

# Restoring Driver Licenses to all Wisconsinites

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Restoring access to driver licenses for every eligible Wisconsinite will keep families together, increase economic opportunities for working families, ensure safer roads, and boost state revenue. For decades, driver licenses had been available to immigrant drivers up until a federal law blocked them in 2007. Since that time, states have had to individually work to get them back. Nineteen states, most recently Minnesota, have passed laws that make driver licenses accessible to all eligible residents, regardless of immigration status. Issuing driver licenses to all Wisconsinites will:

## Keep Families Together

Immigrant parents and family caregivers without a license currently drive in fear of being stopped and potentially separated from their families. When a family member is absent from the home, this disrupts the lives of the children and adversely affects their mental and emotional health.

- There are 67,000 undocumented immigrants 16 years and older who would be eligible for a driver's license if access was granted.<sup>1</sup>
- There are an estimated 32,000 Wisconsinites who are undocumented that have children. Driver licenses mean they could pick up their children from school, go to doctor's appointments, and buy groceries without fear.<sup>2</sup>

## Increase Economic Opportunity

Immigrants with a driver's license will be in a better position to support their families and contribute to the local economy.

- There are an estimated 47,000 undocumented workers in Wisconsin. Expanding driver's licenses to all will allow them to travel to and from jobs more safely.<sup>3</sup>
- More than one in eight workers employed at dairy farms or other livestock industry jobs are not citizens and would likely benefit from a driver's license.<sup>4</sup>

## Safer Roads

Extending driver licenses to all Wisconsinites will help police identify motorists who are stopped for traffic violations and check traffic records. This can reduce the amount of “hit and runs” annually. Licenses also provide critical information for first responders, making it easier for them to identify the individuals they are serving.

- Licensed drivers are statistically more likely to remain on the scene of a crash than non-licensed drivers.
- 13% of Wisconsin drivers lacked insurance in 2019.<sup>5</sup> There are an estimated 11% of uninsured drivers in Wisconsin who are undocumented residents.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, insurance premiums could decrease by \$17 million annually.<sup>7</sup>

## Boost State Revenue

Restoring access to driver's licenses would boost Wisconsin's annual revenue by over a million dollars.

- As newly licensed drivers registered their vehicles, state and local governments could see additional revenue of 2.9 million. Cities and counties with a wheel tax could also see increased revenue.<sup>8</sup>

## Contact

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## Sources

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Kids Forward inspires action and promotes access to opportunity for every kid, every family, and every community in Wisconsin, notably children and families of color and those furthest from opportunity.

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