



## Elizabeth Municipal Identification Card Program



# FAQ Sheet

### **What is a Municipal ID?**

For many residents, municipal ID cards provide meaningful access to civic and economic life that they simply would not otherwise have. Municipal IDs are identification cards issued by local governments to all local residents. They feature the photo of the cardholder, along with other basic identifying information such as address and date of birth. Although available to all residents of a city, the cards are particularly valuable for the most vulnerable community members—undocumented immigrants, the homeless, foster youth, the elderly, formerly incarcerated individuals, and others who may have difficulty obtaining other government-issued ID.

### **How many cities in New Jersey have a Municipal ID?**

Currently, the municipalities of Newark, Roselle, Perth Amboy and Dover issue municipal IDs. Plainfield recently passed ordinances and will soon begin to implement the program

### **Why is this card necessary?**

We are asked for photo ID all of the time – entering city buildings, picking our kids up from school, filling a prescription. Yet many of the residents of our City face barriers to obtaining government-issued photo ID. Without an ID, residents of the City of Elizabeth have had trouble opening a bank account, picking up a package or fear reporting a crime to law enforcement because they lack government issued photo ID. When every resident of our city has access to documentation, we will all be readily identified, feel more secure reporting crimes and will all be safer.

The Elizabeth ID features the photo of the cardholder, along with other basic identifying information such as address and date of birth.

### **Where are Municipal IDs accepted?**

Municipal IDs are accepted at any municipal institution, including schools, the police department and municipal court. Many financial institutions, including banks and credit unions, accept municipal IDs as primary or secondary identification to open an account. IDs can help in day to day activities like filling a prescription, picking up a package or applying for a library card. They are not valid for federal purposes, like boarding an airplane, or to obtain a driver's license in New Jersey. In some cases, they may also provide the cardholder with benefits at local businesses, museums, and entertainment venues.

**Do Municipal IDs grant immigrants access to benefits?**

Municipal IDs do not grant immigrants access to benefits that they do not otherwise qualify for. For example, undocumented immigrants are not eligible for food stamps under federal law. A municipal ID would not change that and a person who is not eligible for food stamps could not use the ID to obtain the benefit.

**Isn't there a County ID program?**

No, the County ID program was discontinued after 2005.

**How is this better/different from a State-issued ID from motor vehicles?**

The New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission State ID and driver's license require that applicants complete a rigorous six-point documentation verification, that thousands of Elizabeth residents simply cannot complete because they lack the required documentation. Therefore, the State-issued ID is not available to many city residents. The Elizabeth ID card also has a rigorous application process. Applicants must submit proof of identity and residency in Elizabeth, and these documents will be authenticated using state of the art technology. It is critical to preserve the validity of the IDs while also protecting our residents' privacy. However, the documents accepted to apply for an Elizabeth ID are more flexible and accessible to the vast majority of city residents.

**What benefits are associated with the Elizabeth ID card?**

In addition to a government-issued photo ID, the Elizabeth ID is a Library Card and grants the cardholder all borrowing privileges to the Elizabeth Public Library. Elizabeth ID cardholders will also receive discounts to local businesses and attractions.

**Can this card also be used as a Library Card**

Yes.

**What services are provided through the Library card?**

Cardholders have the opportunity to check out books, DVDs and other circulating Library materials. Cardholders also get unlimited daily use of the 100+ public computers at the four EPL locations; this includes access to language-learning programs, research resources, streaming services and test-prep programs, some of which are available remotely (at home) online as well as at the Library.

The Elizabeth Public Library is part of a 30-member consortium, LMxAC, and member libraries will accept the EMID card for checkout of materials and use of public computers. EMID cardholders are bound by the rules and procedures of each member library. For information on LMxAC member libraries, please consult EPL staff or the LMxAC website, <https://www.lmxac.org/info/>.

**Can you get the City ID if you already have a Library card?**

Yes. Just bring your library card when you come to your appointment. Congratulations – you are already closer to getting your municipal ID.

**What if someone wants just the ID and not the Library card?**

The library card is an integral part of the EMID program, so this is not possible.

**If I am not an Elizabeth resident and ineligible for a Municipal ID can I still get an Elizabeth Public Library card?**

Yes. People who work, attend school, or own property in Elizabeth, but do not reside here are eligible for special library cards. As non-residents, they are – of course – ineligible for the municipal ID program.

**I have an expired library card that I owe \$xxx on in fines. Is this going to keep me from getting a Municipal ID?**

You can still get a Municipal ID. Your card will be renewed, but the fines will remain, affecting your ability to use Library resources.

**Could someone use another person's card to check out Library books?**

No. One has to be at least 14 years to obtain a Municipal ID; at that age library policy restricts use of the card to the patron to whom it has been issued. The photo ID guarantees that only the person pictured on the card can use it to check out library materials.

**How can a city protect itself against fraud?**

Municipal ID cards should be designed, and programs implemented, in such a way as to prevent fraud and misuse. There are three main components to card security: card design, document authentication and penalties for fraud. One of the simplest ways to prevent fraud is by making the card difficult to counterfeit by including holograms or other tamperproof features. Second, staff should be well-trained in document review to authenticate documents. Finally, cities can implement penalties to deter fraud. Notably, there have been almost no instances of suspected fraud in any of the jurisdictions that currently run municipal ID card programs. When New York City released its first quarterly report to the City Council in March 2015, there were only two instances of possible fraud detected among more than 100,000 processed applications for the IDNYC.

**How will the City of Elizabeth protect the privacy of applicants to the ID program?**

Our city is committed to protecting the privacy of *all* of our residents. Our diversity is our strength and we value every resident of our City. The Elizabeth Municipal ID program has some of the strongest privacy protections in the country. These protections are enshrined in the ordinance that established the program. For example, the City and the library will not keep copies of documentation presented to apply for the ID card nor will applicants be asked questions about their immigration status or criminal record.