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Federal Transit
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Transit Workforce Center

National Technical Assistance Center
for Transit Workforce Development



**TRANSIT
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CENTER**

Recruiting and Developing Today's Transit Workforce

June 7, 2022



Transit Workforce Center – Mission

- Operated by the **ITLC**, the **Transit Workforce Center (TWC)** is **FTA**'s first ever national technical assistance center for transit workforce development.



mission

The **TRANSIT WORKFORCE CENTER** is the Federal Transit Administration's first ever national technical assistance center for transit workforce development. Its mission is to help urban, suburban, tribal, and rural public transportation entities recruit, hire, train, and retain the diverse workforce needed now and in the future.



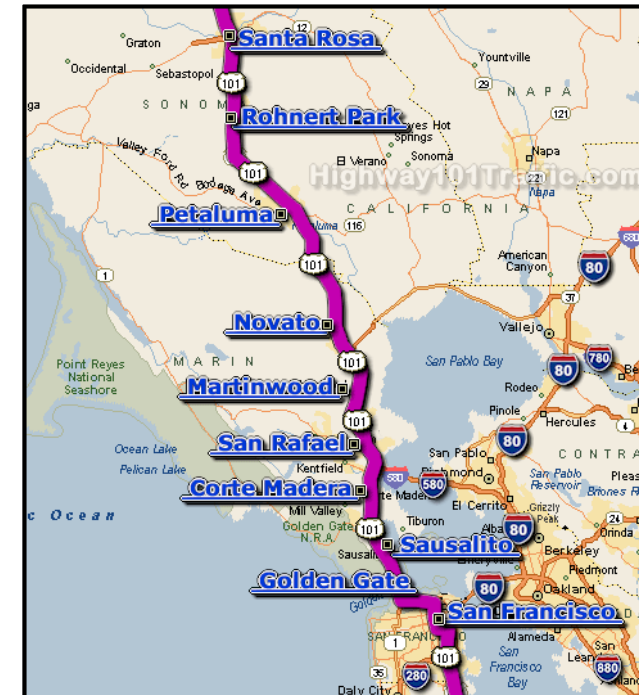
Bus Operator Recruitment and Retention: Confronting Obstacles & Creating Opportunity

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Background

- Golden Gate Transit (GGT) – Serves 4 counties in San Francisco's North Bay. Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we moved thousands of commuters to/from San Francisco each day.
- GGT suspended approximately 90% of its commute service during COVID.
- Currently operating roughly 50% of Pre-COVID service levels, but interested in growing service as San Francisco “reopens” and ridership demand returns.
- **Like other agencies, GGT is challenged with hiring and retaining bus operators, which are important for growing service over time.**



Understanding the Root of our Challenges

Through GGT's "[Workforce Investment Network \(WIN\)](#)" Program, which is a [High Road Training Partnership \(H RTP\)](#), we started to dig into the root of our challenges.

- The **Labor-Management Partnership between GGT & ATU Local 1575** created the foundation for WIN, a High Road Training Partnership that includes contributions from local colleges and [California Transit Works \(CTW\)](#) staff to achieve/maintain the following:
 - Pool of trained **Bus Operator Mentors** who provide 1:1 support to new Bus Operator Apprentices
 - Establishment of a Federal DOL and State-certified **Bus Operator Apprenticeship Program** – Bus Operator Apprentices/Trainees earn college credit + certificate of completion from DOL
 - Establishment of **Pre-apprenticeship Program** to funnel talent to the Apprenticeship Program

WIN creates a **forum for collaboration between management, labor leadership, and mentors** to tackle operational challenges, shape policy, and maintain a positive, constructive relationship.

This Forum prompted us to ask critical questions about underlying factors leading to recruitment and retention challenges..

Critical questions & Data Collection

Where are we losing recruits?

Do we have obstacles to employment?

How can we improve outreach efforts?

How can we attract workers from local communities?

How can we provide a more supportive & seamless pathway to employment, especially for ESL applicants?

What can we do to better support our multilingual applicants?

Data for better understanding the root of our recruitment/hiring challenges:

- Approximately **67% of applicants didn't/ couldn't complete** the application process.
 - Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders (AAPI) struggled the most. Hispanic applicants a close second.
- Of the remaining 33% of applicants who completed the application, roughly **40% failed the written skills test**.
 - AAPI and Hispanic applicants appeared to struggle the most.
- At this point, of the total, original applicants, only **20% of them proceeded to the interview phase**.
- Approximately **16% of the total, original applicants were ultimately offered employment** as Bus Operators.
 - Nearly 50% of those hired were Black applicants. 25% were White.
- **Majority of applicants live in Priority Populations (PPs) /Disadvantaged Communities**, many of which live 1-2.5 hours away from GGT facilities. ***Could benefit from more focused recruiting in local PPs closer to work.***
- **Historical 10-40% attrition rate during initial 11-week Bus Operator training/apprenticeship period.**

NOTE: Very helpful resource used in framing questions: [Equitable Apprenticeship Toolkit](#) by [High Road Alliance](#). Data above from Calendar Years 2018-2020 GGBHTD HR data.

Reevaluate/adjust the pathway to employment...

Through the data collection process, we identified the following actions for potentially addressing our recruitment/hiring challenges:

- Offer 1:1 support during the application process
 - Actual application on paper or online
 - Written skills test
 - Interview Process
- Provide bilingual support
- Reevaluate Minimum Qualifications
- Create opportunities to build workplace skills & gain exposure to the work environment
- Explore a regional approach with neighboring transit agencies to ensure access to employment opportunities. (i.e. Santa Rosa CityBus).
- Strengthen relationships with community based organizations (CBOs)



Pre-apprenticeship Program with Santa Rosa Junior College

- **Full-time Outreach Specialist** to leverage strong communities ties & actively advocate/recruit for GGT Bus Operator positions, especially in Priority Populations.
 - Also serves as **personal support for students/pre-apprentices**
 - Coordinates closely with GGT staff & ATU on student performance and/or if 1:1 support needed from Mentors, GGT Staff, etc.
- 5-course, 16-week certificate program offered by SRJC's Adult Education Department (includes Practicum & Shadow Days)
 - Virtual classes: workplace soft skills, customer service, communication, collaboration, self-advocacy, basic computer skills; bilingual offerings support ESL students
 - **Practicum will incorporate application and interview process.**
 - Two onsite Shadow Days at GGT - contextualize classroom learning, provide work environment exposure
 - **Mentors & ATU Leadership help shape & deliver curriculum**
- Seamless connection to full-time employment & the Bus Coach Operator Apprenticeship Program with College of Marin
- Certificate of Completion and pathway to college credit/degree
- Signing bonus (\$500 upon acceptance + \$500 upon completion)



Mitigating Employment Barriers & Commitment to Equity

Addressing employment barriers:

- **Completion of application process** as graduation requirement - part of SRJC program (Practicum)
- GGT **written skills test waived** with completion of program – SRJC courses & GGT Shadow Days should ensure candidates are prepared to enter the training/apprenticeship program
- **Interview process folded into 2nd Shadow Day**

GGT Commitment to Racial Equity/Justice & Inclusion:

- Focused recruiting in Priority Populations
- Pathway to union-represented employment, career stability, and family-sustaining benefits through investments & support from local colleges, Union, GGT (employer), local colleges, and Mentors
- Building skills & creating educational opportunities for those from disadvantaged/underserved communities
- Bilingual instruction to create a more inclusive learning environment



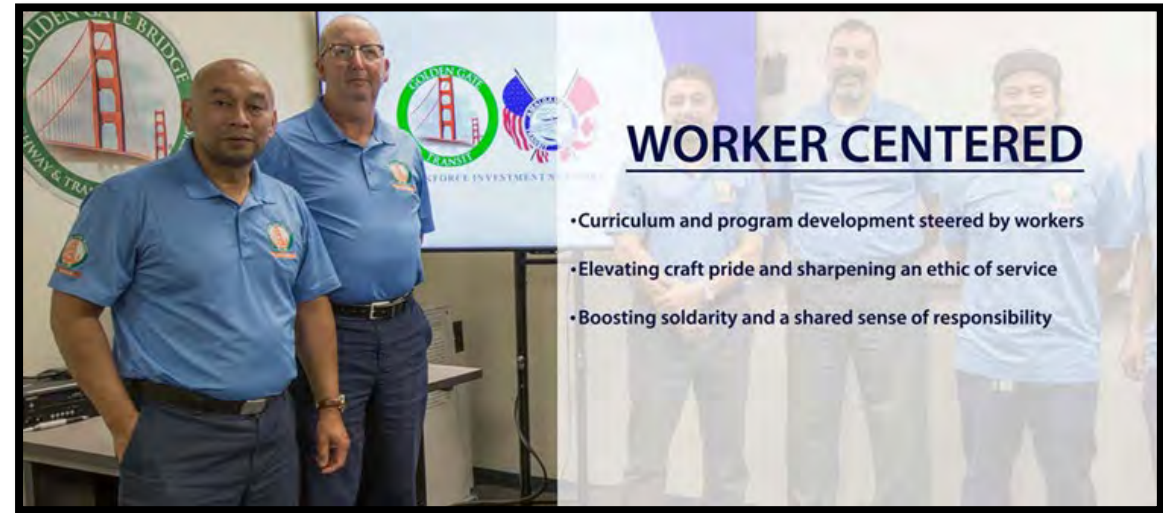
Reevaluate & Revise Minimum Qualifications

Reevaluated Bus Operator position minimum qualifications, also influenced by our commitment to racial equity/justice. Changed requirements related to:

- **High school diploma waived** for pre-apprentices upon completion of program: SRJC will offer an alternative test for reading and writing competencies.
- Driving Experience: Must be a **licensed driver for at least three (3) years** upon completion of the pre-apprenticeship program. **Minimum Age (in this case) = 19 years.** (Regular standard is 7 years as licensed driver.)
- Moving violations: **Applicants with more than two (2) moving violations within the last three (3) years will be reviewed on a case by case basis and such violations may be cause for non-selection.** (Prior standard: No more than two (2) moving violations within the last three (3) years. No exceptions.)
- **Other violations, citations, and/or accidents will be reviewed on a case by case basis and may be cause for non-selection.**

Bus Operator Mentor Program – Retention Effort

- [Worker-centered program](#) developed in partnership with ATU Local 1575
- **Structured peer support** for new Bus Operators led by ATU in collaboration with Management
 - Help them adjust to the new work environment and set them up for success
 - Serve as resource for understanding policy, culture, relationships, etc.
- **Leadership & career/personal growth** opportunity for current Bus Operators.
- Connection to a strong apprenticeship and training program, with continuing opportunities for **career development**.



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TWC Contact Information and Upcoming Webinar Registration

Upcoming Webinar: Fundamentals of Mentoring

Wednesday, June 22, 3 pm ET

Register at <https://zoom.us/webinar/89802224913>

Contact Us

Email us **twc@transportcenter.org**

Call us at **1-855-888-NTWC**

Learn more about us at

<http://transitworkforce.org>



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