



Fourth Quarter 2021 Edition

eNEWSLETTER

NEED TRAINING?

Call our office to schedule training for your agency at 573.341.6155.

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The Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) was initiated in 1986 by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to provide resources, training and technical assistance to rural transit providers. The Missouri RTAP Center is located at Missouri University of Science and Technology (Missouri S&T) in Rolla. Since April 2012, Missouri S&T has been contracted by MoDOT to manage the RTAP program.

**National
RTAP**
Rural Transit Assistance Program



creating rural transit solutions through technical assistance, partner collaboration and FREE training.

National RTAP is a program of the Federal Transit Administration dedicated to

LETTER FROM THE MANAGER



Heath Pickerill
Missouri RTAP Manager

CONTACT INFORMATION

MISSOURI RTAP

710 University Drive, Suite 121
Rolla, MO 65401

Phone: 1.573.341.6155

Fax: 1.573.341.7245

Email: mortap@mst.edu

Web: mortap.com

MISSOURI RTAP/LTAP STAFF

Heath Pickerill

Director

Kristi Barr

Program Coordinator - LTAP

Grant Accountant - RTAP

Doreen Harkins

Administrative Assistant - LTAP

Program Specialist - RTAP

Shelby O'Keefe

Graphic Designer

John Rice

Contract Instructor

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DEAR TRANSIT FRIENDS,

Happy holidays from the entire Missouri RTAP staff. We made it through another unusual and, at times, challenging year. We appreciate being able to continue supporting and training Missouri's rural transit agencies. The semester is quickly wrapping up and the students will be heading home for the holidays. We are looking forward to our time away too during the Holiday Break when campus closes from Christmas to New Years. Please keep in mind our office closure during this time when sending scholarship reimbursements or contacting Doreen with training requests.

Because travel was again limited this past year, many transit agencies did not attend conferences and out-of-state meetings like normal. Therefore, we have Scholarship Reimbursement funds available to purchase training and other related equipment as well as cover costs for other training opportunities outside of what we offer. For example, OATS utilized scholarship funds to purchase securement equipment, training mannequins for passenger assistance training, and American Red Cross CPR cards. SMTS was able to purchase a wheelchair scooter. In addition, both agencies have taken advantage of funding to train their management staff. Both SMTS and OATS participated in the virtual CTAA Fundamental Intensive Training (FIT) for Success 2021. SMTS participated in Passenger Service and Safety (PASS) virtual training along with the online courses Transit Marketing Tools for This New World and Financial Management for Transit Agencies. I encourage you to contact the RTAP office with questions to see if equipment and training you need qualify.

As the year draws to a close, all of us with Missouri RTAP remain focused on planning for next year. Remember we are here to assist in any manner possible. Please send your 2022 training requests to Doreen if you have not done so already. Additionally, John Rice has been busy updating courses with new videos and reviewing course content. The entire RTAP staff hope you, your employees, and families continue to stay safe and healthy. Everyone with Missouri RTAP wants to wish all our transit friends a very safe and happy holiday season.

Season's Greetings!

Heath Pickerill, Missouri RTAP Manager

OATS NORTHEAST REGION

The Northeast Region covers 16 counties including: Adair, Clark, Knox, Lewis, Lincoln, Macon, Marion, Monroe, Montgomery, Pike, Ralls, Randolph, Schuyler, Scotland, Shelby and Warren.

The region provides 500-600 trips daily in these 16 counties. They have a 95% on-time rate in their 16 county area, which is outstanding in the transit industry. Before the COVID pandemic the region provided 195,000 one-way trips each year. Service is building back up, but still not where it was before the pandemic. Transportation to work and medical appointments make up the majority of the NE Region service requests. Drivers cover more than 2.5 million miles in the NE Region annually.

The very-popular Intercity Routes take people from the region to Columbia and St. Louis during the week for long-distance medical appointments and other needs.



Sheree Webb presenting an award to Stella Patinio

the office and out on the road, who whole-heartedly believe in OATS mission of enhancing quality of life by providing safe, caring & reliable transportation services. She also wants to recognize Operation Managers, Trevor White and Samantha Ratliff, who play an integral part in keeping daily operations running smoothly!

The Northeast Region employs 80 drivers and 11 office staff. In past years they have had over 100 drivers, but due to the pandemic and other reasons, numbers are lower than normal. OATS Transit still has their numerous driver openings in this region, as well as many other areas of the state. The driving staff is made up of 55 part-time drivers and 25 full-time drivers.



**Trevor White & Samantha Ratliff
NE Ops Managers**

With the help of local support, the Region has been able to offer more service for the City of Kirksville (KirkTran), City of Macon funded by the Macon Chamber of Commerce, City of Moberly (Magic City Express) and Troy/Lincoln County (The Linc). Additionally, the NE Region contracts with numerous individuals, and agencies to provide service to their clients.

Sheree Webb is the Regional Director. She has worked for OATS Transit since August 1979. Sheree attributes her region's continued

success to dedicated employees both in



The Linc Rider, Jeff Reed

**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED**

DEAR TRANSIT FRIENDS!

THANK YOU Sheree Webb for volunteering and submitting awesome pictures that reflect your agency in service to the community. We want our transit agencies on future covers and would appreciate your help. We will need a cover for the 1st Quarter 2022. If any agencies are interested please contact Doreen Harkins, 573.341.6155 or harkinsd@mst.edu.



TRANSIT AGENCIES PIVOT TO EQUITY AND RECOUP RIDERSHIP

TRANSIT AGENCIES FIND THAT PROVIDING MORE EQUITABLE SERVICE BOOSTS RIDERSHIP

Most U.S. public transit agencies still find themselves staring at a ridership hole even as the economy bounces back from the pandemic lockdowns. As a result, some agencies are rethinking how and where they provide service. And, as Jake Blumgart reports in *Governing*, those agencies are finding that focusing on transit equity reaps ridership rewards.

A recent study prepared for the American Public Transportation Association by researchers at the Urban Institute and the Center for Neighborhood Technology examined the ways transit agencies are responding to the pandemic-induced drop in ridership. The researchers surveyed 74 mass transit systems — 73 in the U.S. and one in the Canadian province of Alberta — and chose five systems to study closely: Denver, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Richmond, Va., and Spokane, Wash.

Of those five, the Greater Richmond Transit Corporation (GRTC) in Virginia has had the greatest success in recovering lost ridership, and it did so by shifting where and how it provides service. The agency eliminated fares, as many agencies did in order to protect vehicle operators. But it had also increased the frequency of service to lower-income and denser communities before the pandemic hit. After its onset, GRTC also cut service on suburban commuter routes where riders were largely working remotely. As a result, GRTC managed to recover almost all of the ridership it had lost in the wake of the pandemic.

“The other agencies had not done that kind of change in advance of the pandemic, which may explain why they experienced such significant declines,” says

Yonah Freemark of the Urban Institute, one of the study’s co-authors.

GRTC is also planning to make free transit permanent if it can, something it could do because fares make up a small percentage of its operating budget. [Editor’s note: See “The Bus Should Be Free” for more on GRTC.] “If I can find a way to fill that [\$5 million hole] and still expand service, then we might be able to do this permanently,” Julie Timm, CEO of GRTC, told *Governing* in August. “We’re going to test it out and do a proof of concept for a couple of years. But if we can’t find the money to fill it, if there is no appetite for finding the funds to preserve this, then fares will come back.”

But even cities that can’t eliminate fares are also planning to focus on providing more equitable service. Pittsburgh’s Port Authority of Allegheny County, for instance, boosted service more than it cut it in neighborhoods where households earned less than \$25,000 a year, neighborhoods with a high percentage of households without vehicles and those with a high percentage of residents of color.

And Streetsblog USA reports that 88 percent of U.S. transit agencies expect that historically disenfranchised riders will be their primary customers going forward. Of the 74 agencies surveyed for the study, nearly half plan to increase neighborhood-to-neighborhood service post-pandemic, and another 37 percent plan to beef up off-peak service in order to respond to changing ridership patterns.

Resource: <https://nextcity.org/urbanist-news/transit-agencies-pivot-to-equity-and-recoup-ridership>



HOW TO MAINTAIN TRANSIT COVERAGE DURING A DRIVER SHORTAGE

The nationwide driver shortage is forcing transit providers to be more creative with their resources. Learn why transitioning from fixed to on-demand service is proving to be a long-term solution for agencies of all sizes.

From Philly to Portland, whether it's transit operators or school bus drivers, the United States is currently facing an historic driver shortage. Add to this the fact that transit ridership is returning, but still nowhere near pre-COVID levels, and it's clear that everyone working in the public transit space must continue to be efficient with the few operational resources we have at our disposal. For many agencies, the shortage has unfortunately resulted in a scramble to modify schedules, increase headways, or even remove low-ridership routes. But, as it turns out, cutting service isn't the only way out.

Serving more riders with fewer vehicles.

In the UK, the town of Sevenoaks, just south of London, saw a dramatic 90% drop in ridership at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Local transport operator GoCoach was already planning on implementing an on-demand service to complement fixed route buses and support first-and-last mile trips to and from the local train station, but the global health crisis presented an immediate need to reduce costs without leaving

residents stranded. So, instead of putting microtransit on the backburner, the team charged ahead: scrapping plans to use smaller vans and instead partnering with Via to launch on-demand service using their existing full-size buses.

"I previously had to get a train and a bus to get to work, and now my journey is much easier as I only need to book a single ride on Go2" -- Maxine Fuller, Go2 rider

Within two weeks, GoCoach replaced all of their fixed routes with Go2 — a more cost-effective on-demand service operating six days a week. The new Go2 service decreased the number of buses used by up to 80% and reduced driver hours by 62%, even while temporarily adding four nearby hospitals to the service area. And with the overall decrease in vehicles and Go2's increased ridership came an impressive 77% increase in utilization compared to the fixed route service, with an average bus carrying over 2 passengers per hour instead of 1.3. The team accomplished this level of efficiency while maintaining a 4.9/5 rider rating and bringing wait times down from one hour to just 11 minutes.

Less is more in Ontario.

Like many small agencies across North America, North Bay Transit (NBT) in Ontario saw a drop in rider demand for their fixed route buses, particularly every evening and weekend. The Canadian agency was running six buses with just a handful of riders on each, none of whom were getting exactly where they wanted to go due to rigid routes and infrequent schedules. The team at NBT wanted to use on-demand service to expand transit coverage during these times of low demand, without wasting valuable vehicles and drivers' time.

This past January, they did just that. myRide NBT combines fixed route and on-demand transit, with one zone where three buses run dynamically and another zone where two buses operate on a regular schedule. Once a rider makes a trip request, Via's algorithm will serve them a fixed route, on-demand, or multimodal proposal with clear instructions on how to easily transfer. On-demand allowed NBT to take an entire bus off the road, reduce total miles driven by 18%, and bring wait times down from 60 minutes to 16 minutes. And as ridership begins to return, the team is adjusting service and using their fleet flexibly to continue to reach a wider coverage area with the same resources.

Ensuring driver satisfaction stays top of mind.

Drivers are the backbone of our public transportation system and creating a rewarding work environment for them is not only a measure to attract and retain the transit workforce — it serves as much-deserved recognition of the essential work these professionals have performed, both before and during the pandemic.

One critical reason drivers or potential drivers may find themselves shrinking from transit is due to COVID-19 concerns. While we can't completely solve that problem, Via's TransitTech does help enable a safe driver experience. Drivers and riders can be prompted to complete in-app wellness checks to confirm that they are symptom-free. Plus, tech-enabled on-demand transportation, with payments available in-app, reduces reliance on cash transactions.

In addition, there are several driver-facing benefits fundamental to tech-enabled on-demand service as opposed to traditional fixed routes. Smarter routing translates to fewer hours spent in bumper-to-bumper traffic, worrying about making it to the next stop on schedule. Also, the dynamic routing and rider aggregation technology — which matches riders to vehicles going their way in real time — means less idle time spent traveling with an empty vehicle.

Traveling the same routes every day, regardless of where rider demand actually is, isn't just inefficient — it's also just plain boring. With on-demand, drivers have greater flexibility to visit new areas of their city or town, or even just take an unfamiliar route to a familiar destination. Not to mention, drivers with on-demand services ride with happier passengers; riders who are now getting the rideshare experience at a public transit price.

Keeping up with ever-evolving transit patterns

What it boils down to is this: on-demand, shared transit is, in many cases, the answer to maintaining, or even expanding, transit service in the midst of fewer riders, drivers, or funds. Tech-enabled on-demand networks utilize on-the-ground, real-time data to inform scheduling, routing, and vehicle assignments, while creating a smoother passenger and driver experience. COVID-19 has created a world where the everyday is unpredictable. With smarter, responsive TransitTech, adapting to the ever-changing new normal is possible and more agencies and cities are choosing to do so every day.

Resource: https://ridewithvia.com/resources/articles/how-to-maintain-transit-coverage-during-a-driver-shortage/?utm_source=pardot&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_december_2021&utm_content=driver_shortage



Federal Mask Requirement Extended for Public Transportation

Following the President's order and announcement regarding efforts to combat the Omicron variant, TSA, in conjunction with the CDC, will extend the face mask requirement for individuals across all transportation networks throughout the United States, including at airports, onboard commercial aircraft, on over-the-road buses, and on commuter bus and rail systems through March 18, 2022.

TSA Administrator David Pekoske has said frequently the combination of vaccinations and face masks work and are highly effective in terms of slowing the spread of the virus in the transportation system, and they make travel safer for everyone. More details about the extension will be available soon.

Resource: <https://www.tsa.gov/news/press/statements/2021/12/02/statement-regarding-face-mask-extensionstatements/2021/12/02/statement-regarding-face-mask-extension>

WINTER CAR EMERGENCY KIT

What to Keep in Your Car in Case of an Emergency

Emergencies can happen to anyone. Prepare for the worst-case scenario (especially in wintertime) by keeping the following supplies in your winter car kit!

Whether you run out of fuel, puncture a tire, or slip off a snowy road, a car emergency kit can help you get back on the road safely and quickly.

In addition to the items listed below, keeping a cell phone on hand is highly advised. Make sure your phone is charged every time you get in the car and keep a spare cell phone charger and a rechargeable battery pack in your emergency kit as well.

CAR EMERGENCY KIT LIST

Keep the below items in a bag in your trunk. Ideally, we'd suggest keeping these items in a clear, plastic container so it's easy to see and locate everything. You can buy a pre-packaged kit or create your own.

MINIMUM SUPPLIES:

In an emergency situation, in addition to a full tank of gas and fresh antifreeze, the National Safety Council recommends having these with you at all times:

- Blankets, mittens, socks and hats
- Ice scraper and snow brush
- Flashlight, plus extra batteries (or a hand-crank flashlight)
- Jumper cables
- First-aid kit (band-aides, adhesive tape, antiseptic wipes, gauze pads, antiseptic cream, medical wrap). [See a first-aid kit checklist.](#)
- Bottled water
- Multi-tool (such as a Leatherman multi-tool or a Swiss Army knife)
- Road flares or reflective warning triangles
- Windshield cleaner

EXTRA SUPPLIES FOR FRIGID WEATHER:

For those in wintry snowy areas, add the below items to your emergency kit. (If it's balmy all winter where

you live, be thankful that you don't need all of this stuff!)

- A bag of sand to help with traction (or bag of non-clumping cat litter)
- Collapsible or folding snow shovel
- Blanket
- Tire chains and tow strap
- Hand warmers
- Winter boots for longer trips
- Sleeping bag for longer trips
- Note: Use salt for de-icing driveways and roads. (Excess salinity can damage vegetation and contaminate groundwater, however. So, with this in mind, salt your driveway only when you must, and try not to use more than necessary.)

OTHER ESSENTIALS:

- Small fire extinguisher (5-lb., Class B and Class C type) in case of a car fire
- Tire gauge to check inflation pressure in all four tires and the spare tire
- Jack and lug wrench to change a tire
- Rags and hand cleaner (such as baby wipes)
- Duct tape
- Foam tire sealant for minor tire punctures
- Rain poncho
- Nonperishable high-energy foods such as unsalted and canned nuts, granola bars, raisins and dried fruit, peanut butter, hard candy.
- Battery- or hand-crank-powered radio
- Lighter and box of matches (in a waterproof container)
- Scissors and string or cord
- Spare change and cash
- Compass
- Paper maps

Resource: <https://www.almanac.com/content/winter-car-emergency-kit>



MISSOURI SLATED TO RECEIVE \$670M FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

With an influx of federal infrastructure dollars on its way to Missouri, public transportation providers are awaiting a substantial investment.

Missouri is expected to receive \$674 million for its public transportation system over the next five years, allowing for providers to maintain and upgrade their fleets while expanding their operations. Much of the allotment will be distributed through existing funding pots and will require a state match: Operating funding programs are subject to a 50-50 state match, while capital funding programs will see an 80-20 investment.

"The big question will once again be what does our state investment in public transit look like, and that's going to become even more important as we see these federal funding amounts grow," Missouri Public Transportation Association (MPTA) Executive Director Kim Cella told The Missouri Times. "We're really excited to see an increase in funding for public transit. It's delivering in Missouri — we're seeing that with economic returns, the number of jobs, the necessity of public transit that we saw during the pandemic."

Missouri ranked 45th in the nation in state transit investments, which have stagnated since 2016, according to Cella. The state's 34 public transit providers split a \$1.7 million operating assistance allotment this year, leaving some providers with as little as \$5,000 in state funding.

Grants for rural areas are administered through the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT). Director Patrick McKenna said his department

is taking feedback from the public on potential investments, though the exact amount of funding available is still unknown.

"Even with additional revenue, transportation needs greatly outweigh funding available, and the challenge is determining the optimal projects to fund that provide the greatest return on investment to taxpayers," McKenna said in a statement. "Other priorities include projects that improve safety, spur economic growth, and provide more transportation choices."

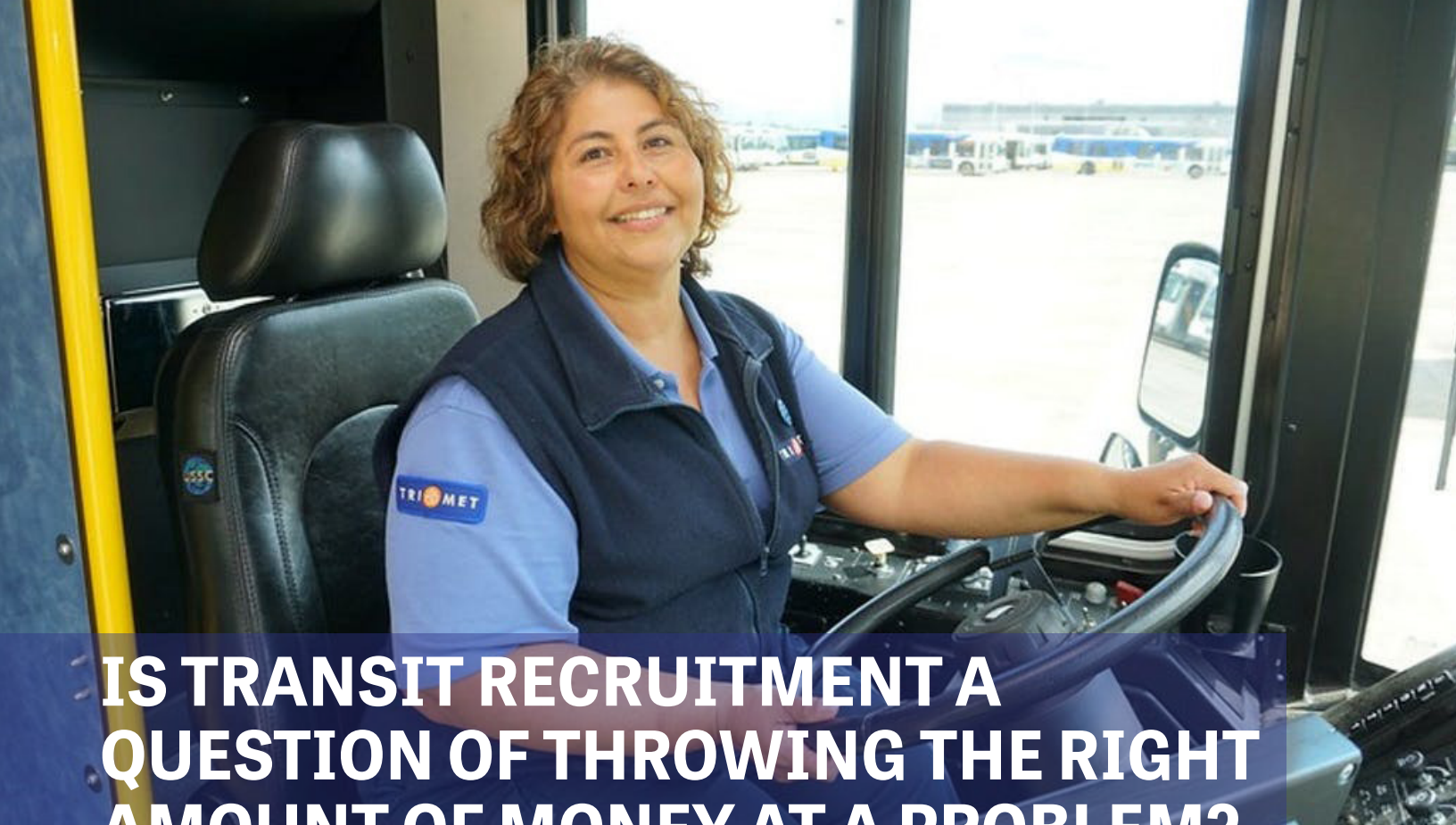
Minority Missourians are 10 times more likely to use public transportation, according to the White House, with riders spending nearly 80 percent more time on their commutes.

The state would also be eligible to apply for a program allowing it to transition its system to a zero-emissions fleet. The bill expanded the Federal Transit Administration's Low and No Emission Bus programs to \$5.6 billion, allowing state and local governments to apply for grants to purchase clean buses and associated equipment.

Reducing emissions has been a priority for transit providers over the past year, a trend Cella said would likely continue through federal assistance. The Kansas City Area Transportation Authority unveiled its first zero-emission buses earlier this year with more slated to follow, and St. Louis launched a clean-energy transportation system for seniors last month.

[READ MORE>](#) for the full article.





IS TRANSIT RECRUITMENT A QUESTION OF THROWING THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF MONEY AT A PROBLEM?

At the national level, transit ridership has been on a steady increase during the past 52 weeks.¹ While current ridership numbers represent about 55 percent of pre-pandemic numbers, transit systems across the United States have seen a roughly 35-percent increase in ridership during the past year. That ridership is steadily increasing amid the “Great Resignation” – where many employees are voluntarily leaving their companies – has produced tough times for transit agencies looking to recruit new talent and hold onto the talent they already have.

Some agencies are digging deeper into budget reserves or utilizing some of the emergency funding provided by the federal government to increase wages, as well as provide bonuses to existing and new employees.

PANDEMIC BONUS

In April 2021, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) said it would use approximately \$13 million from a budget surplus to provide nearly three-fourths of its staff one-time pandemic payments of \$3,500. MARTA said bus and rail operators, mechanics and supervisors, as well as members of the MARTA Police Department with the rank of major and below would receive the payments.

“I am extremely grateful to our frontline employees who have carried us through this pandemic,” said MARTA General Manager and CEO Jeffrey Parker at

the time of the payment announcement. “These are people who could not work from home, who showed up every day to keep the buses and trains running and protect our customers, all while considering the health risks to themselves and their families.”

However, on Nov. 11, MARTA announced it would temporarily modify service to address a shortage of bus operators. All the authority’s routes will operate, but MARTA is having to adjust service to absorb a 14 percent staffing deficit. It cites COVID-19 as being the greatest threat to operator retention and recruitment. The authority does have policy that requires either a vaccination card be submitted or an employee receive weekly tests. MARTA says operators are leaving due to health concerns or being terminated due to noncompliance with the authority’s vaccination/testing policy. Additionally, absenteeism is high and MARTA believes the temporary adjustments will provide more reliability to service.

Unfortunately, the situation experienced in Atlanta is being repeated at agencies across the U.S. In the St. Louis region, the Bi-State Development Agency of the Missouri-Illinois Metropolitan District (St. Louis Metro) implemented service changes on 38 of its Missouri MetroBus routes, including suspending six routes as it too battles bus operator shortages. St. Louis Metro says it “continues to aggressively recruit and train new operators” and is offering \$2,000 hiring bonus for MetroBus and Metro Call-a-Ride operators, as well as mechanics and electricians.

HIRING BONUSES INCREASE

In Denver, Colo., the Regional Transit District recognizes the compounded impact of the "Great Resignation" with the increase in ridership and is offering a \$4,000 hiring bonus for bus operators, light-rail operators/engineers, body shop technicians, general repair mechanics, signal power maintainers, electro-mechanics and facilities maintenance mechanics.

"RTD is comprised of people who move people and without frontline team members the agency could not realize its mission of making lives better through connections," Debra A. Johnson, RTD general manager and CEO said.

Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (CapMetro) in Austin, Texas, is offering a hiring bonus of \$3,500 for some qualified candidates and has offered an agreement to the Amalgamated Transit Union, which represents CapMetro bus operators and mechanics, to significantly increase the hourly wage of operators and mechanics.

Under the increased wage, bus operators would start at \$22 per hour, which represents an increase of 30 percent and an annual salary of between \$54,000-\$76,000. Mechanics would earn at least \$31 per hour, which is up to a 13 percent increase with an annual salary of between \$71,000-\$84,000. Additionally, CapMetro explains the wage structure increases a staff member's hourly rate, the longer they serve, which is designed to reward and incentivize retention.

"Our staff has been on the frontlines of the pandemic for the last two years, so this is not only a great way to support our workforce but also to ensure that we are providing equitable, competitive wages and benefits to such dedicated public servants," said Capital Metro Deputy CEO Dottie Watkins. "I was once a bus operator myself, so I know how important it is to take care of those who make it possible for us to serve customers."

TriMet in Portland, Ore., announced its intention in October to increase starting pay of bus operators to \$21.36, but as of Nov. 29, the agency is adding a \$2,500 hiring bonus. TriMet says the new wage and hiring bonus extends the agency's menu of benefits, which includes health, dental, vision, pension and retirement plans, paid training, as well as paid leave among other benefits.

Bus operators comprise about one-third of the agency's workforce and TriMet says it is committed to growing its team as it begins planning for the future.

¹Ridership statistics pulled from APTA Ridership Trends powered by Transit: <https://transitapp.com/apta>

Resource: <https://www.masstransitmag.com/management/article/21248317/is-transit-recruitment-a-question-of-throwing-the-right-amount-of-money-at-a-problem>



Federal Transit
Administration



Prevention of Alcohol Misuse and Prohibited Drug Use in Transit Operations CY2022 Drug & Alcohol Testing Rates

FTA published a Federal Register notice to announce the CY2022 Drug and Alcohol Random Testing Rates for transit employers. The minimum random drug testing rate will remain at 50 percent and the random alcohol testing rate will remain at 10 percent. FTA requires drug and alcohol testing for transit employees performing safety-sensitive functions and for employers to submit annual drug and alcohol testing reports by March 15 of each year. Final Rule - Federal Registry - [LINK](#)



DOT COVID-19 Drug & Alcohol Testing Statement of Enforcement Discretion for Substance Abuse Professionals and Service Agents. As of November 29, 2021, ODAPC has extended the statement and it continues to be effective through June 30, 2022. [LINK](#)



APTA Report Makes Recommendations Regarding Post-Pandemic Travel

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) released a new report at its 2021 TRANSform Conference and EXPO in Orlando, Fla., examining potential changes in demographic, employment and travel trends that could impact the transit industry.

“Throughout the pandemic, public transit agencies across the nation kept our communities running, from providing transportation to connecting community members to food to even setting up bus Wi-Fi hotspots for students,” said APTA President and CEO Paul P. Skoutelas. “In this time of crisis, our industry provided vital services and reliable mobility for millions, with public transportation employees continuing to prove their abilities to adapt to the swiftly changing needs of their communities. Now, as the industry looks to the future, we can take the lessons we’ve learned and apply them to improve mobility in the coming years.”

The report, **On the Horizon Planning for Post-Pandemic Travel**, collected data from operators, deployed staff to conduct a nationwide survey and conducted detailed case studies of five agencies (Regional Transportation District in the Denver, Colo., Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the Port Authority of Allegheny County in Pittsburgh, Pa., GRTC Transit System in Richmond, Va., and Spokane Transit Authority in Washington State).

In response to falling ridership, staff retention issues and fiscal concerns, most public transit agencies were forced to cut services. However, the report found that not all agencies responded this way. Some agencies

eliminated fares and reoriented service to prioritize essential workers and social equity, and/or split shifts to provide social distancing for employees.

Port Authority in Pittsburgh, Regional Transportation District in Denver and the GRTC Transit System in Richmond expanded or reoriented services to underserved and low-income communities that depend on more frequent service. Spokane Transit Authority reassigned paratransit vehicles to help older adults better access health care, recreation and other needs. To keep the public informed of these changes, transit agencies also had to expand communication efforts with the public. For example, Los Angeles’ Metro system reinforced its social media campaigns and signage, while monitoring customer feedback in real time.

GRTC CEO Julie Timm explains the system’s transit dependent riders not only continued to ride local bus routes, but needed to ride more often to access jobs, groceries, child care and healthcare. Timm notes GRTC eliminated fares at the start of the pandemic as a safety enhancement, but the transit system found going fare free not only helped promote safety but was protecting the economic health of the community. GRTC local bus ridership has returned to pre-pandemic levels and Timm says the transit system is exploring ways to bridge the funding gap by going zero fare.

[READ MORE>](#) for the full article.

AVAILABLE TRAINING PROGRAMS

The following is a list of the training programs and course length of each that are currently available to rural transit providers through Missouri RTAP. Requests for training can be made by contacting Doreen Harkins, MO-RTAP Program Specialist, at harkinsd@mst.edu or 573-341-6155.

1. **ACTIVE SHOOTER PREVENTION AND RESPONSE**
– 2 HOURS.
2. **AGGRESSIVE DRIVING** – 1 HOUR.
3. **BACKING SAFETY** – 1 HOUR.
4. **BASIC FIRST AID** – 1 HOUR.
5. **BLOOD BORNE PATHOGENS** – 1 HOUR.
6. **CPR & BASIC FIRST AID** – 4 HOURS.
7. **DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PASSENGERS**
– 2 HOURS.
8. **DEFENSIVE DRIVING** – 3 HOURS.
9. **DISTRACTED DRIVING** – 1 HOUR.
10. **DIVERSITY & AWARENESS TRAINING -
PROVIDING QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR
TRANSPORTATION PASSENGERS WHO HAVE
DISABILITIES** – 2 HOURS.
11. **DRIVEN TO EXTREMES** – 1 HOUR.
12. **DRUG ABUSE AWARENESS IN RURAL TRANSIT**
– 1 HOUR.
13. **EMERGENCY & EVACUATION PROCEDURES**
– 1 1/2 TO 2 HOURS.
14. **ENTRY LEVEL CDL DRIVER TRAINING**
– 2 HOURS.
15. **FATIGUE AWARENESS FOR DRIVERS** – 2 HOURS.
16. **HIPAA** – 1 HOUR.
17. **NIGHT DRIVING** – 1 HOUR.
18. **OPERATION LIFESAVER – HIGHWAY-RAIL
CROSSING SAFETY** – 1 HOUR.
19. **PASSENGER ASSISTANCE/MOBILITY AID
SECUREMENT**
– 2 HOURS.
20. **REASONABLE SUSPICION TRAINING FOR
SUPERVISORS**
– 2 HOURS.
21. **SAFE & SECURE PROPER INFANT AND CHILD
SEAT INSTALLATION** – 2 HOURS.
22. **SENSITIVITY AWARENESS** – 1 HOUR.
23. **SEXUAL HARRASSMENT** – 1 HOUR.
24. **SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS** – 1 HOUR.
25. **WHEELCHAIR SECUREMENT** – 2 TO 3 HOURS
DEPENDING ON NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS.
26. **WINTER DRIVING SAFETY** – 1 HOUR.

For more information on classes and to register please visit: mltrc.mst.edu/mortaphome/mortaptraining/

RESOURCES

National RTAP – Rural Transit Assistance Program

www.nationalrtap.org/

**Transportation Safety Institute –
Transit Safety & Security Training Division**

www.tsi.dot.gov/Transit.aspx

**Federal Transit Administration –
Rural Transit Assistance Program Page**

[www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/
grants_financing_3554.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3554.html)

Missouri Public Transit

www.mopublictransit.org/

National Transit Institute

www.ntionline.com/

**Kansas RTAP – Kansas University
Transportation Center**

[www.kutc.ku.edu/cgiwrap/kutc/rtap/
index.php/index.html](http://www.kutc.ku.edu/cgiwrap/kutc/rtap/index.php/index.html)

**Transportation Research Board's (TRB) Transit
Cooperative Research Program (TCRP)**

www.tcrponline.org/

