

# Kentucky's first digital ID available through free and secure phone app

Technology provides Kentuckians privacy control, convenience to confirm identity at participating commercial airports, establishments

BY PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

FRANKFORT — In keeping with Team Kentucky's commitment to prevent identity theft and deliver modern licensing services, Gov. Andy Beshear announced that Kentuckians can download Kentucky Mobile ID — a secure digital version of a standard or REAL ID driver's license or ID accepted for air travel at more than 250 airports. The app is used at Transportation Security Administration (TSA) checkpoints to verify a user's identity and helps protect privacy by sharing only the information needed. The app does not replace a physical ID or driver's license, which should still be carried at all times.

"Mobile ID offers Kentuckians more options for air travel, while further protecting them from identity theft or having their private information shared," Beshear said. "We want our families to be safe and feel safe while they are traveling, and this is just another step Team Kentucky is taking to increase safety for our people."

A Kentucky Mobile ID is a voluntary, state-approved version of a person's Kentucky driver's license, permit or ID card ideal for air travel, age-restricted purchases or transactions requiring verification at participating establishments. The digital version is stored on the user's smartphone as a valid form of ID locked behind a mobile phone's unique PIN, Touch ID or Face ID, so that, if

the device is lost or stolen, the ID is locked — unlike a physical ID in a lost or stolen wallet that could be used by someone else. The authenticity of the Mobile ID is ensured through verification with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC), based on records created when a user applies for a driver's license or state ID.

Kentuckians with a state license, permit or ID card can request a digital version through the app. Kentuckians who register for a mobile ID using a standard driver's license but are approved for a REAL ID at a Driver Licensing Regional Office will have their upgraded status reflected on the app within days before their physical card arrives in the mail. Federal REAL ID enforcement began May 7, 2025, requiring an accepted form of REAL ID for U.S. commercial air travel and military base entry.

Eighteen other states and Puerto Rico offer IDEMIA's Mobile ID app. Those states are Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, Montana, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Utah, Virginia and West Virginia.

"Everything's in your phone; now your ID can be too," KYTC Secretary Jim Gray said. "A digital ID serves as an addition to a physical ID, allowing Kentuckians convenience when proving their identity. One of the biggest benefits is letting

cardholders limit showing only necessary personal information during a transaction or service, like withholding your address when proving your age to buy restricted items."

Not all Kentucky businesses or state agencies may accept mobile IDs, so Kentuckians should always continue to carry a hard copy of their driver's license or state identification. State law requires law enforcement to request physical operators' licenses when conducting a traffic stop or responding to a crash. Therefore, Kentuckians who choose to download a Mobile ID must be prepared to present a hard copy upon request.

Kentucky's Mobile ID is accepted at TSA security checkpoints at most U.S. airports, including the Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky International Airport in Covington, the Blue Grass Airport in Lexington, Barkley Regional Airport in Paducah, and Louisville's Muhammad Ali International Airport.

A merchant can also verify Mobile ID by using the free "Mobile ID Verify App," available in the App Store or Google Play. The verifier and the credential holder's apps communicate via Bluetooth with end-to-end encryption. The verifier must select which information they are requesting to access. The user has the option to accept or reject the requested information, and an additional alert will pop-up if the verifier requests to temporarily store the

information. Not all merchants may accept Mobile ID, and individuals should be prepared to present a hard copy of their identification if required for purchase.

## HOW TO GET YOUR KENTUCKY MOBILE ID

Kentuckians can get their Mobile ID in a few simple steps:

- Download the Kentucky Mobile ID Verify app from the App Store or through Google Play.
- Register the phone number of the Mobile ID device. An individual's Mobile ID can only be on one device at a time to help protect their identity.

• Take a picture of the front and back of your physical ID (driver license, permit, or non-driver ID), using their phone's camera.

• Take a live selfie. The app checks your photo and ID against information on file with your Transportation Cabinet driving record to ensure you are who you say you are.

• Once your information is verified, your Mobile ID is active and ready to use wherever it is accepted.

• To learn more about Mobile ID or how to verify a Mobile ID, visit [drive.ky.gov/mobile-id](http://drive.ky.gov/mobile-id).

Implementing Kentucky Mobile ID is the first step before launching other digital driver licensing wallet options (e.g., Apple, Google, Samsung) in the future. Before releasing other digital wallet apps, Kentucky must first complete its modernization of its current driver licensing system in the summer of 2026. More information will be available at a later date.



McKenna Horsley/Kentucky Lantern

**Republican Kentucky State Treasurer Mark Metcalf says his office has pilot programs in the works to expand unclaimed property returns.**

## Kentucky's treasurer's office aims to expand, streamline unclaimed property returns

BY MCKENNA HORSLEY

KENTUCKY LANTERN

website, [treasury.ky.gov](http://treasury.ky.gov), and click on "Unclaimed Property" in the menu at the top of the page. Then, they may fill out the search with their information to see if the database has any matches. If they do have a match, then they will be directed to begin the process to reclaim the money.

People can also make nationwide searches for unclaimed property at [missingmoney.com](http://missingmoney.com).

"It's their money. We intend to get it back," Metcalf said. "It is public money in the sense that it's being managed by us for the public good, but all of these monies that you see in the Unclaimed Property Trust Fund are monies that belong to someone."

The office is in the first phases of a pilot program to add child support and crime victims' restitution payments to the system, Metcalf said. Those pilot programs will likely last a year or so before it can be fully implemented.

Metcalf, a Republican who is halfway through his first term as state treasurer, told the Lantern he plans to run for reelection in 2027.

"It's a great job," he added. "Serving the people of the commonwealth is the greatest honor extended to me, and we don't take for granted what we're doing."

## CHARLIE'S

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want, run along the river or across the bridge. I have a little motor scooter if I'm in a hurry and it's warm. There's a quality to downtown Madison that's very special, and I'm so glad to be a part of it.

"A big part of my life now, and a big reason why I'm having so much fun and enjoying everything, is my job at Vintage Lanes. I just love the people I meet, the Chandlers are awesome, and I'm learning so much. I'm becoming a real expert in bourbon, wine, craft beer and cocktails. And as an added perk of the job, sometimes the jazz trio that plays on Fridays has me come up and sing a tune or two. That pretty much makes my whole night when that happens!"

"If you'd have told me four years ago when I was still in college that I'd be living back in my

home community, working at a classy wine bar and singing in a rock band, I'd have said you were crazy. You just never know where your life will lead and how great it can be, if you just follow your heart and put yourself out there."

### HOT TIP OF THE WEEK

January in Madison is traditionally kind of slow as far as live music goes ... but our awesome bars and venues obviously did not get the memo! Still

plenty of free, live music to enjoy Thursday, Friday, Saturday and even Sunday in Indiana's Music City. But enough about music, the mighty Indiana University

Hoosiers are playing for a berth in the college football championships on Friday night. There is no better way to watch a big game than at a lively bar or brewery with a bunch of friends (whether you know anyone or not!).

Tailgators – Rachael Holt (8 p.m.-Midnight)

### Saturday, Jan. 10

Mad Paddle Brewstillery – Keith Scott Blues (8 p.m.)

Tiki LIVE! – L&L Karaoke (9 p.m.-1 a.m.)

Tailgators – Rachael Holt (8 p.m.-Midnight)

### Saturday, Jan. 10

Mad Paddle Brewstillery – Keith Scott Blues (8 p.m.)

Off Broadway Taproom – Zach Hackney (8 p.m.)

Timeless LIVE! – The Woodshop Boys (8 p.m.)

Central Hotel – Anthony Ray Wright (9 p.m.)

### Sunday, Jan. 11

Vintage Lanes – Violin Pop with Samantha Lamkin (6-8 p.m.)

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