

SPRING 2022

REACHING *Out*

RESUMING
TRAVEL?



REDUCING
BARRIERS



NEW
VOTING
LAW



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
LICENSING



A message from **ALEJANDRO SANCHEZ**

HELLO COMMUNITY PARTNERS,

My name is Alejandro Sanchez, and I have been in Washington state service for nearly 10 years. I began my career out of law school as a tax attorney in the private sector, focusing primarily on the unique issues that impact immigrant taxpayers. From there, I became an administrative law judge at the Washington State Board of Tax Appeals. Interested in taxation but not inspired by it, I was delighted by the opportunity to become the governor's immigration advisor in 2018. There, I learned a great deal about the power of community activism and engagement. With major initiatives in place, including the passage of several immigration-related bills and the implementation of new immigrant-supporting programs, I welcomed the chance to join DOL as its deputy director.

As I see it, my charge now is to carry forward our director's vision for improved access to services and her steadfast commitment to equity. I also strive to ensure our agency remains positioned to meet all challenges before it with professionalism and diligence. To achieve this, I will draw from my education, my experience in a variety of state roles, and my time working with underserved communities, all with an eye toward becoming a trusted leader both inside of DOL and out.



The most important lesson I have learned during my professional career is that I cannot devise better outcomes for Washingtonians on my own. None of us can. It is instead a follow-up call with the expert, a knock on the coworker's door, a moment spent with a customer, or a roundtable joined by community advocates; these are the places where the best policies are formulated. And if we make a mistake, we come back the next day and try again.

The best way to stay energized in this work is, of course, maintaining a positive work-life balance. For me, that means spending as much of my free time with family and friends, listening to music, bicycling, playing chess, and camping.

I look forward to our future together.

Best,

Alejandro Sanchez
Deputy Director, Department of Licensing





RESUMING TRAVEL? CONSIDER YOUR IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENT WHILE PACKING

The REAL ID Act goes into effect nationwide on May 3, 2023. From that date forward, standard Washington driver's licenses and IDs will no longer be valid for air travel within the U.S., at U.S. border crossings, or get into certain federal facilities. That means you have just about a year to make sure you have—or get—the right kind of ID for your trip.

If you're planning on traveling by air, you may need an [enhanced driver's license](#) (EDL), U.S. passport, or alternate forms of identification, such as a foreign passport, a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Employment Authorization Card (I-766), or a Permanent Resident Card (I-551). You may already have what you need. To see if you're ready, take the [ID2023 quiz](#).

This all may sound familiar, as the REAL ID deadline was originally in 2020. "Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Washington State Department of Licensing offices were at limited capacity for a significant amount of time," said Teresa Berntsen, DOL's director. "This was the case with licensing agencies across the country, leading to the federal government extending the deadline. DOL has reopened most offices and is ready to issue enhanced licenses and IDs to all state residents who qualify."

[Getting an EDL](#) requires a visit to a driver licensing office. DOL encourages applicants to [make an appointment](#) to avoid long walk-in lines and waiting times. However, getting an appointment at your desired office may take up to a month, and once your application is approved it could take a couple of weeks to receive your card. Residents who need an enhanced license or ID shouldn't wait until the last minute. "A year may sound like a long time, but we recommend that you don't wait until the deadline gets closer or until just before a trip to make sure you have the right ID to travel," Berntsen said. "You don't want to plan that perfect vacation without knowing that everybody is prepared."

DOL's standard driver's license or ID will still be good for other forms of U.S. travel, such as driving or riding a train. Newly issued standard licenses will bear the marking "Federal Limits Apply" to indicate they are not REAL ID compliant. Visit [DOL's ID2023](#) website to learn more.



Reducing barriers to professional licensure for individuals with previous criminal convictions



REDUCING BARRIERS TO PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH PREVIOUS CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

[House Bill 1399](#) removes barriers that stop people with prior criminal convictions from entering the workforce. It allows them to get a professional license when the convictions don't directly relate to the profession, business, or trade.

As of January 1, 2022, the Department of Licensing (DOL) will review "[preliminary applications](#)" ([Criminal Conviction Screening form](#)) from individuals with criminal convictions who want certain professional licenses. The review will not approve the license. It will determine whether the type of conviction is related to the license and if it would disqualify them from obtaining a professional license from DOL.

This service is free and optional. The individual may submit the application at any time. DOL will make the decision in writing within 60 days after receiving the request. It is intended to give potential applicants information before spending time or money taking any required classes or exams or paying licensing fees.

This service is available only to professions DOL licenses or certifies, such as hair designers, barbers, geologists, and architects to name a few. Professions managed by a board or commission DOL supports are also included. To see the full list of professions impacted by this bill visit our [website](#).





RESIDENTS WITH FELONY CONVICTIONS CAN NOW REGISTER TO VOTE

Effective January 1, 2022, residents convicted of a felony in Washington State, and not currently serving a sentence of total confinement under the Department of Corrections, are now eligible to vote. Those convicted of a felony in another state or in federal court, and who are not currently incarcerated for that felony, are now eligible to vote as well.

Eligible individuals must register to vote even if previously registered. A certificate of discharge is not required.

Registering to vote is available in many ways. It can be easily done when completing a transaction in person at a driver licensing office. Residents can also register directly through the [Secretary of State](#) or their local [county elections department](#).

You can find more information at DOL's [voter registration page](#).





Legislature invests in statewide transportation projects

The Legislature successfully passed a once-in-a-decade transportation revenue package this year.

[Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5974](#) will allow our state to restart and reinvest in many delayed transportation projects. It will also move us closer to meeting certain court directives regarding fish culverts. This was accomplished by increasing a variety of vehicle and driver fees, and a higher tax rate on aircraft fuel. These include increases such as:

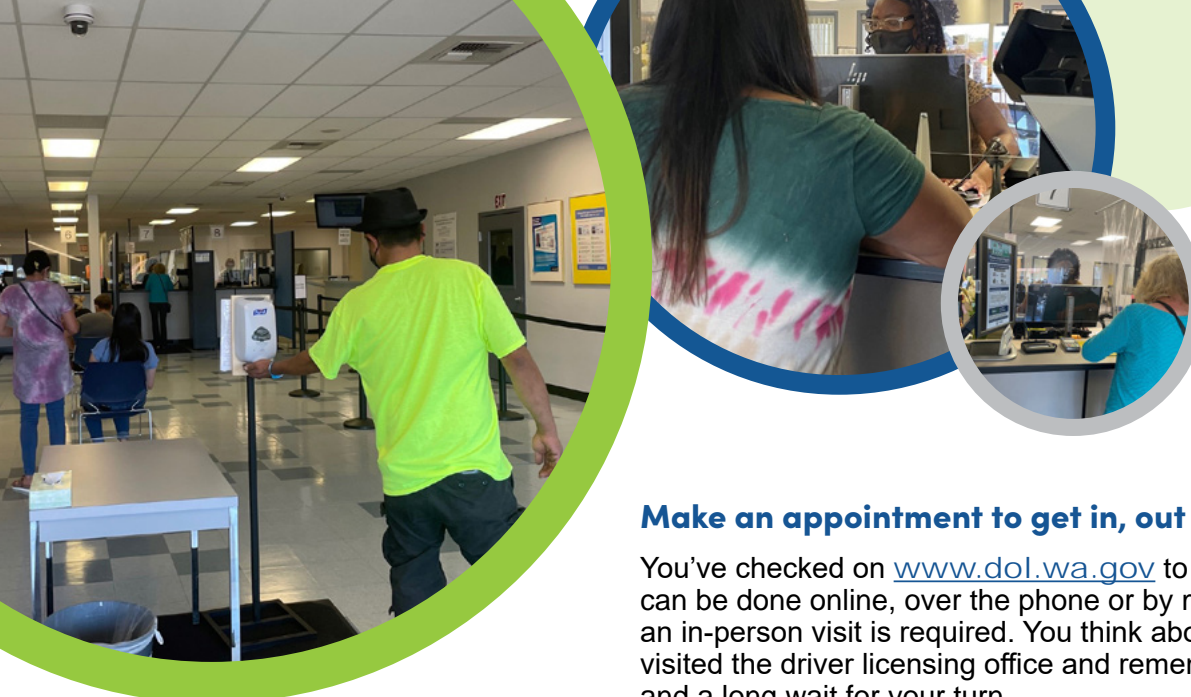
- License plate fees (originals and replacements)
- Enhanced Driver License/Identification Card fees
- Abstract of Driving Record (ADR) fees

Other bills passed during the 2022 Legislative session:

- [Substitute Senate Bill 5631](#) (lawfilesexternal.wa.gov) disqualifies a driver from holding a commercial driver license if they are convicted of using a motor vehicle in a human trafficking offense. This is an important bill for DOL, as it allows our state to become compliant with new Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration requirements related to human trafficking. This bill goes into effect September 23, 2022.
- [Substitute Senate Bill 5815](#) (lawfilesexternal.wa.gov) creates a program to provide homeless Washington residents with a state-issued ID card if they meet certain criteria. DOL, working in conjunction with the Department of Commerce, will develop a program to go into effect January 1, 2023.



Visiting DOL?



Make an appointment to get in, out and on with business

You've checked on www.dol.wa.gov to see if your transaction can be done online, over the phone or by mail and have discovered an in-person visit is required. You think about the last time you visited the driver licensing office and remember crowded lobbies and a long wait for your turn.

Fortunately, those days are over with our easy-to-use appointment system!

By going to www.dol.wa.gov/appointments on your phone, tablet or computer, you can choose an appointment time that allows you to plan your work, childcare or other duties. You can also be assured that you'll be seen at a specific time and be done quickly.

We've expanded appointment availability and new appointments are added every day. If you have trouble finding a timeslot at a location near you, consider checking a different office location or trying again later in the day. As an added convenience, we will send a confirmation email or text message. You'll also receive an appointment reminder.

For urgent visits or those without access to a computer, our Customer Service Center can help with scheduling at 360-902-3900. You can also walk into one of our driver licensing offices without an appointment. Our office staff will do their best to work you in as quickly as possible. However, you may have a long wait or be scheduled to return on another day.

Introducing new toolkit for first-time driver license applicants

DOL is excited to introduce our latest toolkit designed to assist Washington residents applying for their first driver license. Easy to download and print, this toolkit is filled with information on what to expect on the drive test, things to know if using your vehicle for the drive test, frequently asked questions, and much more. Visit our [Community Engagement and Outreach](#) web page.





Follow us

DOL has more than 40,000 followers on social media and we want to grow. For the latest updates, check out our [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#), and the [DOL Blog](#)! Using Google Translate, all of our blog articles can be translated into any language with the click of a button.



Community Outreach CONTACTS

We take pride in collaborating with local agencies and organizations to assist Washington residents to better understand agency services and programs. Contact us if you would like information about our services, or are interested in scheduling an event with one of our representatives:

- Email us: DOLCommOutreach@dol.wa.gov
- Call us: **509.290.8568**
- Invite us to your next event with our **OUTREACH REQUEST FORM**.
- Use our **ID2023 toolkit** to inform your community.

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