

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



SENATOR ELVI GRAY-JACKSON
SENATE DISTRICT G

Senate Bill 261: Unhoused Young Adults: IDS, Birth Cert. Sponsor Statement

Transition-age youth are in a critical stage into adulthood. Having personal identification is a necessary step to obtaining first-time employment, living independently, applying for higher education, or accessing government services. However, youth experiencing housing insecurity do not have a reliable, safe place to protect these vital records; additionally, they may lack the money, paperwork, or permanent address required to apply for replacement documentation. In 2024, at least 671 Alaska youths between the ages of 18-25 were identified during the Alaska Point in Time Count.

SB 261 would remove financial and bureaucratic barriers preventing unhoused Alaskans between the ages of 18 and 25 from obtaining essential personal identification documents. It would allow the state to waive the fee for an unhoused youth seeking a copy of a birth certificate or state identification card. Specific to unhoused youth, SB 261 also expands the forms of identification that may be used to request these documents, such as school records, medical records, affidavits from another person, or other documentation approved by regulation. Additionally, SB 261 allows the Division of Motor Vehicles to provide flexibility in how an address may be listed on the identification card, allowing applicants to use the address of a service organization or another location where they can reliably receive services.

State law AS 18.65.310 requires the Division of Motor Vehicles to charge a \$15 fee for an identification card (with some exceptions). State regulation 7 AAC 05.975 allows the State Registrar to set the fees for documents in the Bureau of Vital Statistics; a first copy of a certified birth certificate is \$30, while additional copies are \$25. There are some organizations and efforts that assist in financial assistance for these documents, such as Covenant House Alaska and The Good Neighbor Fund, but their reach is limited. SB 261 builds on the strong work of these service organizations to help the state verify a youth's identification.

Together, these changes create a practical pathway for unhoused young adults to obtain the identification they need to build stability in their adult lives. SB 261 helps ensure that young Alaskans experiencing homelessness can access work, services, and opportunities that support their transition to independence.

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Session: State Capitol • Juneau, AK 99801-1182 • (907) 465-4930
Interim: 1500 W. Benson Blvd. • Anchorage, AK 99503 • (907) 269-0174
Sen.Elvi.Gray-Jackson@akleg.gov