

2021 REIMBURSEMENTS FROM THE WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE SERVICES FUND

This report provides an overview of reimbursements from the Wheelchair Accessible Services (WAS) Fund for the 2021 calendar year (January 1st through December 31st). The WAS Fund, which is jointly administered by Seattle and King County, is funded through a 10-cent surcharge on every taxi, for-hire vehicle, and transportation network company (TNC, e.g., Uber, Lyft) ride originating in Seattle or King County. The Fund’s purpose is to help offset the higher operational costs incurred by owners and drivers of wheelchair-accessible taxicabs and for-hire vehicles.

Table 1 describes the categories of reimbursement and the reimbursement rates for Seattle (as established in FAS Director’s Rule [FOR-HIRE-TRANSPORTATION-04-2020](#)) and King County (as established in [FIN-10-3-2-PR](#)).

| Table 1. 2021 WAS Fund Reimbursement Categories | | | |
|--|--|---------------|--|
| Reimbursement Category | Purpose | Recipient | Reimbursement Rates |
| Dispatched trips to passengers using a wheelchair (TPW) | To offset the additional costs of serving passengers in wheelchairs (e.g., extra time required for wheelchair passenger loading and securement, costs associated with prioritizing TPWs regardless of pick-up and drop-off location) | Driver | <p>Reimbursement rates are based on the zone in which the TPW originates and terminates. Urban, rural, and suburban zones are based on zip code.^A If a TPW originates and terminates in different zones, the greater reimbursement rate applies (i.e., if a TPW originates in the urban zone and terminates in the suburban zone, it is reimbursed by Seattle at the \$30 rate). Payments are disbursed twice per month.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban TPW: \$20 • Suburban TPW: \$30 • Rural TPW: \$40 |
| WAV Fuel Costs | To offset the higher fuel costs associated with operating a WAV | Driver | \$15/shift of four or more consecutive hours, disbursed once per month. |
| Off-Peak Shifts | To offset costs of operating during off-peak hours when demand is low but accessible transportation must be available to improve equity of service | Driver | \$45/shift that includes four or more consecutive hours between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m., disbursed once per month. |
| Additional Shifts | To offset costs incurred by vehicle owners for making WAVs available for additional shifts | Vehicle Owner | \$30/shift (lasting four or more consecutive hours) that the WAV is operated by a second and/or third driver if the WAV owner or another driver also completed a shift in the same vehicle during the same 24-hour period, disbursed once per month. |
| Driver Training | To offset the costs of completing one additional WAV-related training course per year, after completing the initial | Driver | Drivers are reimbursed for the cost of the course, plus a stipend for the time it takes to complete the training at the taximeter rate of \$30/hour. Payments are disbursed after drivers complete the course and submit a request for reimbursement. |

| | | | |
|--|---|---------------|---|
| | training required for WAT endorsement ¹ | | |
| New Vehicle Acquisition | To offset the costs associated with acquiring a new WAV | Vehicle Owner | Owners are reimbursed \$6,000/year for six years (\$36,000 total) for new (not previously titled) vehicles, disbursed monthly. Used vehicles are not eligible for this reimbursement. |
| Maintenance and equipment (M+E) costs | To offset the higher costs of purchasing, retrofitting and/or maintaining a WAV (e.g., vehicle conversions, ramps, brakes, axels) | Vehicle Owner | M+E costs are fully reimbursed (with receipts), up to \$6,000/year for WAVs 0-6 years old; up to \$48,000 for WAVs 7 years old; \$3,600 for WAVs 8 years old; \$2,400 for WAVs 9 years old; and \$1,200 for WAVs 10 years old. Payments are disbursed quarterly, after the owner submits a request for reimbursement. |

¹ Please refer to the zip code table and map included at the end of [FOR-HIRE TRANSPORTATION-04-2020/Public Rule FIN-10-3-2-PR](#))

Table 2 displays the total number and dollar amounts of each WAS Fund reimbursement type for Seattle and King County in calendar year 2021.

| Table 2. | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 2021 Total WAS Fund Reimbursements by Reimbursement Category | | | | | | |
| Reimbursement Type | Seattle | | King County | | Total | |
| | Total # | Amount Paid | Total # | Amount Paid | Total # | Amount Paid |
| TPW^A | 9,600 TPWs | \$205,972.40 | 9,116 TPWs | \$287,940.00 | 18,716 TPWs | \$493,912.40 |
| Fuel^B | Please refer footnote "B" below. | | | | 12,010 Shifts | \$180,150.00 |
| Off-Peak Shifts^B | | | | | 692 Shifts | \$ 31,140.00 |
| Additional Shifts^B | | | | | 1,026 Shifts | \$ 30,780.00 |
| Driver Training | 2 Trainings | \$534.80 | 2 Trainings | \$420.20 | 2 Trainings | \$955.00 |
| Vehicle Acquisition and M+E^B | | \$102,689.30 | | \$61,224.21 | 51 WAVs | \$163,913.51 |
| Total | | | | | | \$906,278.40 |

*The COVID-19 pandemic significantly reduced ridership. To ameliorate the impacts of the pandemic, trip minimums for fuel and off-peak shift reimbursements were suspended. In addition, the vehicle age limit was raised from 10 year to 12 years for vehicle acquisition and M+E reimbursements.

^A TPWs that originate in the urban zone are reimbursed by Seattle; TPWs that originate in the suburban and rural zones are reimbursed by King County.

^B Reimbursement costs for these categories are shared between Seattle and King County based on the proportion of TPWs originating in each jurisdiction in the prior year. In 2021, Seattle covered 56% of reimbursement costs in these categories, and King County covered the remaining 44%. If the vehicle is licensed by only Seattle or only King County, reimbursement costs for these categories are covered entirely by the licensing jurisdiction. In 2021, the owner/operator of County-only WAV were reimbursed by King County

To assess the impact of WAS Fund reimbursements on the typical WAT driver or owner, it is necessary to calculate the average reimbursement amount per driver or owner. Average per-driver or per-owner

reimbursements for calendar year 2021 were calculated monthly in the case of TPW and Shift reimbursements, and on a yearly basis in the case of M+E cost reimbursements.

Table 3 displays the average number of WAT drivers, the average number of trips dispatched to wheelchair passengers per WAT, the average number of shifts per WAT and the average reimbursements per driver or owner, all on a per-month basis (except average per-owner M+E reimbursement, which, as noted above, is reported on an annual basis).

| Table 3. 2021 Average WAS Fund Reimbursements by Reimbursement Category (Seattle and King County) | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------|
| Reimbursement Category | Average Units | Average Reimbursement |
| Dispatched Trips to Passengers in Wheelchairs (TPW) | 27.85 trips per driver per month (56 drivers per month) | \$734.99 per driver per month |
| Fuel Reimbursements | 17.87 WAV fuel shifts per driver per month (56 drivers) | \$268.08 per driver per month |
| Off-Peak Shifts | 2 off-peak shifts per driver per month (29 drivers) | \$89.48 per driver per month |
| Additional Shifts | 7 additional shifts per WAV per month (13 WAVs) | \$ 197.31 per owner per month |
| Vehicle Acquisition & Maintenance and Equipment (M+E) Costs | 37 WAVs | \$4,430.00 per owner (annual) |

Average reimbursement amounts reported in Table 3 were calculated in the following manner:

TPW. The average number of WAV drivers per month (owner-drivers or lease drivers) was derived from semi-monthly data submitted to the City of Seattle by the taxicab associations. The average number of WAV drivers per month was 56 in calendar year 2021. The average monthly TPW reimbursement per driver was \$734.99. This figure was calculated by dividing the average monthly TPW by the average number of drivers per month: $(\$163,913.51/12 \text{ months}) = \$41,159.37/37 \text{ drivers} = \$4,430.00$.

Fuel reimbursements. The average number of fuel reimbursements was derived from monthly data submitted to the City of Seattle by taxicab associations. The average number of WAV drivers per month was 56 in the calendar year 2021. The average monthly fuel reimbursement per driver was \$268.08. This figure was calculated by dividing the average monthly fuel reimbursement by the average number of drivers per month: $(\$180,150.00/12 \text{ months}) = \$15,012.50/56 \text{ drivers} = \268.48 .

Off-peak shifts. The average number of off-peak reimbursements was derived from monthly data submitted to the City of Seattle by taxicab associations. The average number of drivers doing off-peak shifts per month was 29 in calendar year 2021. The average monthly off-peak reimbursement per driver was \$89.45. This figure was calculated by dividing the average monthly off-peak reimbursement by the average number of drivers per month: $(\$31,140/12) = \$2,595.00/29 \text{ drivers} = \53.83 .

Additional shifts. The average number of additional shifts reimbursements was derived from monthly data submitted to the City of Seattle by taxicab associations. The average number of WAVs doing additional shifts per month was 13 in calendar year 2021. The average monthly reimbursement per WAV was \$129.44. This figure was calculated by dividing the average monthly additional reimbursement by the average number of drivers per month: $(\$30,780/12) = \$2,565/\text{WAVs} = \$197.31$.

Maintenance and equipment costs. Total M+E reimbursements for calendar year 2021 amounted to \$163,613.51. The average annual M+E reimbursement per WAV owner was \$4,130 ($\$163,913.51/37 \text{ WAV} = \$4,430$). Of the 51 licensed WAV owners (including 47 dual-licensed WAT owners, 1 City-only, and 3 County-only) 39 WAV owners received reimbursements.

Voluntary conversions. Voluntary conversion is a process in which taxi drivers chose to change their vehicle to WAVs. 4 taxi owners completed voluntary conversions in 2021. 3 of the voluntary conversions are dual-licensed and one is licensed by the County only.