



# Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey

Washington, DC Metropolitan Region  
Fiscal Year 2017

**Final Report**

March 20, 2018

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

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



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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 24 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 2017 (July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017). 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.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

BACKGROUND AND SURVEY METHODOLOGY..... 1

SURVEY DESIGN..... 2

RESPONSE RATES..... 3

FISCAL YEAR 2017 SURVEY RESULTS..... 5

COMPARISONS TO PREVIOUS FISCAL YEARS.....12

WRITTEN RESPONSES..... 17

RECAP SUMMARY.....21

APPENDIX ..... 22

## **Background**

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) through its Commuter Connections program, under the auspices of its state 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 support air quality goals. The GRH program’s Participation Guidelines and survey samples used during FY 2017 are provided in the Appendix of this report.

## **Survey 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 FY17 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017) were provided the opportunity to participate in the survey. Emails with a survey link are sent the day following the GRH trip. A small portion of surveys (five percent) are sent through the U.S. Postal Service, as no email address is available.

Both the hard copy and online surveys allow respondents to rate the GRH service and provide comments and suggestions; see appendix for samples. 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**

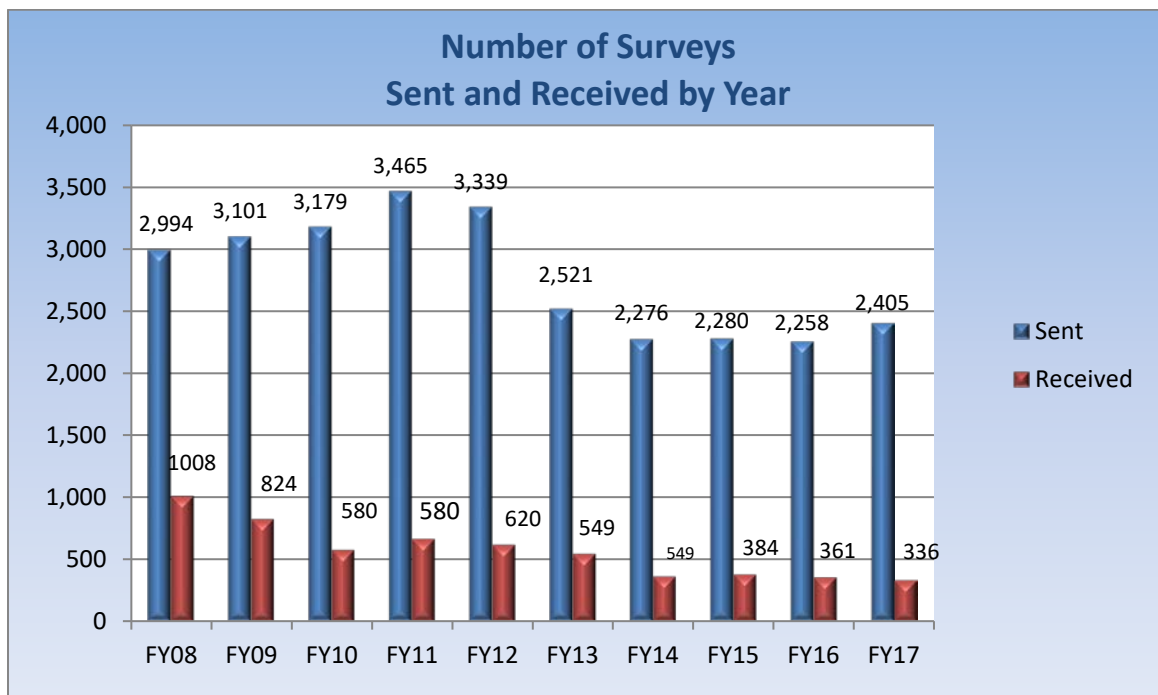
The FY 2017 survey consists of five multiple-choice questions, one fill in the blank and an area for comments. Four questions provide insight into customer opinions regarding various operational functions of GRH and ask respondents to rate aspects of the service by selecting one of four responses—“Poor,” “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

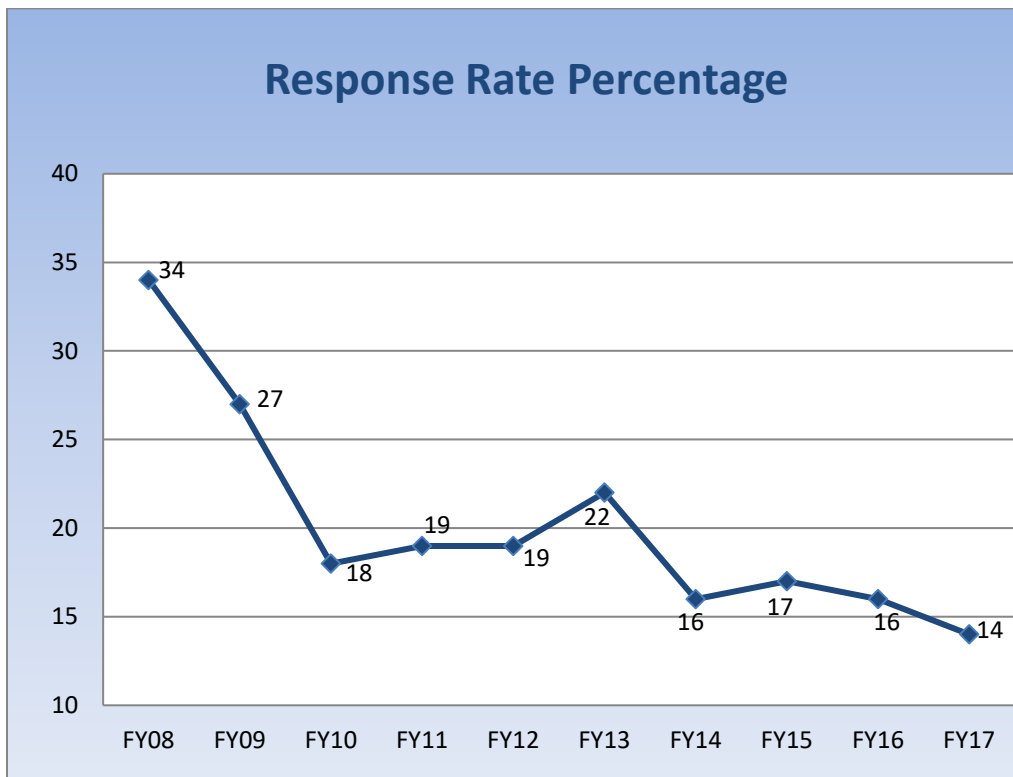
### Number of Surveys Sent and Received Since Program Inception

Of the 2,405 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2017, 336 completed surveys were received.



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

The response rate in FY17 was 14 percent, a two 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 are often seen as spam or end up in junk folders. 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 2017 Survey Results

This section indicates survey results from the 336 respondents for fiscal year 2017.

### Reservation Staff

#### Percentage of Responses Received

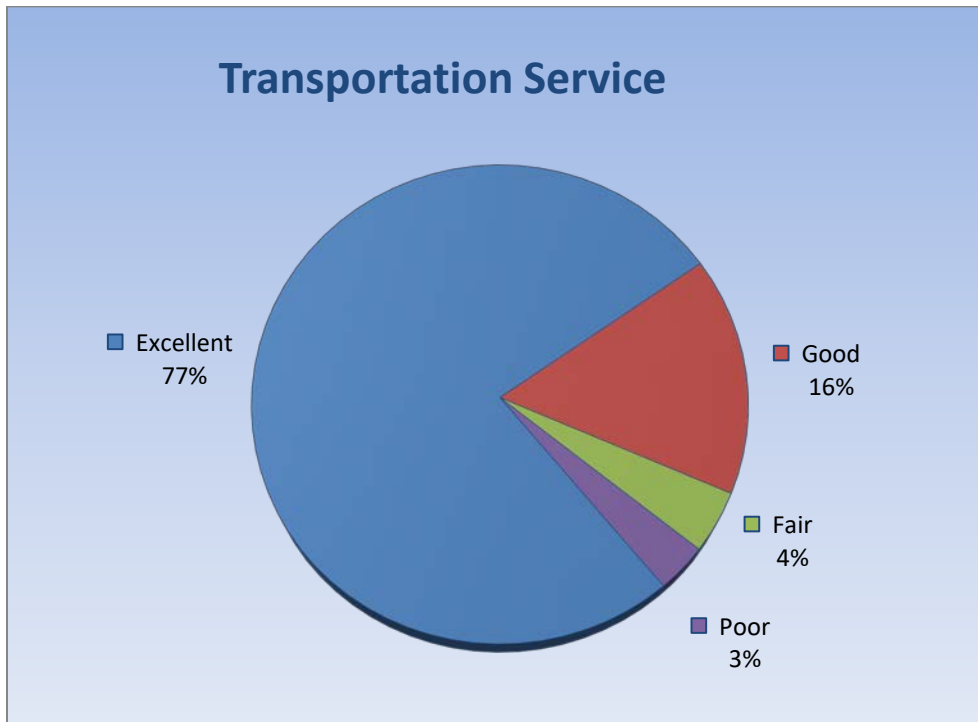
How would you rate the service you received from our GRH trip reservation staff?



## Transportation Service

### Percentage of Responses Received

How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?



## Response Time - Rating

### Percentage of Responses Received

How would you rate our response time?

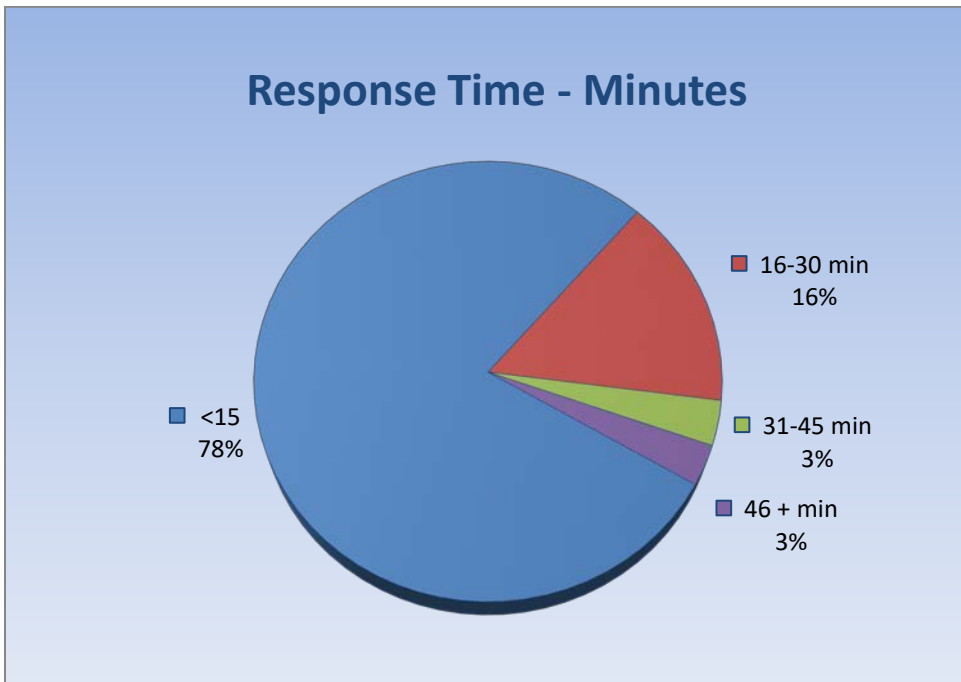


## Response Time – Minutes

### Percentages of Responses Received

Approximately how many minutes did you wait until your ride?

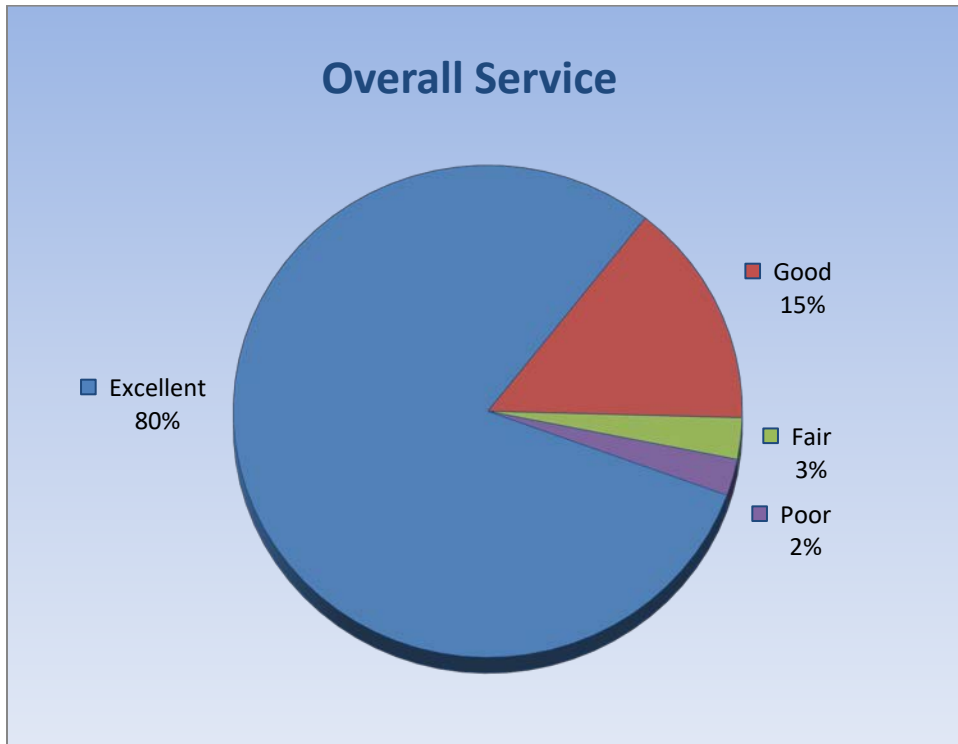
Average response wait in FY17 was 14 minutes, and the percentage of customers with a wait time of 30 minutes or less was 94%.



## Overall Service

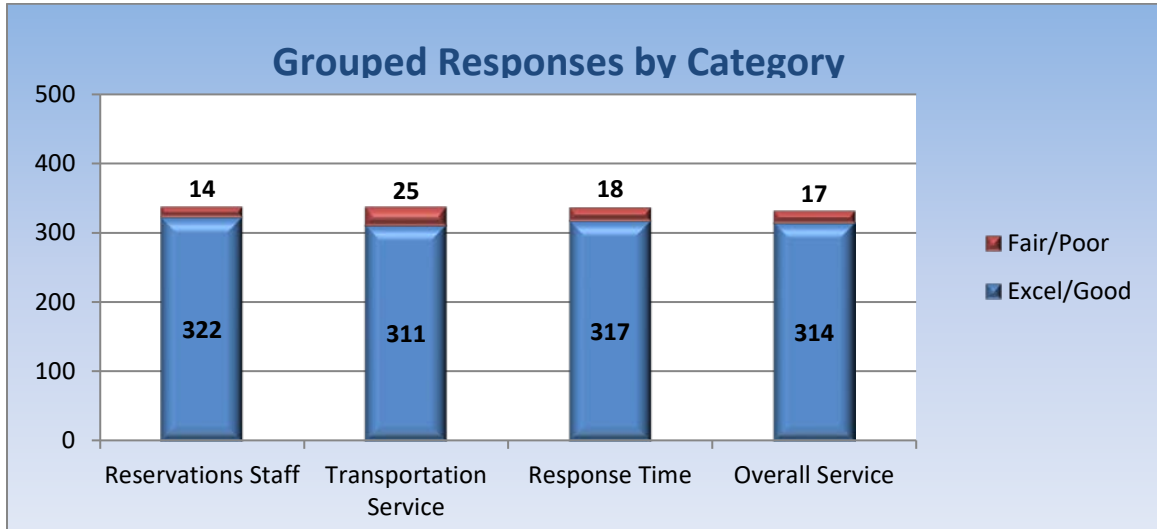
### Percentages of Responses Received

Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?



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

### Number of Responses Based on Combined Satisfaction Levels

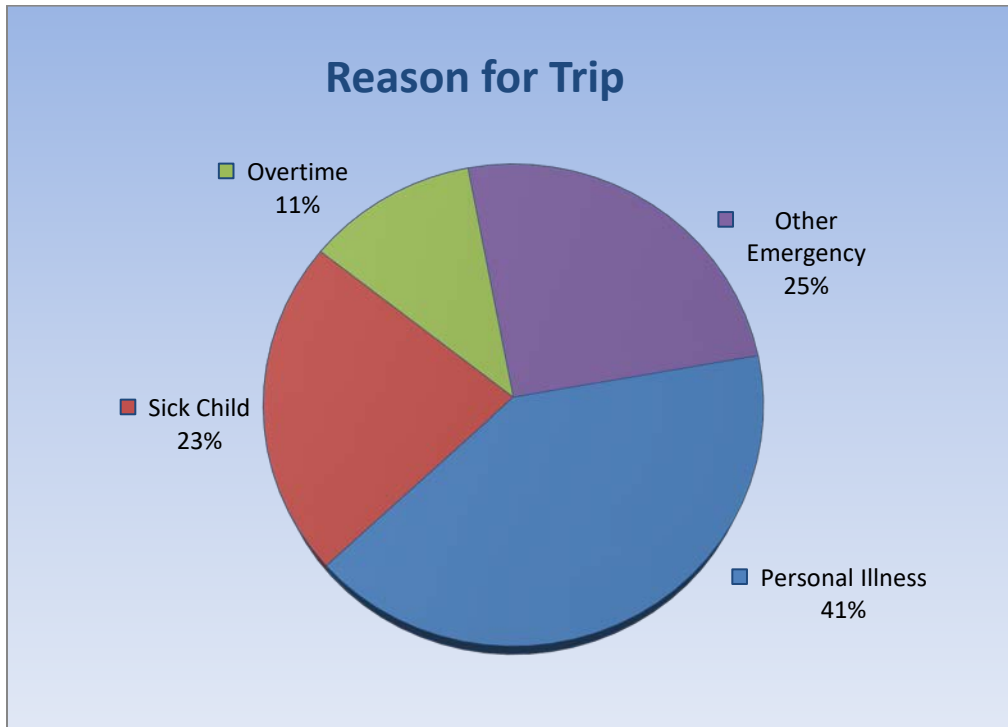


This chart emphasizes the overwhelming favorable ratings (excellent & good) compared to the less favorable ratings (fair & poor). For example, in the first column, 322 respondents gave the Reservations Staff category a favorable rating of either Excellent or Good, noted in the blue area. In contrast, only 14 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

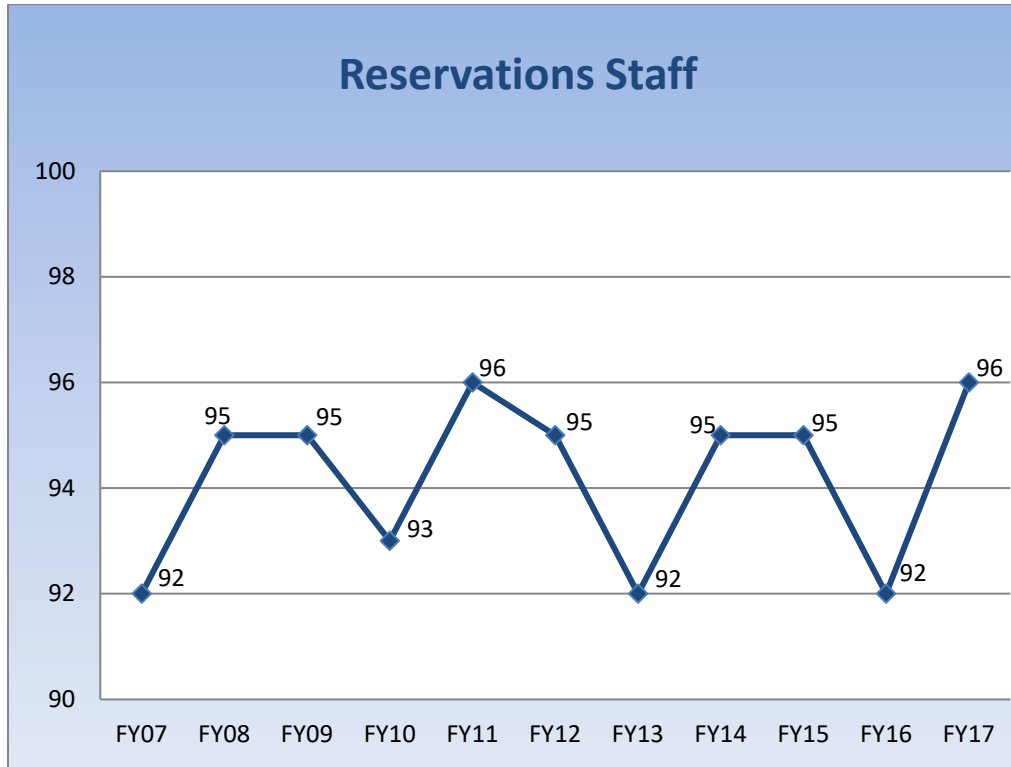
What was the reason for your GRH Trip?



## Comparison to Previous Fiscal Years

### Reservations Staff

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

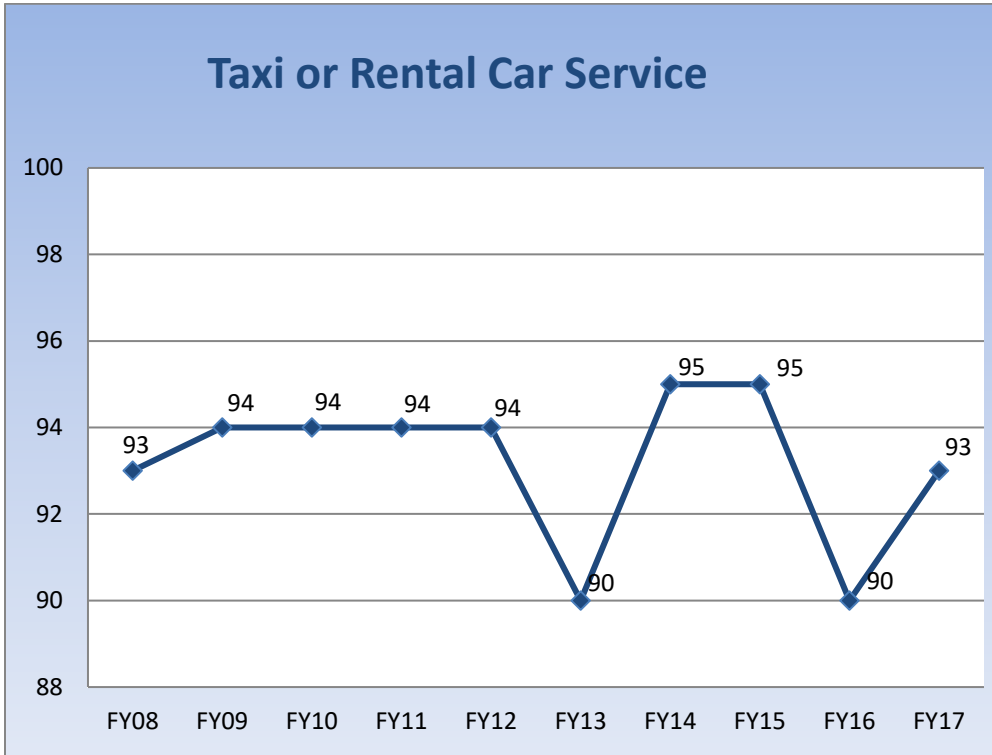


Percentage of Responses with Favorable Ratings (Excellent and Good)



## Transportation Service

How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?

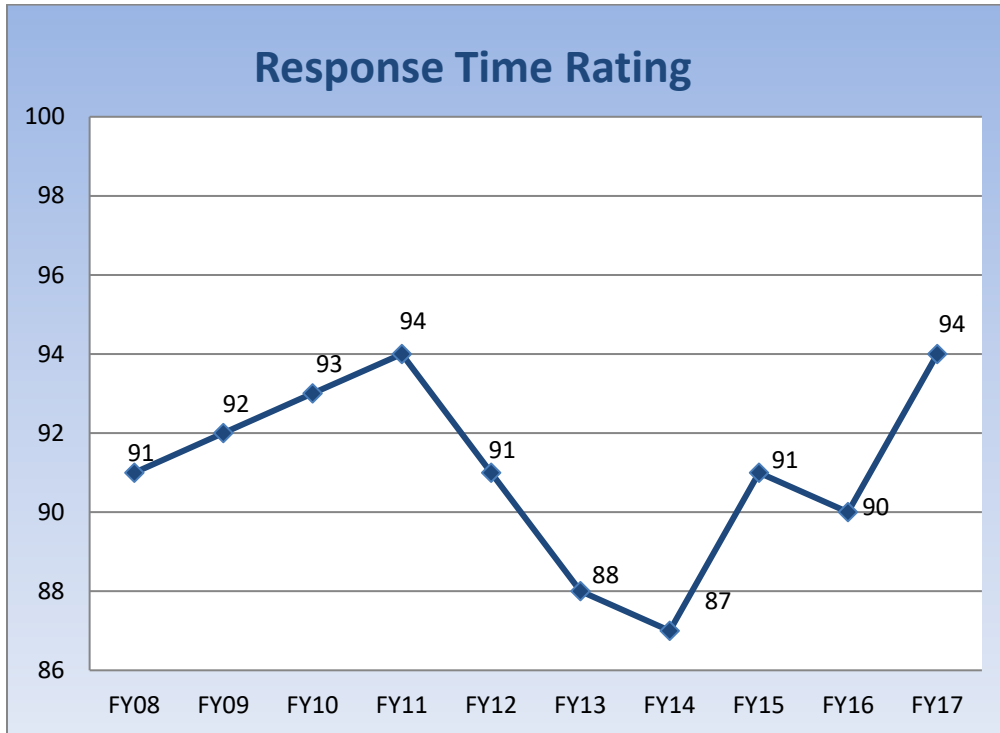


Percentage of Responses with Favorable Ratings (Excellent and Good)

## Response Time

Percentage of Responses with Favorable Ratings (Excellent and Good)

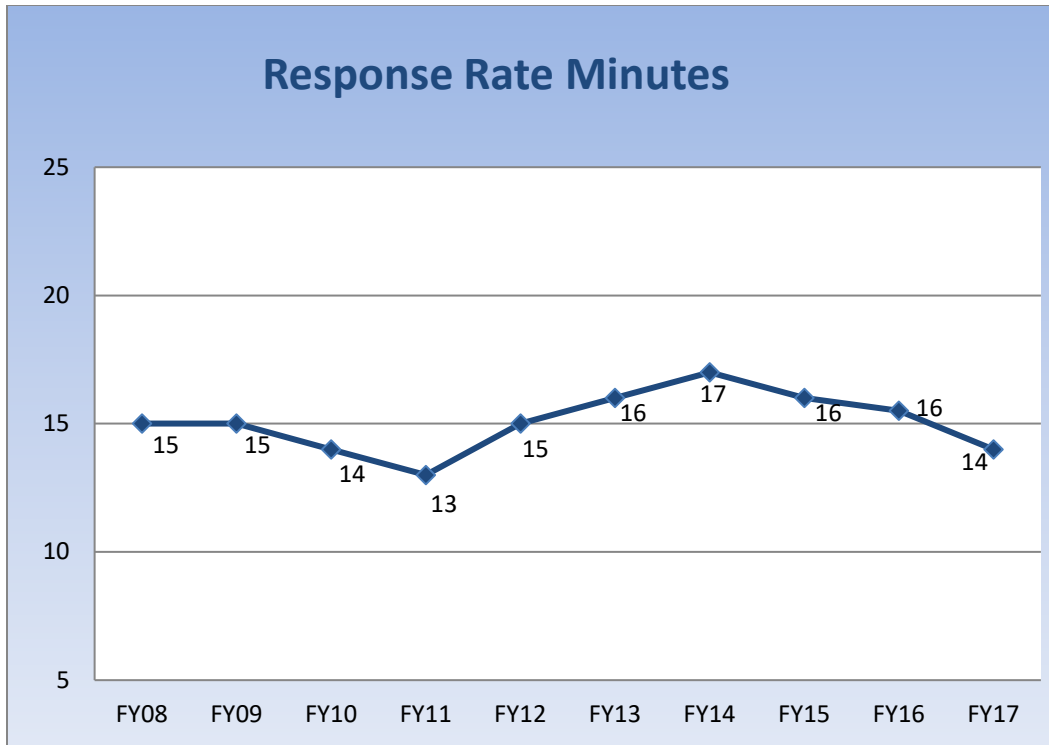
How would you rate our response time?



Percentage of Responses with Favorable Ratings (Excellent and Good)

## Average Response Time – Minutes

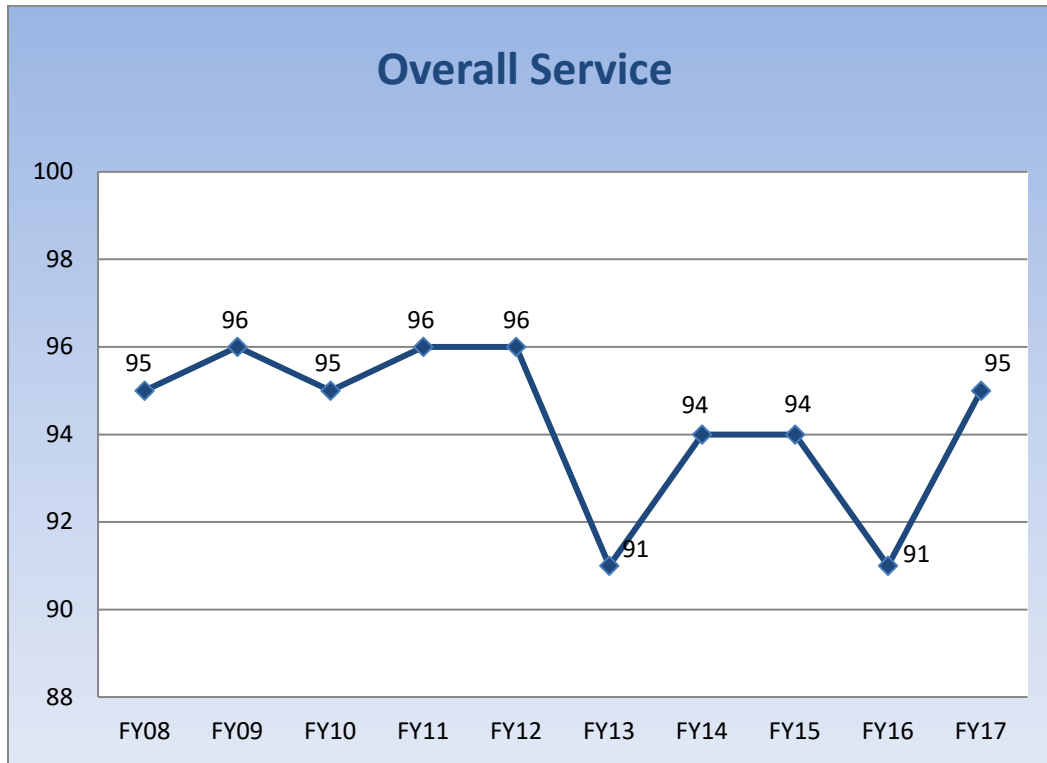
Approximately how many minutes did you wait until receiving your ride?



Percentage of Responses with Favorable Ratings (Excellent and Good)

## Overall Service

Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?



Percentage of Responses with Favorable Ratings (Excellent and Good)

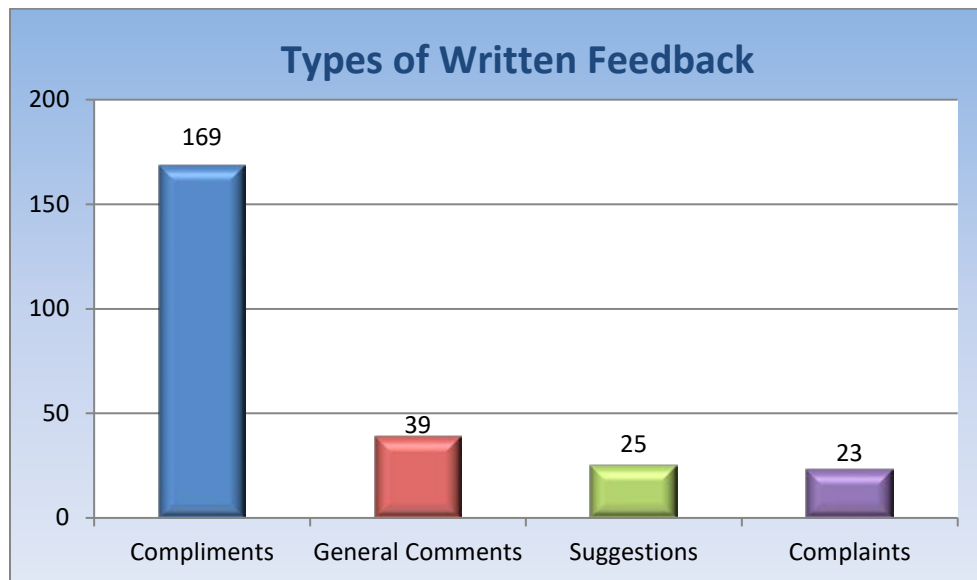
## Written Responses

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 242 out of 336 returned surveys, nearly three-quarters (72%) of survey participants.

Some commuters explicitly listed GRH as the main reason which allowed them to utilize an alternative commute mode. Many of the respondents provided personal stories about how GRH helped them during their emergency situation.

The open-ended written responses included compliments, suggestions, complaints, and comments. Respondents were allowed to check more than one type of comment, hence the below chart adds up to more than 242. In such cases, a respondent may have given a compliment about a specific aspect of their experience, coupled with a complaint about a completely separate aspect. For example, *“The taxi was quick to arrive but the driver was not hospitable”*.

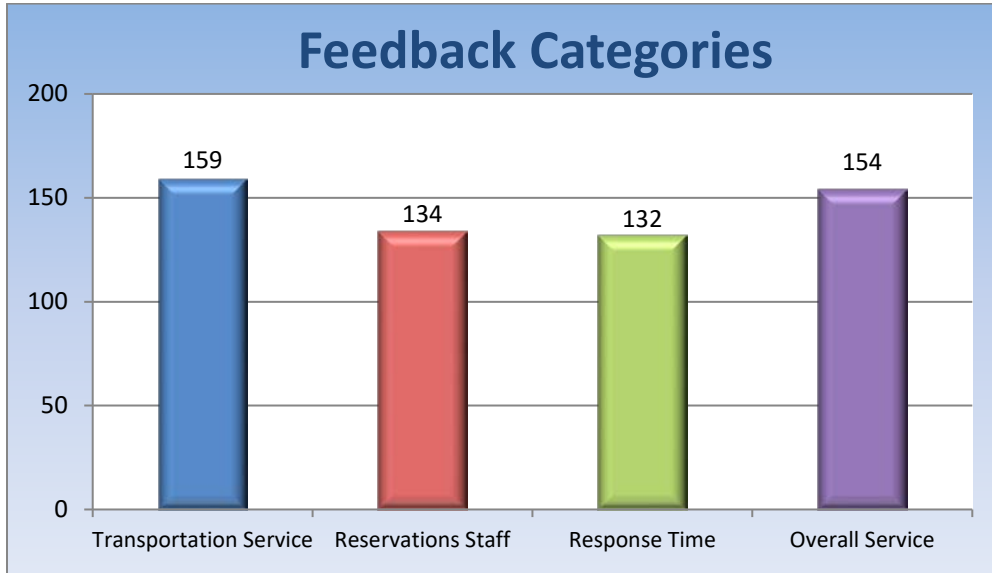
### Types of Feedback



The feedback given was overwhelmingly positive.

### Written Feedback Categories

Over 150 written comments pertained to both Transportation Service and Overall Service; each category was mentioned in nearly two-thirds of the 242 written comments. Over 130 comments were about the Reservations Staff and Response Time categories, referred to in more than half of the written responses.



## **Compliments**

With 169 survey respondents providing compliments, positive feedback was overwhelmingly (70 percent) the most prevalent kind, out of the total 242 written responses received; this measured more than 7 times the rate of complaints. Many were expressions of gratitude for the GRH service, and contained human interest stories about the emergency.

Samples of actual compliments from FY17:

- You are a life saver. I'm so thankful for this service. I don't know how I would have picked up my sick child within the required time her daycare provider mandates.
- Work at the Pentagon, the cab was waiting for me by the time I walked from my desk out to the taxi stand. Great service both in talking with the GRH representative and with the cab driver.
- Very impressed with the effort made to get me home in a flexible and expedited fashion.
- I was very surprised and happy. Definitely told everyone I know to sign up. My husband was in a car accident and I got to the hospital hours before the train would have left Union Station.
- Very courteous and helpful. The service was a life saver as I needed to go to the Hospital.
- I was very impressed with the ease and speed of the service. Thank you for providing this service.
- I was extremely impressed with how smoothly and quickly everything happened. This was especially important considering my stress level due to the emergency I was dealing with.
- I was so pleased with the staff at Commuter Connections and how they handled my emergency and my driver was excellent! He was able to get me to my car safely and fast. Thank you!
- This service is great. I wasn't feeling well and was worried as to how to get home when I remembered I signed up for this service.
- The woman that took my call was very patient and polite. The taxi service arrived in record time.

## **Complaints**

A total of 23 survey respondents provided complaints about the GRH service; 9.5 percent out of the 242 written responses. In some cases (last bullet point below), respondents who complained, also provided positive feedback.

Sample of actual complaints from FY17:

- The driver didn't know how to get to Virginia/I-395; made wrong turns. We made lots of u-turns. Several drivers honked due to his erratic driving, he told me that the vehicle was new and it just "zoomed" as he was operating it.
- The driver didn't understand English. He asked me where I was going. Even though I gave him instructions, he still asked me what exit three times. Every time we passed an exit he asked if this was it and I would reply no. We finally get close to my exit and I tell him that this is the exit. He almost passes it. Then as we bare off on the exit I told him to take a left at the fork. He keeps right.
- Driver stopped for gas and did not have a GPS, resulting in a longer route to my destination.
- The taxi driver started to talk about religion.
- The cab driver was falling asleep. I kept talking loudly. Worst ride ever.
- The ride was convenient; however, the taxicab had an unpleasant odor.



## **Recap Summary**

Of the 2,405 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2017, 336 or 14 percent of surveys were completed. The vast majority, 95% of the survey respondents were pleased with the overall GRH service. Written responses were provided by 72% of the respondents, the overwhelming majority of which (70%) contained compliments. Compliments outweighed criticism more than 7 to 1. For every program category, good or above ratings were given by 93% or more of the respondents. Average response wait was 14 minutes and 94% 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 300 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002-4239

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

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



1-800-745-7433

**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 7. Your name: (optional) _____ 8. Comments: _____ _____ _____
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				

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?**

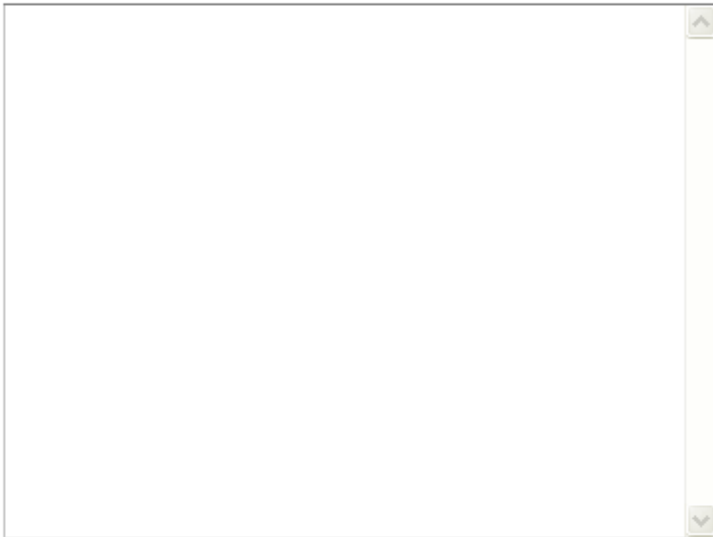
- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent

**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	FY17
Trip Reservations Staff	E	78%	80%	81%	84%	80%	71%	76%	83%	79%	84%
	G	17%	15%	12%	12%	15%	20%	19%	12%	13%	12%
	F	3%	3%	4%	2%	3%	6%	3%	3%	3%	3%
	P	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	5%	1%
Taxi or Rental Car Service	E	71%	74%	72%	75%	71%	70%	74%	74%	71%	77%
	G	22%	20%	21%	20%	23%	20%	21%	21%	19%	16%
	F	5%	3%	4%	3%	4%	7%	2%	2%	6%	4%
	P	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	3%	4%	3%
Response Time	E	74%	78%	76%	82%	77%	70%	73%	75%	73%	81%
	G	17%	14%	16%	12%	14%	18%	14%	16%	17%	13%
	F	4%	4%	4%	4%	5%	7%	7%	5%	4%	2%
	P	5%	4%	4%	2%	4%	5%	6%	4%	6%	4%
Overall Service	E	77%	79%	81%	84%	80%	73%	73%	81%	77%	80%
	G	18%	17%	14%	12%	16%	18%	20%	13%	14%	15%
	F	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%	5%	4%	4%	4%	3%
	P	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	4%	3%	2%	5%	2%

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