



STATE OF MICHIGAN
RUTH JOHNSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

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Michigan Department of State to issue driver's licenses to qualified deferred action program participants after federal government reversal

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Department of State – in light of a recent reversal by federal officials on whether Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals participants are lawfully present – is now required to issue those participants driver's license and identification cards, the department announced today.

“Michigan will only issue driver's licenses to individuals who are here legally,” Michigan Secretary of State Ruth Johnson said. “The feds now say they consider these young people to be lawfully present while they participate in the DACA program, so we are required to issue driver's licenses and identification cards. I will continue to follow the law.”

The announcement comes after a thorough review of the federal government's latest position, which was posted on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security website on Jan. 18, seven months after the creation of the DACA program.

DACA participants who have documentation that they're in the United States legally for a limited period of time may apply for driver's licenses and IDs starting Feb. 19. That's when the Michigan Department of State will issue new limited-term driver's license and state ID to follow state and federal law.

The new licenses and IDs will be issued to all limited-term customers who are verified through the federal government to be here legally, such as those with employment authorization cards, student visas and other temporary visas. The new cards have the same security features as all Michigan driver's licenses but will also have a special “Limited Term” designation and the expiration date will coincide with the day the license holder's legal presence expires.

Law enforcement, local and county clerks, and other stakeholders will receive information about the new limited-term driver's licenses and ID cards in the coming weeks. The limited-term cards will ensure Michigan is in compliance with additional state and federal laws.

The new limited-term driver's licenses and IDs will also help with elections integrity because clerks will now be able to tell if someone is not a qualified voter, Johnson said.

“This is another tool to help clerks ensure that only qualified residents cast a ballot on Election Day,” Johnson said. “This will also help prevent noncitizens from inadvertently registering to vote or from voting, which could result in felony charges.”

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