

For Immediate Release
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**Santa Cruz METRO Opens Recruitment for Bus Operators (Drivers)
New Recruitment Incentives Include an Increase in Starting Salary & Hiring Bonus**

Santa Cruz, CA (Friday, September 9, 2022) - The Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (METRO) announced today that the agency will be opening Bus Operator (Driver) recruitment, September 12 – October 16th, for new applicants.

This new recruitment includes a variety of new incentives, that were launched in Summer 2022, to attract qualified Bus Operator candidates.

“At METRO we are facing the same challenges with recruiting Bus Operators as our sister transit agencies,” said Dawn Crummié, METRO HR Director. “We are striving to create new ideas to recruit and retain talent. One such idea is a pilot program that temporarily eliminates our Step 1 training wage so that new operator’s salaries start 5% higher. This is equal to a total compensation, of \$94,863 (\$51,126 in wages & \$43,737 in benefits), in year one alone.”

Bus Operator Recruitment Incentives:

- Pilot program with SMART Local 0023 that temporarily eliminates the trainee rate and increases the starting salary rate for new Bus Operators from the original Step 1 rate to Step 2. Now new Operators will have a starting salary of \$24.58 versus the previous rate of \$19.97. Additionally, METRO will continue to offer a 5% yearly salary increase for the next six years.
- \$4,000 hiring bonus to all new Operators that will be paid out in three installments, \$500 after completing training, \$1,500 after completing probation, and \$2,000 one-year after completing probation.
- Employee Referral Incentive Program for current employees in the amount of \$2,000 if they refer a Bus Operator candidate that is hired to the position, which will be paid out over a two-year period.

Over the past few recruitment cycles METRO has received an underwhelming amount of applicants and is trying to backfill vacant Operator positions so it can maintain its’ current service levels with minimal impact to riders. The agency is hoping that these new incentives will be the key to attracting more talent.

To be a qualified candidate, applicants must possess strong customer service skills and interact with the public. Previous driving experience is not required as METRO will provide all training in-house.

METRO’s current Bus Operator recruitment runs from September 12th through October 16th. Please visit <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/scmttd> for more information or to apply.

For information on METRO visit scmttd.com.

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About Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District:

Established in 1968, Santa Cruz METRO provides directly operated fixed-route and Highway 17 commuter service throughout Santa Cruz County, with limited service connecting to Monterey Salinas Transit at our Watsonville Transit Center and Santa Clara County, transporting more than 5 million* passenger trips a year. METRO also directly operates ParaCruz paratransit service to Santa Cruz County, providing about 73,500* trips per year. METRO’s operating budget in

FY21 is almost \$55 million and is funded through a combination of farebox revenue, sales tax, and state and federal sources. Today METRO operates a fleet of 94 buses on at least 24 fixed-routes and 32 paratransit vehicles. For more information, visit www.scmtd.com. Like METRO on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SantaCruzMETRO or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/SantaCruzMETRO.

*Reflect pre-pandemic ridership numbers