

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA THE
DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES**



Fiscal Years 2022 – 2023
Performance Oversight Hearing

Testimony of
Gabriel Robinson, Director
Department of Motor Vehicles

Before the
Committee on Transportation and the Environment
Charles Allen, Chairperson

January 31, 2023
Virtual Hearing

Good morning, Chairperson Allen, Committee members, councilmembers and staff of the Committee. I am Gabriel Robinson, Director of the District of Columbia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). I am pleased to testify before you today.

Prior to sharing the major FY22 and year-to-date FY23 DMV accomplishments, on behalf of Mayor Muriel Bowser, I would like to thank our customers and the Council for their support. The feedback the Council provides to the agency is valued and critically important in guiding our decision-making process for service improvements. I would also like to extend a special thank you to all my colleagues at DMV for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to serving our customers.

During FY22, DMV provided service to more than 575,000 licensed drivers/identification card holders and more than 290,000 registered vehicle owners at four service centers. We provided adjudication services, including conducting more than 210,000 in-person, mail, and virtual hearings. DMV also collected ticket payments for more than 2.7 million tickets. We inspected more than 150,000 vehicles, including 8,300 inspections completed using our self-service on-board diagnostics (or OBD) emissions kiosk. On average, DMV interacts with 3,200 District residents and non-residents a day; more than almost any other District agency. FY 2022 was no exception.

The mission of DC DMV is to promote the safe operation of motor vehicles and public safety, while providing outstanding customer service. As I frequently tell my team, our agency is truly “saving lives every single day.”

The agency has three operational divisions: Adjudication, Vehicle, and Driver Services. Our Adjudication Services team provides ticket processing, ticket noticing, hearings, and hearing support services to residents and non-residents, in order to render legally sound decisions on parking, photo enforcement and minor moving violations. The Adjudication team also ensures proper processing of violations and penalty payments for these infractions. Additionally, driver license revocation and reinstatement hearings are provided through Adjudication Services. Vehicle Services provides title and registration certification and inspection services to residents, businesses and government entities so they may legally park, drive and sell their vehicles in the District of Columbia. Driver Services provides driver certification and identification services to residents, ensuring they have the proper credentials to reflect identity, residence and driving qualifications, so they may legally and safely operate their vehicles.

As the District continued its transition from the public health emergency in FY22, DMV essentially returned to a normal operating status. For much of FY22, the agency continued to require customers and employees who interact directly with the public to wear face coverings in all DMV facilities. Effective August 2022, DMV shifted to recommending the use of face coverings by employees and customers at all agency facilities, while still requiring them for the in-vehicle portion of the road test. The agency also continued our enhanced cleaning and sanitation program, specifically at our service centers where in-person volume is the highest.

In FY22 and at the beginning of FY23, DMV launched several new initiatives to better serve our customers and streamline our internal processes. Starting in December 2021, DMV began participating in the National Motor Vehicle Information System (NMVTIS) to protect consumers from purchasing vehicles that are unsafe, potentially involved in fraud, or have been stolen.

Through our participation with NMVTIS, DMV can now access a vehicle's history in real-time to help car buyers detect fraud and know if a car has been totaled or determined to be salvage or junk before the agency completes a vehicle transaction. The system allows DMV to verify information instantly and reliably on a paper vehicle title by comparing it to the electronic data submitted by the jurisdiction that previously issued the title. NMVTIS is also a tool that assists law enforcement and DMV in deterring and preventing title fraud and other crimes.

At the start of the public health emergency in March 2020, DMV launched a virtual hearing pilot to facilitate social distancing by allowing all parties, including drivers, police officers, attorneys and hearing examiners, to participate remotely from a computer or mobile device. Virtual hearings were available only for minor moving violations, permit suspensions and revocations, and reinstatement hearings. The online technology is being well received by the public as a safe and convenient alternative to in-person hearings. As a result, on January 25, 2022, DMV expanded our virtual hearing options to include parking and photo enforcement tickets.

In FY22, DMV also introduced several new specialty tags, including the Washington Capitols, the Washington Mystics, and for Bicycle Awareness. On May 31, 2022, DMV introduced a new Adjudication Chat feature on our website, which allows customers to interact directly with DMV staff. The Adjudication Chat is available Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Since its launch, more than 400 individuals have utilized this feature. Further, in July 2022, DMV resumed offering DC residents child car seat inspections and installation services. This free service is offered in partnership with the District Department of Transportation.

On September 26, 2022, DMV introduced an online driver license renewal option for eligible District residents who are 70 years of age or older. Previously, mature drivers could only complete their driver license renewal in-person at a DMV Service Center. Mature drivers who are eligible may renew their driver license online.

In FY22, DMV also made it easier for individuals to take the knowledge test, the first exam DMV administers to beginning drivers to test their knowledge of traffic laws, road signs and driving safety rules. New drivers now have the option to take the knowledge test remotely via a virtual test.

As we transitioned into FY23, DMV announced the implementation of the mandatory Ignition Interlock Device (IID) Program. Residents holding a DC driver license, who have been convicted, or found administratively liable, for an alcohol or drug-related driving offense on or after December 19, 2022, are required to enroll in DMV's IID Program. Once convicted, or found liable, for an alcohol or drug-related driving offense, a driver must complete an application and enroll in the IID program online through DMV's website.

In FY23, DMV also updated the Ticket Alert Service (TAS). All District residents may now enroll in TAS to get quick notifications on tickets. Previously, residents had to have been issued a ticket before enrolling in the service. Non-residents are still required to have received at least one ticket within the past 18 months in order to enroll. Enrollment in TAS is free and it provides users with near real-time notification of ticket-related activity on up to four vehicles and a single driver license.

DMV has been proactive in announcing these operational updates through multiple communications channels, including press releases, social media, website, direct mail, emails, and an electronic newsletter that is distributed to more than 500,000 subscribers. The agency also hosts a live web chat on the first Thursday of each month where participants ask their DMV-related questions online and receive a real-time response directly from the Director. On June 30, 2022, DMV also hosted our first Live Video Chat event on social media. During the video event, which was live-streamed across all of the agency's social media platforms, my leadership team and I introduced ourselves, provided an overview of our responsibilities, and answered viewers' DMV-related questions in real-time. DMV plans to host additional Live Video Chats in FY23 highlighting different services the agency offers the public.

DMV also continues to utilize Zendesk to streamline our communications processes. The Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform was implemented in 2021 and allows the agency's correspondence representatives to respond on a single platform to customer inquiries submitted through various channels, including phone, website, and social media.

DMV has continued to see increased usage of the agency's mobile app. Currently, DMV has approximately 80,000 users who have downloaded the mobile app. By comparison, in September 2020, the agency had 5,000 app users. Recent upgrades have enabled customers to complete a variety of transactions from their smart devices including, but not limited to:

- Ticket Payment;
- Driver License and ID Card Renewal; and

- Registration Renewal

In FY23, DMV will add additional features.

We continue to encourage the public to use DMV's mobile app and skip the trip. It's free and can be downloaded from any place you get your apps from by searching DC DMV.

Educating residents about the importance of obtaining a REAL ID credential remains a priority for DMV throughout FY22 and into FY23. A REAL ID complies with federal security standards and ensures residents have access to federal facilities as well as the ability to board an airplane.

Currently, 99% of District residents are REAL ID compliant. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in December 2022, the Department of Homeland Security extended the REAL ID compliance deadline to May 7, 2025.

During FY22 and into FY23, DMV has continued to engage directly with the public through participation in community meetings, partnerships with other agencies and presentations at various public forums. In FY22, DMV leadership presented at 11 virtual ANC community meetings where residents were provided with important information related to driver, vehicle and ticket-related services. Additionally, in partnership with DDOT, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and the Street Smart regional safety traffic campaign, the Southwest and Benning Ridge Service Centers hosted a "Lives Shatter on Impact" Testimonial Wall to educate the public about pedestrian and bicycle safety. DMV also supported the Ford Motor Company Fund's "Ford Driving Skills for Life" clinics, Senior Spa Day and Senior Fest, and the Mayor's Annual Senior Holiday Celebration.

DMV continues to identify opportunities to offer more online transactions to the public, so they can “skip the trip”. DMV remains committed to serving the public at a high level as demonstrated by the large volume of work the agency has produced, including mailings generated from more than 392,000 online transactions completed during FY22. Additionally, we remain focused on continuing to operate our facilities in a manner that keeps everyone safe. I personally want to thank Team DMV for their dedication to our customers and for helping to keep the District and our residents safe and moving over the past year.

Public safety and customer service will remain a priority for DMV throughout FY23. My team and I continue to look forward to improving operational processes and making it easier for our customers to complete their transactions with DMV. Again, we appreciate the support we have received from the Council and look forward to continuing our efforts to improve the quality of service to the residents of the District of Columbia. In closing, we would like to thank Mayor Bowser for her continued leadership and commitment to good government and accountability. I will now welcome any questions you may have.