



# Department of Education External Users Login.gov Guide

*Note: The Department of Education strives to make all content accessible to everyone. While this document does not currently meet the standards of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, The Enterprise ICAM Team is working to create an accessible version. If you need access to this content before the accessible version is available, please contact the Information Technology Accessibility Program Help Desk at [ITAPSupport@ed.gov](mailto:ITAPSupport@ed.gov) to help facilitate.*

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# Login.gov

## What is Login.gov?

[Login.gov](#) securely verifies, stores, and manages user's digital identity using verified credentials and multi-factor authentication. This means multiple layers to your identity are verified when you log in to ensure the person logging into your account is indeed you! Several levels of security are needed to qualify as an official identity provider (IdP) for a government agency, and Login.gov meets these requirements.

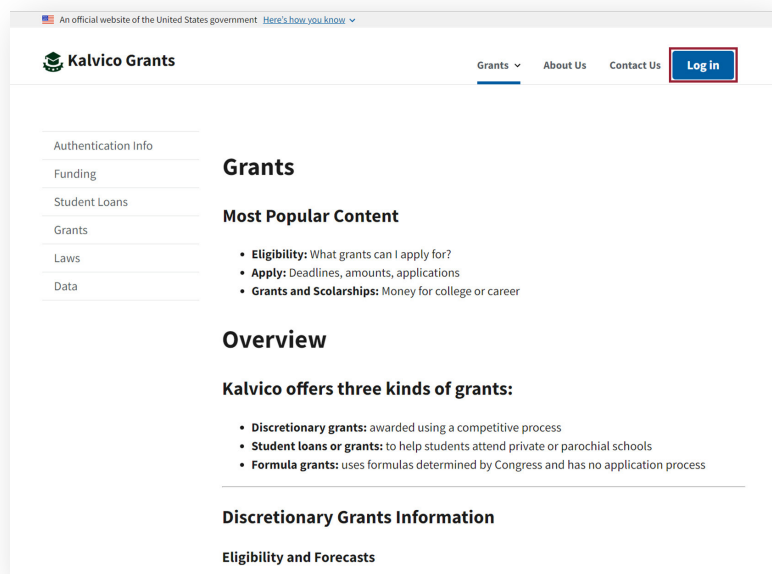
## How Does This Work?

Think of Login.gov as a directory where external users' identities can all be housed and managed. The Department of Education allows transferring that identity (after being verified) from Login.gov to the Department's network. There are three steps to the transfer:

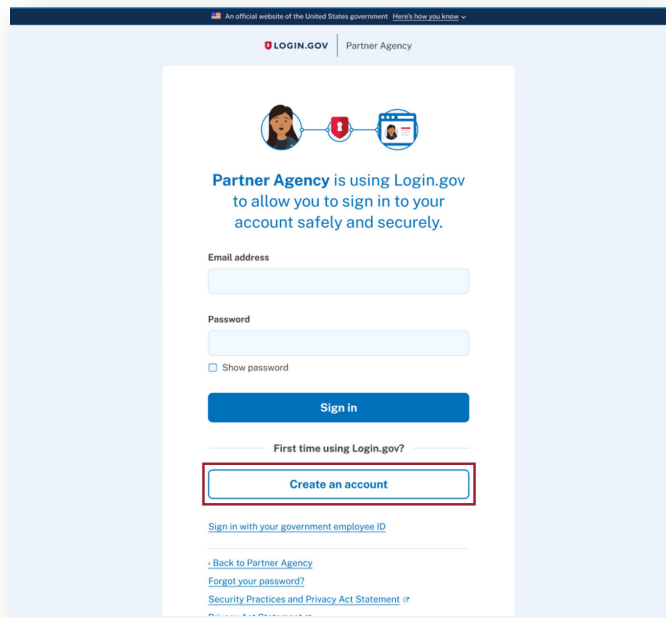
1. External users set up and use their Login.gov account
2. Login.gov verifies a user's identity through a vetted process
3. The Department of Education's Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM) system allows users to access the Department of Education by using their Login.gov credentials

## How to Create an Account

1. Go to your application's home page and click **Log In**.

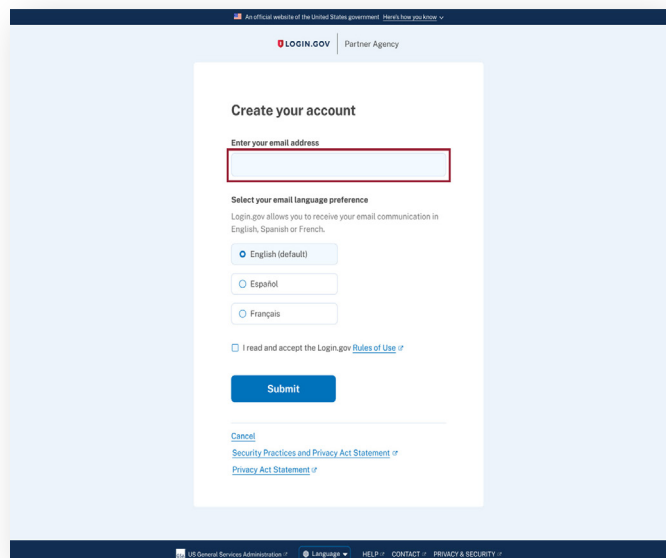


2. On the [Login.gov sign-up page](#), click **Create an account**.

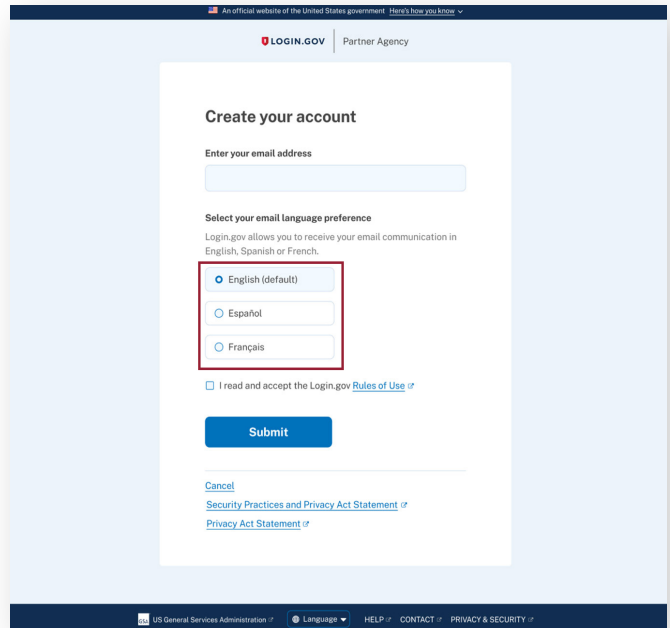


3. In the text box **Enter your email address**, enter the email address you would like connected to your Login.gov account.

*Note: It is best practice to use the same email address you presently use for your account with your application. If you already have a Login.gov account with a different email, check with your application to see if you need to create a new Login.gov account to match your email with that application.*



4. Then select your preferred language.



An official website of the United States government. Here's how you know ✓

LOGIN.GOV Partner Agency

### Create your account

Enter your email address

Select your email language preference

Login.gov allows you to receive your email communication in English, Spanish or French.

☒ English (default)

☐ Español

☐ Français

☐ I read and accept the Login.gov [Rules of Use](#) ✓

Submit

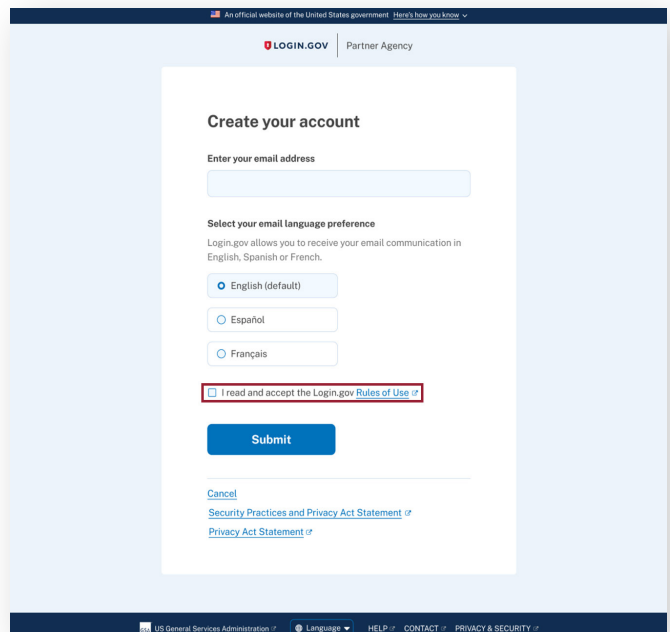
[Cancel](#)

[Security Practices and Privacy Act Statement](#) ✓

[Privacy Act Statement](#) ✓

US General Services Administration ✓ Language ✓ HELP ✓ CONTACT ✓ PRIVACY & SECURITY ✓

5. Select the checkbox next to the statement **I read and accept the Login.gov Rules of Use.**



An official website of the United States government. Here's how you know ✓

LOGIN.GOV Partner Agency

### Create your account

Enter your email address

Select your email language preference

Login.gov allows you to receive your email communication in English, Spanish or French.

☒ English (default)

☐ Español

☐ Français

☐ I read and accept the Login.gov [Rules of Use](#) ✓

Submit

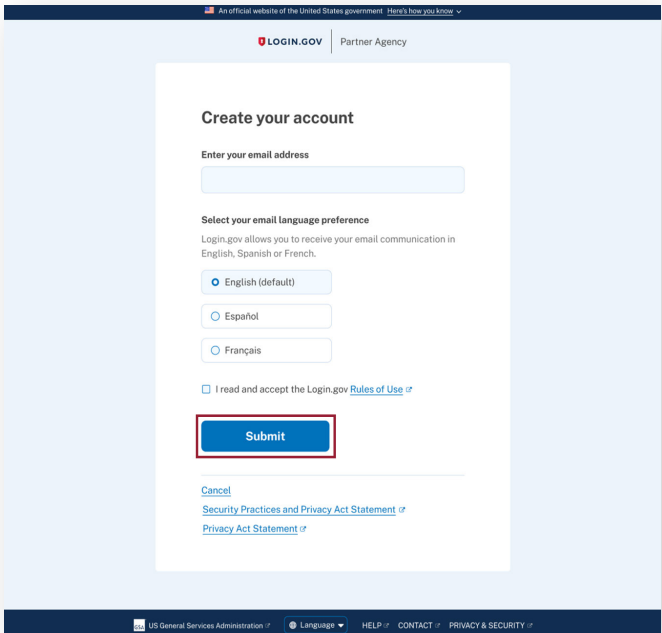
[Cancel](#)

[Security Practices and Privacy Act Statement](#) ✓

[Privacy Act Statement](#) ✓

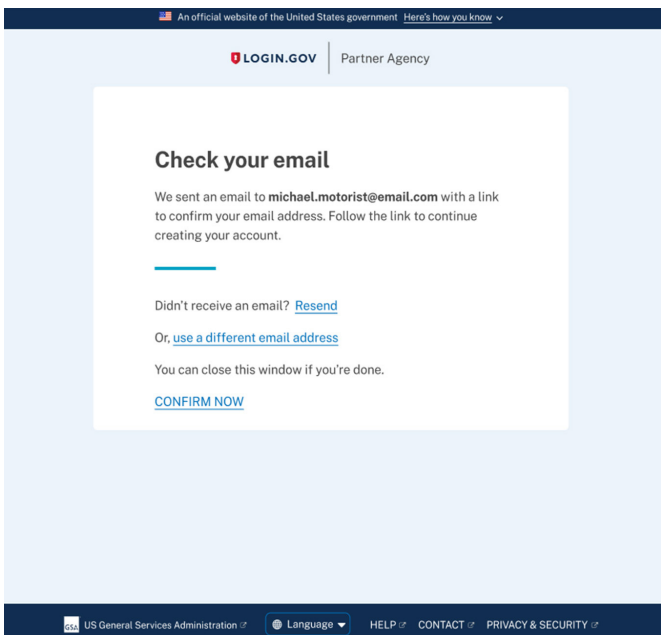
US General Services Administration ✓ Language ✓ HELP ✓ CONTACT ✓ PRIVACY & SECURITY ✓

6. Select **Submit**.



7. Check the inbox of the email account used in **Step 3** for a verification email. The verification email will have the subject: “Confirm your email” and be sent from no-reply@Login.gov. If you are not seeing an email come through, check your spam folder.

Open the email and select the **Confirm your email address** button. This will bring you back to the login.gov Create an Account page where you can finish creating your account.



8. You will then be prompted to **create a strong password**.

Note: *Login.gov requires your password be at least 12 characters long. Alphabet characters, special characters, and even spaces are allowed. Make sure this password is unique and not used with any other applications or websites.*

This screenshot shows the 'Create a strong password' step in the Login.gov account setup process. At the top, a green confirmation message states 'You have confirmed your email address'. Below this, the heading 'Create a strong password' is followed by instructions: 'It must be at least 12 characters long and not be a commonly used password. That's it!'. A text input field for the password is highlighted with a red border. Below the field is a 'Show password' checkbox. A 'Password strength' indicator shows four bars, with the first two filled. A blue 'Continue' button is also highlighted with a red border. At the bottom, there is a link for 'Password safety tips' and a link to 'Cancel account creation'.

9. Next, you will need to set up your secondary authentication method. Choose one of the options listed below. Then click continue.

- Authentication application
- Security Key
- PIV or CAC

Note: *The government issues two types of smart cards to people with verified identities: Personal Identity Verification (PIV) cards and Common Access Cards (CAC). PIV cards are used throughout the government to control access to facilities and systems at different security levels. CACs are a subset of PIV cards The Department of Defense uses.*

*If your email address ends in .gov or .mil, using a PIV card or CAC as a second authentication method is appropriate.*

This screenshot shows the 'Authentication method setup' screen. It prompts the user to 'Add another layer of security by selecting a multi-factor authentication method. We recommend you select at least (2) two different options in case you lose one of your methods.' Five options are listed, each with a checkbox and an icon: 'Security key' (USB drive icon), 'Government employee ID' (ID card icon), 'Authentication application' (smartphone icon), 'Text or voice message' (phone handset icon), and 'Backup codes' (plus sign icon). Each option has a brief description. A blue 'Continue' button at the bottom is highlighted with a red border.

*Your account setup is complete.*

## What if I Already Have a Login.gov Account?

If you already have a Login.gov account created for a different organization or application, you can use the same account to access your application at the Department of Education. However, if your account did not previously require verification methods and your Department of Education application does, you will have to go through the process of getting those verification methods set up. You will know if your previously made Login.gov account doesn't have verification methods set up when you first try to log into your Department of Education application requiring verification methods. After inputting your email and password on the login screen for that application, you will be presented with the screen below.

## What Do I Do if I Don't Have Verification Methods Setup?

If you see this screen on the right, you will need to follow the steps below to add your verification methods. Make sure you have the following:

- A state-issued ID
- Social Security number
- Phone number
- Home address
- Cell Phone

Select **Continue** on the “Get started verifying your identity” screen and follow the sequential steps below.

This screenshot shows the 'Get started verifying your identity' screen. At the top, there's a progress bar with five steps: 'Getting started' (active), 'Verify your ID', 'Verify your information', 'Verify phone or address', and 'Secure your account'. The main heading is 'Get started verifying your identity'. Below it, a note states: 'Partner Agency needs to make sure you are you – not someone pretending to be you.' The section 'You will need your:' lists three requirements: 1. State-issued ID (with a note 'Your ID cannot be expired.'), 2. Social Security number (with a note 'You will not need the card with you.'), and 3. Phone number OR home address (with sub-points for 'Verify by phone' and 'Verify by mail'). A link 'Learn more about verifying by phone or mail' is provided. A blue 'Continue' button is highlighted with a red box. Below this, a section 'Are you missing one of these items?' has three links: 'See a list of accepted state-issued IDs', 'Learn more about verifying by phone or mail', and 'Get help at Partner Agency'. At the bottom, there's a section 'Our privacy and security standards' with a link 'Learn more about our privacy and security measures' and a 'Cancel' link.

1. You will be presented with an explanation of how the process will work. **Check the box** to agree for Login.gov to keep your personal information and select **Continue**.

This screenshot shows the 'How verifying your identity works' screen. At the top, there's a progress bar with five steps: 'Getting started' (active), 'Verify your ID', 'Verify your information', 'Verify phone or address', and 'Secure your account'. The main heading is 'How verifying your identity works'. Below it, a note states: 'Identity verification happens in two parts:'. The section 'Verify your identity' says: 'We'll ask for your personal information to verify your identity against public records.' The section 'Secure your account' says: 'We'll encrypt your account with your password. Encryption means your data is protected and only you will be able to access or change your information.' A checkbox is checked, with text: 'By checking this box, you are letting Login.gov ask for, use, keep, and share your personal information. We will use it to verify your identity.' A link 'Learn more about our privacy and security measures' is provided. A blue 'Continue' button is highlighted with a red box. At the bottom, there's a 'Cancel' link.

2. The first piece of your identity needed is your state-issued ID. You can upload this from your computer or select the option to use your phone to take photos of the front and back of your ID.

If you chose the phone option, you will need to **provide your phone number** and **select send link**. You will then **click the link texted to you** on your phone and **take pictures of the front and back of your ID** with your phone camera.

If you would like to upload photos of the front and back of your ID from your computer, select **Upload photos**.

This screenshot shows the 'How would you like to add your ID?' screen on the LOGIN.GOV website. At the top, a progress bar indicates the steps: Getting started, Verify your ID (current step), Verify your information, Verify phone or address, and Secure your account. The main heading is 'How would you like to add your ID?'. Below it, a sub-heading says 'We'll collect information about you by reading your state-issued ID.' There are two main options: 'Recommended' (Use your phone to take photos) and 'Continue on this computer'. The 'Recommended' option includes a text box for 'Phone number' and a 'Send link' button. The 'Continue on this computer' option includes an 'Upload photos' button. A 'Cancel' link is at the bottom left.

3. **Add images of the front and back of your ID** through your selected method using the blanks for the two images. Click **Submit** once you have finished uploading your photographs.

Once you have added and submitted your photos you will see the processing screen. Once your photos are fully processed, you will be moved on to the social security number verification. If your drivers license was not clear or there was a different issue, the processing could fail and ask you to re-submit your photographs.

This screenshot shows the 'Add your state-issued ID' screen on the LOGIN.GOV website. At the top, a progress bar indicates the steps: Getting started, Verify your ID (current step), Verify your information, Verify phone or address, and Secure your account. The main heading is 'Add your state-issued ID'. Below it, a sub-heading says 'For best results:'. There are four bullet points: 'Use a dark background', 'Take the photo on a flat surface', 'Do not use the flash on your camera', and 'File size should be at least 2 MB'. There are two main sections: 'Front of your ID' and 'Back of your ID'. Each section has a text box for the image and a 'Submit' button. Below the 'Submit' button, there is a 'Having trouble? Here's what you can do:' section with three links: 'More tips for adding photos of your ID', 'See a list of accepted state-issued IDs', and 'Get help at Partner Agency'. A 'Cancel' link is at the bottom left.

4. To add your Social Security Number, type the number into the provided field and select **Continue**.

This screenshot shows the 'Enter your Social Security number' step in the Login.gov verification process. At the top, a progress bar indicates the current step is 'Verify your information'. Below the progress bar, a green banner states 'We verified your ID'. The main heading is 'Enter your Social Security number', followed by a subtext explaining the need for the number and a link to learn more. A text input field for the Social Security number is highlighted with a red box, with an example '123 45 6789' above it. Below the field is a checkbox labeled 'Show Social Security number'. A blue 'Continue' button is also highlighted with a red box. At the bottom left is a 'Cancel' link. The footer includes the US General Services Administration logo, a language dropdown, and links for HELP, CONTACT, and PRIVACY & SECURITY.

5. Login.gov will then pull the information it has associated with your Social Security Number. Review the information and select **Continue** if it is correct.

If your information is not correct, update the information using the **Update** links and select **Continue** once it is updated.

This screenshot shows the 'Verify your information' step in the Login.gov verification process. The progress bar at the top indicates the current step is 'Verify your information'. Below the progress bar, the heading is 'Verify your information'. The screen displays personal information pulled from the Social Security Number, including First name (MICHAEL), Last name (MOTORIST), Date of birth (04/09/1970), Address (2345 ANYWHERE ST), City (YOUR CITY), State (NY), and Zip Code (12345). Each field has an 'Update' link to its right. Below this, the Social Security Number is displayed with a 'Show Social Security number' checkbox. A blue 'Continue' button is highlighted with a red box. At the bottom left is a 'Cancel' link. The footer is identical to the previous screenshot, showing the US General Services Administration logo and various utility links.

6. It is time to verify your phone number. **Enter your phone number** in the designated field. Chose whether you would rather have a text message or phone call deliver a verification code to your phone. Ensure your phone is handy to receive the code for the next step. Once ready, select **Send code**.

This screenshot shows the 'Verify your phone number' step in the LOGIN.GOV process. At the top, a progress bar indicates the current step is 'Verify phone or address'. Below the progress bar, a green banner states 'We verified your information'. The main heading is 'Verify your phone number', followed by an explanation: 'We'll check this number with records and send you a one-time code. This is to help verify your identity.' Below this, it asks to 'Enter a phone number that is:' and lists two criteria: 'Based in the United States (including U.S. territories)' and 'Your primary number (the one you use the most often)'. A link 'Learn more about what phone number to use' is provided. A 'Phone number' input field with a country code dropdown (set to '+1') is shown. Below the input field, it asks 'How should we send a code?' with two radio button options: 'Text message (SMS)' (selected) and 'Phone call'. A blue 'Send code' button is at the bottom. At the very bottom, there is a link 'Verify your address by mail instead' and a 'Cancel' link.

7. Enter the code you received on your phone and select **Submit**.

This screenshot shows the 'Enter your one-time code' step in the LOGIN.GOV process. The progress bar at the top shows 'Verify phone or address' as the current step. Below the progress bar, a green banner states 'We verified your information'. The main heading is 'Enter your one-time code', followed by an explanation: 'We sent a one-time code to +1 555-123-4568. This code will expire in 10 minutes.' Below this, a 'One-time code' input field is shown. A blue 'Submit' button is at the bottom. Below the 'Submit' button, there is a link 'Send another code'. At the very bottom, there is a link 'Entered the wrong phone number? Use another phone number' and a 'Cancel' link.

8. Enter your existing account password in the designated field and click **Continue**. This will lock in all the verification information you input into your account.

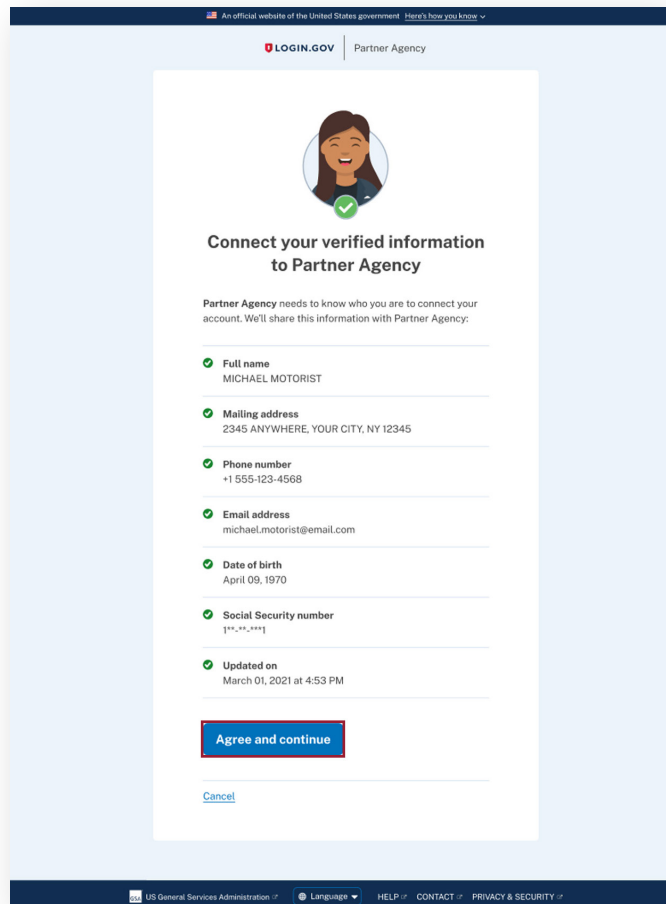
This screenshot shows the 'Enter your password' step in the Login.gov account setup process. At the top, a progress bar indicates five steps: 'Getting started', 'Verify your ID', 'Verify your information', 'Verify phone or address', and 'Secure your account'. The first four steps are completed, and the fifth is the current step. A green message states 'We verified your phone number'. Below this, the heading 'Enter your password' is followed by an explanatory sentence: 'Login.gov will encrypt your account with your password. This means that your verified information is secure and only you will be able to access or change it.' A password input field is shown with a red border. Below the field are two links: 'Show password' and 'Forgot password?'. A blue 'Continue' button is prominently displayed, and a 'Cancel' link is at the bottom left. The footer includes 'US General Services Administration', a language dropdown, and links for 'HELP', 'CONTACT', and 'PRIVACY & SECURITY'.

9. Copy, download, and/or print your personal security key that shows up on the screen. This is important in case you get locked out of your account.

Once you save your personal key in a safe place, **check the box** next to “I saved my personal key in a safe place” and select **Continue**.

This screenshot shows the 'Save your personal key' step. The progress bar at the top is identical to the previous screen. A green message states 'We secured your verified information'. The heading 'Save your personal key' is followed by a visual representation of a personal key: a red shield with a white border containing the alphanumeric string 'G3X6 - QWX9 - PXSX - 4ZQS'. Below this, it says 'Your personal key was generated on March 1, 2021'. Three action links are provided: 'Copy', 'Download (text file)', and 'Print'. A section titled 'What is a personal key?' explains that the key is needed if the password is forgotten and should be kept safe. It also states that resetting the password without the key requires re-verification. A checkbox labeled 'I saved my personal key in a safe place.' is checked. A blue 'Continue' button is at the bottom. The footer is the same as the previous screen.

10. The final step is to allow your application to use your verified information to ensure your account is accessed by only you. Select **Agree and continue**.



The screenshot shows the LOGIN.GOV interface for connecting verified information to a Partner Agency. At the top, it says "An official website of the United States government" and "Here's how you know". The header includes the LOGIN.GOV logo and "Partner Agency". A user profile icon with a green checkmark is shown. The main heading is "Connect your verified information to Partner Agency". Below this, a message states: "Partner Agency needs to know who you are to connect your account. We'll share this information with Partner Agency:". The form lists the following verified information:

- Full name: MICHAEL MOTORIST
- Mailing address: 2345 ANYWHERE, YOUR CITY, NY 12345
- Phone number: +1 555-123-4568
- Email address: michael.motorist@email.com
- Date of birth: April 09, 1970
- Social Security number: [REDACTED]
- Updated on: March 01, 2021 at 4:53 PM

At the bottom of the form, there is a blue button labeled "Agree and continue" and a link labeled "Cancel". The footer contains the US General Services Administration logo, a language dropdown menu, and links for HELP, CONTACT, and PRIVACY & SECURITY.

*Your account is now set up with verification methods and ready to be used with your application at the Department of Education.*

# Identity Proofing

Some applications require proof of a user's identity beyond a name and an email address. Proofing your identity on Login.gov can only be initiated when logging into an application that requires proofing. If you're required to prove your identity with Login.gov, be ready to provide the following information:

1. Your state-issued ID card. You will be asked to upload photos of your ID by phone or computer. Examples of acceptable ID cards include:
  - State-issued Drivers License
  - State-issued ID card
  - Military ID card
  - Citizenship or legal residency card
2. Your Social Security number
3. Your phone number

Users will not be prompted to prove their identity when setting up their account for the first time.

## Adding Authentication Methods

### Personal Identity Verification (PIV) Card / Common Access Card (CAC)

A PIV card or CAC is a smart card issued by different government agencies to verify individuals. The card contains a chip that allows the card to store encrypted information about a person (name, phone number, email, and address). The encrypted PIV card or CAC can authenticate its user with physical resources, such as offices and equipment, and virtual resources, such as Login.gov. To use a PIV card or CAC for authentication, your device must have a smart card reader and you must already have a PIV card or CAC issued.

### How to Add a PIV / CAC Authentication Method

1. Open a new browser and **sign in** to your [Login.gov account](#).
2. On the left side of your account page, find the menu of options below the heading **Your Authentication Methods**.
3. Select **Add Federal Employee ID**.
4. **Enter a nickname** in the text box. (e.g. Education PIV Card).
5. **Insert your PIV card/CAC** into your card reader
6. **Select Add PIV/CAC card**

7. On the certificate selection pop-up, select the certificate associated with your PIV card/CAC.
8. When prompted, **enter your PIN** associated with your PIV card/CAC, then **select Okay**.

*You have successfully added your PIV card/CAC to your Login.gov account.*

## How to Remove PIV or CAC Authentication Method

1. Open a new browser and **sign in** to your [Login.gov account](#).
2. On the right-hand side of your account page, scroll down to the section titled **Federal Employee ID**.
3. Find the PIV card/CAC you want to remove and **select Delete**.
4. If you're prompted to enter your password or authentication code, enter it and select **Continue**.
5. Select **Yes, remove card**.

*You have successfully removed your PIV card/CAC from your Login.gov account.*

## Security Key

A security key is a phishing-resistant authentication method similar to a PIV card or CAC. It must be connected to your computer or mobile device to authenticate. A common type of the security key is a small USB device, like a [YubiKey](#).

## How to Add a Security Key Authentication Method

1. Open a new browser and **sign in** to your [Login.gov account](#).
2. On the left-hand side of your account page, find the menu of options below the heading **Your Authentication Methods**.
3. Select **Add Security Key**.
4. **Enter a nickname** in the text box (e.g. Education Key).
5. **Insert your security key** into your computer.
6. **Select Add Security Key**.
7. **Activate** your security key (e.g. pressing the security key).

*Note: This may differ based on specific vendor instructions.*

*You have successfully added your security key to your Login.gov account.*

## How to Remove a Security Key Authentication Method

1. Open a new browser and **sign in** to your [Login.gov account](#).
2. On the right-hand side of your account page, scroll down to the section titled **Security Keys**.

3. **Select the security key** you want to remove and select **Delete**.
4. If you're prompted to enter your password or authentication code, enter it and **select Continue**.
5. **Select Yes, Remove Key**.

*You have successfully removed your security key from your Login.gov account.*

## Authentication App

An authentication app is another way to prove your identity when you log into an account. An authentication app generates a time-sensitive code to sign into your account. The code changes each time you sign in, so it cannot be memorized and used by someone other than the user with the authenticator app. Department of Education users must install the authentication app on a mobile device.

Although many different authentication apps are available, it is encouraged that Department of Education users begin only to use Microsoft Authenticator as their authenticator app. Microsoft has taken steps to ensure its authenticator app is secure and safe to use with government applications. This makes it a strong choice for internal and external Department of Education users.

## How to Add an Authentication App

After you've installed Microsoft Authenticator on your mobile device, follow the steps below to configure the app for use with Login.gov.

1. Open a new browser and **sign in** to your [Login.gov account](#).
2. On the left-hand side of your account page, find the menu of options below the heading "Your authentication methods." **Select Add Authentication Apps**.
3. **Enter a nickname** in the text box for the app you choose (e.g. Microsoft Authenticator).
4. Open the authentication app.
5. **Scan the barcode** on the screen *or* manually enter the code below the barcode into the app.
6. **Enter the temporary code** the app generates into the text box at the bottom of the authentication app setup page and **select Submit**.

*You have successfully added your authentication app to your Login.gov account.*

## How to Remove an Authentication App

Follow the steps below to remove an authentication app from your [Login.gov account](#).

1. Open a new browser and **sign in** to your Login.gov account.
2. On the right-hand side of your account page, scroll down until you see the **Authentication Apps** section.
3. **Select the app** you want to remove and **select Delete**.
4. **Select Yes, Remove Authentication App**.

*You have successfully removed your authentication app from your Login.gov account.*

## Have Further Questions?

*Go to Login.gov's Help Center for all Login.gov account related questions.*

**Login.gov Help Center**

*Email [Ed\\_ICAM\\_Support@ed.gov](mailto:Ed_ICAM_Support@ed.gov) for any Department of Education network access questions.*

**Email Enterprise ICAM**

*Contact your application at the Department of Education for any application account related questions.*