

## Photo ID Options for Non-Drivers

By: Terry Adams, Principal Analyst  
January 22, 2020 | 2020-R-0012

### Issue

Provide examples of government-issued photo IDs other than driver's licenses, specifically (1) options for people who cannot appear in person at a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office and (2) whether any municipalities offer ID cards to their residents. Additionally, describe how individuals may obtain a copy of their birth certificate. (This report updates OLR Report [2012-R-0247](#).)

### Summary

The primary form of photo ID, other than a driver's license, is a non-driver ID card issued by DMV. While obtaining this card requires appearing at a DMV office, applicants meeting certain criteria may be able to renew a non-driver ID card by mail. A person without a photo ID could also obtain a U.S. passport if he or she meets certain criteria.

Members of the public may be able to obtain other types of government-issued photo ID, but these IDs generally do not meet federal requirements (e.g., for boarding a plane). Examples could include library cards or cards issued to certain program participants (e.g., recreation programs). Additionally, senior citizens and individuals with a disability may obtain a photo ID from CTTransit. (It issues these cards to riders who qualify for reduced fares.) It appears that Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven are the only municipalities in the state to offer their residents ID cards.

A person may obtain a copy of his or her birth certificate from either the Department of Public Health's (DPH) State Vital Records Office or a town vital records office. If the birth occurred before January 1, 2003, then a person may request it only from the State Vital Records Office, town vital records office of the town where the birth occurred, or the town of the mother's residence at the

time of birth. If the birth occurred on or after January 1, 2003, then a person may request it from the State Vital Records Office or any town vital records office.

## Non-Driver ID Card

A [DMV-issued non-driver ID card](#) is the primary alternative to a driver's license. All initial applicants for an ID card must appear in person. Renewal applicants (including applicants who are downgrading from a driver's license to an ID card) also must appear in person unless they are out of state, incarcerated, active duty military members, or unable to appear because of medical reasons. Applicants who qualify for these exceptions may [renew by mail](#) by completing a [B-350 form](#). DMV allows one renewal by mail before an in-person visit is required for a new photo.

If the mail renewal is for medical reasons, the applicant must also complete a [CI-1 form](#), which is a request to receive the card by mail because of a medical condition. The form must be signed by a physician.

## *Required Documents*

Initial applicants who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents may obtain only a REAL ID-compliant card. According to DMV, if an applicant for an ID card does not present the necessary REAL ID documentation (see below), then he or she will be turned away and told to return with the necessary documentation.

However, the department has an exception process for applicants who are elderly or have a disability. If these applicants appear at a DMV office without all of the necessary REAL ID documents, then the office may call the department's Document Integrity Unit for approval to issue the card without the documentation. DMV notes that this exception does not apply to proof of address.

According to DMV, applicants who are [renewing](#) an existing ID card or downgrading from a driver's license to an ID card have the option to decline REAL ID compliance. Additionally, an applicant who is in the United States on a visa would be issued a non-REAL ID-compliant card only.

***REAL ID Act.*** The Real ID Act is a federal law that requires state driver's licenses and non-driver ID cards to meet certain standards in order to be accepted for federal purposes, such as boarding airplanes or entering certain federal facilities. To issue Real ID-compliant licenses, states must require applicants to prove their (1) identity and birthdate, (2) Social Security number, (3) principal address, and (4) lawful presence in the United States.

DMV's REAL ID document checklist is available [here](#). For more information on REAL ID requirements, please see OLR Report [2015-R-0241](#).

## ***Fees***

A newly issued ID card costs \$28 and is valid for seven years. The card may be renewed for six years (\$24) or eight years (\$32) ([CGS § 1-1h](#), as amended by [PA 19-165](#) (§ 1)). According to [DMV's website](#), the fee is waived for applicants who provide proof of residency from an authorized homeless shelter or transitional housing location in Connecticut. It is also waived for blind veterans who provide (1) a certificate of blindness from the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind or (2) letter from a doctor or optometrist and evidence of an honorable discharge.

## **Passports**

A person without photo ID can obtain a passport if he or she meets certain requirements. First-time applicants must apply in person, but the locations are often more convenient (generally at a local post office) than DMV offices.

Passport applicants must prove both their U.S. citizenship and their identity. Primary [evidence of citizenship](#) may be documented by a previous U.S. passport or a certified birth certificate, among other things. Primary [identification](#) includes a previous U.S. passport or a government-issued photo ID card (e.g., a driver's license or non-driver ID card), among other things.

If an applicant does not have primary identification, he or she must present (1) a combination of secondary IDs (e.g., a Social Security card, employee ID card, student ID card) and, (2) in some instances, an identifying witness. The witness must (1) be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, (2) have known the applicant for at least two years, (3) have valid ID, (4) be present at the time of application, and (5) complete an Affidavit of Identifying Witness in the presence of a passport agent.

Passports are generally valid for 10 years (five years for children younger than age 16), and a person can obtain a passport card, book, or both. The card is a wallet-sized document valid for reentering the U.S. at land border crossings and sea ports of entry from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda. The book is valid for all international travel. For applicants age 16 or older, a card costs \$30 while a book costs \$110. For children younger than age 16, a card costs \$15 while a book costs \$80. In all cases, first-time applicants must also pay a \$35 processing fee.

More details about the application requirements are available [here](#).

## Other Options

Members of the public may be able to obtain other types of government-issued photo ID. These IDs do not meet the REAL ID requirements, but may be sufficient for other purposes, such as banking transactions. Examples could include library cards or cards issued to certain program participants (e.g., recreation programs). Additionally, certain populations, such as students or public employees, often obtain a photo ID from their school or employer, respectively.

### *CTTransit Card*

CTTransit offers reduced fares for senior citizens and individuals with a disability and issues [photo ID cards](#) to these passengers. (They may also use a Medicare card if they have one.) To obtain a card, individuals with a disability must submit a physician-certified application or proof that they are receiving disability benefits. Senior citizens must submit copies of their Medicare card and a government-issued photo ID that includes date of birth. In both cases, applicants must submit a recent photo with the application. A new CTTransit ID card costs \$5, and a replacement card costs \$10.

The application for a CTTransit ID card is available [here](#).

### *Municipal IDs*

Besides the program-specific IDs described above, municipalities could offer municipal ID cards to their residents, but it appears that New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport are the only Connecticut municipalities to do this. Each municipality requires card applicants to prove their identity and residency in the municipality.

New Haven began issuing the Elm City card in 2007. It costs \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 16 and younger. More details are available [here](#).

Hartford began offering the Hartford City ID card in 2017. It costs \$15 for adults ages 18-64 years old, \$10 for adults 65 and older, and \$10 for individuals younger than age 18. The card is valid for two years. More information is available [here](#).

Bridgeport began offering the [Park City ID](#) card in 2017. It is valid for three years and costs \$15 for all applicants.

## **Birth Certificates**

A person may obtain a copy of his or her birth certificate from either DPH's State Vital Records Office or a town vital records office. If the birth occurred before January 1, 2003, then a person may request it only from the State Vital Records Office, town vital records office of the town where the birth occurred, or the town of the mother's residence at the time of birth.

If the birth occurred on or after January 1, 2003, then a person may request it from the State Vital Records Office or any town vital records office.

### ***Required Documents***

A person must present a valid, government-issued photo identification that includes the requestor's name, date of birth, signature, and an expiration date. If a photo identification is not available, then the requestor must provide two forms of secondary identification. These may include a Social Security card, voter registration card, a utility bill, or a bank statement. The [State Vital Records Office](#) has a full list of acceptable documents.

### ***Fees***

Both a full-size birth certificate and a wallet-size certificate cost \$30 if ordered from the [State Vital Records Office](#). (Certificates may also be ordered online for an additional fee.) If ordered from a [town vital records office](#), then a full-size certificate costs \$20, and a wallet-size certificate costs \$15 ([CGS § 7-74\(a\)](#)). We are not aware of any fee waivers for obtaining birth certificates.

TA:kc