

Driving Together: Benefits of Allowing All New Yorkers to Apply for Licenses

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NEW REPORT

<http://fiscalpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/NYS-Drivers-Licenses-2019.pdf>

Suddenly, with a new legislature in office, New York is poised to join 12 other states plus Puerto Rico and D.C. and allow undocumented immigrants to apply for driver's licenses. A report by the Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI) estimates that 265,000 undocumented immigrants statewide would obtain driver's licenses, including 64,000 north of New York City and 51,000 on Long Island. FPI also estimates that \$57 million in annual revenue and \$26 million in one-time revenue would be generated from the purchase of driver's licenses, new cars, registrations, and sales and gas taxes. According to FPI's report, revenues from expanding access to driver's licenses, which would increase the number of people buying cars and purchasing licenses and registrations, would more than cover expenses to the Department of Motor Vehicles. This report is based on a ground breaking analysis from FPI released in 2017.

"However you may feel about immigration, this proposal is just common good sense. It's best for all of us when everyone on the road is tested, licensed and insured. Statewide, we expect 265,000 people would get a license, making it so much easier to get to work pick up their kids from school. That's good for them, but it's also good for the economy and for our communities," said **David Dyssegaard Kallick, Deputy Director of the Fiscal Policy Institute and co-author of the report.**

There are also additional benefits to allowing all New Yorkers access to driver's licenses regardless of immigration status. New Yorkers could expect to save \$17 on their auto insurance each year, problems when traffic incidents occur can be reduced, there would be improvements among job match between employers and employees, which would in turn help local economies. California also seen an increase in organ donors after the implementation of their program allowing undocumented immigrants access to driver's licenses.

"Allowing undocumented immigrants access to driver's licenses is good for everyone. Our roads will

become safer, our local economies will grow, and it will protect New York immigrants from attacks by the federal administration that threaten to separate their families" said **Cyierra Roldan, Policy Analyst at the Fiscal Policy Institute and co-author of the report.**

This program would help prevent the devastating effects that a traffic stop can have on families, such as deportation and family separation. It would allow undocumented immigrants, such as farmworkers in upstate New York and other isolated immigrant workers living in rural communities, access basic necessities and take their children to school and doctors appointments without the constant fear of deportation. Allowing undocumented immigrants access to driver's license would also support New York's position as a welcoming state, particularly in the current political climate where immigrants are under attack by the federal administration.

The new report is available at <http://fiscalspolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/NYS-Drivers-Licenses-2019.pdf>

The Fiscal Policy Institute is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit research and education organization committed to improving public policies and private practices to better the economic and social conditions of all New Yorkers. The Fiscal Policy Institute's Immigration Research Initiative looks at immigration in New York State, and around the country.