

---

## New State Law Helps Drivers With Autism

Autism New Jersey advocated for new driver's license marker, guidance to law enforcement officers

**ROBBINSVILLE, N.J.** — Traffic stops can be nerve-wrecking for anyone, but for drivers with autism or a communication disorder, they can lead to dangerous misunderstandings with law enforcement officers.

Thanks to advocacy of Robbinsville-based non-profit, [Autism New Jersey](http://www.autismnj.org), and its partnerships with several state agencies, New Jersey drivers with autism or other communication disorders can now discreetly indicate their diagnosis on their driver's license. The program aims to make common interactions with police less stressful and allow officers to adjust their communication for the safety of both parties.

Autism New Jersey collaborated with the Department of Human Services, the Motor Vehicle Commission, the Attorney General's Office, and the New Jersey Speech-Language-Hearing Association over the course of three years to design the registration process and write guidance for law enforcement officers. [The new written guidance](#) helps officers identify common communication disorders and accommodate residents' needs.

Residents with autism can now voluntarily sign up at any Motor Vehicle Commission office to receive the small notation on their driver's license or identification card and a supplemental "pink card" that shares more information about their diagnosis. To get the cards, residents need to bring the typical 6 points of identification, [along with the appropriate form](#) that lists the resident's diagnosis, to their MVC appointment. There is no medical documentation required.

"Law enforcement encounters can be stressful for everyone involved," Attorney General Matthew Platkin said following an announcement of the roll-out late last month. "The new designation for driver licenses and state IDs offers an additional way for New Jerseyans with communication challenges to express their needs. And, by helping our law enforcement officers better understand the needs of a civilian, we hope to create a more productive and safer environment for both law enforcement officers and the people with whom they interact."

Experts from Autism New Jersey provided feedback on the policy implementation throughout the planning process, as [part of their ongoing Law Enforcement Initiative](#). The non-profit also [recently published a booklet](#), highlighting police departments across the state that implement autism-friendly best-practices, such as mock traffic stops.

Beyond providing guidance for professionals, Autism New Jersey [offers a helpline](#) for parents, caregivers and individuals with autism who need guidance. The helpline experts can help callers navigate the new ID process as well as early intervention, special education, state-funded services, adult services, insurance coverage, and more. Residents can call 800.4.AUTISM or [visit the website](#).

###