

In early 2025, APTA conducted message research to determine how to best communicate the economic impact of public transportation to Moderate and Conservative elected officials—and help protect federal investment for public transit in the coming months.

We found that highlighting the **jobs that public transit supports across sectors, and the potential job loss without investment, is the most effective message against funding cuts. Specifically, emphasizing what could happen to those jobs without funding** makes our message far more persuasive with moderates and conservatives.

Below is APTA’s recommended jobs messaging—including sample proof points—for outreach to Congressional Republicans and their staff to encourage them to protect federal funding.

Option 1: For general outreach around protecting public transit funding, lead with a positive framing of the impact that public transit has on American jobs.

Main Message (General Outreach)	
Public transit benefits more than just the people who ride it. In cities and towns across America, miles from the nearest bus stop, American workers are building the parts, designing the systems, and developing the technology that keep public transit running. In fact, public transit directly employs over 430,000 people and supports millions more in the private sector. Investing in public transit is a smart, practical investment in American leadership, jobs, and innovation.	
Supporting Message	Supporting Message
In fact, 77% of federal transit funding flows to the private sector, supporting American companies across every corner of the country.	Cutting public transit funding means cutting good-paying American jobs in a range of industries – from manufacturing and engineering to operations and information technology.
Proof Points	Proof Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share an example of a major transit-related business in [State/District], and the jobs they support. Share an example of jobs created and/or economic impact numbers of recent transit projects that received Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public transit relies on more than 2,000 suppliers in the U.S.—including right here in [State/District]. That’s 2,000 American companies that lose out if federal funding for public transit is cut. There are [XXX] bus and rail manufacturers in [State/District]—that’s [XXX] companies that will lose revenue and workers if federal funding for public transit is cut.

Option 2: When there is a direct threat to funding, frame the jobs message with more urgency from the start.

Main Message (Direct Threat Response)
Cutting federal funding for public transit doesn’t just mean reduced federal budgets — it means cutting hundreds of thousands of good-paying American jobs. From companies that build buses to local transit systems, public transportation creates high-paying American jobs in key sectors like construction, manufacturing, engineering, and operations. Without public transit, American workers will lose their jobs across the country—including in your state/district.
Proof Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, there are [XXX] bus and rail manufacturers in [State/District]. That’s [XXX] companies that lose out if federal funding for public transit is cut—putting [XXX] jobs at risk. Cutting federal funding won’t just mean longer waits in traffic around [City], it will mean more [State] workers looking for employment and more [State] families struggling to pay bills.

Our jobs message can also be customized for specific threats to public transit funding. For example:

When responding to opposition messages around privatizing public transit, emphasize how public transit is already impacting the private sector with revenue and jobs:

- **Your Message:** The private sector is already a core component of public transit. In fact, private companies build public transit. American businesses and American workers are manufacturing parts, assembling buses and developing the technology that keeps it all running. Cutting federal funding means cutting hundreds of thousands of private-sector jobs—and cutting off American innovation.
- **Proof Points:** Provide concrete examples of the private-sector jobs that are critical to public transportation and the ways in which federal funding is supporting American manufacturing and innovation.
 - How many American suppliers and companies do you use?
 - What kind of jobs does your company or transit system support that elected officials don't always associate with public transit?
 - What are examples of how public transportation is innovating for the future? Is your business developing new transit technologies?
 - Does your company or supplier create a product that used to only be manufactured overseas?

When responding to opposition messages about states and local governments funding public transit, emphasize why public transit's economic impact is felt across America—not just in communities with robust public transit.

- **Your Message:** Public transit benefits more than just the people who ride it or the communities that have robust transit systems. In cities and towns across America, miles from the nearest bus stop, American workers are building the parts, designing the systems, and developing the technology that keep public transit running. More public transit means more small-town jobs—and cutting funding means cutting good-paying American jobs in state and local communities across the nation.
- **Proof Points:** Share examples of companies boosting their local economies in states and districts not known for their public transit systems.
 - For transit systems, where are the parts of your buses, ferries and trains manufactured? What major out-of-state companies do you work with on technology and engineering?
 - For businesses, how many states do you employ people in? Is your company building new plants or facilities in additional states?

When responding to opposition messages around low ridership, emphasize public transit's impact on American workers—beyond just those who ride it.

- **Your Message:** The benefits of public transit extend beyond the riders that use it. Not only do many essential workers rely on transit every day to keep our schools, hospitals, industries and communities running, but American workers across the country are keeping our transit systems running—going to good-paying jobs to manufacture parts, assemble buses and develop traffic technology. By cutting investments in public transit, you're cutting hundreds of thousands of jobs for Americans who rely on them.
- **Proof Points:** Reframe the narrative about ridership by focusing on the economic impact, freedom of choice, and non-commuter jobs that rely on public transit.
 - How many essential workers use your system to get to work?
 - What are some examples of major businesses that your transit system connects to? Health centers, sports arenas, airports, major employers seeking a talent pipeline, business districts?
 - How many people does your business or transit system employ? Have you added/hired new employees in the past year thanks to federal grants?
 - How would a loss of federal funding impact the jobs in your transit system or business?