

MAKING CONNECTIONS, MAKING A DIFFERENCE

◦ **Making**
Connections 2024

◦ **The National Transit Workforce Conference**

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





What Do Young People Want from a Transit Career?



Moderator and Panelists



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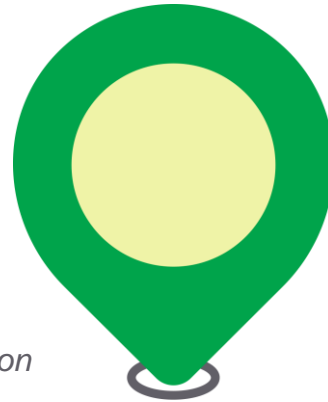
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YOUTH



PRESENTED BY:

iyai+



CRITICAL
CONVERSATIONS:
THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT
FRONTLINE WORKER
CRISIS

www.iyai.org

THE FUTURE IS NOW



Missing Link:

Youth Voice



CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS: The Public Transport Frontline Workers Crisis.
YOUTH VOICE: The Future is Now!

APPROACH TO STUDY

01

Nationwide Survey

788 responses (80% of respondents between 18-29 years of age)

02

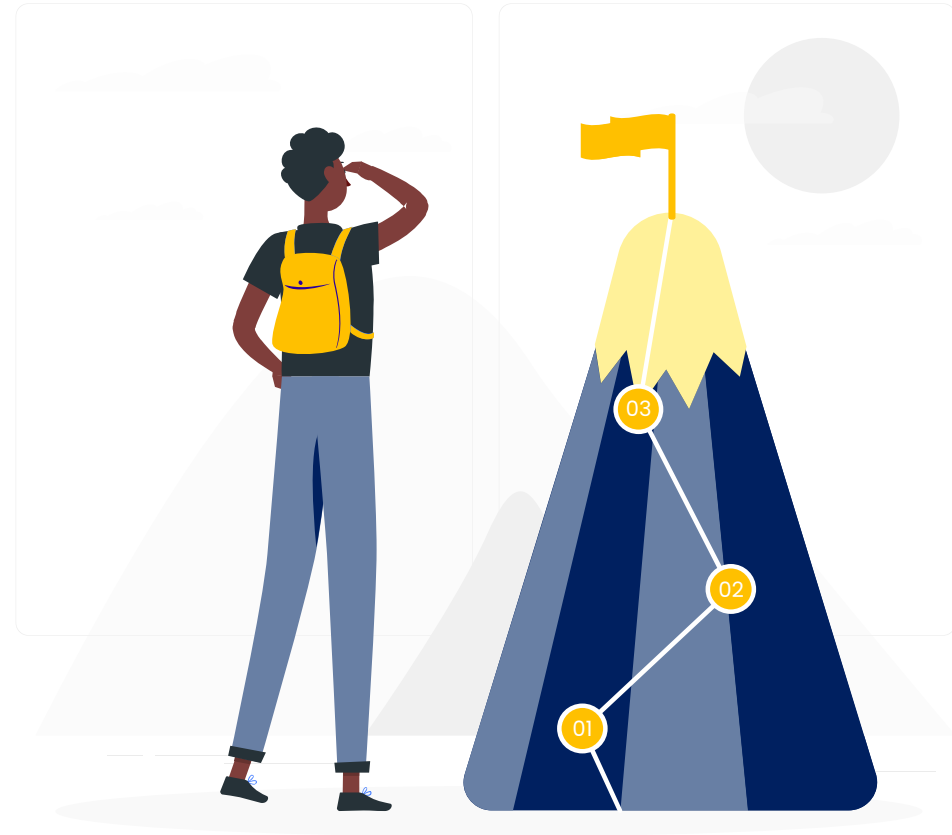
Agency Input

11 local organizers (18 participating public transit agencies)

03

Critical Conversations

10 facilitated local youth centered focus groups (62 youth participants)





Respondent

Profile

- Age: 18-29 years of age (80.4%)
- Gender:
 - Female (50.1%)
 - Male (49.7%)
- Highest Level of Education:
 - Bachelor's Degree (39.1%)
 - Some College/Associates Degree (26.6%)
 - High School Diploma/GED (19.5%)
 - Technical Institute/Apprenticeship (6.4%)
- Employment Status:
 - Full-Time (45.5%)
 - Part-Time (18.7%)
 - Student (17.6%)

Perception of the Transit Industry

- Almost 50% reporting transportation employment and/or career preparation:
 - Half were unfamiliar with the requirements for a bus/rail operator.
 - Close to half (47.2%) were unfamiliar with the requirements for an entry-level transit mechanic position.
 - 25% were NOT aware of the major “frontline” worker shortage.
- For those respondents who were unemployed, a significant number (44.7%) stated they “would personally apply for a frontline position.”
- An overwhelming majority stated they would recommend a frontline transit position to a Friend/Family member (72.4%).



Perception of the Transit Industry

Top Possible Areas of Career Interest:

1. Organizational Development/Human Resources
2. Operations/Maintenance & Safety
3. Bus/Train Operator/Mechanic Roles

Top Incentives to Personally Work as a Public Transit Frontline Employee

1. Compensation
2. Work-Life Balance
3. Clear Career Pathways and Growth Opportunities

Top Reasons for Not Being Interested in a Frontline Position (if unemployed)

1. Compensation: More Competitive Pay + Better Benefits
2. Better Career Awareness Needed: Generally unfamiliar with requirements
3. More Flexible Work Hours/Schedules



Perception of the Transit Industry

Top Challenges/Potential Barriers “Personally” Encountered by Respondents who Previously Applied for a Frontline Position

1. Commercial Driver’s License (CDL)
2. Testing/Qualification
3. Health Issues

Top Employment Process: Searching for Job Opportunities

1. On-Line
2. In-Person
3. Word of Mouth/Family, Friends, Colleagues

Top Job Search Assistance Priorities

1. Resume Writing & Interview/Presentation Skills
2. Classes for Computer Skills (On-Line Job Applications)
3. Mentor



Perception of the Transit Industry

Following an Interview, Time Expected to Receive Hiring Decision

1. Within 1 week
2. About 2 weeks

Why Would You Potentially Leave An Organization

1. Compensation: Pay Not Competitive + Benefits Not Competitive
2. Work Schedule (too inflexible)
3. Work not Interesting

Most Important Life Goals (Priority Order

1. Maintaining Good Physical/Mental Health
2. Being Successful in Work
3. Having a Good Family Life



Focus Group Takeaways

- Meaningfully Engage with Youth
- Describe the “Image” and “Value” of these Positions as the “backbone” of public transport organizations
 - “Worker Voice” and Real-World Examples Matter
- Clear Career Pathways and Advancement Opportunities
- Work with Community Partners to connect with and engage “disconnected youth/young adults”
- Make the “Mobility” and “Community Building” Connection
- Partner with Community Colleges, Technical and Vocational Schools and Training Programs, Other Agency Partners/Industry Employers/Professional Associations
- Communicate Importance of “Workforce-Readiness and Availability”
 - Data, Metrics, Transparency & Accountability
- Simplify the Hiring Process
- Competitive Pay and Benefits are Matters
- Promote Work-Life Balance Matter
- Management Responsiveness and Meaningful Employee Engagement Matter

Next Steps: Urgency and Action

- Elevate industry wide importance of fact-informed, comprehensive approach to “people-readiness”
- Raise the visibility and criticality of “workforce-readiness” and availability
- Need to make “people-readiness” “WE” work – and a critical element of everyday in-house discussions, planning, and decision-making
- Be “less internally siloed” – everyone is potentially an “ambassador,” a “recruiter”
- “Worker voice” at all levels will need to be empowered and motivated to “tell” and “sell” the public transit story
- Top-down reassessment of the work, workforce, and workplace; policies and practices “21st century update”
- Clarity regarding “career” progression and advancement opportunities – and the knowledge, training, and experience needed to be successful
- “Re-framing” the “image” of our frontline workforce as an important “gateway” to a lifetime “career” of exciting and interesting work
- Public transit leadership (management and labor must LEAD this transformation
- ***“YOUTH VOICE” must be at the table!***



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