

IDENTITY DOCUMENTS & PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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PAGE 1

Identity documents (IDs) are vital keys necessary to open the doors to so many parts of everyday life. However, there are key system-level failures that create significant obstacles to IDs for many people, causing severe, yet avoidable harm. This infographic highlights some of the unique impacts on people with disabilities. See MAP's new report to learn more about the obstacles to ID, the harms caused from a lack of ID, and recommendations for improving ID access for everyone.

SYSTEM FAILURES CREATE OBSTACLES TO ID



Burdensome documentation requirements often mean a person needs one form of ID (such as a birth certificate) to get another ID (such as a driver's license), and further that additional paperwork like bills or bank statements are needed to verify residency or meet other requirements. However, the National Council on Disability reports that at least 1.3 million people with disabilities in the United States are under guardianship—meaning another person has legal authority to make decisions for a person with a disability—and therefore they may not have direct access to their own birth certificates and may not have bills or utilities in their own name.

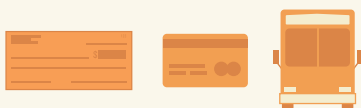


IDs are needlessly expensive, with a new driver's license costing an average 4.1 hours of work at minimum wage, and as much as 8.7 hours of work—not including the costs of time waiting at or traveling to an ID office. And, due to discrimination and structural barriers to employment, housing, and economic opportunities, people with disabilities face far higher rates of poverty, making the cost of IDs even more difficult. For example, in 2021, working aged people with disabilities were nearly three times as likely to live in poverty (25%, compared to 9% of people without disabilities). This is especially true for people of color with disabilities, LGBTQ people with disabilities, and others who face even higher rates of poverty.



The **limited availability of ID services** especially impacts people with disabilities, who are less likely to drive and more likely to use public transportation. Having limited hours or ID-issuing locations restricts the options available to the public, and especially for those who rely on public transportation with its fixed routes and schedules. Additionally, rates of disability are higher in rural areas, which generally have even fewer ID-issuing locations and fewer open hours. Traveling to other locations adds additional costs and obstacles to getting ID—and especially for those with limited financial means or without access to reliable transportation.

LACK OF ID CAUSES CONCRETE, YET AVOIDABLE HARM



A lack of ID **limits access to essential services**, such as social safety net programs like disability benefits. As argued by the Center for American Progress, many essential services and safety net programs impose harsh “administrative burdens,” such as extensive paperwork and ID requirements, making it significantly more difficult to access programs for which people are otherwise qualified. These burdens disproportionately harm people with disabilities and other already vulnerable members of society.

Lack of ID also prevents access to essential services like banking, which is critical for economic security and stability. In 2019, the FDIC reported that 16.2% of households with a disabled person were “unbanked”—meaning no one in the house had a checking or savings account. This is significantly higher than the nationwide rate of unbanked households (5.4%), and even more so than the rate of unbanked, non-disabled households (4.5%), posing even further obstacles to economic security for people with disabilities.



A lack of ID **restricts participation in civic life**, and especially with the growing number of strict photo ID laws. People with disabilities are, on average, less likely to drive and therefore to have a driver's license, making them less likely to have a photo ID that meets the requirements of these strict voter ID laws—all on top of existing, extensive barriers to accessing polling places.

Additional identification requirements of some voting laws further harm the right to vote for people with disabilities: for example, “signature matching” requires that a voter's signature on their voter registration match the signature on a ballot. But for some people with disabilities (e.g., those with a condition impacting vision or motor skills), their handwriting may not be consistent from one signature to the next, leading to a higher likelihood their vote will be rejected.

IDS ARE ALREADY EXPENSIVE—AND MANY STATES ALLOW PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO BE PAID LESS THAN MINIMUM WAGE

Figure 1: Cost of a Driver's License Ranges Widely Across States, But Averages At Over Half a Day's Work At Minimum Wage

Figure 1a: Driver's License Cost in Dollars

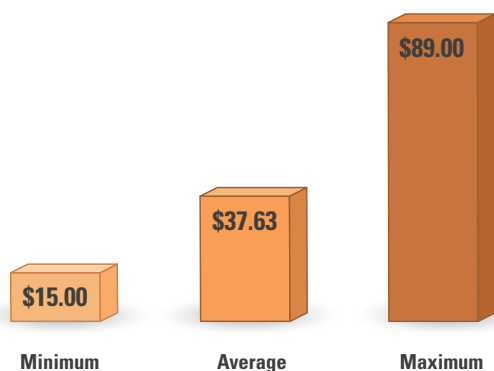
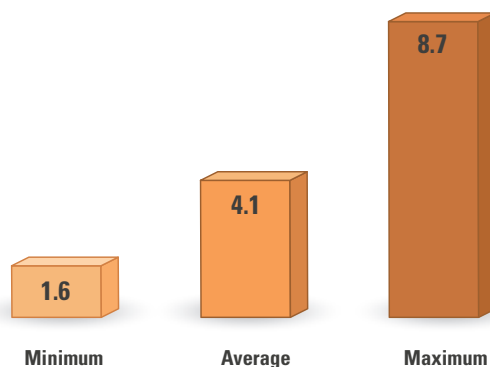


Figure 1b: Driver's License Cost in Hours Worked at State Minimum Wage



But in half of states, some employers are allowed to pay disabled workers less than minimum wage—making IDs even more difficult to afford.

Note: Each state's ID costs are matched to that state's minimum wage. Data as of 2022. For more detail on these graphs, visit this infographic's citations [here](#).

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FACE MANY OBSTACLES TO ID, IMPACTING THEIR RIGHT TO VOTE AND MORE

Stephen and Mary Beth Wagner live in Arizona, a state with a strict voter ID law. They are both visually impaired, and as a result neither of them can drive—including to the state's Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) offices in order to get a photo ID. The state's websites, including for its voter registration system, also present obstacles to their being able to get an ID, especially one that meets the state's requirements to vote. They described that the websites are "moderately accessible" using screen reader software, but that some of the required documents were not able to be filled out using the software.

Only through the help of a nonprofit organization called VoteRiders were the Wagners able to get to the MVD. With the help of a VoteRiders volunteer, they were able to obtain IDs. Stephen told the Arizona Mirror, "It felt good to vote again because I haven't voted in approximately 6 years."

However, people with disabilities should not have to rely on volunteers and third parties to get an ID or exercise their right to vote. And increasingly, states are passing voting laws that disproportionately harm people with disabilities. These include laws that make it illegal to have a friend or family member drop off a ballot, rather than having to go in person, potentially on infrequent or unreliable public transportation, to a potentially inaccessible polling place.

Adapted from: Jerod MacDonald-Evoy. Aug 15, 2022. "[Arizona's disabled community faces unique challenges on their way to the ballot box.](#)" *Arizona Mirror*.

Learn more about identity documents in MAP's new report:

THE ID DIVIDE: HOW BARRIERS TO ID IMPACT DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES AND AFFECT US ALL

<http://www.mapresearch.org/id-documents-report>

