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Home (<https://www.metro.net/>) > About Metro (<https://www.metro.net/about/>) > **Metro Board Approves Contract Agreement with SMART Union Representing Agency Bus and Rail Operators and Scheduling Analysts**

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Rick Jager August 25, 2022

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Board of Directors today approved a new five-year contract agreement with the Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART) Union, representing bus and rail operators and scheduling analysts.

"This is a historic day for Metro and our union representing the men and women who operate our fleet of buses and trains and really represents true collaboration and leadership from both Metro and our workers reflecting our shared commitment to serving the people of our region," said Glendale City Council Member and Metro Board Chair Ara J. Najarian.

The approved contract agreement ensures fair and equitable labor costs for both the agency and for Metro employees and their families, a major milestone as the region recovers from the pandemic.

"Our bus and train operators have been there when we needed them the most, and I want to thank them for their tireless commitment to the people of L.A. County," said Metro CEO Stephanie N. Wiggins. "This new agreement with SMART provides our bus and rail operators with competitive salaries and benefits, helping us to improve retention, grow our operator ranks, and improve performance to deliver a transit experience that exceeds our customers' expectations."

The agreement includes the ability to hire full-time bus operators and external recruitment of train operators which provides flexibility in scheduling without impacting existing staffing. One of the lessons learned from the pandemic was the need to address fatigue and stress. The agreement also reduces the amount of ordered call backs for full time employees.

"This is an historic, record setting contract agreement," said John M. Ellis, General Chairman, SMART-TD GO-875. "We believe that this new contract represents a significant improvement and protection in wages and benefits for our 4,600 + members and their families. The overwhelmingly positive vote was a strong indicator that union members were pleased with the agreement and the new contract represents a monumental accomplishment".

The new contract provides a starting rate of \$23 an hour, an increase from the current \$20.49 an hour with a top rate increasing from \$33.21 to \$42.07 for full time operators. In addition, the time it takes to progress to the top rate is reduced from 11 to 5 years. The average annual adjustments is 3.4 percent compounded annually over the life of the contract. The new agreement will require a budget increase estimated at \$46.5 million, which is 0.5 percent of Metro's total \$8.8-billion budget for FY23. Salary adjustments will be retroactive to July 1.

With the new agreement in place, Metro has scheduled a series of additional Bus Operator Hiring Events over the next few months to hire additional operators for an exciting career in transportation.

Metro Bus Operator Hiring Events include:

- Saturday, Aug. 27 (8 a.m. – 1 p.m.) at Los Angeles Valley College, 5800 Fulton Ave., Valley Glenn.
- Saturday, Sept. 24 (8 a.m. – 1 p.m.) Rio Hondo College, 3600 Workman Mill Road, Whittier.
- Saturday, Oct. 29 (8 a.m. – 1 p.m.) Metro's Operator Central Instruction, 490 Bauchet Street, Los Angeles.

About Metro

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is currently providing lifeline service for essential trips and frontline workers. Metro continues building the most ambitious transportation infrastructure program in the United States and is working to greatly improve mobility through its Vision 2028 Plan (<https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.metro.net%2Fabout%2Fmetro-vision-2028-plan%2F&data=02%7C01%7CJagerR%40metro.net%7Ccc06477f8609462f2c6f08d8567618e2%7Cab57129bdbfd4caca77fc74c40364af%7C0%7C0%7C637354412504359729&sdata=5UoeSkyo5UIPQ>)

Metro has proudly pledged to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Health and Safety Commitment Program

(<https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com?url=https%3A%2F%2Fthesource.metro.net%2F2020%2F09%2F09%2Fmetro-commits-to-national-effort-to-ensure-health-and-safety-of-returning-transit-riders%2F&data=02%7C01%7CJagerR%40metro.net%7Ccc06477f8609462f2c6f08d8567618e2%7Cab57129bdbfd4caca77fc74c40364af%7C0%7C0%7C637354412504359729&sdata=og6f7ReGhLAh>) to help ensure the safe return of transit riders as the U.S. recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

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