



**Board Report**

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**Agenda Number:** 28.

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
MAY 21, 2026**

**SUBJECT: ROOM TO WORK PROGRAM UPDATE**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

**RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE status report on Metro’s Room to Work Program.

**ISSUE**

Metro’s Room to Work Program is now in its fourth year of operations providing career access and support to communities with historical economic and social barriers to employment. Room to Work’s focus has grown from supporting formerly unhoused individuals with a pathway to training and employment in the transportation industry, starting with part-time Custodian roles, to also supporting veterans, justice-impacted individuals, and others facing barriers to employment. This report provides an update on the program’s progress to date, outlines its strategic direction moving forward and its alignment with key Metro priorities.

**BACKGROUND**

This pilot program helps address two agency priorities: Workforce shortages and reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness who are sheltering on the Metro system. Launched as a pilot in June 2022, the program partners with community organizations and Los Angeles Trade Technical College (LATTC) to employ participants as part-time custodians for 24 months, with structured training and support. Additional collaboration with community-based organizations (CBOs) and Transportation Workforce Readiness Training (TWRT) partners strengthens career readiness through enhanced screening, soft skills training, and case management. Since its launch, 149 participants, including veterans, justice-impacted individuals, and those facing other employment barriers, have secured roles at Metro.

Room to Work is designed to ensure that the main program user, Metro’s Facilities Maintenance Department within the Operations cabinet, has access to a trained workforce from within communities. As noted in Attachment A, the program is customer-centered, inclusive, and enhances Metro’s ability to be a resilient transit provider, while implementing the agency’s commitment to addressing homelessness with compassion and dignity.

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## **DISCUSSION**

Guided by the vision of Metro's CEO, the Chief People Office and Operations cabinets have come together to champion opportunity- taking bold, intentional steps to open doors for communities most impacted by economic and housing instability. The Room to Work Program reflects this commitment, creating a pathway for formerly unhoused residents and others facing barriers to employment to access meaningful, long-term careers in transportation, and in doing so, labor partners from the Transportation Communications Union (TCU) have agreed to 90 Room to Work participants at any given time. The Program reflects Metro's ongoing commitment to equity and inclusion by creating accessible pathways to opportunity for the communities it serves. This workforce development initiative and the corresponding external community partnership aligns with Metro's needs as an employer and leverages education, training, and supportive services to create sustainable career pathways. These collaborations, often facilitated by local boards, nonprofits, and colleges, focus on inclusive growth, upskilling, and providing wraparound services for underserved populations.

Room to Work candidates are required to complete the TWRT as a condition of joining the Program. This readiness training has been developed by the Transportation Workforce Institute in collaboration with Los Angeles Trade Tech College, and Metro. TWRT is a non-credit certification program delivered through the community college system. The curriculum typically covers 60 hours of instruction, and its adaptive format means that modules can be added or changed to serve general recruitment as well as more specific training as needed.

### Room to Work Program Objectives

1. Identify & Support the Unhoused Population and Others with Historical Barriers to Employment
  - Support existing outreach efforts to identify and connect unhoused individuals on Metro's system with resources
  - Partner with LA County Unhoused Initiative and others who provide transitional housing and other wraparound services
2. Create Employment Opportunities
  - Creation of a new entry-level position in Operations to pathway into custodial positions
3. Increase Cleanliness of System
  - Increase the cleanliness of the system by aligning the workforce to today's cleanliness expectations and standards.

Metro staff have determined that the Program is meeting, and in many cases exceeding its stated objectives of providing support to formerly unhoused individuals by creating pathways to custodial careers at Metro and thereby increasing the cleanliness of the system.

Metro leverages a network of community-based partners-including local non-profits, neighborhood groups, and advocacy organizations- that maintain direct, trusted relationships with transit-dependent populations. Through partners such as Justice Care Opportunity Department (JCOD), People Assisting the Homeless (PATH), Volunteers of America (VOA), Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC), Chrysalis, USVETS-Inglewood, Union Station Homeless Services, USVET-Long Beach, Village for VETS, and City and County Workforce Development Boards, the program is able to effectively reach individuals experiencing homelessness, justice-impacted populations, and

veterans. Through these partnerships, Metro has established a targeted workforce pipeline in collaboration with the Transportation Communication Union (TCU), supporting up to 90 active participants at any given time in Part-Time Custodian roles.

### Program Outcomes

Program outcomes demonstrate strong engagement and conversion across the employment pipeline. To date, 423 individuals have applied, resulting in 320 interviews—a 75.7% interview rate. From those interviewed, 149 individuals have been hired, representing a 46.6% interviews-to-hire conversion rate and an overall application-to-hire rate of 35.2%.

### Career Pathway

Importantly, the program is also achieving early indicators of long-term workforce attachment. Of those hired, 21 participants have transitioned to full-time employment after meeting the one-year eligibility requirement outlined in the side letter agreement, reflecting a 14.1% advancement rate. These outcomes underscore the program's effectiveness in not only connecting priority populations to employment, but also supporting pathways to sustained, career-oriented opportunities. If participants see a clear earnings pathway (Part-time to full-time to higher wage steps), they are more likely to:

- Stay beyond 1-year mark: (Equals actual upward mobility, not just placement, and encourages retention)
- Reduces turnover compared to traditional hires
- Builds tenure in hard-to-fill roles

### Hires to Date

The following is a breakdown of the 149 Room to Work Hires to date, with a requirement that all participants be formerly unhoused:

- Justice-impacted individuals and formerly unhoused: 73
- Veterans and formerly unhoused: 55
- (non justice-impacted or veteran) formerly Unhoused: 21

## **EQUITY PLATFORM**

Since its launch, the Room to Work Program has provided more than employment opportunities at Metro. Through intentional, strategic hiring and targeted outreach in partnership with LATTTC, TWRT and various CBOs, all sharing the same mission and focus on advancing equity and inclusion for the most disadvantaged populations within Los Angeles County, the program delivers training, interview coaching, and end-to-end hiring support to help individuals access careers in transportation.

Additionally, the following outlines the ethnic demographics of the 149 candidates hired to date:

- African American: 89
- Hispanic: 37
- Native American: 1
- White: 7

- Two or More: 10
- Did not disclose information: 5

## **VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED OUTCOME**

VMT and VMT per capita in Los Angeles County are lower than national averages, the lowest in the SCAG region, and on the lower end of VMT per capita statewide, with these declining VMT trends due in part to Metro's significant investment in rail and bus transit.\* Metro's Board-adopted VMT reduction targets align with California's statewide climate goals, including achieving carbon neutrality by 2045. To ensure continued progress, all Board items are assessed for their potential impact on VMT.

While this item does not directly encourage taking transit, sharing a ride, or using active transportation, this initiative is expected to reduce VMT in LA County by training and transitioning disadvantaged individuals into Custodian careers within Metro Operations. Furthermore, cleanliness activities improve, benefit and encourage taking transit, including providing support services to transit services. Metro's Board-adopted VMT reduction targets were designed to build on the success of existing investments, and this item aligns with those objectives.

\*Based on population estimates from the United States Census and VMT estimates from Caltrans' Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) data between 2001-2019.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

Staff recommendation supports Metro's Vision 2028 goals in the following manner:

GOAL 2: Deliver outstanding trip experiences for all users of the transportation system. Specifically, Custodian personnel support a clean system and Metro facilities which enhance the external and internal customer experience.

GOAL 3: Enhance communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity. Specifically, per 3.1: To lift up local communities, Metro will create jobs and career pathways in transportation. The Room to Work initiative expands access to meaningful employment training and career opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds, including the unhoused, veterans, people from disadvantaged communities, justice-impacted individuals, and those facing barriers to employment.

GOAL 4: Transform LA County through regional collaboration and national leadership. The Room to Work Program's success is driven by Metro's strong partnerships with community-based organizations and Metro's commitment to diversity, inclusion and strategic hiring efforts across all fronts.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Metro staff will continue to advance the Room to Work Program through tracking of key goals targeting up to 90 Room To Work participants at a time, monitoring of the Room to Work dashboard to track the progress of existing hires, and program partner expansion through the addition of

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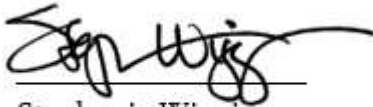
community referral and supportive service partners. The next Room to Work training cohort is scheduled for June 2026 and is expected to meet the 90 Room to Work participants hiring goal.

**ATTACHMENT**

Attachment A- Room to Work Program Brochure

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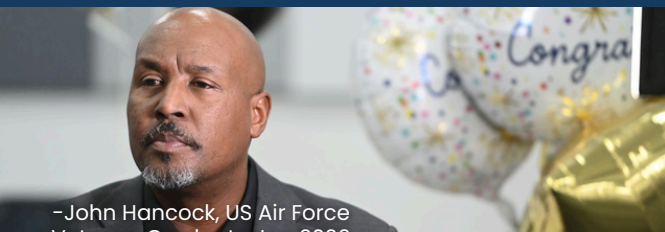


Stephanie Wiggins  
Chief Executive Officer



## CHANGING LIVES.

*Veterans, individuals from disadvantaged communities, justice-impacted participants, and those facing barriers to employment have transitioned into roles at Metro or are on a clear pathway to do so.*



—John Hancock, US Air Force Veteran, Graduate Jan 2026

# 149 PARTICIPANTS & COUNTING HIRED SINCE 2022



—Thomas Benkert, Graduate Jan 2026

# REAL STORIES. REAL IMPACT.

*See the impact firsthand. Meet our participants and hear how Room to Work is changing lives and building careers at LA Metro.*



Meet Angelica Garcia and learn how the Room to Work program transformed her path and opened new career opportunities at LA Metro.

Get to know Michael Romero and hear how Room to Work changed his life, and set him on a career journey at LA Metro.



*“Together, we build careers. Together, we strengthen communities. Together, we do hard things.”*

— Dawn Jackson-Perkins, Chief People Officer, LA Metro

# ROOM TO WORK

*Strategic Hiring Initiative*



*Join the Metro Team*

# WE PUT PEOPLE FIRST

*Transitioning Formerly Unhoused Individuals into Careers at Metro*



**Metro**



— Marilyn Guzman,  
HUB Cities Consortium

## HOW IT WORKS

In Partnership with community based-organizations and our Transportation Workforce Readiness Training (TWRT) partners, the Room to Work program is strengthened through enhanced career-readiness screening, expanded soft skills training, and close collaboration with employment support coordinators and case managers.



— Stephen Humma Jr (Veteran),  
Graduate Jan 2026

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Through partnerships with approved community partners and Los Angeles Trade Technical College, participants gain employment as part-time custodians at LA Metro for 24 months, with structured development and support.



— Dennis Tucker,  
HR Manager, LA Metro

“Room to Work is an initiative designed to support and transition formerly unhoused individuals into careers at LA Metro.”

For more information, please email:  
[StrategicHiring@metro.net](mailto:StrategicHiring@metro.net)

— Shauna Leon,  
Program Supervisor III,  
Volunteers of America HVRP



## WHY IT MATTERS

LA Metro’s Room to Work is more than a job placement program. It represents workforce development, community reinvestment, second-chance employment, and a pathway to stability and career mobility.

“The program reflects Metro’s commitment to opportunity, equity, and long-term workforce sustainability.”

# Room To Work Program Update

*“Together, We Do Hard Things”*



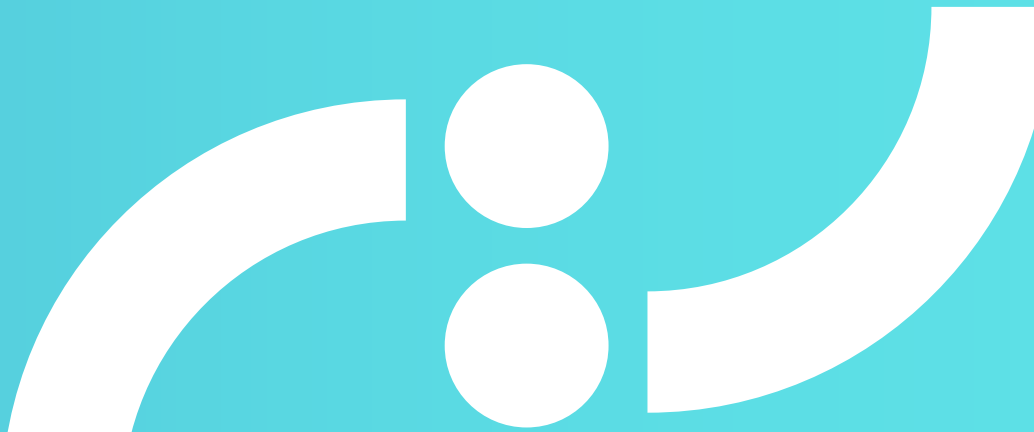
# Room To Work

Room to Work is a CEO-directed initiative from 2022 that supports and prepares formerly unhoused individuals for career pathways in transportation.

- Partnership with our TCU-Labor union and community partners
- Transportation Workforce Readiness Training (TWRT)
  - Pre-Employment training through our Los Angeles Trade Technical College (LATTC) partner
- Custodial employment opportunities
  - New Employee Experience and upon completion of custodial training as a paid Metro employee
- Post-employment follow-up
- Up to 90 Room To Work hires at any given time



# Background Info: Room To Work



Launched in June 2022 as a pilot, the program partners with community organizations and Los Angeles Trade Technical College (LATTTC) to employ participants as part-time custodians for 24 months, with structured training and support. In its fourth year of operations, RTW provides career access and wrap-around resources to our communities with historical economic and social barriers to employment and has also grown from initially supporting formerly unhoused to also supporting veterans, justice-impacted individuals, and others facing barriers to employment.



# Room to Work YTD Update

## Since inception in June 2022, Metro has sourced the following:

- Applicants: 423
- Interviews: 320
- Total Hire YTD: 149
- Currently sourcing another cohort in June 2026

## Demographics

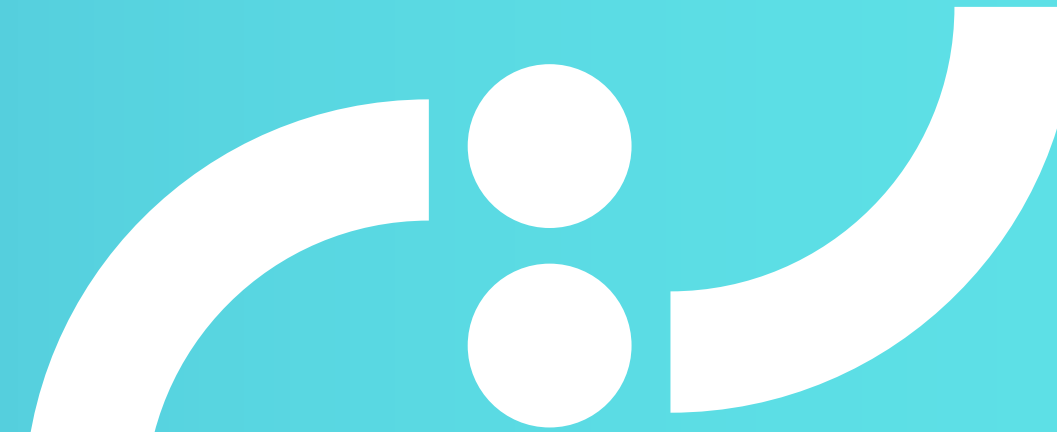
- Justice impacted & formerly unhoused: 73
- Veterans & formerly unhoused: 55
- Promoted to full-time: 21

## Position Information

- \$26.44/hour
- Min. 15 hours per week; Max. 30 hours per week
- Supporting all lines



# Room to Work Video



Click the link below to watch the Room To Work Promotional Video.

[LA METRO PROGRAM-V2b.m4v](#)



**Metro**

CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICE