

Cultural perks added to alien ID

Written by Administrator
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New York Mayor Bill de Blasio at a press conference at the Bronx Zoo on Sept. 18 announcing the debut of NYC ID in January, and the inclusion of several cultural benefits to lure all New Yorkers to apply regardless of immigration status.

New York City's Municipal ID cards that will give certain benefits to the undocumented living in the city will be unveiled on Jan. 1, 2015, it was announced by Mayor Bill de Blasio.

The city-issued ID is meant to provide official documentation for residents who entered the

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country illegally, and advocates have sought incentives to encourage legal residents to also sign up.

“The municipal ID is a powerful tool to bring more New Yorkers out of the shadows and into the mainstream,” de Blasio said last week.

“The municipal card embodies the values we cherish most about inclusivity and equality, and these memberships are another step forward on providing greater access and opportunity for our people.”

The card will be available to anyone who can prove their identity and New York residency.

It is particularly aimed at those who do not currently have ID, such as the elderly, homeless and an estimated 500,000 immigrants who live in the city without legal documentation.

“You can get a lease, a library card. You can open a bank account, you can do so many of the things in life that aren’t possible without an ID card to connect with New York City government more deeply.”

As added incentives to encourage more New Yorkers to apply and prevent the card from being viewed as something only used by immigrants, de Blasio said the card will also serve as a key to open the door for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers to the city’s premier assets in culture, science and entertainment.

Card holders can have a free membership for one year at 33 of the city’s signature cultural institutions.

An annual individual membership at the Bronx Zoo, for instance, is \$79.

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Other institutions involved include the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the American Museum of Natural History, the Brooklyn Museum, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Snug Harbor Cultural Center, the New York Botanical Garden, Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall and others.

Officials hinted the cards eventually will provide discounts at movie theaters and other commercial entertainment venues.

“These New Yorkers are our neighbors, our friends, our family, our co-workers,” said City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito.

“They send their kids to school and contribute to New York in various ways, so truly this will be an ID for all.”

“In a city as diverse as New York City, it does really help instill acceptance, understanding and collaboration,” Mark-Viverito told reporters.

It is not known how much the benefit will cost the institutions involved.

But they’re hoping New Yorkers will sign up and then renew their memberships when their free year is up.

The card, dubbed NYC ID, is meant to help New Yorkers — many of whom don’t drive or have a driver’s license — take care of their day-to-day business, such as cashing a check, signing a lease or entering office buildings for job interviews or public schools for parent-teacher conferences.

The city is also negotiating with banks to treat the card as acceptable identification to open accounts.

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It will be made available to any city resident over age 14, regardless of immigration status.

Other U.S. cities that issue such cards include Los Angeles, San Francisco and New Haven, Connecticut.