

Recommendation

New York State should restore equal access to driver's licenses by passing legislation ensuring that New York's "Standard" licenses be accessible to all state residents, regardless of immigration status.

Twelve other states, plus Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico already offer drivers licenses to all of their residents.

Community Need and Opportunity

- **Protect New York's Immigrants:** More than **750,000** undocumented immigrant New Yorkers over the age of 16 are currently barred from obtaining driver's licenses due to their immigration status. Expanding access to driver's licenses will help prevent simple traffic infractions from resulting in arrest and tragic deportations.
- **Improve Public Safety:** Expanding access to driver's licenses will make roads and communities safer for everyone, by ensuring all drivers are properly licensed, informed of traffic laws, have passed a driving test, and operate a registered, inspected and insured vehicle. States that allow undocumented immigrants to apply for a driving document have, on average, less traffic fatalities than states requiring either documented legal presence or a valid SSN, and a decrease in the number of uninsured drivers on the road. *After New Mexico changed its policy, the State's rate of uninsured motorists fell from 33 percent to under 9 percent, and in Utah the rate dropped from 28 percent to 8 percent.*
- **Grow New York's Economy:** Allowing immigrants to access "Standard" licenses will strengthen and grow New York's economy. New York State and County governments will receive an estimated **\$57 million** in combined annual revenue, and **\$26 million in one-time revenue** through taxes and fees.
- **New York State and REAL ID compliance:** Offering driver's licenses to all New Yorkers is fully compliant with the Federal REAL ID Act and requires no changes.