

2025 REIMBURSEMENTS FROM THE WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE SERVICES FUND

This report provides an overview of reimbursements from the Wheelchair Accessible Services (WAS) Fund for the 2025 calendar year. The WAS Fund, which the City of Seattle and King County jointly administer, is funded through a 10-cent surcharge on every taxicab, for-hire vehicle, and transportation network company (TNC, e.g., Uber, Lyft) ride originating in Seattle or King County.

The WAS Fund helps offset the higher operational costs incurred by owners and drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs). Eligible WAV owners and drivers receive reimbursements from the Fund based on their individual operating data as provided by their affiliated regional dispatch agency.

The categories of reimbursements and reimbursement rates that are available to eligible WAV owners and operators are established by rule. **Table 1** describes the categories of reimbursement and the reimbursement rates for Seattle (FAS Director's Rule [FOR-HIRE TRANSPORTATION-08-2024](#)) and King County (as established in [FHT-2-2024-PR](#)).

Table 1 - 2025 WAS Fund Reimbursement Categories			
Reimbursement Category	Purpose	Recipient	Reimbursement Rates
Dispatched trips to passengers using a wheelchair (TPW)	To offset the additional costs of serving passengers in wheelchairs (e.g., extra time required for wheelchair passenger loading and securement, costs associated with prioritizing TPWs regardless of pick-up and drop-off location)	Driver	Reimbursement rates are based on the zone in which the TPW originates and terminates. Urban, rural, and suburban zones are based on zip codes. ¹ If a TPW originates and terminates in different zones, the greater reimbursement rate applies. - Urban: \$20 - Urban (98133, 98155, 98177): \$30 - Suburban: \$30 - Rural: \$40
Fuel	To offset the higher fuel costs associated with operating a WAV	Driver	Each driver is eligible to receive fuel reimbursement based on the mileage driven on the WAV while logged into the dispatch system, at a rate of \$0.14 per mile.
Off-Peak TPW	To offset costs of operating during off-peak hours (9 p.m. to 5 a.m.) when demand is low but accessible transportation must be available to improve equity of service	Driver	TPWs that occur between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. will be reimbursed based on following rates: 9 a.m. – 11 p.m.: Additional \$5 11:01 p.m. – 1 a.m.: Additional \$10 1st TPW between 1:01 a.m. and 5 a.m.: Additional \$45 - Any additional TPWs between 1:01 a.m. and 5 a.m.: Additional \$20
Driver Training	To offset the costs of completing one additional WAV-related training course per year, after completing the initial training required for wheelchair accessible taxicab (WAT) endorsement	Driver	Drivers are reimbursed for the cost of the course, plus a stipend for the time it takes to complete the training at the taximeter rate of \$30/hour. Payments are disbursed after drivers complete the course and submit a request for reimbursement. Covered training includes securement training and safety trainings.
Vehicle Acquisition, Maintenance, and Equipment (VAME) and Insurance	To help offset the higher costs associated with acquiring, converting, and maintaining a WAV vehicle, as well as the insurance cost for a WAV vehicle (relative to the costs for a non-accessible vehicle)	Vehicle Owner	Owners are reimbursed between \$1,464 and \$6,700 per year, disbursed quarterly, until the vehicle reaches 15 years old. The maximum annual reimbursement amount depends on the age of the vehicle (based on model year), engine type, and whether the vehicle has all-wheel drive. Eligible owners also receive an insurance reimbursement of \$1,800 per calendar year regardless of vehicle age and type.

¹ Please refer to the zip code table and map included at the end of [FOR-HIRE TRANSPORTATION-08-2024](#) or [FHT-2-2024-PR](#).

Total WAS Fund Reimbursements

Table 2 displays the total number and dollar amounts of each WAS Fund reimbursement type Seattle and King County made in calendar year 2025.

Table 2 - 2025 Total WAS Fund Reimbursements by Reimbursement Category						
Reimbursement Type	Seattle		King County		Total	
	Total #	Amount Paid	Total #	Amount Paid	Total #	Amount Paid
TPW ²	19,356	\$457,950	19,928	\$625,560	39,284	\$1,083,510
Fuel (mileage) ³	927,150	\$129,801	822,191	\$115,107	1,749,341	\$244,908
Off-Peak TPW ²	763	\$16,515	1,671	\$26,330	2,434	\$42,845
Driver Training		\$2,237		\$1,963	35	\$4,200
VAME and Insurance ³		\$179,274		\$158,979	61	\$338,253
Total		\$785,777		\$927,939		\$1,713,716

Average Reimbursements by Category

To assess the impact of WAS Fund reimbursements on WAV drivers and owners, we calculated the average reimbursement amount per driver or owner. Average per-driver or per-owner reimbursements for calendar year 2025 were calculated monthly in the case of TPW and Fuel reimbursements, and on a yearly basis in the case of VAME and Insurance reimbursements.

Table 3 displays the average number of reimbursements by category. For each category, the average unit and reimbursement per driver or owner is provided.

Table 3 - 2025 Average WAS Fund Reimbursements by Reimbursement Category (Seattle and King County)				
Reimbursement Category	Average Units	Average Reimbursement		
Dispatched Trips to Passengers in Wheelchairs (TPW)	44.84 trips per driver per month (73 drivers)	\$1,236.88 per driver per month		
Fuel Reimbursements	2,351.26 WAV miles per driver per month (62 drivers)	\$329.18 per driver per month		
Off-Peak Reimbursements	3.98 off-peak trips per driver per month (51 drivers)	\$70.01 per driver per month		
VAME and Insurance Costs	61 WAVs	\$5,545.12 per owner (annual)		

² TPWs that originate in the urban zone are reimbursed by Seattle; TPWs that originate in the suburban and rural zones are reimbursed by King County.

³ Reimbursement costs for these categories are shared between Seattle and King County based on the proportion of TPWs originating in each jurisdiction in the prior year. In 2025, Seattle covered 53% of reimbursement costs in these categories, and King County covered the remaining 47%.

Average reimbursement amounts reported in Table 3 were calculated in the following manner:

TPW: The average number of WAV drivers per month was derived from data submitted semi-monthly or monthly by the taxicab associations with affiliated WAVs. In 2025, the average number of WAV drivers per month was 73 and the average monthly TPW reimbursement per driver was \$1,236.88. This figure was calculated by dividing the average monthly TPW by the average number of drivers per month: $(\$1,083,510/12 \text{ months}) = \$90,292.50/73 \text{ drivers} = \$1,236.88$.

Fuel (mileage): The average number of fuel reimbursements was derived from monthly data submitted by taxicab associations with affiliated WAVs. In 2025, the average number of WAV drivers per month who qualified for fuel reimbursement was 62 and the average monthly fuel reimbursement per driver was \$329.18. This figure was calculated by dividing the average monthly fuel reimbursement by the average number of drivers per month: $(\$244,907.75/12 \text{ months}) = \$20,408.98/62 \text{ drivers} = \329.18 .

Off-Peak TPW: The average number of off-peak reimbursements was derived from monthly data submitted by taxicab associations with affiliated WAVs. In 2025, the average number of WAV drivers performing off-peak trips per month was 51 and the average monthly off-peak reimbursement per driver was \$70.01. This figure was calculated by dividing the average monthly off-peak trip reimbursement by the average number of drivers per month: $(\$42,845/12 \text{ months}) = \$3,570.42/51 \text{ drivers} = \70.01 .

VAME and Insurance: Total VAME and Insurance reimbursements for 2025 amounted to \$338,252.50. The average annual VAME and Insurance reimbursement per WAV owner was \$5,545.12 $(\$338,252.50/61 \text{ WAVs} = \$5,545.12)$.

Voluntary Conversions

Voluntary conversion is a process in which drivers choose to change their vehicle to a WAV. Nine taxicab owners completed voluntary conversions in 2025.

Historical Trends

To understand historical trends and evaluate the recovery of WAV operations since the COVID-19 pandemic, we compiled data for the last eight years.

Figure 1 shows total annual WAS Fund reimbursements and the annual percent change from 2018 through 2025. Reimbursements have increased every year since 2021, with the relatively smaller increase in 2025 likely due to a new reimbursement structure introduced in mid-2024.

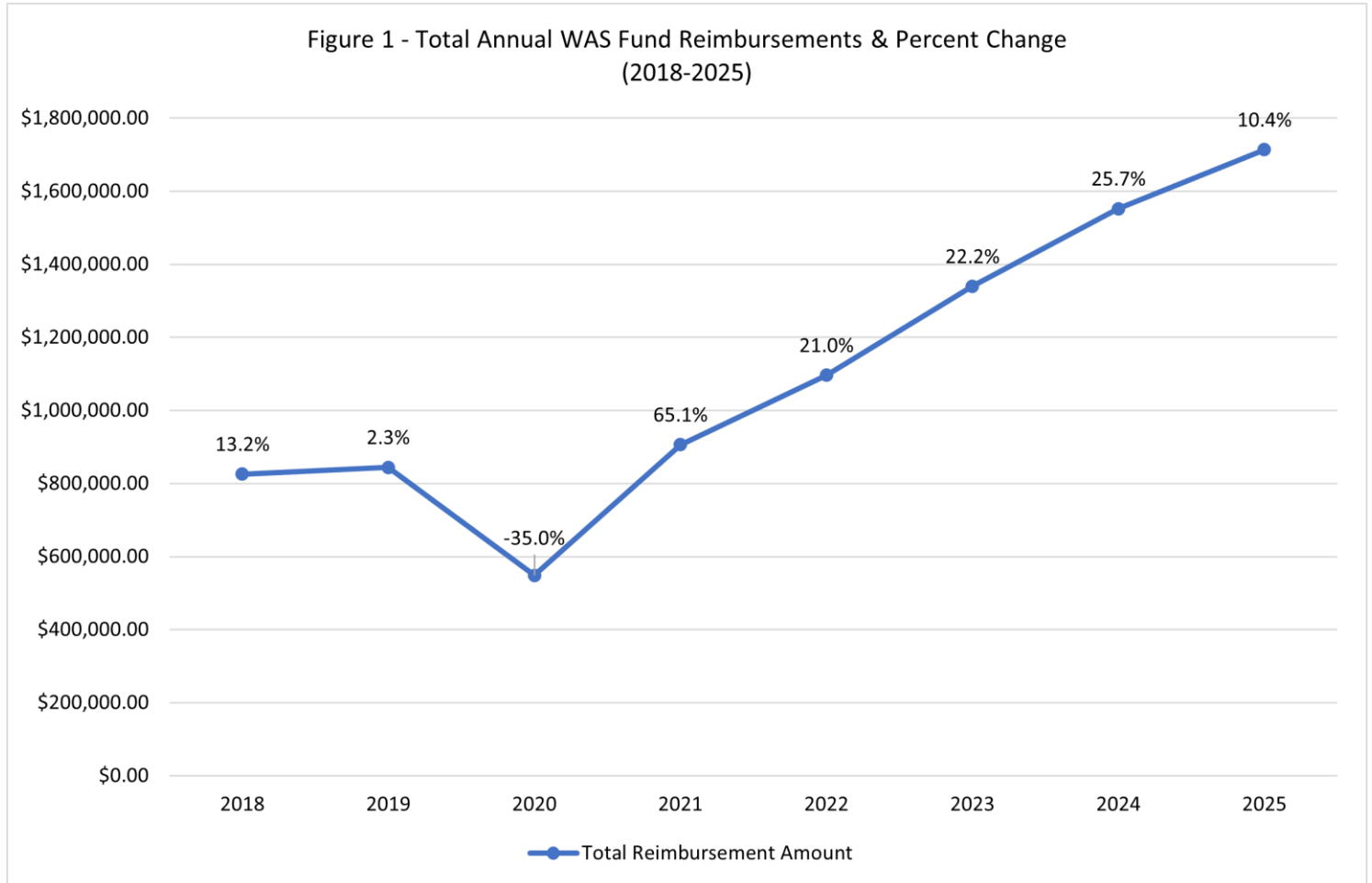


Figure 2 shows the total number of reimbursed TPWs over time. Trips have continued to steadily increase since 2021, demonstrating robust demand for wheelchair-accessible taxicab services.

