

The Aging Transit Workforce

Investing in Human Capital

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Synopsis: APTA's Executive Committee has previously acknowledged that workforce and human capital issues are critical to the continuing success of the public transportation industry. Thus, our group's initial research focused on the aging workforce within bus operations and maintenance. Our subsequent research and survey analyzed the current trends of the aging workforce and assessed the factors that contribute to these trends. With results in, we are now offering recommendations to help the transit industry prepare for the challenges of attracting and retaining qualified human capital.

Problem Statement:

Now that employees of the baby boomer generation are retiring and will continue to retire over the next few years, public transit is facing an unknown future. Transit organizations have to come up with creative solutions to attract and retain employees or they face the danger of losing qualified workers to other fields.

Problem 1: A large number of transit workers are due to retire in next three to five years.

- *"Public transit properties were formed in a narrow window of time, generally the mid-1960s through early 1980s. Once these agencies opened their doors, the retirement clock started for all employees at the same moment."* Bond, Alexander. (2017, November 7). 'Precarious' Transit Workforce Needs Data, Research to Help Fill the Void.
- *"If we look back to the demographic of the transit industry in the 1970s and early 80s, our workforce consisted of individuals in their late 50s and 60s or 20s and early 30s. The other age cohorts were not well represented. Take a look at today's transit workforce and a similar picture exists."* Larrousse, Paul. (2017, September 20). *The Transit Industry's Workforce Challenge is Still Real.*
- Over the last decade, transit agencies have attempted to address the spate of retirements by hiring already-qualified workers from other transit agencies and bus companies. However, this is not sustainable as these new hires are already mid-career and this practice caused in-house training, school-to-work programs, and apprenticeships to shrink in prominence across the industry. (Bond 2017)

Problem 2: Transit is not the only industry looking to recruit workers. For example, the trucking industry is also seeking workers with CDLs

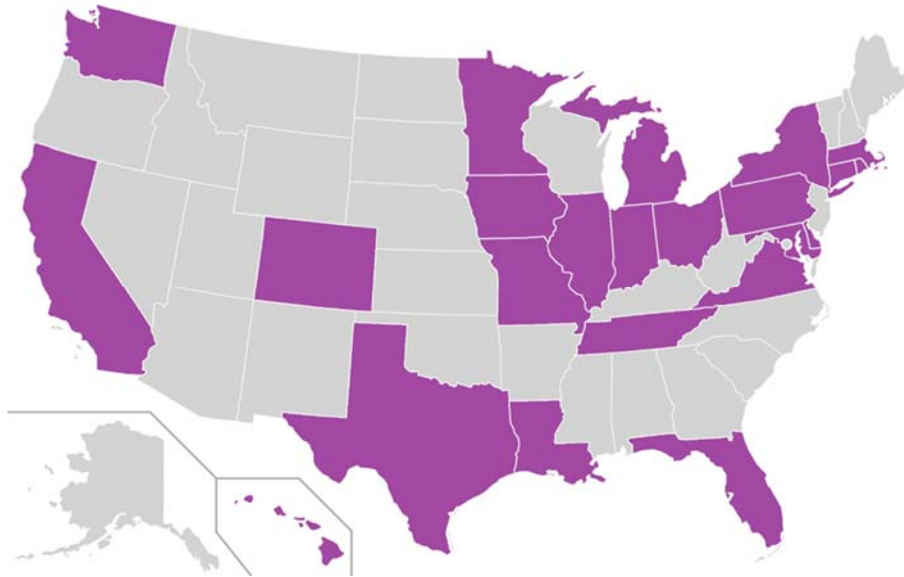
- *"Several years ago, the trucking industry was one of the few industries hiring people. Today, the job market has improved and there are more job alternatives available for current drivers and would-be truck drivers. For example, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, the construction industry has increased payrolls by nearly 1.3 million over the last five years. Most construction jobs are local and don't require travel as extensive as truck driving. Additionally, these alternative jobs often carry much less responsibility and regulatory guidelines to adhere to."* Costello, Bob. (2017). *ATA Truck Driver Shortage Analysis 2017.*
- *The Truck driver "shortage is expected to surpass 50,000 by the end of 2017" and "could swell to over 174,000 by 2026."* Costello, Bob. (2017) *ATA Truck Driver Shortage Analysis 2017.*
- Over the next decade, the trucking industry will need to hire roughly 898,000 new drivers, or an average of nearly 90,000 per year. Replacing retiring drivers will account for nearly half of all new drivers, but the trucking industry is also expected to grow by 28% by 2026. Thus, public transportation faces competition not only within the labor force at large, but also specifically for workers with CDLs. Trucking firms have reported increased pay of 17% over the last couple years with first-year entrants earning approximately \$50,000. Costello, Bob. (2017). *ATA Truck Driver Shortage Analysis 2017.*

Problem 3: There is a need to find a way to attract and retain new recruits to transit profession.

- *"We're told that the young workforce of today, millennials, are the least loyal generation to hit the job market, and the least interested in the benefits of public sector jobs." And "the academic research shows that millennials are more willing to leave jobs."* Goodyer and Kuhr (2017, October 24.) *How to Attract Millennials to the Transit Industry.*
- *"It's expected that by 2020, 31 million jobs will become available as Boomers retire, and another 24 million new jobs will be created."* Hirsch, Arlene S. (2017, October 11). *4 Ways for HR to Overcome Aging Workforce Issues.*
- *"While today many employees tend to rate factors such as career development higher than pay, good pay and benefits still count." or "Effective communication can help ensure that employees want to stay with your company. Employees need to know—and be reminded on a regular basis—how the organization is doing and what they can do to help."* Career One Stop Business Center. (2018).

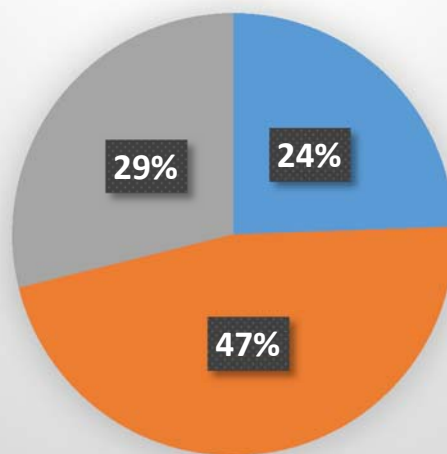
Survey Deployment

- Survey Method: Online
- Method of Contact: E-mail & Phone
- Survey Population:
 - APTA Workforce Development Committee List
 - ELP Program Participant Agencies
 - Supplemented with personal contacts to seek geographic balance and agency size distribution balance
- # of Agencies Contacted: 125
- # of Transit Agency Responses: 44
- Response Rate: 35.20%
- US States Represented in Responses: 23
- Areas of Focus: Bus Operations & Maintenance



** Survey response from TTC not shown on map.**

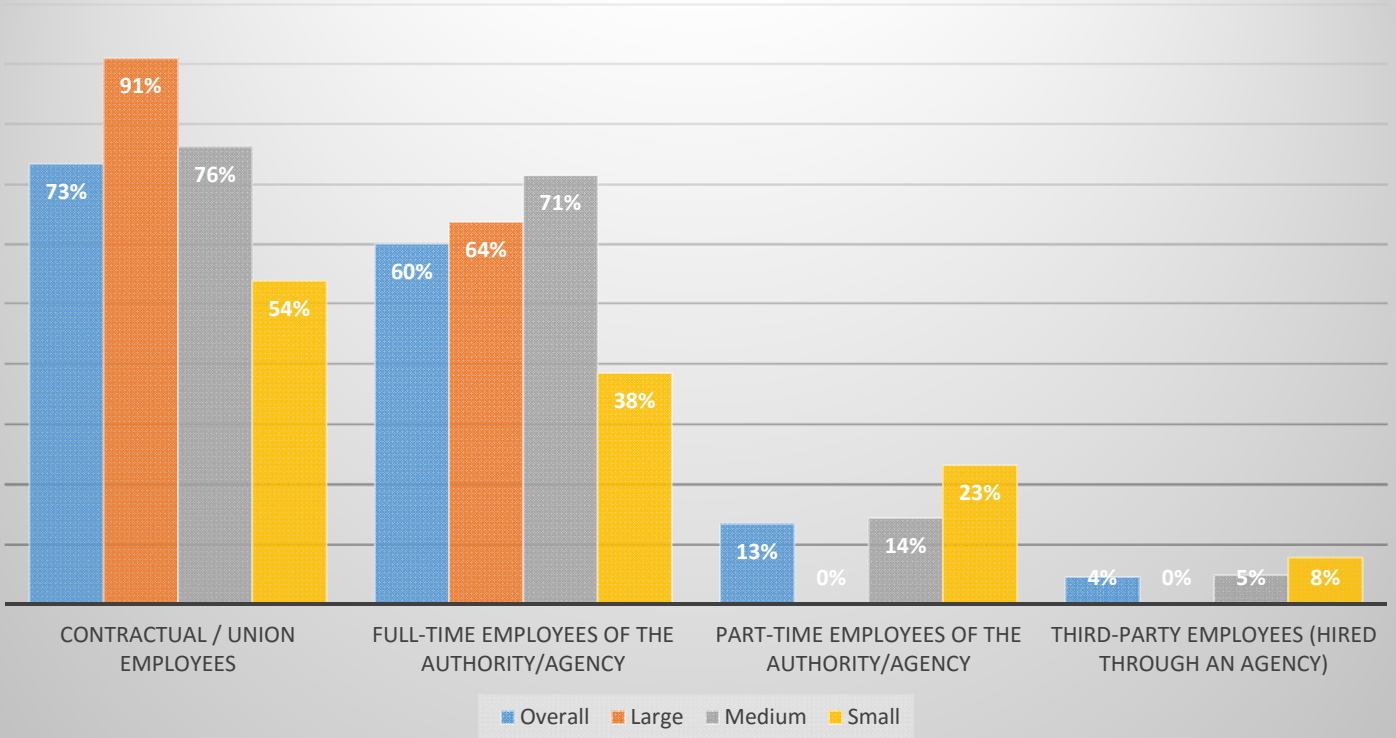
Agency Size for Survey Responses



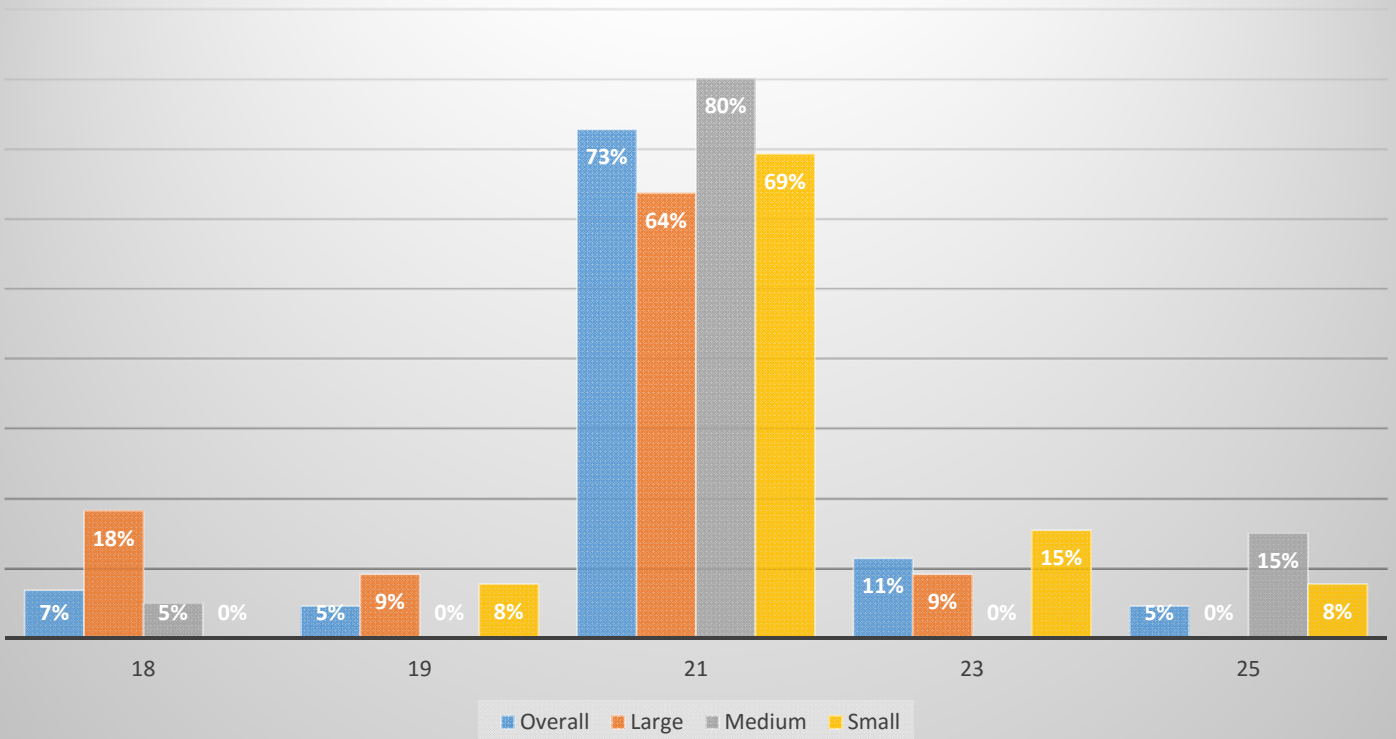
- Large: More than 20 million annual passenger trips.
- Medium: More than 4 million, but fewer than 20 million annual passenger trips.
- Small: 4 million or fewer annual passenger trips.

Bus Operations

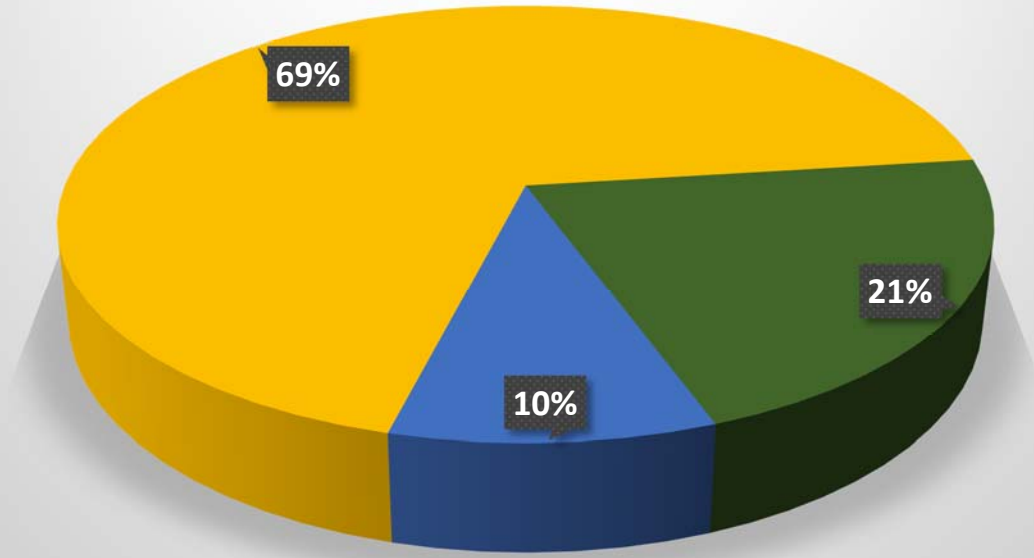
Status of Bus Operator Employees



Bus Operator Minimum Age

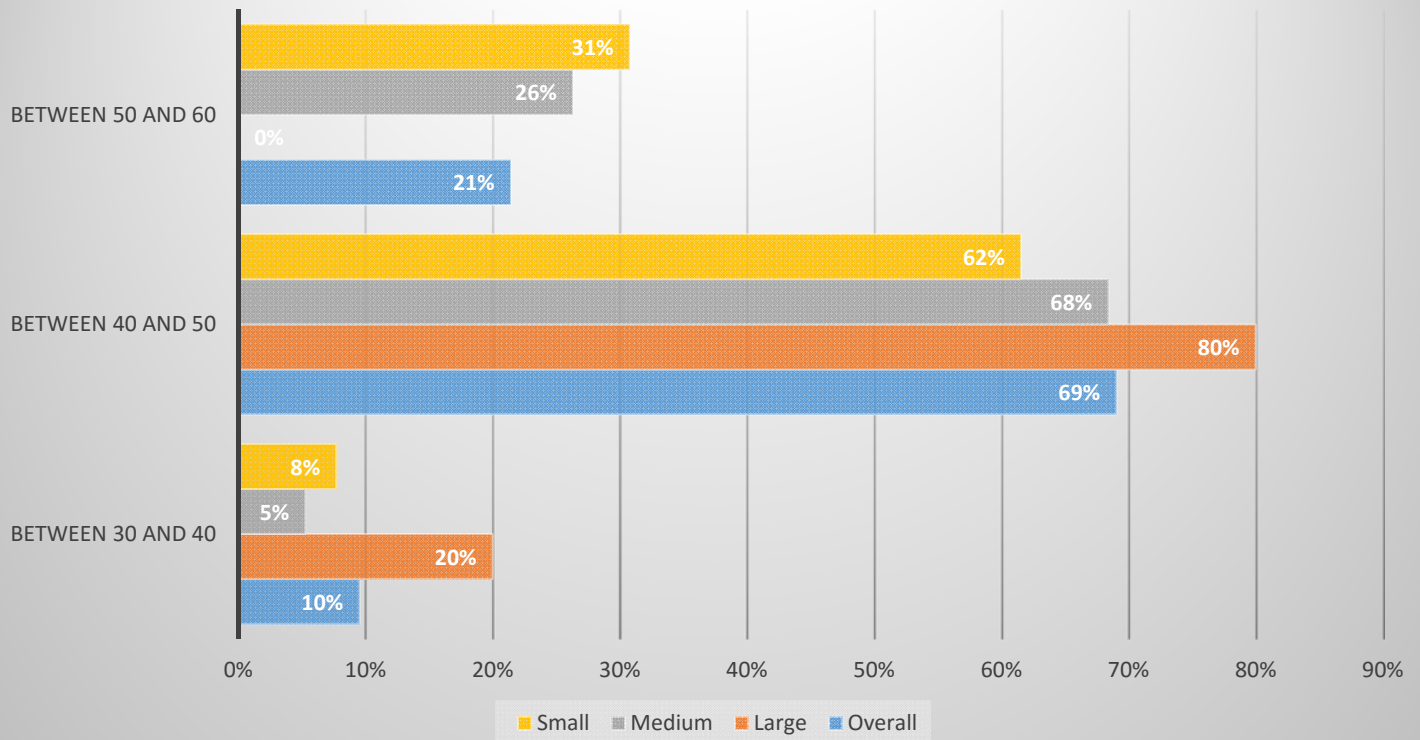


Average Age of Bus Operators

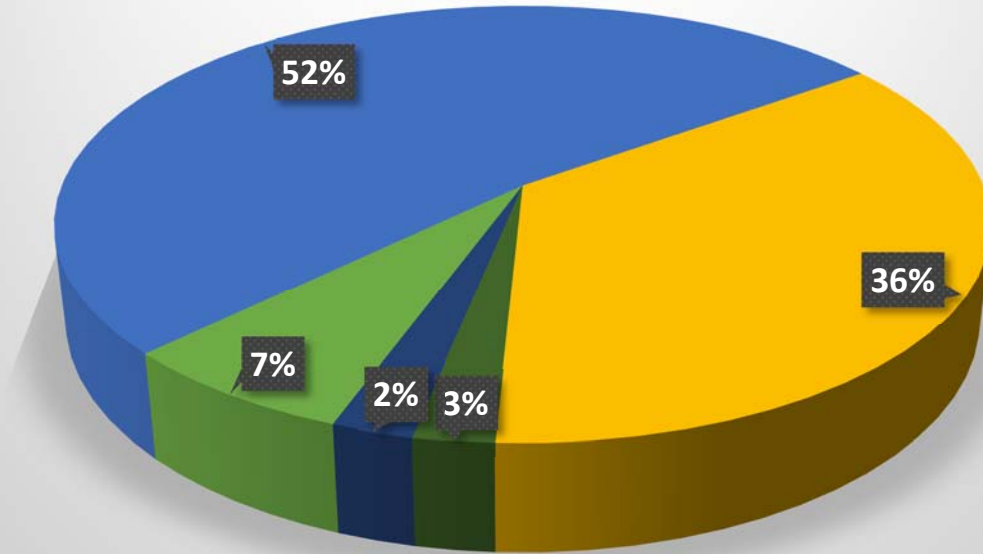


■ Under 30 ■ Between 30 and 40 ■ Between 40 and 50 ■ Between 50 and 60 ■ Over 60

Average Age x Transit Agency Size

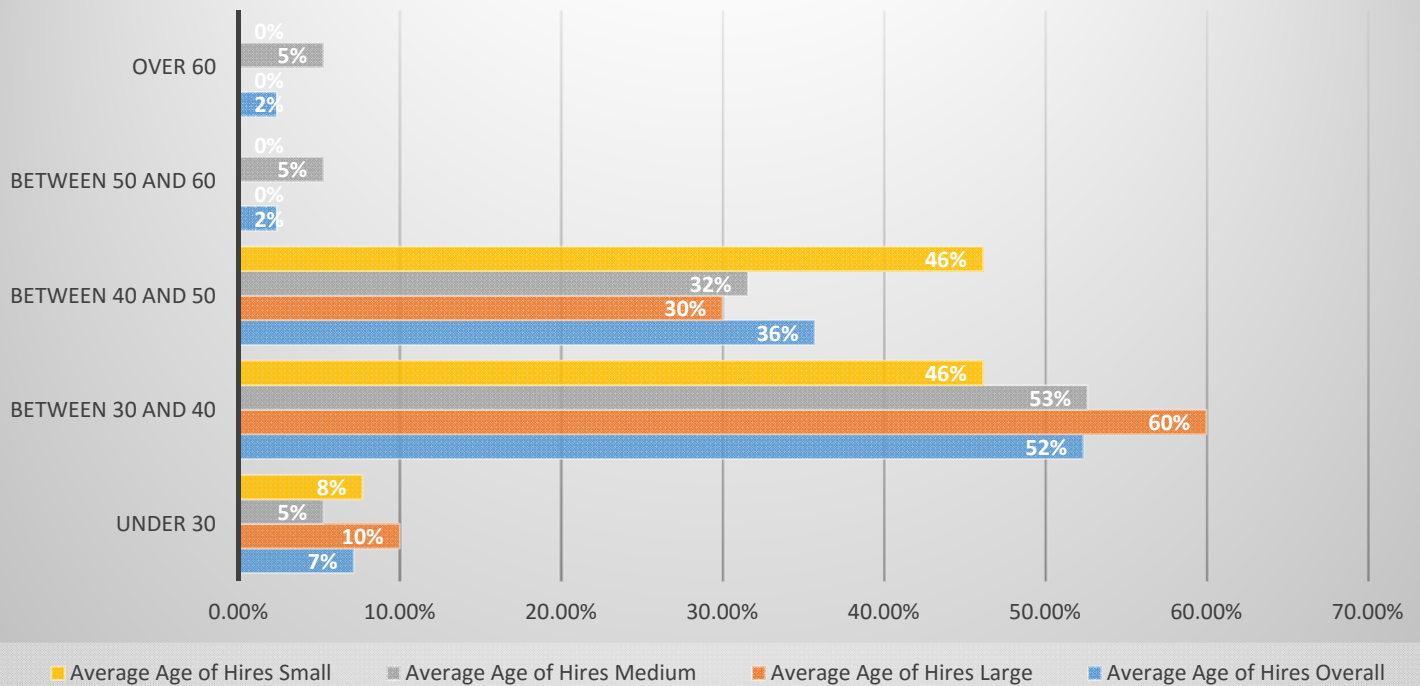


Average Age of 2017 Hires



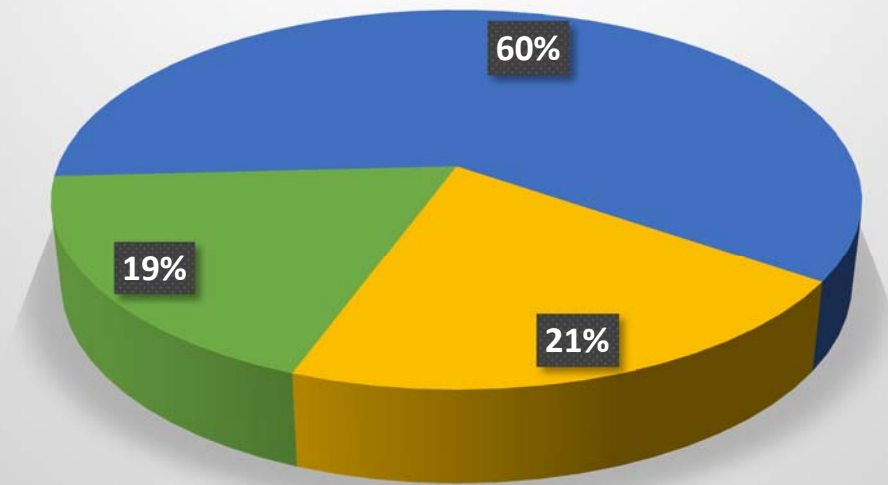
Under 30 Between 30 and 40 Between 40 and 50 Between 50 and 60 Over 60

Bus Operators: Average Age of 2017 Hires x Agency Size



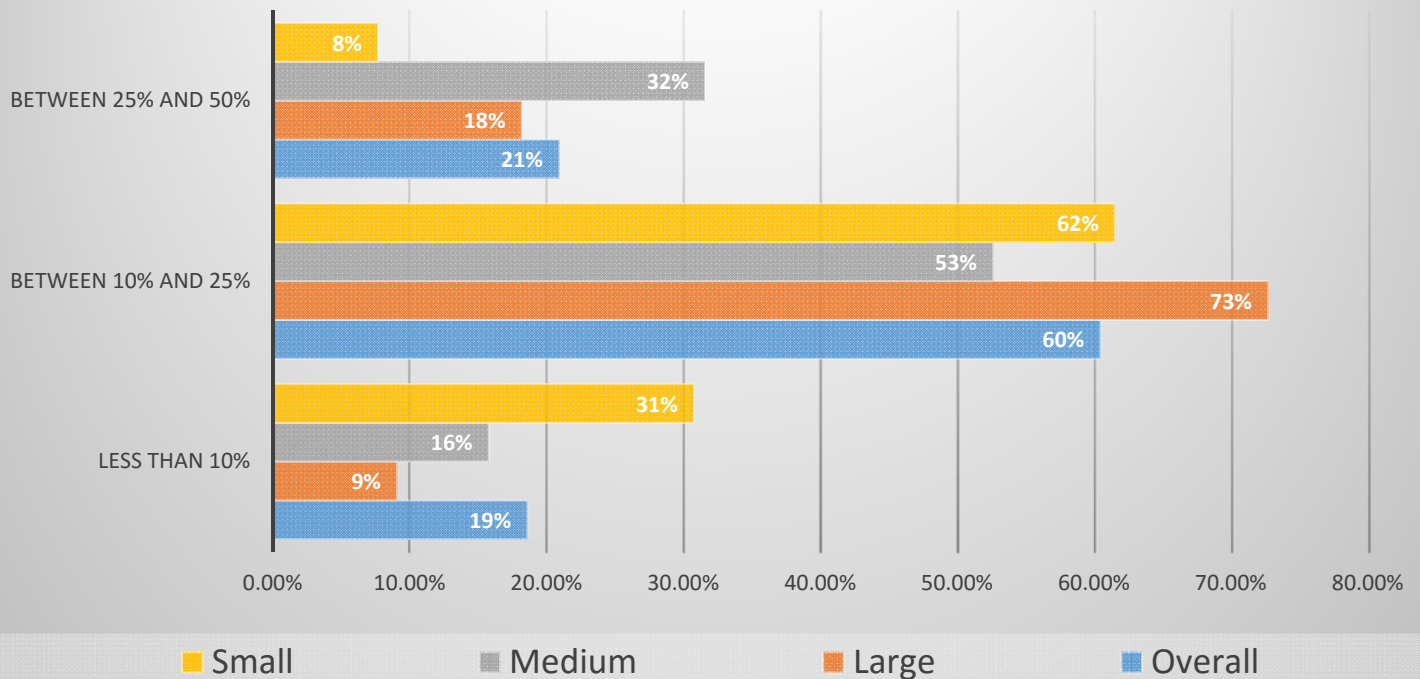
Average Age of Hires Small Average Age of Hires Medium Average Age of Hires Large Average Age of Hires Overall

Percentage of Bus Operators Eligible to Retire in 3-5 years

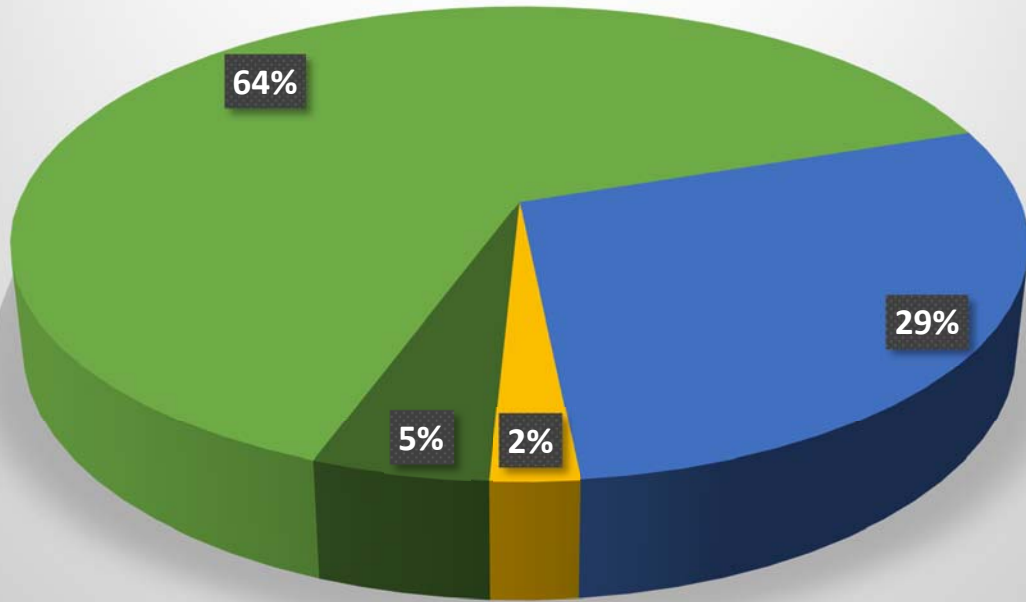


■ Less than 10% ■ Between 10% and 25% ■ Between 25% and 50% ■ Greater than 50%

Percentage of Bus Operators Eligible to Retire in 3-5 Years x Agency Size

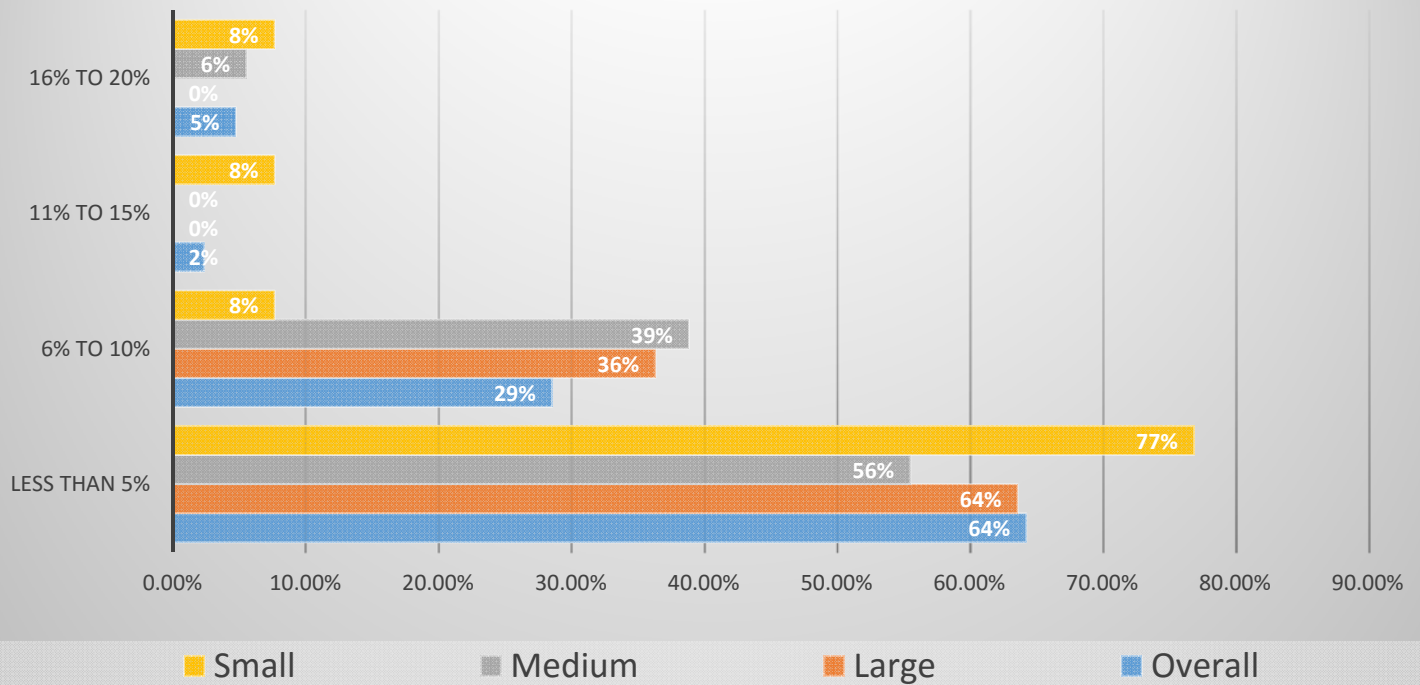


Percentage of Bus Operator Positions Vacant



■ Less than 5% ■ 6% to 10% ■ 11% to 15% ■ 16% to 20%

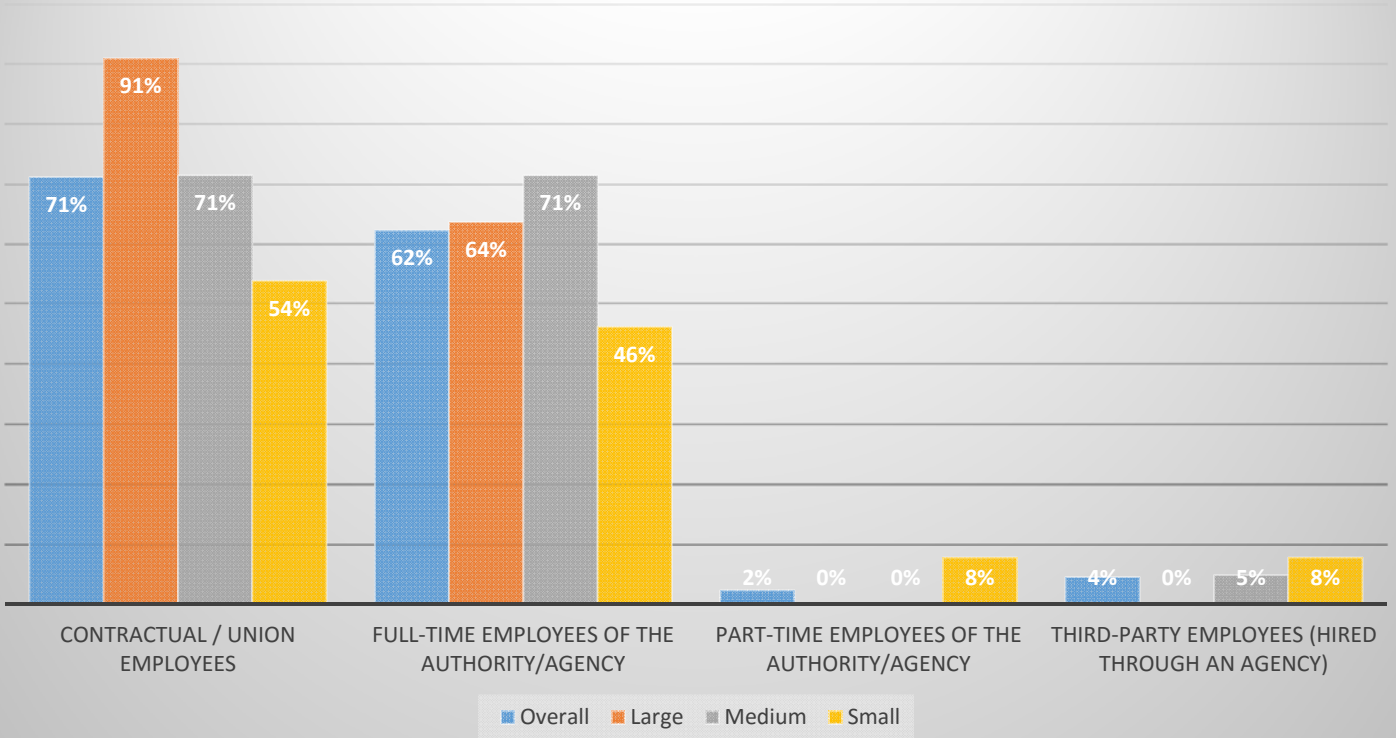
Percentage of Bus Operator Positions Vacant x Agency Size



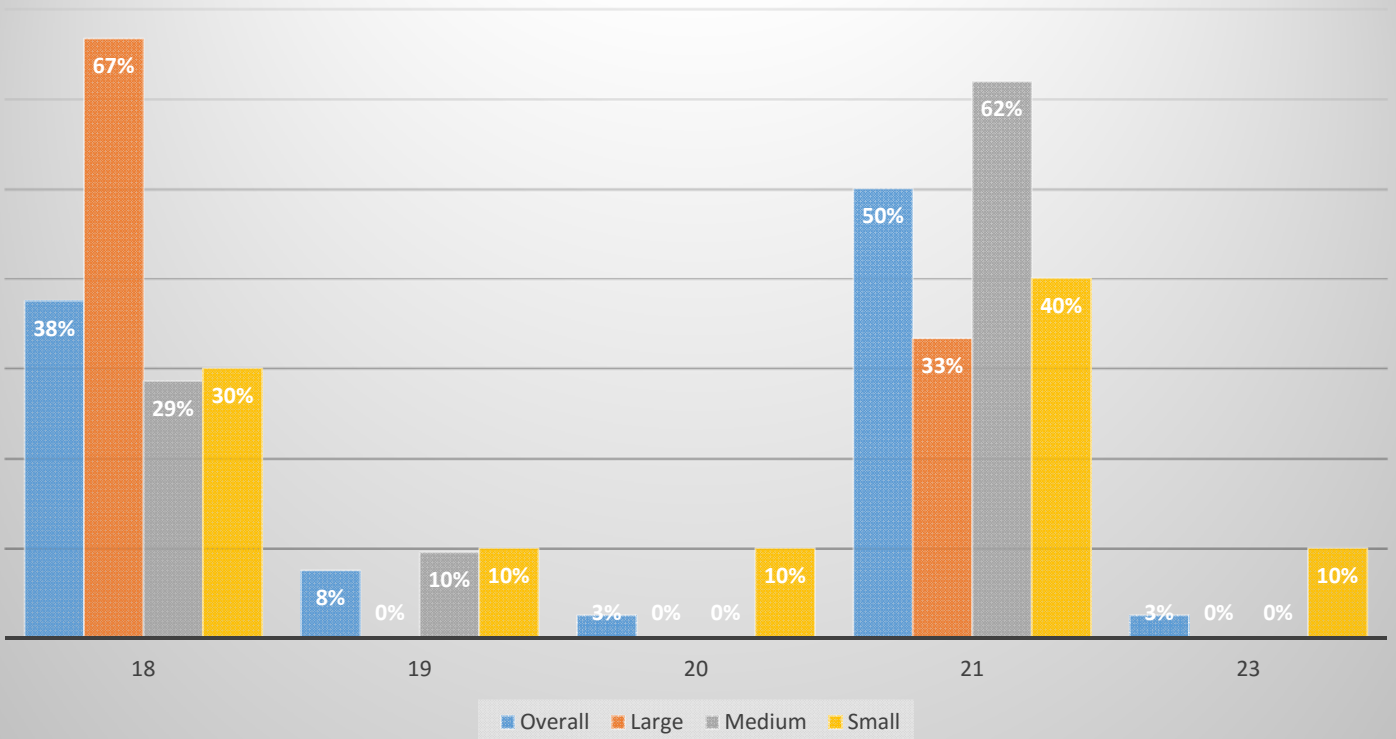
■ Small ■ Medium ■ Large ■ Overall

Bus Maintenance

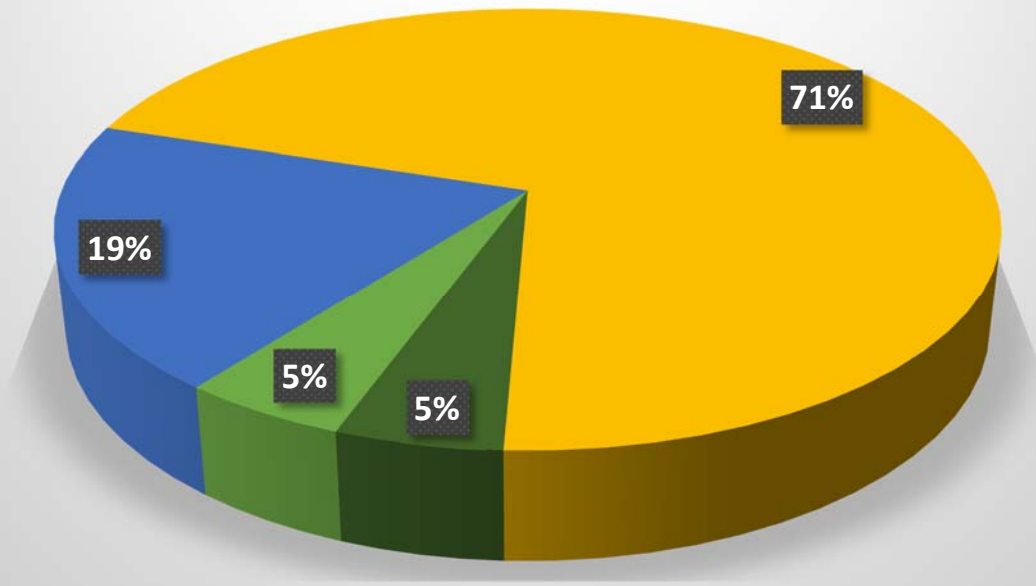
Status of Bus Maintenance Employees



Minimum Age Required - Bus Maintenance Employees

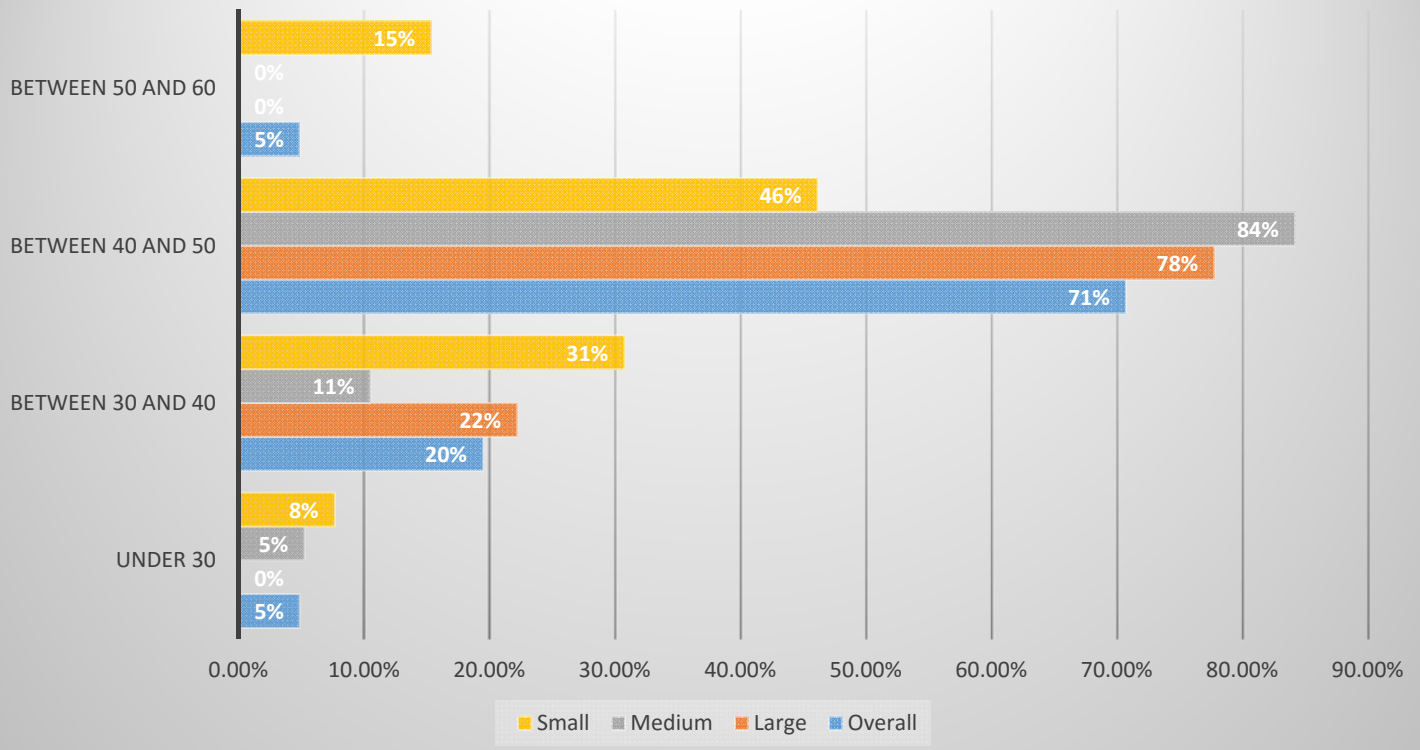


Average Age - Bus Maintenance Employee

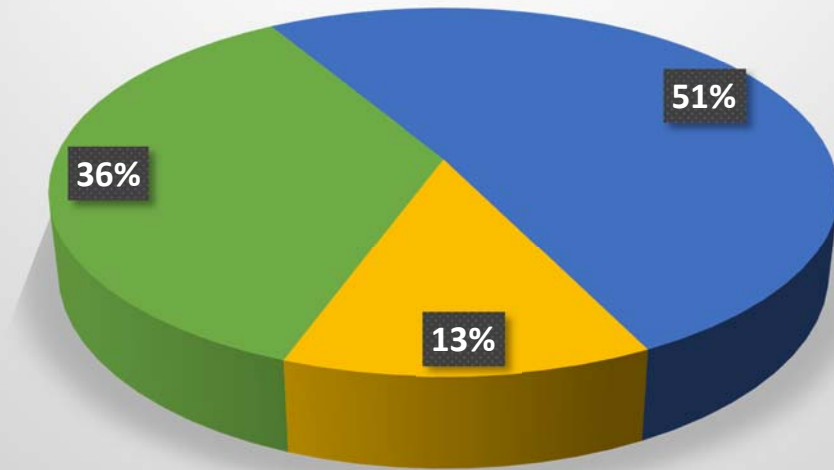


Under 30 Between 30 and 40 Between 40 and 50 Between 50 and 60 Over 60

Average Age x Transit Agency Size

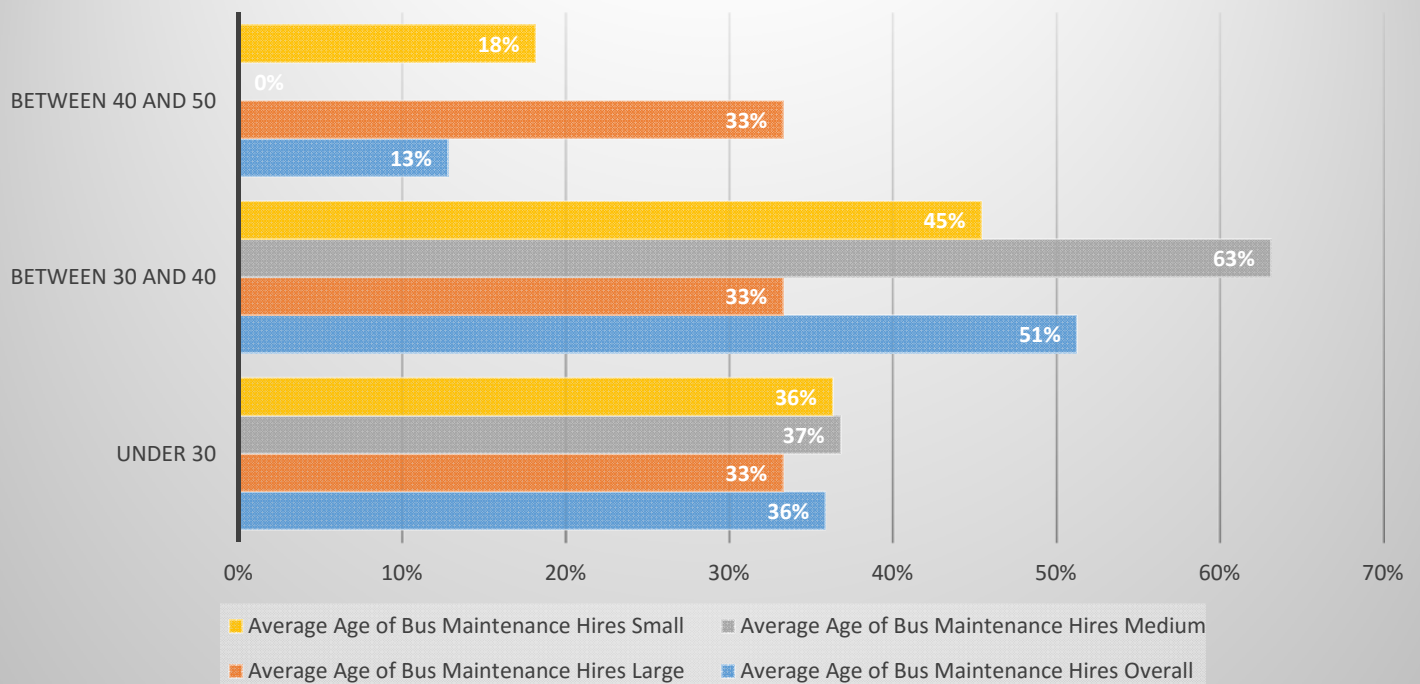


Bus Maintenance: Average Age of Hires in 2017

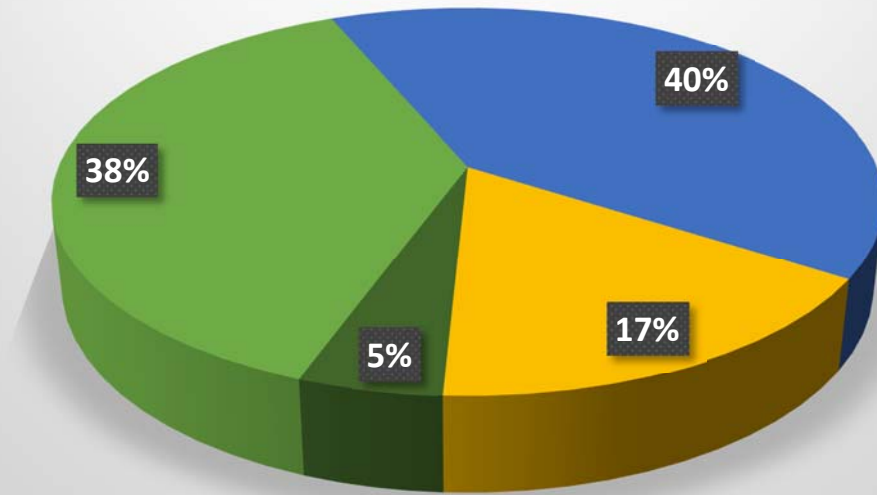


Under 30 Between 30 and 40 Between 40 and 50 Between 50 and 60 Over 60

Bus Maintenance: Average Age of 2017 Hires x Agency Size

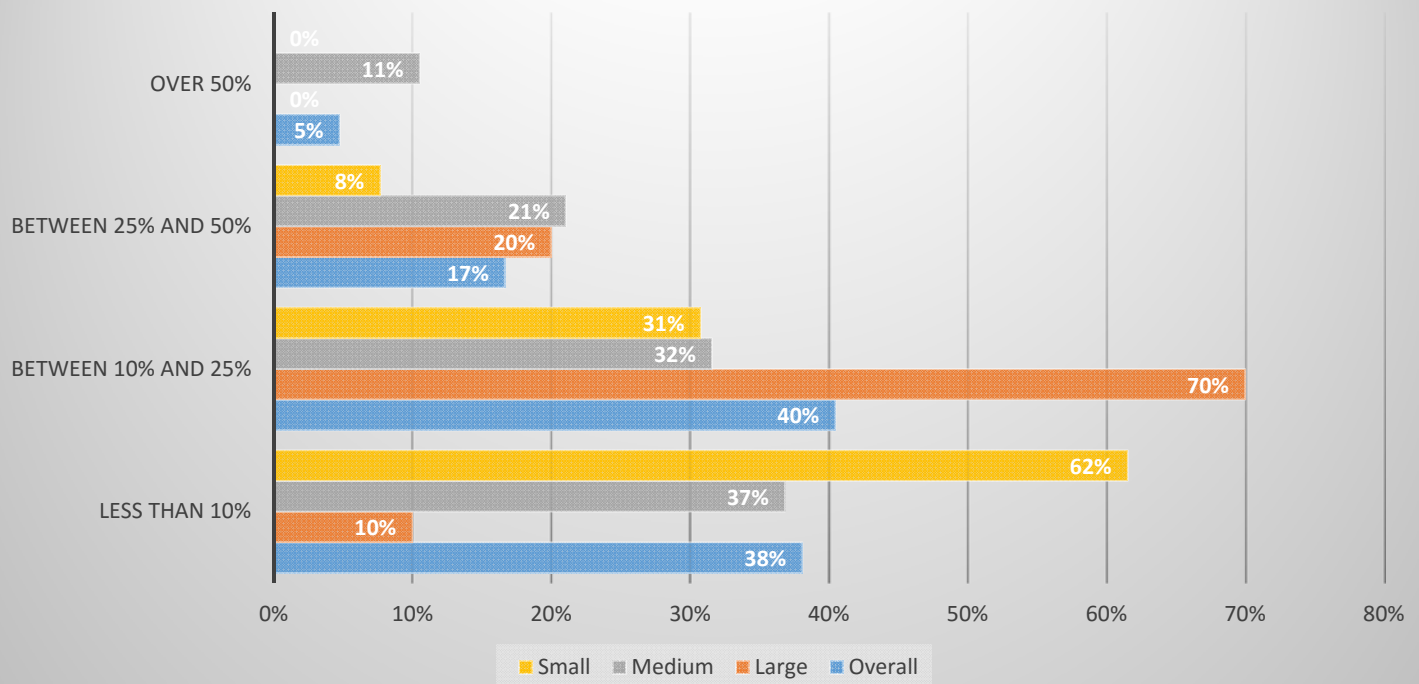


Percentage of Bus Maintenance Employees Eligible to Retire in 3-5 Years



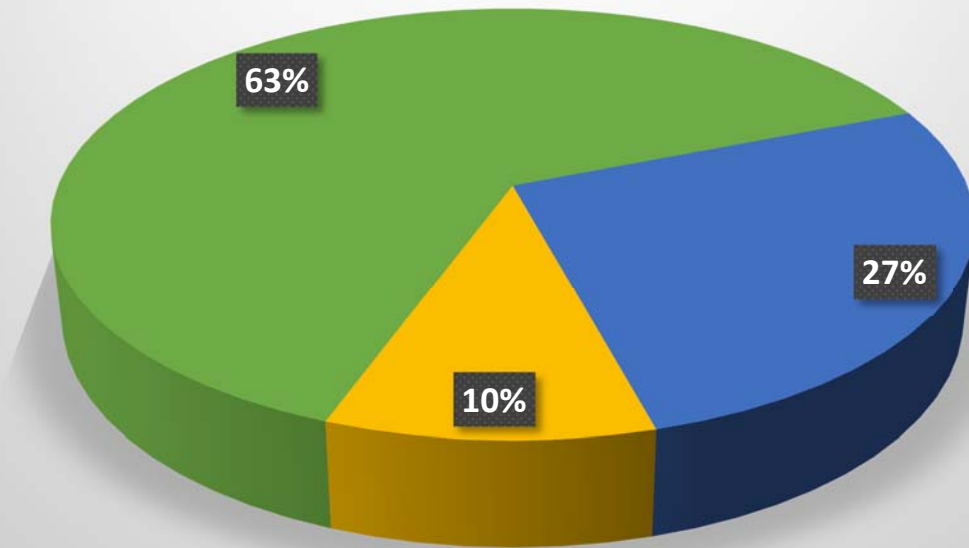
■ Less than 10% ■ Between 10% and 25% ■ Between 25% and 50% ■ Greater than 50%

Percentage of Bus Maintenance Employees Eligible Retire in 3-5 Years



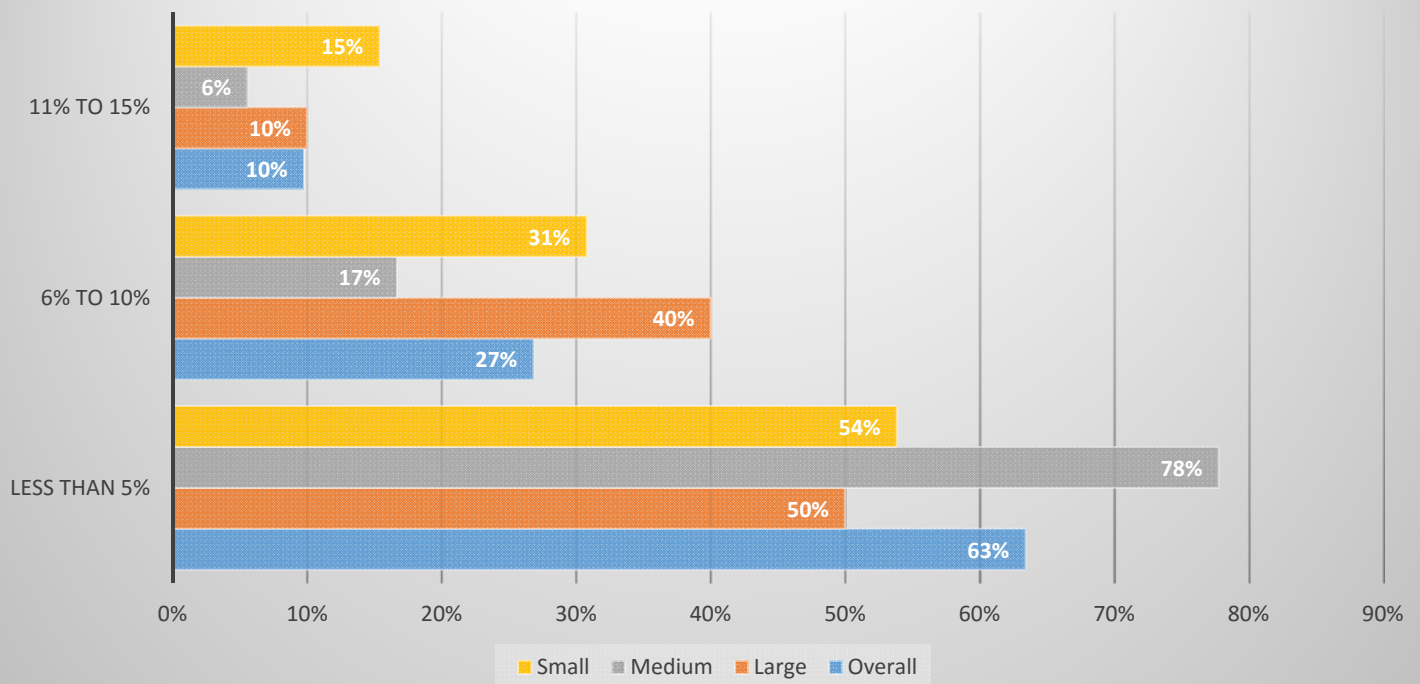
■ Small ■ Medium ■ Large ■ Overall

Percentage of your bus maintenance positions are currently vacant



■ Less than 5% ■ 6% to 10% ■ 11% to 15% ■ 16% to 20%

Percentage of Bus Maintenance Positions Vacant x Agency Size



Recruitment and Retention

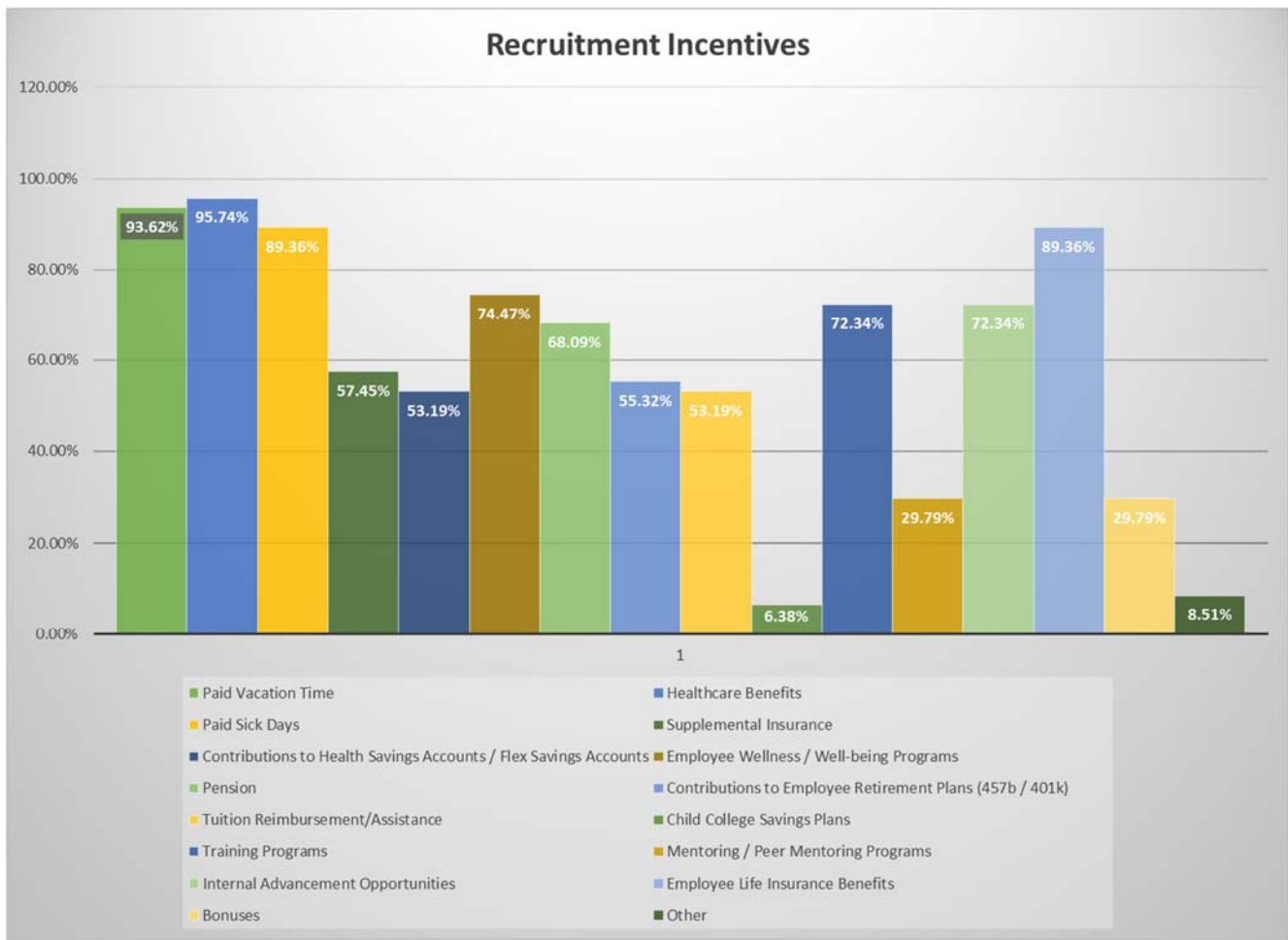
- According to our survey most agencies surveyed offer
 - Paid Time Off
 - 91% of Agencies offer Paid Sick Days
 - 94% of Agencies offer Based Paid Vacation Time
 - 89% - Vacation Time increases with Seniority.
 - Healthcare Options
 - 96% of Agencies offer Healthcare Benefits
 - Other Benefits
 - 89% of Agencies offer Employee Life Insurance Benefits
 - 76% of Agencies offer Employee Wellness / Well-being Programs

Most Agencies Offer

- Holiday Luncheons
- Bus Roadeos
- Award Ceremonies
- Discounted Tickets to Events
- Gift Cards

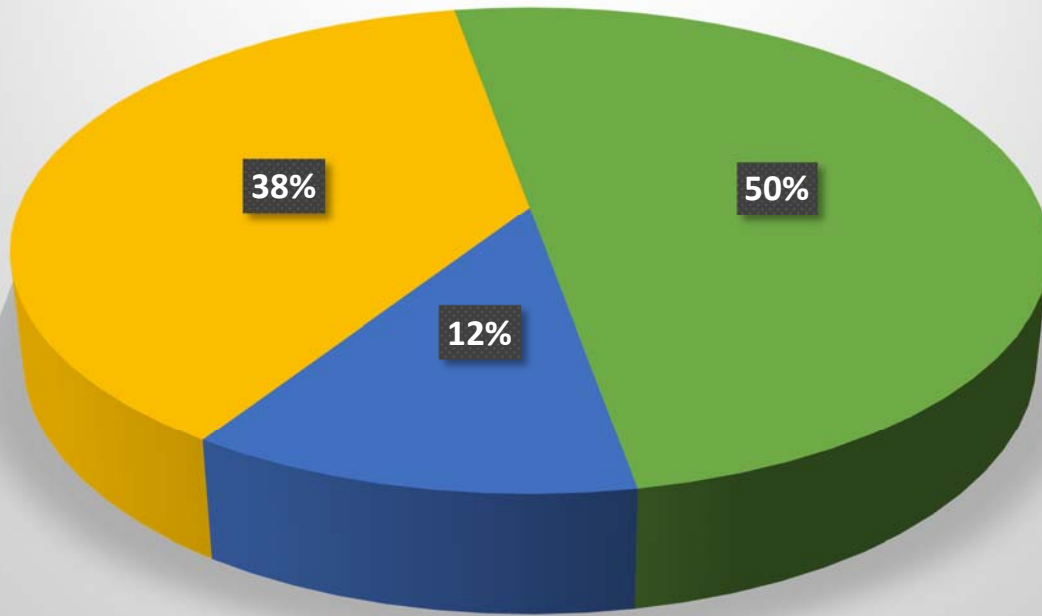
Some Unique Options Include

- Employee and Family Holiday Banquet
- Annual Gifts
- Safety Bonuses and Gifts
- Additional Time Off
- Gift Cards for Birthdays
- Cake to Celebrate Work Anniversaries



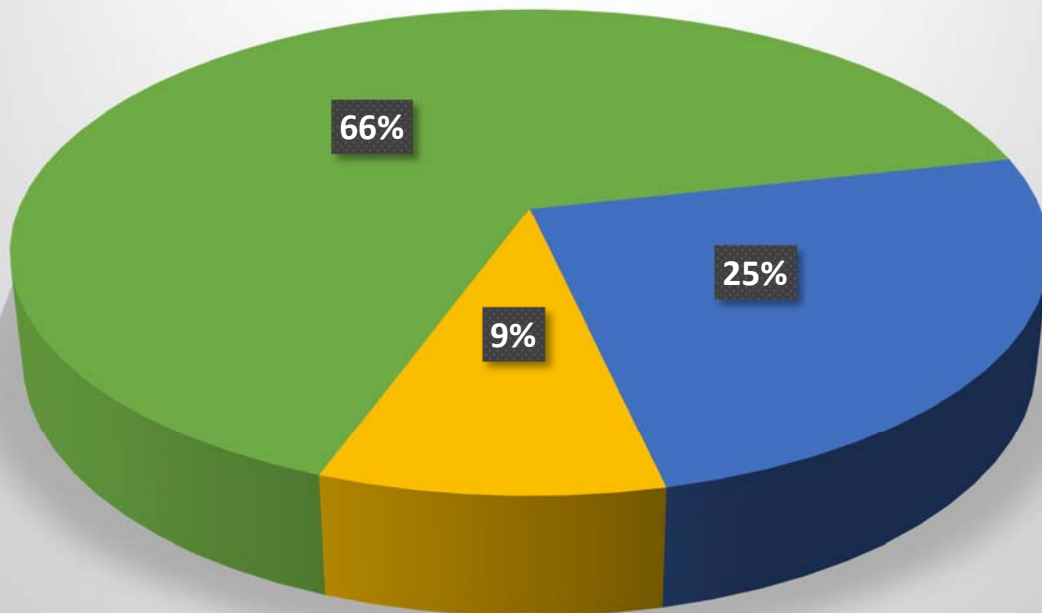
- **Newspaper Advertisements** = least effective (per 56.75% of respondents)
- **Los Angeles Metro** distributed flyers at Dodgers games = not particularly effective, but most enjoyable!

Succession Plan



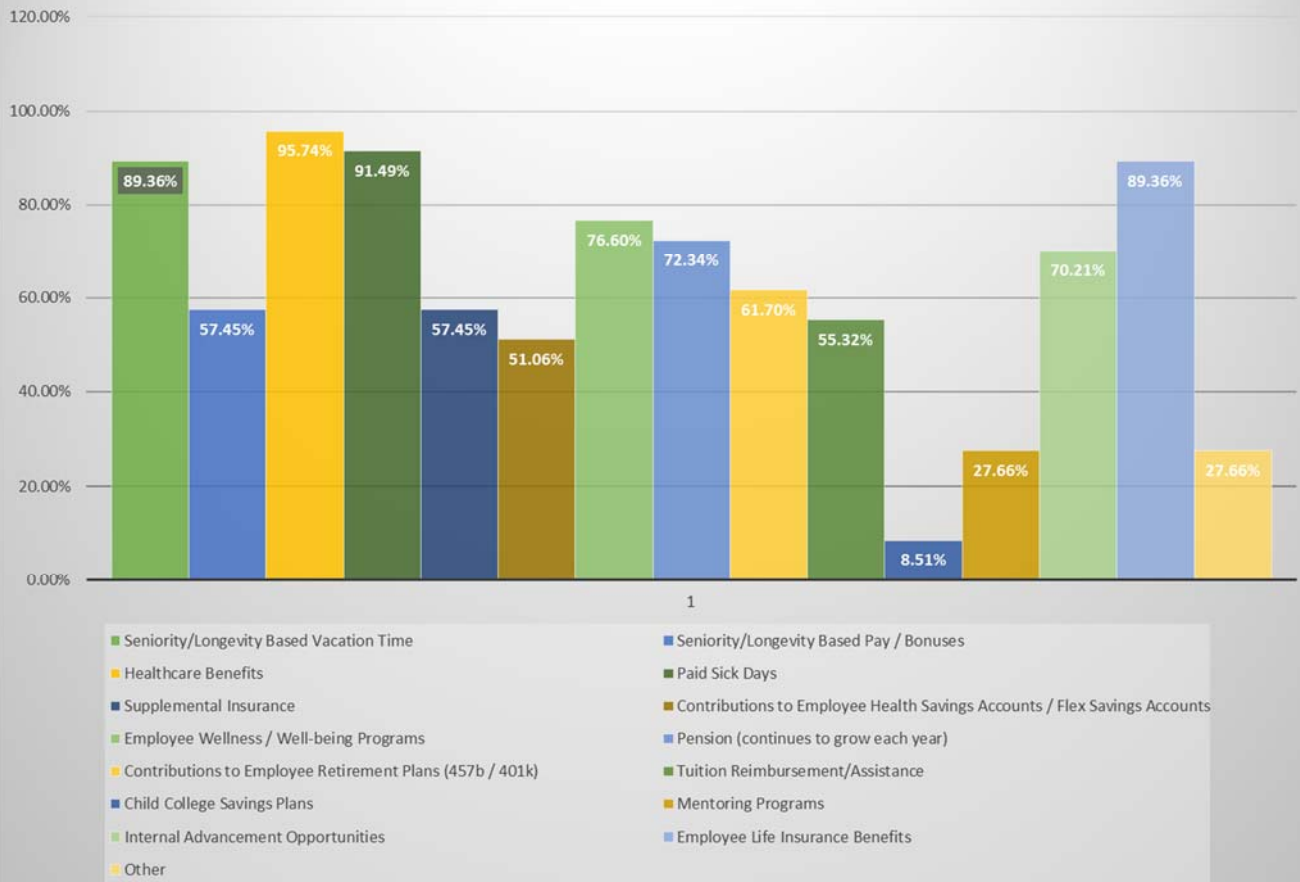
■ Yes ■ In Development ■ No

Internship Program Available

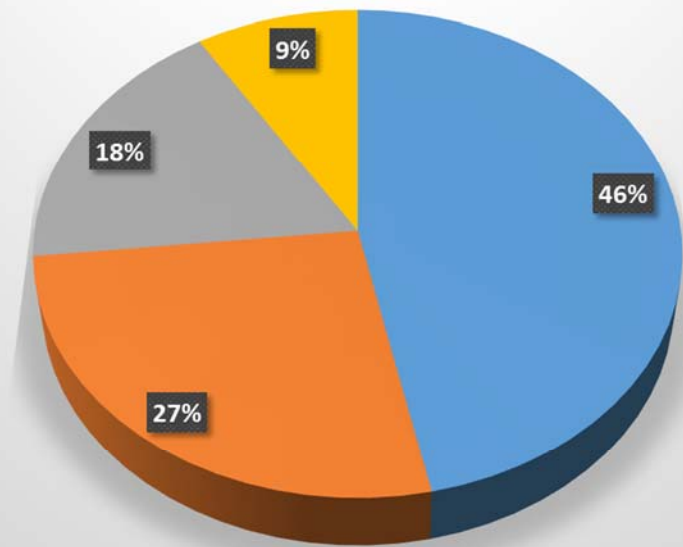


■ Yes ■ In Development ■ No

Retention Incentives

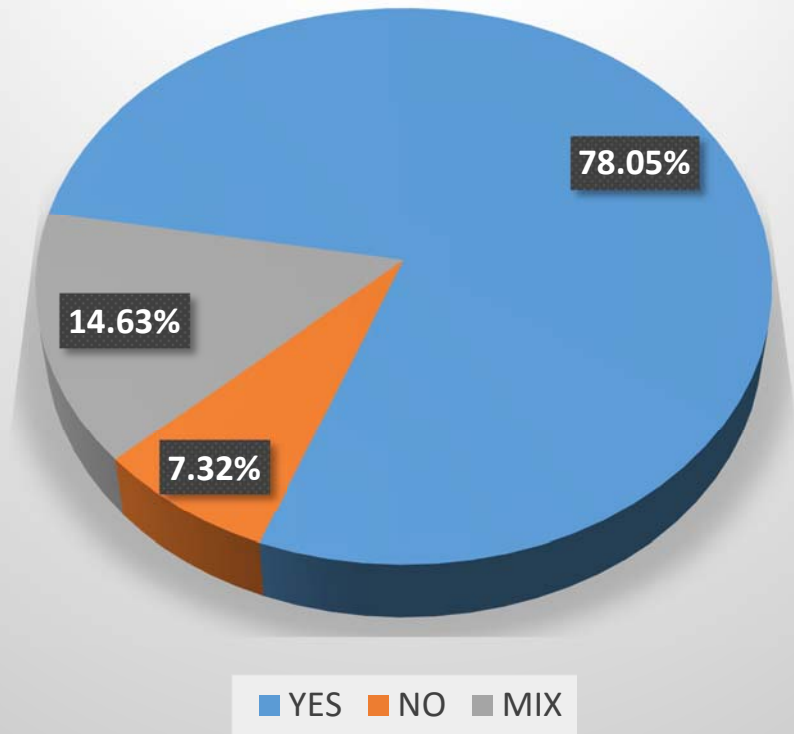


Availability of Health Benefits



- Full-time employees
- Full-time employees and Retirees
- Full-time employees and Part-time
- Full-time employees, Part-time and Retirees

Training programs available during regular work hour



Innovative Best Practices in Workforce Development Recruitment and Retention: Transportation Industry Concerns

Small Agencies:

- **Arlington Transit**
 - Sign-on bonuses
- **Blacksburg Transit**
 - Targeted social media recruitment campaign
- **Lebanon Transit**
 - Career opportunity signage at Park-n-Rides

Medium Agencies:

- **Capital Metro**
 - Full-time Recruiter
- **Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATABUS)**
 - “Done in a Day”
- **Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA)**
 - Master mechanic shadow program
- **Orange County Transit**
 - Cash bonuses for referrals
 - Mechanic apprenticeship program
 - College students as bus operators
 - College tuition reimbursement

Large Agencies:

- **Baltimore Maryland Transit Administration**
 - Apprenticeship and Operability Program
- **Greater Cleveland RTA**
 - Quarterly open houses - operators
 - Trade School partnerships
- **LA County Metro**
 - 1-day recruitment; Same day process/hire
 - LA Valley College partnership – operator training academy
- **Toronto Transit Commission**
 - Apprenticeships/Maintenance employees schools

Other:

- **Southern California Regional Transit Training Consortium (SCR TTC)**
 - Master Partnership – Hartnell JC Diesel Mechanic School

Survey Respondents

Baltimore MTA
Chicago Transit Authority
CTTransit
Greater Cleveland Regional Transit
Los Angeles County Metro
Metro Transit (MN)
New Orleans Regional Transit Authority
Pierce Transit
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System
TheBus, City and County of Honolulu
Toronto Transit Commission
Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority
Capital Metro Transit Authority (TX)
Capital District Transportation Authority (NY)
Champaign Urbana Mass Transit District
City of Santa Monica – Big Blue Bus
Delaware Transit Corporation
Des Moines Area Regional Transportation Authority
Foothill Transit
Intercity Transit
Jacksonville Transportation Authority
Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority

Memphis Area Transit Authority
Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County
Monterey-Salinas Transit District
Orange County Transportation Authority
Roaring Fork Transportation Authority
San Joaquin Regional Transit District
Stark Area Regional Transit Authority
Rhode Island Public Transit Authority
Altoona Metro Transit (Amtran)
Arlington Transit
Blacksburg Transit
Capital Area Transit (CAT)
Centre Area Transportation Authority (CATA)
Connect Transit
Crawford Area Transportation Authority (CATA)
Fort Wayne Public Transportation - Citilink
Greater New Haven Transit District
Greater Richmond Transit Company
Lebanon Transit
Mountain Metro Transit
Norwalk Transit District
Southeastern Regional Transit Authority

Resources:

- Bond, Alexander (2017, November 7). 'Precarious' Transit Workforce Needs Data, Research to Help Fill the Void.)
- *Career One Stop Business Center*. (2018).
- Costello, Bob (2017) ATA Trucker Driver Shortage Analysis 2017.
- Goodyer, Tom and Kuhr, Stephen. (2017, October 24). How to Attract Millennials to the Transit Industry.
- Hirsch, Arlene S. (2017, October 11). 4 Ways for HR to Overcome Aging Workforce Issues. Retrieved from <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/behavioral-competencies/global-and-cultural-effectiveness/pages/4-ways-for-hr-to-overcome-aging-workforce-issues.aspx>.
- Larrousse, Paul. (2017, September 20). *The Transit Industry's Workforce Challenge is Still Real*.
- Lynn, Adam. (2016, February 11). *Aging workforce a concern for Pierce Transit*. Retrieved from <http://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/traffic/article59415952.html>.
- United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2018, January 19). *Household Data Annual Averages*. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat18b.htm>.

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