



# Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey

Washington DC Metropolitan Region  
Fiscal Year 2016

**Final Report**

March 21, 2017

**We'll get you home. Guaranteed.**

**National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board  
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments**



**DATE:** March 21, 2017

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**AGENCY:** Founded in 1957, The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is an independent, nonprofit association that brings area leaders together to address major regional issues affecting the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia. COG's membership is comprised of 300 elected officials from 23 local governments, the Maryland and Virginia state legislatures, and U.S. Congress. Policies are set through the COG Board of Directors, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, and the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee.

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the region, and plays an important role as the regional forum for transportation planning. The TPB prepares plans and programs that the federal government must approve in order for federal-aid transportation funds to flow to the Washington region.

Commuter Connections is a regional network of transportation organizations coordinated by the TPB. Established in 1974, Commuter Connections offers free commuter services to help both businesses and their employees find the best available commuting options to improve traffic congestion through fewer vehicles, and improve air quality through lower auto emissions. Primary services of Commuter Connections include Ridematching for carpools and vanpools, administration of the Guaranteed Ride Home and 'Pool Rewards rideshare incentive programs, marketing of alternative commute options, and coordination of an employer outreach program, including telework.

Funding for Commuter Connections is provided by:

District Department of Transportation  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
Virginia Department of Transportation  
United States Department of Transportation

**ABSTRACT:** This report presents results of a survey of all Guaranteed Ride Home trip recipients working in the Washington Metropolitan region during fiscal year 2016 (July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016). The survey was designed to gauge the level of satisfaction of commuters who utilized the GRH service.

The GRH program was started in 1997 to eliminate a key barrier to using alternative modes; commuter fear of being stranded at the workplace due to illness, an unexpected personal or family emergency, or unscheduled overtime.

**PUBLICATION:** The final report once endorsed for release will be published on the Commuter Connections website at [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org) under the About Us, Publications section.

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## **Background**

### **Guaranteed Ride Home Program Description**

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) through its Commuter Connections program, under the auspices of its funders, has operated the Guaranteed Ride Home program (GRH) in the Washington DC Metropolitan region since January 1997. A “commuter insurance” program, GRH is designed to encourage ridesharing and transit usage by providing a way home for qualifying commuters in the case of illness, an unexpected personal/family emergency, or unscheduled overtime when their normal alternative commute mode is not available. Many area workers who consider switching commute modes from Single Occupancy Vehicles to carpools, vanpools, and transit are concerned about being stranded at work if they unexpectedly have to leave before or after standard work hours. GRH eliminates this concern, and encourages carpooling/vanpooling, taking transit, bicycling and walking to work. Commuters who use these transportation modes twice a week are provided with four free GRH rides home per year. Alternative mode commute practices reduce the number of automobiles on the road and help the region toward air quality goals. The GRH program’s Participation Guidelines and survey samples used during FY 2016 are provided in the Appendix of this report.

### **Customer Satisfaction Survey and Methodology**

The Customer Satisfaction Survey for GRH was conducted as an ongoing study each month throughout the fiscal year. All customers who obtained a free ride home through the program during FY16 were provided the opportunity to participate in the survey. Emails with a link to the survey are sent on the day following the GRH trip. A small portion of GRH customers, five percent, have not provided Commuter Connections with an email address, therefore surveys for this group are sent through the U.S. Postal Service.

Both the hard copy and online surveys allow respondents to rate the GRH service and provide comments and suggestions. See appendix for samples of the survey response card and online survey. Note: some respondents did not answer all questions. As a result, response totals to some questions may not be equal to the total number of survey respondents.

## **Survey Design**

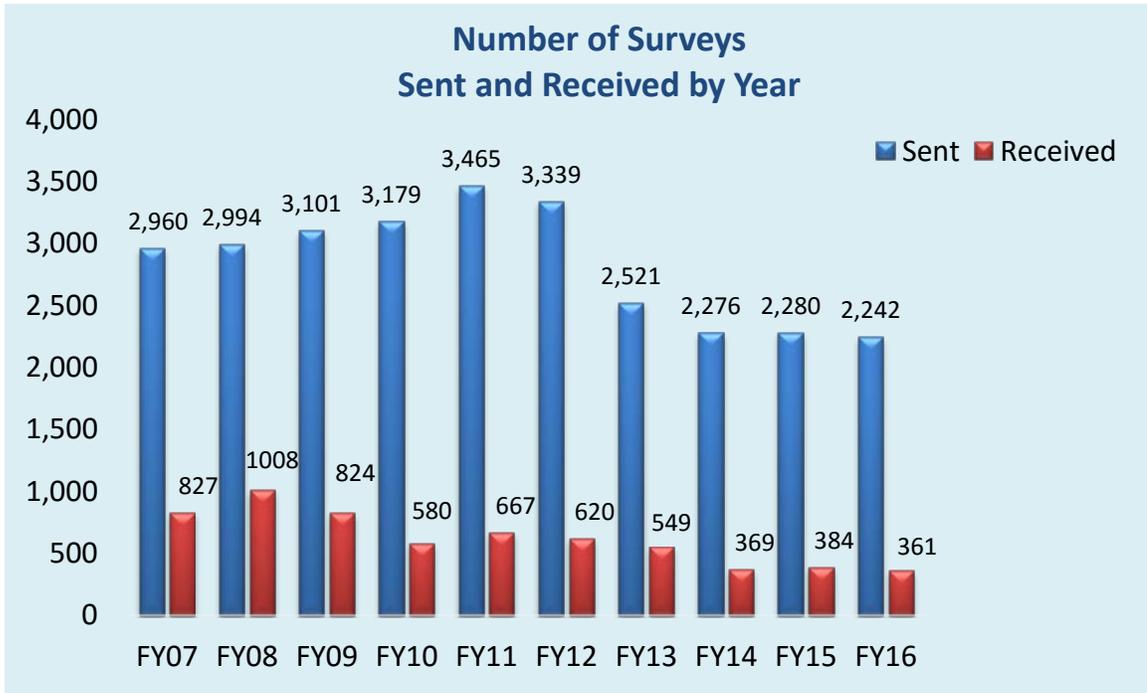
The FY 2016 survey consists of five multiple-choice questions, one fill in the blank and an area for comments. Four questions provide insight into customer opinions regarding various operational functions of GRH and ask respondents to rate aspects of the service by selecting one of four responses—“Poor,” “Fair,” “Good,” or “Excellent.” Another multiple choice question asks the reason for the trip, and a fill in the blank question asks respondents to indicate their wait time. The comments area provides an open ended forum to offer specific or general feedback, whether positive or negative.

The performance areas of GRH were addressed by four multiple-choice questions pertaining to: reservations staff; transportation service; response time and overall service. Reservations staff refers to the operators who answered telephone calls from commuters requesting GRH service, verified the request in accordance with the official GRH participation guidelines, and arranged the ride for the commuter. These contracted staff are employees of Diamond Transportation Services, Inc., which provides such services under arrangement with COG. Transportation service refers to the modes of transportation (e.g. taxi, rental car service) and the affiliated organizations (e.g. xyz cab company, Enterprise Rent-a-car) that provided the trips from the workplace to the final destination. The transportation modes used for the GRH trips are selected by Diamond Transportation based on the type and severity of the emergency, distance traveled, and customer preferences.

## Response Rates

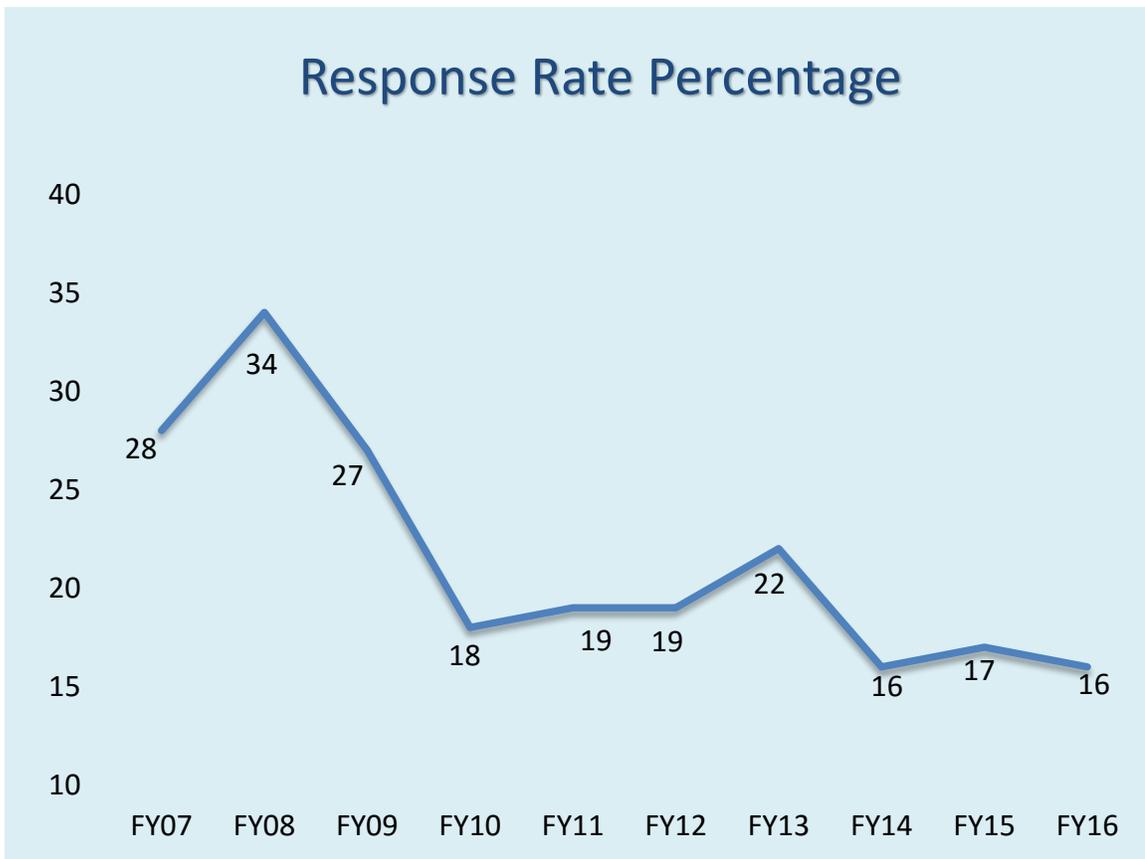
### Number of Surveys Sent and Received Since Program Inception

Of the 2,242 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2016, 361 completed surveys were received.



### Response Rates in Percentages - All Fiscal Years.

The response rate in FY16 was 16 percent, a one point decrease compared to the previous year. The precipitous nine point drop from FY09 to FY10 occurred when the survey changed to an online system. Online surveys are easier to ignore and may be tied up in spam/junk filters. Physical survey cards tend to have more impact. In many households, the volume of emails received have easily surpassed traditional postal delivery mail. Another plausible reason why there are significantly fewer online responses may be due to the fact that many GRH customers realize that online surveys no longer provide anonymity.



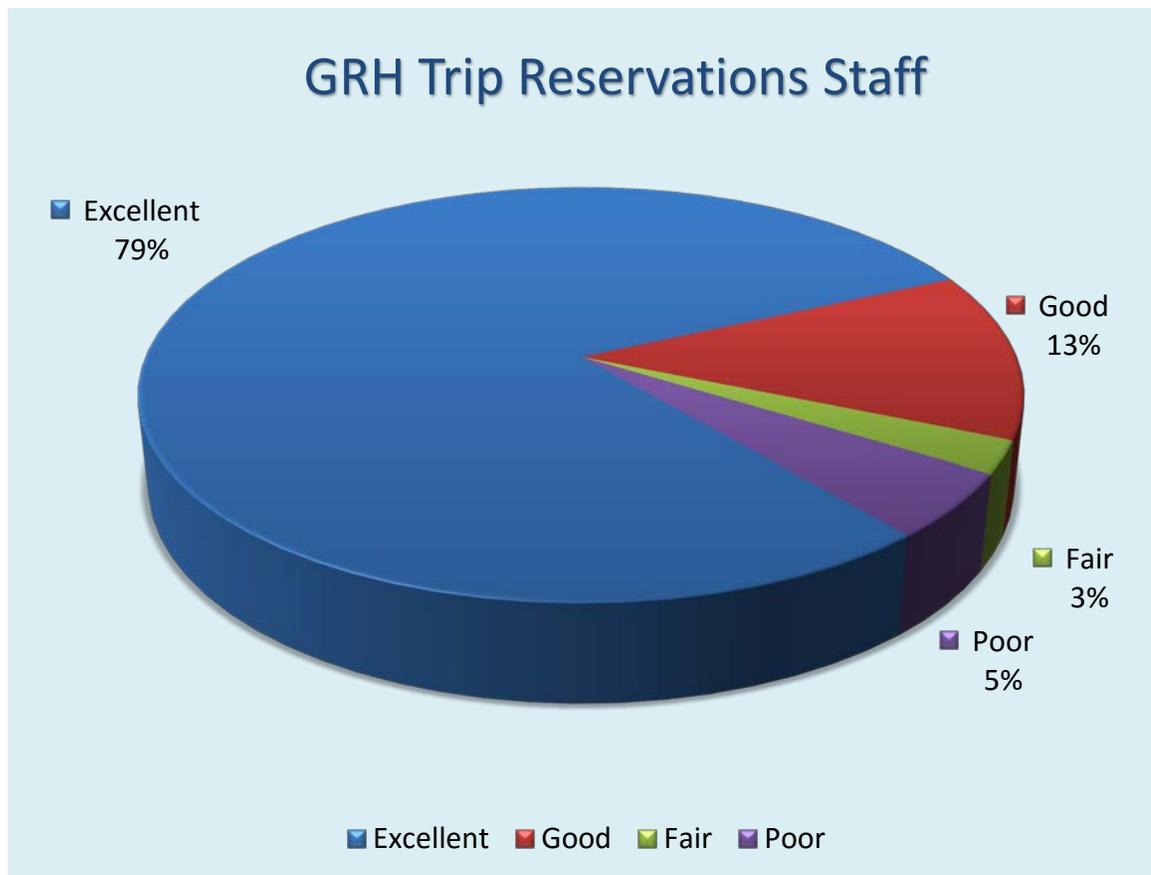
## Fiscal Year 2016 Survey Results

This section indicates survey results from the 361 respondents for fiscal year 2016.

### Reservation Staff

#### Percentage of Responses Received

Q. How would you rate the service you received from our GRH trip reservation staff?

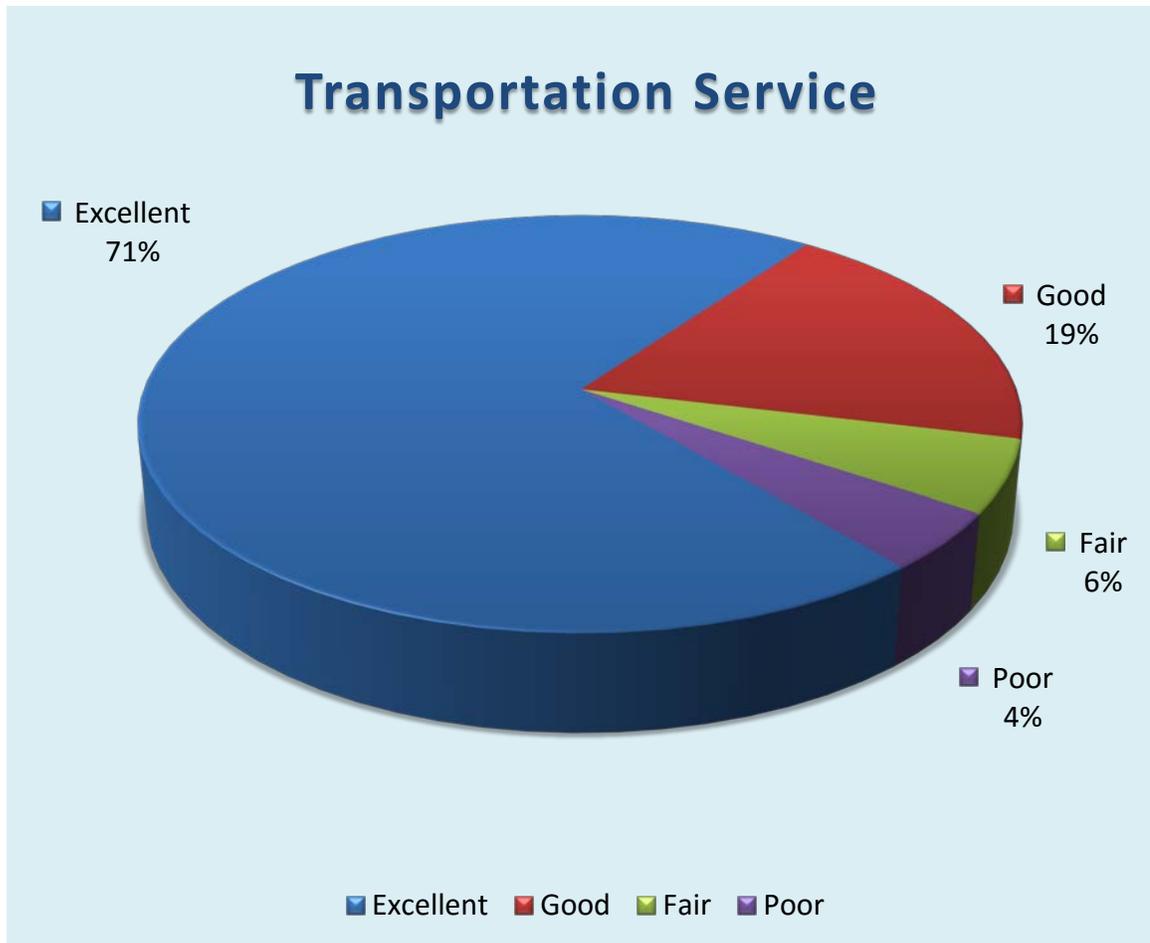


92% rated the trip reservations staff as either excellent or good.

## Transportation Service

### Percentage of Responses Received

Q. How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?



90% rated the transportation service as either excellent or good.

## Response Time - Rating

### Percentage of Responses Received

Q. How would you rate our response time?



90% rated the response time as either excellent or good.

## Response Time – Minutes

### Percentages of Responses Received

Q. Approximately how many minutes did you wait until your ride?

Average response wait in FY16 was 16 minutes, and the percentage of customers with a wait time of 30 minutes or less was 92%.



## Overall Service

### Percentages of Responses Received

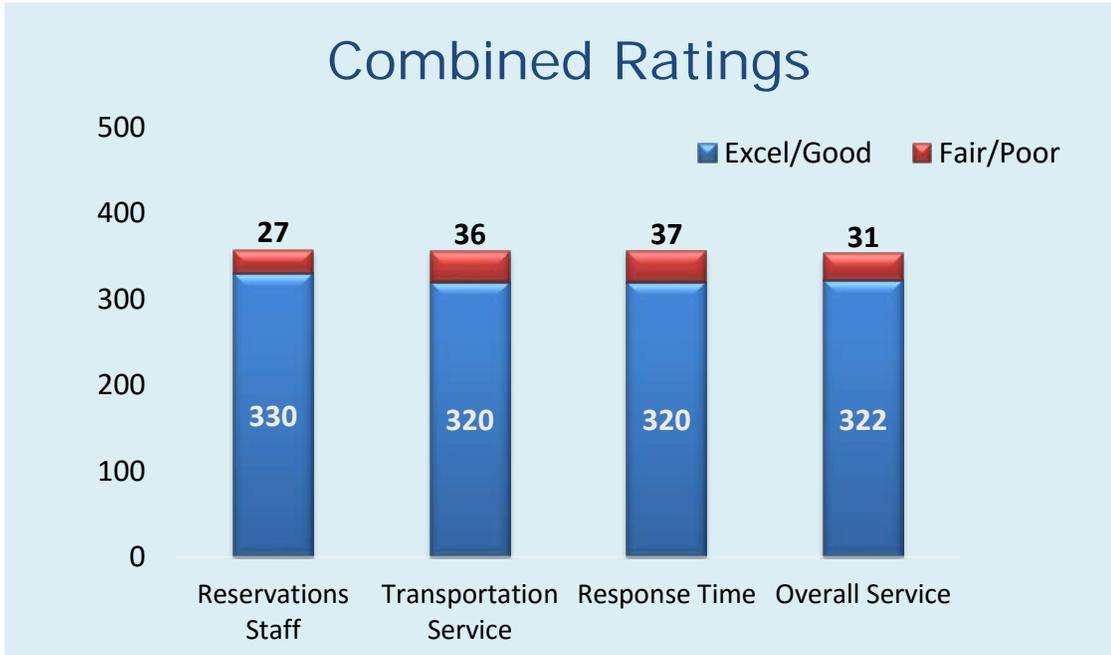
Q. Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?



91% rated the overall service as either excellent or good.

## Excellent/Good vs. Fair/Poor: All Questions

### Number of Responses Based on Combined Satisfaction Levels

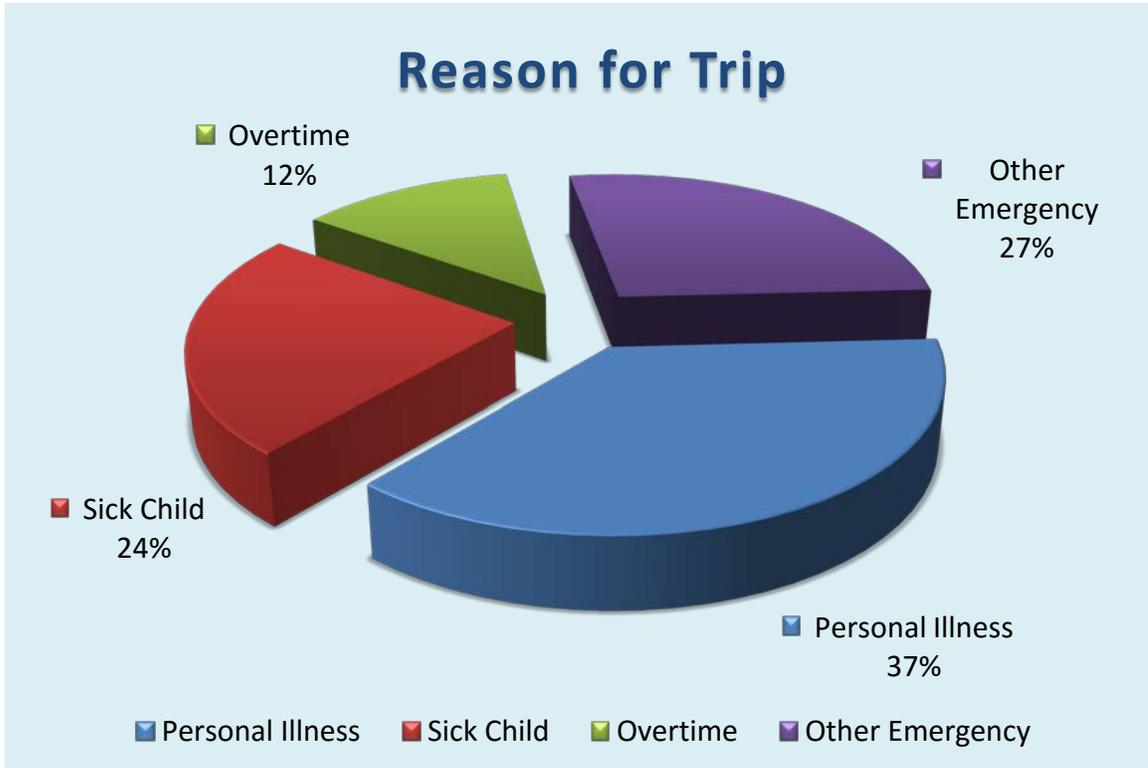


This chart emphasizes the overwhelming favorable ratings (excellent & good) compared to the less favorable ratings (fair & poor). For example, in the first column, 330 respondents gave the Reservations Staff category a favorable rating of either Excellent or Good, noted in the blue area. In contrast, only 27 respondents, shown on top in red, rated the reservations staff with a less favorable “Fair or Poor” response.

## Reason for Trip

### Percentages of Responses Received

Q. What was the reason for your GRH Trip?



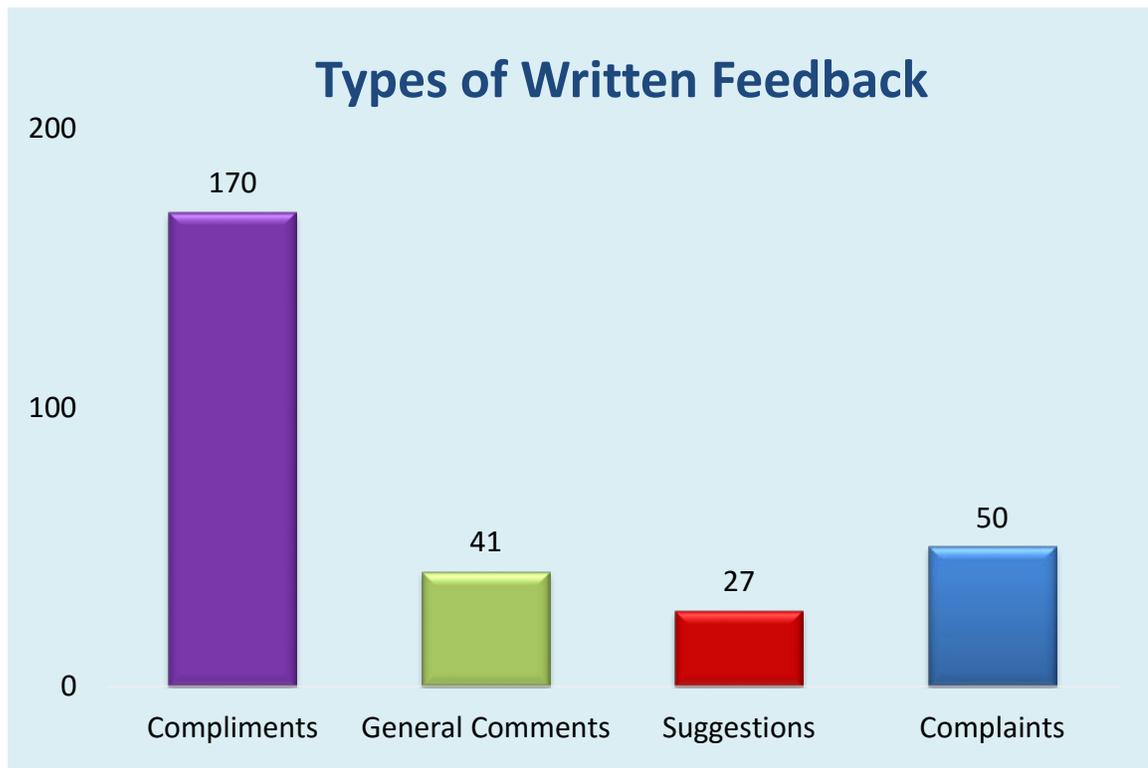
At 37%, personal illness was the most common reason given for using GRH.

## Written Responses

In addition to the multiple-choice questions, survey respondents were offered the option of providing written comments. Feedback is valuable for assessing customer attitudes regarding specific service areas, and helps to gauge the general pulse of the program. The total number of written responses equaled 279 out of 361 returned surveys, more than three-quarters (77%) of survey participants.

The open-ended written responses included compliments, suggestions, complaints, and comments. Respondents were allowed to check all that applied, so a significant amount of feedback fell into more than one type of written response category, hence the below chart adds up to more than 279. A respondent may have given a compliment about a specific aspect of the experience coupled with a complaint about a completely separate aspect. For example, *“The taxi was quick to arrive but the driver was not hospitable.”* This example is both a compliment and complaint.

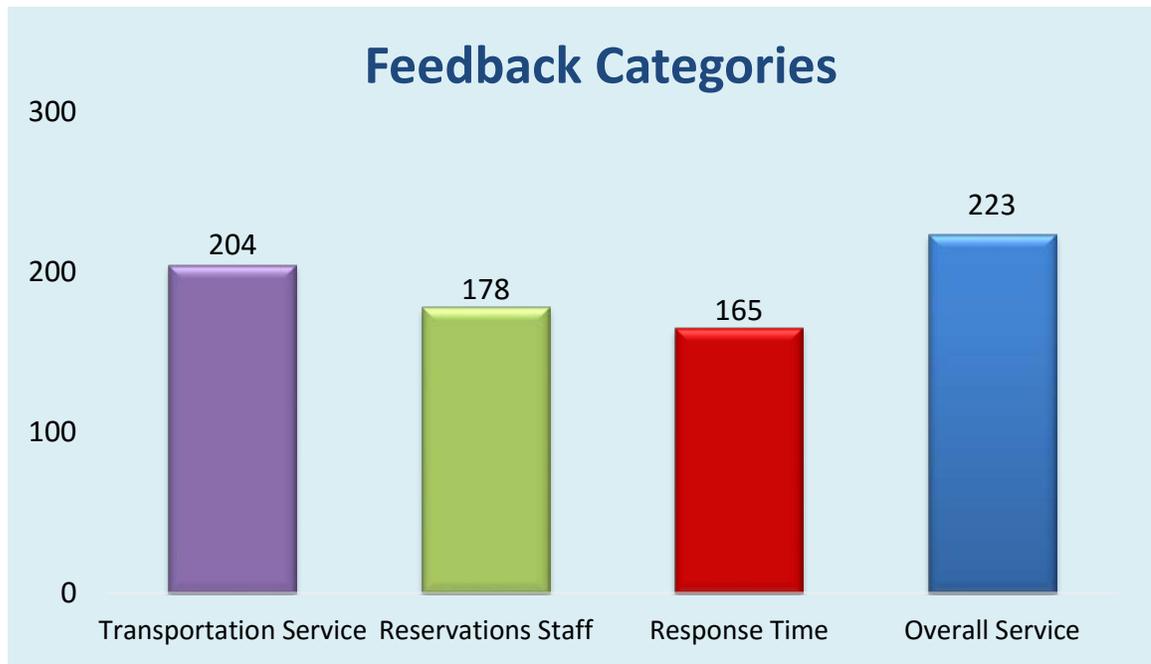
## Types of Feedback



The vast majority of feedback given were compliments.

## Written Feedback Categories

Most respondents, 223 who provided written feedback did so by mentioning the service in an overall manner. This was reflective of 80% of the 279 written responses. The transportation service category received the second greatest amount of written feedback at 204 (73%). The reservations staff and response time received about an equal number of written responses.



The Overall Service category received the most comments, followed by Transportation Service, Reservations Staff, and Response Time.

## **Compliments**

With 170 survey respondents who provided compliments, positive feedback was overwhelmingly (61 percent) the most prevalent type out of the total 279 written responses received; this measured more than 3.4 times the rate of complaints. Many were expressions of gratitude for the GRH service. Some commuters explicitly listed GRH as the main reason which allows them to utilize an alternative commute mode. Many of the respondents provided personal stories about how GRH helped them during a crisis situation.

The vast majority compliments were about Overall Service, followed by the Transportation Service. The breakdown of compliments by category are as follows: 132 of 170 compliments were made about the Overall Service, 78 percent; 111 compliments were made about the Transportation Service, 65 percent; 97 were made about the Reservations Staff, 57 percent; and 90 were made about Response Time, 53 percent.

Samples of actual compliments from FY16:

- I was happy and pleased with the service. The taxi was right on time so I didn't have to wait.
- The ride was very comfortable. The cab driver was pleasant, considerate, asked me if the temperature was ok and the radio too loud. Didn't talk much which was ok but when did was nice. Overall everyone I talked to that day was very helpful and courteous.
- Excellent service all the way through.
- You could not have done anything better. Thank you for being available at my time of need.
- This is an amazing service! Makes it possible to commute to work without worrying about emergencies at home so much!
- GRH is an excellent program! Please keep up the fantastic work!
- This was my first time using the service. I was very impressed.
- This is an excellent service and the staff is professional, understanding, and caring. Keep up the excellent job helping us.
- The reservation staff that answered my call was pleasant & extremely professional & efficient. The taxi driver was also very pleasant and personable. My interaction with these two individuals turned an already stressful situation into a much easier one! Thank you!
- GRH has really helped me out to be able to take care of my sick child! Thanks again!
- Great service. Really helped in response to an emergency with my wife. Would have been difficult, more time consuming and expensive without GRH. Thanks!
- I was amazed when I was told I could take a taxi and even more amazed when the taxi arrived within 10 minutes. What a relief it was to be at my granddaughter's side during her birth.

## **Complaints**

A total of 50 survey respondents provided complaints about the GRH service; 18% out of the 279 written responses. Respondents who complained may have also provided written feedback of other types. For example of respondents who cited a complaint, six also gave a compliment.

The breakdown of complaints by category are as follows: 32 out of 50 complaints were about the Transportation Service, 64 percent; 28 were about the Response Time, 56 percent; 24 were about the Overall Service, 48 percent; and 27 were about the Reservations Staff, 54 percent.

Sample of actual complaints from FY16:

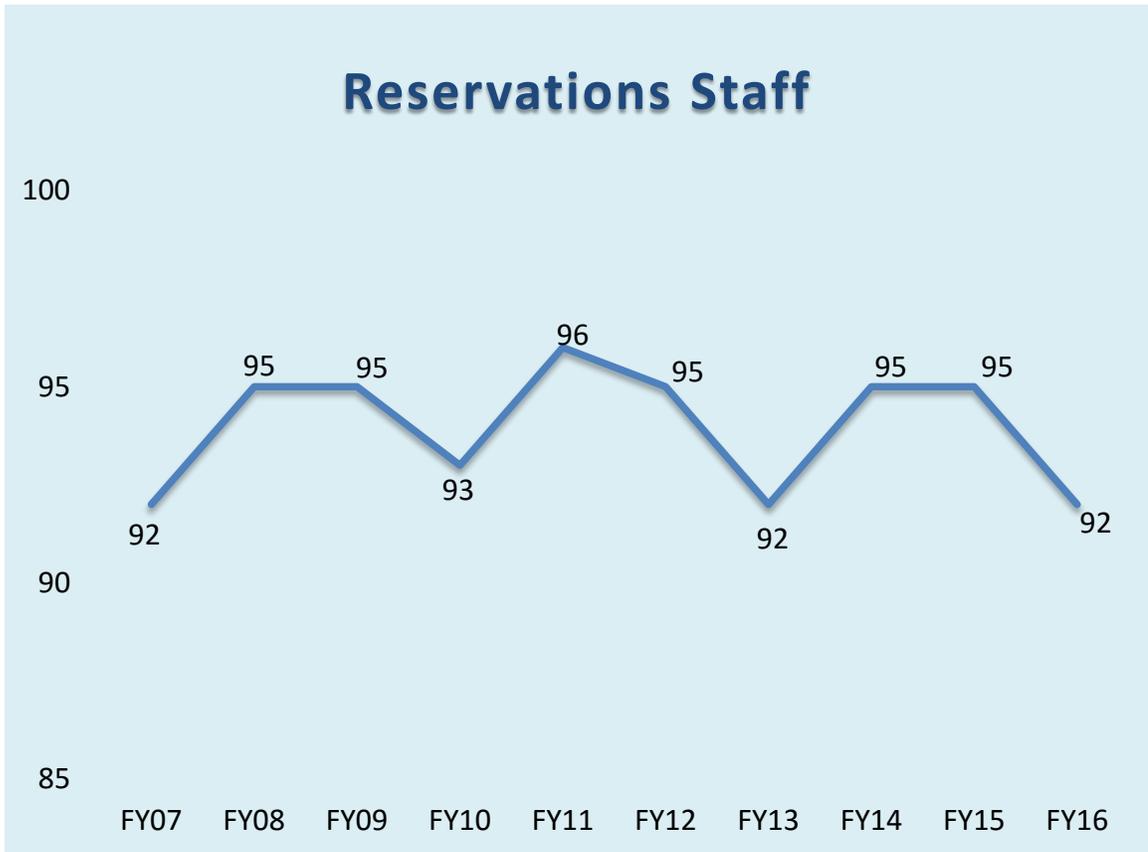
- I think GRH could be enhanced if DC taxi drivers were aware of the program. I had to have the driver contact the taxi office to confirm that I did not have to pay the driver.
- Taxi said they wouldn't take my bicycle. I did not want to chain it up overnight as there have been recent thefts. When I told the driver to forget the whole thing and I'll get a friend to pick me up, he said he would try to fit it in. I declined at that point.
- I had to first take a shuttle from work to the Twinbrook train station, then I had to take the train to Shady Grove metro, then had to wait for the cab at Shady Grove to finally get to where my car was parked in Urbana. This was very hectic, given that I wasn't feeling well.
- I was a little disappointed with the cab driver. Both times I have used this service, they tried to get me to sign a blank form and I refused. One guy was visibly upset that I wouldn't sign the blank document.

## Comparison to Previous Fiscal Years

### Reservations Staff

Percentage of Responses with Favorable Ratings (Excellent and Good)

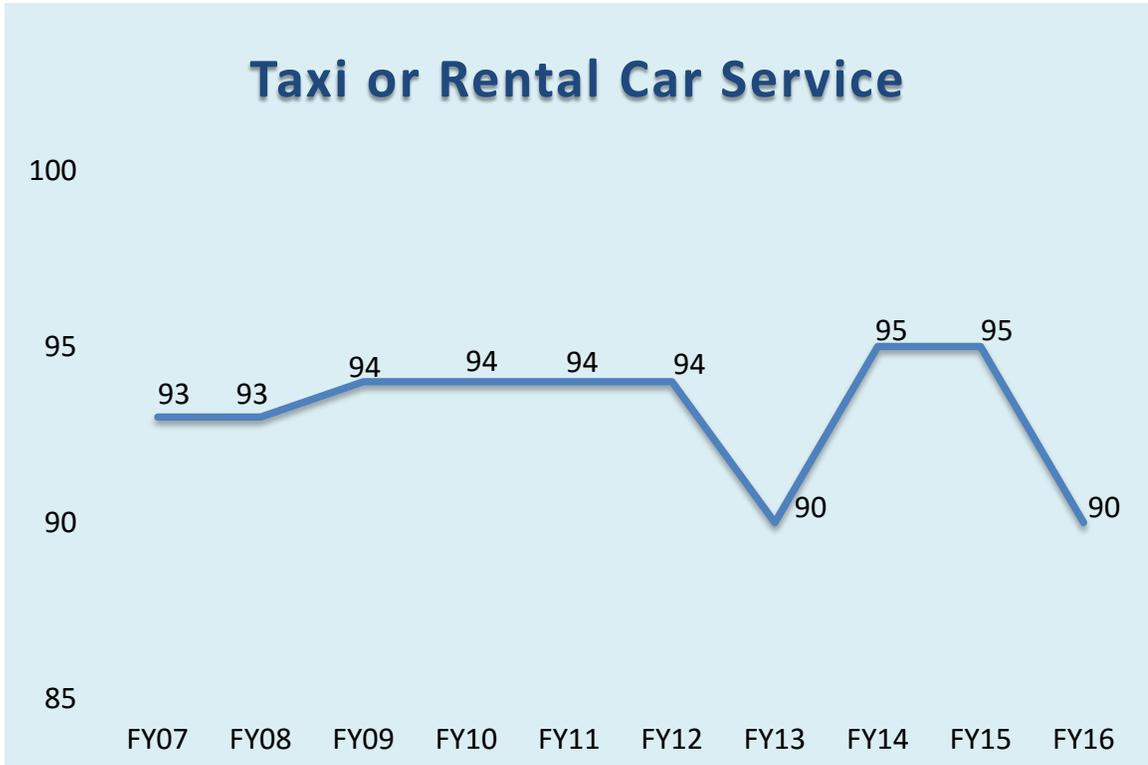
Q. How would you rate the service you received from our GRH trip reservations staff?



## Transportation Service

Percentage of Responses with Favorable Ratings (Excellent and Good)

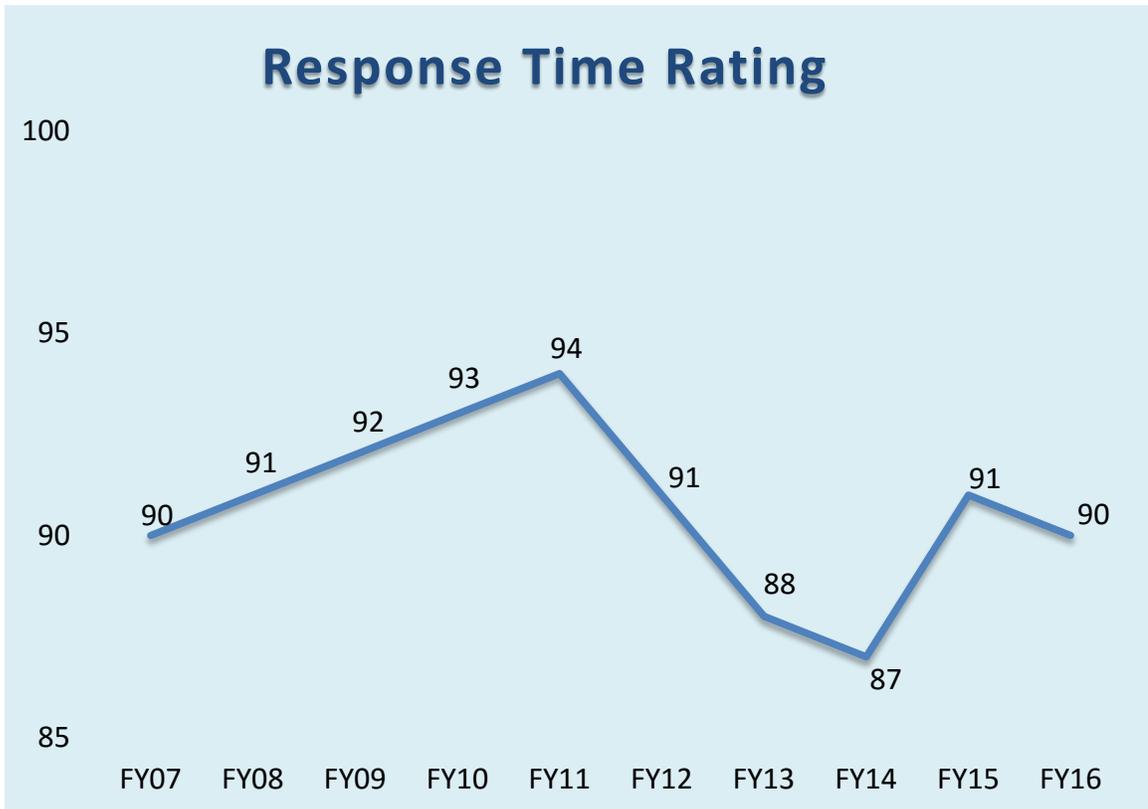
Q. How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?



## Response Time

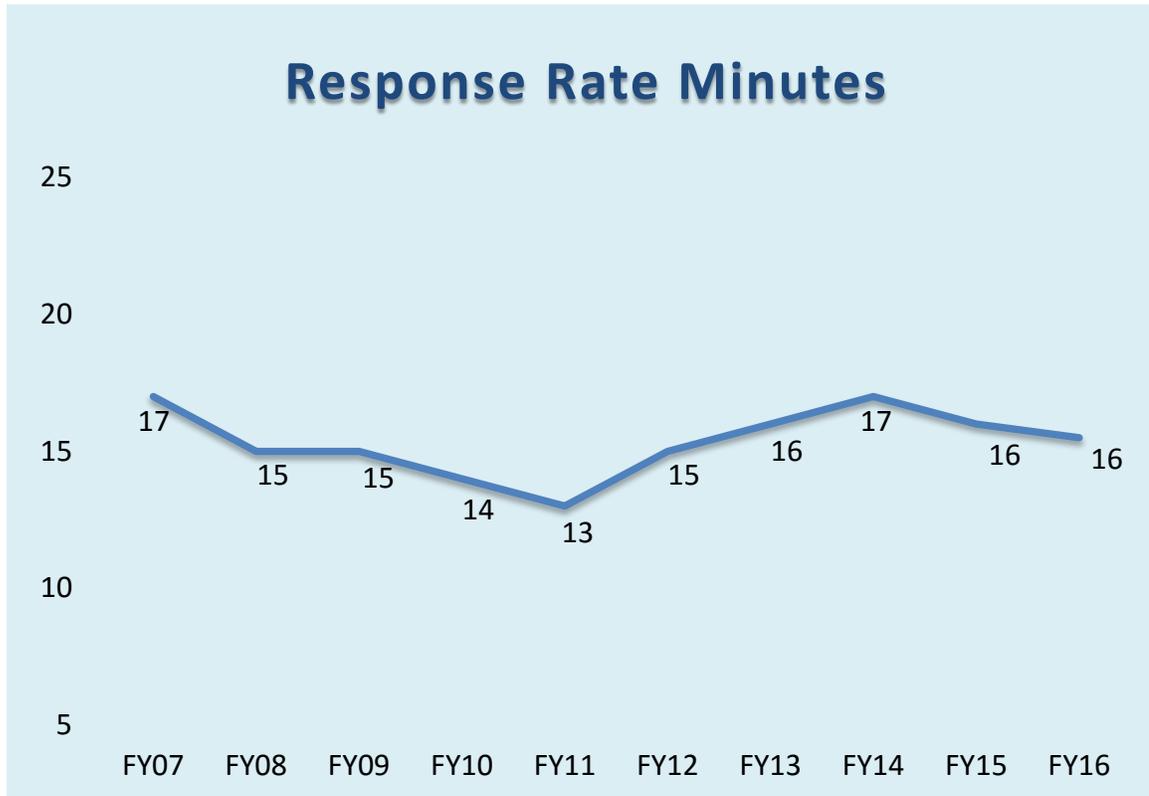
Percentage of Responses with Favorable Ratings (Excellent and Good)

Q. How would you rate our response time?



**Average Response Time – Minutes**

Q. Approximately how many minutes did you wait until your ride?



## Overall Service

Percentage of Responses with Favorable Ratings (Excellent and Good)

Q. Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?



## **Recap Summary**

Of the 2,242 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2016, 361 or 16 percent of surveys were completed. The vast majority, 91% of the survey respondents were pleased with the overall GRH service. Written responses were given by 77% of the respondents, the overwhelming majority of which (61%) contained compliments. Compliments outweighed criticism more than 3.4 to 1. For every category, good or above ratings were given by 90% or more of the respondents. Average response wait was 16 minutes and 92% waited 30 minutes or less.

# Appendix

## Sample Cover Letter Sent with Survey Card



Dear Commuter:

Thank you for using the Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program in September. As a standard practice, we send out survey cards to all of our customers, in order to determine their level of satisfaction with this free service. Your feedback will help us gauge the program's continued value and also help improve and better serve commuters in the Washington metropolitan area.

**Please take just a moment to complete the enclosed survey card and simply drop it in the mail within 10 days, no postage necessary!**

Please note, your answers to the survey should only reflect your September 2008 GRH trip. If you have again used the GRH service after September 30, 2008, you will receive a separate survey card for that trip.

For the latest Guaranteed Ride Home participation guidelines, or if you would like information about other Commuter Connections services, please visit our web site at [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org), or call us at 1-800-745-7433.

Thank you for using an alternative method of transportation to get to work and for supporting the Guaranteed Ride Home program. Your efforts help to reduce traffic congestion and improve the air we breathe.

Please be sure to tell your co-workers and neighbors to sign up for the free Guaranteed Ride Home program at [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org).

Happy Commuting!

**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS**

**We'll get you home. Guaranteed.**

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS, 777 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, N.E., SUITE 900, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002-4239

THE COMMUTER INFORMATION SOURCE FOR MARYLAND, VIRGINIA AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

[www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org)



1-800-365-9105

**Sample Survey Response Card**



**Thank you for using Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH).**  
We'd like to know how you feel about our program.

---

Please take a moment to complete this card and drop it in the mail. Your response is greatly appreciated.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
1. How would you rate the service you received from our GRH trip reservations staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. What was the reason for your GRH trip? <input type="checkbox"/> Sick Child <input type="checkbox"/> Overtime <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Illness <input type="checkbox"/> Other Emergency
2. How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. How would you rate our response time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Approximately how many minutes did you wait until receiving your ride?	_____ minutes				7. Your name: (optional) _____
					8. Comments: _____ _____ _____

1-800-745-RIDE • [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org) **We'll get you home. Guaranteed.**

## Sample Online Survey

### Commuter Connections GRH Satisfaction Survey

We'd like to know how you feel about our program. Please take a moment to complete this survey. Your response is greatly appreciated.

**How would you rate the service you received from our GRH trip reservation staff?**

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent

**How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?**

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent

**How would you rate our response time?**

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent

**Overall how would you rate our GRH service?**

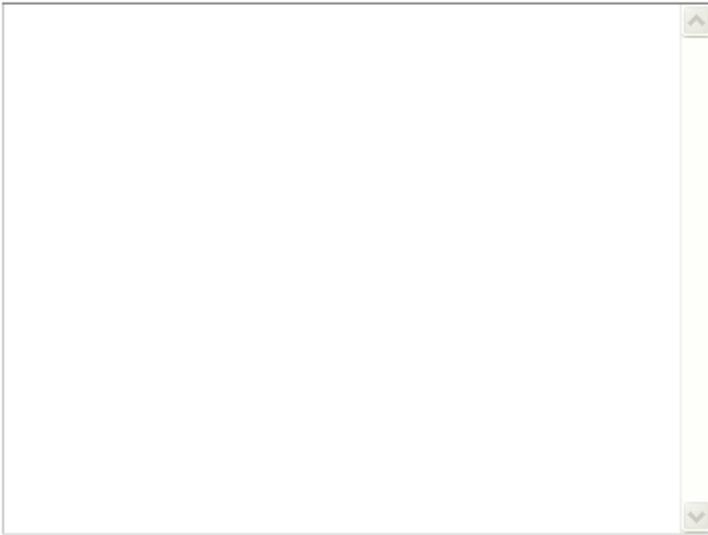
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent

**Approximately how many minutes did you wait until receiving your ride?**

**What was the reason for your GRH trip?**

- Sick Child
- Personal Illness
- Unscheduled Overtime
- Other Emergency

**Please Provide us with any comments about your GRH experience.**



**Do you consider your comments to be a: (check all that apply)**

Compliment



Suggestion



Complaint



General Comment



**Do your comments refer to: (check all that apply)**

Taxi or Rental Car Service

Overall Service

Reservation Staff

Response Time

## Survey Response Table

Survey Questions	Responses	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16
Trip Reservations Staff	E	78%	80%	81%	84%	80%	71%	76%	83%	79%
	G	17%	15%	12%	12%	15%	20%	19%	12%	13%
	F	3%	3%	4%	2%	3%	6%	3%	3%	3%
	P	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	5%
Taxi or Rental Car Service	E	71%	74%	72%	75%	71%	70%	74%	74%	71%
	G	22%	20%	21%	20%	23%	20%	21%	21%	19%
	F	5%	3%	4%	3%	4%	7%	2%	2%	6%
	P	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	4%
Response Time	E	74%	78%	76%	82%	77%	70%	73%	75%	73%
	G	17%	14%	16%	12%	14%	18%	14%	16%	17%
	F	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	7%	7%	5%	4%
	P	5%	4%	4%	2%	4%	5%	6%	4%	6%
Overall Service	E	77%	79%	81%	84%	80%	73%	73%	81%	77%
	G	18%	17%	14%	12%	16%	18%	20%	13%	14%
	F	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%	5%	4%	4%	4%
	P	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	4%	3%	2%	5%

E = Excellent

G = Good

F = Fair

P = Poor

## WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA GUARANTEED RIDE HOME PROGRAM PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

Guidelines are subject to change without notice.

Call 1-800-745-7433 or visit [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org) for current Participation Guidelines.

1. Commuters must be officially registered with Commuter Connections before using the Guaranteed Ride Home service. However, commuters who have not been officially registered may use the GRH service one time, providing they meet all other eligibility criteria. This is referred to as a “one-time exception.” Any commuter granted a one-time exception must officially register *before* additional trips are granted. Commuters must provide the supervisor name and phone number and at least two (2) phone numbers (home/cell and work) in order to register for GRH service. Registered commuters are those who have received an official registration letter and GRH ID card from Commuter Connections. Registered and one-time exception commuters must be carpooling, vanpooling, taking transit, bicycling, or walking to their site of employment at least two (2) days per week **and** on the day they use the GRH service. GRH is only available to people commuting to and from work.
2. **Commuters must call Commuter Connections and receive authorization from Commuter Connections prior to using the GRH service.** Commuter Connections will issue an authorization number to the commuter to approve a GRH trip. **Commuters will not be reimbursed for trips not authorized by Commuter Connections.** After approval, Commuter Connections will make the GRH trip arrangements for the commuter and, if necessary, provide instructions on how and where the GRH transportation provider will pick up the commuter. Commuter Connections is equipped to provide wheelchair accessible transportation as part of the GRH service as needed.
3. Registered commuters may use the GRH program up to four (4) times annually from their official registration date. Commuters who received a one-time exception then officially register with Commuter Connections may use the GRH service three (3) more times within 12 months from the date of their one-time exception GRH trip. The GRH trip credits are non-transferable.
4. Commuters must re-register annually to maintain their GRH registration. Commuters may contact Commuter Connections to re-register and update their registration information or request re-registration through the Commuter Connections website.
5. The GRH program may only be used in cases of unexpected personal or family emergency, unexpected illness, or unscheduled overtime. **Cases in which the GRH program cannot be used include, but are not limited to, the following: previously scheduled medical appointments, trips to the doctor, urgent care center, emergency room or hospital for a commuter that needs medical attention, personal errands, transit service disruptions and/or delays, business related travel, working late without a supervisor’s request, weather emergencies, any type of office or building closings and/or evacuations, natural and/or man-made disasters. If any of the above unqualified cases should lead to a qualifying reason, the trip will be denied due to its underlying cause.**
6. Requests to use the GRH program because of unscheduled overtime must be made *before* the commuter’s registered work end time, **and** a supervisor’s verification will be required at the time of the request.
7. GRH service is available between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except designated program holidays and any planned and/or unplanned Federal Government office closings. **GRH TRIPS MUST BE TAKEN BEFORE 10:00 P.M to ensure that the commuter has received their ride. Designated program Holidays include: New Year’s**

**Eve, New Year's Day, Birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.**

8. To be eligible, a commuter must be physically working in the following areas in the Washington, D.C. or Baltimore, MD regions. These areas include: the District of Columbia, the Maryland counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, and St. Mary's; the City of Baltimore, and the Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William; and the City of Alexandria as well as all cities within the aforementioned counties.
9. Eligible commuters can live anywhere inside **the areas listed in Guideline #8** or in any of the following areas: Allegany, Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot or Washington counties in Maryland; and Caroline, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Frederick, King George, Lancaster, Madison, Northumberland, Orange, Page, Rappahannock, Richmond, Shenandoah, Stafford, Spotsylvania, Warren, or Westmoreland counties, the City of Fredericksburg, or the City of Winchester in Virginia; and Berkeley, Hampshire, or Jefferson County in West Virginia; and Adams, Franklin, or York counties in Pennsylvania. Any residence outside of the above-mentioned areas will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
10. All GRH trips must originate from the commuter's registered work location. Depending on the nature of the emergency, and home and work locations, a commuter using the GRH service may be required to use a taxi, car rental, transit, or any combination of these services to reach their destination point. **Commuter Connections will determine the type of service used and will issue a valid GRH authorization number at that time.**
11. Commuter Connections will pay for one vendor service and/or one transit service per request. If the GRH trip uses a taxi, Commuter Connections will pay for all charges, excluding gratuity, to the destination. **The commuter is responsible only for tipping the taxi driver.** Cancellation on the part of the commuter of a GRH trip may count as one of the four annual trips.

If a transit option is used for part of the GRH trip, the commuter will be mailed a transit reimbursement voucher form. The transit reimbursement voucher must be completed and submitted back to Commuter Connections within thirty days of transit use in order for payment to be made. Please allow 45 days for reimbursement. A commuter's supervisor must sign the transit voucher for any trip granted because of unscheduled overtime in order for the reimbursement to be issued.

If the GRH trip is made by rental car, the commuter is responsible for signing a standard rental agreement, showing a valid driver's license, proof of insurance, providing a credit card number for collateral, returning the rental car within a 24-hour period, and the following charges: gasoline refueling charges, taxes, purchase of insurance (if necessary), and additional rental charges if auto is not returned within a 24-hour period (unless Commuter Connections has given prior approval for additional rental time). The commuter will be responsible for any loss or damage to the rental car.
12. GRH is a free service provided by Commuter Connections at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). COG will use its best efforts to provide the Guaranteed Ride Home in accordance with the guidelines shown above. By requesting assistance from the Guaranteed Ride Home program, the participant in the program explicitly acknowledges that COG assumes no liability for the timeliness of the GRH participating vendor(s) or any accidents that may occur on the conveyance.

01/19/16