

**MAKING CONNECTIONS, MAKING A DIFFERENCE**



# • Making Connections 2024

• The National Transit Workforce Conference

• November 11 – 13, 2024 • Baltimore, MD •





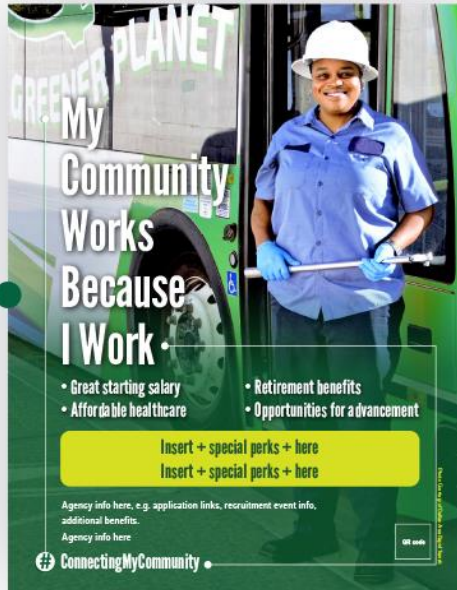
# Successful Models for Career Awareness, Outreach, and Recruitment

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

1:30 – 3:00 PM

# # ConnectingMyCommunity

## National Transit Frontline Worker Campaign Toolkit



**GREENER My Community Works Because I Work**

- Great starting salary
- Affordable healthcare
- Retirement benefits
- Opportunities for advancement

Insert + special perks + here  
Insert + special perks + here

Agency info here, e.g. application links, recruitment event info, additional benefits.  
Agency info here

ConnectingMyCommunity



**Drive into Your Transit Career**

- Great starting salary
- Health and other benefits
- Retirement benefits
- Opportunities for advancement

Insert + special perks + here  
Insert + special perks + here

Agency info here, e.g. application links, recruitment event info, additional benefits.  
Agency info here  
Agency info here  
Agency info here

ConnectingMyCommunity



**Work at Insert Name of Your Agency Here and Connect Your Community**

- Great starting salary
- Health and other benefits
- Retirement benefits
- Opportunities for advancement

Insert + special perks + here

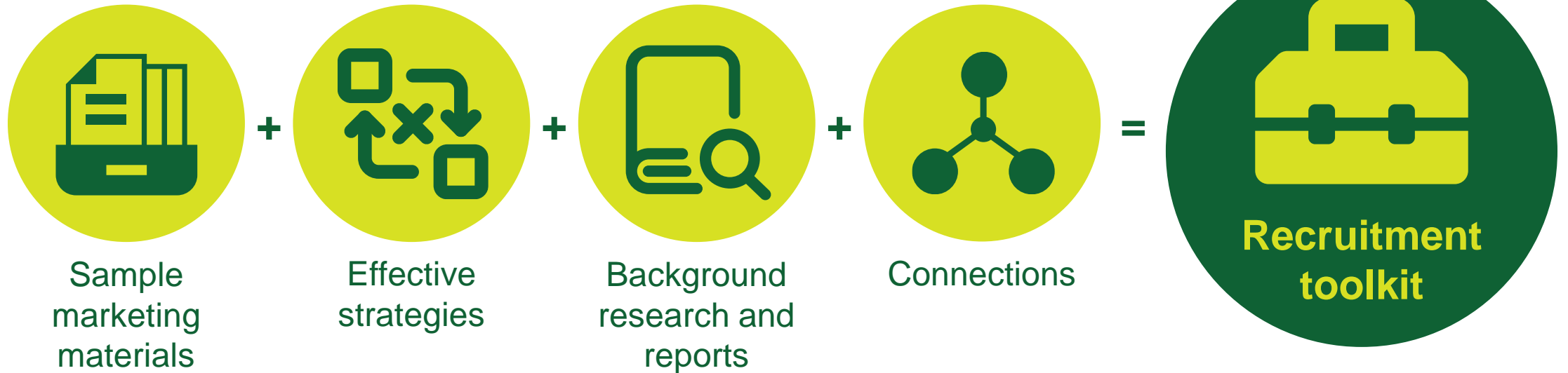
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ConnectingMyCommunity



# What is the National Transit Frontline Worker Campaign Toolkit?

A central repository of:





# Speakers



**Julia Castillo**  
Executive Director  
*HIRTA*



**Jaymi Swarbrick**  
Director of Human Resources  
*MeVa - MA*



**Tony Pollard**  
Organizer  
*ATU Local 689*



**Trenise Winters**  
Assistant Executive Director  
*Metro Transit (St. Louis)*



**Dan Stouffer**  
Manager, Bus Instruction  
*Metro Transit (MN)*



**Adam Parast**  
Enterprise and Strategic Initiatives Lead  
*King County Metro (WA)*

# Recruitment and Retention

Presented by:

**Jaymi Swarbrick**

Director of Human Resources

**Jense Rodriguez, Bus Operator**

Bus Operator



# MeVa Background



Ridership is 83% Latino and 75% Spanish speaking



MeVa carries over 3.5 million riders per year - 60% over pre-pandemic



MeVa is one of 15 RTAs across the Commonwealth



MeVa went fare free in March of 2022



MeVa went fare free in March of 2022



Total of 172 employees

- 90 Bus Operators
- 33 Van Operators
- 15 Mechanics



Fully staffed during CDL Driver shortage



# First Steps



Improve Moral



Significant Raise



Fare Free



# Improve Moral



**New Management**



**Redecorated drivers room**

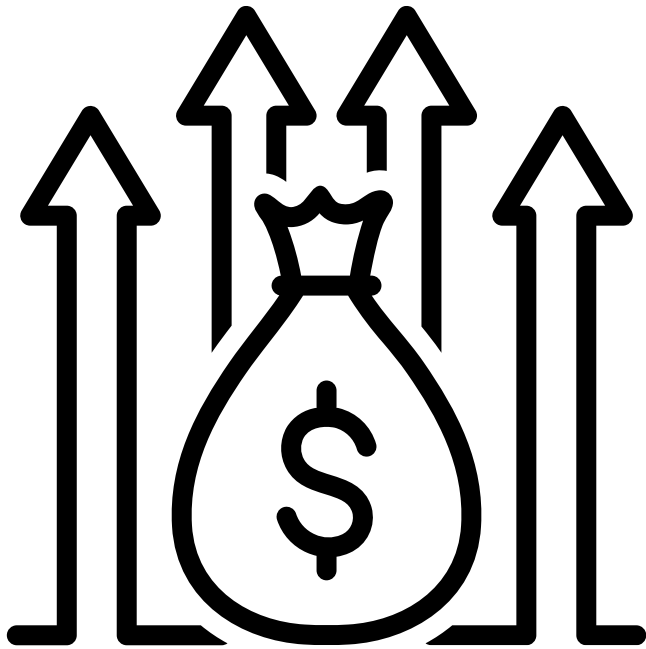


**Created the GIG Group**



**Implemented Employee of the Month**

# Significant Raise



**Sign on Bonus**



**15.7% raise in new contract**



**Referral Bonus**



**Free Health Care**

# Free Fares

**FREE**



**Happier Drivers**



**Customer complaints  
were significantly  
reduced**



**No more fareboxes**



**No conflicts with riders  
regarding fare  
collection**

# What Didn't Work??



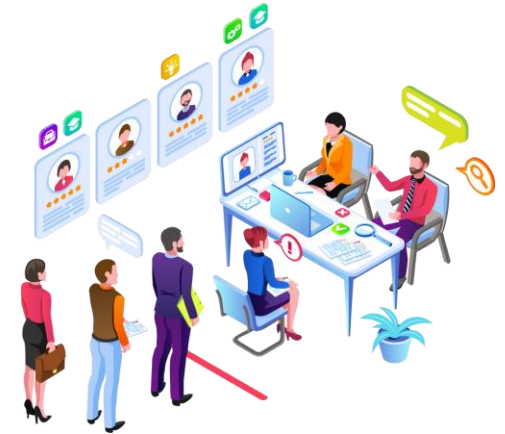
Recruitment websites



Job Fairs



Local Recruitment Agencies



# Don't Take it from Me, Ask a Driver



**No Intimidation**



**Speak Freely**



**Helpful Management  
Team**



**Likes coming to work**





**Thank you!**



# Recruitment & Retention

*A Multifaceted Approach to Addressing Workforce Shortages*

# Community Partnerships

- **Collaborations with Community Organizations:**

- Bi-State specific events with Urban League
- Job fairs and job postings with Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- IISTL - workforce readiness , resume writing, interview prep
- Gateway Nexus group
- Transformative Workforce Academy
- Self-hosted hiring events



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# Talent Pipelines

- **Key Points**

- Building relationships with technical schools
- Establishing talent pipelines for internships and apprenticeships



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# Successful Strategies

- **Key Points**

- Multifaceted approach
- Partnership with Operations, Marketing, Training
- Community connections
- Referral programs
- Everyone plays a role in recruitment



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# Technology / Data

- **Key Points**

- Automated scheduling software (Calendly)
- QR codes and text to apply
- Geofencing technology
- Data and ATS reporting



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# Key Takeaways

- **Key Points**

- Collaborative effort
- Community engagement
- Diversified outreach
- Use of Technology & Data



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# Mentors

A Valued Partnership in Recruitment and Retention



# Define the Problem (Recruitment-Retention)

## **Ask for Help**

- Discuss the state of the workforce
  - Engage front line team and listen for solutions
  - Gain buy-in through constant collaboration and communication
  - Use data to evaluate progress
- 

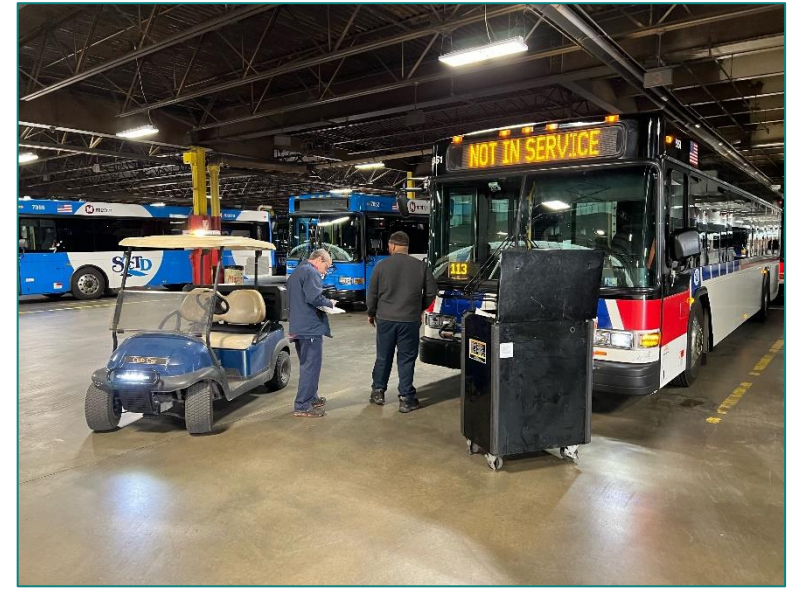
# Mentors as Ambassadors

- **Key Points**

- Ideal spokesperson for the organization
- Share practical experiences
- Talk candidate through the process for employment



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# Engage Mentors Regularly

- **Key Points**

- Monthly meetings and quarterly trainings
- Offer development opportunities
  - Engagement Champions
  - Interview Training
- Set the Mentors apart from their peers
- Recognize their efforts and successes

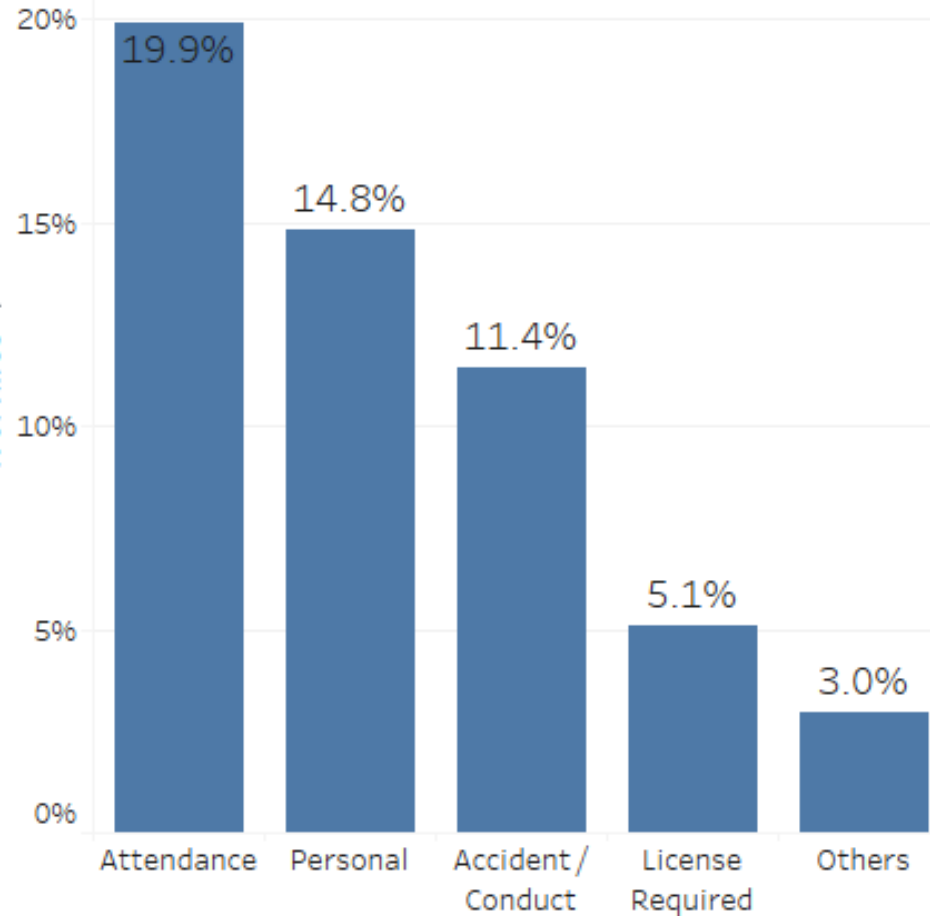


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# Leaving Reason - All Operators

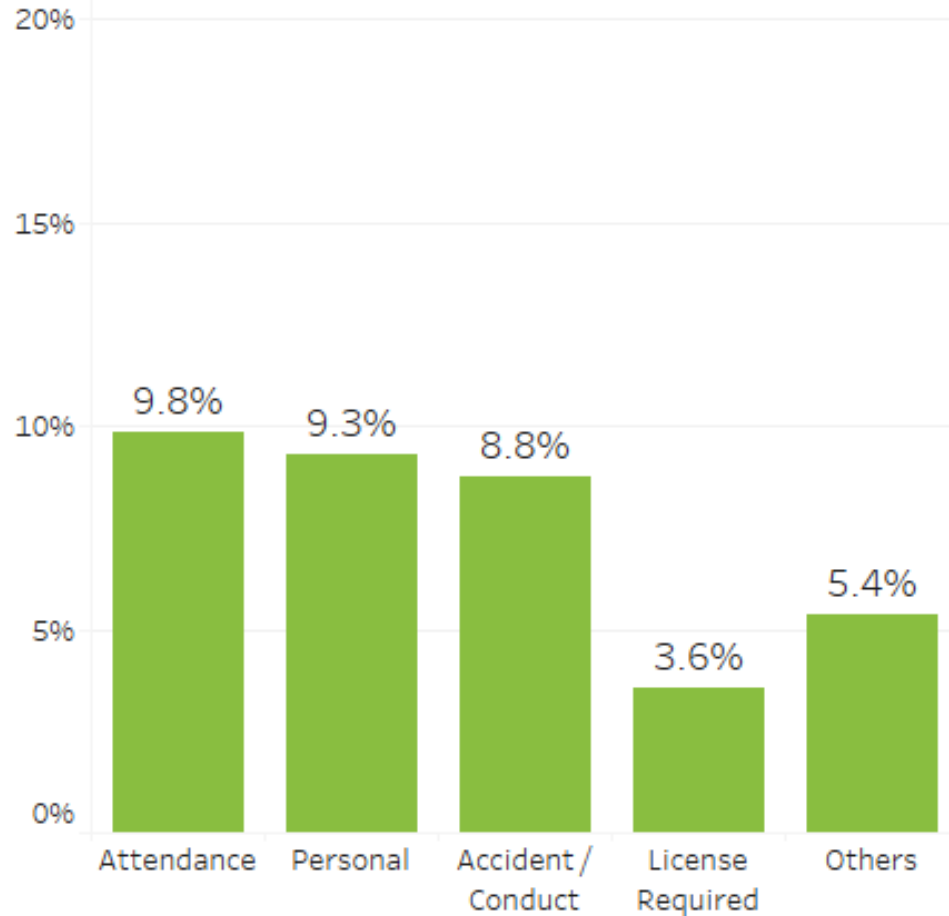
## Before Mentor Program

(12/1/2021 - 3/30/2023)

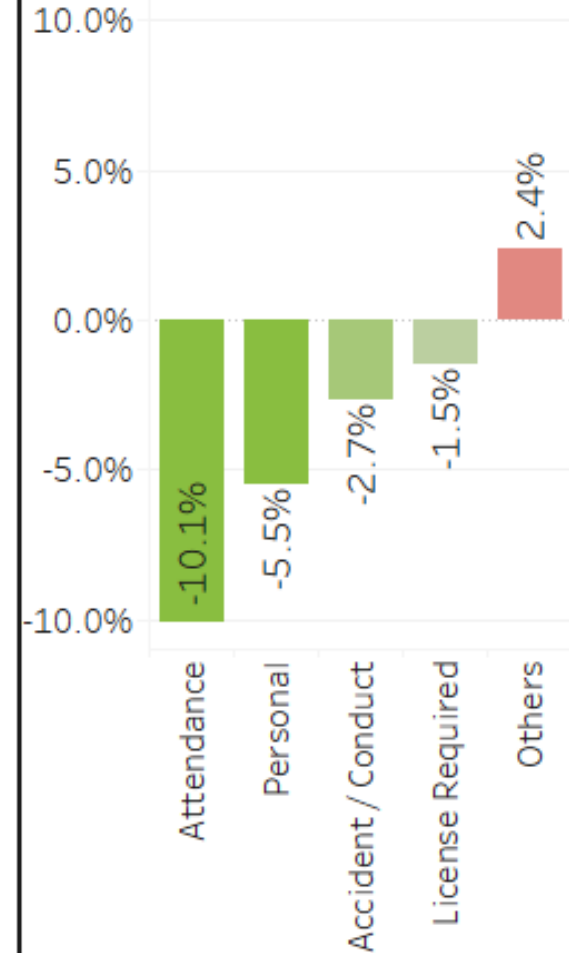


## Mentor Program

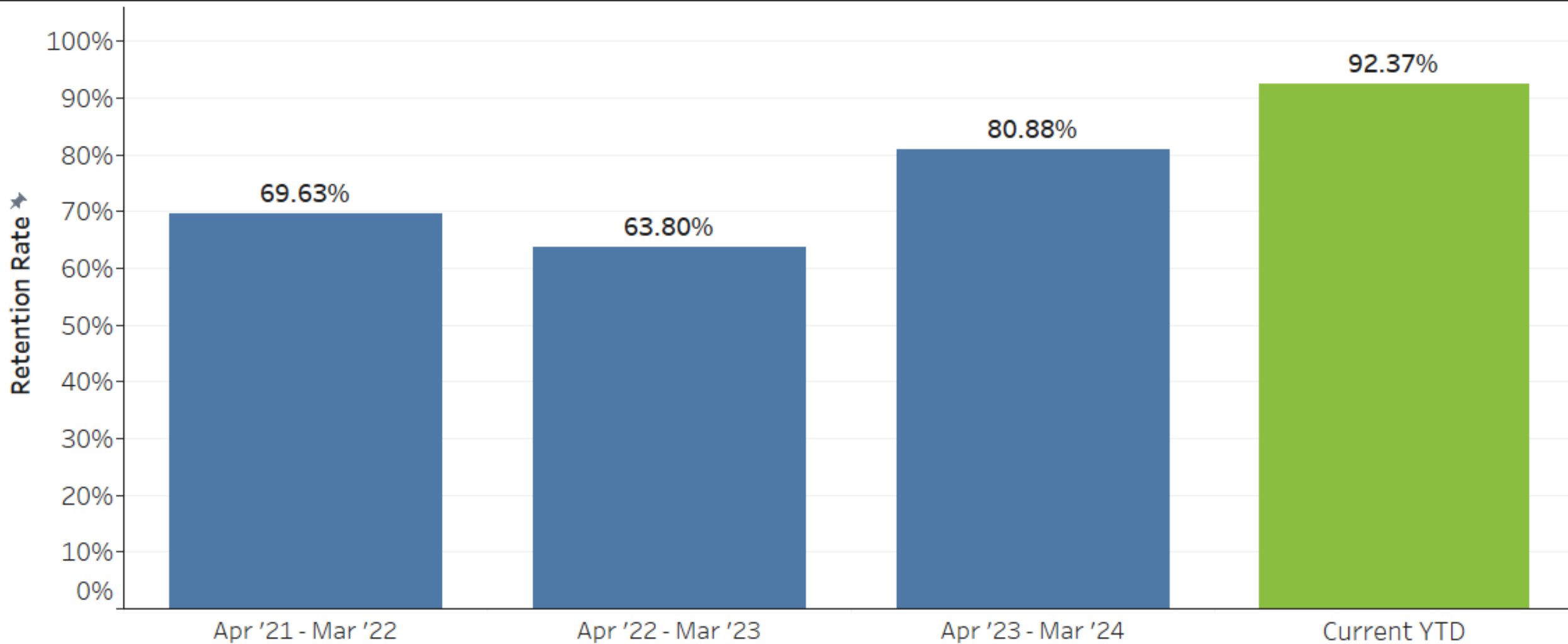
(4/1/2023 - 7/31/2024)



## Difference



# Retention Rate - All Operators



# THANK YOU

**Scott Joiner – Sr. Manager of Talent Acquisitions**

[sdjoiner@bistatedev.org](mailto:sdjoiner@bistatedev.org)

**Trenise Winters – Assistant Executive Director Metro Transit**

[tlwinters@metrostlouis.org](mailto:tlwinters@metrostlouis.org)



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## **Service and Workforce Initiative**

*“The Service and Workforce Initiative will coordinate a proactive and results-oriented response to address Metro’s workforce and service delivery challenges, first by stabilizing operations and then by growing service.”*

# Stage Setting: Bus Operator Recruitment and Training

- Strong interest
- Diverse applicant pool
- Slow and legacy hiring practices
- Training capacity limitations
- Low graduation rates
- Outdated and inconsistent training
- Lack of alignment between divisions
- CBA complications

**Need:** Improve recruitment and training outcomes to grow our workforce

**How:** Using lean principles of continuous improvement and empowering teams

# Examples: Bus Operator Recruitment & Training



Recruiting candidates

- Hire into full-time work
- Improved wages, benefits
- Signing bonus
- "Schedule of Record"
- More women applicants



Applying for a job

- Clear job description
- Refreshed job requirements
- Equity and diversity guided
- Clear timelines
- More communication
- Improved metrics



Bus driver training

- Paid training program
- Increased class size and cadence
- Revamped curriculum and processes
- Materials in plain language
- Improved photos/videos/tech/VR
- Daily learning checklist and quizzes
- Student interviews guide improvements
- Adaptation and customization



Safety test, health screen, learners permit

- On-site drug and alcohol screening
- Paid commercial learner's permit
- Paid medical exam



Application review and interview

- One-day hiring events
- Dedicated recruitment team
- Deployed standard work



Commercial Driver's License

- Simplified CDL test from WA DOL
- More hands-on practice before CDL
- Pre-trip inspection improvement
- Increased pass rates



Onboarding & retention

- In-service training
- Mentors Moving Metro
- Additional training
- 30 and 60-day refresher
- Student feedback on process
- Employee Exit interviews



**Attract, Hire, Retain:  
The Employee Equation**



# Change how jobs are advertised

*Don't let someone eliminate themselves because of the language you use*

- Consider making being an **EEO Employers statement** more important **by what you state and where you place** this statement in your ads.
- Put the qualities **you need in the person**, not just the duties they will perform
- The **most important part** you want the potential applicant to see **should be at the top of the ad**. Flexible Hours – Must have CDL - Will train – Must work Weekends
- **Consider removing info about running a background check**
- How can you **add flexibility or assistance in applying** for those who need it.

*Tri Delta Transit honors diversity where people are appreciated, respected, and nurtured. Tri Delta Transit's environment fosters creativity and productivity among all its employees and extends a welcome to those who wish to join our team.*

*HIRTA is an EEO, where we value diversity and strive to expand representation at all levels in our workforce.*

*Beacon Mobility is an equal opportunity employer that is committed to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. We prohibit discrimination and harassment of any kind based on race, color, sex, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, genetic information, pregnancy or any other protected characteristic as outlined by federal state and local laws.*

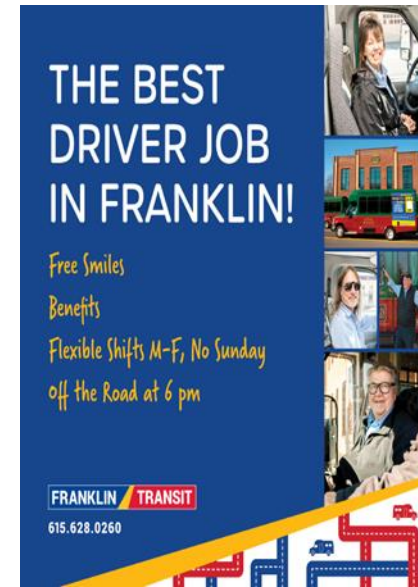
# Where and How are you Advertising?

- Job Sites like Indeed?
- Local Newspaper?
- Social Media? Website
- Driver – Drive a Bus events?
- Flyers posted around town?
- Job Fairs?
- Back/Side of your Vehicles?
- Retired Police Officers, Firefighters, EMS
- Veterans
- Previously Incarcerated

## Negatives of Help Wanted Signs?

- Perceived as poor working conditions and/or not a good place to work
- Appear understaffed and desperate so what does that mean for them?

## Eye Catching Simple



THE BEST DRIVER JOB IN FRANKLIN!

Free Smiles  
Benefits  
Flexible Shifts M-F, No Sunday  
Off the Road at 6 pm

FRANKLIN TRANSIT  
615.628.0260

This advertisement features a blue background with a collage of photos showing bus drivers in various settings. The text is white and yellow, highlighting the benefits of the job. The Franklin Transit logo and phone number are at the bottom.



Hiring drivers. We train.  
Great benefits. Open roads. Desk-free.

ATA

This advertisement has a green background. It features two photos of buses: a large green and white bus on a bridge and a smaller white bus with green accents. The text is white and green, emphasizing the training and benefits offered.



People Persons  
~~Drivers~~ Wanted

This advertisement has a blue background. The text 'People Persons' is in yellow, and 'Drivers Wanted' is in white with a yellow underline. A photo of a blue and white bus is at the bottom.



Always wanted a corner office with a view?  
How about being paid to travel?  
Plus drive a \$400,000 company vehicle?

Tony did, so he became a bus driver.

You can become one too. All you need is a NZ driver's licence. So apply today at [busdriver.co.nz](http://busdriver.co.nz)

BUS DRIVING: YOUR TICKET TO A GREAT CAREER

This advertisement features a green background and a large photo of a smiling man in a suit. The text is white and yellow, highlighting the benefits of bus driving. A blue banner at the bottom reads 'BUS DRIVING: YOUR TICKET TO A GREAT CAREER'.

# Make applying as Easy as Possible

## Simplify your Job Application Process

- **Ask for minimal information.**
- **Don't require someone to enter info that is already on a resume.**

*If you need a complete application for HR purposes, it can be completed upon hire.*



A recent study by Management Research Services showed

- 31% of Americans are willing to spend more than 20 minutes filling out a job application.
- 44% will spend between 5-15 minutes
- 99% are willing to spend at least five minutes

# Review and Change Background Reviews

- Limit information in background checks to recent, *occupation-related information*
- Eliminate bans that automatically disqualify applicants with criminal records.
- Don't make gaps in employment an immediate **red** flag.

It is more helpful to understand **WHY** an applicant has a criminal record, than simply knowing **THAT** an applicant has a record

# SAMPLE Background Check Criteria

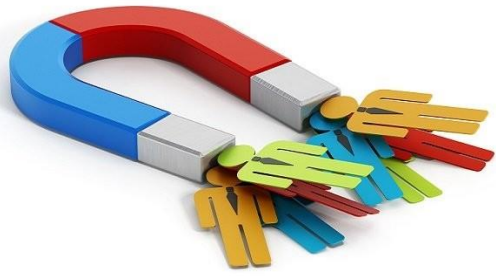
The following criteria will NOT be considered, when evaluating the results of a background check:

- Any conviction for decriminalized conduct
- Arrests that did not lead to a conviction
- A conviction that has been dismissed, expunged, or sealed
- A conviction that is more than 5 years old, unless there are legal requirements tied to the role

Convictions under 5 years old will be reviewed through an individual assessment process.

Factors that may be taken into consideration prior to making an employment decision, include, but are not limited to:

- The age of the applicant at the time of the offense
- The facts or circumstances surrounding the offense
- The length and consistency of the applicant's employment history before and after the offense
- The relevance of the offense to the position being sought
- The time which has elapsed since the offense
- The number of convictions.



# Keep Good Employees

- Have the right people in the right positions.
- Promote, value and build on employee strengths.
- **Make Safety a Priority and part of the Culture**
- Communicate the Good, Bad and Ugly
- Ensure you have a DEI Culture - make sure it is shown in your leadership, employees, policies, service, etc.
- Provide training/opportunities for the job an employee wants to advance into.
- LISTEN, ENGAGE and ACT, so that each employee feels valued and part of the “TEAM”.
- Encourage Accountability



# What is Leadership doing to make employees feel valued?

- Be Flexible
- Care about staff Mental Wellbeing
- Offer onsite Flu Shots, Massages, etc.
- Do One on One meetings for goal setting
- Give staff training/learning opportunities outside of their typical job
- Provide opportunities for them to ride the bus and/or attend events to meet the public they help serve
- Give them a voice where their input, opinions and ideas matter

## Talented Employees stay because they are:

- ✓ **Appreciated**
- ✓ **Listened to**
- ✓ **Promoted**
- ✓ **Involved in Decisions**
- ✓ **Mentored**
- ✓ **Challenged**

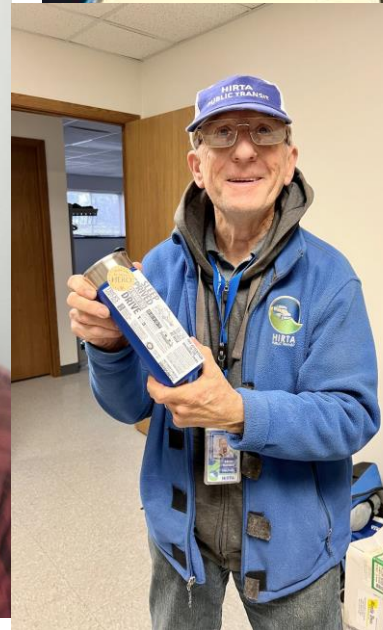
# Happy Employees Stay

## We all need some Fun at Work ...

The transit industry can be stressful – Make sure you allow everyone time to take breaks, both mental and physical when needed.

Employees who have fun while working feel more motivated, relaxed, and connected with the rest of the team and experience less stress while at work.

**Happy Employees are the Best Employees!**



## Featured Driver



Congrats to Karen Dont!

As part of her life-saving efforts, Karen Dont has been awarded for her outstanding dedication to her community. We recognize her for going the extra mile and showing what it's like to be a HIRTA hero. View the story by clicking the link above.

Thank a HIRTA Hero



- Food Days
- Bring your pet to work Day
- Recognize Above and Beyond
- Drunk Goggles are just fun
- Recognize your drivers
- Allow drivers to do fun things
- Team Activity – Adopt a family, canned food drive
- Volunteer together



# Who we are

- In 1981, the Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTA) was formed under a 28E agreement with the 7 counties in central Iowa.
- Region 11, better known as HIRTA, was established to provide public transit services in the counties of Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Madison, Marion, Story and Warren.



## Julia Castillo

Executive Director  
Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency

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She/Her



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@RideHIRTA



HIRTA Public Transit



[www.RideHIRTA.com](http://www.RideHIRTA.com)



+





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