



**DATE** January 19, 2024  
**SUBJECT** Citizenship Marking on Driver's Licenses

**MEMO**

31 states, including MO, require proof of lawful residence to obtain a driver's license ([NCSL 2023](#)). To obtain an original MO driver's license or non-driver ID, one of each of the following documents must be presented ([MO DOR 2023](#)).

- Identity (e.g., U.S. birth certificate, U.S. Passport, Permanent Resident Card)
- Lawful Status (e.g., U.S. birth certificate, U.S. Passport, Permanent Resident Card)
- Social Security Number (e.g., Social Security card, W-2 form)
- Proof of Missouri Residency (e.g., Utility bill, housing documents, letter from a homeless shelter)

19 states allow people to apply for a driver's license without requiring proof of U.S. citizenship or lawful status ([NCSL 2023](#)). These licenses are marked "Not for Federal Purposes" to indicate that acquiring the license did not require providing a Social Security number or proof of lawful status.

The Department of Homeland Security notes that people holding "Not for Federal Purposes" licenses are not necessarily undocumented immigrants or noncitizens. People may choose to hold these licenses over those that require providing a Social Security number for a variety of reasons, including personal preference or the inability or decision not to provide original documents needed to verify identity, citizenship, or lawful status ([DHS 2023](#)).

The [2005 REAL ID Act](#) established security standards for state-issued driver's licenses, permits, and ID cards. Starting in 2025, U.S. residents will be required to present REAL ID-compliant identification to fly domestically and to access federal facilities. To obtain a REAL ID-compliant license, a person must provide documents showing full legal name, date of birth, Social Security number, two proofs of address of principle residence, and proof of lawful status.

REAL ID-compliant MO driver's licenses and non-driver IDs include a compliance status marking, a yellow star, in the upper corner; those non-REAL ID compliant IDs show "Not for REAL-ID Purposes" in the upper corner.

MI, MN, NY, VT, and WA, all northern border states, offer [enhanced driver's licenses](#) to serve as proof of identity and U.S. citizenship. These licenses are automatically REAL ID-compliant, are marked by the word "Enhanced", and can have a yellow REAL-ID star at the upper corner. They can be used in place of a U.S. passport to cross a U.S. border.