

CHECKLIST · SEATTLE

Moving to Seattle Checklist: The First 90 Days

What newcomers need to do, in order, with deadlines and where to do it. Print it and tick it off.

SHORT ANSWER

If you are subject to address reporting, tell USCIS your new address within 10 days. In the first week, put Seattle City Light electricity in your own name (no deposit, a passport works as ID) and enroll your children in school. Only the owner can open the water, sewer and garbage account, so a tenant pays those through the landlord. Within 30 days get your Washington license, then register the car: the license comes before vehicle registration.

First 10 days

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Report your new address to USCIS (AR-11)	As a general rule, most people who are not U.S. citizens, including green card holders, must. A and G visa holders and Visa Waiver visitors are outside it. A move within Seattle counts too. uscis.gov/addresschange
☐ If you have an immigration court case, file EOIR-33	Within 5 days: respondentaccess.eoir.justice.gov
☐ If you have an ICE reporting obligation	Update your address through portal.ice.gov as well, within 5 business days of the move
☐ Post office change of address	A USPS change does not update your USCIS record. They are two separate steps.

First week

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Electricity	Seattle City Light, (206) 684-3000. No deposit and no credit check. A passport, green card, work permit or state ID is accepted, and staff have access to interpreters. As a tenant you can put electricity in your own name.
☐ Water, sewer and garbage	Only the property owner can hold these three accounts. As a tenant you pay through the landlord, so get in writing how the charges are calculated. Anyone may pay an SPU bill, whatever name is on it.
☐ Gas	Puget Sound Energy (PSE), 1-888-225-5773. An SSN is only one of several ID options.

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Bill discount	Utility Discount Program: 60% off electricity and 50% off water, sewer and garbage. The city does not ask about citizenship or immigration status. utilityassistance.seattle.gov , 206-684-0268. As a tenant, the credit lands on your City Light bill.
☐ Enroll your children in school	Online. No SSN is asked; two proofs of address dated within the past eight weeks and an immunization record are enough. Enrollment Services, 2445 3rd Ave S, 206-252-0000.
☐ Save the city line	Seattle has no short three-digit city line. For non-emergency city business call 206-684-CITY (206-684-2489) and use the free Find It, Fix It app. In a life-threatening emergency call 911.
☐ Library card	A Seattle Public Library card is issued regardless of immigration status. A foreign license or passport plus one proof of address is enough.

When renting

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Deposit and fees	The deposit plus non-refundable fees cannot exceed one month's rent. A pet deposit is separate.
☐ Move-in checklist	Ask for the signed, dated move-in checklist and photograph every room. A deposit cannot be taken without it.
☐ Refund	Within 30 days after you move out, with a written statement itemizing every deduction.
☐ First-in-time	The landlord must offer the unit to the first qualified applicant with a complete application. You get 72 hours to supply missing information and 48 hours to answer an offer.
☐ Your rights as a tenant	A landlord must state one of 16 approved reasons to end a tenancy. A rent increase needs 180 days of written notice, and the statewide cap for 2026 is 9.683%. In an eviction case you have a right to free legal representation: 206-684-5700.

Within 30 days: license and car

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Washington driver's license	Appointment required: Queen Anne (450 3rd Ave W, Suite 100) or West Seattle (2420 SW Dakota St). No SSN needed. A Turkish license is not exchanged, so you take both tests. Confirm the hours when you book.
☐ Vehicle registration	After the license. Walk-in only, at the King County Customer Service Center, 201 S Jackson St, 2nd floor. Seattle adds a \$50 city fee.
☐ Insurance	Minimum \$25,000 / \$50,000 bodily injury and \$10,000 property damage.
☐ Good To Go! account	Free. Without one, every toll costs \$2 more. Add your plate on the day you buy the car.
☐ Emissions test	None. The program ended on January 1, 2020.

60 to 90 days and beyond

TASK	WHERE / HOW
☐ Health coverage	No insurance? Ask the hospital for charity care before you pay: at the larger hospital systems care is free up to 300% of the federal poverty level, with no immigration-status condition in the law. Children and pregnant people are covered by Apple Health regardless of status. Healthplanfinder 1-855-923-4633.
☐ Turkish consular services	There is no consulate in Seattle. The Consulate General of Türkiye in Los Angeles serves you; book at konsolosluk.gov.tr. Passports are issued in person only, so plan a flight and usually a night's stay. Put your passport expiry date in your calendar now.
☐ Taxes	Washington does not tax wage income, and Seattle does not either. Sales tax is high: 10.55% in the last quarter of 2026. King County bills property tax, due April 30 and October 31.
☐ No SSN but you must file	Apply for an ITIN with Form W-7. The IRS Seattle office, 915 Second Ave, 32nd floor, by appointment at 844-545-5640.
☐ A baby was born	Certified birth certificate: King County Vital Statistics, 201 S. Jackson St., Suite 220. A certified copy is \$25; order at least two.

IF YOU ARE NOT A CITIZEN, REMEMBER

- Do not register to vote. You will be offered registration at the DOL appointment; decline. Registering or voting as a noncitizen is a federal crime.
- Before you apply for SNAP, Apple Health or any other public benefit, talk to an immigration attorney. A new public charge rule has been in force since September 18, 2026.
- Check your I-94 record at i94.cbp.dhs.gov.
- If your green card application is pending, do not travel abroad without advance parole.

Information as of October 1, 2026. See the matching sections of the Seattle page for detail.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN SEATTLE

Have a question about your immigration status?

Attorney Asim Clinch serves clients in Seattle and the surrounding area, in Turkish and English. Free evaluation: clinchlaw.com/free-evaluation · +1 866-491-7669

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