

Chicago Rideshare Driver Pay Standard Would Return \$470+ Million to Local Economy



A new analysis by PowerSwitch Action looks at what Chicagoland and Chicago app-based drivers are losing each month because the Chicago Rideshare Living Wage Ordinance has not been passed and implemented.

The analysis of the earnings of app-based passenger and delivery drivers in Chicago reveals that the 87,000 gig drivers in the city are missing out on between \$39.2 million and \$52.6 million in pay each month the ordinance is not in place.¹ This loss of pay amounts to between \$470 and \$631 million per year. The results are devastating for the city of Chicago: with lower earnings for drivers who struggle to make ends meet, less money drivers can spend supporting local small businesses, and a decrease in tax revenue during a time when the city is confronting a \$1 billion budget gap.²

Raising the pay standard for Chicago drivers will help address the long-standing issue of revenue from the rideshare industry being extracted from the city due to the industry's predatory model. In a traditional taxi system, money stays in a particular community, moving from local passengers to local drivers, who use that money where they live. However, Uber's model means a significant portion of passenger fares are actually sucked out of Chicago, to Silicon Valley and Wall Street.³

Our research has shown that Uber has raised fares in Chicago without raising driver pay, suggesting the company has taken more money from Chicago passengers without paying more to drivers in the city — despite drivers bearing the lion's share of costs associated with operating a rideshare vehicle. In fact, research has shown that average Uber driver earnings nationally fell 17% percent in 2023 and fell again in 2024 — despite working hours remaining relatively flat.⁴

Meanwhile, Uber has seen steadily rising profits since 2023. In 2024, the corporation reported \$9.86 billion in net income,⁵ and just this month reported that the trend continues with \$1.78 billion in net income in the first quarter of 2025.⁶ Chicago is a top 5 market for the rideshare giant globally.⁷

MAJOR FINDINGS

- ⚡ We found that Chicago rideshare drivers would earn between \$39.2 million and \$52.6 million more per month on average under two different minimum pay policy scenarios.
- ⚡ Drivers would, on average, earn between \$686 and \$920 more per month under a minimum pay policy. Recent research has shown that currently Chicago drivers earn below minimum wage.
- ⚡ We also found that 10,072 drivers out of the 87,072 reported in December 2024 worked full time (11.6%). Full-time was defined as taking at least 250 trips in a month. Full-time drivers provide just over half of the rideshare trips provided in Chicago.

The analysis drew from the hourly wage amounts found in the recent report from UC Berkeley Labor Center, Chicago Transportation Network Drivers' Earnings and Projections Under Proposed City Ordinance. This first-of-its-kind analysis of the earnings of app-based passenger drivers in Chicago revealed that gig drivers struggle to make ends meet, earning less than the city's minimum wage. The report found that rideshare drivers made an average of \$9.05 an hour, well below Chicago's minimum wage of \$16.20 per hour and even below the tipped minimum wage of \$11.02 per hour.

The analysis comes as drivers escalate their demands for the City Council to urgently pass the Chicago Rideshare Living Wage Ordinance, sponsored by Alderman Mike Rodriguez. The ordinance has been under consideration for the last two years and would address the city's rideshare drivers' low pay and safety concerns.

	<i>Low End of Proposed Minimum Driver Pay ⁸</i>	<i>High End of Proposed Minimum Driver Pay</i>
<i>Average increase in earnings per driver (monthly)</i>	\$686	\$920
<i>Total additional earnings (monthly)</i>	\$39,232,616	\$52,603,561
<i>Total additional earnings (yearly)</i>	\$470,791,392	\$631,242,732

Notes

1 Based on our analysis of Chicago trip data taken from Transportation Network Providers - Drivers and Transportation Network Providers - Trips (2023-2024) datasets published by the City of Chicago, from which we calculated average trips per driver and average trip times. Our analysis also incorporated a range of employee-equivalent hourly wages for Chicago drivers that represent earnings under current conditions and under a proposed minimum pay policy, taken from the recent [UC Berkeley study Chicago Transportation Network Drivers' Earnings and Projections Under Proposed City Ordinance](#) (Ken Jacobs and Aida Farmand). The hourly wage amounts factor in the costs of owning and operating a vehicle, as well as Medicare and Social Security taxes. Data analysis by Kevin Flores of Small World Strategy.

2 "Chicago Faces \$1 Billion Budget Gap in 2026, Mayor Says," [CBS News](#), April 23, 2025.

3 Our analysis of Uber's financial disclosures show that since the corporation went public, average fares have increased by 65% while at the same time Uber's share of the fare has increased. Additionally, one analyst has found that Uber has both raised fares and lowered pay, and also transferred over \$1 billion in revenue per quarter from drivers to Uber shareholders. Horan, Hubert, "Can Uber Ever Deliver? Part Thirty-Two: Losses Top \$33 Billion But Uber Has Avoided The Equity Collapse Most 'Tech' Startups Experienced," [Naked Capitalism](#), February 27, 2023. Additionally, in 2024, Uber announced it would spend \$7 billion on its first-ever stock buyback program. "Uber Announces Inaugural \$7 Billion Share Repurchase Authorization," [Uber Technologies, Inc.](#), February 14, 2024.

4 Understanding gig drivers: Investor insights from Gridwise Analytics. Gridwise, May 30, 2024. Gridwise 2025 Annual Mobility Report, [Gridwise](#), February 18, 2025. In 2024, Gridwise reported average monthly Uber driver earnings fell by 17.1% from 2022 to 2023 while monthly working hours fell only 2.9%. In 2025, Gridwise reported that average weekly Uber driver earnings fell by 3.4% in 2024, while weekly working hours rose .8%.

5 "Uber Announces Results for Fourth Quarter and Full Year 2024," [Uber Technologies, Inc.](#), February 5, 2025.

6 "Uber Announces Results for First Quarter 2025," [Uber Technologies, Inc.](#), May 7, 2025.

7 2024 Form 10-K, [Uber Technologies, Inc.](#), filed February 14, 2025.

8 The variability between hourly earnings can be attributed to traffic, waiting times, the vehicle driven, among other factors. Individual drivers may earn less or more than these amounts on any given day depending on such factors, according to Jacobs and Farmand, *supra* note 1.