



Moving Public Transportation
Into the Future

Coping With Driver Shortages

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Agenda

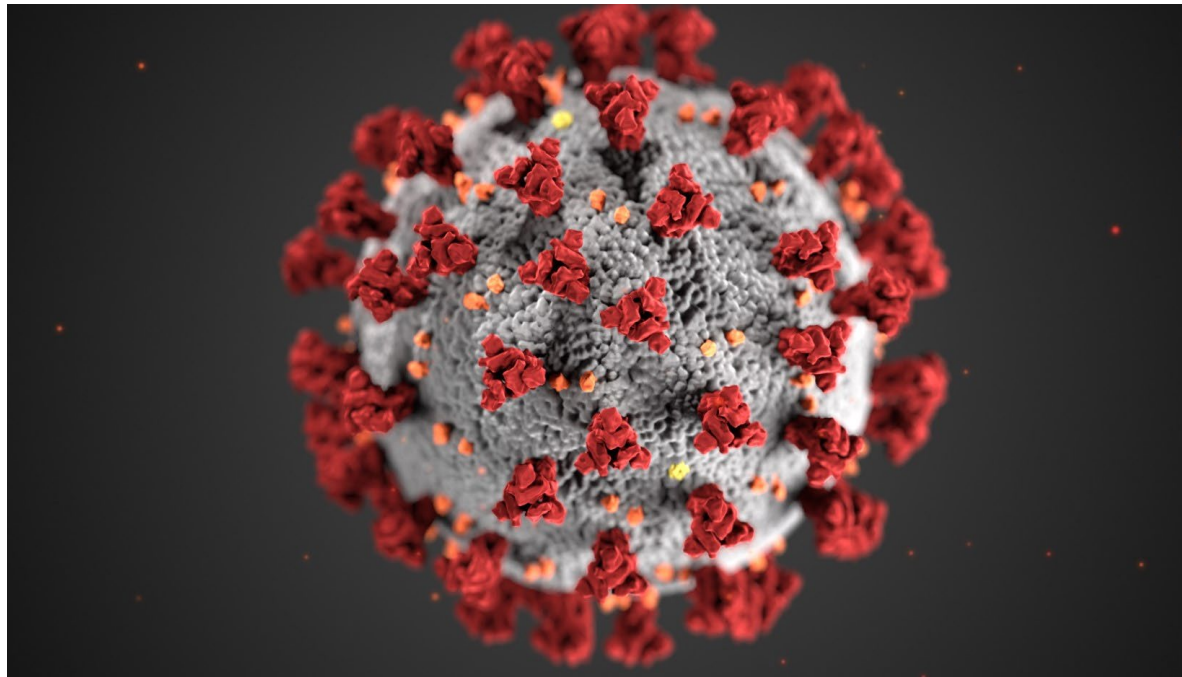
4 Hour Webinar

- ◆ Environmental Challenges
- ◆ Hiring Challenges
- ◆ Recruitment Process
- ◆ Hiring Process
- ◆ Onboarding
- ◆ Employee Growth
- ◆ Understanding Employee Value
- ◆ Break-Out Topics
- ◆ Closure



Environmental Challenges

Since the Spring of 2020, the World has faced one of its worst crisis since 1918.





Environmental Challenges

The pandemic has changed lifestyles and habits for Marylanders



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Outbreak

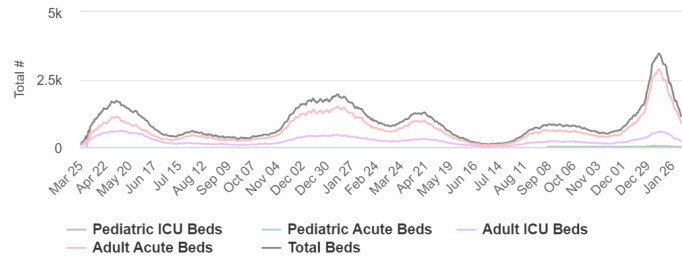
This is a rapidly evolving situation and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) will provide updates as they become available.

Notice of Non-Discrimination and Accessibility Statement

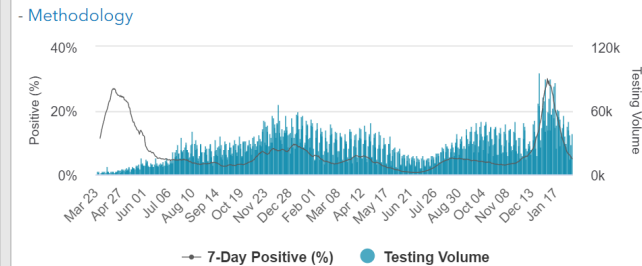
[Additional COVID-19 Resources at CovidLINK](#)



ICU and Acute Hospital Beds for COVID-19, Currently in Use



Testing Volume, Tests per Day and Percent Positive Rate (7-Day Avg)



Hospitalizations, Current

Positivity Rate

Confirmed Cases

968,648

24hr Change: +731

Testing Volume

18,361,870

24hr Change: +35,462

Testing % Positive

4.88%

24hr Change: -0.24

Confirmed Deaths

13,615

24hr Change: +10

Currently Hospitalized

913

24hr Change: -73

Environmental Challenges

How has this pandemic impacted public transit?

- ◆ Ridership dropped
- ◆ New policies to mitigate were developed
- ◆ Additional training provided – PPE, cleaning, social distancing
- ◆ Barriers were erected, fareboxes removed, seating was limited
- ◆ Transit services were reduced





Environmental Challenges

The biggest impact was yet to come...

Our regular passengers and drivers got sick
and we lost some dear friends and co-
workers.



Environmental Challenges

- ◆ As time went on, vaccines were introduced as a way to slow the pandemic down while also raising personal choices and hard decisions for some.
- ◆ Today, though the impacts of Covid-19 have lessened, the after effects have left Public Transit in a precarious situation.

How do we fill our operator vacancies?



Environmental Challenges

Other industries were impacted as well.

- ◆ Transportation – trucking, shipping, ports, airlines
- ◆ Hospitality – hotels, tourist destinations, resorts
- ◆ Manufacturing – auto, consumer goods
- ◆ Food Services Industry
- ◆ Retail industry
- ◆ School systems

While other industries flourished

- ◆ Amazon, Grubhub, Uber Eats and other online retail delivery



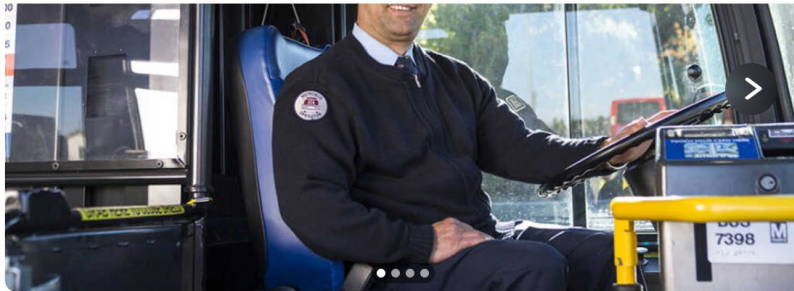
Environmental Challenges

- Montgomery County Requests Help From National Guard Amid School Bus Driver Shortage
- Lawmakers Discuss Challenges Causing Bus Driver Shortage Across Maryland
- Bus driver shortage stresses school districts

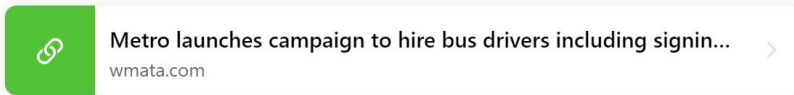


Environmental Challenges

Search Nextdoor



Metro launches campaign to hire bus drivers, including signing bonus. Beginning this week, we're offering up to a \$2,500 pay incentive as part of a new campaign to hire more bus drivers! We're facing a staffing shortage due to the pandemic and looking to hire nearly 70 bus drivers needed to meet the current bus service
See more...



Posted to **Subscribers of WMATA**



6



Like



1 Comment



Share



Interesting that Wiedefeld's statement indicates what WMATA wants from the drivers and how critical they are to the public, but says nothing about what WMATA is prepared to do to retain the new drivers or those who they already have. I signing bonus is a lure...what are you willing to do as a company to keep people there. I know several Metro employees and many want to leave or have left due to the toxic culture that the experience.

7 hr ago

Like

Share



4

Interesting that Wiedefeld's statement indicates what WMATA wants from the drivers and how critical they are to the public, but says nothing about what WMATA is prepared to do to retain the new drivers or those who they already have. I signing bonus is a lure...what are you willing to do as a company to keep people there. I know several Metro employees and many want to leave or have left due to the toxic culture that the experience.

Environmental Challenges

How do these other industries impact transit?

- ◆ Manufacturing and Transportation effect the supply chain.
 - Anyone having trouble replacing vehicles or getting parts?
 - New and used car inventory – chips and chassis
- ◆ Online retail sales are skyrocketing as more people shop from their couch. Amazon drivers have little interaction with people...maybe an occasional dog.



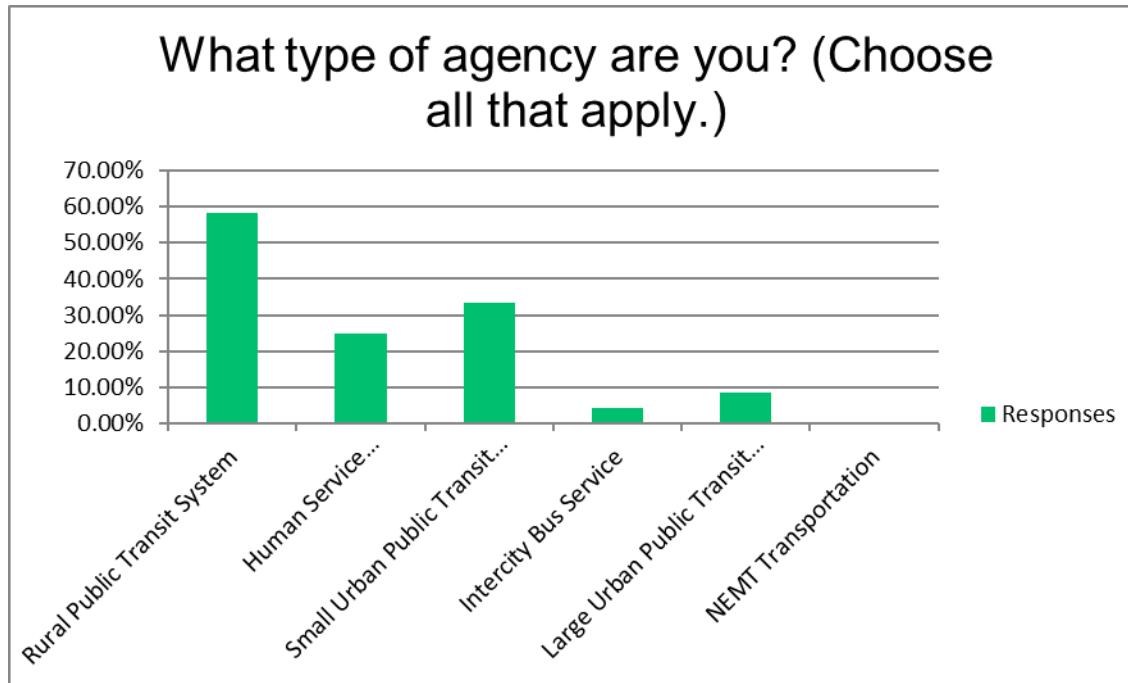


Survey Responses



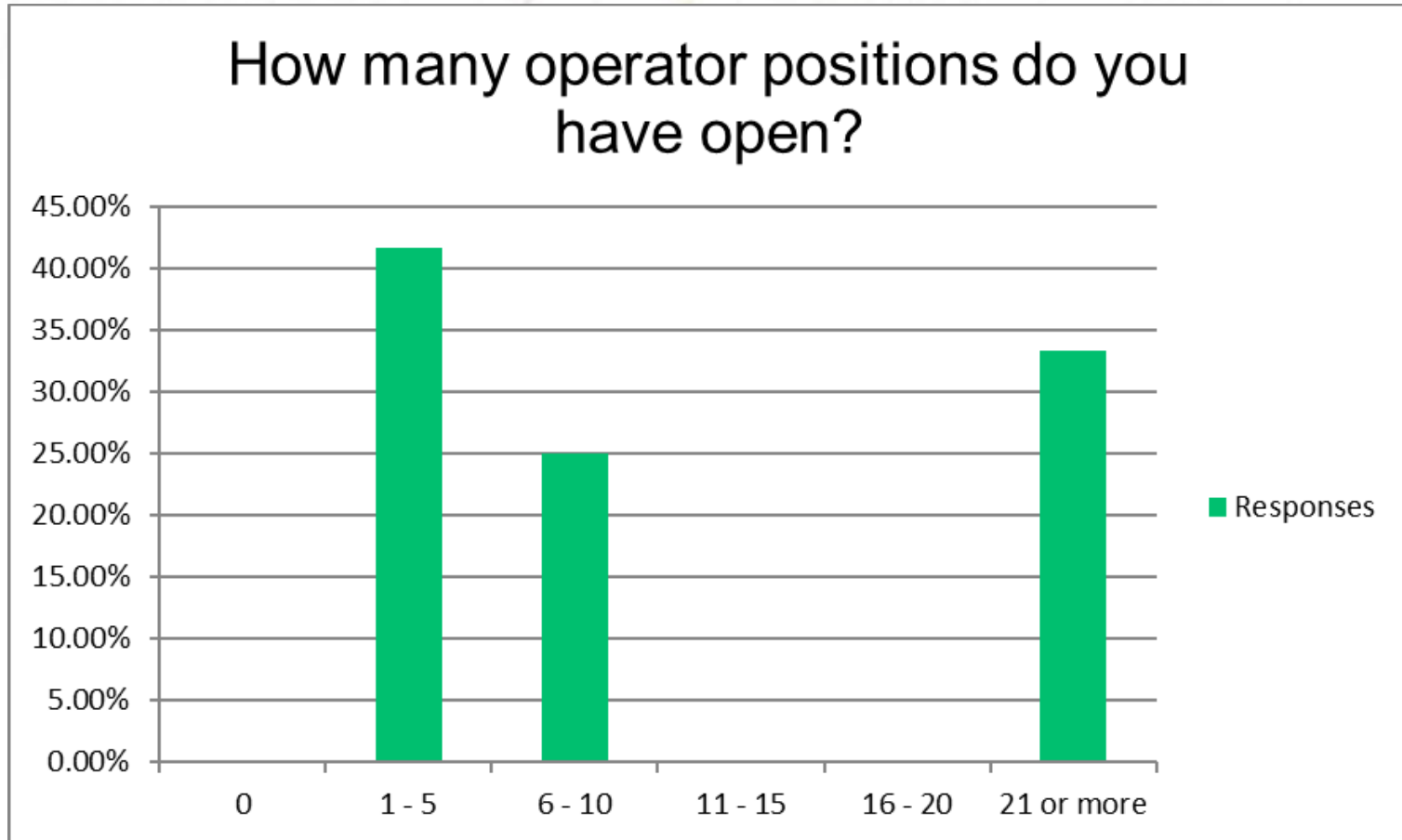
TAM Survey Results

TAM Members were asked 21 questions



Rural Public Transit System	14
Human Service Transportation Service	6
Small Urban Public Transit System	8
Intercity Bus Service	1
Large Urban Public Transit System	2
NEMT Transportation	0
Survey Total	24

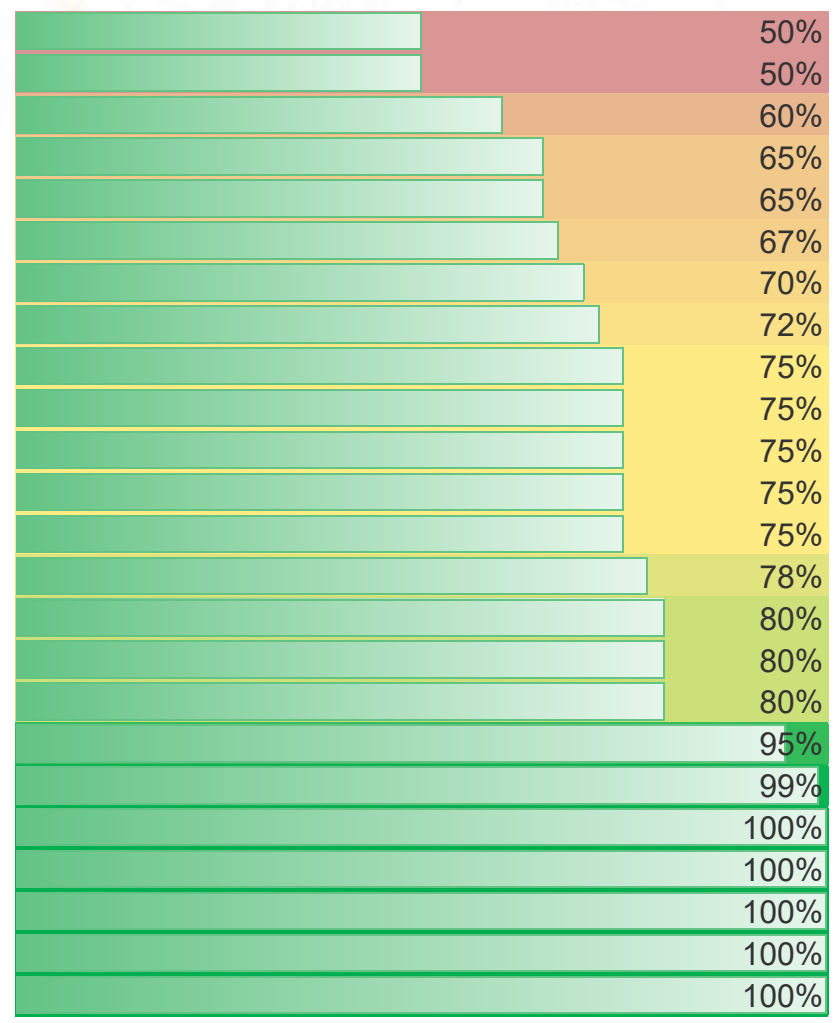
TAM Survey Results





TAM Survey Results

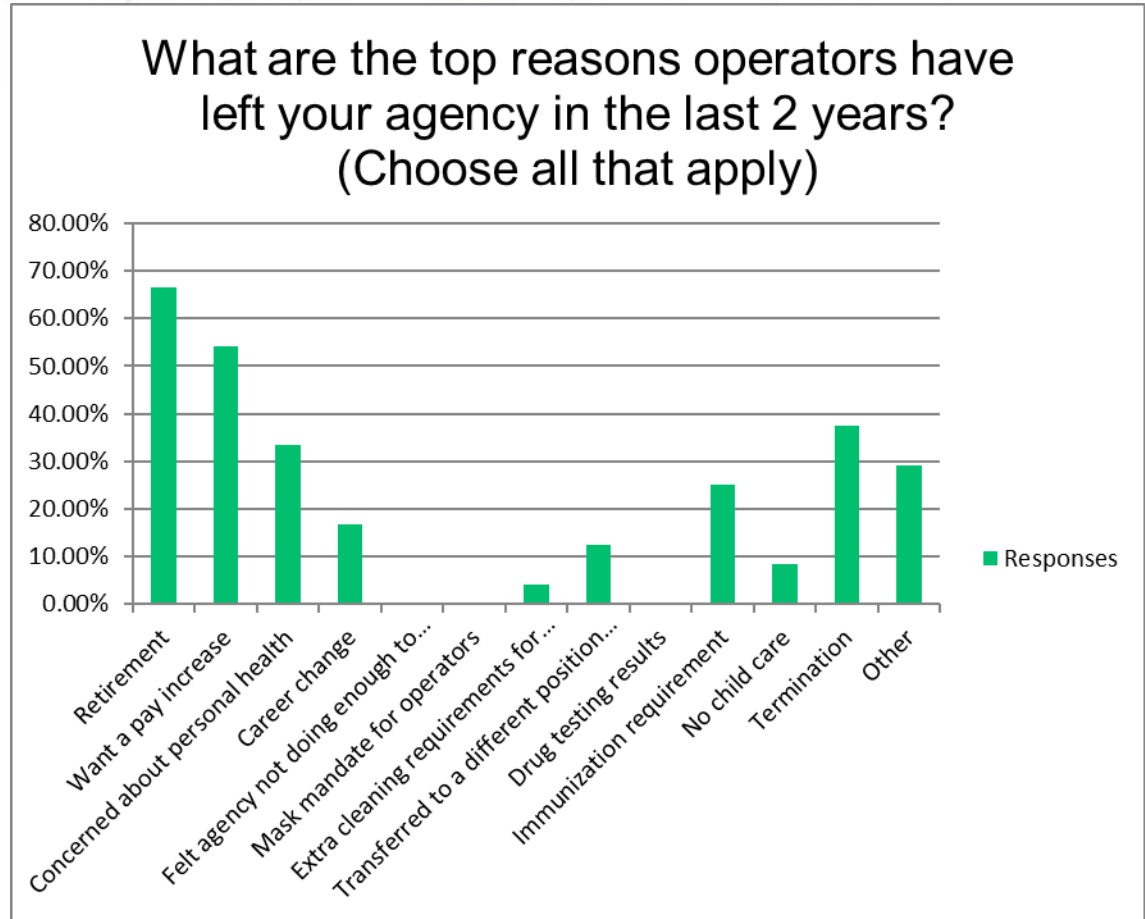
What % of your Pre-Pandemic service level area are you currently operating?





TAM Survey Results

To know how to fill vacancies we must first know why they left.





TAM Survey Results

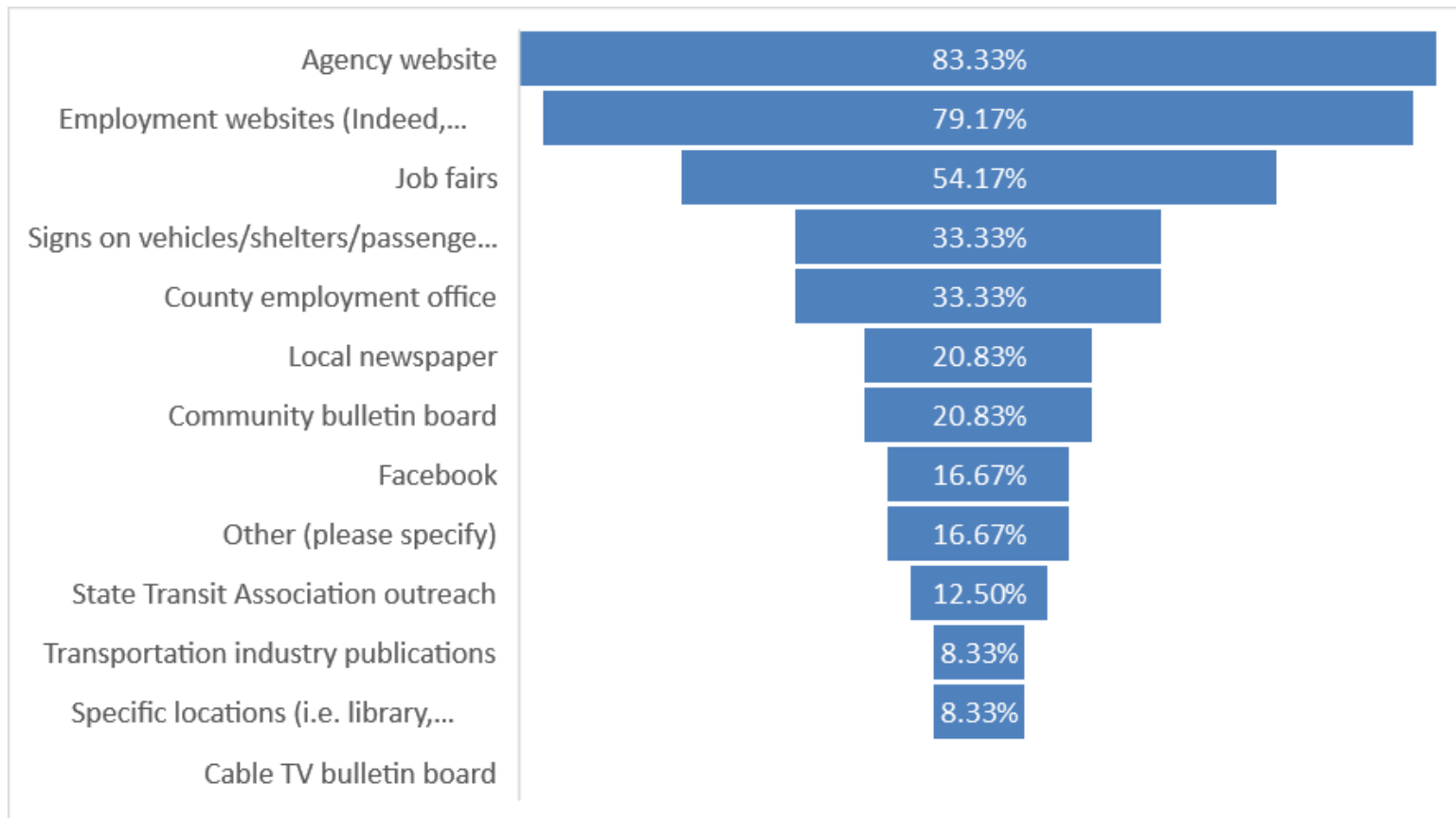
What are the most common complaints by operators? (Choose all that apply)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Pay rate	75.00%	18
Passenger issues related to COVID-19	41.67%	10
Passenger issues (not related to COVID-19)	37.50%	9
Hours scheduled	20.83%	5
Driving stress	12.50%	3
Not enough breaks	8.33%	2
Too many policies/procedures/requirements	8.33%	2
Supervisory issues	4.17%	1
Vehicle maintenance issues	0.00%	0
Drug and Alcohol Testing	0.00%	0
Poor training	0.00%	0
	Answered	24



TAM Survey Results

What methods do you use to advertise operator positions?
(Choose all that apply)



TAM Survey Results

Do you require applicants to possess a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) upon hire?

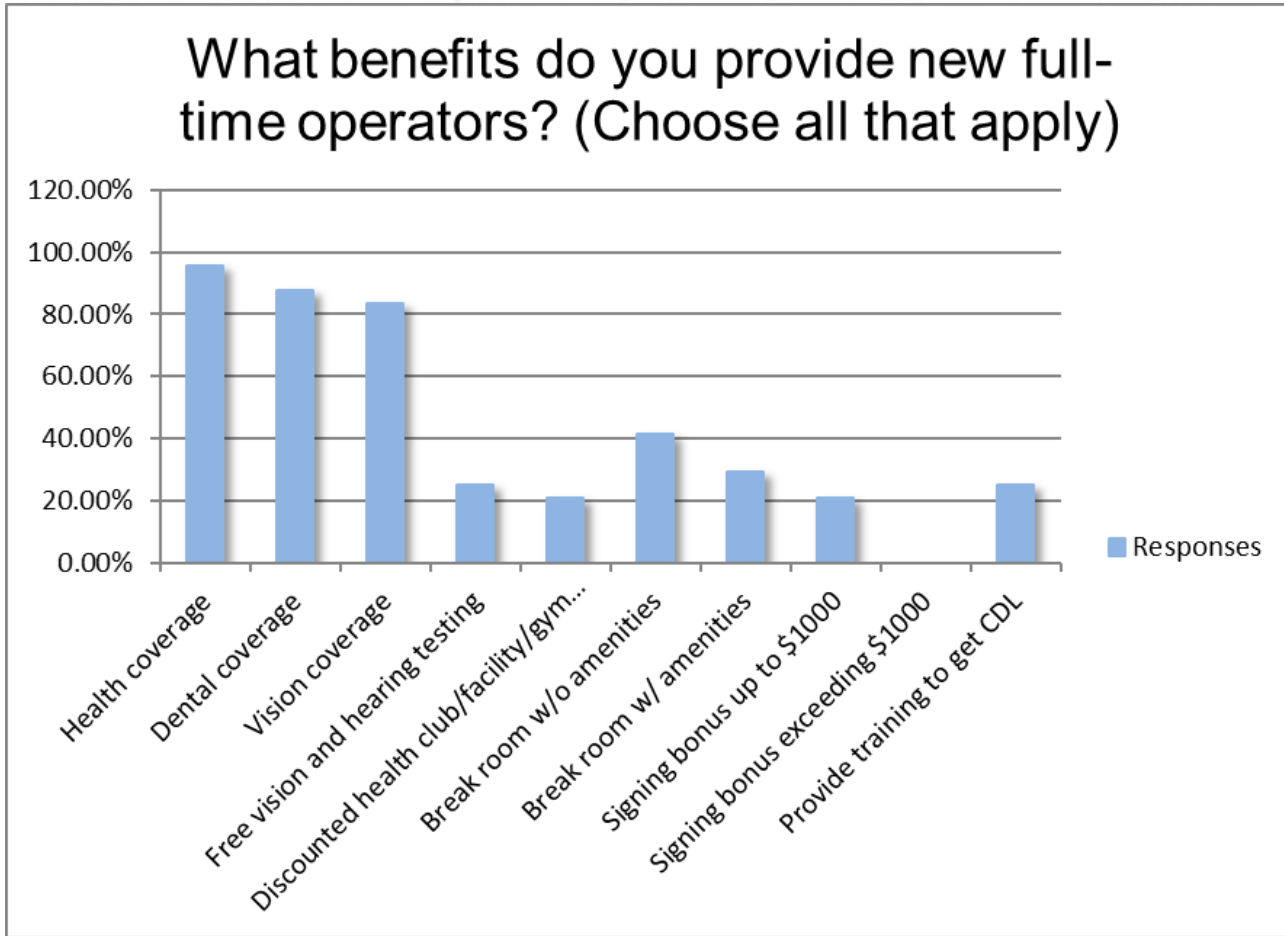
Choices	Responses	
Yes	37.50%	9
No	62.50%	15
	Answered	24

Do you provide training to employees to obtain a CDL?

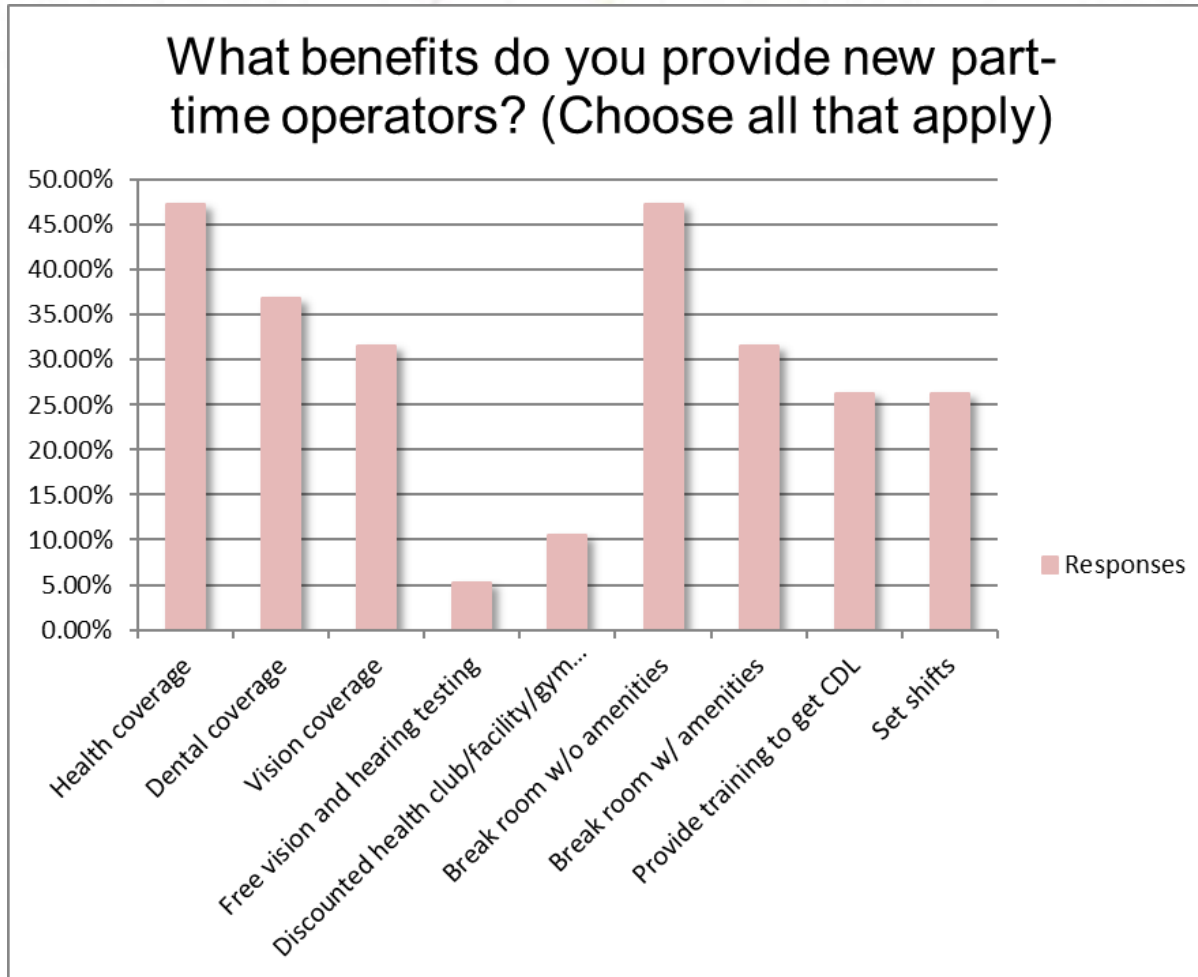
Choices	Responses	
Yes	41.67%	10
No	58.33%	14
	Answered	24



TAM Survey Results



TAM Survey Results



TAM Survey Results

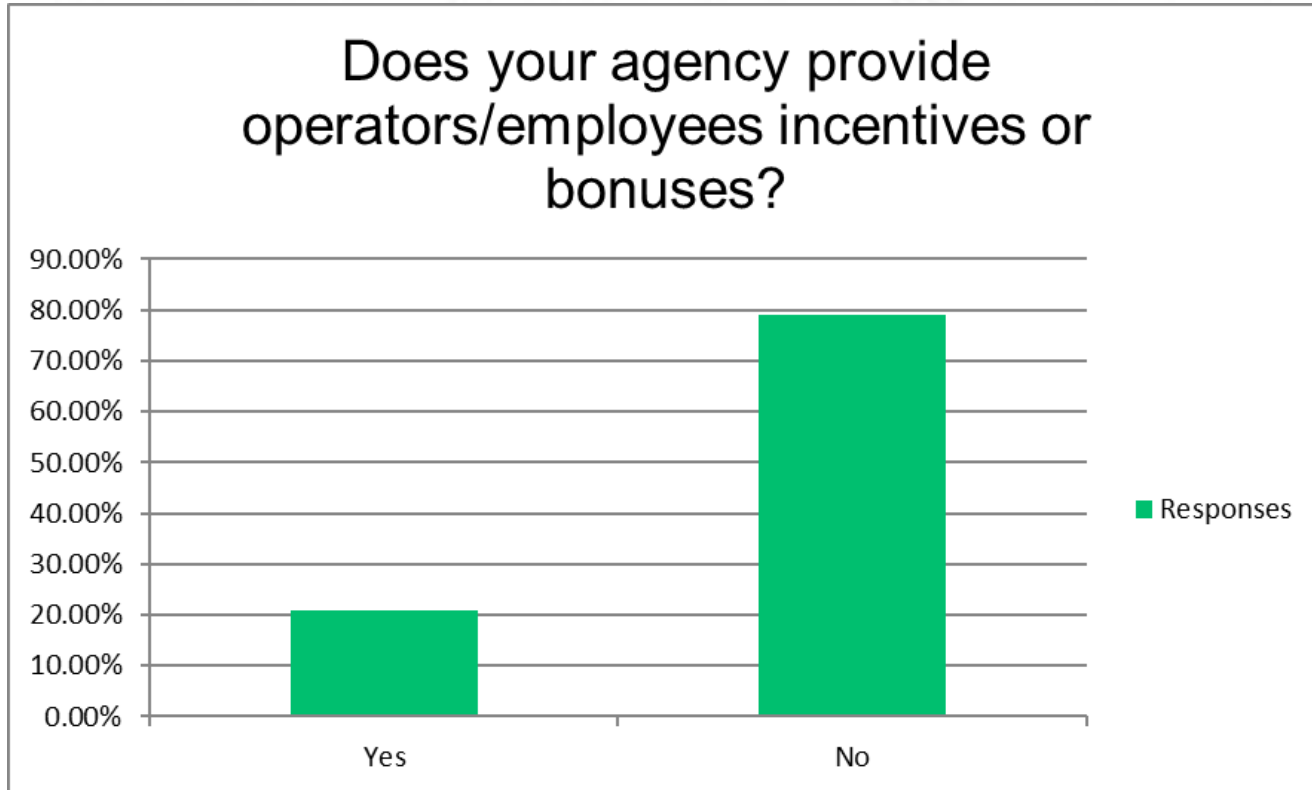
Are operators assigned the same vehicle each day?

Choices	Responses	
Yes	45.83%	11
No	54.17%	13
	Answered	24

Are new operators paid the same or more than any existing operators as a result of the driver shortage?

Choices	Responses	
Yes	30.43%	7
No	69.57%	16
	Answered	23
	Skipped	1

TAM Survey Results





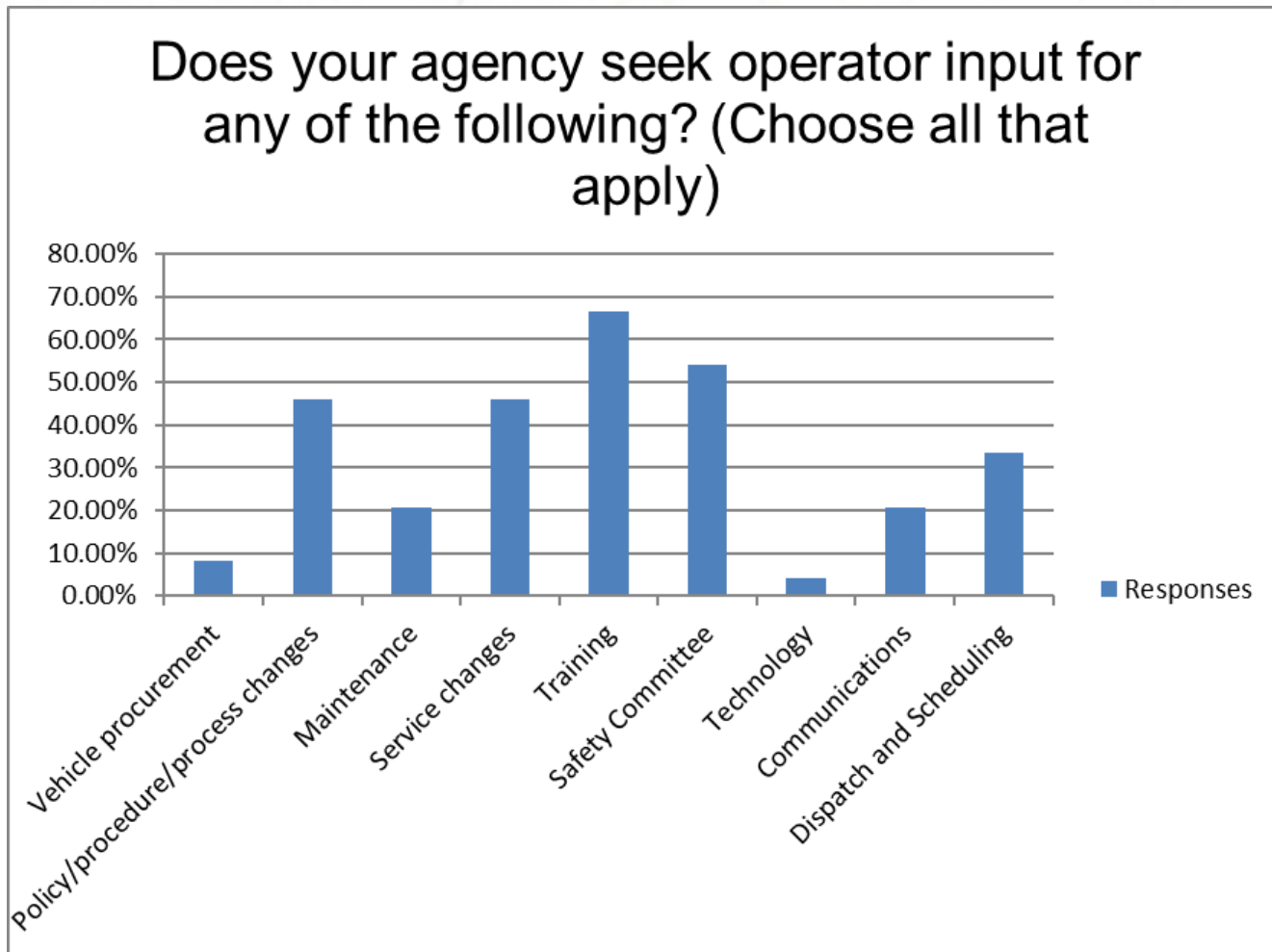
TAM Survey Results

What type of incentives or bonuses do you provide operators/employees? (Choose all that apply)

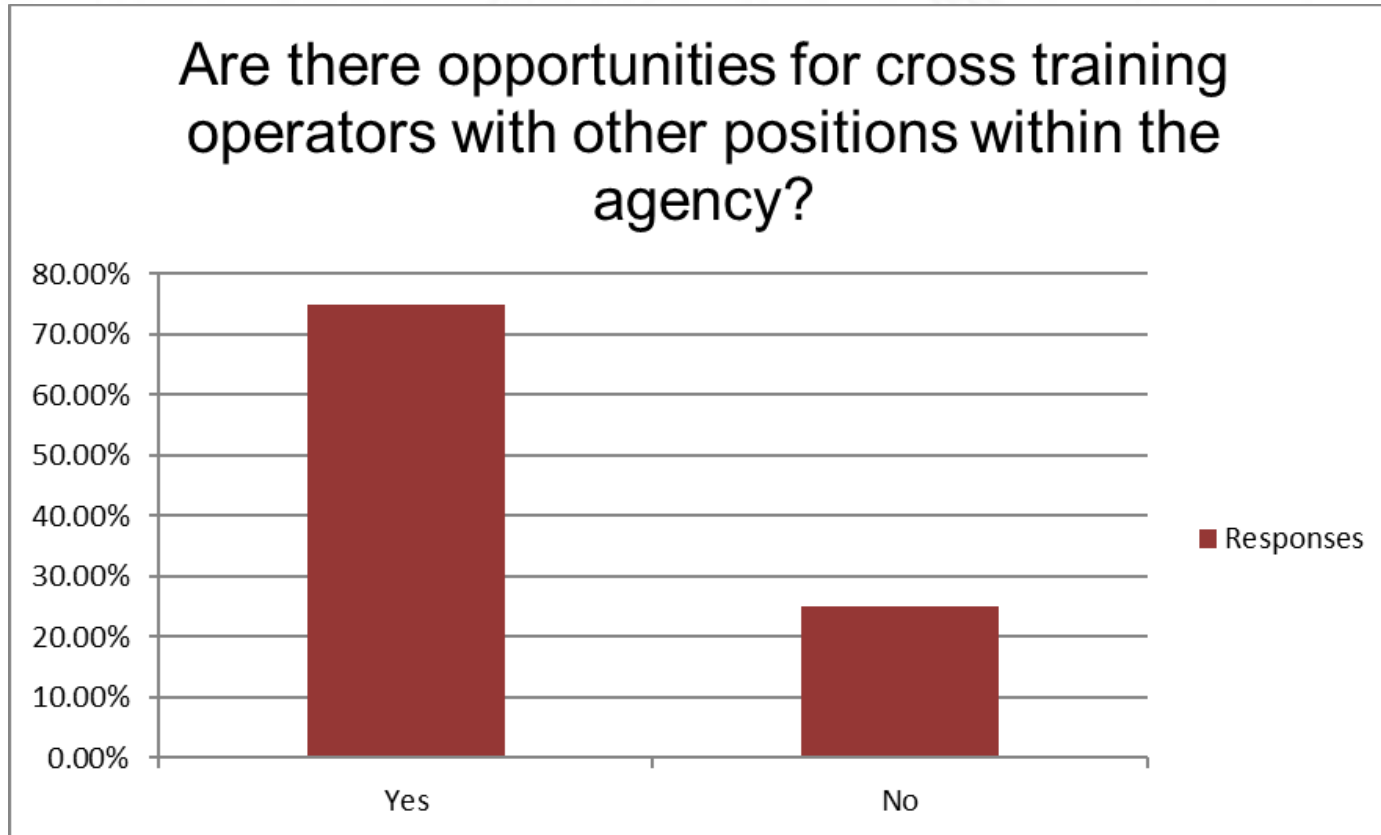
Answer Choices	Responses	
Bonuses - Days off, monetary bonus (not pay increase), store/gym/service gift card	80.00%	4
Years of service recognition	60.00%	3
Operator/Employee of the month, quarter, or year	40.00%	2
Safety recognition	20.00%	1
Customer service recognition	20.00%	1
Events sponsored by agency (i.e. holiday party, cookout, health and wellness event, etc.)	20.00%	1
State Rodeo participation (including National Rodeo if qualify)	20.00%	1
Other (please specify)	20.00%	1
Above and beyond award	0.00%	0
	Answered	5
	Skipped	19

Other: Acceptable application in by "X" date bonus; Employee Referral bonus; Stay thru the end of the Season bonus; Paid CDL Training;

TAM Survey Results



TAM Survey Results



TAM Survey Results

Are there opportunities for cross training operators with other positions within the agency?

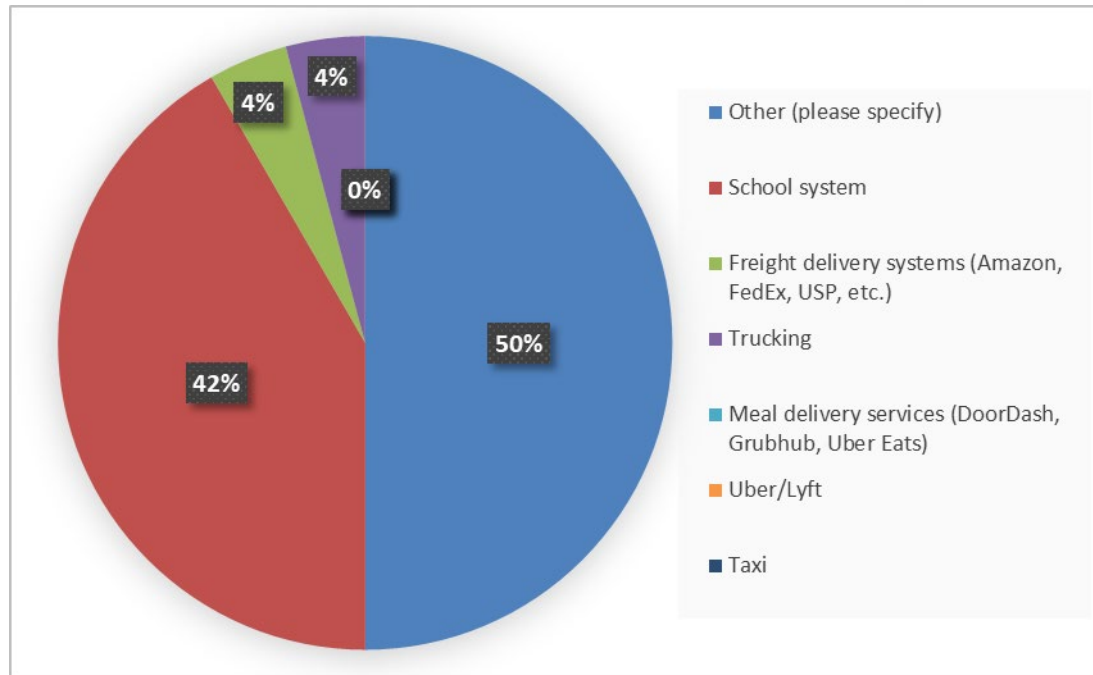
Choices	Responses	
Yes	75%	18
No	25%	6
	Answered	24

Does your agency have a collective bargaining agreement?

Choices	Responses	
Yes	37.50%	9
No	62.50%	15
	Answered	24

TAM Survey Results

What is your biggest competition for operators?



Other: Fast food restaurants, Adult day services, WMATA (2), Private sector, CDL Truck, Covid-19, Higher paying jobs, no comp

TAM Survey Results

What is the average age of your agency's operators?

Choices	Responses	
18-24	0.00%	0
25-34	0.00%	0
35-44	8.70%	2
45-54	26.09%	6
55-64	52.17%	12
65-74	13.04%	3
75+	0.00%	0
	Answered	23
	Skipped	1

What percentage of your operators are full-time?

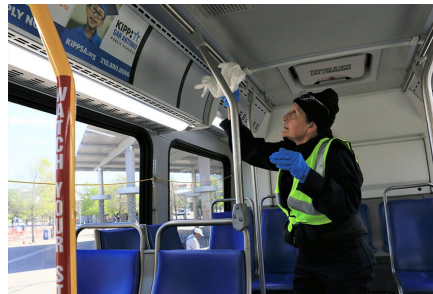
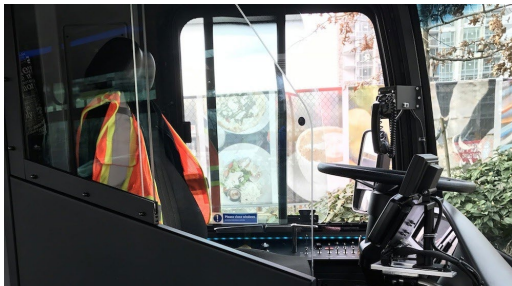
0%	1
5%	1
25%	1
43%	1
60%	1
63%	1
75%	1
76%	1
80%	3
90%	5
95%	5
100%	2
	23



TAM Survey Results

Has your agency made modifications to protect the operators? (Choose all that apply)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Additional cleaning and disinfecting	95.83%	23
Vehicle interior modifications (i.e. plexiglass driver area, social distancing)	66.67%	16
Policy changes (no fares, operator vaccination requirement, reduced capacity)	66.67%	16
Additional training and education in response to COVID-19	58.33%	14
Periodic wellness checks of operators (mental health)	33.33%	8
	Answered	24





Hiring Challenges



Hiring Challenges

Retirement	66.67%
Want a pay increase	54.17%
Termination	37.50%
Concerned about personal health	33.33%
Other	29.17%
Immunization requirement	25.00%
Career change	16.67%
Transferred to a different position within agency	12.50%
No child care	8.33%
Extra cleaning requirements for operators	4.17%
Felt agency not doing enough to protect employees	0.00%
Mask mandate for operators	0.00%
Drug testing results	0.00%



Hiring Challenges

Retirement

Operators probably had plans for retirement at some point, but Covid might have accelerated those plans. Underlying cause of mass retirements

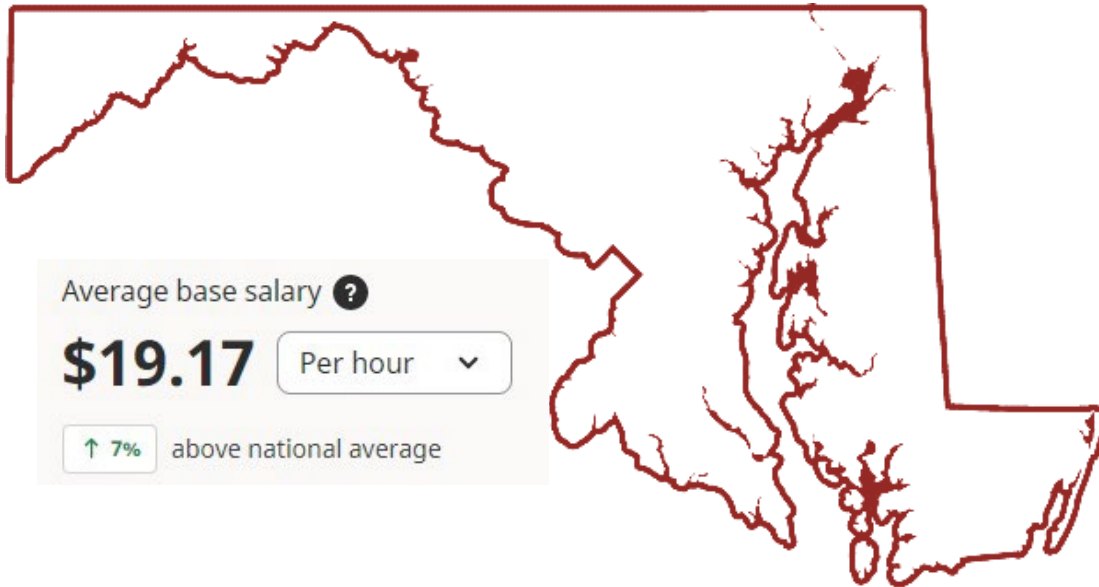
- ◆ Personal Safety
- ◆ Find a job with minimal people interaction
- ◆ “Can’t pay me enough to risk my health”
- ◆ Predisposed immune system
- ◆ Not pleased with Transit’s response
- ◆ Or...Just at that age



Hiring Challenges

Pay

The national average according to [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) is **\$23.13** mean hourly wage for bus drivers, transit and intercity (May 2020)



\$20.50



Photo: ©Courtesy of TriMet, Portland, OR

\$12.00



Hiring Challenges

“There is not really a lack of bus operators,” said David Bragdon, executive director of the nonprofit TransitCenter which advocates nationally for better public transportation. “There’s just a lack of labor at the wages employers are willing to offer, so raising pay has to be part of the answer to the perceived shortage. Nationally we have yet to see systemic change in transit’s labor relations, but the situation does call for it.”

Virginia Mercury, Nov. 19, 2021



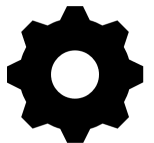
Recruitment Process



Recruitment Process

Based on the challenges, how do we make becoming a bus operator look attractive?

Before we can start our marketing and advertising campaign we have to step back and look at our system and ask why anyone would want to work there.





Recruitment Process

How do we do that?

- ◆ Consider surveying employees
- ◆ Evaluate current benefits for incoming operators
- ◆ Is your pay scale competitive for the area?
 - Other operator positions (schools, delivery, trucking etc...
 - Are there other local industries stacking up the applications? What do they pay for entry level?
- ◆ What values does the job bring an individual?
- ◆ Turnover ratios – exit interviews



Recruitment Process

How do we do that?

- ◆ Where will the operator spend most of their day? Are the conditions satisfactory or excellent?
- ◆ What is the office work environment like?
- ◆ What structure is in place to support volunteer drivers?
- ◆ What does your social media presence look like? Reviews, disgruntled employees or passenger posts
- ◆ Does your system provide the necessary tools for operators to be successful?

Training

Recognition

Appreciation

Growth

Responsibility

Leadership

Safety Culture



Recruitment Process

Once your evaluation is complete focus on the strongest elements to build your marketing effort.

“At ABC Transit System we offer a safe and rewarding career while providing a vital service to the community”

“Do you want to be a valued part of a team of heroes making a difference in our community?”



Recruitment Process

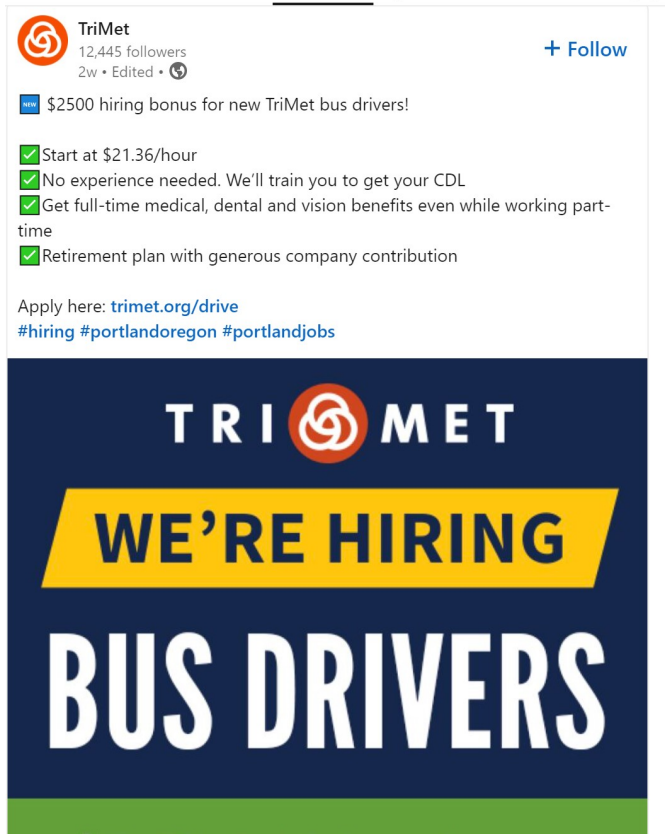
Or you can keep trying...

About the job

█ Transit is now hiring Full-Time Vehicle Operators to join the team. Applicants are required to have at least 6 years of general driving experience legally operating a motor vehicle. In order to be considered for hire, applicants must be able to consistently report to work on short notice. Satisfactory completion of a pre-employment drug/alcohol screen and criminal background check is a condition of employment for this position with █ Transit.

Recruitment Process

Or somewhere in between...



The image shows a LinkedIn post from the official TriMet page. The post header includes the TriMet logo, the name 'TriMet', '12,445 followers', and '2w • Edited •'. A '+ Follow' button is visible. The main text of the post reads: '\$2500 hiring bonus for new TriMet bus drivers!'. Below this, there are four bullet points, each with a green checkmark icon: 'Start at \$21.36/hour', 'No experience needed. We'll train you to get your CDL', 'Get full-time medical, dental and vision benefits even while working part-time', and 'Retirement plan with generous company contribution'. At the bottom of the text, it says 'Apply here: trimet.org/drive' and includes the hashtags '#hiring #portlandoregon #portlandjobs'. Below the text is a large graphic with a dark blue background and a green bottom bar. The graphic features the 'TRI MET' logo at the top, a yellow banner with the text 'WE'RE HIRING', and the words 'BUS DRIVERS' in large white letters at the bottom.

TriMet – Portland, OR

- ◆ Provide safe, reliable, courteous, and efficient bus transportation service for residents and visitors in the TriMet service area.
- ◆ Ensure a commitment to safety through consistent and professional behaviors in performance of job requirements that demonstrate safety is a fundamental value that guides all aspects of our work. Perform related duties as required.
- ◆ Serve as a good steward of TriMet by regularly utilizing our transit system to maintain a strong and current understanding of customers' experiences and of TriMet's product and service offerings.

Recruitment Process

Marketing the Position

- ◆ Description (hook, description, benefits, close)
- ◆ Add strategic picture
 - Smiling employees
 - Assisting passengers
 - New buses
 - New technologies
- ◆ Highlight achievements, safety, and rewards of working at your agency

◆ Where to place ad

- Newspaper (old school?)
- Agency website
- Employment websites – Indeed, Monster, Glassdoor
- County Employment Office
- On vehicles, shelter, ticket outlets
- Social Media – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn
- Chamber of Commerce
- Community Bulletin Board
- LPTA
- Churches



Recruitment Process

Add examples of marketing pics



Recruitment Process

Other Methods

- ◆ Job Fairs
- ◆ Community Events
- ◆ Video
- ◆ Rider Testimonies
- ◆ Employee Referrals
- ◆ Local News Story
- ◆ Targeted Market
- ◆ Volunteer Organizations





Hiring Process



Hiring Process

The hiring process can be painful and time consuming to both the employer and applicant.

Evaluate your process. Is it...

- ◆ Time consuming – application process, review timeline, start time from offer time
- ◆ Available in electronic format for submission
- ◆ Include unnecessary steps
- ◆ Clear and concise



Hiring Process

Evaluate your qualification requirements.

Are qualifications reducing potential applicant pool?

“must have 6 years legal driving experience”

“required to have CDL with P endorsement”

“must work well with others”

“required to work any shift”

“must possess strong work ethic”



Hiring Process

- ◆ Is your agency able to provide CDL training?
- ◆ Can you teach customer service skills?
- ◆ Do new employees automatically get the least desirable shift, vehicle, supervisor or hours?
- ◆ Do you offer tracks for advancement, cross training, or additional responsibilities?



Hiring Process

The application, interview and pre-hire testing must be consistent for all applicants.

Creativity is now necessary to entice applicants, but understand the impact on current operators hired under normal circumstances.



Hiring Process

Putting barriers up in the job requirements tells applicants they will be judged from the start.

Make the process easy. You want them to apply. You want them to be interviewed.



Onboarding



Onboarding

Onboarding, Orientation, Initial Training

Do you have a process in place for onboarding that is organized, coordinated and efficient?

Does your agency have the resources and time to properly prepare a new operator?

The pulse perspective is never a good option.



Onboarding

Using checklists, training agenda and handbooks, company policies and procedures are basic guidelines to ensure proper preparation.

What else might help?



Onboarding

Onboarding Value Added

- ◆ Develop a mentoring program
- ◆ Establish benchmarks with instructor/manager with feedback at each stage of onboarding
- ◆ Ask for feedback from trainee
- ◆ Arrange recognition upon completion
- ◆ Identify co-workers to help informal guidance
- ◆ Provide wellness checks
- ◆ Open door policy



Onboarding

What is the onboarding approach with volunteer drivers?

- ◆ Arrangement
- ◆ Training
- ◆ Regulatory compliance
- ◆ Mileage reimbursement
- ◆ Scheduling
- ◆ Accountability
- ◆ Vehicle and insurance requirements



Onboarding

Management must deliver on its commitment to provide accurate and updated training, grasp new learning techniques, use technology platforms where applicable and assess the process periodically to determine effectiveness.



Employee Growth & Value



Employee Growth

Once an applicant has been trained, the process does not end. To retain operators the agency must continue to develop the employee and help them be successful.



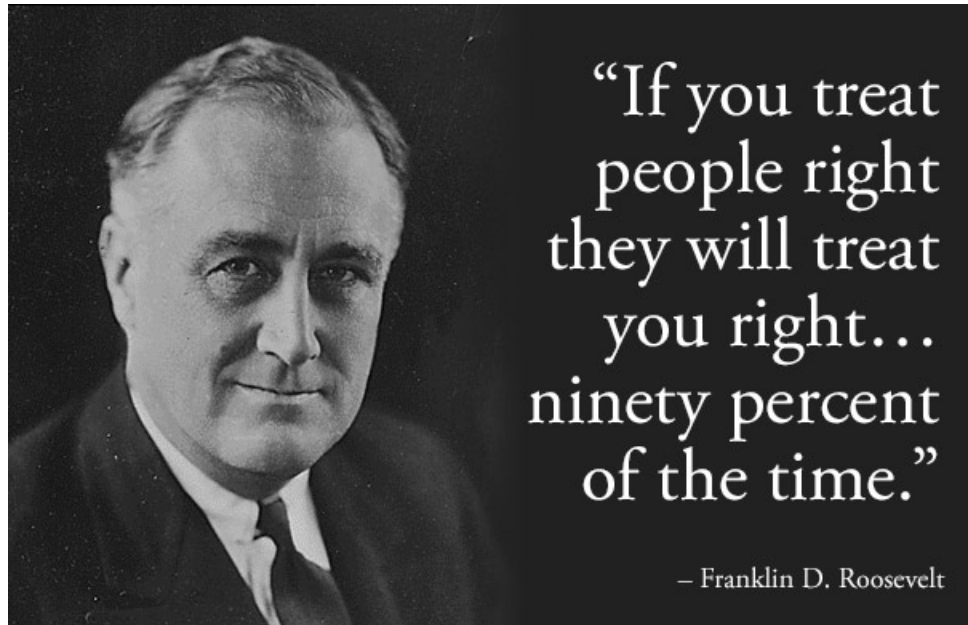
Employee Growth

Tools to encourage success:

- ◆ Wellness programs...especially these days
- ◆ Continued education
- ◆ Timely and meaningful evaluations
- ◆ Recognition at any level
- ◆ Avenues for feedback
- ◆ “Don’t mess with my pay!”
- ◆ Respect

Employee Growth

Respect – easy to promise, but harder to practice.





Employee Growth

How does your agency show respect?

- ◆ Vehicle condition and maintenance
- ◆ Policy and procedure enforcement and non-enforcement
- ◆ Delivery of promises – “I promise those brakes will be fixed tomorrow”
- ◆ Consistent treatment
- ◆ Identifying risk proactively
- ◆ Management awareness



Understanding Employee Value

Similar to Employee Growth, Employee Value is for both the benefit of the employee and the agency.

How do you place a value on an employee?

What do they bring to the transit system?

How do they enhance the rider experience?

How do you share this value?



Understanding Employee Value

Valuing Employees

- ◆ Annual or periodic evaluation
- ◆ Ask for suggestions
- ◆ Provide responsibilities
- ◆ Use data to support value
- ◆ Emphasis on training and safety
- ◆ Provide proper tools



Understanding Employee Value

Sharing with employee their value

- ◆ Recognition awards
- ◆ Periodic, spontaneous appreciation
- ◆ Events
- ◆ Incentives
- ◆ Participation in non standard training or education
- ◆ Media stories
- ◆ Submission for outside awards
- ◆ Pay scale



Break-out Sessions

#1 – Developing advertisement, marketing and application process

#2 – Driver retention, tools for success and value



Break-out #1

Developing advertisement, marketing and application process

- ◆ **What are 3 low cost methods of advertising job openings you are/can implement?**
- ◆ **What are 3 higher cost methods of advertising job openings you are/can implement?**

Break-out #1

Developing advertisement, marketing and application process

- ◆ **List 3 ways your agency creates a positive impression on the community.**
 - Examples: Drivers in uniform, clean buses/vans, food drive – “stuff the bus”, participate in community events etc...

Break-out #1

Developing advertisement, marketing and application process

- ◆ **What steps have you taken to expedite the application/interview/hire process? (without sacrificing safety and proper background checks)**

Examples might include:

Removed Rorschak test, removed map test, online application, reduced app review time

3 of 3

Break-out #2

Driver retention, tools for success and value

- ◆ **What processes do you have in place to check the wellness of your drivers?**

Examples might include:

Routine assessments, driver meetings,
casual discussions, passenger feedback

Break-out #2

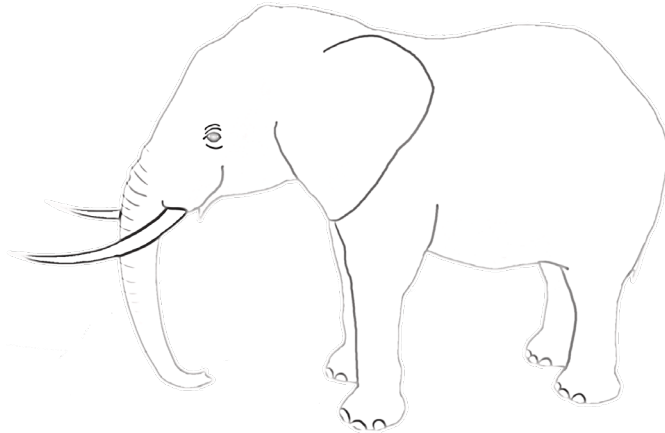
Driver retention, tools for success and value

- ◆ **What no/low cost steps can you take to show drivers they are valued?**
- ◆ **What additional steps, though some cost involved, can you take to show drivers they are valued?**

Break-out #2

Driver retention, tools for success and value

- ◆ **If pay rate is the biggest obstacle for hiring and retaining drivers, what steps can you take to improve the pay?**





Break-out Summary

Group #1

- ◆ What are 3 low cost methods of advertising job openings you are/can implement?
- ◆ What are 3 higher cost methods of advertising job openings you are/can implement?
- ◆ List 3 ways your agency creates a positive impression on the community.
- ◆ What steps have you taken to expedite the application/interview/hire process? (without sacrificing safety and proper background checks)



Break-out Summary

Group #2

- ◆ What processes do you have in place to check the wellness of your drivers?
- ◆ What no/low cost steps can you take to show drivers they are valued?
- ◆ What additional steps, though some cost involved, can you take to show drivers they are valued?
- ◆ If pay rate is the biggest obstacle for hiring and retaining drivers, what steps can you take to improve the pay?



Overview

Retention of operators starts before the application process.

As a agency, determine what changes can be made to help new and existing operators succeed.

Continuous evaluation of your internal system is just as important as your external system.



Resources

National RTAP – [Transit Manager's Toolkit](#)

APTA - [Recruiting and Retaining Bus Operations Employees](#)

APTA – [Transit Workforce Readiness Guide](#)

CTAA – National Volunteer Transportation Center – [Volunteer Driver Recruitment and Retention Experience and Practice](#)

CTAA CTR - [Driver Shortage and Incarcerated Re-entry - Solution for Success?](#)

CTAA - [Top Ten Tips for Sourcing and Hiring Drivers](#)

TCRP - [Attracting, Retaining, and Advancing Women in Transit](#)

TCRP - [Resource Guide for Improving Diversity and Inclusion Programs for the Public Transportation Industry](#)

Alliance for Just Society - [Invest in Transit Equity, Invest in Transit Workers](#) – Report Feb. 2022



Questions?



Thank you!



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