

## 2019 REIMBURSEMENTS FROM THE WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE SERVICES FUND

This report provides an overview of reimbursements from the Wheelchair Accessible Services (WAS) Fund for the 2019 calendar year (Jan. 1-Dec. 31). 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 CPU-07-2015](#)) and King County (as established in Public Rule FIN-10-3).

<b>Table 1. 2019 WAS Fund Reimbursement Categories</b>			
<b>Reimbursement Category</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Reimbursement Rates</b>	
		<b>Seattle</b>	<b>King County</b>
<b>Dispatched trips to passengers in wheelchairs (TPW)</b>	To offset the additional costs of serving passengers in wheelchairs (e.g., extra time required for wheelchair loading and tie down)	\$20/TPW, disbursed twice per month	\$20/TPW, disbursed twice per month
<b>Wheelchair-accessible taxicab (WAT) shifts (four or more hours)</b>	To offset the higher operating costs associated with operating a WAT (e.g., higher fuel costs)	\$15/shift of four or more hours, disbursed once per month	N/A
<b>Maintenance and equipment (M+E) costs</b>	To offset the higher costs of purchasing, retrofitting and/or maintaining a WAT (e.g., vehicle conversions, ramps, brakes, axels)	Fully reimbursed with paid receipts up to \$3,500/year, disbursed once per year	Fully reimbursed up to \$1,500/year for vehicles 0-5 years old; \$1,250/year for vehicles 6 years old; \$1,000/year for vehicles 7 years old; and \$750/year for vehicles 8-10 years old, disbursed once per year

Owner-drivers are eligible for all three types of reimbursement. Lease drivers are directly eligible for the TPW reimbursement, while the shift reimbursement is indirectly passed on to lease drivers through a reduced lease cap (i.e., the cost of their lease is reduced by the equivalent of \$15 per shift).

Table 2 displays the total number and dollar amount of each WAS Fund reimbursement type for Seattle and King County in calendar year 2019.

<sup>1</sup> [Seattle Municipal Code \(SMC\) 6.310.175](#); [King County Code \(KCC\) 6.64.111](#).

**Table 2.**  
**2019 Total WAS Fund Reimbursements by Reimbursement Category**

Gov't Unit	TPW		WAT Shifts		M+E Costs		Total Reimbursements
	# of TPW	Amount Paid	# of Shifts	Amount Paid	# of WAT <sup>A</sup>	Amount Paid	
Seattle	12,494	\$249,880	17,835	\$267,525	47	\$104,555.38	\$621,960.38
King County	9,476	\$189,520	N/A	N/A	26	\$32,963.73	\$222,483.73
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,970</b>	<b>\$439,400</b>	<b>17,835</b>	<b>\$267,525</b>		<b>\$137,519.11</b>	<b>\$844,444.11</b>

<sup>A</sup> There are 50 dual-medallion WAT owners eligible for M+E reimbursement. Of the 50 WAT, 40 operate under Yellow Cab, eight under E-Cab, and two under Farwest Taxi. During 2019, 21 WAT owners were reimbursed for M+E costs by Seattle alone and 26 WAT owners were reimbursed for M+E costs by both Seattle and King County (WAT owners may be eligible for M+E reimbursements from both Seattle and King County, though expenses already reimbursed by Seattle are not eligible for reimbursement by King County and vice versa).

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 2019 were calculated on a monthly basis 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.**  
**2019 Average WAS Fund Reimbursements by Reimbursement Category (Seattle and King County)**

Reimbursement Category	Average Units	Average Reimbursement
Dispatched trips to passengers in wheelchairs (TPW)	35.90 trips per driver per month (51 Drivers per Month)	\$717.97 per driver per month
Wheelchair-accessible taxicab (WAT) shifts (four or more hours)	29.73 shifts per WAT per month (50 WAT)	\$445.88 per owner per month
Maintenance and equipment (M+E) costs	47 WAT	\$2,920.86 per owner (annual)

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

**TPW.** The average number of WAT drivers per month (owner-drivers or lease drivers) was derived from bimonthly data submitted to the City by the taxicab associations. The average number of WAT drivers per month was 51 in calendar year 2019. The average monthly TPW reimbursement per driver was \$717.97. This figure was calculated by dividing the average monthly TPW by the average number of drivers per month:  $(\$439,400/12 \text{ months}) = \$36,616.67/51 \text{ drivers} = \$717.97$ .

**WAT shifts.** Total WAT shift reimbursements averaged \$22,293.75 per month in calendar year 2019  $(\$267,525/12 \text{ months} = \$22,293.75)$ . On a per-owner basis, the average monthly WAT shift reimbursement was equal to \$445.88. This figure was calculated by dividing the per-month average of total WAT shift reimbursements by the total number of WAT owners who received shift reimbursements in calendar year 2019  $(\$22,293.75/50 \text{ WAT owners} = \$445.88)$ . The average number of shifts per WAT per month was 29.73 in calendar year 2019. This figure was calculated by dividing the average monthly WAT shift reimbursement per owner by the \$15 per-shift reimbursement rate  $(\$445.88/\$15 = 29.73)$ .

**Maintenance and equipment costs.** Total M+E reimbursements for calendar year 2019 amounted to \$137,519.11. The average annual M+E reimbursement per WAT owner was \$2,925.94  $(\$137,519.11/47 \text{ WAT} = \$2,925.94)$ . Of the 50 dual-licensed WAT owners who may be eligible for M+E reimbursement, 47 WAT owners received reimbursements in 2019. The three remaining WAT owners did not submit any invoices for reimbursement. The cap for this reimbursement in 2019 is set at \$5,000 per WAT per year  $(\$3,500 \text{ for the City} + \$1,500 \text{ for King County})$ .

Table 4 displays WAT operating statistics for calendar year 2019.

Table 4. 2019 WAT Operating Statistics	
Measurement Type	Units
Average shifts per WAT	0.99 shifts per day (seven shifts per week)
Average dispatched trips to passengers in wheelchairs (TPW) per shift	1.23 TPW per shift

The average WAT operating statistics reported in Table 4 were calculated in the following manner:

**Daily shifts per WAT.** The average number of shifts per WAT per day was 0.99 in calendar year 2019. This figure was calculated by dividing the average number of shifts per WAT per month from Table 3 by the number of days per month  $(29.73/30 \text{ days per month} = 0.99)$ . This assumes that the average WAT works seven days per week.

**TPW per shift.** The average number of dispatched trips to passengers in wheelchairs (TPW) per shift for calendar year 2019 was 1.23. This figure was calculated by dividing the total number of TPW in 2019 by the total number of shifts in 2019, found in Table 2 (21,970 TPW/17,835 shifts = 1.23).