

**National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board
COMMUTER CONNECTIONS PROGRAM**

**GUARANTEED RIDE HOME
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY**

**WASHINGTON, DC REGION
FINAL REPORT**

FY 2023 (JULY 2022 – JUNE 2023)

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Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey

FY2023 Washington, DC Metropolitan Region

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ABOUT COMMUTER CONNECTIONS

Commuter Connections, a program of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), promotes bicycling to work, ridesharing, and other alternatives to drive alone commuting, provides ridematching for carpools and vanpools, incentive programs for alternative commuting, and offers the free Guaranteed Ride Home program. Commuter Connections is funded by the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, and U.S. Department of Transportation.

The preparation of this program document was financially aided through grants from the District Department of Transportation; Maryland Department of Transportation; Virginia Department of Transportation; and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

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Program Background

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) through its Commuter Connections program, under the auspices of its state funding agencies introduced the Guaranteed Ride Home program (GRH) in the Washington, DC region beginning FY 1997. In FY 2011, GRH was expanded to include the Baltimore Metropolitan region and St. Mary's County, Maryland.

A "commuter insurance" program, GRH is designed to encourage non-Single Occupant Driver use by providing a way home for qualifying commuters in the case of an unexpected personal/family illness or emergency, or unscheduled overtime when their normal alternative commute mode is not available. Many area workers who consider switching commute modes from Single Occupant Vehicles (SOV) to carpools, vanpools, and transit are concerned about being stranded at work if they need to leave before or after standard work hours unexpectedly. GRH eliminates this concern and encourages alternative methods of commuting.

Commuters working within the region who use alternative transportation methods twice a week or more are provided with six 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 FY23 are provided in the Appendix of this report.

During FY23 there were 1,048 active registrants in the Guaranteed Ride Home program within the Washington, DC region. A total of 564 trips were taken and the number of unique members who took trips was 342. The average number of trips taken by each unique member was 1.6. The overwhelming majority, 95 percent of the survey respondents were pleased with the overall GRH service in FY 2023.

Survey Methodology

The GRH Customer Satisfaction Survey collection period is ongoing throughout each fiscal year. All GRH customers who obtained a free ride home through the program during FY23 were provided the opportunity to participate in the survey. Emails with a survey link were sent the day following the GRH trip. A small portion of surveys were sent via U.S. Postal Service, as no email addresses were available.

The survey allows respondents to rate the GRH service and provide written feedback; see appendix. 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

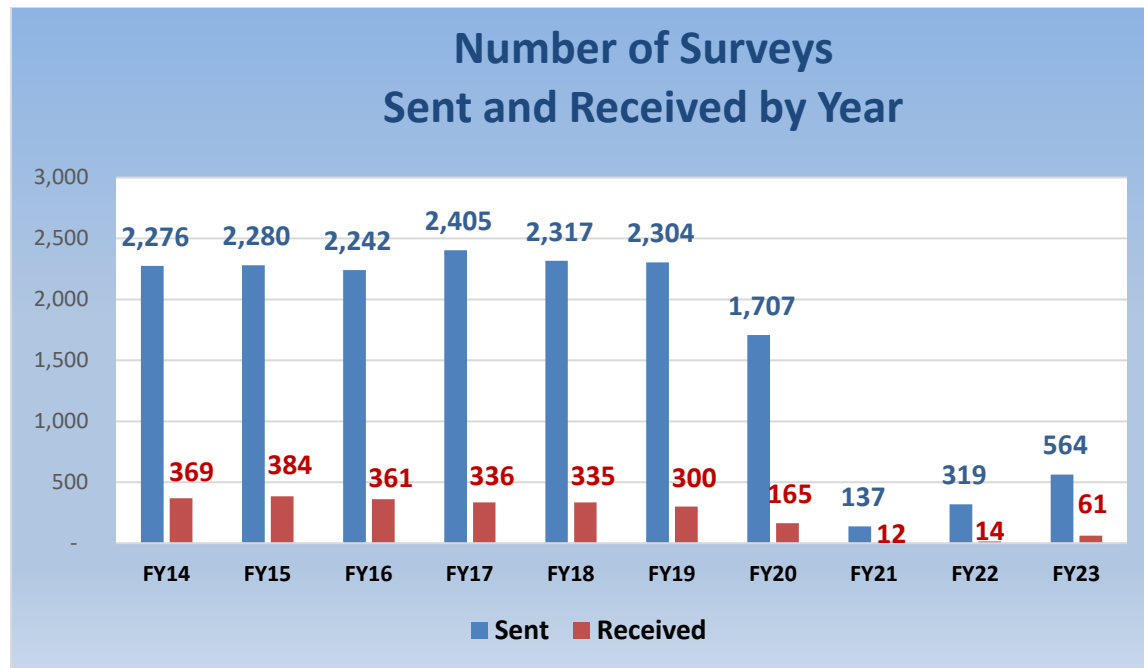
The survey consists of five multiple-choice questions, one fill in the blank and an area for comments. Four questions provide insight into customer opinions regarding various operational functions of GRH and ask respondents to rate aspects of the service by selecting one of four responses "Poor," "Fair," "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 (taxi, ridehailing, or rental car service) and the affiliated organizations (e.g. XYZ Cab Company, Uber, Enterprise Rent-a-car) that provided the trips from the workplace to the destination. The transportation modes used for the GRH trips are selected by Diamond Transportation Services based on the type and severity of the emergency, distance traveled, availability, and customer preferences.

Response Rates

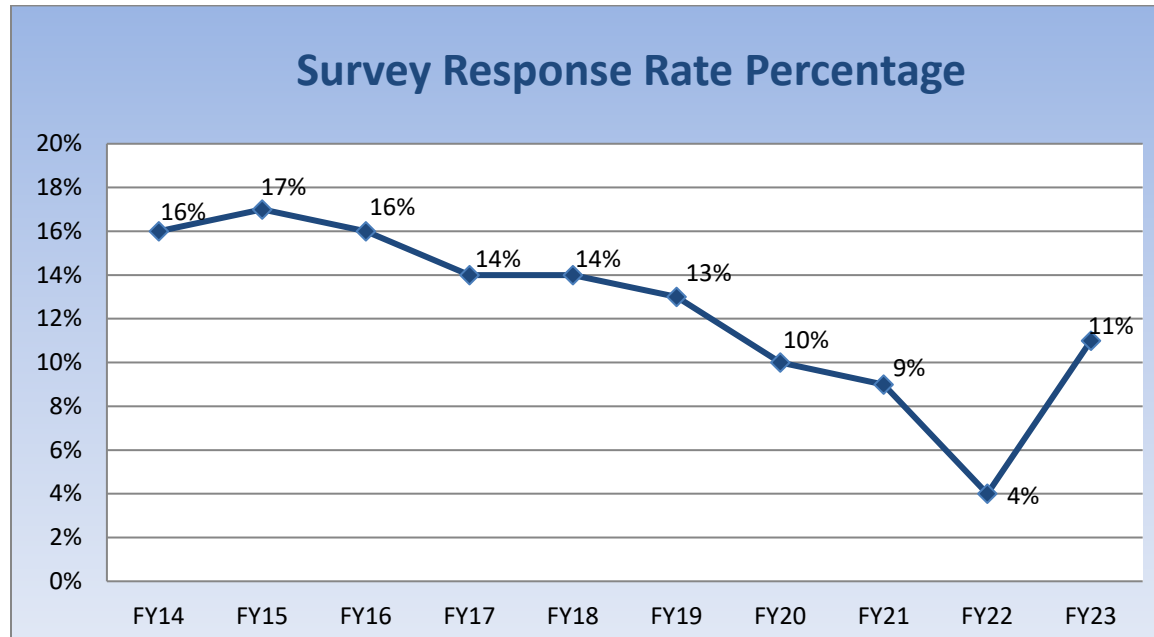
Number of Surveys Sent and Received Past Decade

Of the 564 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2023, 61 completed surveys were received.



Response Rates Percentage – All Fiscal Years

The response rate in FY23 was 11 percent, a seven-point increase over FY22.



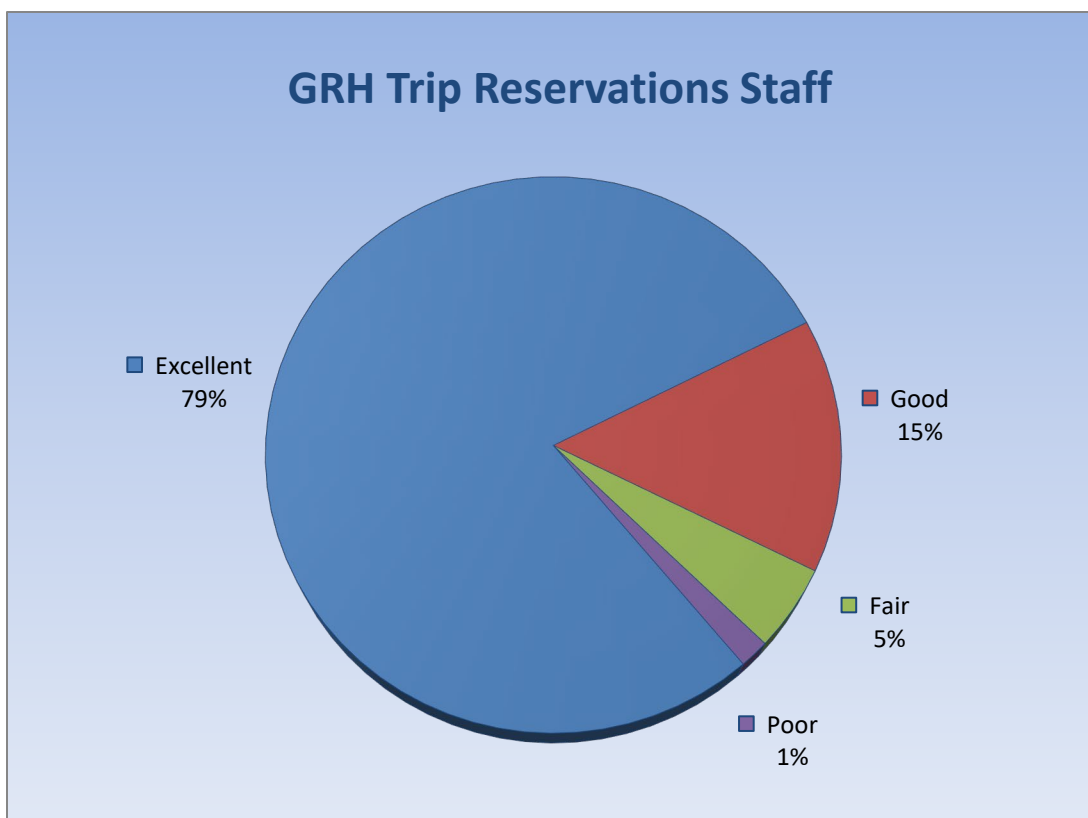
Fiscal Year Survey Results

This section indicates survey results from the 61 respondents for fiscal year 2023.

Reservation Staff Rating

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

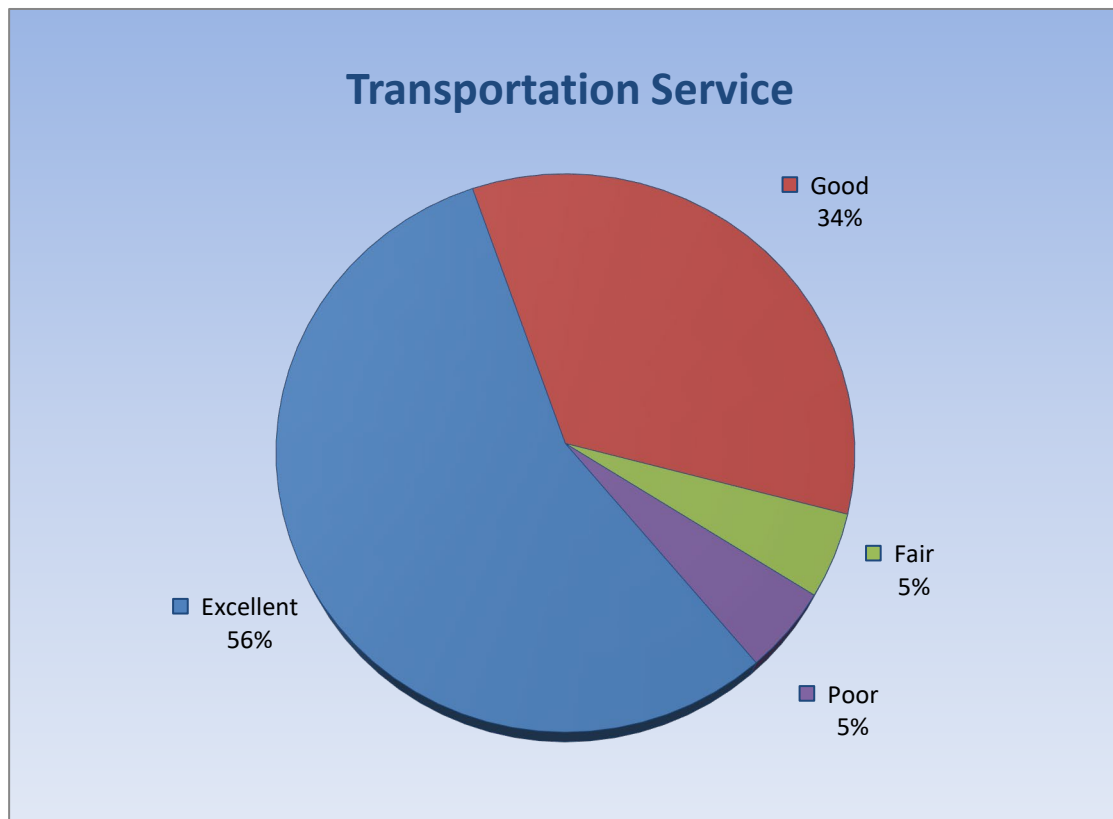
Combined excellent and good ratings equaled 94 percent.



Transportation Service Rating

How would you rate the taxi, ridehail, or rental car service?

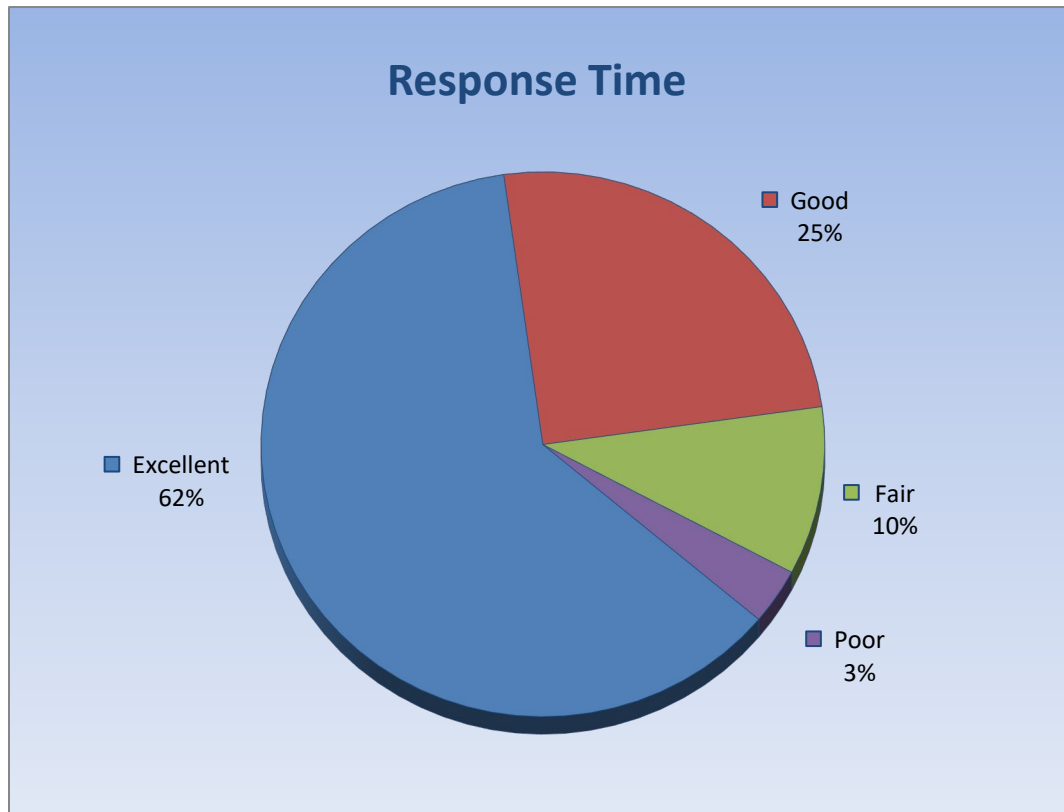
The favorability rating (combined excellent and good) equaled 90 percent.



Response Time Rating

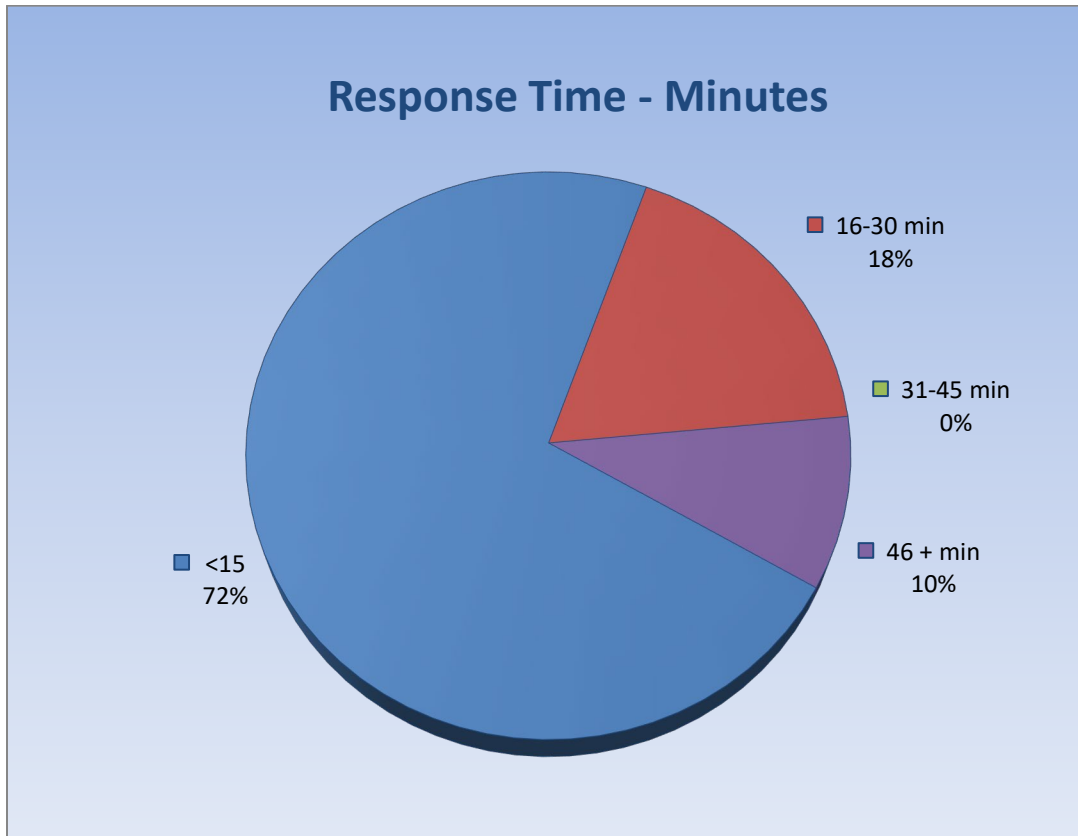
How would you rate our response time?

The favorability rating (combined excellent and good) equaled 87 percent.



Response Time – Minutes**Approximately how many minutes did you wait until your ride arrived?**

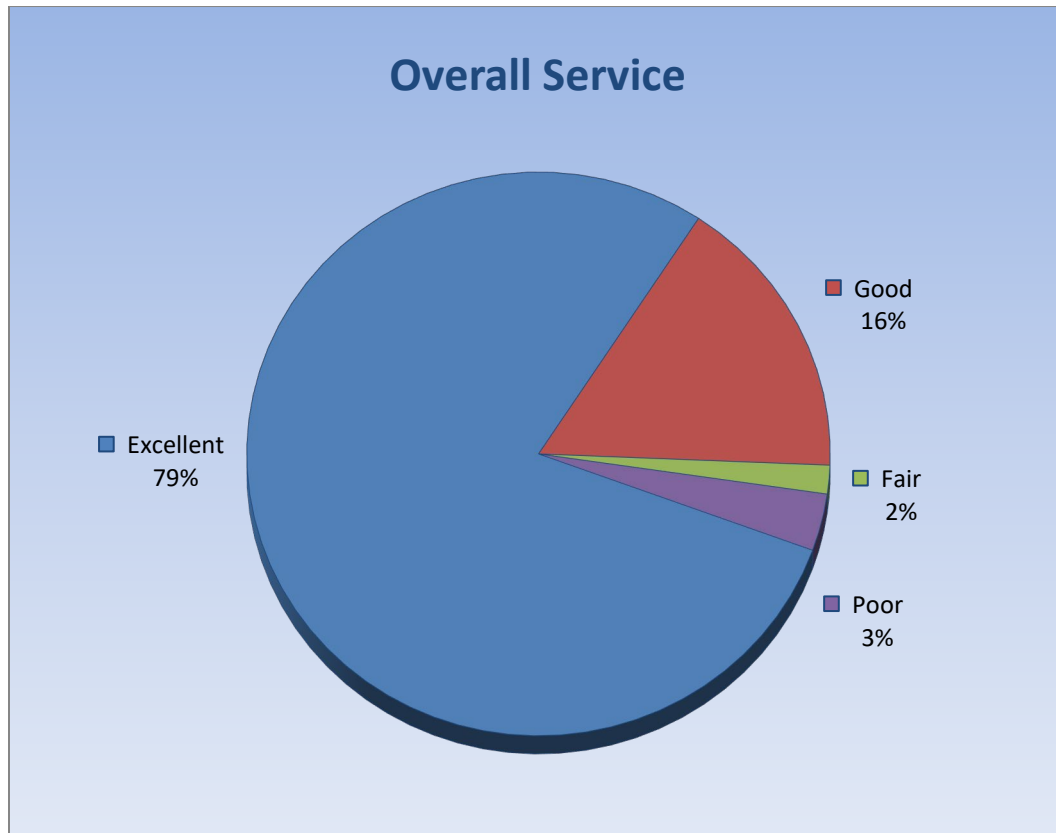
Average response wait in FY23 was 20 minutes and 90 percent of customers waited 30 minutes or less.



Overall Service Rating

Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?

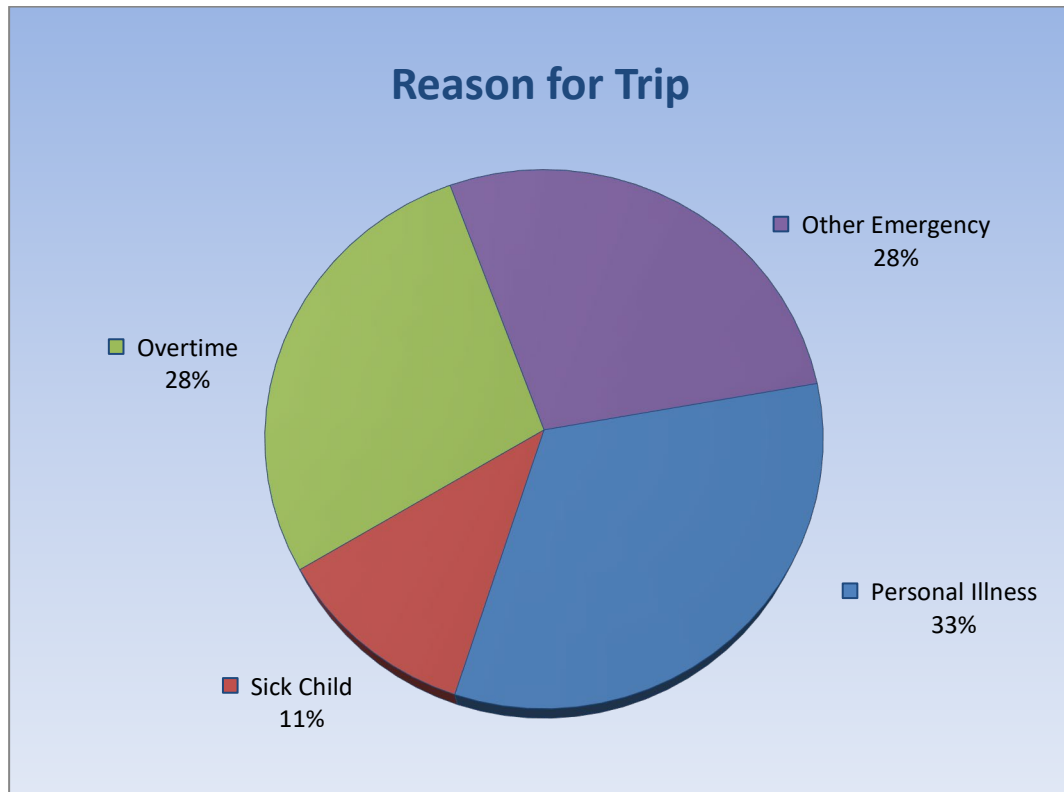
The favorability rating (combined excellent and good) equaled 95 percent.



Reason for Trip

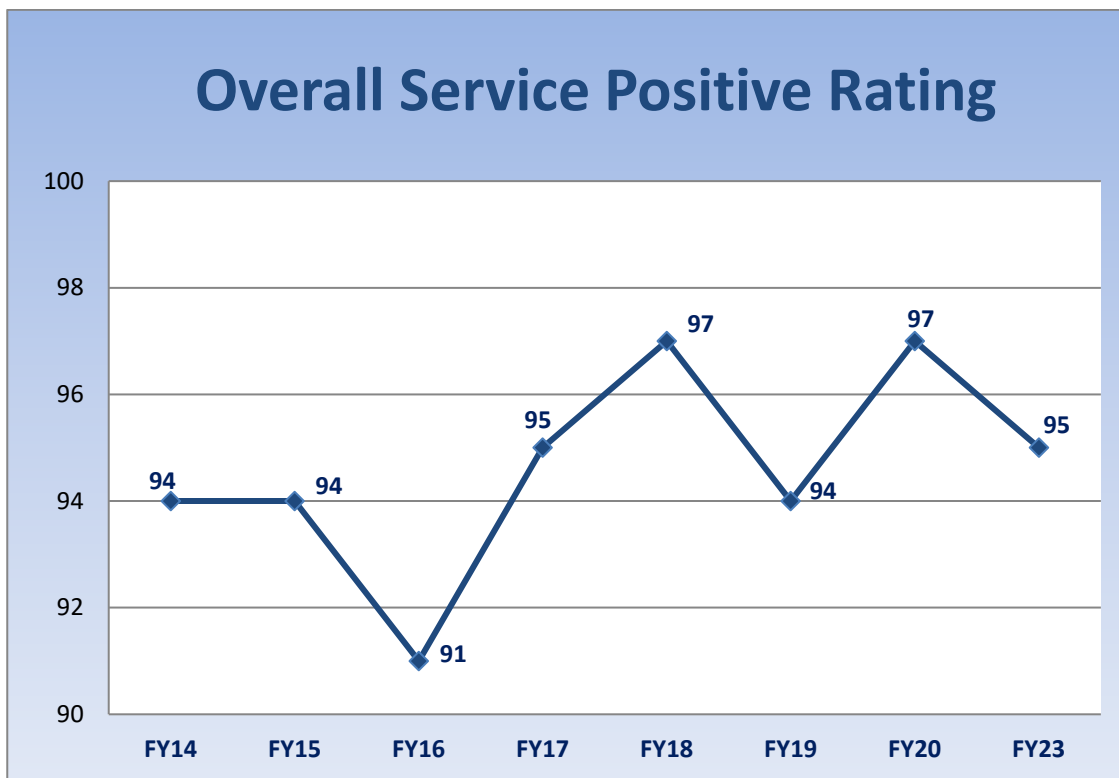
What was the reason for your GRH Trip?

One-third (33%) of respondents indicated “Personal Illness” as the reason for using the GRH service.



Overall Service Rating**Past Ten Fiscal Years****Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?**

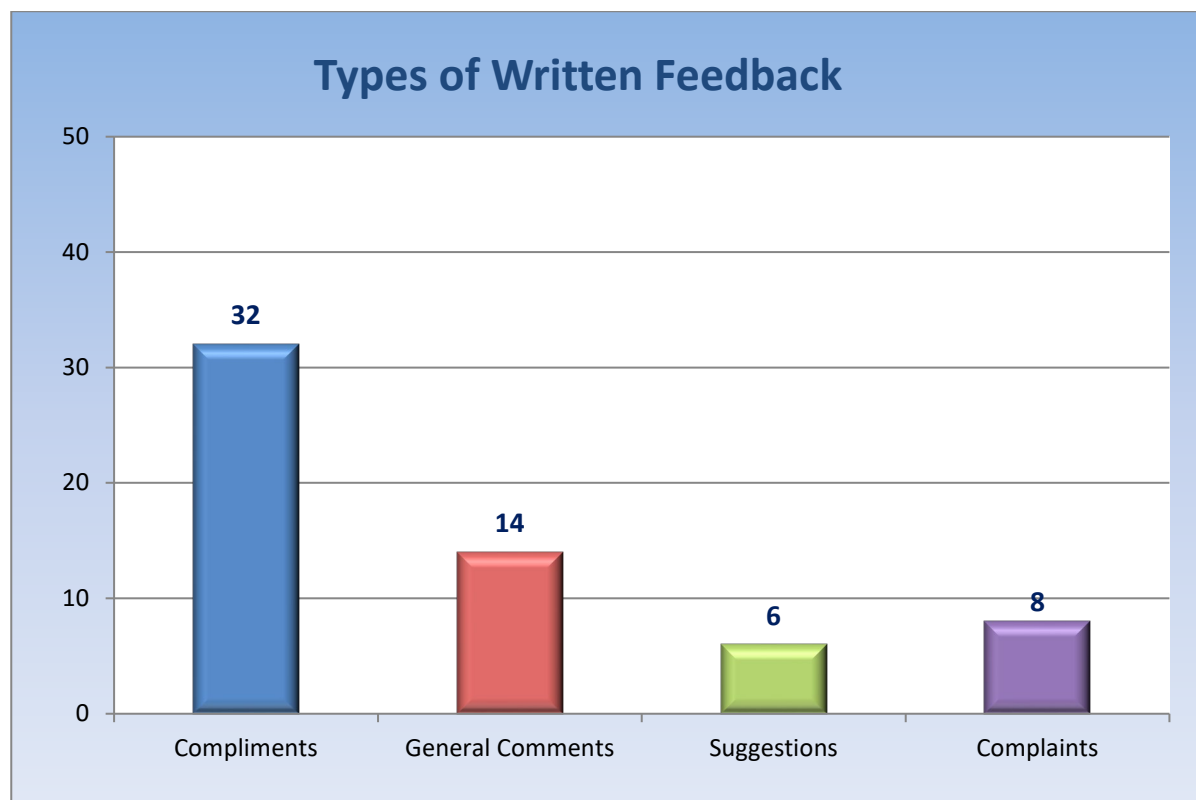
The favorability rating (combined excellent and good) in FY23 was 95 percent, a two-point decrease compared to FY23.



Written Responses

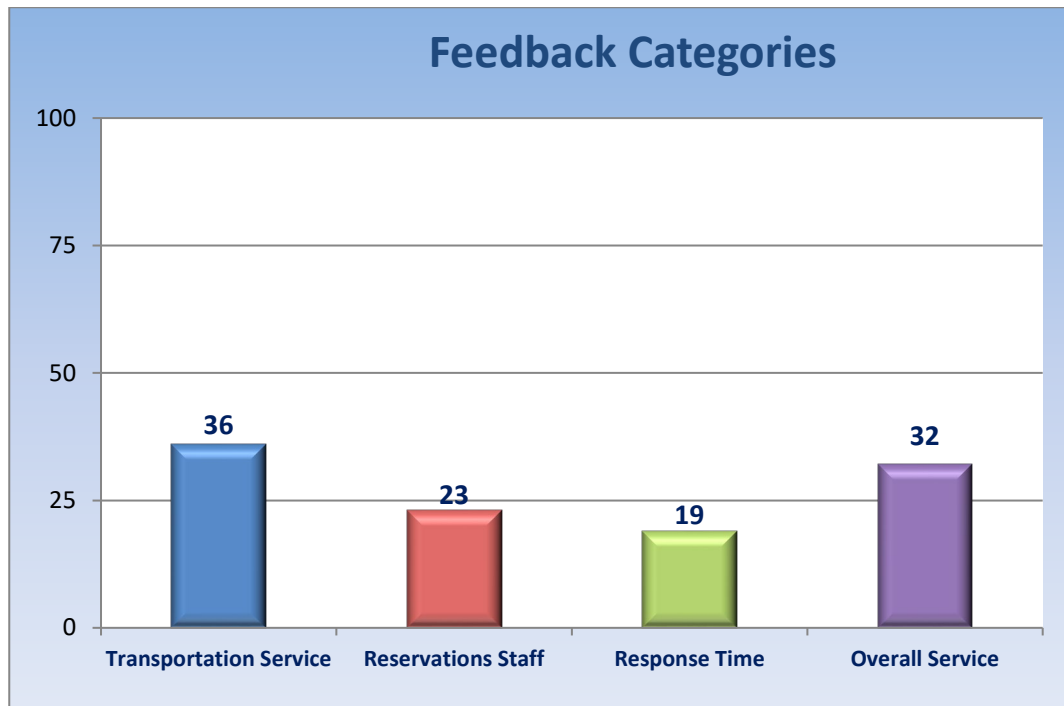
In addition to the multiple-choice questions, survey respondents were offered the opportunity to provide open-ended written comments. The types of open-ended written responses included compliments, general comments, suggestions, and complaints. Feedback is valuable for assessing customer attitudes regarding specific service areas and it helps to gauge the general pulse of the program.

More than half (64%) of respondents provided written comments, 39 out of 61 returned surveys. A portion of the comments received fell into more than one type of feedback. For example, a respondent's comments could contain both a compliment and suggestion, or even a compliment and a complaint. For this reason, the numbers below add up to more than the number of total respondents who provided comments.



Written Feedback Categories

The categories with the most mentions within written comments pertained to the “Transportation Service” and “Overall Service”. Many respondents mentioned two or more categories within their comments, therefore the numbers below add up to far more than the number of respondents who provided comments.



Compliments

A total of 32 compliments were received, making positive feedback the most prevalent type, measuring at an 4 to1 margin against complaints. Many respondents provided personal stories about how GRH helped them during their emergency situation, while others simply expressed gratitude. Some explicitly credited GRH as a reason which allowed them to use an alternative commute mode.

Sample of actual compliments from FY23

- *Thank you for hosting an excellent and very important service. The driver was very professional and friendly, more importantly, I felt safe and his driving skills were excellent.*
- *I couldn't be more pleased with your service! Considering my son was at the hospital alone it meant so much to me to get to him quickly. I can't thank you enough and I'm telling people at work about your service.*
- *The service was fast and efficient, I was unsure how to get home because of an emergency and my boss told me about the program and how great it was. After using it I agree this service is great and works just as advertised.*
- *I am very grateful for this program. My child was sick and the commuter bus would not have arrived for another few hours.*
- *I am extremely satisfied with the level of professionalism and expedited service I received.*
- *The cab driver was pulling up when I made it to the front of my building. Driver prompt and very polite.*
- *My wife and I thank you for this service. I would have had to wait hours for the train to bring me back to the train station. I was able to assist my wife and son when I got home.*
- *Service was great! Wife was taken to the emergency room and I had to get home. Without this service I wouldn't have been able to be there for her. Anyone that commutes to work needs this service! A true lifesaver!*
- *I'm absolutely amazed at how wonderful this experience was.*
- *Sprained left ankle and couldn't walk. Office nurse wrapped foot while I waited for the taxi. Driver was courteous and drove me to my car and assisted me to get in the car.*
- *Excellent option for employees that live far and have few options to get home earlier.*

Complaints

A total of eight survey respondents provided complaints about the GRH service. Most were beyond Commuter Connections' direct control.

Samples of actual complaints from FY23:

- *The cab driver drove aggressively and the car smelled of food when I entered. Overall, the reservation staff made up for the hiccups.*
- *It wasn't the cleanest cab.*
- *There was an unreasonable hold before I was able to connect with a GRH staff member who was on another call. Driver arrived promptly and was courteous.*
- *Mechanical problem, we had to exit the freeway and wait for another taxi. Driver didn't speak English very well which made it difficult to communicate. The response of the service was amazing!*
- *The cab company was calling the wrong number to reach me. I believe the driver wrote down the wrong number when Commuter Connections called him for the pick up.*

Recap Summary

Of the 564 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2023, 61 (11%) surveys were completed. The vast majority (95%) of the survey respondents were pleased with the overall GRH service. At 33 percent, Personal Illness was the most reported reason for using the service. Written responses were provided by 64 percent of respondents and the vast majority contained compliments vs. criticism, more than 4 to 1. For every program category, good or better ratings were given by 87 percent or more of respondents. The average response wait time was 20 minutes and 90 percent 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 May 2019. 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, DC 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!

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, 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.

Happy Commuting!

COMMUTER CONNECTIONS

We'll get you home. Guaranteed.

Sample Survey Response Card



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS.
A SMARTER WAY TO WORK



NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
 FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 10532 WASHINGTON DC
 POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE



METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
 COMMUTER CONNECTIONS
 777 N CAPITOL ST NE STE 300
 WASHINGTON DC 20077-0637



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"/>	7. Your name: (optional) _____
4. Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Comments _____ _____ _____
5. Approximately how many minutes did you wait until receiving your ride?	_____ minutes				

1-800-745-RIDE • www.commuterconnections.org



COMMUTER CONNECTIONS.
A SMARTER WAY TO WORK

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?

Sample Online Survey (con't)

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 Summary Table

Survey Questions	Responses										
		FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
Trip Reservations Staff	E	76%	83%	79%	84%	85%	86%	91%	n/a	n/a	79%
	G	19%	12%	13%	12%	13%	11%	7%	n/a	n/a	15%
	F	3%	3%	3%	3%	1%	2%	2%	n/a	n/a	5%
	P	2%	2%	5%	1%	1%	1%	0%	n/a	n/a	1%
Transportation Service	E	74%	74%	71%	77%	74%	74%	80%	n/a	n/a	56%
	G	21%	21%	19%	16%	19%	21%	15%	n/a	n/a	34%
	F	2%	2%	6%	4%	4%	2%	3%	n/a	n/a	5%
	P	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%	n/a	n/a	5%
Response Time	E	73%	75%	73%	81%	83%	82%	88%	n/a	n/a	62%
	G	14%	16%	17%	13%	13%	14%	9%	n/a	n/a	25%
	F	7%	5%	4%	2%	1%	1%	1%	n/a	n/a	10%
	P	6%	4%	6%	4%	3%	3%	2%	n/a	n/a	3%
Overall Service	E	73%	81%	77%	80%	85%	82%	86%	n/a	n/a	79%
	G	20%	13%	14%	15%	12%	12%	11%	n/a	n/a	16%
	F	4%	4%	4%	3%	1%	4%	3%	n/a	n/a	2%
	P	3%	2%	5%	2%	2%	2%	0%	n/a	n/a	3%

E = Excellent

G = Good

F = Fair

P - Poor

GUARANTEED RIDE HOME PROGRAM PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES WASHINGTON/BALTIMORE METROPOLITAN AREA

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.