkiye , because the United States does not issue it
☐ The knowledge test is not offered in Turkish, but you have an interpreter right	The test comes in 32 languages and Turkish is not among them. The state publishes the interpreter route itself, and the interpreter is approved in advance and prohibited from charging you: 888-767-6424 , MDOS-Access@Michigan.gov. Start it weeks ahead , because the authorization travels by post
☐ Expect no tolls, but do not take a Canada crossing lightly	The research found no toll highway in Michigan; the charges that exist are at crossings (Mackinac Bridge \$4 for a car, Gordie Howe bridge 8.00 CAD / 5.75 USD). Be wary of any message about an "unpaid Michigan toll" . And going to Canada and back is an international border crossing : even for a day trip, ask an immigration attorney about your situation before you set off
☐ The plate expires on your birthday	You can renew up to six months early; if you are late, \$10 is added and the fee is not prorated

The tax side: two layers, and a cap that comes off

- **The state income tax is a single rate: 4.25 percent for the 2026 tax year**, with a personal exemption of **\$5,900** and withholding at the same rate. There are no brackets. **The state return is a separate return**: filing the federal return does not count as filing in Michigan.
- **City income tax sits on top, and rather than saying a city has none we use the authoritative source**: the Michigan Treasury publishes its own list of the cities that impose an income tax. **Ann Arbor is not on that list; East Lansing is**. The highest rate is Detroit's: for 2026, 2.4 percent resident and 1.2 percent non-resident.
- **The tax is withheld where you work as well as where you live**. The practical consequence: when you look for a home you have to **check your own address and your employer's address separately**. On your first day at work the federal W-4 is not enough: Michigan has its own withholding form (the employer guide is Form 446), and if you work in a taxing city there is **a third form**. Check all three lines on your first pay stub. The Treasury city tax line is **517-636-5829**.

- **The property tax mechanic misleads newcomers.** Assessed value is 50 percent of market value under the state constitution, **but the tax is levied on a separate, capped "taxable value"**: the annual increase is limited to **5 percent or inflation, whichever is less. And the cap comes off the year after a sale**, when taxable value jumps to assessed value. So **the seller's bill is not the buyer's bill**; do not build a monthly budget on the tax figure in the listing. Ask the assessor what the taxable value will be after the sale.
- **File Form 2368 as soon as you buy.** The Principal Residence Exemption exempts your principal residence from up to 18 mills of local school operating tax; the form goes to the **city or township assessor**, not to Lansing. Filed **by June 1** it applies from the summer bill; filed **between June 2 and November 1** it applies from the winter bill. **But the net saving is lower than the published 18 mills**: an exempt parcel drops the 18-mill school operating line **but starts paying an additional 2.0394-mill school line that applies only to exempt parcels**. In the Ann Arbor example the net difference is **15.9606 mills**, which is about **\$1,596** a year on \$100,000 of taxable value. Ask your own city for **both rates together**.
- **There are two bills a year and they are not halves of each other**: the summer tax is payable from July 1 and is penalty-free through July 31, and the winter tax is payable from December 1 and is due December 31. Assessment notices are mailed **in early March**, and the local Board of Review sits for **four days beginning the Monday of the third week in March. If you rent, do not count yourself out**: the Homestead Property Tax Credit (MI-1040CR) is income-based and **open to tenants too**, claimed each year with the Michigan return; there is a separate credit for home heating (MI-1040CR-7).
- **ITIN**: somebody who cannot get an SSN but has to file uses Form W-7. The usual route is mailing the original passport to the IRS unit in Austin; some Taxpayer Assistance Centers will **verify the document in person** and hand it straight back. **We could not establish which Michigan centers offer that**, so check your own area on the [IRS list](#) before you book.

Health: put two federal dates in your calendar

- **October 1, 2026.** Federal law now makes full Medicaid payments to a state for only four groups: US citizens and nationals, green card holders, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and people living here under a COFA agreement. **The list is closed; refugees, people granted asylum and parolees are not on it.** Two things survive: **emergency Medicaid** for everyone, and coverage for lawfully residing pregnant people and those under 21, which is **left to the state's option. Do not assume whether Michigan has taken that option, ask.** Note what the law actually cuts: not a person's coverage but **the federal payment to the state**, so we do not say "nothing is left", we say **ask what remains**. Source: [PLAW-119publ21](#), section 71109.
- **January 1, 2027.** The marketplace premium tax credit narrows to the same three categories: green card holders, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and COFA. People granted asylum, refugees, TPS holders and every non-immigrant visa category (H, F, U, T, R and the rest) lose the credit whatever their income; they can buy a plan but without a subsidy. **DACA recipients cannot access the marketplace at all.** Source: healthcare.gov/immigrants/immigration-status.
- **Use the name of the Michigan program**: the Healthy Michigan Plan, applications through **MI Bridges**, help line **1-800-642-3195**. Eligibility is decided **per person**, not per household, and written notice must arrive by post before any change, explaining the change, the new coverage and **how to appeal**. The department publishes its member letter about the change in English, Spanish and Arabic; **the research found no Turkish version**, so ask for Turkish on the phone.

- **Three more Medicaid changes land on January 1, 2027 and two of them punish the person who misses the post:** retroactive coverage shortens, renewal moves from annual to **every six months** for Healthy Michigan Plan adults, and some of those adults may be asked for proof of work or another approved activity. Somebody who has just moved is exactly the person who misses the letter; **check your contact preferences in MI Bridges.**
- **And a contradiction we print.** A local organization's page still says retroactive coverage can be claimed for **up to three months** before an emergency room visit. The state department, however, has published that from January 1, 2027 the retroactive window drops to **one month for Healthy Michigan Plan members and two months for other Medicaid groups.** The local page has not been updated. **Go by the state's rule,** and know that the three-month figure holds only **through December 31, 2026.**
- **We use the word free carefully.** A sliding-scale clinic is not free, and a hospital's financial assistance policy is a bill discount, not a clinic. In Washtenaw County the most useful thing is not a clinic but a plan: the **Washtenaw Health Plan**, for low-income county residents not eligible for Medicaid or the marketplace, with no monthly premium and \$5 or \$7 per prescription, **but it is not insurance** and it does not cover pregnancy, dental, vision or anything outside the county. Enrollment is year-round, in person and **by appointment:** 734-544-3030, 555 Towner Street, Ypsilanti. **Renewal is every September and October** and missing it loses the plan.

Later on

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Birth or death certificate	Two counters hold the same record: the clerk of the county where the birth happened and the state vital records office in Lansing. For a baby born in Ann Arbor the county counter is the fast route; the state's own published timing is 4 to 6 weeks by regular mail and 2 to 3 weeks expedited. A Turkish passport on its own is sufficient identification, the only condition being that it is valid or expired less than one year ago
☐ Know the fee trap	The basic search fee is \$34, is not refundable, and searches only the single year you give. Give the wrong year and your \$34 buys a "record not found" letter. Confirm the year first
☐ A document to be used in Türkiye	An ordinary certified copy is not enough: order the apostilled product separately, search fee \$42, and the application must name Türkiye. A second order costs weeks
☐ US passport application (if you have naturalized)	Michigan has 287 acceptance facilities, most of them post offices; find one with your ZIP code at iafdb.travel.state.gov , and book post office appointments at usps.com/scheduler . On the Ann Arbor side the facility to try first is the Washtenaw County Clerk, 200 N Main Street, Suite 120, 734-222-6730, weekdays 08:30 to 16:00: it does not close for lunch, and the vital records counter is in the same building at Suite 100. Do not merge the two suite numbers
☐ If you are starting a business	The entity itself is filed with the state; the trade name (DBA) goes to the county clerk
☐ Military service registration for men	The deadline for those born in 2007 is December 31, 2026. The consulate is in Chicago, in another state and on Central time

IF YOU ARE NOT A CITIZEN, REMEMBER

- **In Michigan the danger is not the ballot box, it is the licensing counter.** By state law, when an eligible person applies for a Michigan license or ID they are **automatically registered to vote**, and the opt-out instructions are sent afterwards by post. Voting requires US citizenship: say at the counter that you are not a citizen, do not sign that section, and open the letter when it arrives. Do not fill in voter registration forms handed to you by volunteers at the door or at events either.
- **On jury duty this guide has no answer**, because the research could not establish which records feed Michigan's jury lists; we say neither that you will be summoned nor that you will not. If a summons arrives, **respond, do not ignore it**, state on the form that you are not qualified if you are not, and deal with the court named on the summons.
- **The research found no state immigration law in force in Michigan.** What actually operates is not a statute but **agency policy**: the state police published policy is the most protective one seen in this series (no stop or detention based on an immigration detainer or administrative warrant; a traffic stop may not be extended to determine citizenship). **Do not treat that as a promise of protection**: an agency policy can change at any time, it binds only that agency, and it does not bind federal officers at all. And **do not use it to decide where to live**.
- **Michigan is a Canadian border state.** The federal regulation (8 CFR 287.1(a)(2)) defines "reasonable distance" as within **100 air miles** of any external boundary of the United States, and the populated south of the state, including the Detroit and Ann Arbor corridor, falls inside it. We do not enumerate those powers, because what we read was the definition itself; if you are stopped, get advice from an attorney.
- **Public charge**: a new federal rule took effect on September 18, 2026. Speak to an immigration attorney before applying for any means-tested benefit.
- If a green card application is pending, **do not leave the country without advance parole**, and a day trip to Canada is leaving the country.
- One last note: the addresses, hours and fees in this list can change. Check the official site or your appointment notice before you travel. Information as of October 7, 2026.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN MICHIGAN

Have a question about your immigration status?

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