



# EMS Services in Cities

A brief introduction

# Overview of Cities in WA

- 281 cities
  - Smallest: Krup (50)
  - Largest: Seattle (762,500)
  - Mean: Raymond (3,090)
  - Average: 2,713
- 65% of Washingtonians live in an incorporated city or town
  - 2022 - 5,156,008 ([OFM April 1 Population](#))

# Authority for Local Governments to Provide Ambulance and Emergency Medical Services

- [RCW 35.21.762](#) — Authorizes the formation of an urban EMS district for cities and towns whose territory is included in two counties, under certain circumstances.
- [RCW 35.21.770/35A.11.110](#) — Provides that upon adoption by a two-thirds vote of the full legislative body, the legislative body of a city or town may authorize any of its members to serve as volunteer ambulance personnel and may receive the same compensation, insurance, and other benefits received by others.
- [RCW 35.21.766](#) — Provides for establishment of a regional fire protection service authority and/or ambulance services to be operated as a public utility where existing services are not adequate.
- [RCW 35.21.768](#) — Authorizes a city or town to adopt: (1) a business and occupation tax on the privilege of engaging in the ambulance business; and/or (2) an excise tax on all persons, businesses, and industries served and billed for the ambulance service owned and operated or contracted for by a city or town.
- [RCW 35.23.456](#) — Provides second-class cities with the power to operate a municipal ambulance service where commercial ambulance service is not readily available.
- [RCW 35.27.370\(15\)](#) — Authorizes towns to operate ambulance services for the town and surrounding rural areas and to charge for such service.

Source: [MRSC](#)

# How Cities Fund EMS Services

- Levy Funds
  - [RCW 84.52.069](#) allows local governments (county, EMS district, city or town, public hospital district, urban EMS district, regional FPSA, or FPD) to impose a property tax of up to \$0.50 per \$1,000 assessed value for emergency medical services via a voter-approved levy.
- Ambulance Utilities
  - Amended in 2005 by Ch. 482, Laws of 2005 (ESHB 1635), RCW 35.21.766 provides legislative authority to cities or towns to establish an ambulance utility or a fee structure that can fund ambulance transport services, as set by the governing body.
- General Fund
- Partnerships
- Billing for services

Source: [MRSC](#)

# Levy Funding

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Comparison of 6-Year, 10-Year, and Permanent EMS Levies

	6-Year or 10-Year Levy	Permanent Levy
Requirements for initial imposition	60% supermajority with validation	60% supermajority with validation
Requirements for subsequent renewal	Simple majority; no validation	N/A
Separate accounting required?	No	Yes
Referendum procedure required?	No	Yes

# Levy Funding Examples

- [Camas Resolution No. 17-016](#) (2017) – 6-year, \$0.46 continuation levy
- [Carbonado Ordinance No. 418](#) (2014) – Replacing a permanent \$0.39 EMS levy with a 6-year \$0.50 EMS levy
- [Washougal Resolution No. 1135](#) (2017) – 6-year, \$0.50 levy, replacing an EMS levy that expired a year earlier
- [Graham Fire & Rescue Resolution No. 859](#) (2016) – Permanent, \$0.50 EMS levy with referendum provision, replacing previously approved 6-year levy
- [Wilkeson Ordinance No. 1017.06](#) (2017) – Permanent, \$0.50 EMS levy with referendum provision, replacing an expiring 6-year levy

# Ambulance Utility

- [RCW 35.21.766](#) provides legislative authority to cities or towns to establish an ambulance utility or a fee structure that can fund ambulance transport services, as set by the governing body.



Source: JLARC Emergency Medical Services survey.

# Ambulance Utility

City	Monthly Rate	Established	Revised
Aberdeen	\$12.88 for all users	1991	Jan 2007
Bridgeport	\$3.00 for all users	2001	Not revised
Hoquiam	\$9.58 for all users	1975	Jan 2006
Mercer Island	\$1.83 for residents	1990	May 2006
Montesano	\$9.15 for all users	1970's	Dec 2005
Moses Lake	\$3.58 for all users	2001	Jan 2007
Pasco	\$3.00 for all users	1979	Jan 2007
Port Angeles	\$3.75 for residents	1983	Sept 2005
Richland	\$3.16 for all users	1976	July 2006
Sunnyside	\$3.37 for all users	1989	Jan 2004