

Wichita Driver's License Reinstatement Clinic - Huge Success May 7



Free clinic helps suspended drivers get back on the road

[KAKE Wichita reported this story](#) Pilar Pedraza May 7, 2025 Updated May 7, 2025

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[Kansas Legal Services](#), Koch Industries Pro Bono Initiative, the [Kansas Bar Association](#), the [Department of Revenue](#), and [Wichita's Municipal Court](#) team all worked together to help drivers at Wednesday's clinic.

Dozens of Kansans signed up to get free help Wednesday in getting their driver's license back. As with many clinics offering legal aid to those with suspended and revoked licenses, this one filled up fast.

"It's very difficult if you don't understand the legal terms, or if you don't have money," said Debi Tolbert.

She was one of those who showed up at Wednesday's Driver's License Reinstatement Clinic in Wichita. Like many drivers with suspended licenses we've met over the years her primary problem was money.

"There's a lot of people who are not careless drivers that aren't licensed," she said. "They simply just don't have, like, the ability to provide themselves with a working vehicle. And so if they're stopped for a tail light with no insurance, then it compounds over time.

"The majority of people who have a driver's license suspended for unpaid parking tickets, for other fines that they're unable to pay, it's because they can't afford to pay for them," said Bryan Bye with the Koch Pro Bono Initiative. "And so there's this cumulative effect of tickets and then fees on top of that to get reinstated."

Tolbert learned about this clinic from a social worker friend. Turnout was so high that drivers wanting to get back on the road filled all the appointments available almost before the clinic began.

More than 250,000 Kansas drivers have a restricted, suspended or revoked license, at last check. About half of those have historically been in Sedgwick County. We've reached out to the Department of Revenue for updated numbers to see what impact recent legal changes may have had on those numbers.



"We're here today to try to see what legal barriers we can remove," Bye said. "Filing motions for them, hoping that we can reduce those amounts and get them back on the road."

There have been two changes in state law since KAKE News began investigating what some call the epidemic of suspended licenses in Kansas. At the time, Kansas had the fifth most suspended licenses in the nation.

In the wake of KAKE's reporting and reform efforts in Topeka, lawmakers have since made to changes to state law. [One allows Kansas](#) to issue temporary, [restricted drivers licenses](#) to drivers working to pay off those fines and fees, among other things. [The other allows](#) some drivers with revoked licenses, due to convictions for driving on a suspended license, to get back on the road earlier. These changes have increased who is eligible to get their license reinstated.

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"We have clinics like this. They're helpful. They're going on all around Kansas," Bye said. And, for those who weren't able to get help Wednesday, he said help is still available. "Kansas Legal Services, I know, will take anyone's phone calls and talk to them if they want to talk about getting their driver's licenses reinstated."

"I find that there's a lot of red tape," Tolbert said about getting her license back. She spent nearly an hour speaking with the volunteer lawyers.

Lawyers who say they'll keep holding clinics like this, helping folks like Tolbert navigate the court system, so they can return to navigating the city streets to work, to school and beyond.

"I think it's a huge need," she said.

Last updated on May 18, 2025.

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