

2025

Quarter 1

January - March

# Driver Licensing Office Workload



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
**LICENSING**

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## ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A     Driver Licensing Office Workload Data – Q1 CY 2025**  
Monthly workload and performance indicators by office level and statewide
- Attachment B     Driver Licensing Office Locations**  
Driver licensing office locations with operations and services information

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**

Early in 2024, DOL changed the name of licensing services offices (LSO) to driver licensing offices (DLO) to better describe their function and align the naming convention to vehicle licensing offices (VLOs).

### **REAL ID Enforcement**

The Department of Homeland Security established May 7, 2025, as the enforcement date of the REAL ID Act. After that date, people are required to present a REAL ID-compliant form of identification to board a domestic flight or enter a restricted federal facility<sup>1</sup>.

On April 11, 2025, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) announced that starting May 7, it will begin enforcing the REAL ID Act of 2005 and its regulations. TSA will no longer accept state-issued IDs that do not comply with REAL ID standards at security checkpoints. As a result, all airline passengers aged 18 and older must present a REAL ID-compliant identification or another acceptable form, such as a passport. Those relying on non-compliant state IDs without an alternative acceptable form may face delays, additional screening, or even denial of checkpoint access.

Washington's enhanced driver license and enhanced ID card (EDL/EID) are REAL ID-compliant. Currently, 1.9 million Washington residents hold EDLs/EIDs which represent 27% of all active Washington licenses and ID cards. Demand for Washington EDLs/EIDs is forecasted to continue increasing through fiscal year 2029.

People seeking a first-time EDL/EID must apply in person at a driver licensing office. 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 ID cards and driver licensing services, except drive tests, to people with barriers to visiting a DLO. DOL2Go has served rural communities in service

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

area gaps, people experiencing homelessness, assisted living centers, tribal communities, schools, and emergency responses such as wildfires.

During DOL2Go's first 21 months, the team helped over 7,055 Washington residents and issued 4,957 driver licenses and ID cards at 158 events. Demand for DOL2Go service continues to increase. The team is turning down as many events as they are attending due to insufficient staff and scheduling conflicts. Funding for DOL2Go ends June 30, 2025.

It should be noted that continued funding for the DOL2GO team is included in the proposed Washington State budget and is currently awaiting the governor's signature.



### **Driver Licensing Office Closures**

The Smokey Point driver licensing office remained closed this quarter to remediate smoke damage from a fire in the adjoining office space. The office plans to reopen in April 2025.

The Puyallup driver licensing office has been closed since December 2022 when the landlord terminated the office lease. Nearly two years after the closure, the Department of Enterprise services has been unsuccessful in finding a new location.

### **Workload and Wait Time Summary**

Essential services were delivered this quarter through a combination of in-office, online, mail, phone services, and DOL2Go mobile office. The DLOs served 87,000 more customers this quarter compared to the first quarter of 2024. As a result, customers experienced longer wait times for service. Wait times exceeded the statewide average in driver licensing offices in metropolitan locations along the I-5 corridor. Walk-in customers visiting these offices waited over an hour at times.

In mid-February, our DRIVES system underwent a major upgrade. Online transactions were unavailable from Feb. 10 - 17 and the DLOs were closed Feb. 14 – 17. The closure, combined with staff learning new processes once the new system was online, contributed to longer wait times for all driver licensing offices in February.

Last quarter, DOL modified the method used to calculate Licensing Service Representatives (LSRs) in service within DLOs. LSRs in service are now based on the daily average number of staff serving customers on Tuesday through Friday, when all offices are open. This change provides a more accurate reflection of statewide staffing levels during the quarter. Previously, the calculation included Monday through Saturday, skewing averages artificially lower by including days when not all offices are open and staff in those offices are not scheduled to work.

The DLO key workload and performance indicators for this reporting period and comparable periods in 2024 are shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Key workload and performance indicators for Driver Licensing Offices; compares first quarter of 2025 to 2024.

Workload in Quarter 1 (January - March)	CY 2025	CY 2024
<b>Customers Served in DLO</b>	<b>514,816</b>	<b>428,151</b>
January	179,827	138,071
February	145,361	139,457
March	189,628	150,623
<b>Enhanced - Originals Issued</b>	<b>129,972</b>	<b>43,827</b>
January	37,868	13,994
February	34,381	14,031
March	57,723	15,802
<b>Initial Wait Time Average (minutes) <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>
January	10	5
February	20	6
March	31	6
<b>Customer Experience Time Average (minutes) <sup>2</sup></b>	<b>29</b>	<b>14</b>
January	17	14
February	30	14
March	39	15
<b>LSRs in Service - Daily Average <sup>3</sup></b>	<b>309</b>	<b>303</b>
January	309	300
February	308	301
March	309	307

**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, Tuesday through Friday. This does not reflect the number of FTE allotted.

## TRANSACTION AND CUSTOMER VOLUME

This quarter, 796,000 transactions were conducted through a combination of in-person, online, mail, and phone services. Driver licensing offices and the DOL2Go mobile licensing unit served 537,000 in-person customers and 67% of transactions.

Chart 1 below shows transaction distribution by service channel each month beginning July 2023. Transactions completed by mail and phone are a small portion of overall transactions, so they are combined with online transactions and shown in the below chart as Alternative Channel Transactions.

**Chart 1. Monthly distribution of transactions by service channel**

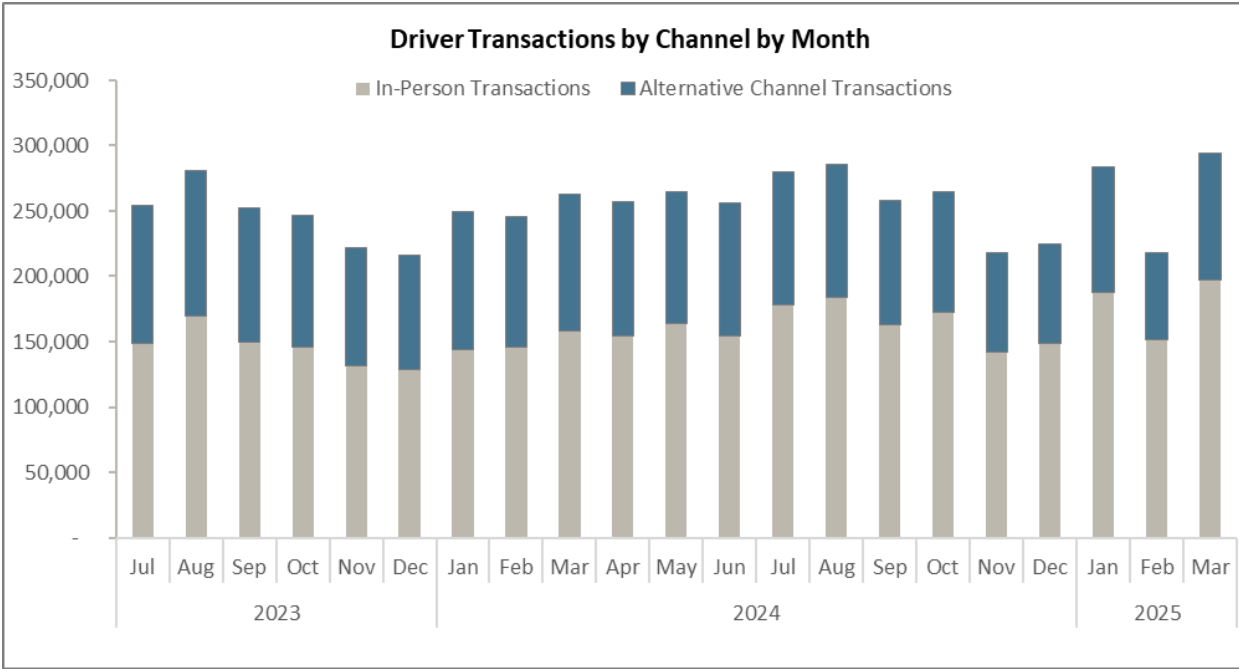
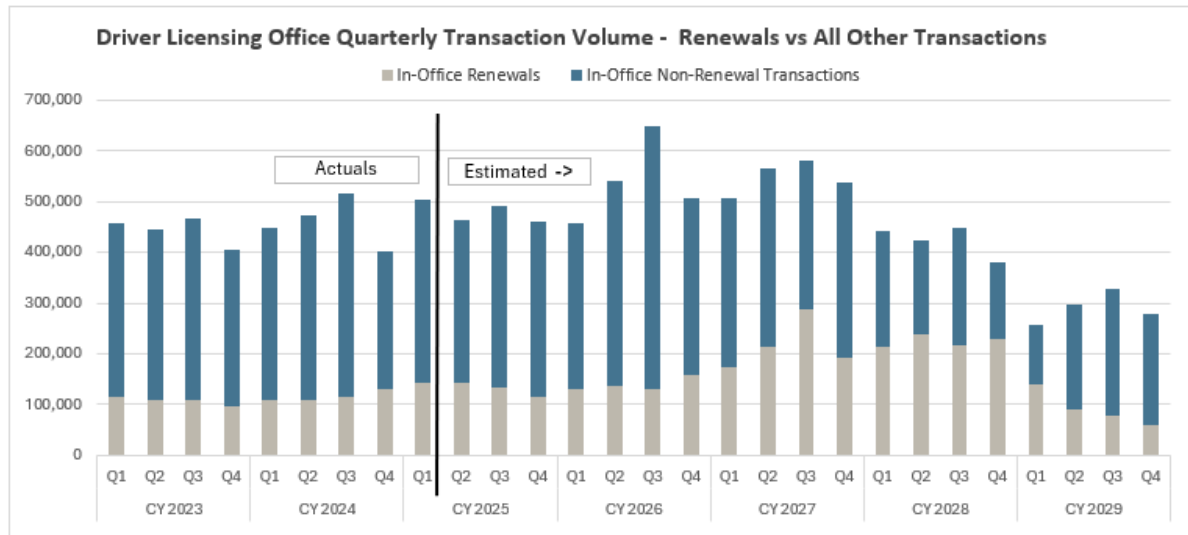


Chart 2 below shows the in-office renewal and non-renewal transactions by quarter, actual transactions during year 2023 through the first quarter of 2025, and estimated transaction volumes from the second quarter of year 2025 through 2029, including forecasted EDLs.

Between 2026 and 2027 there will be an estimated 65% increase in the number of customers requiring an in-office renewal compared to 2024 actuals. The surge in renewals is a residual impact of the transition from a 5-year to a 6-year renewal cycle that began in 2014, along with the extensions issued during the pandemic. In addition, the higher demand will coincide with the ongoing increase in REAL ID transactions, which take an additional 4-5 minutes to complete.

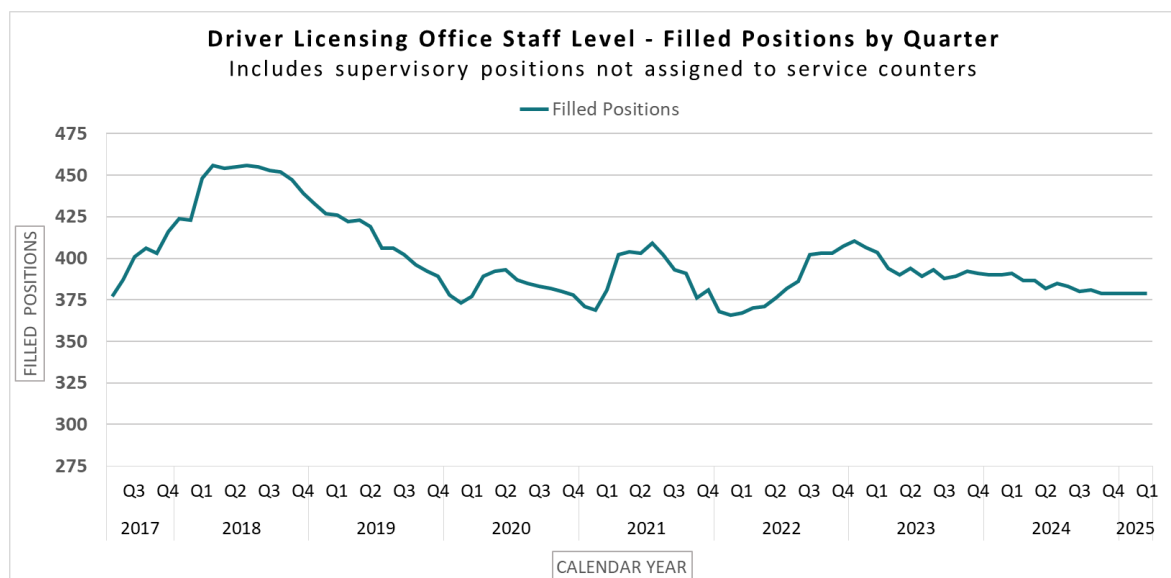
Chart 2. Driver license office quarterly volume of transactions



## STAFFING LEVELS

The agency's 2023-2025 biennial budget for DLO workload was reduced by \$7.1 million, requiring DLO staffing reductions to align with the new funding level. Chart 3 below shows the overall DLO staffing levels by quarter from Q3 2017.

Chart 3. Driver Licensing Office Filled Positions



The budget reduction restricted DOL's ability to ramp up staffing ahead of the May 2025 REAL ID enforcement and address 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.

The current budget reduction combined with increases in customer volumes has begun to affect agency targets in customer and employee satisfaction. Any future cuts could erase efficiency gains and wait time reductions achieved. There is a direct correlation between the reduction of staff and service efficiency. Experience has shown that reducing DLO staffing causes wait times to increase, employee and customer satisfaction to decline, and employee turnover to rise. Recruiting and onboarding new hires divert DLO managers' focus from operational efficiency to recruiting, hiring, and training. Experienced staff split their time between serving customers and mentoring new hires. It can take up to eight months for a new hire to reach the service proficiency of an experienced employee. These indirect impacts reduce DLO service capacity, quality, and efficiency far beyond the direct impact of cutting positions.

## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND WAIT TIME

This quarter, customers visiting driver licensing offices spent more time in offices than in the first quarter of 2024 due to higher customer volumes. In mid-February, our DRIVES system underwent a major upgrade. Online transactions were unavailable from Feb. 10 - 17 and the DLOs were closed Feb. 14 – 17. The closure, combined with staff learning new processes once the new system was online, contributed to longer wait times for all driver licensing offices in February.

- Statewide average initial wait time for service was 14 minutes longer, a 233% increase. Customers spent an average of 20 minutes waiting in the lobby before being called to a service counter.
- Statewide average customer experience time was 15 minutes longer, a 107% increase. Customers spent an average of 29 minutes in the offices measured by the time between check-in and completing the transaction.
- Customers walking into the Seattle Queen Anne, Everett, Shoreline, Lynnwood, and Lacey offices spent an average of 50 minutes waiting in the lobby before being called to a service counter. These offices represent the higher wait times that customers in metropolitan offices along the I-5 corridor experience.
- Customers walking into the Seattle Queen Anne, Everett, Shoreline, Lynnwood, and Lacey offices spent an average of 60 minutes in the offices measured by the time between check-in and completing the transaction.

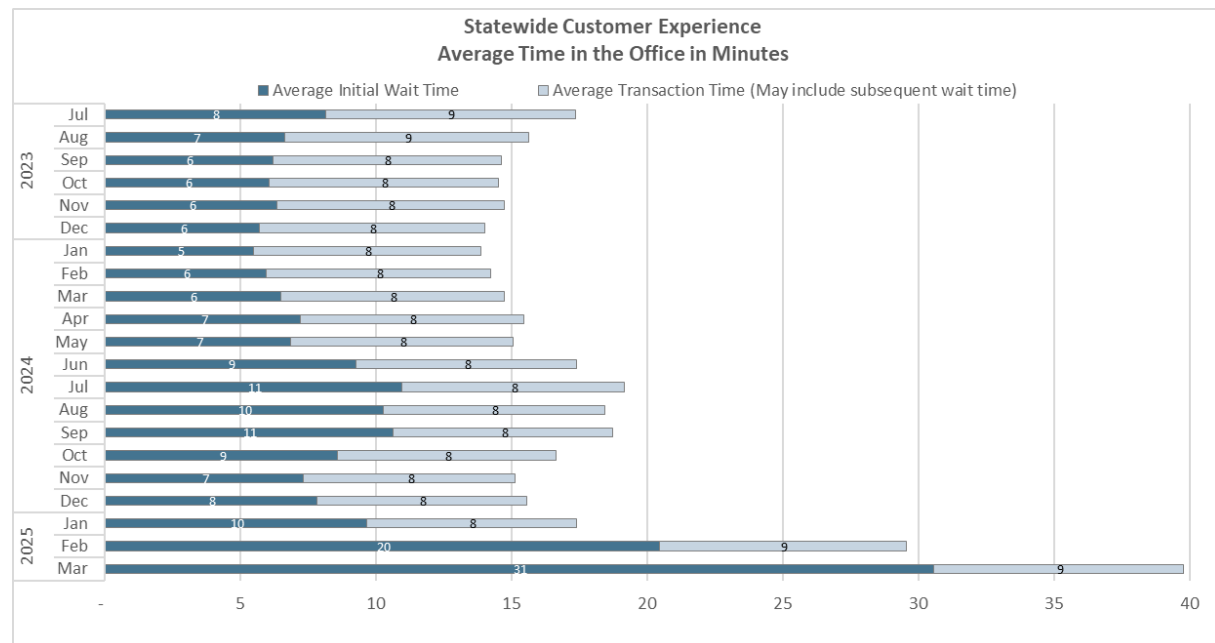
While wait times historically decline during the winter months, due to the REAL ID deadline approaching, wait times rose in the first quarter of 2025. Wait times are expected to continue rising through the second quarter of 2025 and remain elevated through calendar year 2027 due to the high volumes of customers forecasted as explained in [Transaction and Customer Volume](#) section above.



The DLOs operate with a hybrid model, offering both appointments and walk-in service. Appointments were added during the pandemic and have been shown to level out the workload throughout the day. Appointment customers are served as close to their appointment time as possible. Walk-in customers are served on a first-in, first-served basis as time allows between appointments. It can take several hours to catch up from a large influx of walk-in customers. Appointments were increasingly difficult for customers to secure as customer volumes rose in the first quarter of 2025. Most offices along the I-5 corridor began offering appointments 45 or 60 days out to help meet customer demand. There continues to be greater demand for our services than there are appointment slots.

Chart 4 below shows the two components of customer experience time, wait time and transaction time, by month from July 2023.

**Chart 4. Statewide average wait time and transaction time**



## PREPARING FOR REAL ID ENFORCEMENT

The enforcement of REAL ID occurs on May 7, 2025. A significant rise in customer demand for enhanced documents was seen this quarter. Applications for Washington EDLs/EIDs, which meet the federal REAL ID requirements, are forecasted to continue increasing through calendar year 2028. Customers seeking a first-time Washington EDL/EID must apply in person at a DLO. Department of Licensing 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 electronic and paper vehicle and driver license renewal notices. Paper

renewal notices also include a colored insert containing expanded REAL ID information in English and Spanish. The insert was revised second quarter 2024 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 then waited to be called to a dedicated camera station where a photograph was 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.
- In June 2023, the DOL launched a redesigned website ([dol.wa.gov](https://dol.wa.gov)). The new site offers a more accessible and intuitive experience, even on mobile devices. It also contains improved content about Washington's EDL/EID documents and the REAL ID Act.
- Implemented an interactive, online REAL ID document checklist during the summer of 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 the agency website, the link is provided when promoting REAL ID options on social media.

## ENHANCED DRIVER LICENSE AND ENHANCED ID DEMAND

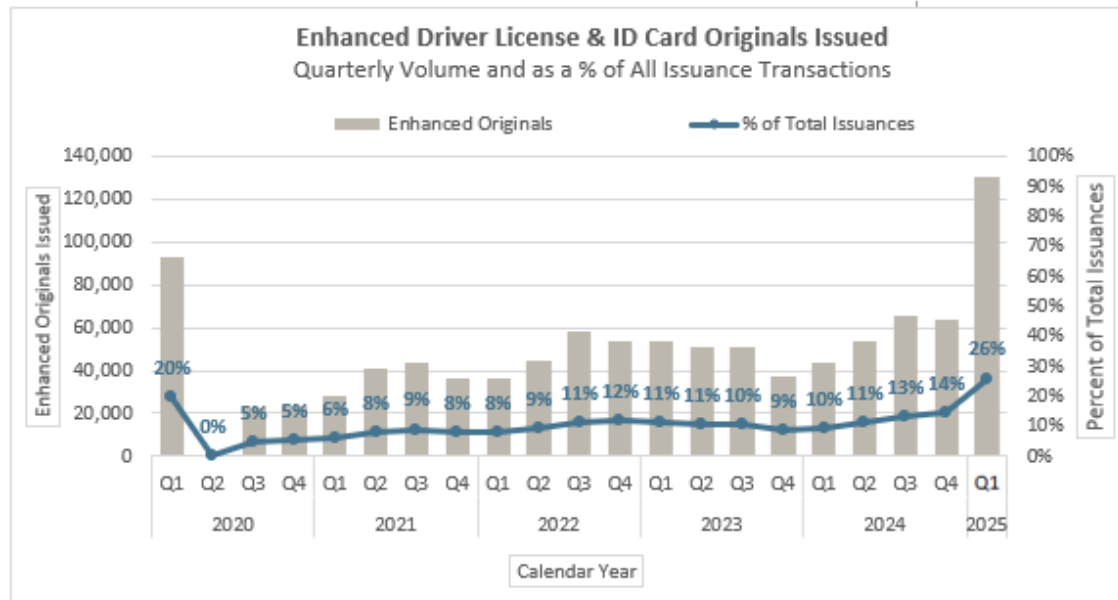
Currently, about 1.9 million Washington residents hold EDLs/EIDs, which is 27% of all active Washington licenses and ID cards.

This quarter, 130,000 customers received their original EDL/EID, a 197% increase from the same quarter of 2024. An original EDL/EID application impacts DLO workload because it takes up to five minutes longer to issue than a driver license renewal and can only be obtained in person at a DLO.

Sixty-four 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**



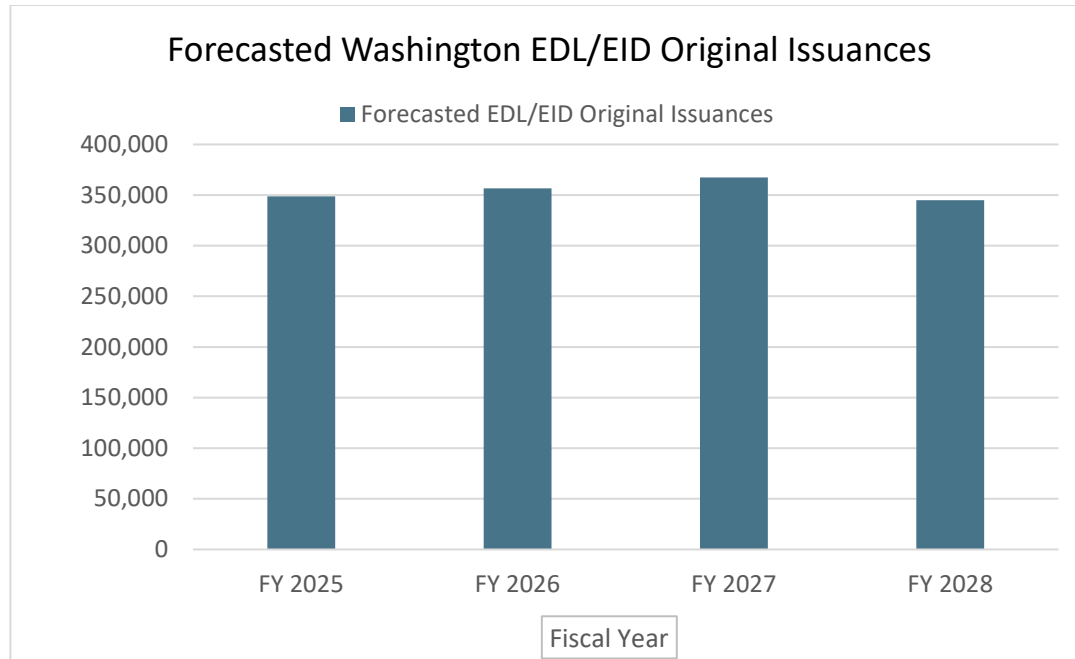
**Data Note:** All Issuance Transactions in above chart includes original, renewal, duplicate and replacement driver licenses and identification cards.

**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 June 2025. Demand for Washington EDLs/EIDs is anticipated to continue increasing and remain elevated through 2028. A REAL ID-compliant credential is required for domestic air travel after May 7, 2025.

Chart 6 below shows the forecasted volume of original EDLs/EIDs for fiscal years 2025 through 2028.

**Chart 6. Forecast of EDL/EID Original Demand**



**Data Note:** Based on DOL March 2025 revenue forecast.

## CUSTOMER EDUCATION OUTREACH

The REAL ID law for air travel goes into effect May 7, 2025. DOL has been running a media campaign since January to make sure Washington residents are aware of their ID options for domestic airplane travel. DOL is reminding residents to be prepared for this upcoming change and urging those who are planning to get an enhanced driver license or enhanced identification card to come in now to avoid a rush at driver licensing offices as the deadline gets closer. The 2024 Legislature provided DOL with \$2.1 million in proviso money for a final media campaign. DOL has contracted with a public relations firm to create two campaigns. The first campaign, “Are you ready? This is your last chance,” launched at the end of January. It urged the public to act to ensure they have what they need to fly in May 2025. Videos and digital ads have been running on:

- Digital mediums, including streaming video and audio, and mobile devices targeting adults 18-24.
- Broadcast TV, broadcast radio, and digital mediums targeting adults 55+.
- Out-of-home mediums, including transit ads and digital billboards targeting adults 18+.

After May 7, the campaign messaging will change to alert residents to which ID will be accepted/needed if they plan to fly. The second campaign, “It’s here, you must have an approved ID to fly,” will begin in May 2025 with messaging focused on letting people know the deadline is here and they must have an approved ID to fly. Updated creative formats will be based on the final media buy, but may include digital, print, out-of-home, TV, and radio.

DOL also continues to routinely create and post messaging on DOL social media channels and our blog, website, driver and vehicle renewal notices, and in offices to inform residents of this upcoming change. Materials are available on DOL's website for communities and residents and includes information cards and posters in multiple languages, including English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, Somali, Ukrainian, and Russian. DOL will add materials in Arabic, Punjabi, and Amharic. DOL also provides videos and the [ID2025 website](#) in five languages, including English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean.

DOL is continuing to work with TDW+Co, an ethnic media company, and they provided grants to community-based organizations that are providing REAL ID awareness and education in their communities throughout the state. Contracted partners include:

- Chinese Information Service Center
- Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority
- El Centro De La Raza
- Friends of Little Saigon
- Russian Community Center in Seattle
- Ethiopian Community in Seattle
- Korean American Coalition of Washington
- Indian American Counseling Services
- Ukrainian Community Center of Washington
- We're still in conversations with Muslim Association of Puget Sound

Additionally, DOL's Community Engagement and Outreach team continue to attend community-based resource events and provide training and presentations directly connected with residents and community leaders. Specifically:

- 8 Spanish media interviews.
- Participated in 33 ethnic community partner meetings to share information and provide support.
- Conducted 11 training courses for community leaders and organization staff.
- Provided 9 webinars and presentations.
- Shared REAL ID information throughout the state in over 14 tabling events.