

Fact Sheet: *Who Rides Public Transportation*

Who Rides Public Transportation is the latest report from the American Public Transportation Association. Using data from 695,748 passenger surveys, the study is the most extensive demographic report of public transit riders ever and reveals the face of public transportation riders across the United States.

Key Demographics:

- **Age:** 89% of riders are in the most economically active segment of the population: individuals age 25 to 64
- **Employment:** 71% of public transit riders are employed and another seven percent are students, making 78% of riders currently employed or preparing for employment. The balance includes seven percent retired persons, six percent unemployed, three percent homemakers.
- **Income:** 21% of U.S. households making at least \$100,000 per year ride public transportation.
- **Education:** More than 51% of public transit riders hold a bachelor's degree or higher level of education.
- **Ethnicity:** The single largest group of riders consists of white or Caucasian riders (40 percent), though communities of color make up the majority of riders (60%). Within communities of color, African-American riders comprised the largest group, at 24 percent. These numbers vary considerably between urban areas of differing sizes.
- **Gender:** Most transit riders in the United States are women (55%). This is true for both bus and rail users.

Key Travel Characteristics:

- **Trip purpose:** 87% of public transportation trips involve direct economic impact on the local economy, including getting to or from work (49%), shopping (21%) and recreational spending in the local economy (17%).
- **Growth in Economic Impact:** Public transit riders impact on the economy has grown over the last 10 years. An example; the share of riders using public transit for shopping more than doubled from 2007 (8.5%) to 2017 (21%).
- **Growth in Ridership:** Since 1995, public transit ridership has increased by 37% – a growth rate higher than the 20% increase in the U.S. population and higher than the 23% growth in the use of the nation's highways over the same period, according to APTA ridership data.
- **Frequency of trips:** 63% of public transit riders use it at least five days a week and another 13% use it six or seven days a week. This shows the primary trip purpose for most riders is commuting but also use it to engage in economic activities that grow the economy.
- **Transportation options:** 65% of public transit users have a driver's license, indicating that they have flexibility in travel mode. Forty-three percent of riders indicated that there is a vehicle available to them.

- **Getting to the stop:** More than two-thirds of public transit users walk to their stop or station, while another 11% drive to their stop and 10% use another form of transit.

Who Rides Public Transportation, a profile of public transportation passenger demographics and travel characteristics is based on a total of 695,748 respondent questionnaires. The surveys included were conducted during eight years from 2008 through 2015. The public transit systems participating the research carried 80% of the transit trips made in the U.S. during the study period. To read the study in its entirety go to www.apta.com/WhoRides.

About American Public Transportation Association

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) is a nonprofit international association of more than 1,500 public and private sector organizations, engaged in the areas of bus, paratransit, light rail, commuter rail, subways, waterborne services, and intercity and high-speed passenger rail. This includes: transit systems; planning, design, construction, and finance firms; product and service providers; academic institutions; transit associations and state departments of transportation. APTA is the only association in North America that represents all modes of public transportation. APTA members serve the public interest by providing safe, efficient and economical transit services and products.