

Compensation Peer Comparison of APTA Salary Survey

We used APTA's 2024 salary data to compare MTA and peer systems across three employee categories: department heads, management staff, and professional staff. Table 3 below shows each category's average salary range and actual pay, highlighting distinct patterns among the six transit agencies.

Table 3: Aggregated MTA and Peer Compensation Data from APTA's 2024 Salary Survey

	Dept Head Average Pay	Dept Head Salary Range Midpoint	Mgmt Average Pay	Mgmt Salary Range Midpoint	Prof Average Pay	Prof Salary Range Midpoint
MTA	\$170,536	\$154,664	\$120,863	\$112,525	\$94,348	\$92,351
GCRTC	\$205,287	\$167,919	\$118,257	\$118,031	\$76,696	\$74,648
PRT	\$139,570	\$138,036	\$102,917	\$104,463	\$86,497	\$86,448
RTD	\$263,518	\$263,518	\$142,802	\$142,802	\$103,660	\$103,659
SEPTA	\$208,485	\$195,730	\$149,832	\$154,629	\$155,238	\$157,024
WMATA	\$357,200	\$340,305	\$179,968	\$177,985	\$125,331	\$128,177
Peer Average	\$224,099	\$210,029	\$135,773	\$135,072	\$106,962	\$107,051

Source: APTA's 2024 Salary Survey

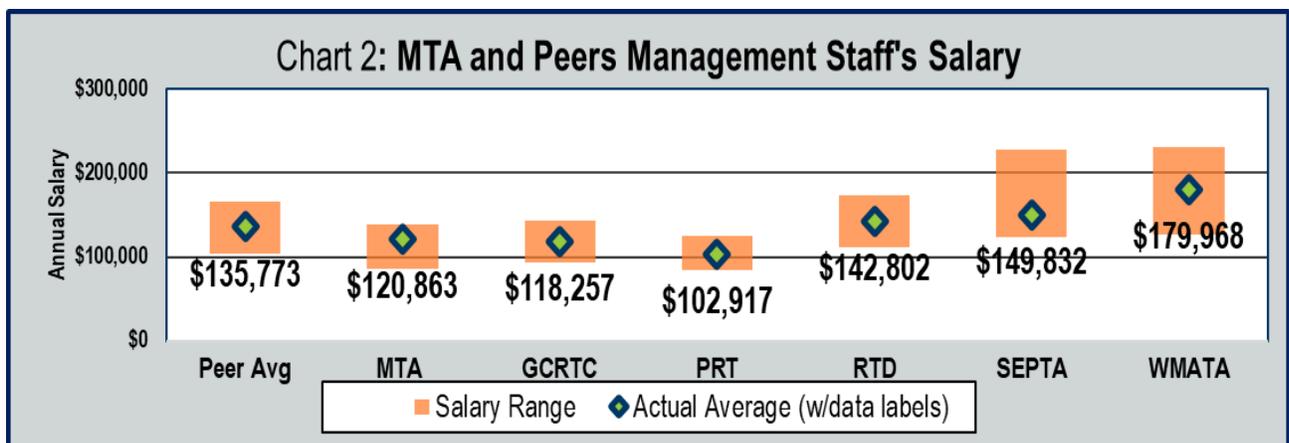
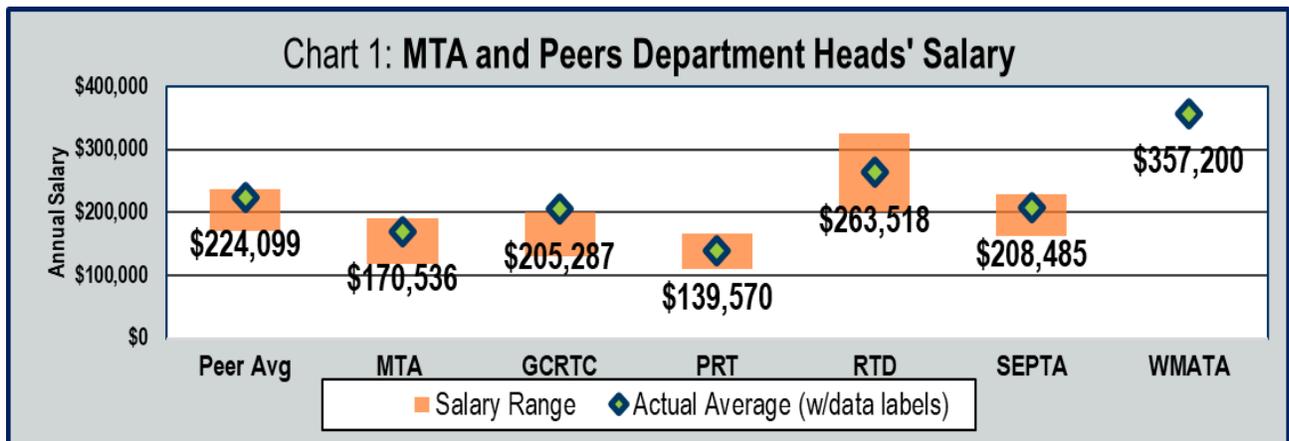
Table 4 presents a comparative analysis of compensation for department heads, management staff, and professional staff at MTA versus peer agencies based on APTA's annual salary report. The data reveals that MTA's average salaries, in both actual pay and salary range midpoint, fall below industry norms, with the most significant gap observed in the department head category. Compared to peer averages, MTA's compensation deficit ranges from –12% to –26%. When benchmarked against the highest compensation figures among peers, MTA's pay disparity widens further to between –33% and –55%. Notably, the top salary values in these comparisons come from the nearest large urban systems, WMATA and SEPTA, underscoring the competitive challenges MTA faces in hiring and recruiting skilled staff in the Eastern Seaboard labor market.

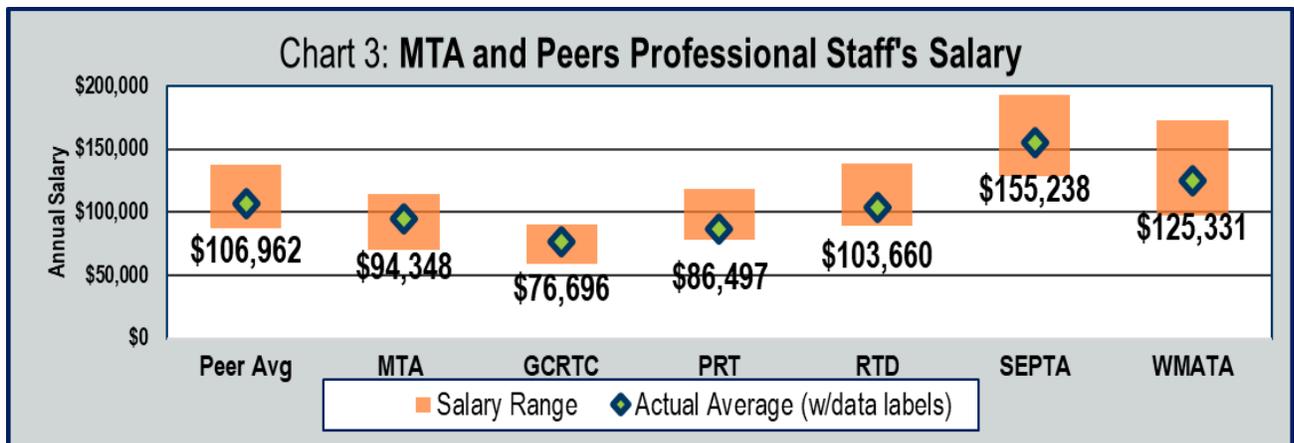
Table 4: MTA Percentage Difference from Average and Highest Peer Annual Salaries

	Dept Head Average Pay	Dept Head Salary Range Midpoint	Mgmt Average Pay	Mgmt Salary Range Midpoint	Prof Average Pay	Prof Salary Range Midpoint
\$ Difference from Peer Average	\$53,563	\$55,365	\$14,910	\$22,547	\$12,614	\$14,700
% Difference from Peer Average	-24%	-26%	-11%	-17%	-12%	-14%
\$ Difference from Highest Value	\$186,664	\$185,641	\$59,105	\$65,460	\$60,890	\$64,673
% Difference from Highest Value	-52%	-55%	-33%	-37%	-39%	-41%

Source: APTA's 2024 Salary Survey

The following charts illustrate the 2024 APTA salary survey data, comparing MTA salaries with peer transit systems. They display the average salary and the average low and high ends of salary ranges for the three employee categories defined in the survey.





Source: APTA's 2024 Salary Survey

Findings from this analysis include

- ▶ **Consistent Below-Average Compensation:** In all three categories (department heads, management staff, and professional staff), MTA, GCRTA, and PRT offer salaries below the peer average for both salary midpoints and actual pay.
- ▶ **Higher Compensation Agencies:** RTD, SEPTA, and WMATA offer higher overall compensation.
 - ▶ WMATA has the highest salary range midpoint and actual salaries for department heads and management staff, and offers above-average pay across all six metrics.
 - ▶ SEPTA offers slightly below-average compensation for department heads but pays above-average salaries for management and professional staff. It has the highest salaries for professional staff.
 - ▶ RTD compensates above average for department heads and management staff but falls slightly below average for professional staff.

One major obstacle MTA faces in attracting and retaining talent is the competition from nearby urban transit providers like SEPTA and WMATA, which offer significantly higher salaries. This persistent compensation gap leads to the steady loss of skilled employees to better-paying systems. MTA's reliance on consultants in key professional roles compounds its challenges, weakens internal capacity, and creates additional hurdles in recruitment and retention. Consultant firms face fewer constraints and can offer more competitive compensation, often outbidding MTA for the same pool of regional transit talent. The combination of inflexible public pay structures and consultant dependence puts MTA at a sustained disadvantage.

The analysis shows that on a per-employee basis, MTA is highly efficient compared to its peers. MTA ranks second in metrics like passenger miles, vehicle revenue miles, revenue hours, and operating expenses per employee. MTA manages over \$210,000 in capital expenditures per employee—more than double the peer average of around \$90,000. This impressive efficiency indicates strong operational performance. However, it also suggests that staff might be overworked, leading to burnout or errors if managers do not provide additional support.

At the same time, MTA's compensation levels for department heads, management, and professional staff are significantly lower than those of nearby competitors such as WMATA and SEPTA. This disparity contributes to the migration of skilled employees, challenging recruiting and retaining talent. To sustain long-term service reliability and meet growing transit demands, MTA must address these issues by increasing compensation and support and expanding its workforce to reduce the burden on current staff.