

FALL 2021

REACHING *out*



NEW
DESIGNATIONS



SPECIALTY
PLATES



RESOURCES
FOR
HOMELESS



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
LICENSING



A message from **TERESA BERNTSEN**

HELLO COMMUNITY PARTNERS,

In August, Gov. Jay Inslee issued a **proclamation** requiring most state employees to be vaccinated unless they receive a medical or religious exemption and an accommodation. The Department of Licensing has about 1,300 employees, and 52 did not meet the requirement and were separated from state service. I appreciate the service of these employees and they will be missed.

With the vaccine mandate in effect, DOL can bring more employees into our administrative offices when needed to meet customer needs. A total of 42 of our 44 full-time driver licensing offices are now open, and we will reopen the other two as soon as staffing allows. We estimate we still have over a year backlog in driver licensing services due to COVID-19, and we'll continue to look for ways to serve more customers.

During the pandemic we expanded online services and created an appointment system for our licensing service offices. We are very excited we received funding for a redesign of our web site, which will be more user-friendly and accessible. We realize not everyone has access to the Internet. Making it easier for those that do have access to complete their transaction online frees capacity to serve customers on the phone and in-person.

Getting back to normal isn't limited to returning employees to offices. We also are committed to Gov. Inslee's climate goals, which include his executive order on **Building a Modern Work Environment**. The order outlines his vision to create innovative workplace strategies including enabling a mobile workforce.

Another next step for the agency is to develop performance metrics and measures to meet our strategic goals and objectives, an effort interrupted by COVID-19. I realize results are more important than plans, and I will keep you updated and ask for your input.



Best,

Teresa Berntsen
Director, Department of Licensing





**Deaf or
hard of
hearing**



**Medical
Condition**



**Developmental
Disability**



DISABILITY AND MEDICAL ALERT DESIGNATIONS FOR DRIVER LICENSES AND ID CARDS

The Department of Licensing has been working with stakeholders on [**Senate Bill 6429**](#), a bill that passed the Legislature in 2020 and takes effect January 1, 2022. The bill allows individuals in Washington to add a designation to their driver license or ID card when they:

- Have a developmental disability.
- Are Deaf or hard of hearing.
- Have a medical condition that could affect their communication or account for a medical emergency.

The bill ensures first responders, such as law enforcement and emergency medical service providers, have the information they need at traffic stops and in medical emergencies on roadways.

Throughout the conversations and discussions with stakeholders, we received feedback on how to design the designations in ways that helped first responders understand them while affirming customers' individual identities. Stakeholders wanted to ensure this process was inclusive and accommodating to all who could use these designations.

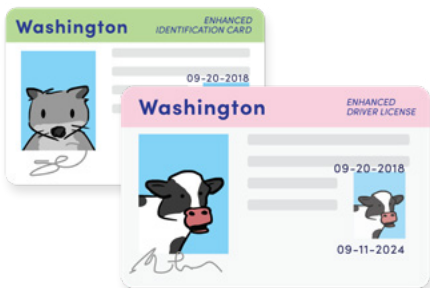
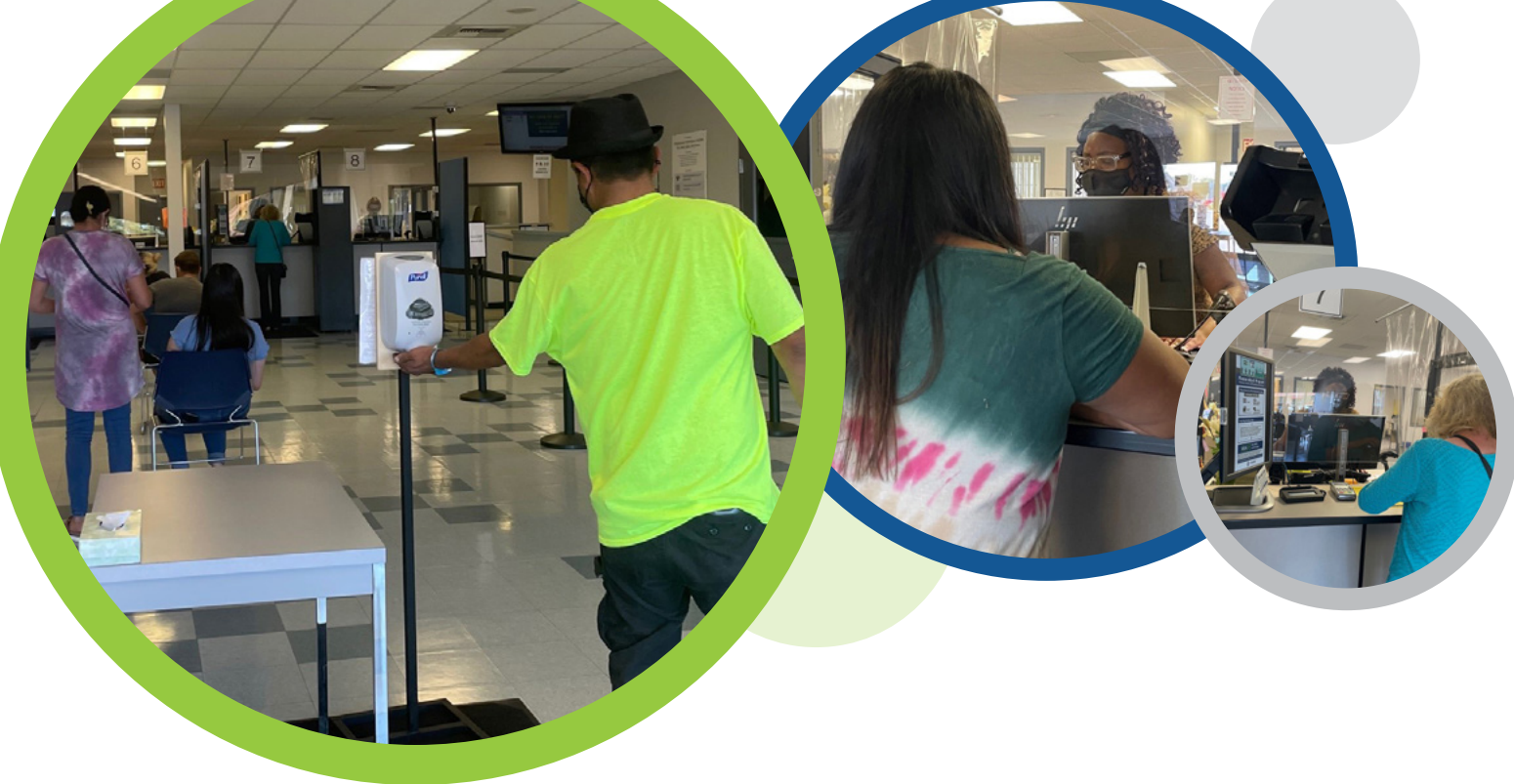




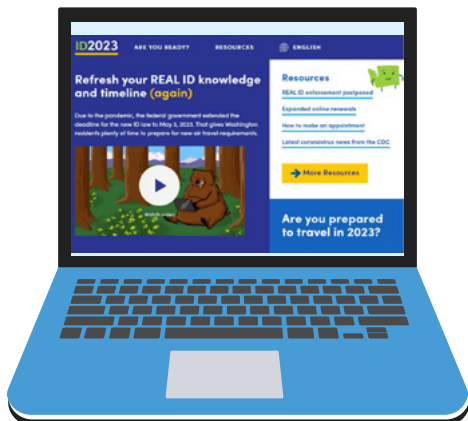
All feedback was essential to inform decisions regarding the design and placement of the designations. These choices were also guided by criteria the Department of Licensing is required to operate on, as established by the bill and other policies. The decisions made are:

1. The symbols for the designations to be used are a “DD” within a circle for developmental disability, an ear with a slash through it for Deaf or hard of hearing, and the “Star of Life” symbol for a medical condition. These icons are featured on the previous page. The designations will be in the bottom right corner on the front of the card as seen here.
2. An individual will be able to have any combination of the designations.
3. An individual will be able to have any combination of the designations “hidden” from the front of their card, allowing the information to be accessible in the system while not visible on the front of the card. This may limit the effectiveness of the designations, as it will reduce the chances of them being visible to law enforcement and medical first responders; however, it will help to address the privacy concerns brought forth by some stakeholders.
4. There will be no fee to have a new card issued if the customer wants to add or remove designation(s) from their card unless the customer is conducting other transaction business at the same time (such as renewing a license, adding an endorsement, or updating personal information such as changing a name or address).





Due to the pandemic, the federal government extended the deadline for the Real ID law to May 3, 2023. [LEARN MORE HERE!](#)



Need to visit a driver licensing office in person?

OUR UPDATED APPOINTMENT SYSTEM MAKES IT EASIER THAN EVER!

While many transactions can be done online, by mail or even over the phone, some business can only be completed by visiting one of our driver licensing offices. These include a first-time Washington license or ID card, reduced-fee ID cards and cash payments.

Making an appointment ensures you'll be seen quickly and allows you to plan work, childcare, and other duties around your visit. And no more waiting in a crowded lobby!

First, go to www.dol.wa.gov/appointments on your phone, tablet, or computer.

- Click on the blue box SCHEDULE OR CANCEL AN APPOINTMENT.
- From there, follow the steps to see appointment dates and times near you. Our new system lets you check different dates and office locations before entering personal information.
- Once you schedule and provide either a phone number or email address, the system will send a confirmation email or text message, as well as an appointment reminder.





If there are no appointments available at locations near you, keep trying. New appointment times are added every day and cancellations will also open slots up for scheduling.

If your visit is urgent or you don't have access to a computer, call our Customer Service Center at 360-902-3900 for assistance with scheduling. You can also try stopping by one of our driver licensing offices to see if they can work you in. There may be a long wait for your turn, and you'll need to wait outside or in your car.

Canceling or rescheduling is also easy. Return to www.dol.wa.gov/appointments and click on the blue box again. On the first welcome screen, click on the link in the middle of the page under, "Already have an appointment?" From there you can search for your appointment by email address or phone number. You'll need the confirmation code you received when you first scheduled. If you have lost that code, you can request that it is emailed or texted to you.

Finally, when you arrive for your appointment, make sure to bring necessary documents, wear a mask, and check in with the DOL staff member at the door.





RESOURCES FOR WASHINGTON RESIDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

According to a report released by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Washington State experienced a 6.2 percent increase in homelessness between 2019-2020, during which time 30 out of every 10,000 people in the state were experiencing homelessness. In Washington State, at least 13,000 young people, ages 12 through 24, are on the street or in unsafe or unstable housing situations. These young people are without a parent or guardian.

Individuals experiencing homelessness often face considerable barriers to obtaining an ID card. Not having an ID card can make it virtually impossible to escape homelessness. It makes it much harder to get a job, find a place to live, open a bank account, get state public assistance and disability benefits – or in some instances even stay in a homeless shelter.

Available resources for WA residents experiencing homelessness:

Reduced-fee identification cards

Under certain circumstances, individuals can obtain a WA ID card and only pay the cost of producing the card (currently \$5). The reduced fee is the same for original, renewal or replacement WA ID cards.

Individuals are eligible for a reduced fee WA ID card if they:

- Were issued a “Reduced fee identicard” voucher by the Department of Social and Health Services;
- Are under 25 years of age and do not have a permanent residence address; or
- Have been recently released from a juvenile rehabilitation facility (e.g., Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration)





Do you need a driver guide?

No need to schedule an appointment. Just stop by one of our open driver licensing offices and ask the Licensing Service Representative at the door for a guide.

[LEARN MORE HERE!](#)

Accepting alternate documents (ID Verification Packet) from a WA state school for individuals under 25 who are homeless

Based on recently passed bill [HB 2607](#), DOL has established a process with Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for accepting alternate documents that would allow individuals under 25 years of age experiencing homelessness to receive an ID card. The new policy went into effect on August 16, 2021. Qualifying individuals can work with either their school district liaison or school's point of contact (POC) to verify their identity using their school record. The liaison or POC would fill out the Youth Identification Form and print the form and school record out and give it to the student to present to DOL. Learn more about the [McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act](#).

Individuals under 25 who did not go to a Washington school or cannot access these school resources in getting their ID cards can work with approved organizations that assist homeless youth. Case managers can help them obtain alternate identity documents.

No-fee birth certificates

On January 1, 2021, a [new vital records law](#) and [rules](#) went into effect that changes the ordering requirements for Washington birth and death certificates. Individuals born in Washington State who are experiencing homelessness may be eligible for a certified copy of their birth certificate at no cost. The request for a birth certificate with no fee is submitted by a government agency or homeless services provider working on behalf of the homeless individual to the Washington State Department of Health. For answers to frequently asked questions, [click here](#).





Specialty Plates Support Favorite Cause or Organization

The Department of Licensing offers many specialty vehicle plates. These plates allow drivers to display their support for an organization, or cause, through the purchase and renewal of their vehicle plates. The money collected from the sale of these specialty plates goes to both the state and those organizations associated with the plate. For example, the new state-flower plate generates money for garden associations throughout Washington.

The most popular specialty plates are those from the Armed Forces Collection. Other popular plates include wildlife and collegiate plates. For more information, visit DOL's website and find all [available](#) specialty plates. Interested in what it takes to start a special license plate for your organization? You can learn about the requirements [here](#).



A bit of history

In 1905, the state Legislature created the Washington Division of Motor Vehicles. One of the first tasks of the new division was to assign license numbers to vehicles for a yearly flat fee of \$2. In the first year, 763 license numbers were issued.

Interestingly, vehicle plates were not issued. Instead, vehicle owners had to make their own plates. They could paint or fasten the numbers to wood, metal, or leather. If they didn't want a plate, they could stencil the numbers on the front and rear of the vehicle.

Source: Susan Parish Photograph Collection, 1889-1990, Washington State Archives.





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Using Google Translate, all of our blog articles can be translated into any language with the click of a button.



**We're
HIRING!**
Check Out Our Jobs
HERE!

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.

Helping every Washington resident
LIVE, WORK, DRIVE, AND THRIVE.



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LICENSING