



Contact: Sandra Bermudez
408-464-7810
Sandra.Bermudez@vta.org

June 15, 2022

VTA Continues to Increase the Number of Women Operators (One-third of new trainees are women)

SAN JOSE – Five women are among the new class of bus operator trainees graduating a 9-week program on Wednesday, June 15, 2022. To create a more diverse workforce and provide well-paying jobs for women, VTA established a goal of recruiting more women, in particular women of color, to non-traditional jobs at the transit agency.

News media is invited to the Operator Trainee graduation, Wednesday, June 15 at 11 a.m. at the VTA Chaboya Bus Division, 2240 S. 7th St, San Jose.

“VTA is always striving to have a workforce that reflects the community that we serve. Half of our ridership is women,” said Lisa Vickery, VTA Deputy Director of Bus Operations.

Being a bus operator at VTA is a pathway to a higher paying career.

“Since VTA values promoting from within, we want to have the diversity and skills within VTA to make sure that we can serve the community well and help VTA be ready for the future.”

Roughly 16% (141) of VTA bus operators are women, out of 869 operators. Of the most recent class of 15 operator trainees scheduled to graduate into full time bus operators Wednesday June 15, a third of the class are women. Suzanne Rocha is among them.

“I come from the private sector, for the past 25 years,” said Rocha, whose husband works at VTA as an electro-mechanic. “I noticed last year things were so difficult because of the pandemic. I wanted to give back to the community. As a bus operator, it feels great, it feels like freedom, you are able to help and give back to your community”

VTA has suffered a chronic shortage of bus operators, especially in the last year. The agency is engaging in a proactive recruitment effort to bring in additional operators so service can return to pre-pandemic levels.

The VTA Board of Directors recently approved an increase in the starting salary and wage progression for bus operators.

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