# Compensation Survey of North Carolina Transit Systems

*Final Report*

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Integrated Mobility Division

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# Executive Summary

Transit systems in North Carolina are having difficulty hiring and retaining drivers and other operations staff. A compensation survey of North Carolina transit systems was conducted in August 2021 to assist the NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division in understanding current transit operations salaries and benefits across the state and how they relate to operator (driver) vacancies.

The survey was distributed to all North Carolina transit agencies to understand vacancy rates, pay rates, benefits and other strategies for recruiting and retaining employees. Based on the survey responses submitted by 71 transit agencies, operator vacancy rates average 20% statewide, meaning one out of every five operator positions is unfilled. Eight transit agencies reported operator vacancy rates of 50% or higher. The challenges are statewide but are more pronounced in rural areas and for smaller transit systems, measured by the number of vehicles.

Analysis of operator vacancy rates, based on the many variables collected through the survey responses and supplemented with transit agency characteristics, identified the following findings:

- **Higher pay leads to lower vacancies** – Transit systems with higher minimum pay rates have lower vacancy rates.
- **Reliable hours and pay attracts workers** – Transit systems with a higher percentage of full-time drivers and/or more generous overtime policies have lower vacancy rates.
- **Workers want training, health benefits, and a quality work environment** – Transit systems which offer healthcare benefits, offer CDL training, and that foster a quality working environment have lower vacancy rates.
- **Blended services can create more opportunities** – Transit systems which blend purchased and directly operated transportation services have lower average vacancy rates.

## Key Findings

### Higher pay leads to lower vacancies.

For operator positions not required to have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL), the average vacancy rate is 16% when the starting wage is $13 or higher, 22% when the starting wage is between $11 and $12.99 per hour, and 34% when the starting wage is less than $11 per hour.

For CDL operator positions, the average vacancy rate is 16% when the starting wage is $13 or higher and 25% when the starting wage is lower than $13.

## Reliable hours and pay attracts workers.

Transit systems that employ over 75% of their operators as full-time staff working 35 hours or more per week have an average operator vacancy rate of 17%. In comparison, transit systems that employ 25% or more of their operators at less than 35 hours per week have an average vacancy rate of 31%.

For transit systems that pay time and a half for overtime, the average operator vacancy rate is 21%. Transit systems that do not pay overtime have average vacancy rates of 28%. Meanwhile, transit systems that pay straight hourly wages for overtime have an average vacancy rate of 38%.

## Workers want training, health/wellness benefits and a quality work environment.

The survey asked about the presence of benefits besides wages, including CDL training, insurance, paid leave and other policies designed to help attract and retain operations staff. The benefits analysis is limited because it only measures the presence of a benefit, not the relative quality of the benefit, and many of the benefits were widely shared among most respondents.

However, three distinct benefits proved to be significant. In general, transit agencies that provide CDL training, wellcare benefits, and/or foster a quality work environment have average operator vacancy rates of about 22% whereas transit agencies that do not provide one or more these benefits have average operator vacancy rates of about 26%.

## Blended services can create more opportunities.

Analyzing the data by type of operations, categorized as directly operated (in-house), purchased transportation (contracted out), or a combination of both (blended system), reveals the average operator vacancy rate for directly operated services is 28% while purchased is 10% and blended is 23%. The distribution of percentages suggests that transit systems without private service contracts are more likely to experience severe operator shortages.

# Moving Forward

As front-line essential workers and the face of the transit system, operators are the most important human resource in the transit industry. This study highlights the issue of transit operator vacancies across North Carolina in an attempt to identify approaches for moving forward. Although almost every transit system is experiencing some level of operator shortage, this research sheds light on some of the most effective policies and practices associated with reduced operator vacancy rates. Transit leaders, stakeholders and elected officials should consider these findings when developing policies to address operator shortages.

# 1. Introduction

Transit systems in North Carolina are having difficulty hiring and retaining drivers and other operations staff. Salary levels and benefits are believed to be a reason for this difficulty. A Compensation Survey of North Carolina Transit Systems was conducted to assist the NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division in conducting a compensation survey to better understand current transit operations salaries and benefits across the state. The findings of this study are documented in this report.

The crux of this study was a survey conducted of all North Carolina transit agencies on staffing levels/vacancy rates, pay rates, benefits, reasons for vacancies, strategies for recruiting and retaining employees, and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on human resources. The survey responses were analyzed to determine vacancy rates, pay rates, and benefits across the state, common factors contributing to vacancies, most commonly applied approaches to staff recruitment and retention, and which of these approaches transit agencies find to be successful. Transit operators were the primary focus of the analysis, as well as mechanics for those agencies with in-house maintenance staff. Pay rates were compiled for dispatchers, operation supervisors and maintenance supervisors. Seventy-one agencies responded to the survey, including several contractors. The survey findings are presented in Chapter 2 of this report.

National data was compiled from available sources on pay rates for operators, dispatcher, operations supervisors, mechanics and maintenance supervisors. Data on cost of living and unemployment rates were also compiled to provide a context for how current operator pay rates are a barrier to hiring and retaining staff. Finally, the study team researched whether the school bus industry and transportation network companies (such as Lyft and Uber) were facing driver shortages as well, and what they are currently offering in the way of financial incentives. The findings from this data review are presented in Chapter 3.

In addition to increasing pay rates, there may be other strategies for recruiting and retaining transit personnel that North Carolina transit agencies could apply. The study included a literature review through which recommended approaches and strategies were gleaned, and they are summarized in Chapter 4 of this report. Based on the survey responses, many North Carolina transit agencies are already offering good benefits and positive work environments and are taking a multi-pronged approach to recruitment. Without competitive pay rates, the non-financial measures are not enough to attract and keep qualified workers.

The final chapter in this report presents conclusions, considerations and general recommendations. The overarching conclusion is that compensation needs to be higher at many North Carolina transit agencies if they are to be competitive with other employers and be able to continue providing needed levels of transit services for North Carolinians who rely on these services for work, school, medical appointments, basic needs shopping and other essential trips.

# 2. Analysis of Survey Responses

## Introduction

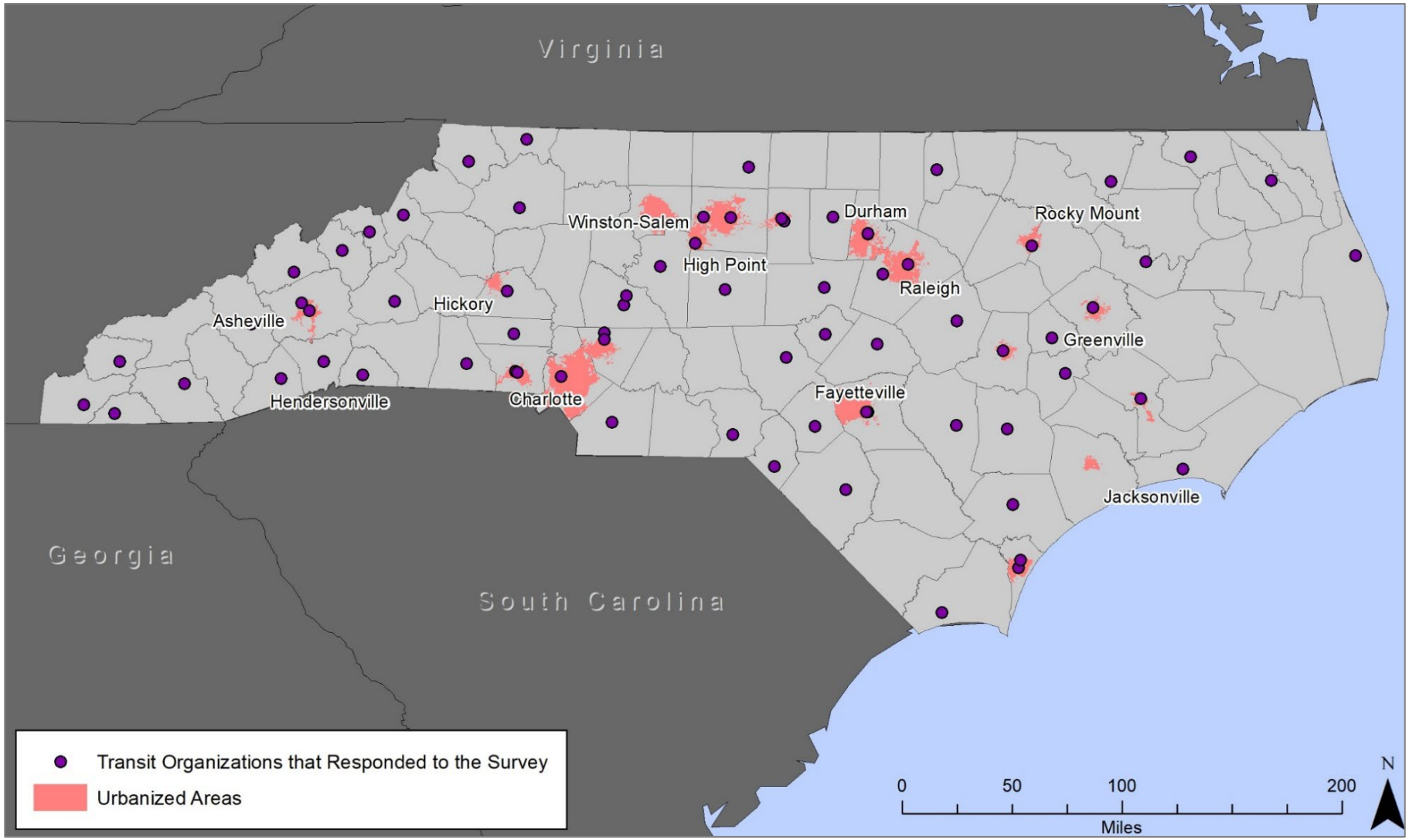
In August 2021, a survey was conducted of the 97 transit agencies across North Carolina to identify current operations and maintenance staffing conditions statewide, as well as wage/salary ranges, benefits provided, reasons for vacancies, and strategies used to recruit and retain operators and other staff. The survey focused mostly on operators and mechanics, as these are the positions transit agencies had expressed most difficulty in keeping filled. The survey instrument was prepared in a web-based format as well as a Microsoft Word document (Appendix A) and was distributed via email from the Integrated Mobility Division on August 5, 2021. Responses were accepted through August 25, with a specified due date of August 19. Responses were received from 71 organizations. Respondent locations are shown in Figure 2-1.

This section of the report provides the detailed analysis of survey responses. Survey responses were supplemented with data on service and organizational characteristics available from NCSU-ITRE (North Carolina State University – Institute for Transportation Research and Education) on each transit agency. NCSU-ITRE also assisted with the analysis of survey responses, focusing on correlations between various organizational characteristics, operator pay and benefits, and other factors that might impact operator vacancy rates at each organization.

## Organizational Characteristics

Table 2-1 provides a list of all respondents and notes for each service area type (urbanized, rural or both), the primary urbanized area served (if applicable), what type of organization they are, whether the grantee's operations are directly operated (in-house), purchased (contracted) or a combination of both, ITRE peer group classification, and vacancy rates calculated from responses to several survey questions discussed later in this section. (Vacancy rates are the number of vacancies divided by the sum of current employees plus current vacancies.) Most responses were from NCDOT Section 5307 or Section 5311 grantee organizations (transit authority, city, county or non-profit organization); in a few cases an operations contractor replied. Most of the organizational characteristics used in the analysis were derived from the NCSU-ITRE data; however, the survey did include a few questions about general organizational characteristics.

## Figure 2-1: Location of Survey Respondents



## Table 2-1: Survey Respondents

| Transit Agency | ITRE System ID | ITRE Peer Group | Service Area Type | Primary Urbanized Area Served | Organization Type | Operations Type | Overall Vacancy Rate* | Operator Vacancy Rate* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aging, Disability and Transit Services of Rockingham County (ADTS) | 157 | 3 | Rural | -- | Non-profit | Directly Operated | 7.7% | 10.5% |
| Alamance County Transportation Authority (ACTA) | 1 | 2 | Urbanized and Rural | Burlington | Authority | Directly Operated | 17.9% | 25.0% |
| Albemarle Regional Health Services (ARHS) - ICPTA | 53 | 4 | Rural | -- | Authority | Directly Operated | 7.1% | 14.3% |
| Alleghany County - Alleghany in Motion | 5 | 5 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 23.5% | 33.3% |
| Area of Richmond Transit (ART) | 153 | 3 | Rural | -- | Non-profit | Directly Operated | 17.6% | 21.4% |
| Ashe County Transportation Authority (ACTA) | 9 | 5 | Rural | -- | Non-profit | Directly Operated | 12.9% | 19.0% |
| Avery County Transportation Authority | 11 | 5 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 19.0% | 25.8% |
| Brunswick Transit System, Inc. | 19 | 4 | Urbanized and Rural | Wilmington | Non-profit | Directly Operated | 20.0% | 36.4% |
| Buncombe County Transit Management - Mountain Mobility | 21 | 3 | Urbanized and Rural | Asheville | County's Contractor | Purchased | 19.2% | 21.3% |
| Cabarrus County (CCTS) | 25 | 2 | Urbanized and Rural | Concord | County | Both | 7.7% | 6.7% |
| Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority - Wave Transit | 241 | 11 | Urbanized and Rural | Wilmington & Myrtle Beach | City | Both | no data | 0.0% |
| Carteret County Area Transit System | 31 | 3 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 26.5% | 58.3% |
| Chatham Transit Network | 37 | 4 | Rural | -- | Non-profit | Directly Operated | 14.6% | 18.8% |
| Cherokee County Transit | 39 | 5 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 13.3% | 28.6% |
| Choanoke Public Transportation Authority (CPTA) | 91 | 4 | Rural | -- | Authority | Directly Operated | 17.9% | 41.2% |
| City of Asheville - Asheville Ride Transit (ART) | 201 | 11 | Urbanized | Asheville | City | Purchased | 33.3% | 11.7% |
| City of Burlington - Link Transit | 249 | 12 | Urbanized | Burlington | City | Purchased | 18.2% | 15.0% |
| City of Durham - Durham City Transit Company - GoDurham | 211 | 11 | Urbanized and Rural | Durham | City | Purchased | 10.4% | 13.5% |

| Transit Agency | ITRE System ID | ITRE Peer Group | Service Area Type | Primary Urbanized Area Served | Organization Type | Operations Type | Overall Vacancy Rate* | Operator Vacancy Rate* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| City of Durham - National Express Transit - GoDurham ACCESS | 211 | 11 | Urbanized and Rural | Durham | City's Contractor | Purchased | 18.4% | 23.8% |
| City of Fayetteville - Fayetteville Area System of Transit/FAST | 213 | 11 | Urbanized | Fayetteville | City | Directly Operated | 19.5% | 27.7% |
| City of Gastonia - Gastonia Transit | 215 | 12 | Urbanized | Gastonia | City | Directly Operated | no data | no data |
| City of High Point - High Point Transit System (HPTS) | 225 | 11 | Urbanized | High Point | City | Directly Operated | 18.0% | 24.0% |
| City of Rocky Mount - Tar River Transit | 235 | 12 | Urbanized and Rural | Rocky Mount | City | Purchased | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| City of Salisbury - Salisbury Transit | 237 | 12 | Urbanized and Rural | Concord | City | Directly Operated | 4.3% | 0.0% |
| Clay County Transportation (CCT) | 43 | 5 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 7.7% | 33.3% |
| Concord Kannapolis Area Transit (Rider) | 209 | 12 | Urbanized | Concord | City | Purchased | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| County of Lee Transit System (COLTS) | 105 | 2 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 13.2% | 23.8% |
| Craven Area Rural Transit System (CARTS) | 251 | 12 | Urbanized and Rural | New Bern | City | Directly Operated | 37.8% | 56.5% |
| Cumberland Community Transportation Program (CCTP) | 51 | 2 | Urbanized and Rural | Fayetteville | County | Purchased | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Dare County Transportation System (DCTS) | 55 | 3 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Davidson County (DCTS) | 57 | 2 | Urbanized and Rural | High Point | County | Both | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Duplin County Public Transportation | 61 | 4 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 25.0% | 66.7% |
| Gaston County ACCESS | 71 | 2 | Urbanized and Rural | Gastonia | County | Both | 11.5% | 13.0% |
| Gates County Inter-Regional Transportation System (GITS) | 73 | 4 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 18.8% | 60.0% |
| Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority | 217 | 12 | Urbanized and Rural | Goldsboro | City | Directly Operated | 12.2% | 35.3% |
| Graham County Transit | 75 | 5 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 6.7% | 25.0% |

| Transit Agency | ITRE System ID | ITRE Peer Group | Service Area Type | Primary Urbanized Area Served | Organization Type | Operations Type | Overall Vacancy Rate* | Operator Vacancy Rate* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Greene County Transportation | 79 | 4 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 14.3% | 33.3% |
| Guilford County | 81 | 1 | Urbanized and Rural | Greensboro | County | Directly Operated | 12.5% | 15.4% |
| Harnett County (HARTS) | 85 | 3 | Rural | -- | County | Both | 46.5% | 60.6% |
| Hoke Area Transit Service (HATS) | 93 | 4 | Urbanized and Rural | Fayetteville | County | Directly Operated | 9.1% | no data |
| Johnston County Area Transit System (JCATS) | 101 | 3 | Urbanized and Rural | Raleigh | Non-profit | Directly Operated | 25.6% | 32.3% |
| Kerr Area Rural Transit System | 185 | 3 | Rural | -- | Authority | Directly Operated | 12.7% | 17.9% |
| Lenoir County Transit (LCT) | 107 | 3 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 27.3% | 37.5% |
| Macon County Transit | 113 | 4 | Rural | -- | County | Both | 22.7% | 27.8% |
| Madison County Transportation Authority | 115 | 5 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Martin County Transit | 117 | 4 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 14.3% | 20.0% |
| McDowell Transit | 111 | 5 | Rural | -- | City | Directly Operated | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Mecklenburg Transportation System (MTS) | 119 | 1 | Urbanized and Rural | Charlotte | County | Both | 3.1% | 3.8% |
| Mitchell County Transportation (MCTA) | 121 | 5 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 15.0% | 60.0% |
| Moore County Transportation Services (MCTS) | 125 | 3 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 20.0% | 26.3% |
| Mountain Projects - Haywood Public Transit | 87 | 4 | Urbanized and Rural | Asheville | Non-profit | Directly Operated | 8.3% | 20.0% |
| Orange County Public Transportation (OCPT) | 135 | 2 | Urbanized and Rural | Durham | County | Directly Operated | 10.7% | no data |
| Pender Adult Services, Inc. (PAS-TRAN) | 141 | 4 | Rural | -- | Non-profit | Directly Operated | 23.5% | 22.2% |
| Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART) | 229 | 13 | Urbanized and Rural | Greensboro, Winston-Salem, | City | Purchased | 14.1% | 16.7% |

| Transit Agency | ITRE System ID | ITRE Peer Group | Service Area Type | Primary Urbanized Area Served | Organization Type | Operations Type | Overall Vacancy Rate* | Operator Vacancy Rate* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Burlington, High Point | | | | |
| Pitt Area Transit System (PATS) | 147 | 2 | Urbanized and Rural | Greenville | County | Both | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Polk County Transportation (PCT) | 149 | 5 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | no data | no data |
| RCATS Transportation | 151 | 3 | Urbanized and Rural | High Point | Non-profit | Both | 19.4% | 54.5% |
| Robeson County - South East Area Transit System (SEATS) | 155 | 3 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 4.2% | no data |
| Rowan Transit System (RTS) | 159 | 2 | Urbanized and Rural | Concord | County | Purchased | 10.0% | no data |
| Sampson Area Transportation | 163 | 4 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 25.7% | 57.1% |
| Scotland County DSS - SCATS | 165 | 3 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 21.6% | 25.0% |
| Town of Cary - GoCary | 203 | 12 | Urbanized | Raleigh | City | Purchased | 2.3% | 0.0% |
| Transportation Administration of Cleveland County, Inc. | 45 | 3 | Rural | -- | Non-profit | Directly Operated | 3.7% | 0.0% |
| Transportation Lincoln County (TLC) | 109 | 3 | Urbanized and Rural | Charlotte | County | Directly Operated | 6.5% | 11.8% |
| Transylvania County Transportation | 175 | 5 | Rural | -- | County | Both | 9.1% | 16.7% |
| Union County (UCT) | 179 | 2 | Urbanized and Rural | Charlotte | County | Both | 24.5% | 50.0% |
| Wake County Health and Human Services - GoWake Access | 183 | 1 | Urbanized and Rural | Raleigh | County | Purchased | 6.7% | 0.0% |
| Western Carolina Community Action Inc. (WCCA) - Apple Country Transit | 89 | 3 | Urbanized and Rural | Asheville | Non-profit | Directly Operated | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority - Greenway Public Transportation | 247 | 12 | Urbanized and Rural | Hickory | Authority | Directly Operated | no data | no data |
| Wilkes Transportation Authority (WTA) | 193 | 4 | Rural | -- | Authority | Directly Operated | 21.6% | 21.1% |
| Yancey County Transportation Authority | 199 | 5 | Rural | -- | County | Directly Operated | 7.1% | no data |

* includes agency and contractor employees and vacancies reported

## Source of Vehicle Maintenance

For those transit agencies that directly operate public transit service, the survey asked who maintains the vehicle fleet of the transit system. The responses to this question are presented in Table 2-2. Over half of the respondents (52.1%) outsource preventive maintenance, and nearly half (47.9%) outsource major repairs. Only 28.2% of respondents perform in-house maintenance. For 22.5%, another department within city/county government maintains the transit fleet. Three respondents indicated that a contractor maintains vehicles as part of the contract.

### Table 2-2: Maintenance Providers for Agency-Operated Transit Systems

| If you directly operate public transit service, who maintains the vehicle fleet of the transit system? (Check all that apply) | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent |
| Outsourced provider of preventive maintenance | 37 | 52.1% |
| Outsourced provider of major repairs | 34 | 47.9% |
| In-house maintenance staff employed by our organization/department | 20 | 28.2% |
| Another department within city/county government | 16 | 22.5% |
| Other (please specify)<br>• *Contractor maintains vehicles as part of contract (3 responses)*<br>• *On demand paid service*<br>• *Outsourced provider of pest control on vehicles* | 5 | 7.0% |
| **Total Respondents** | **71** | |

## Local Funding Sources

At a general organizational level, the survey asked transit agencies about their local match sources. As shown in Table 2-3, the vast majority of respondents (84.5%) use local general funds as local match. Contract revenue from a public or non-profit agency was the second most frequent response (63.4%), followed by contract revenue from a private for-profit agency (29.6%). About 10% of responses use parking or other vehicle fees for local match.

### Table 2-3: Local Funding Sources

| What local funding sources do you use to support public transportation? (Check all that apply) | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent |
| Local general funds | 60 | 84.5% |
| Contract revenue - From Public or Non-Profit Agency | 45 | 63.4% |
| Contract revenue - From Private For-Profit Agency | 21 | 29.6% |
| Specific local source - Parking or Other Vehicle Fee | 7 | 9.9% |
| Specific local source - Sales Tax | 4 | 5.6% |
| Specific local source - Property Tax | 3 | 4.2% |
| Specific local source - Employer Tax | 0 | 0.0% |
| Other (please specify) | 13 | 18.3% |
| **Total Respondents** | **71** | |

Other responses:

- State and federal funds or grants (4 responses)
- Fares, ticket sales or rider fees (3 responses)
- Advertising (2 responses)
- Non-contract revenue
- Rental car proceeds and vehicle registration
- Grants (unspecified)
- United Way
- County local match
- In-kind support

# Staffing Characteristics

The next section of the survey focused on the organization's in-house staff, including pre-pandemic and current staffing levels, and vacancies. Note that in tables with total staff by full-time status, staff counts were excluded for one agency that submitted two responses with very different responses to questions on number of staff, so these counts do not represent the complete picture. Also, employees of contractors are included in some counts. Staffing levels and vacancy rates for each of the responding transit agencies can be found in Appendix B.

# Agency-Wide Staffing and Vacancies

Table 2-4 presents the number of transit agency staff reported by full-time and part-time status (based on number of hours per week worked on average), as well as volunteers (not included in the table), as of July 2021. Table 2-5 presents the staffing levels in 2019. Staff reductions between 2019 and 2021 are shown in Table 2-6 and Figure 2-2.

### Table 2-4: Transit Agency Staffing Levels in July 2021

| How many people are currently employed by the public transit system (July 2021)? | Number of Employees in this Category | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total Statewide | By Service Area Type | | |
| | | Urban only | Both Urban and Rural | Rural Only |
| Employees working 35 hours a week or more | 1,446 | 298 | 716 | 432 |
| Employees working 20-34 hours per week on average | 420 | 25 | 212 | 183 |
| Employees working 19 or fewer hours per week on average | 183 | 3 | 104 | 76 |
| **Total Employees** | **2,049** | **326** | **1,032** | **691** |

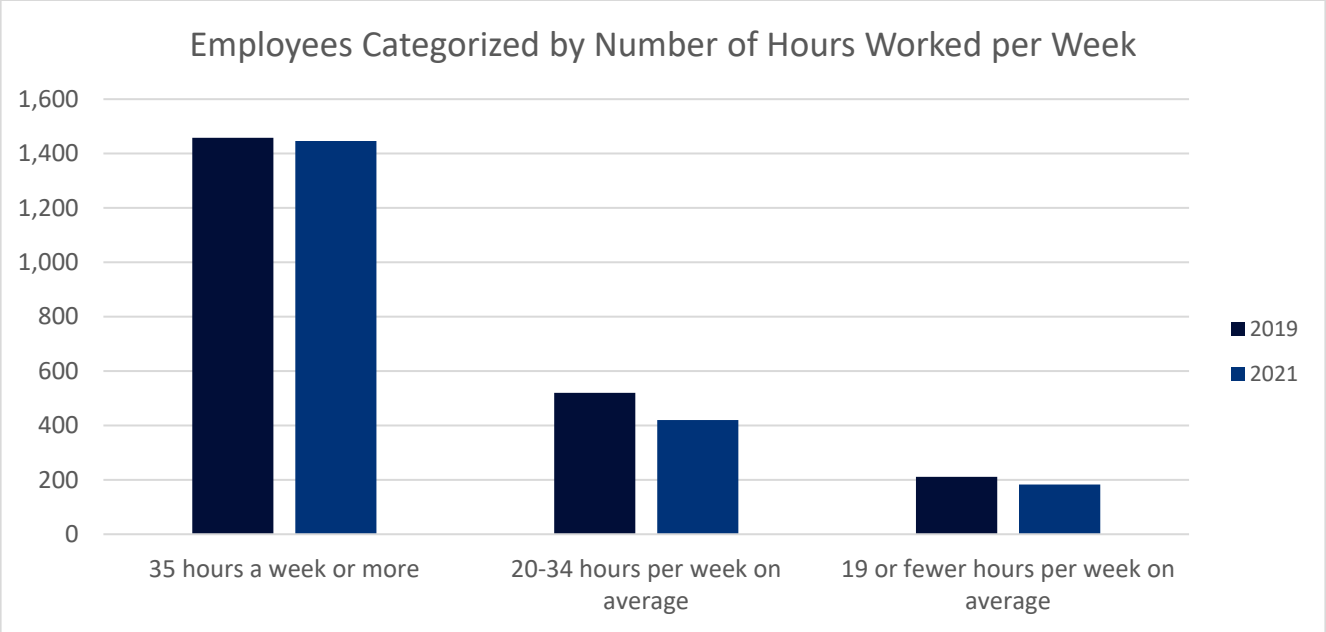
### Table 2-5: Transit Agency Staffing Levels in 2019

| How many people were employed by the public transit system in 2019? | Number of Employees in this Category | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total Statewide | By Service Area Type | | |
| | | Urban only | Both Urban and Rural | Rural Only |
| Employees working 35 hours a week or more | 1,458 | 279 | 699 | 480 |
| Employees working 20-34 hours per week on average | 520 | 27 | 198 | 295 |
| Employees working 19 or fewer hours per week on average | 211 | 3 | 82 | 126 |
| **Total Employees** | **2,189** | **309** | **979** | **901** |

## Table 2-6: Reductions in Staffing Levels 2019 to 2021

| Category of Employee Based on Number of Hours Worked | Number of Employees in this Category | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2019 | 2021 | Reduction in Staff | |
| | | | Number | Percent |
| 35 hours a week or more | 1,458 | 1,446 | 12 | 0.82% |
| 20-34 hours per week on average | 520 | 420 | 100 | 19.23% |
| 19 or fewer hours per week on average | 211 | 183 | 28 | 13.27% |
| **Total Employees** | **2,189** | **2,049** | **140** | **6.40%** |

## Figure 2-2: Reductions in Staffing Levels 2019 to 2021




Again, it should be noted that some of the responses to these questions may have included contractor staffing information as well in-house staff. Where this occurred, individual agency vacancy rates may be distorted. The extent of such blended reporting is not known; overall statewide, the data nonetheless reflect significant numbers of transit operator vacancies across the state.

Overall statewide, respondents' staffing levels decreased by 6.4%, with the largest percentage decrease (19.23%) among employees who work 20-34 hours per week.

Transit agencies were asked to report on the total number of vacancies, as well as driver and mechanic vacancies, for agency-employed personnel. A statewide tabulation of the total vacancies is provided in

Table 2-7, along with current staffing levels reported and calculated vacancy rates. (Vacancy rates among operators and mechanics will be presented later this analysis.) Because there appeared to be some crossover in responses for contract employees in response to questions specifically meant for in-house agency-employed staff, vacancy rates reflect both in-house and contractor data reported.

Statewide among responding transit agencies, the vacancy rate for all positions is 13.4%. Overall, transit agencies with exclusively rural service areas have a higher vacancy rate (16.8%) than those which serve urbanized areas (12.5%).

### Table 2-7: Statewide Vacancy Rates by Service Area Type (Includes Both Agency and Contractor Vacancies Reported)

| Employees (Includes Those Reported for Both Agencies and Contractors) | Total Statewide | By Service Area Type | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Urbanized only | Both Urbanized and Rural | Rural Only |
| Total Vacancies | 339 | 52 | 148 | 140 |
| Total Employees | 2,189 | 326 | 1,032 | 691 |
| Vacancy Rate | 13.4% | 13.8% | 12.5% | 16.8% |

To ensure that respondents that are small transit agencies are not obscured by responses from larger transit agencies, mean and median vacancy rates were also calculated by service area types (Table 2-8). This analysis reveals that transit agencies that serve a combination of both rural and urbanized areas have lower vacancy rates on average, while those that serve exclusively rural or urbanized areas have a higher vacancy rate on average.

### Table 2-8: Mean and Median Overall Vacancy Rates by Service Area Type (Includes Both Agency and Contractor Vacancies Reported)

| Overall Vacancy Rate* | Serves Urbanized Area ONLY | Serves Urbanized Area | Serves Both Urbanized and Rural Areas | Serves Rural Area | Serves Rural Area ONLY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mean | 15.2% | 12.2% | 11.5% | 13.6% | 15.3% |
| Median | 18.1% | 10.7% | 10.4% | 12.9% | 14.5% |

* Includes agency and contractor employees and vacancies reported

# Staffing Levels and Vacancies of Operators

Transit agencies were asked to report the number of operators employed that are required to have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and that are not required to have a CDL. These data were requested for both agency-employed operators and contractor-employed operators. Table 2-9 provides statewide totals by service area type.

### Table 2-9: Operator Staffing Levels (Includes Both Agency and Contractor Vacancies Reported)

| Category of Operator | Statewide Total |
|---|---|
| Agency-Employed Operators | |
| Non-CDL | 463.5 |
| CDL | 445.5 |
| Contractor-Employed Operators | |
| Non-CDL | 129 |
| CDL | 191 |
| **Total Operators** | **1,229** |

Table 2-10 presents the mean and median vacancy rates for transit agencies and contractors with operator positions that do and do not require CDLs. Because the survey did not ask about operator vacancies categorized by whether or not a CDL is required, the number of CDL/non-CDL vacancies cannot be derived from the survey responses; this calculation was therefore prepared at the agency level. As shown in this table, operator vacancy rates are, on average, higher at transit organizations that employee operators that are not required to have a CDL. The median vacancy rate at organizations that have no positions requiring a CDL is 23.6%, compared to a 15% median vacancy rate among organizations that require CDLs for all operators.

### Table 2-10: Mean and Median Overall Vacancy Rates by Whether or Not CDLs are Required for Operator Positions (Includes Both Agency and Contractor Vacancies Reported)

| Operator Vacancy Rate | Employs ONLY Non-CDL Operators | Employs Non-CDL Operators | Employs Both CDL and Non-CDL Operators | Employs CDL Operators | Employs ONLY CDL Operators |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mean | 25.2% | 23.4% | 20.9% | 19.8% | 18.2% |
| Median | 23.6% | 21.4% | 20.6% | 19.0% | 15.0% |

As with the overall vacancy rates, because there appeared to be some crossover in responses for contract employees in response to questions specifically meant for in-house agency-employed staff (i.e., transit agencies which contract for operations reported agency-employed operators and vacancies), the numbers of operators were totaled before calculating vacancy rates.

Transit agencies were asked if the organization reduced the number of operator positions since March 2020 and, if so, by how many full-time equivalents (FTEs). Nine respondents reported a total of 48.5 FTEs in reduced operator positions. Transit agencies were also asked how many operators have resigned or retired since March 2020. Fifty-nine agencies reported that 366.5 transit operators resigned or retired during this 17-month period. Even if all of these positions were subsequently filled, they represent a significant turnover, and the cost and effort to recruit and train so many replacements would be significant. This number likely underrepresents the actual amount of turnover since the extent to which contractor operator resignations and retirements is not known—one respondent that contracts for operations, not included in the total, replied that there were dozens of resignations and retirements among operators.

Transit agencies were asked if the organization had reduced the number of operator positions since March 2020, and if so by how many full-time equivalents. Nine respondents reported a reduction in operator positions totaling 48.5 FTEs statewide. Transit agencies were also asked how many operators have resigned or retired since March 2020. Fifty-nine agencies reported that 366.5 transit operators resigned or retired during this 17-month period. Even if all of these positions were subsequently filled, they represent a significant turnover and the cost and effort to recruit and train so many replacements would be significant. This number likely underrepresents the actual amount of turnover since the extent to which contractor operator resignations and retirements is not known—one respondent that contracts for operations, not included in the total, replied that there were dozens of resignations and retirements among operators.

Operator vacancy rates were analyzed in terms of hours worked per week. NCSU-ITRE grouped operator vacancy rates into four ranges:

- 0%
- greater than 0% and up to 20%
- greater than 20% and up to 30%, and
- greater than 30%.

The average percentage of employees working designated ranges of hours per week in the survey (35 or more, 20-34, or 19 or fewer hours per week) within each of the operator vacancy ranges are shown in Table 2-11. Operator positions with fewer hours per week would be less desirable to operators seeking pay for more hours and benefits that may only be available to full-time positions. Thus transit agencies offering full-time operator positions may be more attractive employers.

### Table 2-11: Operator Vacancies by Hours Worked Per Week

| Hours Worked per Week | Operator Vacancy Rate | | | | Total Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0% | >0% to 20% | >20% to 30% | >30% | |
| Percent of employees working 35 hours or more a week | 66.1% | 82.2% | 76.5% | 47.9% | 67.9% |
| Percent of employees working 20-34 hours per week on average | 16.7% | 15.8% | 20.2% | 31.7% | 21.8% |
| Percent of employees working 19 or fewer hours per week on average | 14.6% | 2.1% | 3.3% | 20.4% | 9.9% |

## Operator Vacancy Rate and Service Area Type

Table 2-12 presents statewide operator vacancy rates by service area type, and Table 2-13 presents mean and median operator vacancy rates by service area type. Figure 2-3 presents a map depicting the operator vacancy rates across North Carolina.

### Table 2-12: Operator Vacancies by Service Area Type (Includes Both Agency and Contractor Vacancies Reported)

| Operators (Employed by Agencies and Contractors) | Total Statewide | By Service Area Type | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Urban Only | Both Urban and Rural | Rural Only |
| Total Vacancies | 307 | 47 | 125 | 135 |
| Total Employees | 1,229 | 306 | 588 | 336 |
| Vacancy Rate | 20.0% | 13.3% | 17.5% | 28.7% |

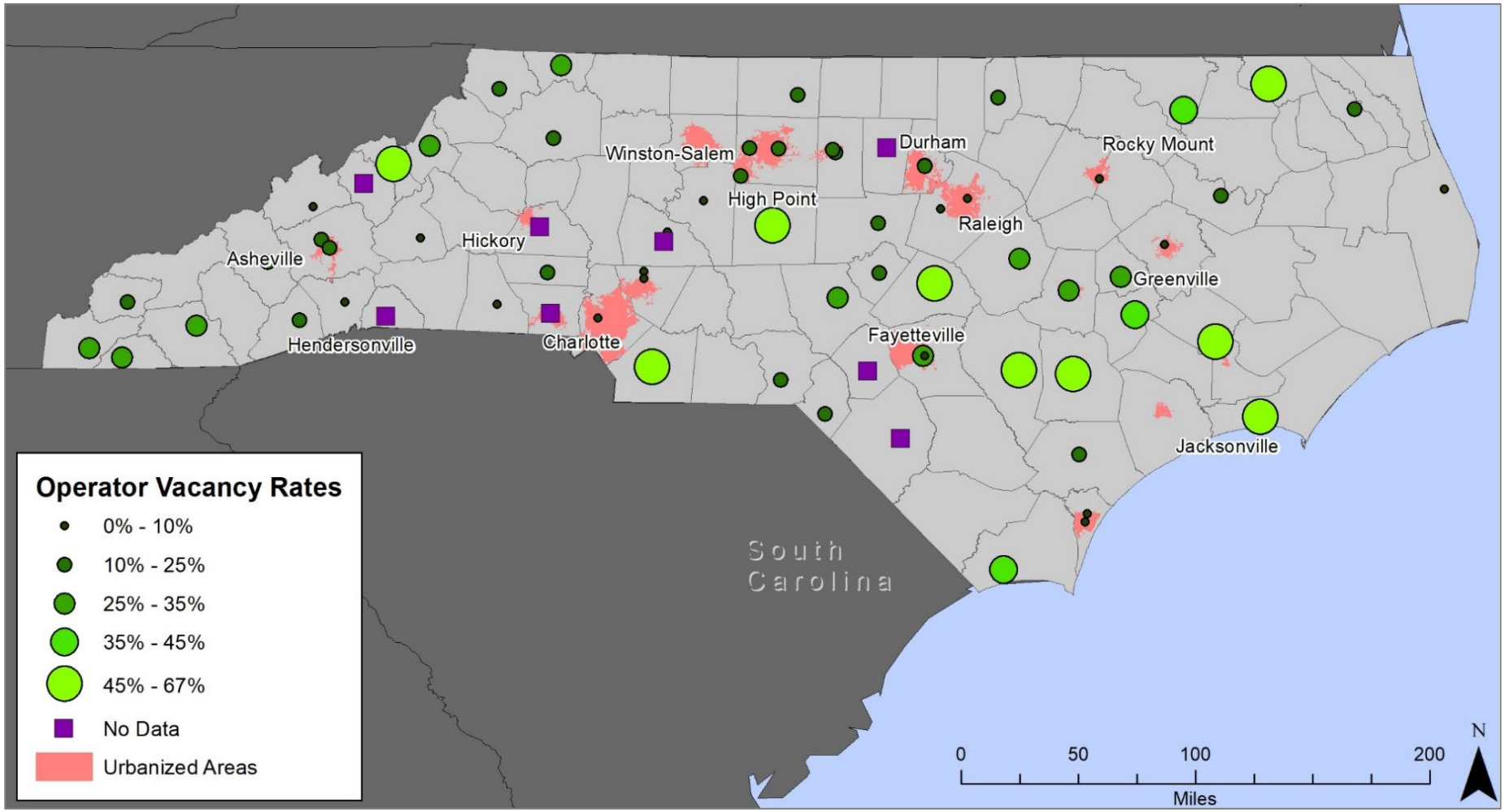
### Table 2-13: Mean and Median Operator Vacancy Rates by Service Area Type (Includes Both Agency and Contractor Vacancies Reported)

| Operator Vacancy Rate | Serves Urbanized Area ONLY | Serves Urbanized Area | Serves Both Urbanized and Rural Areas | Serves Rural Area | Serves Rural Area ONLY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mean | 13.1% | 16.6% | 17.4% | 23.5% | 28.3% |
| Median | 13.3% | 13.5% | 13.5% | 21.3% | 25.0% |

As can be seen in Table 2-12, operator vacancy rates are high among the 71 North Carolina transit agencies that replied to this survey—20% statewide, with transit agencies serving rural-only areas hardest hit at 28.7%, and those that operate only within urbanized areas at the lower end of the range at 13.3%. It should be noted that not all respondents that contract for operations provided data on contract operator staffing levels, as these details may not be available to them.

Table 2-13 reveals that, on average among organizations serving each type of service areas, operator vacancy rates are considerably higher in rural areas than in urbanized areas.

## Figure 2-3: Operator Vacancy Rates Across North Carolina



For peer comparison purposes, mean and median operator vacancy rates were calculated for ITRE's eight peer group categories of transit agencies, shown in Table 2-14.

### Table 2-14: Mean and Median Operator Vacancy Rates by Peer Group (Includes Both Agency and Contractor Vacancies Reported)

| | Operator Vacancy Rate | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Rural Peer Group 1 | Rural Peer Group 2 | Rural Peer Group 3 | Rural Peer Group 4 | Rural Peer Group 5 | Urban Peer Group 11 | Urban Peer Group 12 | Urban Peer Group 13 |
| No. of Respondents Reporting Operator Vacancy Data | 3 | 8 | 15 | 13 | 10 | 6 | 7 | 1 |
| Mean | 6.4% | 14.8% | 25.2% | 33.8% | 24.2% | 16.8% | 15.3% | 16.7% |
| Median | 3.8% | 9.9% | 21.4% | 27.8% | 25.4% | 18.6% | 0.0% | 16.7% |

Operator vacancy rates, in terms of the four NCSU-ITRE-designated operator vacancy rate ranges (0%, greater than 0% up to 20%, greater than 20% up to 30%, and greater than 30%). The portion of respondents under each of these four categories were identified by the jurisdictional span of the service area. NCSU-ITRE identified each transit agency's service area as falling into one of the following categories:

- Consolidated City-County
- Multi-County
- Single Municipality
- Single County

Table 2-15 shows how each of the above four categories are distributed among the four ranges of operator vacancies.

### Table 2-15: Operator Vacancies by Service Area Jurisdictional Span

| Service Area Jurisdictional Span | Operator Vacancy Rate | | | | | | | | Total No. | Total Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0% | | >0% to 20% | | >20% to 30% | | >30% | | | |
| | No. | Percent | No. | Percent | No. | Percent | No. | Percent | | |
| Consolidated City-County | 2 | 20.0% | 2 | 12.5% | 1 | 6.7% | 2 | 11.8% | 7 | 12.1% |
| Multi-County | 0 | 0.0% | 2 | 12.5% | 0 | 0.0% | 2 | 11.8% | 4 | 6.9% |
| Single Municipality | 1 | 10.0% | 1 | 6.3% | 2 | 13.3% | 0 | 0.0% | 4 | 6.9% |
| Single County | 7 | 70.0% | 11 | 68.8% | 12 | 80.0% | 13 | 76.5% | 43 | 74.1% |
| **Total Respondents** | **10** | | **16** | | **15** | | **17** | | **58** | |

Potential correlation between distance from the nearest urbanized area and operator vacancy rate was also analyzed (Table 2-16). For this analysis, NCSU-ITRE coded distance into four ranges:

- 0 means the transit agency is located within an urbanized area
- 1 means the transit agency is located within 25 miles of an urbanized area
- 2 means the transit agency is located within between 26 and 50 miles from an urbanized area
- 3 means the transit agency is located more than 50 miles from an urbanized area

### Table 2-16: Operator Vacancies by Distance from Urbanized Area

| Distance from Urbanized Area | Operator Vacancy Rate | | | | Total Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0% | >0% to 20% | >20% to 30% | >30% | |
| Average Distance Ranges, coded as:<br>0 = within urbanized area<br>1 = ≤25 miles<br>2 = 26 to 50 miles<br>3 = >50 miles | 0.200 | 0.625 | 1.200 | 1.235 | 0.879 |

As can be seen in the table, the transit agencies that have an operator vacancy rate of 20% or more, are on average, further from an urbanized area than those with lower vacancy rates, and those with no operator vacancies are on average within or within close range to an urbanized area. This corresponds to the tendency of rural transit agencies experiencing higher operator vacancy rates than those in urbanized areas.

## Operator Vacancy Rate and Other System Characteristics

Operator vacancy rates within the four ranges (0%, greater than 0% up to 20%, greater than 20% up to 30%, and greater than 30%) were also analyzed for general system characteristics to investigate potential correlations. The general system characteristics examined included organization type, whether or not operations are in-house or contracted out, whether or not fixed/deviated fixed route service is operated, and number of revenue vehicles.

Table 2-17 shows the analysis by organization type, categorized by NCSU-ITRE as an authority, city, county, or non-profit. Table 2-18 shows the analysis by type of operations, categorized by NCSU-ITRE as directly operated (in-house), purchased transportation (contracted out), or a combination of both (blended system). The distribution of percentages in this table suggest that directly operated systems tend to have a higher rate of operator vacancies, while purchased services and blended systems tend to have a lower rate of vacancies. It should be noted however that contractor vacancy rates may be under-represented by survey respondents since the survey did not specifically ask for contract operator vacancy rates (although there are instances where contractor operator vacancies were reported as agency employee vacancies).

## Table 2-17: Operator Vacancies by Organization Type

| Type of Organization | Operator Vacancy Rate | | | | | | | | Total No. | Total Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0% | | >0% to 20% | | >20% to 30% | | >30% | | | |
| | No. | Percent | No. | Percent | No. | Percent | No. | Percent | | |
| Authority | 0 | 0.0% | 2 | 12.5% | 2 | 13.3% | 1 | 5.9% | 5 | 8.6% |
| City | 4 | 40.0% | 3 | 18.8% | 3 | 20.0% | 2 | 11.8% | 12 | 20.7% |
| County | 5 | 50.0% | 7 | 43.8% | 8 | 53.3% | 11 | 64.7% | 31 | 53.4% |
| Non-profit | 1 | 10.0% | 4 | 25.0% | 2 | 13.3% | 3 | 17.6% | 10 | 17.2% |

## Table 2-18: Operator Vacancies by Type of Operations

| Type of Operations | Operator Vacancy Rate | | | | | | | | Total No. | Total Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0% | | >0% to 20% | | >20% to 30% | | >30% | | | |
| | No. | Percent | No. | Percent | No. | Percent | No. | Percent | | |
| Directly Operated | 4 | 40.0% | 9 | 56.3% | 12 | 80.0% | 14 | 82.4% | 39 | 67.2% |
| Purchased | 4 | 40.0% | 3 | 18.8% | 2 | 13.3% | 0 | 0.0% | 9 | 15.5% |
| Both | 2 | 20.0% | 4 | 25.0% | 1 | 6.7% | 3 | 17.6% | 10 | 17.2% |

The operator vacancy rate range by operation of fixed route or deviated route service is presented in Table 2-19. NCSU-ITRE coded transit agencies which operate either fixed route or deviated route service as 1, with agencies that do not operate either fixed route or deviated route service, such as they only operate demand response service, coded as 0.

## Table 2-19: Operator Vacancies by Operation of Fixed Route or Deviated Route Service

| Operation of Fixed Route / Deviated Route Service | Operator Vacancy Rate | | | | Total Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0% | >0% to 20% | >20% to 30% | >30% | |
| Average of operation of fixed route or deviated route service, coded as 1 = operate fixed/ deviated route, or 0 = do not operate fixed/ deviated route | 0.400 | 0.625 | 0.600 | 0.176 | 0.448 |

Finally among system characteristics, Table 2-20 shows operator vacancy rate ranges and system size, represented by ranges of numbers of revenue vehicles. For this analysis, NCSU-ITRE coded revenue vehicle fleet sizes as one of five size categories:

- 1 = <10 revenue vehicles
- 2 = 11 to 20 revenue vehicles
- 3 = 21 to 30 revenue vehicles
- 4 = 31 to 100 revenue vehicles
- 5 = >100 revenue vehicles

### Table 2-20: Operator Vacancies by Revenue Vehicle Fleet Size

| System Size | Operator Vacancy Rate | | | | Total Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0% | >0% to 20% | >20% to 30% | >30% | |
| Average Number of Revenue Vehicle Ranges, coded as<br>1 = <10 revenue vehicles<br>2 = 11 to 20 revenue vehicles<br>3 = 21 to 30 revenue vehicles<br>4 = 31 to 100 revenue vehicles<br>5 = >100 revenue vehicles | 2.600 | 3.250 | 2.533 | 2.529 | 2.741 |

Among these system characteristics, only whether or not the transit agency contracts for operations appears to have a correlation with operator vacancy rates.

# Compensation and Benefits for Operators

## Pay Rates

The survey asked about wages and benefits for operators, both directly employed and employed by contractors, and by whether or not a CDL is required for the position. For each of the position categories, transit agencies were asked to report the lowest and highest wage rate/salary. Table 2-10 summarizes the ranges that were reported, with the caveat that some transit agencies may have reported contract operator data as directly employed operators.

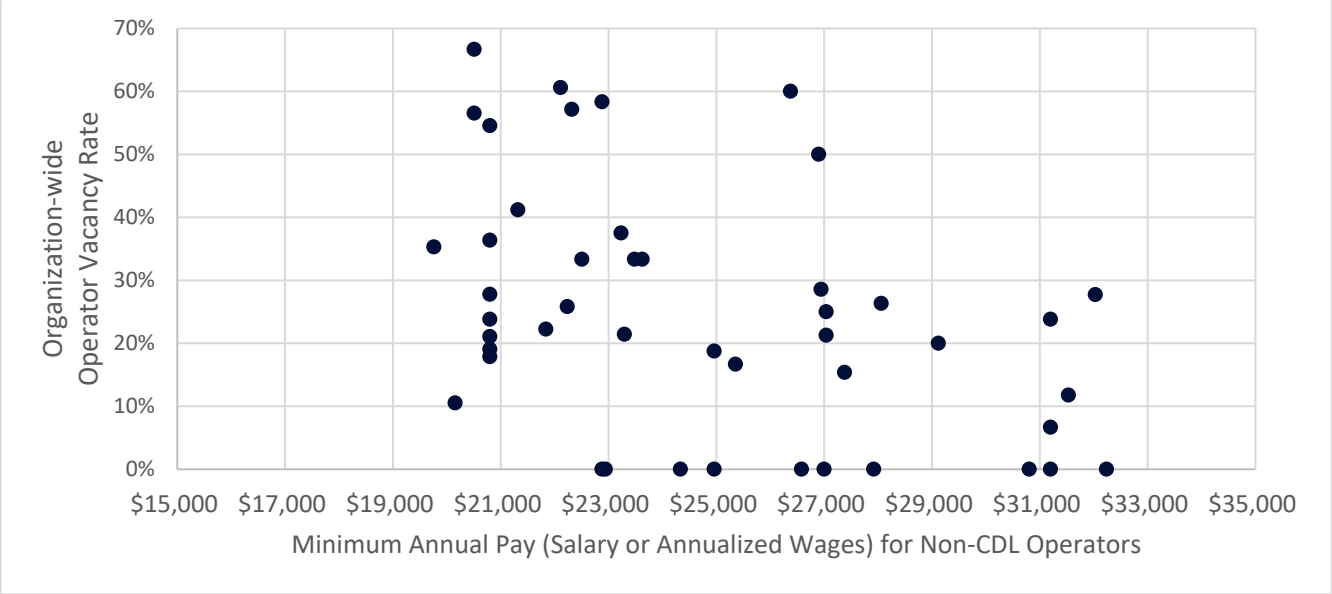
As shown in Table 2-21, pay rate ranges for operator positions requiring a CDL are higher than those positions that do not require a CDL. For agency employed operators, this rate difference is relatively slight on an hourly basis. The lowest wage paid for in-house wages is $11.10 per hour for non-CDL positions and $12.25 for CDL positions. The highest in-house wage for CDL positions is $14.50—only 17 cents an hour more than the highest non-CDL wage. The CDL/non-CDL difference is greater for in-house salaried positions as well as for contractor wages. Salaries reported for in-house operators have a range of $26,922 to $38,335 for non-CDL positions compared to $31,200 to $44,639 for CDL positions. Contractor-employed hourly rates ranged from $11.00 to $16.58 per hour for non-CDL positions and between $15.75 to $19.25 per hour for CDL positions. No salaried rates were reported for contractor operators. Appendix C provides responses from each transit agency, including annualized pay calculated for hourly wages (multiplied by 2,080 hours) and operator vacancy rates.

### Table 2-21: Operator Pay Ranges

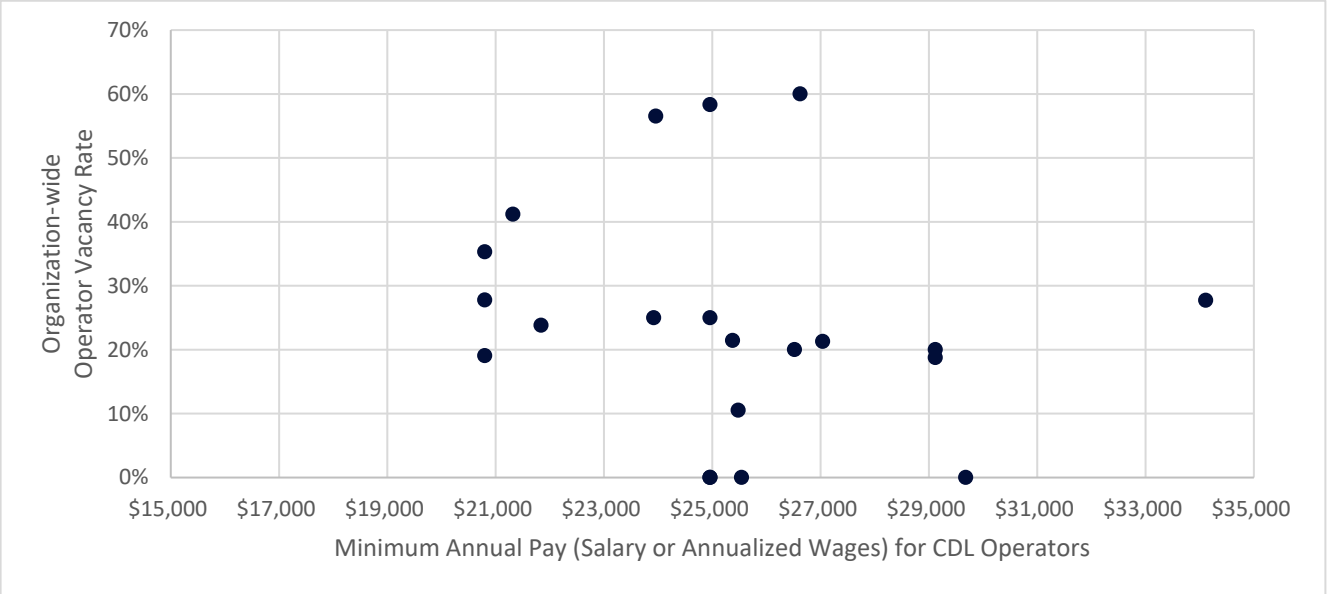
| Operator Pay Rates | Agency-Employed | | Contractor-Employed | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest |
| Reported as Hourly Wage | | | | |
| Position does not require CDL | $11.10 | $14.33 | $11.00 | $16.58 |
| CDL is required | $12.25 | $14.50 | $15.75 | $19.25 |
| Reported as Salary | | | | |
| Position does not require CDL | $26,922 | $38,335 | - | - |
| CDL is required | $31,200 | $44,639 | - | - |

Lowest annual pay and operator vacancy rate was graphed for operators that are not required to have a CDL in Figure 2-4, and for CDL-required operators in Figure 2-5. Both agency-employed and contractor-employed operators are included in the rates shown in these graphs, and the operator vacancy rate reflects the overall rate, not specific to CDL/non-CDL operators. As shown in these graphs, in general, agencies with higher operator vacancy rates tend to have lower starting pay, particularly for the transit agencies with non-CDL operators. For transit agencies with operator positions requiring CDLs, lower pay does not clearly correlate with higher operator vacancy rates.

## Figure 2-4: Operator Vacancy Rates and Lowest Annualized Operator Pay Rates Reported for Non-CDL Operators




## Figure 2-5: Operator Vacancy Rates and Lowest Annualized Pay Rates for Operators Required to Have CDLs




To further investigate the correlation between operator pay rates and vacancy rates, NCSU-ITRE calculated the low average and high average of wages for operators, CDL and non-CDL, and determined

the distribution within the four operator vacancy rate ranges (0%, greater than 0% up to 20%, greater than 20% up to 30%, and greater than 30%) used in other NCSU-ITRE analyses of survey findings. As shown in Table 2-22, lower wages within each position category tend to fall within the higher vacancy rate ranges.

### Table 2-22: Operator Vacancies by Low and High Average Wages of Operator Positions

| Low and High Average Wages of Operator Positions | Operator Vacancy Rate | | | | Total Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0% | >0% to 20% | >20% to 30% | >30% | |
| Low average wage of non-CDL operator positions | $11.77 | $12.36 | $12.08 | $10.92 | $11.69 |
| High average wage of non-CDL operator positions | $15.60 | $15.40 | $14.81 | $14.59 | $15.01 |
| Low average wage of CDL operator positions | $14.11 | $14.22 | $12.60 | $11.60 | $13.25 |
| High average wage of CDL operator positions | $15.84 | $17.63 | $16.19 | $16.29 | $16.69 |

## CDL Training

Transit agencies were asked if they provide CDL training for new operators that are required to have a CDL. This same question was also asked for contractor employed operators. The responses are summarized in Table 2-23. Slightly more than half (51.5%) of the agencies with operator positions that require CDLs do not provide CDL training. Only 45.5% of transit agencies that employ CDL operators do provide CDL training. The small number of responses for contract employees may reflect that transit agencies may not be fully aware of contractor hiring and training practices.

### Table 2-23: CDL Training for Operators

| Is CDL training provided for new operators required to have a CDL? | Responses for Agency-Employed Operators | Percent | Responses for Contactor-Employed Operators | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No | 17 | 51.5% | 3 | 37.5% |
| Yes - upon hiring | 15 | 45.5% | 5 | 62.5% |
| Yes - after a minimum time of employment | 1 | 3.0% | 0 | 0.0% |
| **Total Responses** | **33** | | **8** | |

To analyze how provision of CDL training correlates with operator vacancy rate (Table 2-24), NCSU-ITRE coded transit agencies that provide CDL training as a 1 and coded those that don't as a 0. Lower averages of CDL training provision are found in the higher operator vacancy rate ranges (20% or more), suggesting that provision of CDL training is likely to result in fewer operator vacancies.

### Table 2-24: Operator Vacancies by CDL Training

| Provision of CDL Training | Operator Vacancy Rate | | | | Total Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0% | >0% to 20% | >20% to 30% | >30% | |
| Agency provides CDL training, coded as 0 = no, 1 = yes | 0.40 | 0.44 | 0.27 | 0.24 | 0.33 |

## Overtime Pay

The survey asked about the provision of overtime pay. Table 2-25 provides a summary of the responses to these questions for agency-employed operators. About two-thirds (67.2%) of agency respondents pay overtime, with the vast majority (92.9%) at time and a half. For most (61%) of the respondents that pay overtime, overtime comprises no more than 10% of the total wages paid to operators. Higher percentages of overtime wages are often the result of a staffing shortage and represents one of the significant costs borne by organizations with staffing shortages.

For operators employed by contractors, respondents were only asked whether or not their contractor provides overtime pay, without follow-up questions. Of the 27 respondents to this question, 10 (37%) replied that their contractor does provide overtime, 12 (44.4%) do not, and 5 (18.5%) do not know.

### Table 2-25: Overtime Pay for Agency-Employed Operators

| Overtime Pay for Agency-Employed Operators | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| **Do you provide overtime pay for operators?** | | |
| Yes | 43 | 67.2% |
| No | 21 | 32.8% |
| **Total Responses** | **64** | |
| **If yes, at what rate?** | | |
| Straight time | 3 | 7.1% |
| Time and a half | 39 | 92.9% |
| Double time | 0 | 0.0% |
| **Total Responses** | **42** | |

| Please estimate the percentage of overtime wages to total wages for your operators. | | |
|---|---|---|
| 0% - 10% | 25 | 61.0% |
| 11% - 20% | 9 | 22.0% |
| 21% - 30% | 5 | 12.2% |
| 31% - 40% | 2 | 4.9% |
| **Total Responses** | **41** | |

Overtime pay characteristics were analyzed in terms of the operator vacancy rates, including overtime pay rate and ratio of overtime pay to the total operator pay (Table 2-26). For overtime pay rate, NCSU-ITRE coded responses as 1 for straight time and 2 for time and a half, with 0 if no overtime is paid. Ratio of overtime pay was coded as 0 if no overtime was paid, 1 if overtime comprised up to 10% of overall operator wages, 2 if overtime was between 11 and 20% of overall operator wages, and 3 if overtime amounted to 21% to 30% of the total pay. Average rates for each of these two measures are shown for each of the NCSU-ITRE-designated operator vacancy rate ranges (0%, greater than 0% up to 20%, greater than 20% up to 30%, and greater than 30%). No clear correlations of overtime pay to operator vacancy rates was discerned.

## Table 2-26: Overtime Pay for Agency-Employed Operators

| Overtime Pay Characteristics | Operator Vacancy Rate | | | | Total Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0% | >0% to 20% | >20% to 30% | >30% | |
| Average rate of pay for overtime, coded as<br>0 = no overtime<br>1 = straight time<br>2 = time and a half | 0.80 | 1.56 | 1.60 | 0.94 | 1.26 |
| Average percentage of overtime wages to total wages for operators, coded as<br>0 = no overtime<br>1 = 0% to 10%<br>2 = 11% to 20%<br>3 = 21% to 30% | 0.50 | 1.75 | 1.13 | 0.71 | 1.07 |

# Pay Raises

The survey asked several questions about pay raises for agency-employed operators. When asked when their organization last increased the wage rates or salaries for all operators (Table 2-27), more than two-thirds (67.7%) of the responding transit agencies reported an increase within calendar year 2021, with dates within calendar year 2020 as the next most frequent response (15.4%). Transit agencies were also asked if operators receive pay raises based on years of service (Table 2-28).

### Table 2-27: Most Recent Agency-Employed Operator Pay Increase

| When did your organization last increase the wage rates or salaries for all operators? (open-ended) | Number of Responses | Responses |
|---|---|---|
| Earlier than 2018 | 1 | 1.5% |
| 2018 | 3 | 4.6% |
| 2019 | 6 | 9.2% |
| 2020 | 10 | 15.4% |
| 2021 | 44 | 67.7% |
| Never | 1 | 1.5% |
| **Total Responses** | **65** | |

### Table 2-28: Pay Raises Based on Years of Service (Longevity)

| Do operators receive pay raises based on years of service? | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| No | 43 | 67.2% |
| Yes | 21 | 32.8% |
| **Total Responses** | **64** | |

Only about a third (32.8%) replied that they provide longevity increases. Those that do were asked to describe how years of service factor into wage/salary levels of operators. Responses to this question varied widely:

- Responses indicating scheduled increases during the first few years:
  - *Every six months for the first three years.*
  - *Contractual 6-month, 1 year through 4 years*
  - *Employees with at least 1 but less than 5 continuous years of service as of 6/30/21 =0 .5%*
- Responses indicating scheduled increases at various intervals:

  - *1st year and 3 years thereafter*
  - *2% increase for 10-14 years of service and 4% increase for >14 years*
  - *6 mo - 12.00, 1 yr - 13.00, 5 yr - 13.50, 10 yr - 14.00, 1 5yr - 14.50*
  - *After 10 years of employment, the employee receives 1.25% of their annual salary as longevity pay*
  - *After the 1st year of service and then every 5 years after that*
  - *Every 2 years up to 8th year of service*
  - *Full-Time Drivers receive one-time annual longevity checks after 5 years (not a permanent raise). For 5 through 9 years = 1%, 10 through 14 years = 2%, 15+ years = 3%*
  - *Longevity starting at 10 years. Every year that you are employed you receive a 1.5% cost of living increase.*
  - *Progression Plan every two years - 2.5% increase*
  - *Training-$15.50; First Year-$16.40; 1-2 years-$17.00; 3-8 year-$17.40; 9ys+ ranges $17.73-$20.35 (8/21/21 increase was 10% over FY2021 rate)*

- Responses indicating an annual increase:
  - *Annual evaluations*
  - *Annually*
  - *CBA-amount of increase based on years occurs every April.*
  - *Each 7/1*
  - *Every year if they maintain county standards 1.3%*
  - *Operators receive an annual percentage increased based on their CBA*
  - *Operators receive the annual COLA*

- Non-specific responses:
  - *A scale of years of service is used to determine pay.*
  - *It is factored into the CBA*

NCSU-ITRE's analysis looked at pay raise practices and operator vacancy rates. Table 2-29 shows the average year of the most recent wage increase for operators for each of NCSU-ITRE's four operator vacancy rate ranges (0%, greater than 0% up to 20%, greater than 20% up to 30%, and greater than 30%). It also shows the average measure in each of the four operator vacancy rate ranges indicating whether or not operators receive wages based in years of service, coded as 1 if yes and 0 if no.

### Table 2-29: Operator Vacancies by Pay Characteristics

| Raise Characteristics | Operator Vacancy Rate | | | | Total Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0% | >0% to 20% | >20% to 30% | >30% | |
| Average year of most recent wage increase | 2019.75 | 2020.20 | 2020.40 | 2020.06 | 2020.15 |
| Average of whether or not operators receive wages based in years of service, coded as: 0 = no, 1 = yes | 0.13 | 0.20 | 0.47 | 0.24 | 0.27 |

# Benefits

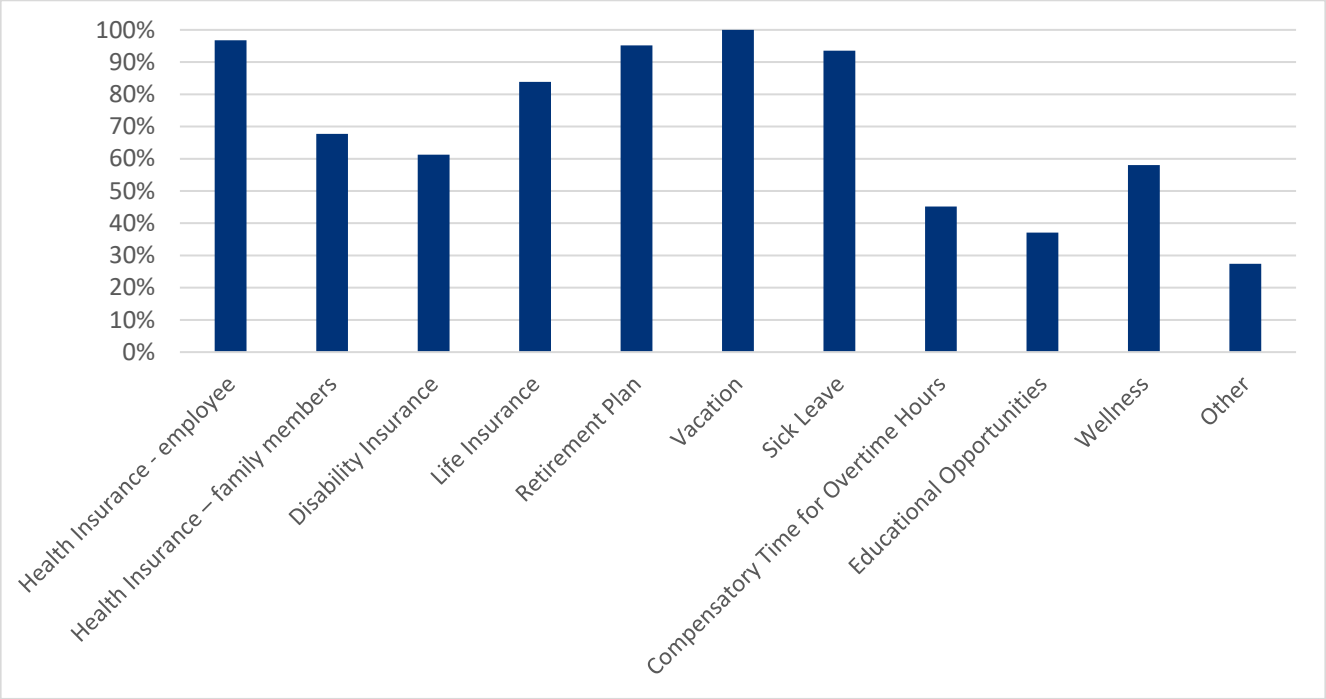
## Provided to Operators Employed by the Agency

Transit agencies were asked to indicate the benefits they provide (in addition to the legally required benefits such as FICA) to the operators they employ. Table 2-30 and Figure 2-6 summarize the responses to this question. The most frequently provided benefits for agency employed operators are vacation (96.8%), retirement plans (95.2%), health insurance for the individual employee (92.1%), sick leave (88.9%), life insurance (77.8%), and health insurance for family members (61.9%).

### Table 2-30: Benefits Provided to Operators Employed by the Agency

| Benefits Provided to Agency-Employed Operators | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Health Insurance - employee | 58 | 92.1% |
| Health Insurance – family members | 39 | 61.9% |
| Disability Insurance | 34 | 54.0% |
| Life Insurance | 49 | 77.8% |
| Retirement Plan | 60 | 95.2% |
| Vacation | 61 | 96.8% |
| Sick Leave | 56 | 88.9% |
| Compensatory Time for Overtime Hours | 30 | 47.6% |
| Educational Opportunities | 19 | 30.2% |
| Wellness | 38 | 60.3% |
| Other | 22 | 34.9% |
| **Total Responses** | **63** | |

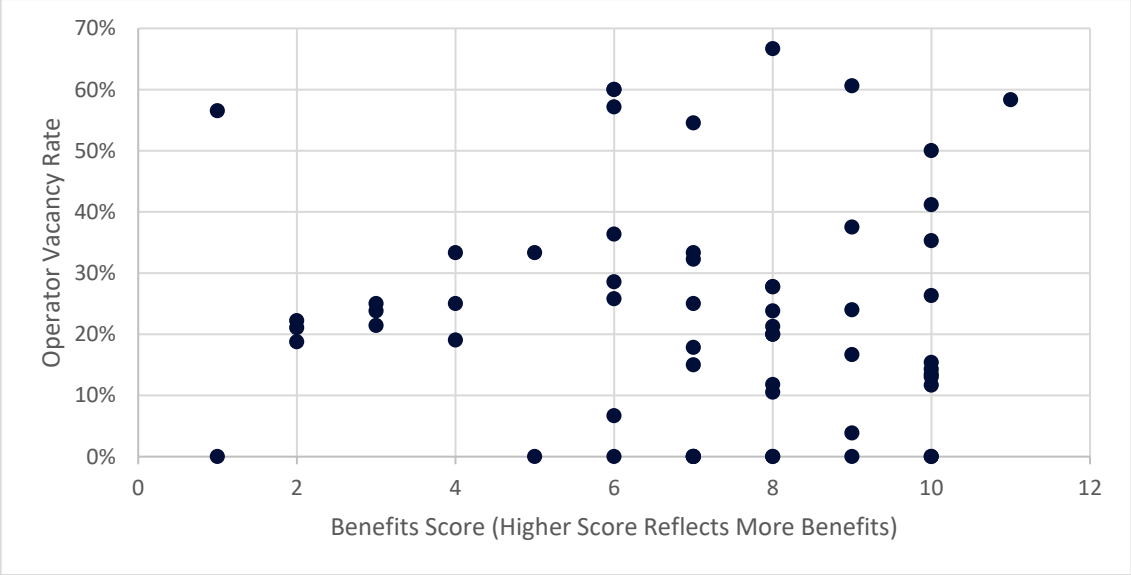
## Figure 2-6: Benefits Provided to Operators Employed by the Agency




Other types of benefits indicated include dental insurance (7 responses), vision coverage (3 responses), 401k (6 responses), holidays/holiday pay (5 responses), longevity pay, bonuses, employee assistance program, personal time, and supplemental insurance. Additional explanation of benefits was also reported under "other."

To see if there is a correlation between benefits provided to operators and operator vacancy rates, the benefits offered by each respondent were scored by adding the number of benefit types reported. Appendix D provides the basis of the score for each respondent. The benefits score was then plotted against the respondent's operator vacancy rate (Figure 2-7). The graph does not reveal any pattern of correlation of operator benefits to vacancy rates. It should be noted that both agency-employed and contractor-employed operators are included in the vacancy rates, while the benefit scores reflect only those benefits provided by agencies. Also, it is important to keep in mind the benefit score does not capture the extent the relative value of any particular benefit or extent to which transit agencies pay for insurance premiums or other variations of a benefit's value.

## Figure 2-7: Benefits Provided to Operators Employed by the Agency and Operator Vacancy Rates




Next, each of the positive responses (excluding the "other" category, which was included in the preceding figure) were totaled to provide an overall score indicative of number of benefits offered to operators. Then, for each of NCSU-ITRE's four operator vacancy rate ranges (0%, greater than 0% up to 20%, greater than 20% up to 30%, and greater than 30%), the average of each benefit is presented in Table 2-31, as well as the average sum of all benefit scores. As with the scatter plot graph, no clear correlation between operator vacancy rates and benefits was detected from these numbers.

## Table 2-31: Operator Vacancies by Benefits Provided

| Benefits for Operators | Operator Vacancy Rate | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0% | >0% to 20% | >20% to 30% | >30% | Average |
| Average provision of benefits to operators, coded as<br>0 = no (or no answer)<br>1 = yes | | | | | |
| Health Insurance – employee | 0.70 | 0.93 | 0.80 | 0.94 | 0.86 |
| Health Insurance – family members | 0.40 | 0.73 | 0.47 | 0.53 | 0.54 |
| Disability Insurance | 0.40 | 0.69 | 0.20 | 0.47 | 0.45 |
| Life Insurance | 0.50 | 0.75 | 0.60 | 0.82 | 0.69 |
| Retirement Plan | 0.80 | 0.94 | 0.73 | 1.00 | 0.88 |
| Vacation | 0.70 | 0.94 | 0.93 | 0.94 | 0.90 |
| Sick Leave | 0.60 | 0.81 | 0.80 | 0.94 | 0.81 |
| Compensatory Time for Overtime Hours | 0.40 | 0.38 | 0.27 | 0.53 | 0.40 |
| Educational Opportunities | 0.20 | 0.38 | 0.13 | 0.35 | 0.28 |
| Wellness | 0.40 | 0.69 | 0.60 | 0.35 | 0.52 |
| **Sum of All Benefits** | **5.10** | **7.13** | **5.53** | **6.88** | **6.29** |

Transit agencies were also asked whether benefits were available to all operators, full-time operators only, or part-time operators working a minimum number of hours required to receive benefits (Table 2-32). Most respondents (65.6%) indicated benefits were limited to full-time operators only, although based on the explanatory responses included under "other" in response to the preceding question, and explanatory responses for "minimum hours" needed to qualify, there are nuances that are not addressed in this question (i.e., some benefits may be available to all operators while others are only available for full-time operators. The minimum hours that were specified ranged from 19 hours, to at least 20 hours/week or 1,000 hours/year, to 30 hours.

## Table 2-32: Operator Benefit Eligibility

| For which operators are these benefits available? (Check one) | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| All operators | 13 | 20.3% |
| Full-time operators only | 42 | 65.6% |
| Part-time operators - Minimum numbers of hours required to work to receive benefits | 9 | 14.1% |
| **Total Responses** | **64** | |

Operator benefit eligibility was also examined in relation to agency vacancy rates. NCSU-ITRE coded responses to this question as 1 if a benefit is provided to full-time operators only, 2 if it is provided to part-time operators working a minimum number of hours, and 3 if provided to all operators. The average score for each of the NCSU-ITRE-designed operator vacancy rate ranges is shown in Table 2-33. No correlation is detected based on these measures.

### Table 2-33: Operator Vacancy Rate by Benefit Eligibility

| Benefits for Operators | Operator Vacancy Rate | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0% | >0% to 20% | >20% to 30% | >30% | Average |
| Average of which operators are eligible for benefits, coded as<br>1 = full-time operators only<br>2 = part-time operators working a minimum number of hours<br>3 = all operators | 1.75 | 1.53 | 1.33 | 1.71 | 1.56 |

## Provided to Contractor-Employed Operators

The survey also asked about benefits for operators employed by contractors. Table 2-34 and Figure 2-8 summarizes the benefits transit agencies reported their contractors provide to operators. The most common contractor-provided benefits known by respondents are vacation, health insurance for the individual operator, sick leave, and disability insurance. Holiday pay was indicated for "other."

## Table 2-34: Benefits Provided to Operators Employed by Contractors

| Benefits Provided to Contractor-Employed Operators | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| I don't know | 8 | 50.0% |
| Health Insurance - employee | 8 | 50.0% |
| Health Insurance – family members | 6 | 37.5% |
| Disability Insurance | 7 | 43.8% |
| Life Insurance | 4 | 25.0% |
| Retirement Plan | 7 | 43.8% |
| Vacation | 9 | 56.3% |
| Sick Leave | 7 | 43.8% |
| Compensatory Time for Overtime Hours | 2 | 12.5% |
| Educational Opportunities | 3 | 18.8% |
| Wellness | 5 | 31.3% |
| Other | 1 | 6.3% |
| **Total Responses** | **16** | |

## Figure 2-8: Benefits Provided to Operators Employed by Contractors

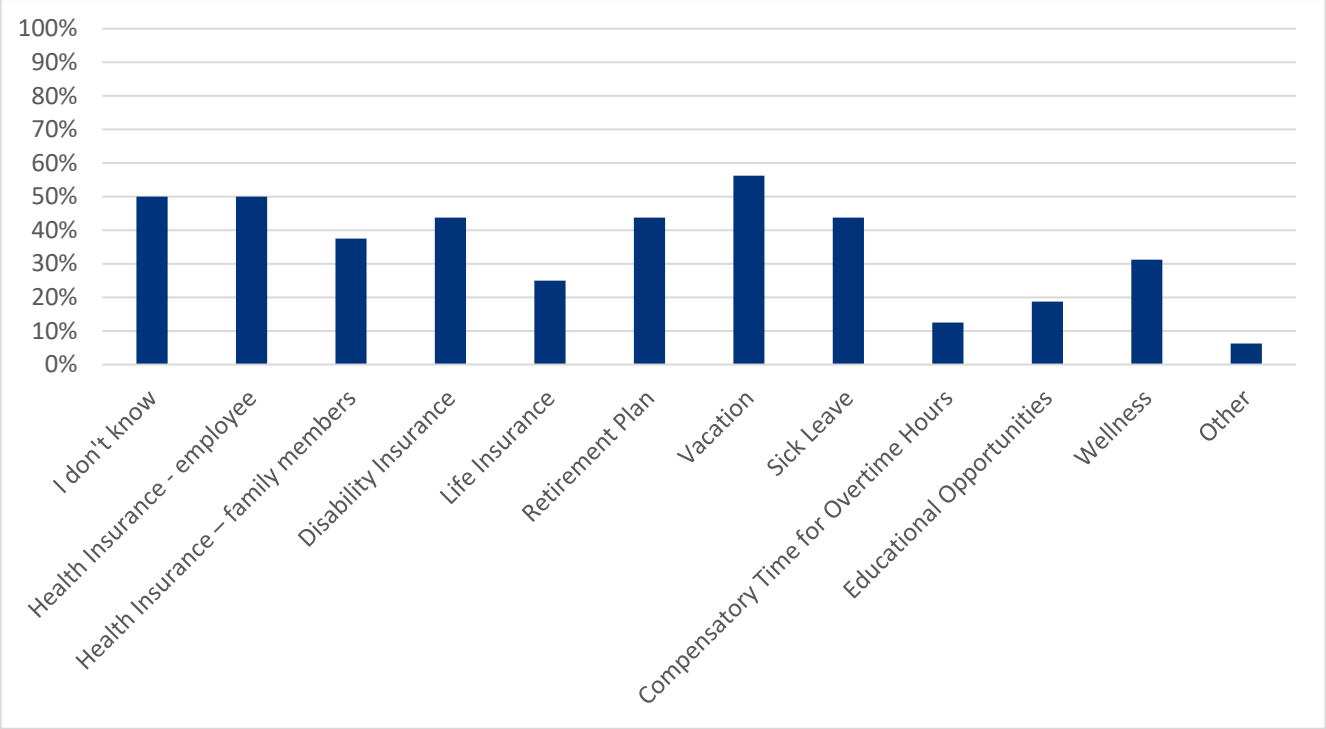


Table 2-35 summarizes which contractor-employed operators are eligible for benefits. For those 12 respondents that reported awareness of eligibility for contractor-provided benefits, over half reported that they are provided to al operators employed by the contractor, and one-third reported that only full-time operators are eligible.

### Table 2-35: Operator Eligibility for Contractor-Employed Benefits

| For which operators are these benefits available? (Contractor-Employed) | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| I don't know | 12 | 50.0% |
| All operators | 7 | 29.2% |
| Full-time operators only | 4 | 16.7% |
| Part-time operators - Minimum numbers of hours required to work to receive benefits | 1 | 4.2% |
| **Total Responses** | **24** | |

## How Pay Rates and Benefits Compare to the Local Labor Market

The survey asked how transit agencies believe their wage/salary rates and benefits for operators compare to the local labor market. Table 2-36 presents the responses to this question regarding pay rates. Only a handful of respondents (9.4%) believe their pay rates are above average for the local labor market. Half (50%) indicated that their pay rates are about average, and 40.6% believe theirs to be below average.

### Table 2-36: Agency Perception of How Their Operator Pay Rates Compare to the Local Labor Market

| How do you believe your wage/salary rates for operators compare to the local labor market? | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Above the local labor market average | 6 | 9.4% |
| About average for the local labor market | 32 | 50.0% |
| Below the local labor market average | 26 | 40.6% |
| **Total Responses** | **64** | |

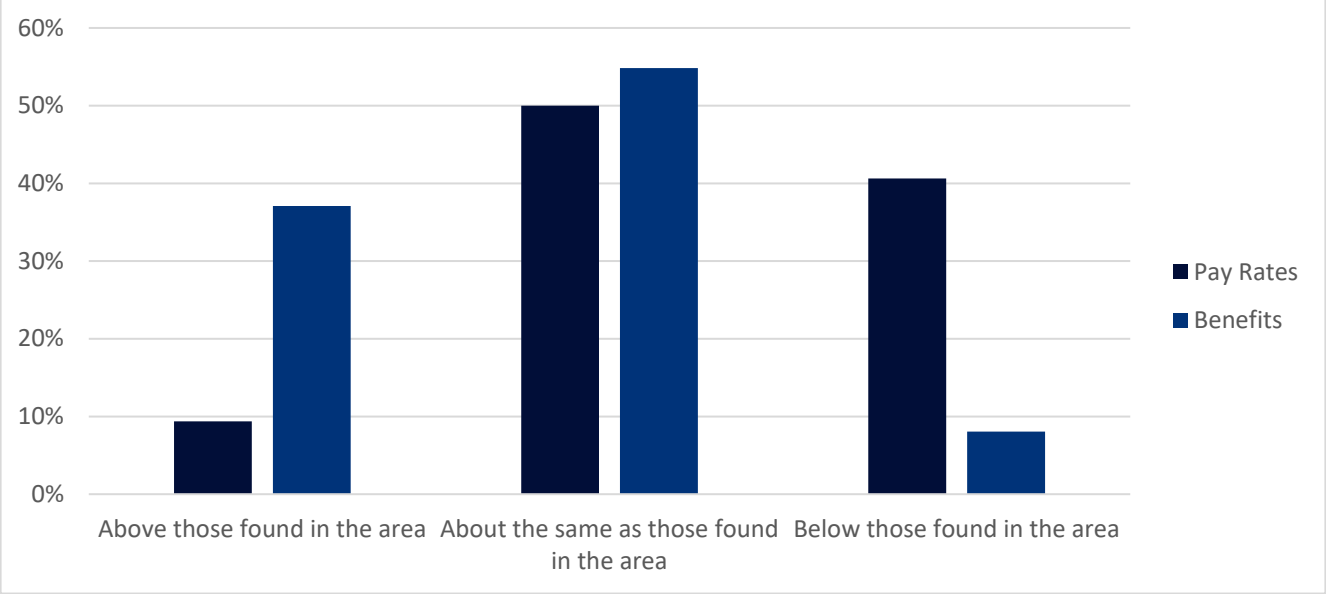
Table 2-37 summarizes how transit agencies believe they compare to the local labor market in terms of benefits. Over half (54.8%) of the respondents believe their benefits are comparable to other employers in the area, 37.1% believe their benefits are better than those found in their area, while only 8.1% feel their benefits are not as good as others in the area.

### Table 2-37: Agency Perception of How Their Operator Benefits Compare to the Local Labor Market

| How do you believe your benefit for operators compare to the local labor market? | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Above those found in the area | 23 | 37.1% |
| About the same as those found in the area | 34 | 54.8% |
| Below those found in the area | 5 | 8.1% |
| **Total Responses** | **62** | |

Figure 2-9 compares perceptions about operator benefits to pay rates. While North Carolina transit agencies tend to perceive their operator pay rates as about the same or lower than average in their area, perceptions about benefits tend to be the other way around.

### Figure 2-9: Comparison of Perceived Operator Pay Rates and Benefits Relative to the Local Labor Market



NCSU-ITRE analyzed how these perceptions correlate with the operator vacancy rates. For the questions on both pay rates and benefits, NCSU-ITRE coded the responses as:

- 0 = No response
- 1 = Below average
- 2 = About average
- 3 = Above average

The averages of the responses for organizations within each of the four operator vacancy rate ranges (0%, greater than 0% up to 20%, greater than 20% up to 30%, and greater than 30%) are shown in Table 2-38. A correlation was not identified.

### Table 2-38: Operator Vacancy Rate by Perceived Operator Pay Rates and Benefits Relative to the Local Labor Market

| How the agency compares to the local labor market, coded as:<br>0 = No response<br>1 = Below average<br>2 = About average<br>3 = Above average | Operator Vacancy Rate | | | | Total Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0% | >0% to 20% | >20% to 30% | >30% | |
| Average perception of agency's wage/salary rates for operators | 1.20 | 1.88 | 1.67 | 1.53 | 1.60 |
| Average perception of agency's benefits for operators | 2.10 | 2.13 | 2.20 | 2.18 | 2.16 |

## Contract Operator Shortages

The final question specific to contract operators was "Does your contractor currently have a shortage of operations for your transit system?" Eight respondents indicated that their contractor does have an operator shortage, six indicated that their contractor does not have a shortage, and nine replied that they did not know.

# Additional Information on Operations Employees

## Pay and Benefits for Other Operations Employees

With operators being the focus of this survey, the number of questions were asked about other operations positions were limited. Transit agencies were asked they employ dispatchers and operations supervisors, how many FTEs of each, what the lowest and highest pay rates are for each, and what benefits are provided to these two positions.

The FTEs and pay ranges reported for these two positions are summarized in Table 2-39. Wage and salary rates for these positions vary widely. Hour wage rates reported for dispatchers range from $10.00 to $21.66 per hour, with salaries ranging from $25,647 to $65,641 per year. Operations supervisor wage rates range from $12.00 to $40.43 per hour, and their salaries range from $55,460 to $81,398. A potential factor in the wide ranges of pay rates for these positions is that these positions can have varying levels of responsibility from organization to the next.

### Table 2-39: Staffing Levels and Pay Rates for Dispatchers and Operations Supervisors

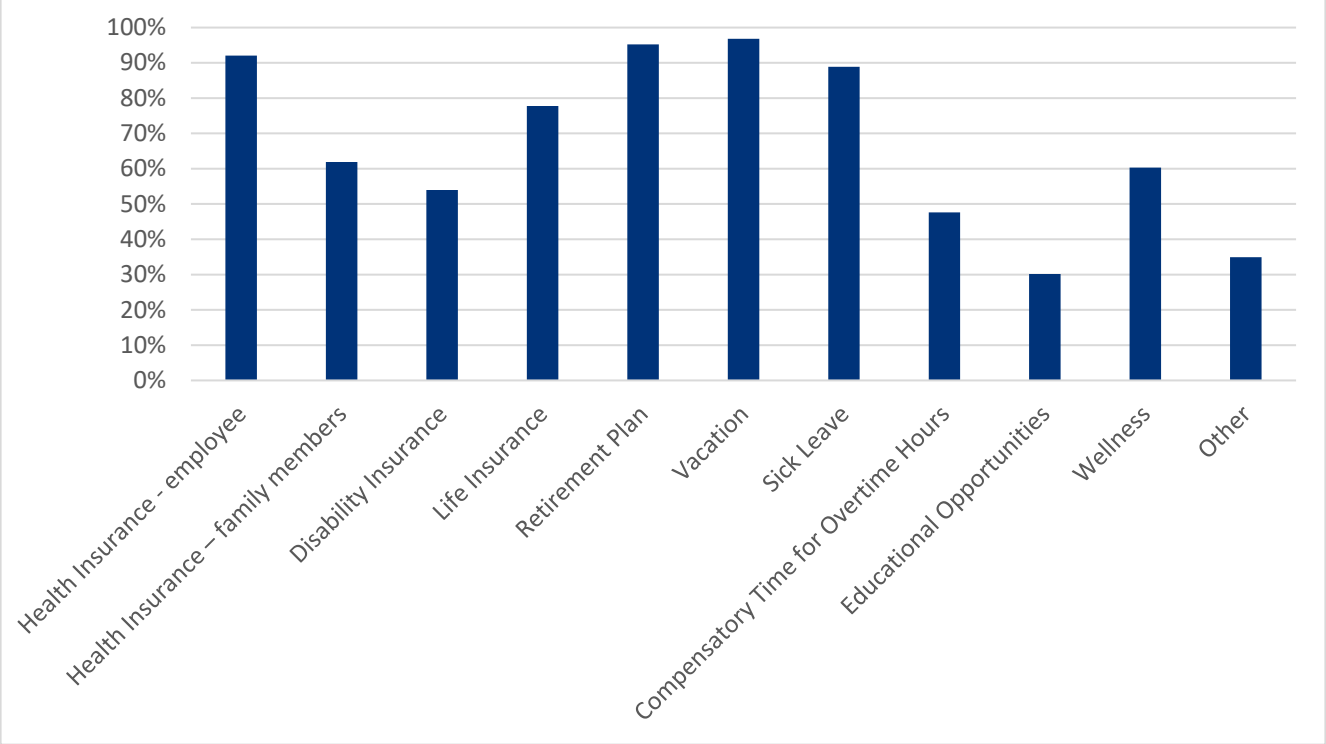
| Other Operations Employees | Number of FTEs | Hourly Wage Rates | | Salary Rates | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest |
| Dispatchers | 115 | $10.00 | $21.66 | $25,647 | $65,641 |
| Operators Supervisors | 82.5 | $12.00 | $40.43 | $55,460 | $81,398 |

Agency-provided benefits for dispatchers and operators are shown in Table 2-40 and Figure 2-10. The most commonly provided benefits for these employment categories are vacation (100%), health insurance for the individual employee (96.8%), retirement plan (95.2%), sick leave (93.5%), and life insurance (83.9%). Other benefits indicated include paid holidays (4 responses), 401k (5 responses), dental insurance (5 responses), vision coverage (3 responses), other types of insurance (3 responses), employee assistance program (2 responses), longevity pay (2 responses), overtime, annual bonuses, and personal time.

## Table 2-40: Benefits Provided to Dispatchers and Operations Supervisor

| Benefits Provided to Dispatchers and Operations Supervisors | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Health Insurance – employee | 60 | 96.8% |
| Health Insurance – family members | 42 | 67.7% |
| Disability Insurance | 38 | 61.3% |
| Life Insurance | 52 | 83.9% |
| Retirement Plan | 59 | 95.2% |
| Vacation | 62 | 100.0% |
| Sick Leave | 58 | 93.5% |
| Compensatory Time for Overtime Hours | 28 | 45.2% |
| Educational Opportunities | 23 | 37.1% |
| Wellness | 36 | 58.1% |
| Other | 17 | 27.4% |
| **Total Responses** | **62** | |

## Figure 2-10: Benefits Provided to Dispatchers and Operations Supervisor



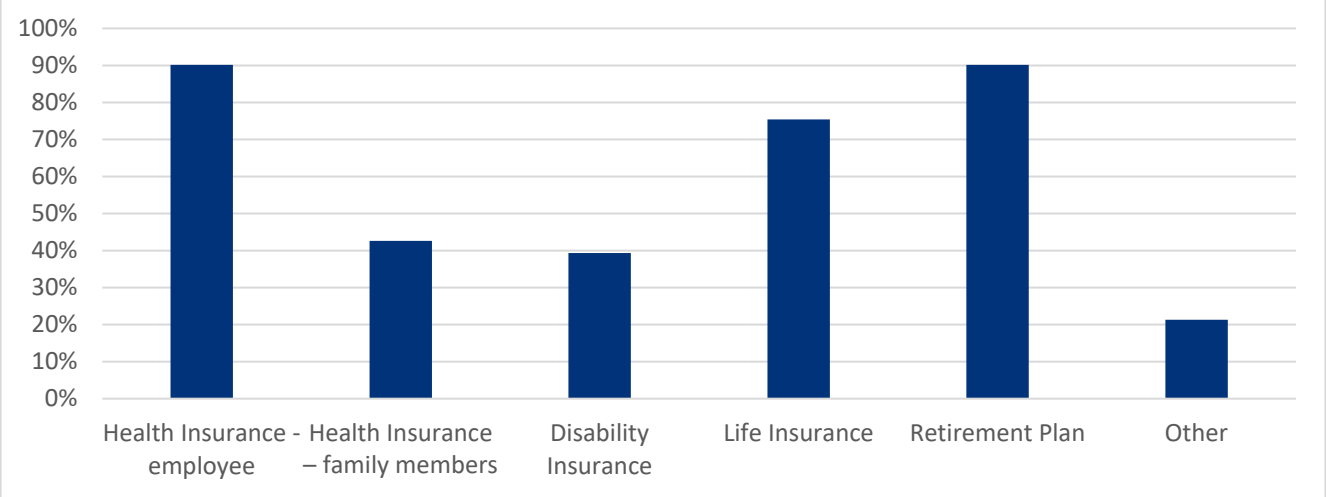
# Employer Contributions to Benefits

A nuance of each benefit offered is whether the employer contributes to it or offers the employee the option of a benefit at their own expense (e.g., insurance premiums). To get at this distinction, the survey also asked respondents to indicate which particular benefits the organization/agency contributes to (if any) on behalf of its operations employees. Table 2-41 and Figure 2-11 present the responses to this question. Health insurance for individual operating employees and retirement plans are both contributed to by 90.2% of the respondents. About three-quarters (75.4%) contribute to life insurance premiums. Far fewer employers contribute to health insurance for family members (42.6%) or disability insurance (39.3%). Respondents identified the following other types of employer-paid benefits: 401k (6 responses), dental insurance (6 responses), vision coverage (3 responses), other types of insurance, and benefits for which employer contribution would be the default (e.g., paid holidays), suggesting that the intent of this question might not have been clear to some respondents.

## Table 2-41: Benefits to Which the Employer Contributes

| Benefits to Which the Employer Contributes | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Health Insurance - employee | 55 | 90.2% |
| Health Insurance – family members | 26 | 42.6% |
| Disability Insurance | 24 | 39.3% |
| Life Insurance | 46 | 75.4% |
| Retirement Plan | 55 | 90.2% |
| Other | 13 | 21.3% |
| **Total Responses** | **61** | |

## Figure 2-11: Benefits to Which the Employer Contributes



# Shortages of Operations Staff

To supplement the questions on total number of agency vacancies, driver vacancies, and mechanic vacancies, transit agencies were asked if they currently have a shortage of operations staff, and if so, which positions and why they believe there is a shortage. Table 2-42 summarizes how many transit agencies identified shortages and what types of positions were indicated in response to this open-ended question. A majority (64.1%) of the respondents indicated that they do have staff shortages, with operators being the most frequently indicate type of position indicated (85.7% including CDL, non-CDL, full- and part-time operators). A few respondents indicated shortages in dispatchers, supervisors, and schedulers/call center staff.

## Table 2-42: Transit Agency Operations Shortages

| Operations Staff Shortages | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| **Does your organization/agency currently have a shortage of operations staff?** | | |
| Yes | 41 | 64.1% |
| No | 23 | 35.9% |
| **Total Responses** | **64** | |
| **If yes, which positions have shortages?** | | |
| CDL Operators (includes full- and part-time) | 12 | 28.6% |
| Non-CDL Operators (includes full- and part-time) | 9 | 21.4% |
| Operators (unspecified as to CDL; includes full- and part-time) | 15 | 35.7% |
| **Subtotal Any Type of Operator:** | **36** | **85.7%** |
| Dispatchers (includes full- and part-time) | 4 | 9.5% |
| Supervisors | 3 | 7.1% |
| Other positions (schedulers, call center clerks, administrative assistants, unspecified) | 6 | 14.3% |
| **Total Responses** | **42** | |

The responses to "Why do you believe there is a shortage?" are summarized in Table 2-43. Unemployment benefits was the most frequently mentioned reason (42.9%), followed the COVID-19 pandemic/health concerns and low pay (33.3% each). Several other reasons given (including shortage of qualified applicants, other work opportunities are more attractive, high responsibility/unappealing job) could likely be mitigated with higher pay. Two agencies noted that they offer good benefits but benefits are of less value than pay rates.

### Table 2-43 Reasons Believed for Operations Shortages

| Reasons Indicated for Operations Staff Shortages | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Unemployment benefits are more attractive | 18 | 42.9% |
| COVID-19 pandemic / health concerns | 14 | 33.3% |
| Low pay | 14 | 33.3% |
| Shortage of qualified people | 5 | 11.9% |
| Other work opportunities are more attractive | 3 | 7.1% |
| Other (high responsibility job, work hours, drug screening, unappealing job) | 8 | 19.0% |
| **Total Responses** | **42** | |

# Staffing Levels, Pay and Benefits for Maintenance Employees

Mechanics were a secondary focus of the survey, which asked several questions about maintenance staff that are employed by the respondent (not their contractors or outsource maintenance). As indicated earlier in Table 2-2, only 20 of the survey respondents have in-house maintenance staff. Transit agencies were asked whether or not they employ mechanics that aren't or are required to have a CDL, as well as maintenance supervisors. For each of these positions, they were asked how many FTEs they employee, and what the lowest and highest pay rates are for these positions. Only 17 agencies reported employing mechanics, and several of these respondents had indicated earlier that they did not have in-house maintenance staff, so appear to have answered in reference to outsourced maintenance. The responses to questions on FTEs and pay rates for mechanics and maintenance supervisors are summarized in Table 2-44 and provided for each respondent in Appendix E. The lowest wages reported for mechanics are $10.00 per hour for those not required to have a CDL and $12.75 for mechanics that are required to have a CDL. At the high end, hourly wages are $32 to $33.

### Table 2-44: Staffing Levels and Pay Rates for Mechanics and Maintenance Supervisors

| Maintenance Employees | Number of FTEs | Hourly Wage Rates | | Salary Rates | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest |
| Mechanics Not Required to Have a CDL | 21 | $10.00 | $33.00 | $33,000 | $41,675 |
| Mechanics Required to Have a CDL | 45 | $12.75 | $32.00 | $34,862 | $66,747 |
| Maintenance Supervisors | 13 | $21.63 | $40.80 | $35,935 | $91,000 |

The survey also asked how transit agencies believe their wage/salary rates and benefits for mechanics compare to the local labor market. Table 2-45 presents the responses to this question for respondents that had previously answered that they employed mechanics. The majority believe what they pay mechanics is about average (52.9%) or below average (35.3%).

### Table 2-45: Perceived Comparability of Mechanics Pay Rates

| How do you believe your wage/salary rates for mechanics compare to the local labor market? | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Above the local labor market average | 2 | 11.8% |
| About average for the local labor market | 9 | 52.9% |
| Below the local labor market average | 6 | 35.3% |
| **Total Responses** | **17** | |

When asked when wage rates of mechanics were last increased (Table 2-46, a majority of responses (61.5%) listed dates within calendar year 2021.

### Table 2-46: Time Frame of Most Recent Raises for Mechanics

| When did your organization last increase the wage rates or salaries for mechanics? (open ended) | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| 2018 | 1 | 7.7% |
| 2019 | 2 | 15.4% |
| 2020 | 1 | 7.7% |
| 2021 | 8 | 61.5% |
| Not sure | 1 | 7.7% |
| **Total Responses** | **13** | |

Transit agencies were also asked about longevity pay for mechanics. Responses to this question are summarized in Table 2-47. Most (70.6%) answered that their mechanics do not receive pay raises based on years of service. Three of that answered in the affirmative noted annual raises. The other two replied "per collective bargaining agreement" and "It also depends on experience and specialized certification."

## Table 2-47: Mechanic Pay Raises Based on Years of Service (Longevity)

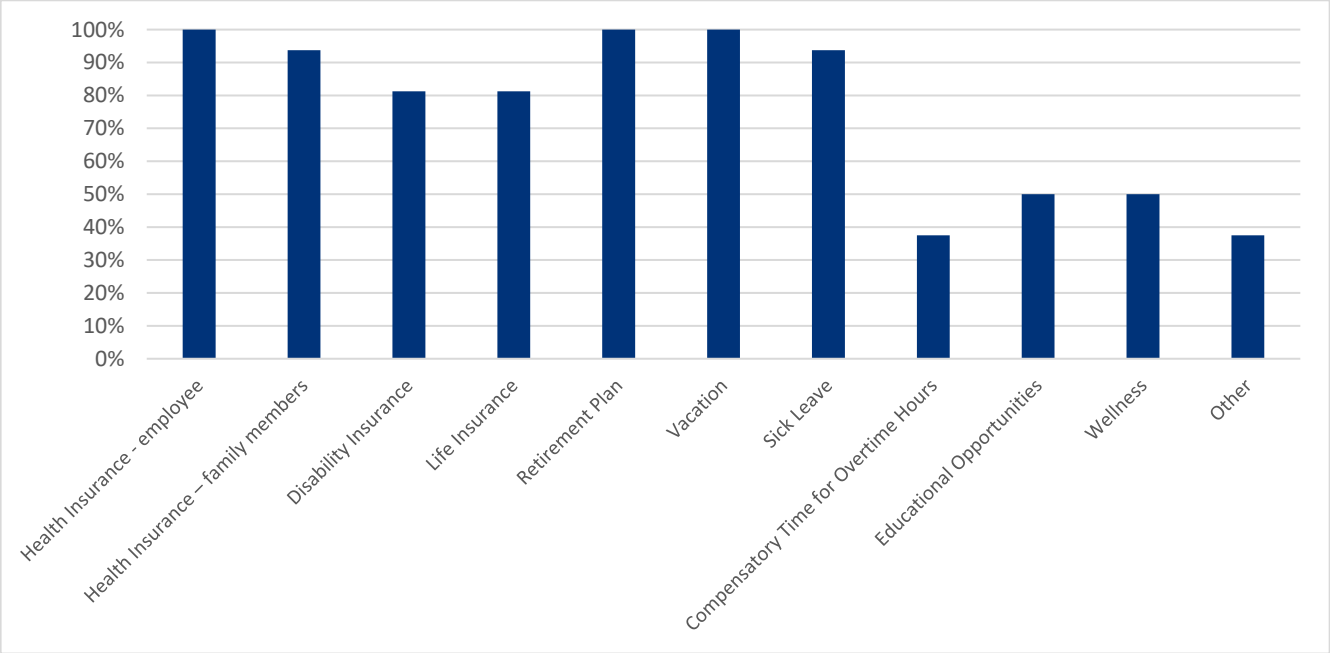
| Do mechanics receive pay raises based on years of service? | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| No | 12 | 70.6% |
| Yes | 5 | 29.4% |
| **Total Responses** | **17** | |

The survey asked about benefits provided to mechanics. The responses are summarized Table 2-48 and Figure 2-12. All or nearly all responding transit agencies employing mechanics provide health insurance to the employee (100%) as well as to family members (93.9%), a retirement plan (100%), paid vacation (100%), and sick leave (93.9%), with disability and life insurance each provided by 91.3% of these employers. Other benefit mentioned include holidays, dental and vision insurance, other types of insurance, and 401k.

## Table 2-48: Benefits for Mechanics

| Benefits Provided to Mechanics | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Health Insurance - employee | 16 | 100.0% |
| Health Insurance – family members | 15 | 93.8% |
| Disability Insurance | 13 | 81.3% |
| Life Insurance | 13 | 81.3% |
| Retirement Plan | 16 | 100.0% |
| Vacation | 16 | 100.0% |
| Sick Leave | 15 | 93.8% |
| Compensatory Time for Overtime Hours | 6 | 37.5% |
| Educational Opportunities | 8 | 50.0% |
| Wellness | 8 | 50.0% |
| Other | 6 | 37.5% |
| **Total Responses** | **16** | |

## Figure 2-12: Benefits for Mechanics




When asked if the transit agency provides financial assistance for training needed by mechanics to earn or retain Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certifications, six replied that they provide this upon hiring, and one provides this assistance after an unidentified period of employment.

Transit agencies were also asked if they currently have a shortage of maintenance staff, and if so, which positions and why they believe there is a shortage. Table 2-49 summarizes how many transit agencies identified maintenance staff shortages and what types of positions were indicated in response to this open-ended question.

## Table 2-49: Maintenance Staff Shortages

| Maintenance Staff Shortages | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| **Does your organization/agency currently have a shortage of maintenance staff?** | | |
| Yes | 7 | 38.9% |
| No | 11 | 61.1% |
| **Total Responses** | **18** | |
| **If yes, which positions have shortages?** | | |
| Mechanic - CDL | 2 | 33.3% |
| Mechanic - unspecified about CDL | 2 | 33.3% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Maintenance Supervisor | 1 | 16.7% |
| Service Aide | 1 | 16.7% |
| **Total Responses** | **6** | |

Reasons listed for maintenance staff shortages included:

- low or average (uncompetitive) pay (3 responses)
- no money for the position
- new budgeted position
- service aide needed due to workers comp injury
- location
- cleanliness of work environment: "People don't want to get dirty anymore. Many people with an aptitude for maintenance work 30 years ago now work in IT. Better money, cleaner environment."

# Recruitment and Retention Strategies

Transit operators were asked about their recruitment and retention strategies for operators and mechanics, what methods or strategies have been particularly effective, and how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the organization's approaches. Although these questions were intended only for those organizations that directly employ operators or mechanics, several respondents that contract for operations also answered these questions, and their responses have been included in the summaries. These questions focus on qualitative information, and as one respondent noted in a comment, contractors experience the same problem as other transit systems with recruitment and retention issues.

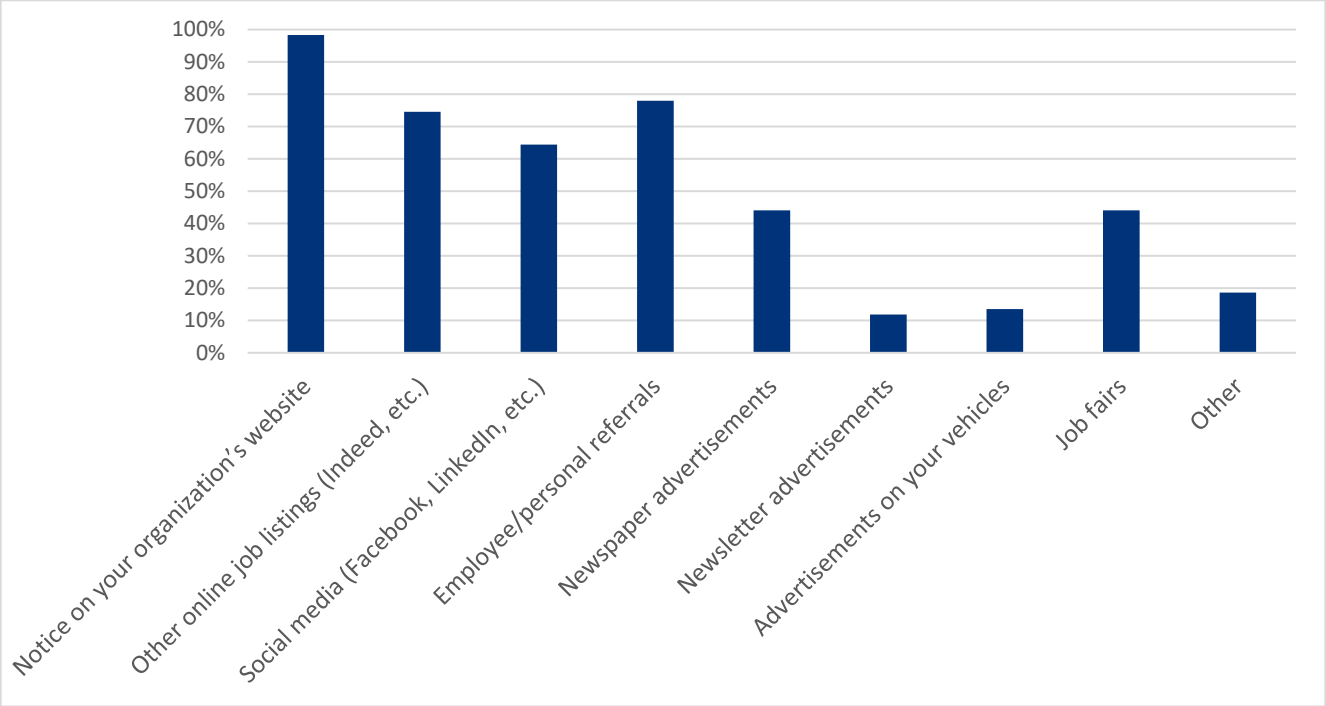
## For Operators

Table 2-50 and Figure 2-13 summarize the responses to the question "Which methods does your organization/agency use to recruit potential operators?" All except one (98.3%) of the respondents' post notices on the agency's website. Other methods used by a majority of respondents include employee/personal referrals (78%), online job listings on sites such as Indeed (74.6%), and social media (64.4%). Job fairs and newspaper advertisements are methods used by 44.4% of respondents. Only 13.6% post advertisements on their own vehicles. Other methods listed include NC Works website (4 responses), signage or notices posted at the agency's facilities (4 responses), partnerships with other organizations (2 responses), yard signs, and radio advertisements.

### Table 2-50: Recruitment Methods for Potential Operators

| Which methods does your organization/agency use to recruit potential operators? | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Notice on your organization's website | 58 | 98.3% |
| Other online job listings (Indeed, etc.) | 44 | 74.6% |
| Social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) | 38 | 64.4% |
| Employee/personal referrals | 46 | 78.0% |
| Newspaper advertisements | 26 | 44.1% |
| Newsletter advertisements | 7 | 11.9% |
| Advertisements on your vehicles | 8 | 13.6% |
| Job fairs | 26 | 44.1% |
| Other | 11 | 18.6% |
| **Total Responses** | **59** | |

## Figure 2-13: Recruitment Methods for Potential Operators




NCSU-ITRE analyzed how the use of these strategies correlates with the operator vacancy rates. NCSU-ITRE coded the responses as 0 for no (or no answer) and 1 for yes. The averages of the responses for organizations within each of the four operator vacancy rate ranges (0%, greater than 0% up to 20%, greater than 20% up to 30%, and greater than 30%) are shown in Table 2-51. A clear correlation was not identified, with the possible exception that the organizations with the lowest operator vacancy rates (0%) had the lowest average incidence of using the listed recruitment strategies.

## Table 2-51: Operator Vacancy Rate by Average Use of Strategies to Recruit Operators

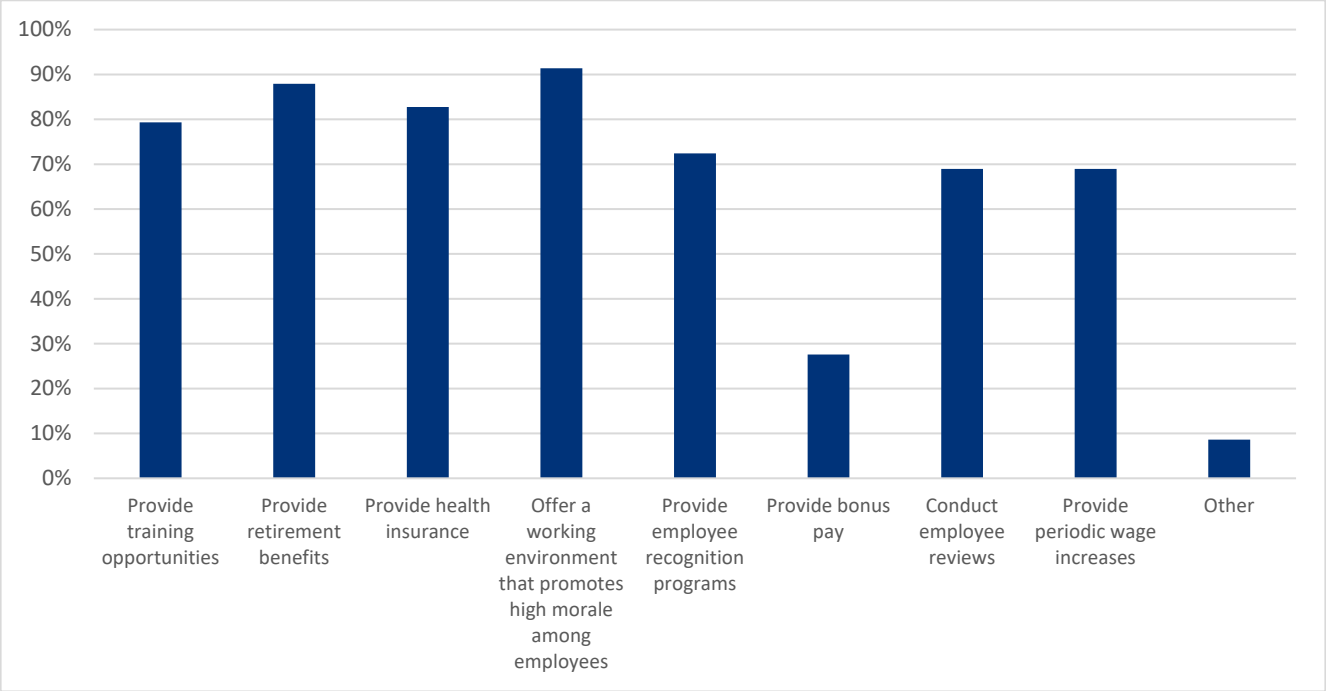
| Average use of strategies to recruit operators, coded as 0 = no or no answer, 1 = yes | Operator Vacancy Rate | | | | Total Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0% | >0% to 20% | >20% to 30% | >30% | |
| Notice on organization's website | 0.80 | 0.94 | 0.87 | 0.88 | 0.88 |
| Other online job listings (Indeed, etc.) | 0.60 | 0.88 | 0.53 | 0.65 | 0.67 |
| Social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) | 0.20 | 0.56 | 0.60 | 0.82 | 0.59 |
| Employee/personal referrals | 0.70 | 0.69 | 0.80 | 0.71 | 0.72 |
| Newspaper advertisements | 0.20 | 0.38 | 0.33 | 0.53 | 0.38 |
| Newsletter advertisements | 0.00 | 0.19 | 0.07 | 0.18 | 0.12 |
| Advertisements on agency's vehicles | 0.00 | 0.13 | 0.20 | 0.18 | 0.14 |
| Job fairs | 0.30 | 0.50 | 0.33 | 0.47 | 0.41 |
| **Sum of All Strategies** | **2.80** | **4.25** | **3.73** | **4.41** | **3.91** |

When asked what strategies they use to retain operators, the most common responses (as shown in Table 3-52 and Figure 2-14) were offer a working environment that promotes high morale (91.4%), retirement benefits (87.9%), health insurance (82.8%), and training opportunities (79.3%). A majority also have employee recognition programs (72.4%), employee reviews (69%), and periodic wage increases (69%). Bonus pay is provided by 27.6% of the respondents. Two respondents listed retention bonus among the other responses; one specified that they pay $500 every six months up to a maximum of $1,500. Other strategies include employee appreciation events, feeding operators a meal during monthly trainings, and allowing operators who have the parking availability to take vehicles home and begin their routes from there, noting that this strategy saves on deadhead time as well.

### Table 2-52: Strategies for Retaining Operators

| What strategies does your agency use to retain operators? | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Provide training opportunities | 46 | 79.3% |
| Provide retirement benefits | 51 | 87.9% |
| Provide health insurance | 48 | 82.8% |
| Offer a working environment that promotes high morale among employees | 53 | 91.4% |
| Provide employee recognition programs | 42 | 72.4% |
| Provide bonus pay | 16 | 27.6% |
| Conduct employee reviews | 40 | 69.0% |
| Provide periodic wage increases | 40 | 69.0% |
| Other | 5 | 8.6% |
| **Total Responses** | **58** | |

## Figure 2-14: Strategies for Retaining Operators




NCSU-ITRE also analyzed how the use of strategies to retain operators correlates with the operator vacancy rates, using the same response coding approach and operator vacancy rate ranges. The averages of the responses are shown in Table 2-53. Again, a clear correlation was not identified, with the possible exception that the organizations with the lowest operator vacancy rates (0%) had the lowest average incidence of using strategies to retain operators. Also, the highest average in use of strategies to retain operators is found in the 0 to 20% vacancy rate range, while the second highest average is found in the range of over 30% operator vacancy rates.

## Table 2-53: Operator Vacancy Rate by Average Use of Strategies to Retain Operators

| Average use of strategies to retain operators, coded as 0 = no or no answer, 1 = yes | Operator Vacancy Rate | | | | Total Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0% | >0% to 20% | >20% to 30% | >30% | |
| Provide training opportunities | 0.70 | 0.69 | 0.60 | 0.71 | 0.67 |
| Provide retirement benefits | 0.60 | 0.94 | 0.60 | 0.82 | 0.76 |
| Provide health insurance | 0.50 | 0.88 | 0.60 | 0.76 | 0.71 |
| Offer a working environment that promotes high morale among employees | 0.70 | 0.94 | 0.80 | 0.76 | 0.81 |
| Provide employee recognition programs | 0.60 | 0.81 | 0.60 | 0.53 | 0.64 |
| Provide bonus pay | 0.30 | 0.31 | 0.13 | 0.18 | 0.22 |
| Conduct employee reviews | 0.30 | 0.81 | 0.47 | 0.65 | 0.59 |
| Provide periodic wage increases | 0.40 | 0.63 | 0.67 | 0.65 | 0.60 |
| **Sum of All Strategies** | **3.40** | **5.31** | **3.87** | **4.35** | **4.33** |

Agencies were then asked to share any methods or strategies they consider to be particularly effective and/or innovative in either attracting or retaining operators. The responses to this open-end question are summarized in Table 2-54. The most commonly mentioned type of strategy (29.7%) is offering a positive work environment, including fostering close communications, regular staff meetings, working as a team, and maintaining a work environment that is open and comfortable and accepting of all.

Additionally hosting employee appreciation events (such as appreciation dinners, seasonal potlucks, and holiday parties) (13.5%) and employee recognition programs (such as annual safety awards) (10.8%) can also foster to a positive work environment. Compensation, cost of living raises, and other raises and bonuses—money-related strategies—is the next most frequent strategy category (21.6%) that transit agencies mentioned they have found effective. Providing good benefits was noted by 16.2% of respondents. Other effective strategies mentioned include employee referrals (10.8%) (with referral bonuses were mentioned by 3 of the 4 responses, also included in the "money" responses), scheduling considerations (flexibility, 4-day work weeks, and not having to work weekends were specifically mentioned), posting jobs on Indeed, training (including paid CDL training), promoting from within, and community partnerships. Two responses indicated that no strategies are effective. Several respondents noted that they continue to try new strategies or that that were looking into bonuses.

### Table 2-54: Particularly Effective Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Operators

| Effectively Used Types of Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Operators (summary of open-ended responses) | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Positive work environment / good communications / teamwork | 11 | 29.7% |
| Money - higher pay, regular raises, bonuses | 8 | 21.6% |
| Good benefits | 6 | 16.2% |
| Employee appreciation events | 5 | 13.5% |
| Employee recognition programs | 4 | 10.8% |
| Employee referrals | 4 | 10.8% |
| Scheduling considerations | 3 | 8.1% |
| Posting on Indeed | 2 | 5.4% |
| Training | 2 | 5.4% |
| None | 2 | 5.4% |
| Other | 4 | 10.8% |
| **Total Responses** | **37** | |

## COVID-19 Impacts

Table 2-55 provides a summary of responses to how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the organization's current approaches to recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining operators. Transit agencies most frequently reported a shortage of applicants, often linked with competition of unemployment benefits. Less specific difficulties in hiring were also mentioned by multiple respondents. Examples of responses related to a shortage of applicants include:

- *Since COVID we have not been able to find any part-time help.*
- *We have raised our starting pay, advertise benefits, but are unable to get applicants.*
- *Complete lack of qualified candidates. We have received virtually no good applications in over a year and a half.*
- *It hasn't changed our practices we are just getting very few applications.*
- *Because of the increased unemployment benefits it has been difficult to attract and retain operators.*
- *Due to the pandemic, unemployment offers most people more money to stay at home, than our starting pay for transporters. Many people are afraid of contacting the virus because we deal directly with the passengers, so that keeps them from applying.*
- *Recruitment efforts are useless, pay does not outweigh federal benefits at this time. We receive maybe 3 applicants a month for a position that is continuously recruited.*
- *We had difficulties hiring pre-COVID but now with the unemployment stimulus it seems no one wants to work. We have heard many people say that they can make more money staying at home than working. Since there is a such a shortage of workers companies are increasing their rate of pay. Unfortunately we are not in a position that we can afford to do an additional increase.*

- *Helped make a constant need even worse. 4 applicant the last 4 weeks for two open Bus Operators position - none of the 4 could pass minimum qualifications.*
- *The job market has become a "candidate market" and the job sites have become "employee owned."*
- *We are not receiving applications for any position.*

### Table 2-55: Summary of Reported COVID-19 Impacts on Recruiting, Hiring, Training, and Retaining Operators

| COVID-19 Impacts on Recruiting, Hiring, Training, and Retaining Operators (summary of open-ended responses) | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Lack of applicants | 18 | 39.1% |
| Changes to recruiting approaches | 8 | 17.4% |
| Staff resigned/retired (fear and/or unemployment) | 6 | 13.0% |
| Generally more difficult to hire | 5 | 10.9% |
| Changes to interview process | 4 | 8.7% |
| Changes to providing training | 4 | 8.7% |
| Increased pay | 4 | 8.7% |
| Work hours decreased | 4 | 8.7% |
| Enhanced safety measures | 3 | 6.5% |
| None | 3 | 6.5% |
| Other | 7 | 15.2% |
| **Total Responses** | **46** | |

Other impacts mentioned by multiple respondents include staff resigning or retiring (several mentioned out of due fear of COVID-19 and/or availability of unemployment), changes made to approaches to recruiting and interviewing, reducing or eliminating in-person training, increasing pay (regular or bonuses), reducing work hours (due to fewer riders and/or shortages in operators), and implementing enhanced safety measures such as personal protective equipment and disinfection. Increased turnover and lowered morale were also mentioned.

Changes noted in recruiting and hiring practices include:

- *It has made it more difficult due to fewer in-person interaction opportunities (i.e., job fairs).*
- *We have increased our recruitment efforts, posting locations, and become better at describing the job, pay and benefits.*
- *There have not been as many recruiting events as there was before COVID. The few that have been held have not had the participation from applicants they normally have.*
- *Tried many new approaches - virtual job fairs, variety of advertising; many have completed hiring process but then declined to start work.*
- *Our hiring process is more selective. We want to be ensured that our employees are here because they*

*want to be given the risks involved.*
- *Interview and test with protective gear on.*
- *Virtual first interviews*

Examples of some of the other negative impacts include:

- *A lot of front line staff feel they should have been compensation due to continuing to work through this pandemic. Medical/police staff were praised when the pandemic first hit, but no one mentioned other organizations that were in the out here making sure passengers were still taking to their critical care appointments, etc.*
- *We have to be sensitive to the concerns of the operators and the office staff during this pandemic. They are front line workers.*
- *It has prevented us from having large gatherings, holding events, training and meeting with staff. We are having to break into much smaller groups. I feel it has affected morale negatively, because of the lack of social interaction with coworkers and administration.*
- *In the beginning of COVID-19, due to the loss of trips there was not a big impact on driver positions. With trips increasing the impact is now being felt.*
- *Review passenger numbers vs. needed drivers have not filled in spots when drivers have resigned.*
- *We have had to maintain reduced service hours due to shortages.*

Three responded that no changes were made to recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining operators because of the pandemic, and several noted the diligence of their staff in carrying on through the pandemic. Lack of qualified applicants is not a problem for all transit agencies:

- *The department had three drivers resign/retire with concerns over COVID but we found highly qualified replacements.*

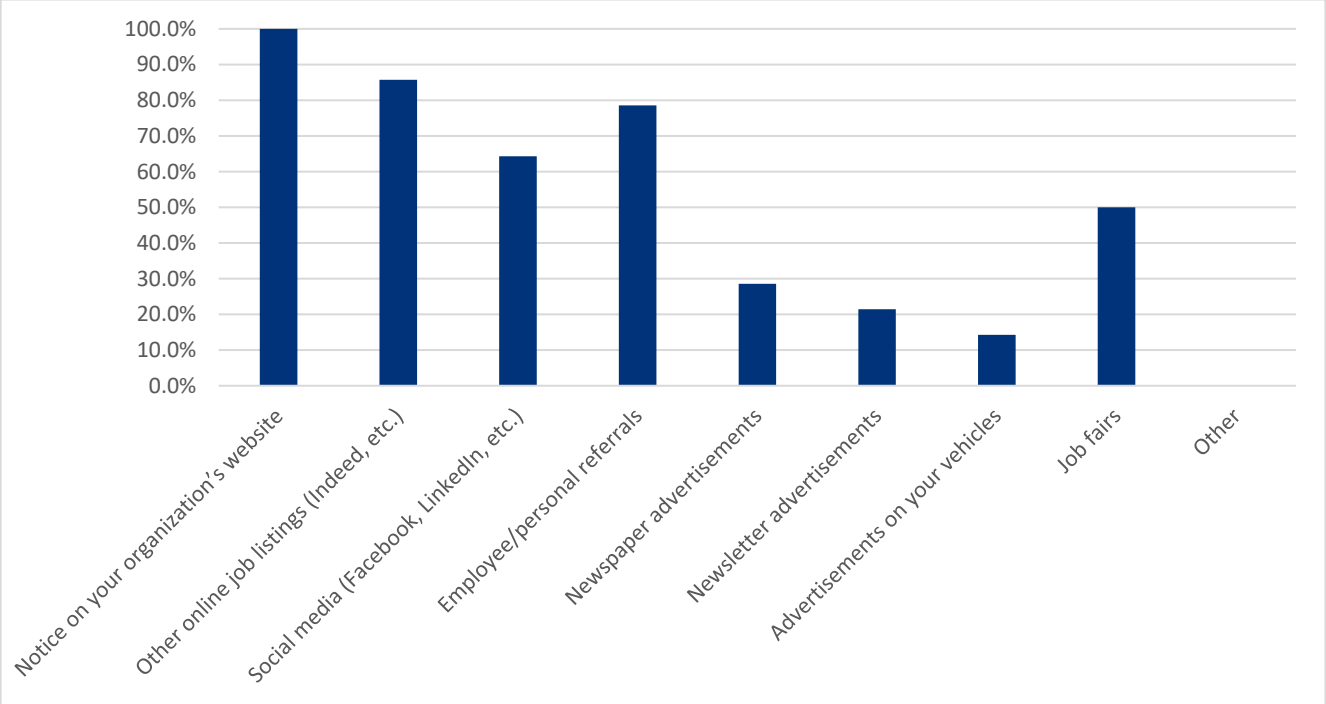
## For Mechanics

Table 2-56 and Figure 2-15 summarize the responses to the question "Which methods does your organization/agency use to recruit potential mechanics?" The response percentages to this question for mechanics were very similar to those for operators, with notice on the agency's website the most common response, followed by other online job listings, employee referrals, and social media.

## Table 2-56: Recruitment Methods for Potential Mechanics

| Which methods does your organization/agency use to recruit potential mechanics? | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Notice on your organization's website | 14 | 100.0% |
| Other online job listings (Indeed, etc.) | 12 | 85.7% |
| Social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) | 9 | 64.3% |
| Employee/personal referrals | 11 | 78.6% |
| Newspaper advertisements | 4 | 28.6% |
| Newsletter advertisements | 3 | 21.4% |
| Advertisements on your vehicles | 2 | 14.3% |
| Job fairs | 7 | 50.0% |
| Other | 0 | 0.0% |
| **Total Responses** | **14** | |

## Figure 2-15: Recruitment Methods for Potential Mechanics

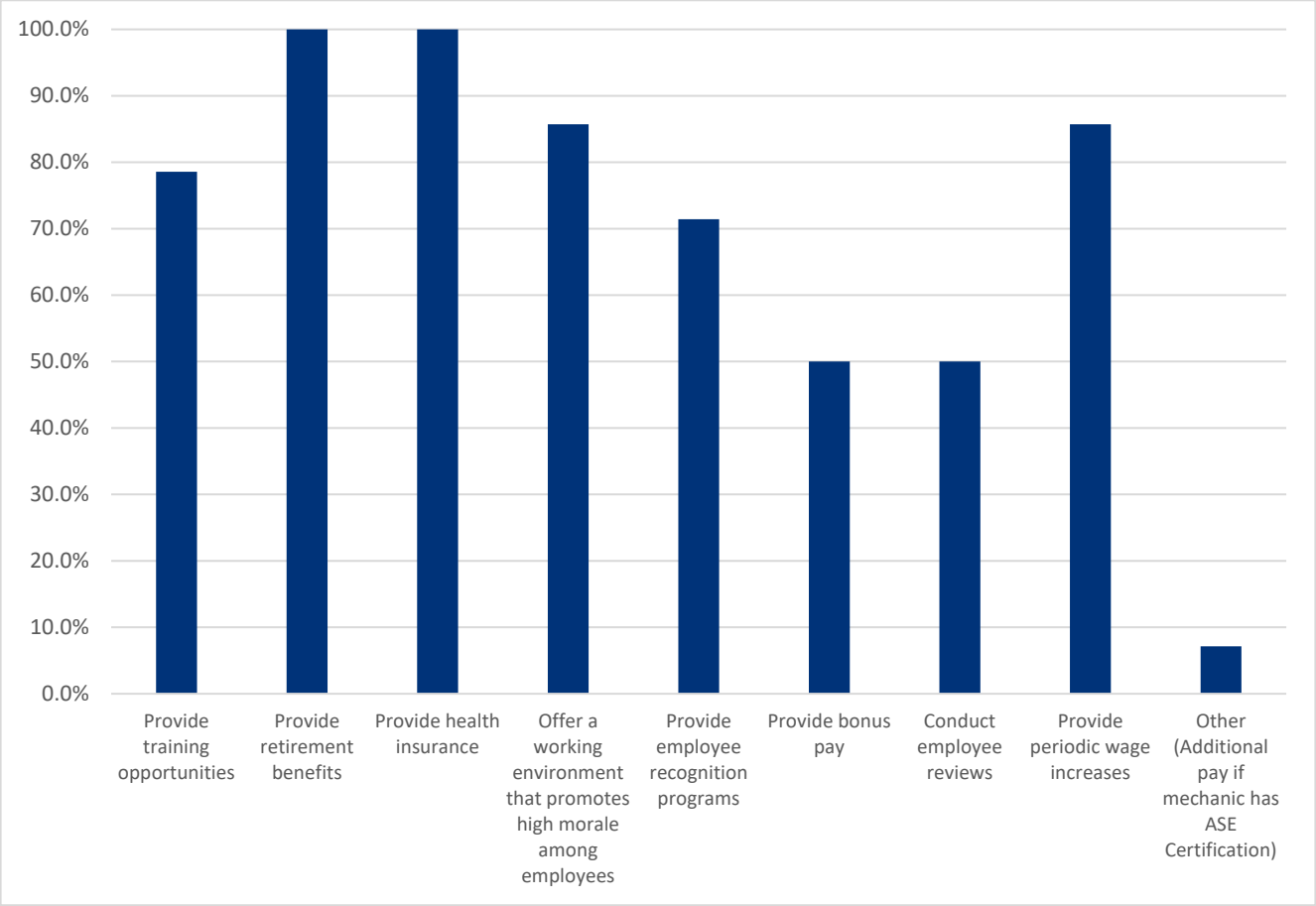


When asked what strategies they use to retain mechanics, all 14 respondents (as shown in Table 3-57 and Figure 2-16) use retirement benefits and health insurance as a strategy. The next most frequent responses were periodic wage increases (85.7%), a working environment that promotes high morale among employees (85.7%), training opportunities (78.6%) and employee recognition programs (71.4%). Half of the respondents conduct employee reviews and bonus pay. The one other strategy mentioned was additional pay if a mechanic has ASE Certification.

### Table 2-57: Strategies for Retaining Mechanics

| What strategies does your agency use to retain mechanics? | Number of Responses | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Provide training opportunities | 11 | 78.6% |
| Provide retirement benefits | 14 | 100.0% |
| Provide health insurance | 14 | 100.0% |
| Offer a working environment that promotes high morale among employees | 12 | 85.7% |
| Provide employee recognition programs | 10 | 71.4% |
| Provide bonus pay | 7 | 50.0% |
| Conduct employee reviews | 7 | 50.0% |
| Provide periodic wage increases | 12 | 85.7% |
| Other (*Additional pay if mechanic has ASE Certification*) | 1 | 7.1% |
| **Total Responses** | **14** | |

## Figure 2-16: Strategies for Retaining Mechanics



In response to an open-ended question, five respondents cited the following methods or strategies they consider to be particularly effective and/or innovative in either attracting or retaining mechanics:

- *Increasing wages and offering longevity bonuses has been the most effective. It is a tough market right now.*
- *Offer of adequate benefits.*
- *Offering training opportunities and ensuring a safe working environment.*
- *Nothing - very tough environment.*
- *Currently, our methods are not working. So, we have decided to reach into our local Community College to seek automotive students that may be looking for employment in their field.*

## COVID-19 Impacts

When asked how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the organization's current approaches to recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining mechanics, four transit agencies reported that COVID-19 had little or no impact on mechanics. Other responses included:

- *We had to increase wages to recruit.*
- *COVID less impactful than the general lack of qualified and interested personnel.*
- *COVID-19 has affected our recruiting, hiring, training and retaining mechanics, as the applicant pool is limited or non-existent. We have found that even using other means to share our openings is not helping. Prior to COVID-19, they were very helpful. Many Americans are fearful to be in the workplace because of COVID-19 and thus lack of interested applicants.*

# 3. National Context

## Introduction

This chapter of the *Compensation Survey of North Carolina Transit Systems* puts the current North Carolina operator shortage in context with challenges experienced in other states and other industries that employ bus and paratransit operators. This chapter also compiles information that North Carolina transit agencies can use to compare their pay rates with peers in other parts of the state and beyond.

North Carolina's transit agencies are not alone in challenges to hire and retain operators. Newspaper articles and trade associations from many states highlight a problem on a national scale, for school bus transportation operators as well as transit operators. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic and its many impacts, "baby boomers" have been aging out of the workforce. A January 2020 Metro Magazine article highlighted a shortage of drivers in all transportation industries, including motorcoach and public transit.[1]

## Pay Rates from National Transit Salary Surveys

Data on pay rates from two recent national transit salary surveys are summarized: the 2020 National RTAP salary survey (conducted among rural and tribal transit agencies) and the 2019 APTA Public Transportation Wage Rate Database (primarily urban transit agencies).

### 2020 National RTAP Salary Survey

The National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) conducts a biennial salary survey of rural and tribal transit systems. National RTAP is an FTA-funded technical assistance center with a mission to address the training and technical assistance needs of rural and tribal transit operators across the nation, and to support the state RTAP programs. The 2020 National RTAP Salary Survey, conducted in June and July 2020 and published online as *Salary Ranges for Transit Jobs*, examined the median, part-time, and full-time salaries, which the consultant team specifically used to assess the salaries for bus drivers/operators, dispatchers, road supervisors, maintenance supervisors, maintenance technicians, mechanics, mechanic I and mechanic II. Table 3-1 presents national ranges of salaries for these positions excerpted from the dataset table of *Salary Ranges for Transit Jobs*.

[1] James Blue, "Driver shortage a challenge for all transportation industries," Metro Magazine, January 23, 2020, https://www.metro-magazine.com/10112010/driver-shortage-a-challenge-for-all-transportation-industries

## Table 3-1: Salary Ranges of Rural and Tribal Transit Agencies

| Job | Median Minimum Salary | Median Maximum Salary | Part-Time Highest Salary | Full-Time Lowest Salary | Full-Time Highest Salary |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Bus Driver/Operator** | **$20,800** | **$25,000** | **$53,839** | **$10,000** | **$150,000** |
| CDL | $24,393 | $31,200 | $53,839 | $14,183 | $62,400 |
| Non-CDL | $18,720 | $22,000 | $35,000 | $10,000 | $150,000 |
| **Dispatcher** | **$25,924** | **$30,106** | **$32,000** | **$13,200** | **$65,145** |
| CDL | $31,000 | $35,360 | $32,000 | $20,000 | $65,145 |
| Non-CDL | $24,960 | $29,120 | $38,000 | $13,200 | $60,320 |
| **Road Supervisor** | **$43,845** | **$53,249** | **$20,000** | **$30,542** | **$99,900** |
| CDL | $45,000 | $56,000 | - | $30,542 | $99,900 |
| Non-CDL | $43,000 | $45,000 | $20,000 | $40,560 | $52,497 |
| **Maintenance Supervisor** | **$43,691** | **$55,000** | **-** | **$25,000** | **$86,392** |
| CDL | $41,000 | $55,000 | - | $28,770 | $86,392 |
| Non-CDL | $46,026 | $55,000 | - | $25,000 | $71,590 |
| **Maintenance Technician** | **$33,956** | **$37,960** | **$23,117** | **$20,000** | **$65,000** |
| CDL | $35,773 | $50,000 | $23,117 | $20,000 | $65,000 |
| Non-CDL | $33,280 | $34,320 | $22,000 | $27,040 | $63,458 |
| **Mechanic** | **$37,843** | **47,881** | **$16,640** | **$8,150** | **$79,040** |
| CDL | $44,000 | $56,000 | - | $23,887 | $79,040 |
| Non-CDL | $30,721 | $32,000 | $16,640 | $27,000 | $54,080 |
| **Mechanic I** | **$35,380** | **$40,000** | **-** | **$24,910** | **$71,660** |
| CDL | $35,890 | $44,228 | - | $24,910 | $71,660 |
| Non-CDL | $31,200 | $39,000 | - | $26,800 | $53,360 |
| **Mechanic II** | **$39,676** | **$50,315** | **$14,500** | **$26,800** | **$78,826** |
| CDL | $45,936 | $55,040 | - | $32,876 | $78,826 |
| Non-CDL | $34,890 | $46,380 | $14,500 | $26,800 | $58,925 |

Source: National RTAP, *Salary Ranges for Transit Jobs*, August 2020, https://cloud.nationalrtap.org/Resource-Center/Advanced-Search/fid/876

According to the 2020 National RTAP Salary Survey, at the national level the overall median salaries for bus drivers/operators ranges from $20,800 to $25,000. Non-CDL bus drivers/operators have the lowest range in median salaries ($18,720 - $22,000). However, the part-time drivers/operators with a CDL a have the highest salary. Full-time bus drivers/operators have the widest range in salaries ranging from $10,000 - $150,000. Those who do not have a CDL are those who had the highest salaries compared to their peers.

When looking at dispatchers, the median salary ranges from $25,900 to $30,106, which is slightly higher than the range for bus drivers. Full-time dispatchers with a CDL had the highest salaries ($65,145), while part-time only reached $38,000. Overall, dispatchers without a CDL remained toward the bottom of the salary ranges.

Road supervisors' median salary ranged from $43,845 - $53,248, with the highest salary for full-time workers being $99,900. Similar to dispatchers, road supervisors with either a CDL reached the highest salary. Maintenance supervisors had similar median salaries ranging from $43,690 - $55,000.

National RTAP prepared a summary table of average minimum and maximum salaries by position category and FTA region. Appendix F provides this summary information for FTA Region 4 and all FTA regions for the position categories that pertain to this study (excerpted from a larger spreadsheet within the National RTAP *Salary Ranges for Transit Jobs*).

# 2019 APTA Public Transportation Wage Rate Database

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) published its *2019 Public Transportation Wage Rate Database* in August 2019. The APTA database contains compensation and benefits for operators and mechanics as reported by primarily urban transit agencies from the United States and Canada in June 2018. Four North Carolina agencies participated in this effort: Charlotte Area Transit System, GoDurham Transit, Orange County Public Transportation, and Go Triangle.

Table 3-2 presents the bus and demand response/paratransit modes excerpted from APTA's Summary of Wages by Mode for U.S. agencies. The APTA database also summarizes compensation for different size agencies based on mode. The 2019 average agency wage reported by APTA was $21.74 per hour for bus operators and $17.29 for demand response/paratransit operators. Average mechanic and mechanic apprentice wages were also higher for bus than they were for demand response.

### Table 3-2: Summary of Wages by Mode (Excerpted from APTA 2019 Database)

| Position / Mode | Lowest Agency Wage | | | Highest Agency Wage | | | Average Agency Wage | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Min | Max | Avg | Min | Max | Avg | Min | Max | Avg |
| **Operator** | | | | | | | | | |
| Bus | $10.30 | $28.80 | $17.23 | $14.00 | $36.05 | $25.00 | $12.95 | $33.07 | $21.74 |
| Demand Response (paratransit) | $9.85 | $23.45 | $14.60 | $11.20 | $29.46 | $19.84 | $11.00 | $29.46 | $17.29 |
| **Mechanic Apprentice** | | | | | | | | | |
| Bus | $12.85 | $37.40 | $20.93 | $14.00 | $44.65 | $26.04 | $14.00 | $37.40 | $23.84 |
| Demand Response (paratransit) | $13.77 | $30.44 | $20.61 | $14.88 | $32.41 | $23.86 | $14.88 | $30.44 | $22.25 |
| **Mechanic** | | | | | | | | | |
| Bus | $11.52 | $44.65 | $24.86 | $19.00 | $44.65 | $30.11 | $19.00 | $44.65 | $28.16 |
| Demand Response (paratransit) | $15.38 | $32.07 | $22.23 | $19.00 | $36.52 | $26.79 | $19.00 | $33.51 | $24.89 |

Source: American Public Transportation Association, *2019 Public Transportation Wage Rate Database*, Table 2, p. 13, August 2019

Table 3-3 presents the 2019 average wage for operator by agency size (based on total number of employees) for bus and demand response/paratransit modes excerpted from the APTA database. As might be expected, larger agencies on average pay higher wages.

**Table 3-3: Summary of Operator Wages by Mode and Agency Size (Excerpted from APTA 2019 Database)**

| Position / Mode | No. of Employees (Agency Size) | Average Agency Wage | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Min | Max | Avg |
| **Operator** | | | | |
| Bus | | | | |
| | 2,000 or more | $19.75 | $33.07 | $26.52 |
| | 500 - 1,999 | $15.07 | $32.82 | $22.26 |
| | 200 - 499 | $14.50 | $26.61 | $21.41 |
| | Fewer than 200 | $12.95 | $27.47 | $18.37 |
| Demand Response (paratransit) | | | | |
| | 2,000 or more | $14.76 | $29.46 | $20.99 |
| | 500 - 1,999 | $11.00 | $22.36 | $17.84 |
| | 200 - 499 | $14.15 | $21.69 | $17.10 |
| | Fewer than 200 | $11.26 | $25.80 | $16.07 |

Source: American Public Transportation Association, *2019 Public Transportation Wage Rate Database*, Table 3, pp. 15-17, August 2019

# Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Data

## National Wage Estimates by Occupation

The National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) were obtained for occupations that most closely approximate transit bus and demand response operators, dispatchers, and operations supervisors. The most recent wage data available at the time of this review was from May 2020. The overall median and mean hourly and annual wages for each of these positions are shown in Table 3-4.

According to the BLS data, nationwide the May 2020 median hourly wage for bus drivers (transit and intercity) is $22.07 and the mean hourly wage for this category is $23.13. Median annual wages for this job category is $45,900, with a mean of $48,110. The BLS job category most closely aligned with paratransit operators is "passenger vehicle drivers, except bus drivers, transit and intercity (including school bus drivers, shuttle drivers, and chauffeurs, and taxi drivers)." The mean and median hourly wages for this category are $15.54 and $16.52 respectively, with annual ages of $32,320 median or $34,360 mean.

### Table 3-4: BLS Wages by Occupation (May 2020)

| Occupational Title | Median Hourly Wage | Mean Hourly Wage | Median Annual Wage | Mean Annual Wage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity | $22.07 | $23.13 | $45,900 | $48,110 |
| Passenger Vehicle Drivers, Except Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity (including school bus drivers, shuttle drivers, and chauffeurs, and taxi drivers) | $15.54 | $16.52 | $32,320 | $34,360 |
| Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance | $19.70 | $21.57 | $40,980 | $44,860 |
| First-Line Supervisors of Material-Moving Machine and Vehicle Operations | $26.37 | $28.04 | N.A. | $58,330 |

Source: US. Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2020 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates, https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm#53-0000

For the dispatchers, except police, fire, and ambulances, the median wage is $19.70, and the mean wage is $21.57, with respective median and mean annual wages of $40,980 and $44,860. The BLS job category closest to transit operations supervisor is first-line supervisors of material-moving machine and vehicle operations. For this category, the median/mean hourly wages are $26.37/$28.04, and mean annual wage is $58,330. No median annual wage was available for this category.

## Unemployment Statistics

Unemployment rates were also obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for metropolitan statistical areas in (or partially in) North Carolina, as well as statewide for North Carolina and the surrounding four states (Table 3-5). As of July 2021, unemployment was relatively low in many parts of North Carolina, only exceeding 5% in four metropolitan areas, and statewide only 4.4%, with rates generally dropping in recent months, which suggests that the competition to fill vacancies is increasing. Unemployment is also low in the surrounding states.

### Table 3-5: Unemployment Rates in North Carolina and Surrounding States, July 2021

| Geographic Area | July 2021 Unemployment Rate |
|---|---|
| Asheville, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area | 4.0% |
| Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC Metropolitan Statistical Area | 4.4% |
| Durham-Chapel Hill, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area | 3.9% |
| Fayetteville, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area | 6.6% |
| Goldsboro, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area | 4.9% |
| Greensboro-High Point, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area | 5.2% |
| Greenville, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area | 4.8% |
| Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area | 4.3% |
| Jacksonville, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area | 5.0% |
| Myrtle Beach-Conway-North Myrtle Beach, SC-NC Metropolitan Statistical Area | 5.2% |
| New Bern, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area | 4.4% |
| Raleigh Metropolitan Statistical Area | 3.9% |
| Rocky Mount, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area | 6.7% |
| Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC Metropolitan Statistical Area | 4.6% |
| Wilmington, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area | 4.0% |
| Winston-Salem, NC Metropolitan Statistical Area | 4.5% |
| **Statewide** | |
| North Carolina | 4.4% |
| Georgia | 3.7% |
| South Carolina | 4.3% |
| Tennessee | 4.7% |
| Virginia | 4.2% |

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, https://www.bls.gov/web/metro/laummtrk.htm

# Cost of Living Indicators

To assist North Carolina transit agencies in comparing their pay rates with their peers in other areas, relative cost of living data was obtained from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), using the EPI's Family Budget Calculator, which is in 2017 dollars. Table 3-6 shows the estimated monthly and annual income needed to support a family with two adults and two children in each North Carolina county. The lowest cost of living is in Columbus County, costing $74,064 per year for this sized family, while the highest at the county level is in Currituck County, at $96,348 per year. The statewide median is $79,812 per year.

## Table 3-6: Costs to Support a Family of Two Adults and Two Children by County (2017 Dollars)

| North Carolina County | Cost to Support 2 Adults and 2 Children | |
|---|---|---|
| | Monthly | Annual |
| Alamance | $6,653 | $79,836 |
| Alexander | $6,294 | $75,528 |
| Alleghany | $6,546 | $78,552 |
| Anson | $6,354 | $76,248 |
| Ashe | $6,567 | $78,804 |
| Avery | $6,670 | $80,040 |
| Beaufort | $6,511 | $78,132 |
| Bertie | $6,401 | $76,812 |
| Bladen | $6,579 | $78,948 |
| Brunswick | $7,229 | $86,748 |
| Buncombe | $7,139 | $85,668 |
| Burke | $6,211 | $74,532 |
| Cabarrus | $7,377 | $88,524 |
| Caldwell | $6,223 | $74,676 |
| Camden | $7,225 | $86,700 |
| Carteret | $7,239 | $86,868 |
| Caswell | $6,219 | $74,628 |
| Catawba | $6,476 | $77,712 |
| Chatham | $7,259 | $87,108 |
| Cherokee | $6,530 | $78,360 |
| Chowan | $6,616 | $79,392 |
| Clay | $6,631 | $79,572 |
| Cleveland | $6,340 | $76,080 |
| Columbus | $6,172 | $74,064 |
| Craven | $7,450 | $89,400 |
| Cumberland | $7,114 | $85,368 |
| Currituck | $8,029 | $96,348 |
| Dare | $7,650 | $91,800 |
| Davidson | $6,470 | $77,640 |
| Davie | $6,739 | $80,868 |
| Duplin | $6,253 | $75,036 |
| Durham | $7,306 | $87,672 |
| Edgecombe | $6,575 | $78,900 |
| Forsyth | $6,692 | $80,304 |
| Franklin | $6,966 | $83,592 |
| Gaston | $6,993 | $83,916 |
| Gates | $6,919 | $83,028 |
| Graham | $6,540 | $78,480 |
| Granville | $6,969 | $83,628 |
| Greene | $6,448 | $77,376 |

| North Carolina County | Cost to Support 2 Adults and 2 Children | |
|---|---|---|
| | Monthly | Annual |
| Jones | $6,823 | $81,876 |
| Lee | $6,509 | $78,108 |
| Lenoir | $6,356 | $76,272 |
| Lincoln | $6,848 | $82,176 |
| Macon | $6,761 | $81,132 |
| Madison | $6,760 | $81,120 |
| Martin | $6,438 | $77,256 |
| McDowell | $6,429 | $77,148 |
| Mecklenburg | $7,700 | $92,400 |
| Mitchell | $6,514 | $78,168 |
| Montgomery | $6,457 | $77,484 |
| Moore | $7,033 | $84,396 |
| Nash | $6,337 | $76,044 |
| New Hanover | $7,509 | $90,108 |
| Northampton | $6,603 | $79,236 |
| Onslow | $7,031 | $84,372 |
| Orange | $7,623 | $91,476 |
| Pamlico | $7,075 | $84,900 |
| Pasquotank | $7,018 | $84,216 |
| Pender | $7,149 | $85,788 |
| Perquimans | $6,938 | $83,256 |
| Person | $6,449 | $77,388 |
| Pitt | $6,920 | $83,040 |
| Polk | $6,965 | $83,580 |
| Randolph | $6,622 | $79,464 |
| Richmond | $6,393 | $76,716 |
| Robeson | $6,319 | $75,828 |
| Rockingham | $6,527 | $78,324 |
| Rowan | $6,896 | $82,752 |
| Rutherford | $6,289 | $75,468 |
| Sampson | $6,521 | $78,252 |
| Scotland | $6,527 | $78,324 |
| Stanly | $6,483 | $77,796 |
| Stokes | $6,568 | $78,816 |
| Surry | $6,250 | $75,000 |
| Swain | $6,460 | $77,520 |
| Transylvania | $6,649 | $79,788 |
| Tyrrell | $6,678 | $80,136 |
| Union | $7,649 | $91,788 |
| Vance | $6,410 | $76,920 |

| North Carolina County | Cost to Support 2 Adults and 2 Children | |
|---|---|---|
| | Monthly | Annual |
| Guilford | $6,969 | $83,628 |
| Halifax | $6,400 | $76,800 |
| Harnett | $6,973 | $83,676 |
| Haywood | $6,847 | $82,164 |
| Henderson | $7,046 | $84,552 |
| Hertford | $7,007 | $84,084 |
| Hoke | $6,972 | $83,664 |
| Hyde | $7,285 | $87,420 |
| Iredell | $6,988 | $83,856 |

| North Carolina County | Cost to Support 2 Adults and 2 Children | |
|---|---|---|
| | Monthly | Annual |
| Wake | $7,520 | $90,240 |
| Warren | $6,525 | $78,300 |
| Washington | $6,668 | $80,016 |
| Watauga | $7,007 | $84,084 |
| Wayne | $6,844 | $82,128 |
| Wilkes | $6,529 | $78,348 |
| Wilson | $6,560 | $78,720 |
| Yadkin | $6,442 | $77,304 |
| Yancey | $6,527 | $78,324 |
| **Median – All Counties** | **$6,651** | **$79,812** |

Source: Economic Policy Institute, Family Budget Calculator, March 2018, https://www.epi.org/resources/budget/

Table 3-7 presents cost of living for the same family size in metropolitan areas of North Carolina within the EPI Family Budget Calculator. The metropolitan area with the lowest annual cost to support two adults and two children is Fayetteville ($71,400) and the highest is Wilmington ($90,108). Again, these amounts are in 2017 dollars.

### Table 3-7: Costs to Support a Family of Two Adults and Two Children by Metro Area (2017 Dollars)

| Metropolitan Area | Cost to Support 2 Adults and 2 Children | |
|---|---|---|
| | Monthly | Annual |
| Asheville | $7,100 | $85,200 |
| Burlington | $6,653 | $79,836 |
| Charlotte | $7,444 | $89,328 |
| Durham | $7,396 | $88,752 |
| Fayetteville | $5,950 | $71,400 |
| Goldsboro | $6,844 | $82,128 |
| Greensboro | $6,622 | $79,464 |
| Greenville | $6,920 | $83,040 |
| Hickory | $6,337 | $76,044 |
| Jacksonville | $7,031 | $84,372 |
| Raleigh | $7,439 | $89,268 |
| Rocky Mount | $6,419 | $77,028 |
| Wilmington | $7,509 | $90,108 |

| Metropolitan Area | Cost to Support 2 Adults and 2 Children | |
|---|---|---|
| | Monthly | Annual |
| Winston-Salem | $6,682 | $80,184 |

Source: Economic Policy Institute, Family Budget Calculator, March 2018, https://www.epi.org/resources/budget/

# Competition with Other Employers

## School Bus Operations

As of the onset of the 2021-2022 school year, school districts are facing significant shortages of bus drivers. At a national level, there is a severe shortage of school bus drivers, according to a 2021 survey conducted by three national associations representing school bus operations.[2] A recent article in *The News & Observer*[3] reported on this problem in North Carolina. According to the article, the North Carolina Association of Educators and some Wake County school bus drivers pointed to the need for state lawmakers to approve a budget that provides for higher bus driver salaries. The article reports that some school districts are supplementing school bus operator pay so that the starting hourly rate in some districts is $15.00 or more (with the school district presumably supplementing the state pay by $2.25 or more per hour). However, vacancies persist even with hiring bonuses (for example, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro school system offers a $4,000 recruitment bonus) and higher wages. North Carolina's transit agencies are competing with school districts in recruiting bus operators, and transit agencies are at a disadvantage if they do not offer at least equal pay.

## Transportation Network Companies (TNCs)

Transportation network companies (TNCs) such as Lyft and Uber may also be competing with transit agencies in attracting applicants for driving positions. At a national level, TNCs are offering bonuses and other financial incentives to attract new drivers and retain current drivers. News articles in recent months highlight a driver shortage and some of the incentives offered. In April 2021, Uber announced the launch of a $250 million driver stimulus incentive to boost driver wages. The press release listed typical driver wages for selected large U.S. cities before tips and stimulus payments (no North Carolina cities were

[2] National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT), National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS), and National School Transportation Association (NSTA), "NAPT, NASDPTS and NSTA Release Findings of School Bus Driver Shortage Survey," press release, August 31, 2021

[3] T. Keung Hui, "'Exhausted and frustrated.' School bus drivers say NC needs to raise salaries," *The News & Observer,* September 10, 2021, https://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/education/article254133313.html

listed; the closest to North Carolina were Washington, D.C. ($26.62) and Atlanta ($26.40)).[4] A technology industry article[5] provides examples of Uber's stimulus payments, which are on top of hourly rates but likely to be temporary. In Austin, Texas, current drivers will get $1,100 if they complete 115 trips. Another article published in April 2021 in a business periodical[6] notes that both Uber and Lyft are resorting to generous cash bonuses for driving or referring new drivers, although Lyft had not at the time announced the amounts for the bonuses being offered. The article quotes a driver who wasn't planning to start driving until unemployment ends and expressed distrust that the company will follow through with the promoted incentives. A tech industry article in June[7] noted that Lyft was then offering $800 bonuses to those who return and $2,000 for new drivers in some cities, but that drivers say they don't want incentives, they want a simple wage raise. Transit agencies have the advantage over TNCs as trustworthy employers with transparent pay rates and providers of benefits, which "gig workers" do not get.

## Other Types of Jobs

Transit agencies are also competing with employers that are recruiting for relatively unskilled labor. In some communities, the starting wages for janitorial, stocking clerk, and cashier positions at a major retailer may match or exceed the starting wages of a transit operator in that community. For example, current job listings for a Walmart Supercenter in Goldsboro indicate an hourly wage range of $11.00 to $19.00 for a janitorial associate, and a range of $11.00 to $17.55 for a checkout team associate—both with benefits.

[4] "Getting Drivers Back on the Road," Uber Newsroom, April 7, 2021, https://www.uber.com/newsroom/getting-drivers-back-on-the-road/

[5] Rebecca Bellan, "Uber entices drivers back post-pandemic with $250 million stimulus," TechCrunch, April 7, 2021, https://techcrunch.com/2021/04/07/uber-entices-drivers-back-post-pandemic-with-250-million-stimulus/

[6] Lizette Chapman, "Uber and Lyft Are Spending Millions on Driver Bonuses to End Shortage," Bloomberg Businessweek, April 22, 2021, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-04-22/uber-lyft-pay-big-incentives-to-get-drivers-back-on-the-road-after-covid

[7] "Uber and Lyft experiment with labor practices amid driver shortage," TNW, June 2, 2021 https://thenextweb.com/news/uber-lyft-experiment-labor-practices-amid-driver-shortage-syndication

# 4. Recommendations from the Literature

## Introduction

This chapter of the *Compensation Survey of North Carolina Transit Systems* compiles recommendations for attracting and retaining employees from relevant Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) publications, national providers of technical assistance to transit agencies, and recent news articles on strategies to address operator shortages. In addition to pay increases (through higher wages, regular raises, ands incentive bonuses), transit agencies can use other strategies to become attractive employers.

## Recommendations from TCRP Publications

### TCRP Report 127: *Employee Compensation Guidelines for Transit Providers in Rural and Small Urban Areas (2008)*

This 2008 report[8] identified numerous practices that transit agencies can use to improve employee recruitment and retention. The study found that human resource management is important in being an attractive employer. An employer of choice is:

- Recruiting the right people
- Hiring only the best applicants
- Training staff to be successful
- Continuing to develop staff
- Providing a positive work environment
- Compensating staff fairly
- Recognizing staff worth
- Providing growth opportunities

An important first step is defining positions and determining how they fit into the organization, as well as appropriate compensation. The compensation package should include training, schedules, flexibility, promotional opportunities, bonuses, uniforms, and health and wellness programs, in addition to pay and traditional benefits such as health insurance, retirement, and paid leave.
Strategies for recruitment recommended in this report include:

[8] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2008. *Employee Compensation Guidelines for Transit Providers in Rural and Small Urban Areas*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/14163.

- Use local newspapers, geared towards seniors/retirees, or more community oriented.

- For more technical positions (such as mechanics), seek out community colleges or trade schools that offer that type of education (for example, trade schools that offer CDL driving training.

- Internship or apprentice programs can help with positions that have high turnover rates. Partner with trade schools or community colleges for providing hands-on training opportunities while students earn credit.

- Conduct a survey of current employees to identify what they value. This information can help better target benefits for new hires.

Strategies for retaining current employees in this report include:

- **Promotional opportunities** – If the potential for advancement does not exist, employees may not stay at the position long or may become discouraged. Current system employees who are overlooked for promotional opportunities in favor of external candidates may become discouraged. Whenever a position becomes available, in-house recruiting should be included and can potentially eliminate the need to recruit externally or train new employees.

- **Recognition** – Many transit systems implement programs that recognize and reward employees for longevity. Some programs are financial in nature, such as the wage scale or bonuses based on experience. Other opportunities include giving more senior employees priority in selecting work schedules or assignment or choosing days off and vacation schedules. Some agencies award pins or badges that can be worn on uniforms.

- **Personal and professional development** – This can include regular ongoing training programs, certification programs, and tuition assistance or reimbursement for adult education programs. Ongoing training is both a recruitment tool and a retention tool (offering continued investment). Cross training can be provided as a general orientation, so that everyone understands each other's' roles in the organization, or more in-depth, for promotional and support purposes. Cross training allows for temporary reassignments in order to keep work processes flowing.

- **Positive work environment** – Characteristics include consistent management interaction and communications, a flexible environment, employee involvement, and comfortable settings. Employee newsletters, birthday celebrations, employee outings, holiday parties, spontaneous lunches, and management walk arounds can help employees feel appreciated.

## TCRP Report 139: *Guidebook for Recruiting, Developing, and Retaining Transit Managers for Fixed-Route Bus and Paratransit Systems*

Although this 2010 report[9] focused on managers, many of the recommendations can be useful for recruiting and retaining front-line and supervisory staff as well. Recruitment recommendations include:

- Advertise job openings through transit-specific channels, such as transit-only publications and websites, which allow for exposure to for applicants with relevant experience. The report notes that cost can be a barrier to this strategy.
- Use online recruitment techniques, such as job search websites, job aggregator websites, social networking websites, and websites such as LinkedIn.
- Match the recruitment source to the type of candidate desired.
- Highlight employee benefits. Discussing and promoting transit system benefits packages in job advertisements may make potential applicants more motivated to apply for the job.
- Recruit internally for management positions. Job openings can be posted on system bulletin boards, websites, or intranets.

Retention recommendations in this report include:

- **Offer competitive benefits** – Transit systems may be unable to pay employees as much as other government, private sector, and transportation industry competitors can pay, but may be able to offer better benefits. To determine the needs of employees and the benefits they value, conducting a benefits needs assessment is recommended.
- **Offer flexible work schedules** – Flexible schedules allow employees to vary their work start and end times or work more hours certain days of the week in order to have an extra day off.
- **Implement a rewards program for high performers** – Recognizing the accomplishments of high performing employees with rewards and public acknowledgment can increase retention. Such rewards can include uncreased wages, bonuses, or priority in selecting work or vacation schedules, choosing assignments, and choosing days off.
- **Spend time up front hiring high quality employees** and ensuring a person-organization fit. Person-organization is defined as the compatibility between an employee's preferences for organizational culture and the culture of the organization.

[9] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2010. *Guidebook for Recruiting, Developing, and Retaining Transit Managers for Fixed-Route Bus and Paratransit Systems*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/14417.

- **Provide training and development opportunities** - This communicates to the employee that his/her professional growth and needs are important to the organization.

- **Engage employees** in developing and supporting the mission and building a culture of ownership. Gaining employee buy-in to the transit system culture and the system's mission helps to motivate employees and can increase retention. Implement a formal new employee orientation program, especially at systems that experience high turnover. Create teams and organized groups within the transit system that are given understanding of the transit system

- **Create a positive organizational culture**.

## TCRP Report 142: *Vehicle Operator Recruitment, Retention, and Performance in ADA Complementary Paratransit Operations*

This 2010 report[10] focused on paratransit operators. The research identified the following successful approaches to recruiting and retaining transit vehicle operators:

- Equalize salaries and benefits of fixed-route and paratransit operators, with the rationale that research has documented that such action can reduce chronic paratransit problems such as high turnover and difficulties in maintaining a stable, skilled force of operators.

- Consider training operators on both service modes and rotate operators between fixed-route and paratransit service.

- Undertake studies to determine the impact of the discrepancy in employee wages and benefits between fixed-route operators and paratransit operators on service quality and other factors.

- Minimize time involved to recruit operators by interviewing and administering drug tests in one day.

- Partner with community colleges and offer classes on-site as a recruitment and retention incentive

- Embrace the health and wellness of operators as a critical employee development and retention issue.
- Recognize that financial compensation is still a primary consideration for most workers; however, they also want opportunities to pursue their own interests and personal growth.

[10] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2010. *Vehicle Operator Recruitment, Retention, and Performance in ADA Complementary Paratransit Operations*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/14415.

The research identified the following successful approaches cited in other transportation sectors:

- New employee orientation is the very first step of retention that prepares the new hire to feel like a part of the organization.
- Three general strategies for being successful include making your company a desirable place to work, providing competitive wages and compensation, and offering careers instead of jobs.
- Things that attract employees to companies include trust - A business and supervisors that employees can have faith in, compatibility with peers—co-workers one can appreciate and take pride in, and character of the work - Challenges accompanied by management support.
- Things needed by operators from their jobs include:
  - Appreciation of their efforts
  - Insight and information – being "in on things"
  - Recognition – not only awards and bonuses but also recognition of company decisions that take employee preferences into consideration
  - Respect – courtesy, equality, and explanation
  - Pride in their job done
  - Adequate compensation
  - Security
  - Better work-life balance
  - Better pay for work done
  - Fringe benefits – health insurance is the king
  - Relationships with co-workers
  - Training opportunities

Recruitment ideas include:

- Consider ex-military applicants and use post-military recruiting programs.
- Seek input from current vehicle operators.

It is important to realize the reasons some applicants do not apply, such as:

- **Inadequate pay**. Pay needs to reflect all the responsibilities of the job and be higher than pay offered by less demanding jobs. This includes paid training, initial pay, and pay structure. Low pay leads to high turnover (which is costly to an organization).
- **Lack of benefits**. Fringe benefits should be within reach of all employees. In particular, not offering health care benefits can limit the pool of potential applicants.
- **Uncertainty of work schedules**. Split and part-time shifts during peak run times can be unpopular with applicants. Work shifts are generally prioritized by seniority, and the resulting weekly work shifts offered to new recruits most often interfere with applicants' lifestyles or with family or other demands
- **Licensing requirements**.

Recruitment strategies include:

- Ads on buses.
- Banners in front of transit facilities.
- Newspaper ads.
- Word of mouth – realizing that word-of-mouth recruitment works best when the current workforce is content and shares that the organization is a good employer.
- Signing bonuses and referral bonuses.
- Targeting and recruiting health care and social service employees from home health care and other industries.

Pre-screening and job previews were recommended hiring practices. Effective pre-screening can prevent high training drop-out rates and preserve training resources. Providing applicants with a realistic description of the job can also help individuals decide if the job is right for them.

For existing paratransit operators, scheduling during their shifts is a frequently cited source of frustration. Schedules can be too tight with not enough time to get from one point to another safely. A transit agency that wants to retain paratransit operators (and ensure safe operations) needs to prioritize schedules that are achievable with safe driving practices.

## TCRP Report 169: *Developing Best-Practice Guidelines for Improving Bus Operator Health and Retention*

This 2014 report11 provides best practices for retaining operators through health protection and promotion. The study shows that bus operators and other transit employees experience "some of the highest rates of health problems of any industry." Many of health problems can be caused or exacerbated by the conditions and requirements of the job. Workplace health protection and promotion (WHPP) has been recognized as an important path to improving operator health and reducing costs. Developing a culture of health and safety requires leadership to take an active role, involving a team from top management, middle management and local union leaders. A steering group can set the vision and goals of the WHPP program, make budget and resource decisions and address organizational and collective bargaining issues. Recommended practices in this report are organized around goals that include:

[11] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2014. *Developing Best-Practice Guidelines for Improving Bus Operator Health and Retention*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/22322.

- Helping diagnosis, treat, and manage health problems (for example, a sick leave policy that does not penalize ill workers or encourage coming to work ill).
- Improving safety and health at work and at home (including training, reduced exposure, scheduling practices that provide time for safe driving).
- Improving healthy food access and choice (such as subsidizing healthy food in machines and cafeteria, providing nutrition counseling).
- Increasing physical activity (make exercise opportunities available for all work schedules).
- Improving ergonomics and reduce musculoskeletal disorders (for example, improving driver's seat and controls).
- Preventing and managing fatigue (such as designing schedules that promote health and rest, and allowing flexible leave time use to cover family need).
- Eliminating or reducing the impact of hazardous and stressful working conditions (helping employees develop coping skills, ensuring access to convenient, clean, safe restrooms - A related subsequent TCRP study, Report 216: *Improving the Safety, Health, and Productivity of Transit Operators Through Adequate Restroom Access* (2020), provides strategies for this).

# Recommendations from Other Sources

## Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA)

CTAA provides training in driver recruitment and retention, developed and conducted by Caryn Souza. An article by Ms. Souza[12] published in CTAA's Community Transportation magazine in 2016 and more recently online training[13] provided many ideas for recruitment methods, including:

- Help wanted ads.
- School employment services – including vocational training programs.
- Employee referrals.

[12] Caryn Souza, "How to Recruit & Retain Drivers," *Digital Community Transportation*, Summer 2016, pp. 34-36, https://ctaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/How_To_DigitalCT.pdf.
[13] Caryn Souza, Sourcing and Interviewing Drivers in the Post Pandemic World, CTAA July 2021 member webinar, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfkMpWAzrwU&ab_channel=TaylorKlocke

- State employee agencies.
- Advertisements inside and outside the bus (keep in mind that current customers could be candidates or know someone who is looking for work).
- Public service announcements.
- Job fairs (external and internal - Ms. Souza mentioned a transit agency that hosted its own job fair on board both fixed-route and demand response vehicles, with drivers there to answer questions authentically, and on-the-spot interviews conducted with candidates).
- The agency's own website:
  - Ms. Souza recommends profiling a diverse mix of "star" employees on the website telling what they like about the job, potentially as video interviews.
  - Creating a realistic job preview—a typical day in the life—can help attract the right applicants.
  - The application should be easy to find and if possible, able to be completed online in five minutes.
- Other online job listings and career sites, such as Indeed, LinkedIn, Career Builder, and the state association, as well as on social media.
- Targeting retirees - Particularly military and firefighter retirees. Ms. Souza recommends partnering with local veteran and first responder organizations to learn how to access their network.
- Chambers of Commerce.
- Welfare to Work programs.

The July 2021 training underscored the importance of a living wage for a starting salary, and suggested that current employees should be paid more than the starting salary. To attract the right kind of applicants, Ms. Souza recommends branding the organization and advertising the job as mission-centric work that requires being friendly and helpful. She noted in the July 2021 training that drivers value safe working conditions, work/life balance, and respectful treatment above compensation.

A recent post[14] to CTAA's web log, *Community Transportation Reader (CTR)*, suggests that transit agencies consider hiring individuals that are re-entering the community after incarceration. The blog post's author Julia Castillo, who is the executive director of a large rural transit agency in Iowa. She notes that in her state, Workforce Development and Iowa Department of Transportation staff have been placed within correctional facilities to help prepare individuals for re-entry into the community. The success of this innovation has not yet been proven, but it is worth exploring.

[14] Julia Castillo, "Driver Shortage and Incarcerated Re-entry - Solution for Success?" Community Transportation Reader, August 10, 2021, https://ctaa.org/driver-shortage-and-incarcerated-reentry-solution-for-success/.

## National RTAP Transit Management Toolkit

National RTAP's online *Transit Manager's Toolkit* includes a section on Driver Recruitment, Training, and Retention.[15] This resource builds on the CTAA article cited above, a pre-pandemic training conducted by Ms. Souza and other sources listed in the toolkit. Suggestions for retaining drivers include:

- Employee recognition/incentive program – Designed with input from drivers to ensure the requirements are possible and the incentives are meaningful.
- Periodic onboard performance appraisals aligned with job descriptions, with advanced notice.
- Mentoring program for new hires.
- Ongoing training opportunities, potentially including cross-training, mentoring, and coaching.
- For agency provided CDL training, paying a higher wage after they have earned their CDL.
- Providing a bonus at the end of the season for seasonal employee who stay the full season.
- Helping employees feel appreciated by issuing thank-you gift cards for outstanding performance during the year, celebrating employment anniversaries and birthdays, and surprising employees with a meal such as pizza.
- Ensuring the salary scale is adequate.

## Operator Recruitment Incentives from Around the Country

The following ideas were found through a scan of recent news articles and employment listings for transit operators and school bus drivers:

- The Memphis Area Transit Authority is offering a $3,000 hiring bonus for new CDL bus operators and mechanics through December 2021. New hires will receive $500 at 120 calendar days from date of hire, a second installment of $1,000 paid 240 calendar day from hire, and the remaining $1,500 on year from the date of hire. This strategy encourages at least one year of work.
- The City of Greenville, South Carolina is offering a $1,000 sign-on bonus for CDL bus operators, with an hourly rate of $16.27 to $24.00. Greenville is also recruiting for bus operators in training who will be paid $16.00 per hour. CDL training is provided for individuals not already in possession of a CDL.

[15] National RTAP, "Driver Recruitment, Training, and Retention," Transit Manager's Toolkit, https://www.nationalrtap.org/Toolkits/Transit-Managers-Toolkit/Administration/Driver-Recruitment-Training-and-Retention,

- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is offering a $1,000 for all new drivers who have a start date this school year and who participate in a training class no later than September 30.

- The City of Charlottesville, Virginia, is offering a $2,400 sign-on bonus (paid out in $800 installments) to new school bus operators working at least 20 hours per week, and provides free CDL training. The city's Charlottesville Area Transit is offering a $2,400 sign-on bonus (paid out in installments to be determined). Wages for school bus and transit operators are comparable for 30-39 hours per week, with a slightly higher maximum wage for transit operators.

- Hampton Roads Transit in Norfolk, Virginia is offering a $4,000 service bonus for bus operator trainees with an hourly wage of $18.00.

- Horry County Schools in South Carolina are offering $1,500 bonus pay for both new and current school bus drivers.

- School bus drivers in Cobb County, Georgia that are employed by September 24 will receive a $1,200 retention bonus in their December paycheck.

- Portsmouth Public Schools in Virginia is offering a $1,000 new hire bonus for bus drivers (and other positions) who complete 90 days on the job. Existing staff receive $750 for referrals that are successful hired.

# 5. Conclusions and Considerations

In order to safely operate transit service levels to meet community needs, transit agencies must have an adequate number of qualified operators. Transit systems in North Carolina, like many transit agencies and school districts across the nation are faced with a significant shortage of operators. The survey found that current operator vacancy levels are 50% or more at eight North Carolina transit agencies, between 25% and 41% at fifteen agencies, and between 15% and 24% at sixteen agencies. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, operator vacancies were already an issue for some transit agencies. Since the onset of the pandemic, generous unemployment benefits and fear of COVID-19 infection has exacerbated the problem. Unemployment is low—4.4% statewide in July 2021—and there are staffing shortages in other industries as well, including school bus transportation.

Analysis of the operator vacancy rates based on the many variables identified through the survey responses and transit agency characteristics data available through NCSU-ITRE presented the following findings:

- **Blended services can create more opportunities** – Transit systems which blend purchased and directly operated transportation services have lower average vacancy rates. Blended services can create more options for systems to recruit and retain operators.
- **Challenges are more pronounced in rural areas and for smaller transit systems** – Vacancy rates tend to be higher the farther a transit system is from an urbanized area. Vacancy rates tend to be lower for larger transit systems (measured by number of vehicles) and systems which have fixed or deviated-fixed route services.
- **Higher pay leads to lower vacancies** – Systems with higher minimum and maximum pay rates have lower vacancy rates on average.
- **Reliable hours and pay attracts workers** – Systems with a higher percentage of full-time drivers and with more generous overtime levels have lower vacancy rates.
- **Workers want training, health benefits, and a quality work environment** – Systems that offer healthcare benefits, offer CDL training, and that foster a quality working environment have lower vacancy rates.

The job of professional transit operator is an essential worker with specialized skills, who faces daily challenges with potentially belligerent passengers, pressure to keep on schedule with challenging driving conditions, long periods of time sitting, and safely assisting individuals with disabilities, all while ideally being the professional, courteous public face of the organization. During the pandemic, operators are also faced with the risk of exposure the virus, the responsibility of trying to enforce the Transportation Security Administration directive requiring face coverings on transit vehicles (sometimes with violent reactions from passengers) and added tasks with cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces during their shift. Being a transit operator is a difficult job. The pay should reflect this.

Pay levels for transit operators tend to be low among many (though not all) North Carolina transit agencies. The survey found that hourly wage rates for operators at some North Carolina transit agencies are as low as $9.50 per hour for non-CDL operators (23 agencies pay below $12.00 per hour) and as little as $10.00 per hour for CDL operators (18 agencies pay below $13.00 per hour for CDL operators).

The lower end pay rates may not provide a living wage for a family, even in rural areas. Cost of living estimates from the Economic Policy Institute estimate that a family of two adults and two children needs an annual income of $79,812 on average in North Carolina (statewide mean across all counties)—in 2017 dollars, not accounting for inflation. An employee working full-time at $12.00 per hour makes only about $25,000 per year. Entry level transit operator jobs in North Carolina often pay at or below the starting wage (with benefits) for a janitorial associate or a checkout team associate position at a Walmart Supercenter.

If a transit agency cannot attract quality candidates to apply and continue working, the quality of the services the organization provides will suffer. Without enough employees (high quality or otherwise), service levels cannot be maintained, and some members of the community will lose their ride to work, school, the doctor, and other essential destinations. Each time a transit organization must fill a vacant position, there is a cost to the organization to hire and train a new employee. Paying overtime to current employees can be a short-term solution but is not a sustainable strategy. About 39% of survey respondents reported that operator overtime pay accounts for more than 10% of their total operator wages. For two respondents, overtime is more than 30% of total operator wages. Not only is a high rate of overtime utilization costly to the agency in terms of payroll (because the overtime pay rate is typically 150% of the regular pay rate), but frequent overtime can also lead to safety risks due to operator fatigue and employee burnout, leading to yet more vacancies.

If they are to restore and maintain staffing levels, transit agencies will need to provide competitive wages and benefits that are commensurate with the levels of risk, pressures, and responsibilities that come with the operator position. The compensation will need to be higher than that offered by low-risk, low-challenge jobs in their area, and competitive with other types of driving jobs such as school bus operators.

Additionally, to compete with other employers in the area in today's employment environment, transit agencies may need to offer hiring bonuses. Hiring bonuses could be paid in installments over the course of the first year to encourage continued employment. Bonuses for referrals from current employees should also be considered.

Transit agencies with vehicles that require the operator have a CDL should seriously consider providing paid training to prepare new hires to obtain their CDL. Offering a competitive wage as well as a meaningful sign-up bonus contingent upon a minimum period of employment can help prevent new CDL operators from taking a higher-paying job as soon as they have earned their CDL.

In addition to offering competitive, higher entry-level wages, transit agencies need to offer regular cost of living increases so that operators can continue to earn a living wage, and periodic longevity increases and/or bonuses, rewarding operators for their years of service will help retain operators and reward

them for continuing to work for the organization. A majority of the survey respondents (67.7%) did increase operator pay rates during the current calendar year. Five agencies (7.5%) had not raised operator pay more recently than 2018. Only about a third reported that they give raises based on years of service.

Transit agencies in North Carolina tend to provide good benefits for operators, and this can help provide a competitive edge as long as wages are also competitive. Transit agencies offer an advantage over transportation network companies (such as Lyft or Uber) not only with benefits, but also by being a trusted employer. Transit agencies can have an advantage in recruiting efforts by emphasizing the agency's mission and the importance of the job to the community. However, adequate pay is needed for the job to be attractive. Transit agencies with full-time operator positions (at least 35 hours per week) are likely to have lower operator vacancy rates.

Investing in adequate compensation to maintain full staffing operating staff levels should be a priority for every transit agency, but additional funding may be needed to do this. Additional funding to allow for competitive pay scales and hiring bonuses for transit operators is an investment in the economy and quality of life in North Carolina. Transit operators are essential frontline employees—essential for safely getting other community members to their jobs, schools, health care appointments, retail establishments, and other essential needs.

# Appendix A: Compensation Survey of North Carolina Transit Systems

## Introduction

North Carolina Transit Agencies: Your input is requested! NCDOT has engaged KFH Group to conduct a Compensation Survey of North Carolina Transit Systems. The survey seeks to identify trends in operations and maintenance staff salaries and benefits as well as promising practices in recruiting and retaining operations and maintenance staff in North Carolina and across the U.S. Please help NCDOT better understand operations and maintenance staff salaries and benefits across the state by completing this survey by **close of business Thursday, August 19, 2021**. You have several options for completing the survey. You can:

1. Complete the survey on-line through the following Survey Monkey link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3ZRZ5MW.

2. Complete this printer-friendly version of the survey and return to:

Sarah Lasky
KFH Group
4920 Elm Street
Suite 350
Bethesda, MD 20814

slasky@kfhgroup.com
Phone: (301) 951-8660
Fax: (301) 951-0026

We estimate that it will take you about 15-20 minutes to complete the survey. You may need to look up specific wage and benefit information by job category for your employees. Please note that if you are completing the web-based survey on Survey Monkey you may stop the survey at any point and come back to finish it; your answers will be saved automatically as long as you are using the same device and browser. To return to the survey, simply follow the link above.

The data collected through this survey will be supplemented by data available through ITRE and the National Transit Database. Note that we plan to report aggregated survey responses by type and size of organization and type of service area (rural or urban), for use in comparing industry-wide compensation comparisons. Individual agency data will not be published by KFH Group; however, individual agency survey responses may be shared with NCDOT.

If you have any questions regarding the survey itself or the project, please contact Beth Hamby of KFH Group at bhamby@kfhgroup.com or (206) 274-5996, or Sarah Lasky at slasky@kfhgroup.com or (301) 951-8660. Thank you for your participation!

# A. Contact and Organizational Information

Name of Organization: _____

Transit System Name or Acronym: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Person Completing this Survey: _____

Title: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

*Notes: for this survey, "public transit" includes any fixed route, demand response, route deviation service, or other type of service that is open to the general public, as well as ADA complementary paratransit. "Operators" refers to drivers of passenger vehicles in public transit service.*

1. If you directly operate public transit service, who maintains the vehicle fleet of the transit system? (Check all that apply)

- ❑ In-house maintenance staff employed by our organization/department
- ❑ Another department within city/county government
- ❑ Outsourced provider of preventive maintenance
- ❑ Outsourced provider of major repairs
- ❑ Other: (Specify) _____

2. What local funding sources do you use to support public transportation? (Check all that apply)

- ❑ Local general funds
- ❑ Specific local source - Sales Tax
- ❑ Specific local source - Property Tax
- ❑ Specific local source - Employer Tax
- ❑ Specific local source - Parking or Other Vehicle Fee
- ❑ Contract revenue – From Public or Non-profit Agency
- ❑ Contract revenue – From Private For-Profit Agency
- ❑ Other (please specify)

# B. Staff Characteristics

*Please answer the questions in this section for employees of your organization. Include ALL positions unless otherwise specified. If you contract operations or maintenance, please do NOT report on positions employed by your contractors.*

3. How many people are **currently** employed by the public transit system (July 2021)?

Number of employees working 35 hours a week or more: _____
Number of employees working 20-34 hours per week on average: _____
Number of employees working 19 or fewer hours per week on average: _____
Number of volunteers: _____

4. How many people were employed by the public transit system in **2019**?

Number of employees working 35 hours a week or more: _____
Number of employees working 20-34 hours per week on average: _____
Number of employees working 19 or fewer hours per week on average: _____
Number of volunteers: _____

5. How many currently budgeted positions are currently vacant? _____

6. How many of the vacant positions (if any) are operators? _____

7. How many of the vacant positions (if any) are mechanics? _____

8. Since March 2020, did the organization reduce the number of operator positions?

- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes - If Yes, how many full-time equivalents (FTEs)? _____

9. Since March 2020, how many operators have resigned or retired? _____

# C. Operations Job Categories and Wages, and Benefits – Directly Employed

Please answer the following series of questions only for those transit operations positions your organization **directly employs**. If you do not have operations employees, skip to the next section.

Indicate the number of full-time equivalents (FTEs) and hourly wage rate or annual salary range for each position listed. In cases where an individual has multiple functions, please classify that individual under the job title that best describes his/her predominant area of responsibility. Please classify each staff person only ONCE.

## For Operators

11. **Operator - Non-CDL** - Does your organization employ operators that are **NOT** required to have a CDL?
- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes - If Yes,
  a. How many full-time equivalents (FTEs)? _____
  b. What is the lowest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____
  c. What is the highest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____

12. **Operator - CDL** - Does your organization employ operators that are **REQUIRED** to have a CDL?
- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes - If Yes,
  a. How many full-time equivalents (FTEs)? _____
  b. What is the lowest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____
  c. What is the highest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____

13. Do you provide CDL training for new operators required to have a CDL?
- ❍ Yes – upon hiring
- ❍ Yes – after a minimum time of employment (specify length of time:) _____
- ❍ No

14. Do you provide overtime pay for operators?
- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes - If Yes, at what rate?

- Straight time
- Time and a half
- Double time

15. Please estimate the percentage of overtime wages to total wages for your operators: _____%
16. How do you believe your wage/salary rates for operators compare to the local labor market?

- ❍ Above the local labor market average
- ❍ About average for the local labor market
- ❍ Below the local labor market average

17. When did your organization last increase the wage rates or salaries for all operators? (open ended)

_____

18. Do operators receive pay raises based on years of service?
- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes - If Yes, please describe how years of service factor into wage/salary levels of operators:

_____

19. Please tell us about the benefits your organization or agency provides for **operators** *(in addition to the legally-required benefits such as FICA)*. (Check all that apply)

- ❑ Health Insurance - employee
- ❑ Health Insurance – family members
- ❑ Disability Insurance
- ❑ Life Insurance
- ❑ Retirement Plan
- ❑ Vacation
- ❑ Sick Leave
- ❑ Compensatory Time for Overtime Hours
- ❑ Educational Opportunities
- ❑ Wellness
- ❑ Other (Please specify:) _____

20. For which operators are these benefits available? (Check one)

- ❍ All operators
- ❍ Full-time operators only
- ❍ Part-time operators - Minimum number of hours required to work to receive benefits: _____

21. How do you believe your benefits for operators compare to the local labor market?

- ❍ Above those found in the area
- ❍ About the same as those found in the area
- ❍ Below those found in the area

## For Other Operations Employees

22. **Dispatcher** - Does your organization employ dispatchers?
- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes - If Yes,
  a. How many full-time equivalents (FTEs)? _____
  b. What is the lowest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____
  c. What is the highest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____

23. **Operations Supervisor** - Does your organization employ operations supervisors?
- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes - If Yes,
  a. How many full-time equivalents (FTEs)? _____
  b. What is the lowest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____
  c. What is the highest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____

24. Please tell us about the benefits your organization or agency provides for **dispatchers and operations supervisors** *(in addition to the legally-required benefits such as FICA)*. (Check all that apply)

- ❑ Health Insurance - employee
- ❑ Health Insurance – family members
- ❑ Disability Insurance
- ❑ Life Insurance
- ❑ Retirement Plan
- ❑ Vacation
- ❑ Sick Leave
- ❑ Compensatory Time for Overtime Hours
- ❑ Educational Opportunities
- ❑ Wellness
- ❑ Other (Please specify:) _____

## For ALL Operations Employees

25. Please indicate which particular benefits your organization/agency contributes to (if any) on behalf of your operations employees. (Check all that apply)
- ❑ Health Insurance - employee

- ❑ Health Insurance – family members
- ❑ Disability Insurance
- ❑ Life Insurance
- ❑ Retirement Plan
- ❑ Other (Please specify:) _____

26. Does your organization/agency currently have a shortage of operations staff?

- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes – If Yes,
    - Which positions have shortages? (Please indicate full-time, part-time, and whether a CDL is required) _____ _____
    - Why do you believe there is a shortage? _____ _____ _____

# D. Contract Operator Wages and Benefits

If your organization contracts for operations, please answer the following questions to the best of your ability about the **operators employed by your contractor(s) to operate your organization's public transit services**. If you do not contract for operations, skip to the next section.

27. **Operator - Non-CDL** - Does your contractor employ operators for your transit system that are **NOT** required to have a CDL?

- ❍ I don't know
- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes - If Yes,
    d. How many full-time equivalents (FTEs)? _____
    e. What is the lowest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____
    f. What is the highest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____

28. **Operator - CDL** - Does your contractor employ operators for your transit system that are **REQUIRED** to have a CDL?

- ❍ I don't know
- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes - If Yes,
    d. How many full-time equivalents (FTEs)? _____

e. What is the lowest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____
f. What is the highest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____

29. Does your contractor provide CDL training for new operators required to have a CDL?

- ❍ I don't know
- ❍ Yes – upon hiring
- ❍ Yes – after a minimum time of employment (specify length of time:) _____
- ❍ No

30. Does your contractor provide overtime pay for operators?

- ❍ I don't know
- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes

31. Please tell us about the benefits your contractor provides for **operators** *(in addition to the legally-required benefits such as FICA)*. (Check all that apply)

- ❑ I don't know
- ❑ Health Insurance - employee
- ❑ Health Insurance – family members
- ❑ Disability Insurance
- ❑ Life Insurance
- ❑ Retirement Plan
- ❑ Vacation
- ❑ Sick Leave
- ❑ Compensatory Time for Overtime Hours
- ❑ Educational Opportunities
- ❑ Wellness
- ❑ Other (Please specify:) _____

32. For which operators are these benefits available? (Check one)

- ❍ I don't know
- ❍ All operators
- ❍ Full-time operators only
- ❍ Part-time operators - Minimum number of hours required to work to receive benefits: _____

33. Does your contractor currently have a shortage of operations for your transit system?

- ❍ I don't know
- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes

# E. Maintenance Job Categories, Wages, and Benefits

Please answer the following series of questions only for those maintenance positions your organization **directly employs**. If you do not have maintenance employees, skip to the next section.

Indicate the number of full-time equivalents (FTEs) and hourly wage rate or annual salary range for each position listed. In cases where an individual has multiple functions, please classify that individual under the job title that best describes his/her predominant area of responsibility. Please classify each staff person only ONCE.

34. **Mechanic - Non-CDL** - Does your organization employ mechanics that are **NOT** required to have a CDL?

- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes - If Yes,
  a. How many full-time equivalents (FTEs)? _____
  b. What is the lowest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____
  c. What is the highest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____

35. **Mechanic - CDL** - Does your organization employ mechanics that are **REQUIRED** to have a CDL?

- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes - If Yes,
  a. How many full-time equivalents (FTEs)? _____
  b. What is the lowest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____
  c. What is the highest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____

36. **Maintenance Supervisor** - Does your organization employ maintenance supervisors?

- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes - If Yes,
  a. How many full-time equivalents (FTEs)? _____
  b. What is the lowest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____
  c. What is the highest wage rate/salary for this position? _$_____

37. How do you believe your wage/salary rates for **mechanics** compare to the local labor market?

- ❍ Above the local labor market average

- ❍ About average for the local labor market
- ❍ Below the local labor market average

38. When did your organization last increase the wage rates or salaries for **mechanics**? (open ended)

_____

39. Do **mechanics** receive pay raises based on years of service?

- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes - If Yes, please describe how years of service factor into wage/salary levels of mechanics:

_____

40. Please tell us about the benefits your organization or agency provides for **mechanics** *(in addition to the legally-required benefits such as FICA)*. (Check all that apply)

- ❑ Health Insurance - employee
- ❑ Health Insurance – family members
- ❑ Disability Insurance
- ❑ Life Insurance
- ❑ Retirement Plan
- ❑ Vacation
- ❑ Sick Leave
- ❑ Compensatory Time for Overtime Hours
- ❑ Educational Opportunities
- ❑ Wellness
- ❑ Other (Please specify:) _____

41. Does your organization/agency currently have a shortage of maintenance staff?

- ❍ No
- ❍ Yes – If Yes,
  - Which positions have shortages? (Please indicate full-time, part time, and whether a CDL is required) _____
    _____
  - Why do you believe there is a shortage? _____
    _____
    _____

42. Do you provide financial assistance for training needed by mechanics to earn or retain Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certifications?

- ❍ Yes – upon hiring
- ❍ Yes – after a minimum time of employment (specify length of time:) _____
- ❍ No

# F. Recruitment and Retention Strategies

Please answer the following series of questions only for operators and mechanics positions your organization **directly employs**. If you do not employ operators or mechanics, skip to the next section.

## For Operators

43. Which methods does your organization/agency use to recruit potential operators? (Check all that apply, and describe additional methods as needed.)

- ❑ Notice on your organization's website
- ❑ Other online job listings (Indeed, etc.)
- ❑ Social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)
- ❑ Employee/personal referrals
- ❑ Newspaper advertisements
- ❑ Newsletter advertisements
- ❑ Advertisements on your vehicles
- ❑ Job fairs
- ❑ Other: _____

44. What strategies does your agency use to *retain* operators? (Check all that apply, and describe additional strategies as needed)

- ❑ Provide training opportunities
- ❑ Provide retirement benefits
- ❑ Provide health insurance
- ❑ Offer a working environment that promotes high morale among employees
- ❑ Provide employee recognition programs
- ❑ Provide bonus pay
- ❑ Conduct employee reviews
- ❑ Provide periodic wage increases
- ❑ Other: _____
  _____

45. Please tell us about any methods or strategies you consider to be particularly effective and/or innovative in either attracting or retaining operators.

_____

_____

46. Please tell us how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted your organization's current approaches to recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining operators.

_____

_____

## For Mechanics

47. Which methods does your organization/agency use to recruit potential mechanics? (Check all that apply, and describe additional methods as needed.)

- ❑ Notice on your organization's website
- ❑ Other online job listings (Indeed, etc.)
- ❑ Social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)
- ❑ Employee/personal referrals
- ❑ Newspaper advertisements
- ❑ Newsletter advertisements
- ❑ Advertisements on your vehicles
- ❑ Job fairs
- ❑ Other: _____

48. What strategies does your agency use to *retain* mechanics? (Check all that apply, and describe additional strategies as needed)

- ❑ Provide training opportunities
- ❑ Provide retirement benefits
- ❑ Provide health insurance
- ❑ Offer a working environment that promotes high morale among employees
- ❑ Provide employee recognition programs
- ❑ Provide bonus pay
- ❑ Conduct employee reviews
- ❑ Provide periodic wage increases
- ❑ Other: _____
  _____

49. Please tell us about any methods or strategies you consider to be particularly effective and/or

innovative in either attracting or retaining mechanics.

_____

_____

50. Please tell us how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted your organization's current approaches to recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining mechanics.

_____

_____

# Additional Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you!

# Appendix B – Staffing Levels and Vacancy Rates

| Transit Agency | Total Employees Reported | Total Vacancies Reported | Overall Vacancy Rate | Total Operators Reported (Employed by Agency and/or Contractor) | Operator Vacancies | Operator Vacancy Rate | Operator Positions Reduced Since March 2020 | Operators Resigned or Retired Since March 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aging, Disability and Transit Services of Rockingham County (ADTS) | 24 | 2 | 7.7% | 17 | 2 | 10.5% | 6 | 0 |
| Alamance County Transportation Authority (ACTA) | 32 | 7 | 17.9% | 21 | 7 | 25.0% | | 7 |
| Albemarle Regional Health Services (ARHS) - ICPTA | 39 | 3 | 7.1% | 18 | 3 | 14.3% | | 13 |
| Alleghany County - Alleghany in Motion | 13 | 4 | 23.5% | 8 | 4 | 33.3% | | 3 |
| Area of Richmond Transit (ART) | 14 | 3 | 17.6% | 11 | 3 | 21.4% | | 2 |
| Ashe County Transportation Authority (ACTA) | 27 | 4 | 12.9% | 17 | 4 | 19.0% | | 10 |
| Avery County Transportation Authority | 17 | 4 | 19.0% | 11.5 | 4 | 25.8% | | 4 |
| Brunswick Transit System, Inc. | 16 | 4 | 20.0% | 7 | 4 | 36.4% | 4 | 6 |
| Buncombe County Transit Management - Mountain Mobility | 42 | 10 | 19.2% | 37 | 10 | 21.3% | | 10 |
| Cabarrus County (CCTS) | 36 | 3 | 7.7% | 28 | 2 | 6.7% | | 4 |
| Carteret County Area Transit System | 25 | 9 | 26.5% | 5 | 7 | 58.3% | | 7 |
| Chatham Transit Network | 35 | 6 | 14.6% | 26 | 6 | 18.8% | 8 | 12 |
| Cherokee County Transit | 13 | 2 | 13.3% | 5 | 2 | 28.6% | | 3 |
| Choanoke Public Transportation Authority (CPTA) | 16 | 3.5 | 17.9% | 5 | 3.5 | 41.2% | | 0 |
| City of Asheville - Asheville Ride Transit (ART) | 2 | 1 | 33.3% | 53 | 7 | 11.7% | | 7 |
| City of Burlington - Link Transit | 18 | 4 | 18.2% | 17 | 3 | 15.0% | | 6 |

| Transit Agency | Total Employees Reported | Total Vacancies Reported | Overall Vacancy Rate | Total Operators Reported (Employed by Agency and/or Contractor) | Operator Vacancies | Operator Vacancy Rate | Operator Positions Reduced Since March 2020 | Operators Resigned or Retired Since March 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| City of Durham - Durham City Transit Company - GoDurham | 207 | 24 | 10.4% | 135 | 21 | 13.5% | | |
| City of Durham - National Express Transit - GoDurham ACCESS | 62 | 14 | 18.4% | 32 | 10 | 23.8% | 7 | 6 |
| City of Fayetteville - Fayetteville Area System of Transit/FAST | 140 | 34 | 19.5% | 73 | 28 | 27.7% | | 22 |
| City of Gastonia - Gastonia Transit | 24 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | | |
| City of High Point - High Point Transit System (HPTS) | 50 | 11 | 18.0% | 28.5 | 9 | 24.0% | | 7 |
| City of Rocky Mount - Tar River Transit | 2 | 0 | 0.0% | 40 | 0 | 0.0% | | 2 |
| City of Salisbury - Salisbury Transit | 22 | 1 | 4.3% | 7 | 0 | 0.0% | | 7 |
| Clay County Transportation (CCT) | 12 | 1 | 7.7% | 2 | 1 | 33.3% | | 2 |
| Concord Kannapolis Area Transit (Rider) | 6 | 0 | 0.0% | 30 | 0 | 0.0% | | Dozens |
| County of Lee Transit System (COLTS) | 33 | 5 | 13.2% | 16 | 5 | 23.8% | | 6 |
| Craven Area Rural Transit System (CARTS) | 23 | 14 | 37.8% | 10 | 13 | 56.5% | | 11 |
| Cumberland Community Transportation Program (CCTP) | 3 | 0 | 0.0% | 14 | 0 | 0.0% | | 0 |
| Dare County Transportation System (DCTS) | 18 | 0 | 0.0% | 1 | 0 | 0.0% | | 3 |
| Davidson County (DCTS) | 19 | 0 | 0.0% | 7 | 0 | 0.0% | | 1 |
| Duplin County Public Transportation | 18 | 6 | 25.0% | 3 | 6 | 66.7% | | 5 |
| Gaston County ACCESS | 23 | 3 | 11.5% | 20 | 3 | 13.0% | | 9 |
| Gates County Inter-Regional Transportation System (GITS) | 13 | 3 | 18.8% | 2 | 3 | 60.0% | | 2 |
| Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority | 43 | 6 | 12.2% | 11 | 6 | 35.3% | | 10 |
| Graham County Transit | 14 | 1 | 6.7% | 3 | 1 | 25.0% | | 2 |
| Greene County Transportation | 12 | 2 | 14.3% | 4 | 2 | 33.3% | | 3 |

| Transit Agency | Total Employees Reported | Total Vacancies Reported | Overall Vacancy Rate | Total Operators Reported (Employed by Agency and/or Contractor) | Operator Vacancies | Operator Vacancy Rate | Operator Positions Reduced Since March 2020 | Operators Resigned or Retired Since March 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Guilford County | 14 | 2 | 12.5% | 11 | 2 | 15.4% | | 1 |
| Harnett County (HARTS) | 23 | 20 | 46.5% | 13 | 20 | 60.6% | | 20 |
| Hoke Area Transit Service (HATS) | 40 | 4 | 9.1% | 0 | 3 | -- | 14 | 4 |
| Johnston County Area Transit System (JCATS) | 29 | 10 | 25.6% | 21 | 10 | 32.3% | | 6 |
| Kerr Area Rural Transit System | 69 | 10 | 12.7% | 46 | 10 | 17.9% | | 21 |
| Lenoir County Transit (LCT) | 32 | 12 | 27.3% | 20 | 12 | 37.5% | | 16 |
| Macon County Transit | 17 | 5 | 22.7% | 13 | 5 | 27.8% | 2.5 | 6 |
| Madison County Transportation Authority | 11 | 0 | 0.0% | 4 | 0 | 0.0% | | 3 |
| Martin County Transit | 12 | 2 | 14.3% | 8 | 2 | 20.0% | | 0 |
| McDowell Transit | 10 | 0 | 0.0% | 6 | 0 | 0.0% | | 1 |
| Mecklenburg Transportation System (MTS) | 94 | 3 | 3.1% | 25 | 1 | 3.8% | | 1 |
| Mitchell County Transportation (MCTA) | 17 | 3 | 15.0% | 2 | 3 | 60.0% | 0 | 5 |
| Moore County Transportation Services (MCTS) | 10 | 2.5 | 20.0% | 7 | 2.5 | 26.3% | | 2.5 |
| Mountain Projects - Haywood Public Transit | 22 | 2 | 8.3% | 8 | 2 | 20.0% | | 3 |
| Orange County Public Transportation (OCPT) | 25 | 3 | 10.7% | 0 | 1 | -- | | 6 |
| Pender Adult Services, Inc. (PAS-TRAN) | 13 | 4 | 23.5% | 14 | 4 | 22.2% | | 5 |
| Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART) | 67 | 11 | 14.1% | 35 | 7 | 16.7% | | 14 |
| Pitt Area Transit System (PATS) | 51 | 0 | 0.0% | 5 | 0 | 0.0% | | 0 |
| Polk County Transportation (PCT) | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | | |
| RCATS Transportation | 29 | 7 | 19.4% | 5 | 6 | 54.5% | | 8 |
| Robeson County - South East Area Transit System (SEATS) | 23 | 1 | 4.2% | -- | -- | -- | | 2 |
| Rowan Transit System (RTS) | 27 | 3 | 10.0% | 0 | 3 | -- | | 3 |
| Sampson Area Transportation | 26 | 9 | 25.7% | 6 | 8 | 57.1% | | 0 |
| Scotland County DSS - SCATS | 7.25 | 2 | 21.6% | 6 | 2 | 25.0% | | 0 |

| Transit Agency | Total Employees Reported | Total Vacancies Reported | Overall Vacancy Rate | Total Operators Reported (Employed by Agency and/or Contractor) | Operator Vacancies | Operator Vacancy Rate | Operator Positions Reduced Since March 2020 | Operators Resigned or Retired Since March 2020 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Town of Cary - GoCary | 86 | 2 | 2.3% | 104 | 0 | 0.0% | | 15 |
| Transportation Administration of Cleveland County, Inc. | 26 | 1 | 3.7% | 1 | 0 | 0.0% | | 0 |
| Transportation Lincoln County (TLC) | 29 | 2 | 6.5% | 15 | 2 | 11.8% | | 8 |
| Transylvania County Transportation | 10 | 1 | 9.1% | 5 | 1 | 16.7% | | 3 |
| Union County (UCT) | 40 | 13 | 24.5% | 12 | 12 | 50.0% | 2 | 12 |
| Wake County Health and Human Services - GoWake Access | 14 | 1 | 6.7% | 68 | 0 | 0.0% | | 0 |
| Western Carolina Community Action Inc. (WCCA) - Apple Country Transit | 21 | 0 | 0.0% | 14 | 0 | 0.0% | | 0 |
| Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority - Greenway Public Transportation | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | | |
| Wilkes Transportation Authority (WTA) | 29 | 8 | 21.6% | 30 | 8 | 21.1% | 4 | 7 |
| Yancey County Transportation Authority | 13 | 1 | 7.1% | -- | 1 | -- | 1 | 2 |
| **Statewide Total** | **2,049.25** | **339** | **14.2%** | **1,229** | **307** | **20.0%** | **48.5** | **366.5** |

# Appendix C – Operator Pay Rates

| Transit Agency | Operator Pay Rates (hourly or annually as reported) | | | | Operator Pay Rates (annualized @2,080 hrs) | | | | Operator Vacancy Rate* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No CDL Required | | CDL Required | | No CDL Required | | CDL Required | | |
| | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest | |
| Aging, Disability and Transit Services of Rockingham County (ADTS) | $9.69 | $11.75 | $12.25 | $13.10 | $20,155 | $24,440 | $25,480 | $27,248 | 10.5% |
| Alamance County Transportation Authority (ACTA) | | | $11.50 | $14.50 | | | $23,920 | $30,160 | 25.0% |
| Albemarle Regional Health Services (ARHS) - ICPTA | | | $12.70 | $13.33 | | | $26,416 | $27,735 | 14.3% |
| Alleghany County - Alleghany in Motion | $23,627 | $38,335 | | | $23,627 | $38,335 | | | 33.3% |
| Area of Richmond Transit (ART) | $11.20 | $14.70 | $12.20 | $15.70 | $23,296 | $30,576 | $25,376 | $32,656 | 21.4% |
| Ashe County Transportation Authority (ACTA) | $10.00 | $14.56 | $10.00 | $14.56 | $20,800 | $30,285 | $20,800 | $30,285 | 19.0% |
| Avery County Transportation Authority | $10.69 | $14.33 | | | $22,235 | $29,806 | | | 25.8% |
| Brunswick Transit System, Inc. | $10.00 | $13.00 | | | $20,800 | $27,040 | | | 36.4% |
| Buncombe County Transit Management - Mountain Mobility | $13.00 | $13.00 | $13.00 | $13.00 | $27,040 | $27,040 | $27,040 | $27,040 | 21.3% |
| Cabarrus County (CCTS) | $15.00 | $18.00 | | | $31,200 | $37,440 | | | 6.7% |
| Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority - Wave Transit | $15.00 | $15.39 | | | $31,200 | $32,011 | | | 0.0% |
| Carteret County Area Transit System | $11.00 | $14.32 | $12.00 | $17.41 | $22,880 | $29,786 | $24,960 | $36,213 | 58.3% |
| Chatham Transit Network | $12.00 | $16.00 | $14.00 | $19.50 | $24,960 | $33,280 | $29,120 | $40,560 | 18.8% |
| Cherokee County Transit | $26,943 | $39,773 | | | $26,943 | $39,773 | | | 28.6% |
| Choanoke Public Transportation Authority (CPTA) | $10.25 | $10.25 | $10.25 | $10.25 | $21,320 | $21,320 | $21,320 | $21,320 | 41.2% |
| City of Asheville - Asheville Ride Transit (ART) | | | | | | | | | 11.7% |
| City of Burlington - Link Transit | | | $12.69 | $14.36 | | | $26,395 | $29,869 | 15.0% |
| City of Durham - Durham City Transit Company - GoDurham | | | $16.85 | $25.67 | | | $16.85 | $25.67 | 13.5% |

| Transit Agency | Operator Pay Rates (hourly or annually as reported) | | | | Operator Pay Rates (annualized @2,080 hrs) | | | | Operator Vacancy Rate* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No CDL Required | | CDL Required | | No CDL Required | | CDL Required | | |
| | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest | |
| City of Durham - National Express Transit - GoDurham ACCESS | $15.00 | $17.75 | | | $31,200 | $36,920 | | | 23.8% |
| City of Fayetteville - Fayetteville Area System of Transit/FAST | $15.40 | $15.75 | $16.40 | $20.35 | $32,032 | $32,760 | $34,112 | $42,328 | 27.7% |
| City of Gastonia - Gastonia Transit | | | | | | | | | no data |
| City of High Point - High Point Transit System (HPTS) | | | $31,622 | $49,408 | | | $31,622 | $49,408 | 24.0% |
| City of Rocky Mount - Tar River Transit | $11.00 | $16.00 | $12.00 | $19.00 | $22,880 | $33,280 | $24,960 | $39,520 | 0.0% |
| City of Salisbury - Salisbury Transit | $11.70 | $15.96 | $12.28 | $15.96 | $24,336 | $33,197 | $25,542 | $33,197 | 0.0% |
| Clay County Transportation (CCT) | $23,484 | $35,225 | | | $23,484 | $35,225 | | | 33.3% |
| Concord Kannapolis Area Transit (Rider) | | | $11.50 | $18.00 | | | $11.50 | $18.00 | 0.0% |
| County of Lee Transit System (COLTS) | $10.00 | $11.93 | $10.50 | $11.50 | $20,800 | $24,814 | $21,840 | $23,920 | 23.8% |
| Craven Area Rural Transit System (CARTS) | $9.86 | $11.06 | $23,958 | $47,278 | $20,509 | $23,005 | $23,958 | $47,278 | 56.5% |
| Cumberland Community Transportation Program (CCTP) | | | | | | | | | 0.0% |
| Dare County Transportation System (DCTS) | $27,920 | $44,673 | | | $27,920 | $44,673 | | | 0.0% |
| Davidson County (DCTS) | | | $14.27 | $14.40 | | | $29,682 | $29,952 | 0.0% |
| Duplin County Public Transportation | $9.86 | $17.16 | | | $20,509 | $35,693 | | | 66.7% |
| Gaston County ACCESS | | | $11.36 | $17.61 | | | $23,629 | $36,629 | 13.0% |
| Gates County Inter-Regional Transportation System (GITS) | | | $12.80 | $13.80 | | | $26,624 | $28,704 | 60.0% |
| Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority | $9.50 | $9.50 | $10.00 | $12.50 | $19,760 | $19,760 | $20,800 | $26,000 | 35.3% |
| Graham County Transit | $13.00 | $13.50 | | | $27,040 | $28,080 | | | 25.0% |
| Greene County Transportation | $10.82 | $14.54 | | | $22,506 | $30,243 | | | 33.3% |
| Guilford County | $27,381 | $41,082 | | | $27,381 | $41,082 | | | 15.4% |
| Harnett County (HARTS) | $10.63 | $14.00 | | | $22,110 | $29,120 | | | 60.6% |
| Hoke Area Transit Service (HATS) | | | $15.00 | $42,000 | | | $31,200 | $42,000 | no data |

| Transit Agency | Operator Pay Rates (hourly or annually as reported) | | | | Operator Pay Rates (annualized @2,080 hrs) | | | | Operator Vacancy Rate* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No CDL Required | | CDL Required | | No CDL Required | | CDL Required | | |
| | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest | |
| Johnston County Area Transit System (JCATS) | | | $13.00 | $15.00 | | | $27,040 | $31,200 | 32.3% |
| Kerr Area Rural Transit System | $10.00 | $14.51 | | | $20,800 | $30,181 | | | 17.9% |
| Lenoir County Transit (LCT) | $11.17 | $18.75 | | | $23,234 | $39,000 | | | 37.5% |
| Macon County Transit | $10.00 | $37,924 | $10.00 | $37,924 | $20,800 | $37,924 | $20,800 | $37,924 | 27.8% |
| Madison County Transportation Authority | $11.03 | $12.00 | | | $22,942 | $24,960 | | | 0.0% |
| Martin County Transit | | | $26,520 | $26,520 | | | $26,520 | $26,520 | 20.0% |
| McDowell Transit | $27,000 | $23,000 | | | $27,000 | $23,000 | | | 0.0% |
| Mecklenburg Transportation System (MTS) | | | $36,540 | $54,820 | | | $36,540 | $54,820 | 3.8% |
| Mitchell County Transportation (MCTA) | $26,376 | $34,000 | | | $26,376 | $34,000 | | | 60.0% |
| Moore County Transportation Services (MCTS) | $13.49 | $13.49 | | | $28,059 | $28,059 | | | 26.3% |
| Mountain Projects - Haywood Public Transit | $14.00 | $14.00 | $14.00 | $14.00 | $29,120 | $29,120 | $29,120 | $29,120 | 20.0% |
| Orange County Public Transportation (OCPT) | | | | | | | | | no data |
| Pender Adult Services, Inc. (PAS-TRAN) | $10.50 | $12.00 | | | $21,840 | $24,960 | | | 22.2% |
| Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART) | | | | | | | | | 16.7% |
| Pitt Area Transit System (PATS) | $12.78 | varies | | | $26,582 | varies | | | 0.0% |
| Polk County Transportation (PCT) | | | | | | | | | no data |
| RCATS Transportation | $10.00 | $10.50 | | | $20,800 | $21,840 | | | 54.5% |
| Robeson County - South East Area Transit System (SEATS) | | | | | | | | | no data |
| Rowan Transit System (RTS) | $13.00 | $13.00 | | | $27,040 | $27,040 | | | no data |
| Sampson Area Transportation | $10.73 | | | | $22,318 | | | | 57.1% |
| Scotland County DSS - SCATS | | | $12.00 | $12.50 | | | $24,960 | $26,000 | 25.0% |
| Town of Cary - GoCary | $15.50 | $17.50 | $20.00 | $22.50 | $32,240 | $36,400 | $20.00 | $22.50 | 0.0% |
| Transportation Administration of Cleveland County, Inc. | $14.81 | $16.89 | | | $30,805 | $35,131 | | | 0.0% |
| Transportation Lincoln County (TLC) | $15.16 | $16.07 | | | $31,533 | $33,426 | | | 11.8% |

| Transit Agency | Operator Pay Rates (hourly or annually as reported) | | | | Operator Pay Rates (annualized @2,080 hrs) | | | | Operator Vacancy Rate* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No CDL Required | | CDL Required | | No CDL Required | | CDL Required | | |
| | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest | |
| Transylvania County Transportation | $12.19 | $13.97 | | | $25,355 | $29,058 | | | 16.7% |
| Union County (UCT) | $26,900 | $40,350 | | | $26,900 | $40,350 | | | 50.0% |
| Wake County Health and Human Services - GoWake Access | | | | | | | | | 0.0% |
| Western Carolina Community Action Inc. (WCCA) - Apple Country Transit | $12.00 | $14.00 | $12.00 | $14.00 | $24,960 | $29,120 | $24,960 | $29,120 | 0.0% |
| Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority - Greenway Public Transportation | | | | | | | | | no data |
| Wilkes Transportation Authority (WTA) | $10.00 | $13.89 | | | $20,800 | $28,891 | | | 21.1% |
| Yancey County Transportation Authority | | | | | | | | | no data |

# Appendix D – Operator Benefits and Vacancy Rates

| Transit Agency | Health Insurance - employee | Health Insurance - family members | Disability Insurance | Life Insurance | Retirement Plan | Vacation | Sick Leave | Comp. Time for Over. Hours | Educational Opportunities | Wellness Programs | Other | Total Benefit Score | Operator Vacancy Rate* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aging, Disability and Transit Services of Rockingham County (ADTS) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | 8 | 10.5% |
| Alamance County Transportation Authority (ACTA) | 1 | | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | 3 | 25.0% |
| Albemarle Regional Health Services (ARHS) - ICPTA | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 10 | 14.3% |
| Alleghany County - Alleghany in Motion | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 5 | 33.3% |
| Area of Richmond Transit (ART) | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | | | 3 | 21.4% |
| Ashe County Transportation Authority (ACTA) | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | 1 | 4 | 19.0% |
| Avery County Transportation Authority | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | 6 | 25.8% |
| Brunswick Transit System, Inc. | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | 6 | 36.4% |
| Buncombe County Transit Management - Mountain Mobility | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | 8 | 21.3% |
| Cabarrus County (CCTS) | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 6 | 6.7% |
| Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority - Wave Transit | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 7 | 0.0% |
| Carteret County Area Transit System | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 11 | 58.3% |
| Chatham Transit Network | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 2 | 18.8% |
| Cherokee County Transit | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | 6 | 28.6% |
| Choanoke Public Transportation Authority (CPTA) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 10 | 41.2% |
| City of Asheville - Asheville Ride Transit (ART) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 10 | 11.7% |

| Transit Agency | Health Insurance - employee | Health Insurance - family members | Disability Insurance | Life Insurance | Retirement Plan | Vacation | Sick Leave | Comp. Time for Over. Hours | Educational Opportunities | Wellness Programs | Other | Total Benefit Score | Operator Vacancy Rate* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| City of Burlington - Link Transit | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | 7 | 15.0% |
| City of Durham - Durham City Transit Company - GoDurham | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 13.5% |
| City of Durham - National Express Transit - GoDurham ACCESS | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | 8 | 23.8% |
| City of Fayetteville - Fayetteville Area System of Transit/FAST | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 8 | 27.7% |
| City of Gastonia - Gastonia Transit | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data |
| City of High Point - High Point Transit System (HPTS) | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 24.0% |
| City of Rocky Mount - Tar River Transit | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 7 | 0.0% |
| City of Salisbury - Salisbury Transit | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 10 | 0.0% |
| Clay County Transportation (CCT) | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 4 | 33.3% |
| Concord Kannapolis Area Transit (Rider) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 9 | 0.0% |
| County of Lee Transit System (COLTS) | | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 23.8% |
| Craven Area Rural Transit System (CARTS) | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | 56.5% |
| Cumberland Community Transportation Program (CCTP) | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | 0.0% |
| Dare County Transportation System (DCTS) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 10 | 0.0% |
| Davidson County (DCTS) | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | 0.0% |
| Duplin County Public Transportation | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 8 | 66.7% |
| Gaston County ACCESS | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 10 | 13.0% |
| Gates County Inter-Regional Transportation System (GITS) | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | 6 | 60.0% |
| Goldsboro-Wayne Transportation Authority | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 10 | 35.3% |
| Graham County Transit | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 4 | 25.0% |

| Transit Agency | Health Insurance - employee | Health Insurance - family members | Disability Insurance | Life Insurance | Retirement Plan | Vacation | Sick Leave | Comp. Time for Over. Hours | Educational Opportunities | Wellness Programs | Other | Total Benefit Score | Operator Vacancy Rate* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Greene County Transportation | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 7 | 33.3% |
| Guilford County | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 10 | 15.4% |
| Harnett County (HARTS) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 9 | 60.6% |
| Hoke Area Transit Service (HATS) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 9 | no data |
| Johnston County Area Transit System (JCATS) | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | 7 | 32.3% |
| Kerr Area Rural Transit System | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 7 | 17.9% |
| Lenoir County Transit (LCT) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 9 | 37.5% |
| Macon County Transit | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 8 | 27.8% |
| Madison County Transportation Authority | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 5 | 0.0% |
| Martin County Transit | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 8 | 20.0% |
| McDowell Transit | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 8 | 0.0% |
| Mecklenburg Transportation System (MTS) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 9 | 3.8% |
| Mitchell County Transportation (MCTA) | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 6 | 60.0% |
| Moore County Transportation Services (MCTS) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 10 | 26.3% |
| Mountain Projects - Haywood Public Transit | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | 8 | 20.0% |
| Orange County Public Transportation (OCPT) | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data |
| Pender Adult Services, Inc. (PAS-TRAN) | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | 2 | 22.2% |
| Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART) | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | 16.7% |
| Pitt Area Transit System (PATS) | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 7 | 0.0% |
| Polk County Transportation (PCT) | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | no data |
| RCATS Transportation | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 7 | 54.5% |

| Transit Agency | Health Insurance - employee | Health Insurance - family members | Disability Insurance | Life Insurance | Retirement Plan | Vacation | Sick Leave | Comp. Time for Over. Hours | Educational Opportunities | Wellness Programs | Other | Total Benefit Score | Operator Vacancy Rate* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Robeson County - South East Area Transit System (SEATS) | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data |
| Rowan Transit System (RTS) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 10 | no data |
| Sampson Area Transportation | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | 6 | 57.1% |
| Scotland County DSS - SCATS | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | 7 | 25.0% |
| Town of Cary - GoCary | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 6 | 0.0% |
| Transportation Administration of Cleveland County, Inc. | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 | 7 | 0.0% |
| Transportation Lincoln County (TLC) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | 8 | 11.8% |
| Transylvania County Transportation | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 9 | 16.7% |
| Union County (UCT) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 10 | 50.0% |
| Wake County Health and Human Services - GoWake Access | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | 0.0% |
| Western Carolina Community Action Inc. (WCCA) - Apple Country Transit | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 8 | 0.0% |
| Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority - Greenway Public Transportation | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data | no data |
| Wilkes Transportation Authority (WTA) | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | 2 | 21.1% |
| Yancey County Transportation Authority | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 10 | no data |

* includes agency and contractor employees and vacancies reported

# Appendix E – Mechanic Pay Rates

| Transit Agency | Mechanics Employed by Agency | Mechanic Vacancies | Mechanic Vacancy Rate | Mechanic Pay Rates (hourly or annually as reported) | | | | Mechanic Pay Rates (annualized @2,080 hrs) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | No CDL Required | | CDL Required | | No CDL Required | | CDL Required | |
| | | | | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest |
| Albemarle Regional Health Services (ARHS) - ICPTA | 1 | 0 | 0.0% | | | | $54,992 | | | | $54,992 |
| Ashe County Transportation Authority (ACTA) | 2 | 0 | 0.0% | $10.00 | $18.00 | | | $20,800 | $37,440 | | |
| Buncombe County Transit Management - Mountain Mobility | 1 | 0 | 0.0% | N/A | $20.00 | | | N/A | $41,600 | | |
| Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority - Wave Transit | data unclear | 0 | 0.0% | $15.43 | $24.80 | $15.43 | $24.80 | $32,094 | $51,584 | $32,094 | $51,584 |
| Choanoke Public Transportation Authority (CPTA) | 1 | 0 | 0.0% | | | $12.75 | $16.00 | | | $26,520 | $33,280 |
| City of Burlington - Link Transit | 0 | 1 | 100.0% | | | | | | | | |
| City of Durham - Durham City Transit Company - GoDurham | 14 | 0 | 0.0% | | | $45,385 | $66,747 | | | $45,385 | $66,747 |
| City of Durham - National Express Transit - GoDurham ACCESS | 3 | 1 | 25.0% | $23.00 | $33.00 | | | $47,840 | $68,640 | | |
| City of Fayetteville - Fayetteville Area | 8 | 0 | 0.0% | | | 18.62 | 20.9 | | | $38,730 | $43,472 |

| Transit Agency | Mechanics Employed by Agency | Mechanic Vacancies | Mechanic Vacancy Rate | Mechanic Pay Rates (hourly or annually as reported) | | | | Mechanic Pay Rates (annualized @2,080 hrs) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | No CDL Required | | CDL Required | | No CDL Required | | CDL Required | |
| | | | | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest | Lowest | Highest |
| System of Transit/FAST | | | | | | | | | | | |
| City of High Point - High Point Transit System (HPTS) | 3 | 0 | 0.0% | | | $34,862 | $66,213 | | | $34,862 | $66,213 |
| City of Rocky Mount - Tar River Transit | 2 | 0 | 0.0% | $33,000 | $38,000 | | | $33,000 | $38,000 | | |
| City of Salisbury - Salisbury Transit | 1 | 1 | 50.0% | | | $14.92 | $19.40 | | | $31,034 | $40,352 |
| Concord Kannapolis Area Transit (Rider) | 3 | 0 | 0.0% | | | $18.00 | $23.00 | | | $37,440 | $47,840 |
| Davidson County (DCTS) | 3 | 0 | 0.0% | $41,675 | | $42,475 | | $41,675 | | $42,475 | |
| Kerr Area Rural Transit System | 1 | 0 | 0.0% | $16.00 | $16.00 | | | $33,280 | $33,280 | | |
| Orange County Public Transportation (OCPT) | 0 | 2 | 100.0% | | | | | | | | |
| Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART) | 0 | 1 | 100.0% | | | | | | | | |
| Town of Cary - GoCary | 3 | 1 | 25.0% | | | $22.00 | $32.00 | | | $45,760 | $66,560 |

# Appendix F

## National and FTA Region 4 Comparisons Excerpted from Summary Table of National RTAP's 2020 Average Annual Salary Range for Rural Transit Agencies

| Job Title/Description | | | All FTA Regions | | | FTA Region 4 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Data Points | Average Min. | Average Max. | Data Points | Average Min. | Average Max. |
| **Bus Driver:** safely navigate the bus, collect fares, help passengers (including those with disabilities) and answer questions, perform vehicle inspections, maintain route schedules and trip logs, communicate with dispatchers and traffic controllers, and troubleshoot incidents and emergencies | Full-Time | CDL | 156 | $29,474 | $37,064 | 21 | $23,930 | $29,041 |
| | | Non-CDL | 162 | $25,940 | $30,159 | 39 | $22,641 | $26,554 |
| | | All | 318 | $27,674 | $33,546 | 60 | $23,092 | $27,425 |
| | Part-Time | CDL | 94 | $18,554 | $21,420 | 11 | $31,331 | $15,173 |
| | | Non-CDL | 156 | $12,390 | $15,441 | 29 | $14,800 | $17,168 |
| | | All | 250 | $14,708 | $17,689 | 40 | $19,346 | $16,620 |
| **Road Supervisor:** ensure safety of transportation operations, supervise maintenance personnel and road crew to ensure safety, communicate with counterparts in neighboring territories, and plan and prioritize safety projects | Full-Time | CDL | 17 | $46,112 | $59,970 | 3 | $31,746 | $45,744 |
| | | Non-CDL | 4 | $43,137 | $46,514 | - | - | - |
| | | All | 21 | $45,545 | $57,407 | 3 | $31,746 | $45,744 |
| | Part-Time | CDL | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | Non-CDL | 1 | $12,000 | $20,000 | - | - | - |
| | | All | 1 | $12,000 | $20,000 | - | - | - |
| **Dispatcher:** coordinate needs of riders with vehicle availability, communicate with passengers, drivers and maintenance staff, ensure buses arrive on time to locations, alert drivers to delays, driving conditions, and traffic pattern changes | Full-Time | CDL | 42 | $33,610 | $41,075 | 6 | $27,018 | $36,393 |
| | | Non-CDL | 110 | $26,824 | $32,146 | 24 | $24,201 | $30,500 |
| | | All | 152 | $28,699 | $34,613 | 30 | $24,764 | $31,678 |
| | Part-Time | CDL | 9 | $19,226 | $22,448 | - | - | - |
| | | Non-CDL | 31 | $14,904 | $19,732 | 1 | $5,000 | $6,000 |
| | | All | 40 | $15,876 | $20,343 | 1 | $5,000 | $6,000 |
| | | CDL | 20 | $45,595 | $57,348 | 3 | $35,120 | $41,507 |

| Job Title/Description | | | All FTA Regions | | | FTA Region 4 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Data Points | Average Min. | Average Max. | Data Points | Average Min. | Average Max. |
| **Maintenance Supervisor:** supervise and train maintenance staff, manage work schedules, prioritize repair projects, review completed work, lead staff meetings, prepare and deliver maintenance reports | Full-Time | Non-CDL | 13 | $44,928 | $55,001 | 2 | $29,826 | $45,884 |
| | | All | 33 | $45,332 | $56,423 | 5 | $33,002 | $43,258 |
| | Part-Time | CDL | 1 | $28,770 | $28,770 | - | - | - |
| | | Non-CDL | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | All | 1 | $28,770 | $28,770 | - | - | - |
| **Maintenance Technician:** use diagnostic systems to identify problems, repair engines and electronic systems, perform preventive and emergency maintenance, and respond to emergencies | Full-Time | CDL | 10 | $40,145 | $48,974 | 1 | $20,000 | $30,000 |
| | | Non-CDL | 6 | $34,046 | $37,488 | 3 | $32,318 | $33,024 |
| | | All | 16 | $37,858 | $44,667 | 4 | $29,238 | $32,268 |
| | Part-Time | CDL | 1 | $21,888 | $23,117 | - | - | - |
| | | Non-CDL | 1 | $18,000 | $22,000 | 1 | $18,000 | $22,000 |
| | | All | 2 | $19,944 | $22,559 | 1 | $18,000 | $22,000 |
| **Mechanic:** diagnose and repair problems with bus equipment, including electrical, hydraulic, engine, mechanical, brake, and/or other specialized systems | Full-Time | CDL | 35 | $42,800 | $52,987 | 1 | $40,000 | $42,000 |
| | | Non-CDL | 11 | $33,115 | $37,486 | 4 | $31,120 | $35,800 |
| | | All | 46 | $40,484 | $49,280 | 5 | $32,896 | $37,040 |
| | Part-Time | CDL | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | Non-CDL | 2 | $11,355 | $12,834 | - | - | - |
| | | All | 2 | $11,355 | $12,834 | - | - | - |
| **Mechanic I:** Entry level mechanic, focuses on preventive maintenance (see job description for Mechanic for types of systems) | Full-Time | CDL | 10 | $39,330 | $46,701 | 4 | $32,578 | $41,327 |
| | | Non-CDL | 7 | $34,886 | $39,503 | 3 | $35,653 | $39,720 |
| | | All | 17 | $37,500 | $43,737 | 7 | $33,896 | $40,638 |
| | Part-Time | CDL | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | Non-CDL | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | All | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | CDL | 12 | $46,926 | $54,045 | 2 | $33,938 | $45,315 |

| Job Title/Description | | | All FTA Regions | | | FTA Region 4 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Data Points | Average Min. | Average Max. | Data Points | Average Min. | Average Max. |
| **Mechanic II:** Skilled mechanic, diagnose, repair and replace engines, transmissions, electrical components, air systems, etc., perform general mechanical service and preventative maintenance | Full-Time | Non-CDL | 7 | $37,352 | $46,070 | 2 | $29,520 | $35,620 |
| | | All | 19 | $43,399 | $51,107 | 4 | $31,729 | $40,468 |
| | Part-Time | CDL | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | | Non-CDL | 1 | $14,000 | $14,500 | - | - | - |
| | | All | 1 | $14,000 | $14,500 | - | - | - |

*Source: National RTAP, Salary Ranges for Transit Jobs, Summary Table, August 2020*
*https://cloud.nationalrtap.org/Resource-Center/Advanced-Search/fid/876*