

Each state has unique requirements and processes, so you should familiarize yourself with the regulations, policies, and other applicable information of the state where you reside. For your reference, below are websites for state **Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) / Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA)** where NIH researchers commonly reside, as well as a Fact Sheet from the Student & Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), Dept. of Homeland Security (DHS):

Maryland: [www.mva.maryland.gov/drivers/apply/international\\_applicants.htm](http://www.mva.maryland.gov/drivers/apply/international_applicants.htm)

Virginia: <http://www.dmv.state.va.us/drivers/#applying.asp>

Washington, DC: [http://dmv.dc.gov/service/driver\\_services](http://dmv.dc.gov/service/driver_services)

North Carolina: <http://www.ncdot.org/dmv/driver/license/>

Montana: [http://doj.mt.gov/driving/driver\\_licensing/](http://doj.mt.gov/driving/driver_licensing/)

Arizona: [http://www.azdot.gov/mvd/driver\\_services/driver\\_license\\_information](http://www.azdot.gov/mvd/driver_services/driver_license_information)

Fact Sheet (SEVP/DHS): [http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/dmv\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/dmv_factsheet.pdf)



## WHERE DO I APPLY?



The nearest full service MVA to NIH for those residing in Maryland is:

Gaithersburg MVA  
15 Metropolitan Grove Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Monday - Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm, Saturday 8:30am - 12:00pm  
1-800-950-1682

Have a question for MDOT MVA? [ContactMVA](http://mymva.maryland.gov/go/web/ContactMVA) has answers.  
[mymva.maryland.gov/go/web/ContactMVA](http://mymva.maryland.gov/go/web/ContactMVA)

Note: In Maryland, you can generally only obtain a new driver's license at full-service MVA locations. Other locations offer limited services, such as renewing your license or obtaining a duplicate license if you have lost yours. Be sure to check the website BEFORE visiting the MVA location to confirm the services offered by that location.

Directions: Check the website for a map and driving directions. If taking public transportation, use the Metro "Trip Planner" tool to determine the best Metro and/or bus route: [http://www.wmata.com/rider\\_tools/tripplanner/tripplanner\\_form\\_solo.cfm](http://www.wmata.com/rider_tools/tripplanner/tripplanner_form_solo.cfm)

See the DMV/MVA websites to confirm locations and hours of operation.

Maryland: [www.mva.maryland.gov/drivers/apply/international-applicants.htm](http://www.mva.maryland.gov/drivers/apply/international-applicants.htm)

Virginia: <http://www.dmv.state.va.us/drivers/#applying.asp>

Washington, DC: <http://dmv.dc.gov/service/driver-services>

North Carolina: <http://www.ncdot.org/dmv/driver/license/>

Montana: <http://doj.mt.gov/driving/driver-licensing/>

Arizona: <http://www.azdot.gov/mvd/driver-services/driver-license-information>

Fact Sheet (SEVP/DHS): [http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/dmv\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.ice.gov/doclib/sevis/pdf/dmv_factsheet.pdf)

Division of  
International Services

Office of Research Services

# OBTAINING A DRIVER'S LICENSE



**NIH** National Institutes of Health  
Office of Management

Division of International Services

NIH Building 31, Room B2B07  
Bethesda, MD 20892-2028  
<http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/pes/dis/>

Tel (301) 496-6166  
Fax (301) 496-0847  
DIS is an ORS Service

**Q****WHEN SHOULD I APPLY FOR A DRIVER'S LICENSE?****A**

DIS suggests that you wait until three (3) days AFTER your arrival in the U.S. to apply for your driver's license because the DMV/MVA must verify your non-immigrant status with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

In addition, if you are in J-1 status, you must also wait until three (3) days AFTER you have checked-in with our office to activate your J-1 record (known as "SEVIS validation").

If you apply too soon, the DMV/MVA may be unable to verify your status because your entry information (taken from your Form I-94 Arrival/Departure record) and/or SEVIS validation has not yet been uploaded to the DHS database (known as the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements or SAVE).

Maryland Residents: You can submit an electronic SAVE Verification Request Form online at <http://www.mva.maryland.gov/save.htm> to begin the application process. An MVA representative will contact you within two (2) business days with the verification results and information to continue the process.

**Q****WHAT DOCUMENTS DO I NEED TO APPLY FOR A DRIVER'S LICENSE?****A**

AGE

IDENTITY

LAWFUL NON-IMMIGRANT STATUS

Check with the DMV/MVA for a current list of documents accepted as evidence of identity and lawful status. Most states require a valid foreign passport with an unexpired visa, as well as the document(s) showing status: Form I-94 print-out, passport admission stamp, AND Form DS-2019 (for J-1/J-2) OR Form I-797 (e.g. for H-1B or O-1) OR Employment Authorization Document (e.g. for J-2 or F-1).

**Driver's License Application and Fee:** Check with the DMV/MVA for the current application and fee.

**Name Consistency:** When completing the form, clearly write your name as it appears on your passport. Do not use a shortened version of your name or a "nickname" on the application form.

**Correct Information:** Check ALL your immigration documents to ensure that all your information is entered correctly (e.g. correct spelling of name, correct date of birth, etc.).

**Proof of residence within the state or district:** Check with the DMV/MVA for a current list of documents accepted as evidence that you live in the state or district.

Proof of Social Security Number (SSN), or Social Security Administration (SSA) Letter of Ineligibility: Check with the DMV/MVA if an SSN or an SSA Letter of Ineligibility (LOI) is required prior to applying for a driver's license or ID.

**Dependents Without Work Authorization:** In most cases, dependents that are not authorized to work in the U.S. (such as H-4 dependents) are NOT eligible for an SSN. However, the SSA will be able to provide a "Letter of Ineligibility" (LOI). To obtain an LOI, submit an application for an SSN and notate your status on the form (e.g. H-4) and request the LOI.

Evidence that you have a license issued by a U.S. state/territory or a foreign country, have passed a driving test, or have completed a driver education program: Check with the DMV/MVA for their specific requirements.

**HOW TO RESOLVE COMMON ISSUES****?****EXPIRED VISA**

Maryland and DC currently require an unexpired visa as proof of identity and lawful status. If you do not have one (e.g. your visa expired after entry or you are a Canadian citizen who does not need a visa), and are refused DMV/MVA issuance of a driver's license, please email [dis@mail.nih.gov](mailto:dis@mail.nih.gov).

**?****FORM I-94 OR OTHER ENTRY ERRORS**

If the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) made an error on your Form I-94 (e.g. indicated the wrong status or period of admission) or in the CBP database (e.g. entered the wrong birth date), CBP can review and remedy the error.

Any CBP office or "deferred inspection" location can assist you regardless of where you were last admitted into the U.S.\* See the CBP website for a list of locations (<http://www.cbp.gov/contact/deferred-inspection/overview-deferred-inspection>) and read the Fact Sheet on the Arrival Departure Record (Form I-94) available at ([http://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/documents/i94\\_factsheet\\_2.pdf](http://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/documents/i94_factsheet_2.pdf)).

If your electronic Form I-94 cannot be found, please visit (<http://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/i-94-instructions>) and go to "CBP INFO Center questions and answers for I-94."

\*Note: DIS recommends that you call the CBP location in advance to confirm the best day and time to come. You may request the correction at your nearest CBP office. If you live in Maryland, this would be at Baltimore Washington International (BWI) Airport.

**?****F-1 (STEM), H-1B, O-1, or TN AWAITING USCIS APPROVAL OF EXTENSION OF STAY**

If you are an F-1 Student (with an expired I-20 & EAD) and are awaiting your STEM extension approval from USCIS or you are an H-1B, O-1, or TN status holder (in your 240-Day extension period) awaiting USCIS approval of your extension of stay, show the DMV/MVA your USCIS Receipt Notice. If this is not accepted, please email [dis@mail.nih.gov](mailto:dis@mail.nih.gov).

**Q****CAN MY DEPENDENTS APPLY FOR A DRIVER'S LICENSE?****A**

Yes. In addition to the documentation above, the accompanying spouse and/or dependent should present supporting documentation from the principal non-immigrant (J-1, H-1B, O-1, etc.) to reflect the duration of status, as well as their own. It is suggested that you accompany your spouse and/or dependent applying for a driver's license.

**?****SAVE, SEVIS, OR OTHER DATABASE ISSUE**

If the DMV/MVA advises you that there is an issue with your information in a database, and you have waited three (3) days AFTER your arrival in the USA, and if J-1, you have waited at least three (3) days AFTER checking-in with DIS, ask the DMV/MVA which database is causing the issue so that you can follow up with the appropriate agency.

For SEVIS issues: Please email [dis@mail.nih.gov](mailto:dis@mail.nih.gov) to request confirmation that "SEVIS validation" occurred.

For SAVE issues: Request a correction through CBP (see "Form I-94 or Other Entry Errors" section)

For Social Security issues (e.g. if any of your information has changed since your SSN application, such as a name change due to marriage/divorce): go to your local Social Security Administration (SSA) Office to request a correction. See the DIS handout, "Social Security Number Information," (provided when you first check-in with DIS) for general information and where to find your local SSA office.

**?****DMV/MVA WILL NOT ACCEPT YOUR IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS OR OTHER ISSUE NOT LISTED ON THIS CHART**

If the DMV/MVA advises you that it will not accept your immigration documents to prove age, identity, and/or lawful status, or describes an issue not listed on this chart, please email [dis@mail.nih.gov](mailto:dis@mail.nih.gov) and explain your situation.