



## Insights from Case Studies on Creative Recruitment Strategies

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This brief presents a few examples of creative tactics transit agencies are using in their recruitment efforts. To combat an ongoing workforce shortage, transit agencies have been asking themselves: who is not in our workforce who could be? How do we craft a compelling recruitment message that conveys why people would want to work here?

Veterans comprise one key source of qualified candidates. Sixty-seven percent of [veterans report feeling underutilized](#) in the jobs they secure after leaving the military. In transit, military skills can be exercised: the transit industry needs workers who have a strong commitment to public service, technical skills (e.g., CDL, electrical knowledge), and are used to high-pressure conditions and structured schedules. In our [case study research on veterans](#), we have learned that transit agencies (including CapMetro in Austin, LA Metro, and WMATA in DC) have successfully built pipelines into transit careers for veterans through a range of intentional partnerships with veteran-serving organizations. Some also have used available funding streams to support recruitment efforts; for example, Pierce Transit (WA) got an approval from its state VA office that allows veterans to use GI Bill Benefits to offset their living expenses while they're starting a technician apprenticeship program at Pierce Transit. A key support some veterans have needed, according to LA Metro, is pre-application assistance converting their résumés from “military speak” to language more readily intelligible in a civilian context.

Agencies have also found that older workers, particularly recent retirees, often have a great deal to contribute as new recruits. For example, Cape Cod has an older population than the U.S. average, and [Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority \(CCRTA\)](#) recognized the imperative of recruiting from the population it has, which meant targeting older adults. The agency found that many recently retired teachers, police officers, firefighters, and school bus drivers wanted something to do with their time (often part-time) and were motivated to give back to their community. These new recruits brought a lifetime of driving experience, well-developed customer service skills, and an ability to relate to their older passengers. Key selling points for older applicants were flexibility in shift schedules, part-time options, time off for medical appointments, and a comparatively short amount of time to reach the highest salary level (a higher priority for this group than provision of benefits). Because the U.S. has an aging workforce, recruitment and retention of older workers can and must be part of any solution that fully addresses the workforce shortage.



Nonetheless, transit agencies must also be putting in place the next generation. Our [recent blog post](#) reported on a study that found that young adults are open to transit jobs but often not aware of the career pathways available in the industry. Younger workers reported they are looking for competitive pay and benefits, flexible schedules, jobs that pave the way into clear career progressions, and a way to contribute meaningfully to their communities; targeted messaging that highlights these points is likely to be most powerful with younger adults. Internships and pre-apprenticeships have proven to be effective ways to give young adults a taste for working in transit, and [storytelling](#)—by and for young adults—helps these applicants envision themselves in the shoes of a peer launching a successful transit career. Finally, partnerships with K-12 schools create opportunities for kids to board a transit bus, talk to an operator, or otherwise gain exposure to transit in a fun and memorable way. Current employees are the best recruitment messengers, and many kids will remember these interactions.

Last, people with disabilities—especially longtime transit riders with disabilities—have been valuable contributors within transit agencies. MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA), facing the same worker shortages most other agencies have been confronting, has developed multiple deep partnerships with organizations that help jobseekers with disabilities find employment. These partners have not only helped MWRTA identify qualified candidates for job openings, but also helped the agency navigate the process of putting in place any accommodations the jobseeker would need to do their job successfully. Because [a quarter of American adults have some level of disability](#), it proved to be a wise business strategy for MWRTA to consider this population when planning recruitment efforts.

Check out additional [Transit Workforce Center case studies](#) for more details and examples of successful recruitment techniques. TWC's [Recruitment Toolkit](#) also provides smart outreach and advertising sample materials for transit agencies to draw upon, and our newly launched [Career Explorer](#) page helps prospective applicants consider what transit careers might work for them.