

# Chapter 3: Voter Registration and State IDs



### Did you know that . . . ?

- In 1965, Michigan added the motorist's photograph to the driver's license.
- In 1975, Michigan became the first state in the nation to combine driver licensing and voter registration as part of the same service, known as "Motor Voter."

## Voter registration

**You must be registered to vote to participate in local, state and federal elections. To register to vote you must be:**

- A resident of Michigan (at the time you register) and of the city or township where you are applying to register to vote for at least 30 days (when you vote).
- A U.S. citizen.
- At least 18 years old when you vote.
- Not currently serving a sentence in jail or prison.

If you are applying for, renewing, or updating information on your driver's license or state ID card, you will be automatically registered to vote unless you are ineligible or you decline registration.

**Registering to vote:** Except for the 14 days before an election, you may register to vote at your city or township clerk's office, county clerk's office, Secretary of State office, a designated voter-registration agency, online or by mail. During the 14 days prior to and on election day, you may register to vote at your city or township clerk's office.

**14 day voter registration:** If an election is being held within the next 14 days and you wish to vote in that election:

- You must register to vote at **your city or township clerk's office** up to and on election day, and,
- You must provide proof of residency, such as your driver's license, state ID card or other accepted document with your name and current address on it.

If the address on your voter registration application does not match the residential address on file with the Secretary of State, your driver's license or state ID card will be updated to match your voter registration.

**Registering to vote online or by mail:** You may register to vote online at [Michigan.gov/Vote](http://Michigan.gov/Vote).

A voter registration form may also be downloaded from the website and mailed to your local city or township clerk.

**Registered voters:** If you move within your city or township, you must change the address on your voter registration. Submit your change of address online at [Michigan.gov/SOS](http://Michigan.gov/SOS). You may also change

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your address by mail or at a Secretary of State office. Your city, township or county clerk also can process a change of address. There is no fee.

If you move to another city or township, you must register to vote in that jurisdiction to remain eligible to vote.

If you move out of state, please inform your city, township or county clerk *in writing* that you are moving and to cancel your voter registration.

### State identification cards

Under Michigan law, a state identification card is as valid as a driver's license for identification purposes. A state ID card can be issued to any eligible resident, regardless of age. You may not have both a state ID card and a Michigan driver's license unless your license has been restricted, suspended or revoked.

You will need to provide proof of your U.S. citizenship or legal presence, identity, residency and Social Security number (or a letter of ineligibility from the Social Security Administration issued within the last 60 days. More information about the documents required for obtaining a state ID card is available in Chapter 1 and online at [Michigan.gov/SOS](http://Michigan.gov/SOS).

Your state ID card expires four years from your last birthday. Applicants presenting temporary legal presence documents may be issued a state ID card that expires in less than four years.

If you are not required to renew your state ID card at a Secretary of State office, you may renew it by mail, online at [Michigan.gov/SOS](http://Michigan.gov/SOS) or at a self-service station. Self-service stations are located at various branch offices and other locations such as select Meijer and Kroger stores. Find a self-service station near you at [Michigan.gov/SOS](http://Michigan.gov/SOS).

You must renew your state ID card every 12 years at a Secretary of State office to have a new photograph taken. Cash, checks and money orders as well as Discover, MasterCard and Visa debit and credit cards are accepted. Make an appointment to visit a branch office at [Michigan.gov/SOS](http://Michigan.gov/SOS).

Free ID cards are provided to those who are legally blind, drivers 65 or older who voluntarily relinquish

their driver's license, and drivers whose driving privilege is suspended, revoked or denied because of a physical or mental disability.

### State ID cards and REAL ID

Beginning May 3, 2023, Michigan residents boarding a plane for travel in the United States or entering certain federal facilities, military bases and nuclear power plants must present a REAL ID-compliant document. Examples include driver's licenses and IDs issued by states that have met the federal REAL ID standards, valid U.S. passports and passport cards. The Transportation Security Administration has a list of acceptable documents on its website at [tsa.gov](http://tsa.gov).

Michigan issues state ID cards that are REAL ID compliant. These cards have a star in a gold circle printed in the upper right-hand corner. Enhanced state ID cards that do not have a star on them are REAL ID compliant and will be printed with a star when renewed or replaced.

Applying for a REAL ID-compliant state ID card is optional. Not everyone will need one. For example, minors (children under age 18) do not need a REAL ID-compliant document when flying with a companion in the United States. You may decide not to apply for a REAL ID-compliant ID card if you:

- Do not fly and do not plan to enter certain federal facilities, military bases and nuclear power plants.
- Have an acceptable alternative to a state-issued REAL ID-compliant ID card, such as a valid U.S. passport.

If the convenience of having a REAL ID-compliant state ID card is appealing, you may apply for one at any time. If you choose not to get a REAL ID-compliant card, your standard state ID will have "Not for Federal Identification" printed on it, but it remains valid as identification for cashing checks, purchasing age-restricted items and entering casinos.



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