2024
Quarter 2
April - June

Driver Licensing Office Workload

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
LICENSING

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    Monthly workload and performance indicators by office level and statewide

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The Department of Licensing (DOL) was directed through proviso in the 2023 transportation budget to report on a quarterly basis on the driver license office operations, associated workload, and comparative information from prior years.

SUMMARY

Driver Licensing Office Name Change

Last quarter, DOL changed the name of licensing services office (LSO) to driver licensing office (DLO) to better describe their function and distinguish them from vehicle licensing offices (VLOs).

REAL ID Enforcement

The Department of Homeland Security established May 7, 2025 as the full enforcement date of the REAL ID Act. After that date, persons will not be able to board a domestic flight or enter a restricted federal facility[1] without a REAL ID-compliant document.

Washington's Enhanced Driver License and Enhanced Identicard (EDL/EID) are REAL ID-compliant. Currently, 1.65 million Washington residents hold EDLs/EIDs which represents 24% of all active Washington licensees and ID cards. Demand for Washington EDLs/EIDs is forecasted to increase during fiscal years 2025 through 2029.

Persons seeking a first time EDL/EID must apply in person at a driver licensing office (DLO). The section of this report titled Preparing for REAL ID Enforcement covers the variety of improvements and efficiencies DOL is implementing to prepare for the challenges of REAL ID.

DOL2Go Mobile Licensing Unit

The DOL received funding in the 2023-2025 budget to develop and pilot a new program bringing licensing services to under-represented and rural communities around Washington. Launched in July 2023, the DOL2Go mobile unit provides onsite ID card and driver licensing services to people with barriers to visiting our traditional offices. This could include people experiencing homelessness, emergency response such as wildfires, assisted living centers, and in service gap areas which are rural communities without a nearby driver licensing office.

During DOL2Go's first year, the unit issued over 2,100 ID cards and driver licenses to Washington residents at 67 events, including assisting people experiencing homelessness, emergency

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[1] Restricted federal facilities include military bases, nuclear power plants, and areas of federal buildings where one currently must show ID and pass security.

response following a natural disaster, refugee support, assisted living facilities, a school district, and in communities located in service gap areas.

Workload and Wait Time Summary

Essential services were delivered this quarter through a combination of in-office, DOL2Go mobile office, online, phone and mail services. Driver licensing office (DLO) staff turnover and position vacancies are at historical low levels. The majority of DLO staff are fully trained and can efficiently process all types of transactions which enabled them to serve more customers in a shorter amount of time this quarter compared to the second quarter of 2023. The DLO key workload and performance indicators for this reporting period and comparable periods in 2023 are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Key workload and performance indicators for driver licensing Offices; compares second quarters of 2024 to 2023.

Workload in Quarter 1 (April - June)	CY 2024	CY 2023
Customers Served in DLO	**450,253**	**429,098**
April	**147,217**	139,862
May	**155,339**	142,147
June	**147,697**	147,089
Enhanced - Originals Issued	**53,038**	**51,247**
April	**14,769**	17,141
May	**19,427**	16,677
June	**18,842**	17,429
Initial Wait Time Average (minutes) [1]	**7**	**6**
April	7	6
May	7	6
June	9	7
Customer Experience Time Average (minutes) [2]	**16**	**17**
April	15	17
May	15	17
June	17	17
LSRs in Service - Daily Average [3]	**249**	**255**
April	**238**	243
May	**267**	258
June	**243**	264

Table 1 Data Notes:
1 -Initial Wait Time Average: From check in to first service counter visit.
2 -Customer Experience Time Average: Total time customer spends in office from check in to end of transaction. Initial wait time is included here (may include subsequent wait time).
3 -LSRs In Service – Daily Average: Count of distinct Licensing Services Representatives working service counters during the day. Daily average lowered with inclusion of Mondays when only 10 offices are open.

TRANSACTION AND CUSTOMER VOLUME

This quarter, 776,000 transactions were conducted through a combination of in-person, online, mail and phone services. Driver licensing offices (DLOs) and the DOL2Go mobile licensing unit served 451,000 in-person customers and 61% of transactions this quarter, the highest volume quarter since the pandemic.

Chart 1 below shows transaction distribution by service channel each month beginning January 2022. Transactions completed by mail and phone are a small portion of overall transactions, so they are combined with internet transactions and shown in the below chart as Alternative Channel Transactions.
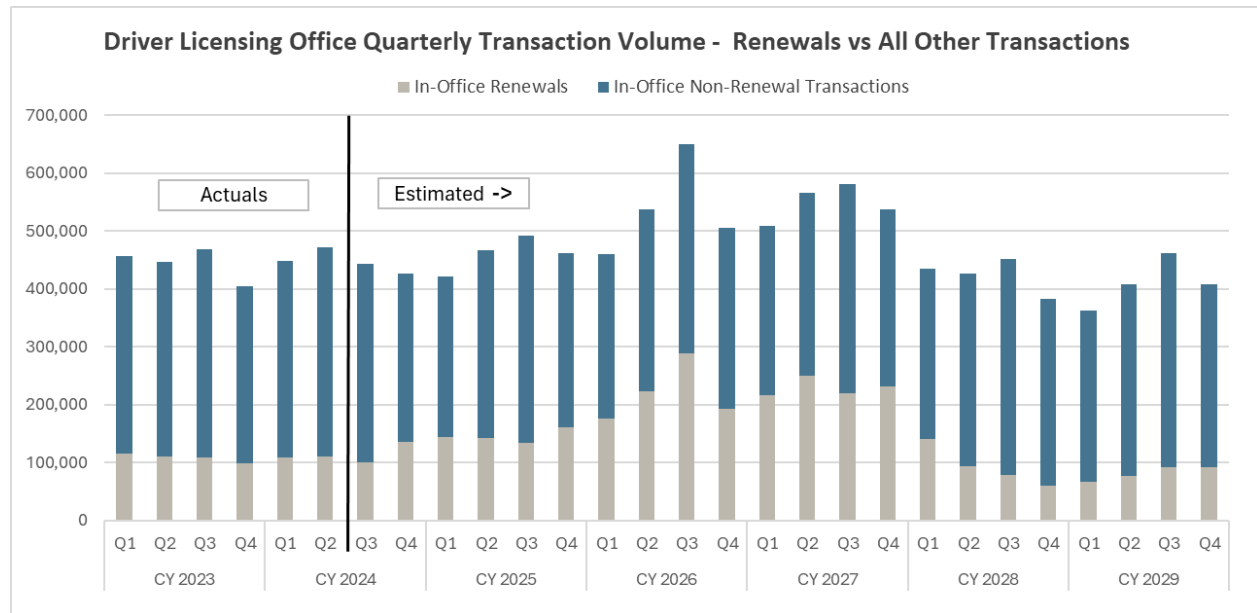
Chart 1. Monthly distribution of transactions by service channel
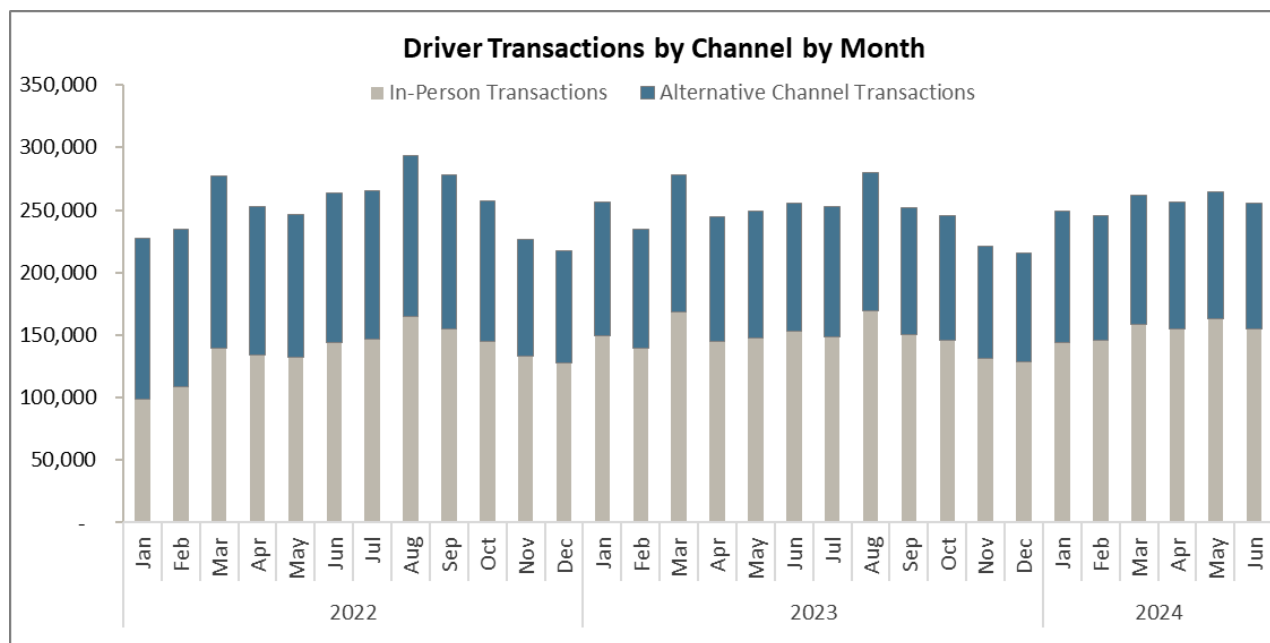
There will be a wave of customers coming into DLOs for license renewals in the years 2026 and 2027 at the same time as REAL ID increased volumes. The renewal wave is a remaining impact of the transition from a 5-year to a 6-year renewal cycle beginning in 2014 and the extensions issued during the pandemic. Looking forward, we can expect significantly higher in-office renewal volumes in April 2026 through December 2027 compared to previous years.

Chart 2 below shows the in-office renewal and non-renewal transactions by quarter, actual transactions during year 2023 through the second quarter of 2024, and estimated transaction volumes from the third quarter of year 2024 through 2029. Chart 2 includes the forecasted REAL ID transactions.
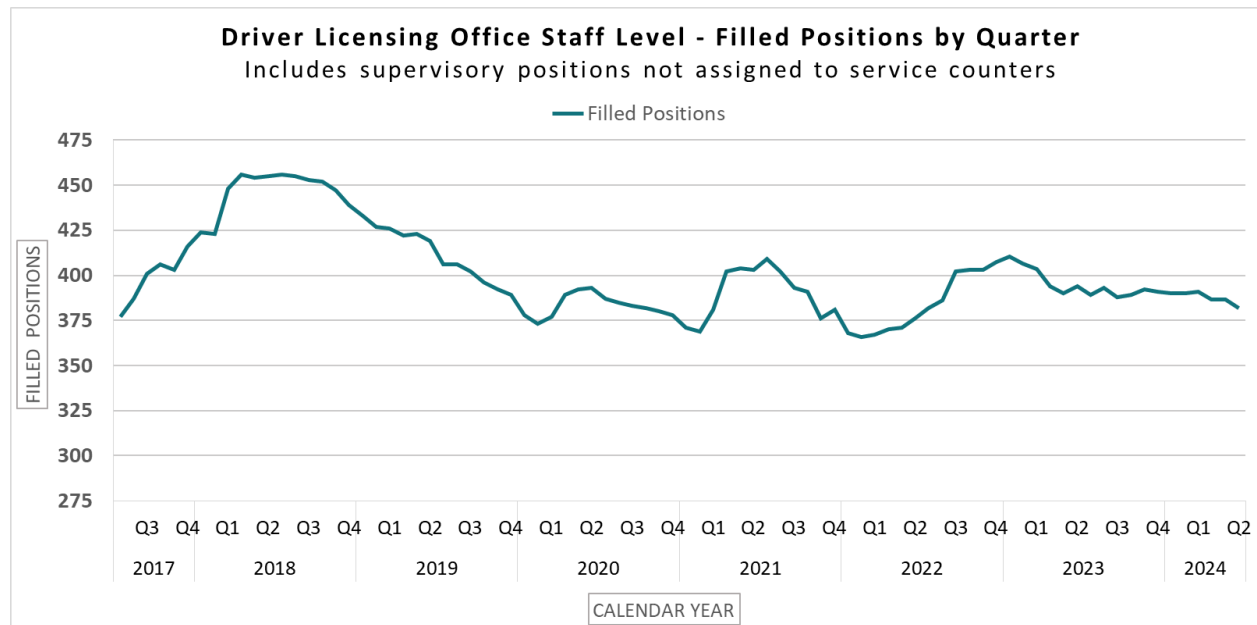
Chart 2. Driver license office quarterly volume of transactions

Driver Licensing Office Quarterly Transaction Volume - Renewals vs All Other Transactions

■ In-Office Renewals ■ In-Office Non-Renewal Transactions

Actuals

Estimated ->

Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4
CY 2023 | CY 2024 | CY 2025 | CY 2026 | CY 2027 | CY 2028 | CY 2029

FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) STAFFING LEVELS

The budget as passed the Legislature reduced the agency's 2023-2025 biennial budget for DLO workload by $7.1 million. DOL has reduced DLO staffing to align with the reduced funding level. Chart 3 below shows the overall DLO staffing levels by quarter from July 2017.

Chart 3. Driver Licensing Office Filled Positions

Driver Licensing Office Staff Level - Filled Positions by Quarter
Includes supervisory positions not assigned to service counters

── Filled Positions

FILLED POSITIONS

Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4 | Q1 Q2
2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024

CALENDAR YEAR

The reduced funding restricts DOL's ability to ramp up staffing ahead of the May 2025 REAL ID enforcement and the significant increase in driver license renewals expected in years 2026 and 2027 as explained in the Transaction and Customer Volume section above. The combination of

these workloads is anticipated to exceed the performance target for acceptable wait time in the DLOs.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND WAIT TIME

This quarter, customers visiting DOL offices spent less time in offices compared to the second quarter of 2023. Customers experienced longer wait times, but transaction times are shorter due to workflow efficiencies put in place over the previous year, including implementing a new lobby management system in June 2023. The majority of DLO staff are fully trained and can efficiently process all types of transactions, which enabled them to serve more customers in a shorter amount of time than was possible during the second quarter of 2023.
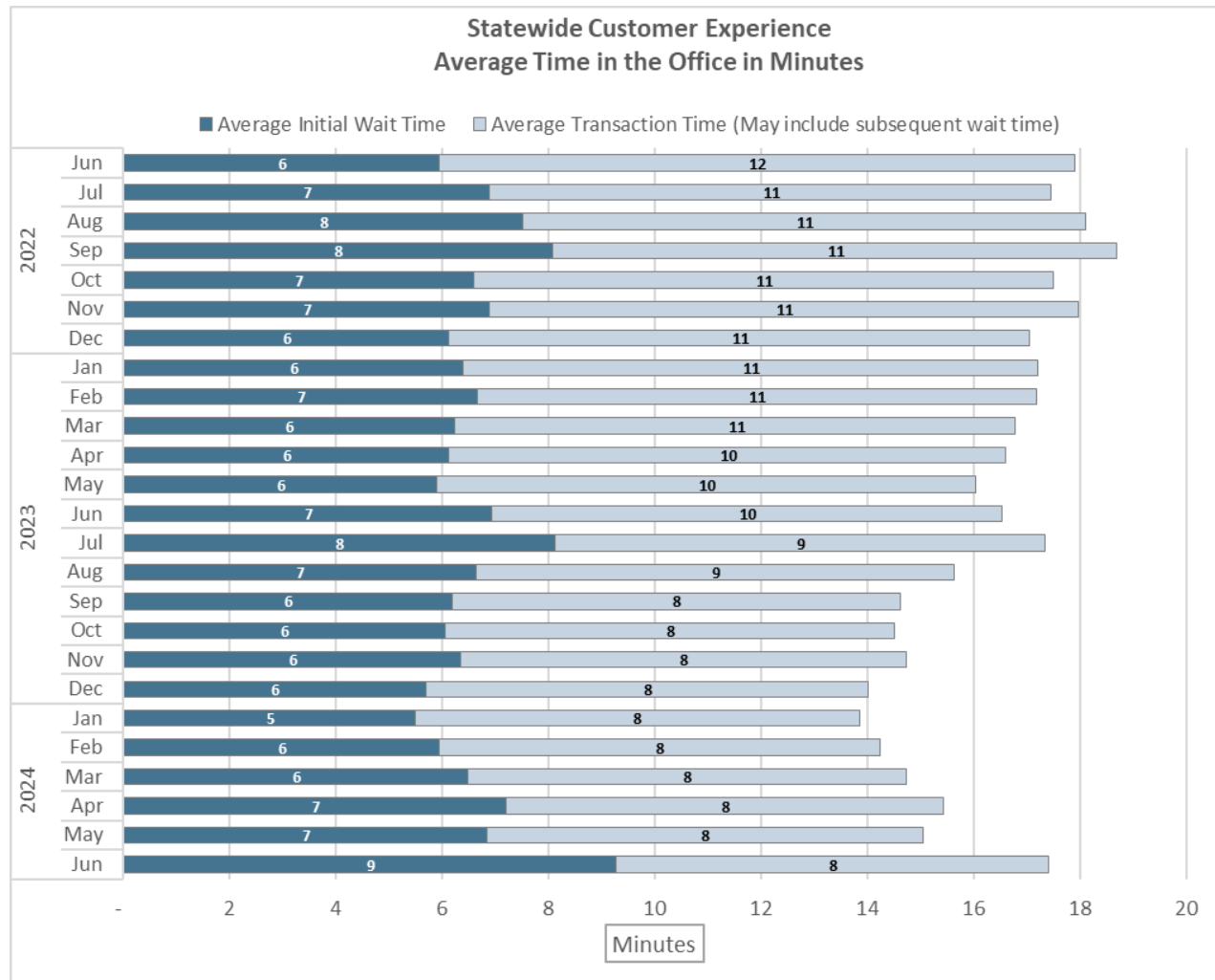
- Average initial wait time for service was 1 minute longer, a 17% increase. Customers spent an average of 7 minutes waiting in the lobby before being called to a service counter.
- Average customer experience time was 1 minute shorter, a 6% decrease. Customers spent an average of 16 minutes in our offices measured by the time between check-in and completing the transaction.

In June of this quarter, customers experienced the longest wait time for service in more than four years. In the busiest offices along the I-5 corridor, customer wait time reached 23 minutes compared to the statewide average of 9 minutes. Across the state, more than 12,000 customers waited over 30 minutes for service in June, a 65% increase from June 2023.

DOL anticipates wait times will continue to climb in the upcoming quarter. Customer volumes peak during summer months while the DLOs have reduced their staffing level as explained in the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Staffing Levels section above. Wait times are expected to rise again in the second quarter of 2025 and remain elevated through calendar year 2028 due to the high volumes of customers forecasted as explained in Transaction and Customer Volume section above.

Chart 4 below shows the two components of customer experience time, wait time and transaction time, by month from June 2022.

Chart 4. Statewide average wait time and transaction time

Statewide Customer Experience
Average Time in the Office in Minutes

■ Average Initial Wait Time □ Average Transaction Time (May include subsequent wait time)

Year	Month	Average Initial Wait Time	Average Transaction Time
2022	Jun	6	12
	Jul	7	11
	Aug	8	11
	Sep	8	11
	Oct	7	11
	Nov	7	11
	Dec	6	11
2023	Jan	6	11
	Feb	7	11
	Mar	6	11
	Apr	6	10
	May	6	10
	Jun	7	10
	Jul	8	9
	Aug	7	9
	Sep	6	8
	Oct	6	8
	Nov	6	8
	Dec	6	8
2024	Jan	5	8
	Feb	6	8
	Mar	6	8
	Apr	7	8
	May	7	8
	Jun	9	8

Minutes

PREPARING FOR REAL ID ENFORCEMENT

The enforcement of REAL ID occurs in less than a year, on May 7, 2025. Demand for Washington EDLs/EIDs, which meet the federal REAL ID requirements, is forecasted to increase approaching the May 2025 enforcement date and through calendar year 2028. Customers seeking a first time Washington EDL/EID must apply in person at a DLO. DOL is utilizing a variety of strategies to prepare for the challenges of REAL ID, including:

- Customer education and outreach as covered in the last section of this report.
- Providing information about REAL ID-compliant document options and the upcoming enforcement date on both electronic and paper vehicle and driver license renewal notices. Paper renewal notices also include a colored insert containing expanded REAL ID information in both English and Spanish. The insert was revised this quarter to communicate greater urgency to prepare now for REAL ID enforcement.

- Implemented a new DLO lobby management system in Spring 2023 to more effectively manage customers visiting an office with an appointment or as a walk-in. Additionally, the system communicates with customers in multiple languages and offers customers contactless check-in for appointments using a mobile device. Customer feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.
- Installed cameras at each service counter in 36 of the largest DLOs, completed in April 2023. The cameras reduce the time customers spend in the offices by three minutes. Prior to installing a camera at each service counter, customers completed their transaction at one service counter and waited to be called to a dedicated camera station where a photograph is taken.
- Reinstated express lines for simple transactions in medium and large DLOs. Express lines were utilized before the pandemic and proved to increase customer service capacity.
- A redesigned DOL website (dol.wa.gov) launched to the public in June 2023. The new site offers a more accessible and intuitive experience, even on mobile devices. The updated site contains improved content about Washington's EDL/EID documents and the REAL ID Act.
- Planned improvements to DOL's online services over the next 12 months. Improving usability and accessibility of our online services has the potential to reduce DLO customer volumes.
- Implemented an interactive, online REAL ID document checklist during summer 2022. The checklist enables customers to better prepare when applying for an EDL/EID and avoid multiple trips to the DLOs because of insufficient documentation. In addition to pointing customers to the checklist on our website, we provide the link when promoting REAL ID options on social media.
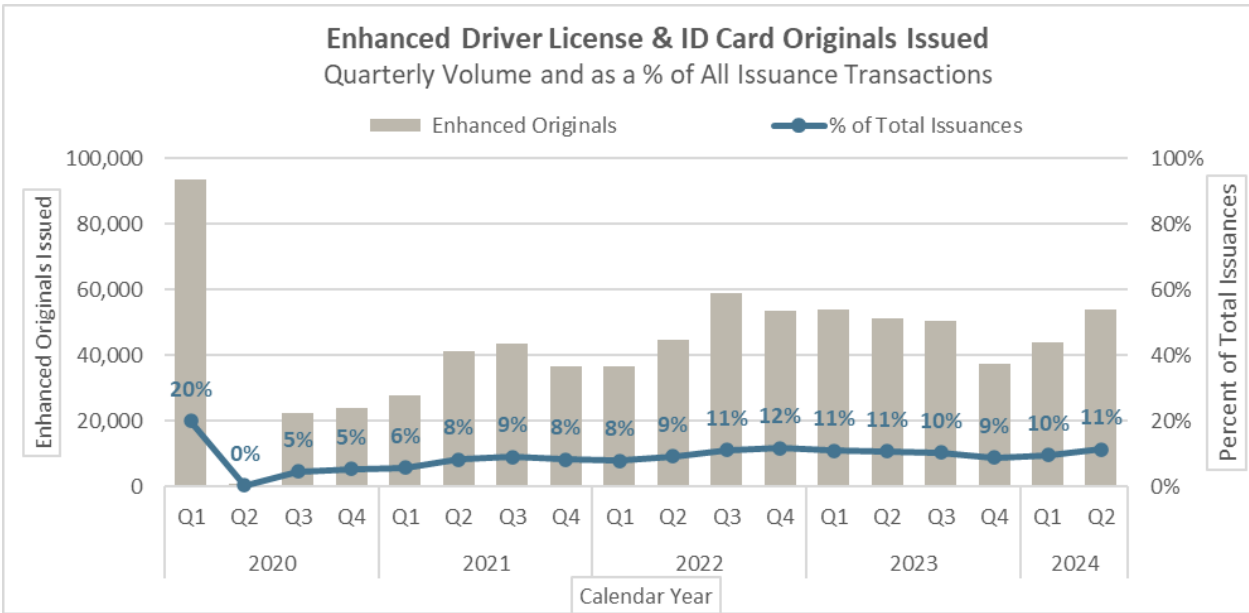
ENHANCED DRIVER LICENSE AND ENHANCED ID DEMAND

Currently, about 1.65 million Washington residents hold EDLs/EIDs which is 24% of all active Washington licenses and ID cards.

This quarter, 53,000 customers received their original EDL/EID, a 21% increase from the previous quarter. An original EDL/EID application impacts DLO workload because it takes up to five minutes longer to issue than a driver license renewal, and it can only be obtained in person at a DLO.

Forty-two percent of the original EDLs/EIDs issued this quarter occurred outside the customer's renewal cycle. These customers likely made a special trip to a DLO specifically to upgrade to an enhanced license or ID card.

Chart 5 below shows the volume of original EDL/EID documents and the percent of the total volume of driver licenses and ID cards issued by quarter beginning January 2020.

Chart 5. Comparing Issuance of Enhanced and Standard Credentials

Enhanced Driver License & ID Card Originals Issued
Quarterly Volume and as a % of All Issuance Transactions

Data Note: All Issuance Transactions in above chart includes original, renewal, duplicate and replacement driver licenses and identification cards.

Enhanced Driver License and Enhanced ID Forecast

The volume of original EDLs/EIDs issued in calendar year 2024 was higher than expected. As a result, DOL raised the monthly EDL/EID transaction forecast through May 2025. Demand for Washington EDLs/EIDs is anticipated to increase in fiscal years 2025 through 2029 when a REAL ID-compliant credential is required for domestic air travel.

Chart 6 below shows the forecasted volume of original EDLs/EIDs for the calendar years 2025 through 2028. The below forecast is based on DOL's June 2024 revenue forecast.

Chart 6. Forecast of EDL/EID Original Demand

Forecasted Washington EDL/EID Original Issuances
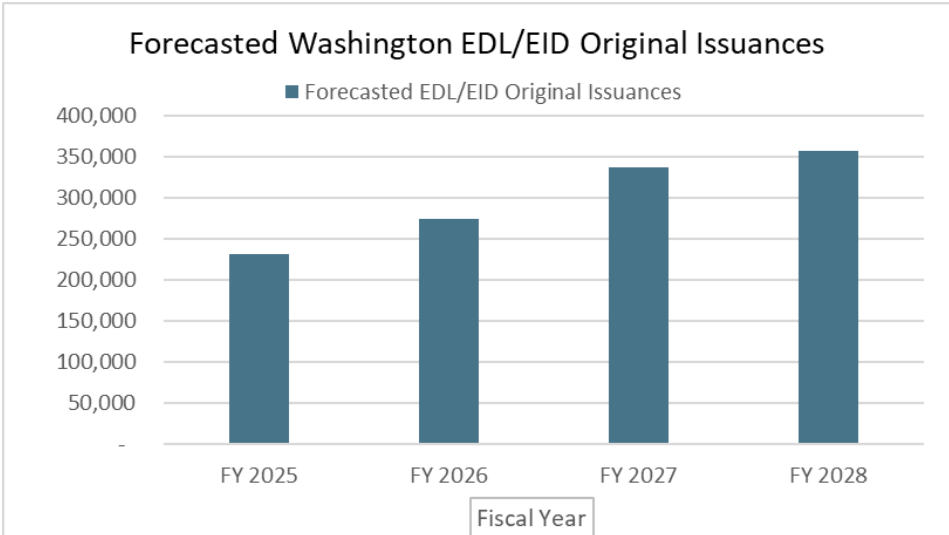
Data Note: Based on DOL June 2024 revenue forecast.

CUSTOMER EDUCATION OUTREACH

We are now less than a year until the federal REAL ID law for air travel goes into effect on May 7, 2025, and are still working to ensure our residents are aware of their identification options for domestic airplane travel. Our main messages are focused on reminding residents to be prepared for this change and urging those planning to get an enhanced driver license (EDL) or enhanced identification card (EID) to visit us sooner to avoid the rush at driver licensing offices as the deadline nears.

During the 2024 legislative session, DOL was appropriated $2.1 million in proviso funding to increase public awareness of federal REAL ID requirements. One portion of the proviso specifies working with groups that provide services to historically underrepresented populations, such as immigrants and limited-English proficiency (LEP) communities. For this work, we have contracted with TDW+Co. They will work on amplifying the 2025 deadline through ethnic media buys and translating created content and soliciting and overseeing community-based outreach contracts. We have also contracted with PRR to develop campaign material and buy media advertising in mainstream and ethnic media markets. Elections and holidays during fall/winter 2024 may drive up costs of advertising prohibitively and dilute the messaging. Because of this, DOL anticipates the timeframe of the campaign to occur in three phases, with the following general themes:

- Summer/fall 2024: "It's close, prepare now."
- Spring 2025: "It's around the corner; this is your final chance."
- May/June 2025: "The deadline is here. You must have an approved ID to fly."

We also continue to create consistent organic messaging on DOL's social media, blog, website, driver and vehicle renewal notices, and in offices to inform residents of the upcoming change. Materials are available for communities and residents and include information cards and posters in nine languages, including English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, Somali, Ukrainian, and Russian. We have videos and the ID2025 website in five languages, including English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean.

DOL's outreach team attends events in person throughout the state, directly connecting with residents and community partners. Events include neighborhood festivals, community-based health and resource fairs, and heritage month celebrations. The outreach team also:

- Sends emails to agency partners, shares links to campaign ready-made messages and graphics, and encourages people to share within their communities.
- Includes REAL ID information in all presentations to community-based organizations, not-for-profits, local governments, and school districts that support marginalized communities.