



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 16, 2025

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**WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLE TAXI DRIVER AWARDS GIVEN FOR EXEMPLARY SERVICE
TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

The award rewards taxi chauffeurs for outstanding service and offers financial freedom by offering a free taxi medallion.

CHICAGO – Today, the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP), along with the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), presented the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) Taxi Driver Award to 10 taxi drivers in recognition of their premier customer service and dedication to riders with disabilities, each recipient received a free taxi medallion.

“Accessible transportation is crucial not just for passengers, but for our entire economy,” said **Mayor Brandon Johnson**. “When people with disabilities can move freely throughout our city, it opens doors to employment, education and healthcare. The WAV Taxi Driver Awards highlight the essential role public chauffeurs play in making that possible. By recognizing their service, we’re advancing accessibility and supporting local entrepreneurship in Chicago.”

The award highlights the City’s effort to expand access to WAV taxis and serves as an incentive for taxi drivers to drive and operate wheelchair accessible taxis. The 10 taxi chauffeurs responded to, and completed 5,250 WAV trips in 2024 through the City of Chicago Centralized WAV Taxi Dispatch Service, managed by contractor Curb Mobility.

“This award honors the dedication and essential work of WAV taxi chauffeurs who serve the disability community in Chicago,” said **BACP Commissioner Ivan Capifali**. “By providing a free taxi medallion license, the award also opens the door for drivers to build their own businesses and grow within the industry.”

“Our WAV taxi chauffeurs are a lifeline for our City’s disability community,” said **MOPD Commissioner Rachel Arfa**. “This award not only recognizes individual drivers for their dedication, but also Chicago’s commitment to providing and supporting accessible transportation options.”

This year marks the 13th year of presenting the WAV Taxi Driver Award. The award has two goals: 1) To recognize WAV taxi drivers who perform exceptional service to people with disabilities and 2) To increase the number of WAV taxis. For the recipients, a free taxi medallion symbolizes independence and freedom from lease payments, allowing taxi chauffeurs to transition from a lease cab driver to a small business owner. The recipients must place the awarded taxi medallion license onto a wheelchair accessible vehicle for a minimum of 10 years. Recipients are also eligible to receive thousands of dollars a year in incentives to maintain and repair their WAV taxis through the Accessibility Fund. Since 2011, \$37 million in subsidies and incentives have been dispersed through

this fund for conversion and maintenance of wheelchair accessible vehicle taxis. Taxi medallion owners are also eligible for \$25,000 towards the expense of converting a minivan into a WAV and up to 9,000 annually towards repairs in maintaining the WAV taxi.

This year's WAV Taxi Driver Award recipients are:

- Vissinto Ayi
- Norman Flowers
- Ikby Binissia Rice Francois
- Walter Jacob
- Michael Peavy
- Ally Razack
- Yeboah Bannied Safah
- Abodu Soulemana
- Clement Squire
- Mouhameth Sylia

"I drive a wheelchair accessible taxi to promote social inclusion for people with mobility challenges," said **Clement Squire, licensed City of Chicago wheelchair accessible vehicle public chauffeur**. "The rides represent independence and mostly importantly are easy and affordable for riders."

"I decided to become a WAV-Taxi driver to help or assist my fellow citizens who are in the same situation as my family members," said **Vissinto Ayi, licensed City of Chicago wheelchair accessible vehicle public chauffeur**. "At the end of the day, I am happy to help the city continue this program created to help the people with disabilities community."

"Through our management of Chicago's Centralized WAV Dispatch Service, Curb has witnessed firsthand the profound impact that dedicated drivers have on the lives of riders who rely on accessible transportation," said **Pascale Selig, Centralized WAV Dispatch Program Manager, Curb**. "The recipients of the WAV Taxi Driver Excellence Award exemplify what it means to serve with compassion, professionalism, and care. We're proud to support a program that not only meets a critical need—but uplifts our community through every ride."

The awards ceremony took place on Thursday, October 16, 2025, at the Central West Community Center, located at 2102 W. Ogden Avenue. The recipients were chosen by the WAV Taxi Driver Award Committee. The committee reviews nominations by the public and carefully considers each of them before selecting recipients of the award. In addition to BACP and MOPD, the committee is comprised of representatives from Access Living, Shirley Ryan Ability Lab, Equip for Equality, and the Gridiron Alliance Foundation.

Under Mayor Johnson's leadership, the City remains committed to increasing transportation access for people with disabilities. Chicago remains one of the few cities in the country in which passengers using a wheelchair can request a WAV taxi or a WAV ride-hail vehicle. BACP maintains a dedicated [Chicago WAV webpage](#) as a resource for passengers and WAV taxi drivers.

BACP ensures Chicago's public vehicles are safe, reliable and provide residents and visitors with a positive transportation experience. As a resource for consumers, BACP's comprehensive Ride Smart Chicago public awareness campaign provides safety and consumer awareness information for

passengers of taxis, ride-hail, and other public passenger vehicles. For tips, including how to spot licensed versus unlicensed taxis, visit [Chicago.gov/RideSmart](https://chicago.gov/RideSmart).

BACP oversees the licensing of Chicago's public chauffeurs and public vehicles including taxis, transportation network providers (ride-hail vehicles), liveries, charter and sight seeing buses, ambulances, water taxis and tour boats. Learn more about BACP's Public Vehicle Operations by visiting [Chicago.gov/PublicVehicles](https://chicago.gov/PublicVehicles).

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