

## 2022 Budget Allocated for Rail Maintenance Apprenticeship

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UTA's 2022 Budget includes \$5.1 million in operating funds and \$2.0 million in capital investments to design and begin delivery of three Rail Maintenance Apprenticeship Programs (RMAP). These programs specifically support safety, operational efficiency and rider comfort for UTA's TRAX, FrontRunner, Streetcar, and Maintenance of Way services, in order to meet our current and future transportation needs by keeping the system in a state of good repair. This investment also supports UTA's goals to provide the resources necessary to build a highly experienced and engaged workforce.

### Background

The nation and the state of Utah have seen a significant decline in the number of workers entering the trades after high school. The State of Utah has identified apprenticeship as a key solution to this issue. Nationally, apprenticeship programs have proven to help with employee attraction and retention, with retention rates for apprenticeship graduates reaching 94 percent.

UTA has conducted very successful Transit Bus and Transit Body Shop journeyist programs since the late 1990s. On November 19, 2021, the State Workforce Services and the Apprenticeship Utah Network recognized UTA's bus apprenticeship program as an "Apprentice Champion".

UTA's existing bus apprenticeship program has been very successful. It continues to outperform national employee retention rates, and our program graduates are key contributors to our industry leading safety and operational efficiency record.

### Rail Fleet

UTA acquired its light rail, streetcar and commuter rail fleet through multiple acquisition contracts over a seven-year period as the rail network was expanded and completed. As a result, the fleet is comprised of several different makes and models of locomotives, passenger cars, and light rail vehicles. The TRAX and FrontRunner vehicle fleets are approaching or past their midlife usage.

As these vehicles age, the requirements of the maintenance staff have shifted from preventive maintenance to more troubleshooting, diagnosis, and repair. Compounding the complexity of maintaining a diverse and aging fleet is the rapid increase and integration of new technologies to enhance system operations.

#### Front Runner



175 track miles  
16 stations  
18 locomotives  
63 passenger cars

#### Light Rail – TRAX



three lines  
94 track miles  
50 stations  
117 TRAX vehicles

#### Streetcar



2 track miles  
7 stations  
3 street cars

### Maintenance of Way (MOW)

The MOW Infrastructure group is responsible for all Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) mandated inspections contained in 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 213 Track Safety Standards. These mandated inspections are designed to ensure the safety and integrity of the infrastructure. Outside of these mandated inspections, the group is also responsible for all maintenance, rail repairs, and ride quality in the UTA rail corridor.

Like the rail fleet, rail infrastructure technology and advances in rail infrastructure design are evolving rapidly, and require constant training, skill development and certification for MOW staff.

## **Why an Apprenticeship Program?**

Many of UTA's current maintenance workers are reaching retirement age. Over the next five years, UTA projects that 22 percent of journey level mechanics and MOW workers will reach retirement age or be eligible to retire.

Rail maintenance skills and knowledge, and especially those held by this experienced group of imminent retirees are not available in the local labor market. UTA must hire workers with basic knowledge and potential, and then train them on the unique skillsets to preserve, maintain and keep UTA's three billion dollars in rail assets in a state of good repair.

Apprenticeship training programs are key to ensuring UTA's workforce has the skills and abilities to maintain and repair the variety and complexity of vehicles and infrastructure necessary to deliver safe, quality service to its riders.

Many of the technical colleges throughout Utah provide foundational training that can prepare new employees to enter UTA's apprenticeship programs. UTA partners with these programs to help feed its current apprenticeship programs and will continue to partner with these community partners as RMAP is implemented.

In its current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with ATU Local 382, UTA has committed to develop and attain Department of Labor certification for a rail maintenance apprenticeship program. Although the CBA does not identify or require specific funding for the program, UTA and ATU are committed to the successful creation, certification, and implementation of this valuable program.

## **Program Information**

Curriculum development for technical training programs is extremely labor intensive. It is estimated that each hour of course content requires approximately 43 hours of staff research and development time.

To expedite development of the program, UTA will utilize a hybrid approach combining UTA staff and third-party vendor contracts for curriculum and training material development.

An estimated \$2 million in capital funding will be used to procure training aides like locomotive engines and other vehicle equipment, track structures and equipment, and other aides that will allow apprentices to get hands-on experience in a controlled training environment where they can perfect lessons learned from program training, curriculum materials, and on-the-job instruction from experienced journeymen.

Unlike the model bus apprenticeship program that has been incrementally funded and developed over a period of 15+ years, RMAP will be implemented via an intensive two-year development process and a total investment of \$7.1 million. UTA is leveraging funds realized through one-time Stimulus funding from the federal government to ensure expedited program development, certification, and implementation.

## **SCHEDULE**

<b>Rail Maintenance Apprentice Program</b>	<b>Q1 – 2022 Register Light Rail Program</b>	<b>Q2 – 2022 Implement Light Rail Program</b>	<b>Q3 – 2022 Curriculum Development and Training</b>	<b>Q4 – 2022 Curriculum Development and Training</b>	<b>Q1 – 2023 Implement FR &amp; MOW Rail Programs</b>
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