

# Kitsap Transit

Connecting Communities

## PRESS RELEASE

### “Work Where You Live” Recruitment Campaign Debuts

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BREMERTON, WA – This week Kitsap Transit debuts a new “Work Where You Live” campaign designed to enhance recruitment of new bus drivers to the organization.

Kitsap Transit (KT) has ongoing recruitment efforts, such as help-wanted ads and career fairs, to fill vacancies in its

workforce. In a series of new videos, Kitsap Transit highlights the benefits of a career as a bus driver, building on its successful “Drive Your Career” campaign two years ago. These benefits include:

- **Great pay:** An \$18.31-\$20.31 per hour Step 1 wage, and a minimum of 30 hours per week guaranteed.
- **Great benefits:** Medical, dental and vision benefits are provided for employees and their families, as well as paid leave and pension eligibility.
- **Paid Training:** Drivers in training earn \$16.13-\$17.90 per hour during a 12-week training program, which prepares them for the Commercial Driver’s License tests and driving for KT.
- **Promotion:** Some operators choose to become full-time drivers and have been promoted into management. Kitsap Transit Executive Director John Clauson is a former KT bus driver.

Across the nation, transits are grappling with a shortage of bus drivers that is expected to get worse, according to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA): In the next five years, a wave of Baby Boomer retirements will reduce the number of drivers with commercial driver’s licenses; the truck driving industry faced a shortage of 50,000 truck drivers in 2017 that could swell to a shortage of



174,000 by 2026. In some communities, the shortage already has been blamed on reduced or delayed expansion of transit services.

In December 2017 Kitsap Transit launched the Drive Your Career campaign, with video testimonials from Routed and ACCESS drivers on YouTube, transit advertising, Facebook ads and ads in local movie theaters. The agency also offers employees a \$500 referral bonus if applicants they refer get hired and successfully complete probation.

As part of the new Work Where You Live campaign, Kitsap Transit is rolling out a series of new videos showcasing current drivers for Routed and ACCESS services. The campaign launched just before Thanksgiving with a 30-second spot during the pre-show at the Galaxy Uptown Luxury+ Theater in Gig Harbor that will air through January 2020. More videos debut on Facebook, YouTube, Vimeo and the Kitsap Transit website starting today.

“This was something that afforded me the opportunity to be on this side of the water rather than commuting via the ferry for two hours of my day, so it was a good fit to be over here and I love Kitsap County,” said Eric Foster, who drives Routed buses.

“I was ready for a change to stay in my community, versus commuting to Seattle every single day,” said Andrea Hillman, an ACCESS operator. “So even though I’m still in the driver’s seat, it’s different because I’m home, I’m here in my own community with my neighbors.”

Drivers hired since 2016 have come from transportation occupations, but also retail, construction, and protective services. About 40 percent of recent hires say they have served in the military or reserves.

The most important job attributes sought out by recent hires? Job security, benefits such as health care and retirement plans, competitive wages and the ability to work independently, based on an internal survey of recent hires. Beyond those fundamentals, operators say there are other perks.

“It’s a fabulous place to work,” said fellow Routed operator Mike Silverwood. “The benefits are fantastic, and it’s like you’re walking into a family instead of walking into a company.”

Kiana Lewis, a Routed operator, was surprised by how much support she received as a new driver. “I think the training program’s really good, especially for someone like me who was terrified to drive the bus,” she said. “They’re right there with you, even after you’re out of training.”

Patrick Rendt, an ACCESS operator who used to work for UPS, recently was named ACCESS Driver of the Month. “I actually was thinking about being a semi-truck driver for a long time, and then I’m like ‘You know what? I want to drive something smaller, something more local,’” Rendt said. “And then I saw buses and thought, ‘Hmm, being a bus driver would actually be kind of fun.’”

In 2020 Kitsap Transit plans to offer training classes in January, February, March, April, August and September. Information about becoming a bus driver (“transit operator”) at Kitsap Transit can be found at <http://kitsaptransit.com/drive>.