



FACES *of* TRANSIT

TRANSIT MATTERS.
TRANSIT **INVESTMENT** MATTERS.





TRANSIT MATTERS.

Transit connects lives, builds communities, and drives Missouri's economy.

Across Missouri, public transit is more than a ride — it's a lifeline. It gets thousands of Missourians to work, school, and medical appointments, while fueling billions in economic activity each year. From Kansas City to Cape Girardeau, from small towns to busy city streets, transit keeps our communities moving — but recent funding cuts are putting that progress at risk.

In State Fiscal Year 2026 (SFY26), Missouri's State Transit Assistance funding was cut by 42%, from \$11.7 million to \$6.7 million, reducing General Revenue by \$5 million. Per capita spending on transit has now fallen from \$1.89 to just \$1.08, one of the lowest in the nation. These cuts not only limit rides — they threaten jobs, economic growth, and federal matching funds that multiply every state dollar invested.

37M

rides provided annually across Missouri

3,800

Missourians employed directly by transit agencies

22,000+

jobs supported indirectly statewide

\$5M

cut + future Medicaid cuts will significantly increase demand for transit

\$4.05B

annual economic impact from public transit

\$51M

in state tax revenue generated annually

 **\$5M** = fewer rides, fewer jobs, fewer opportunities

IMPACT OF SFY 2026 REDUCTIONS.

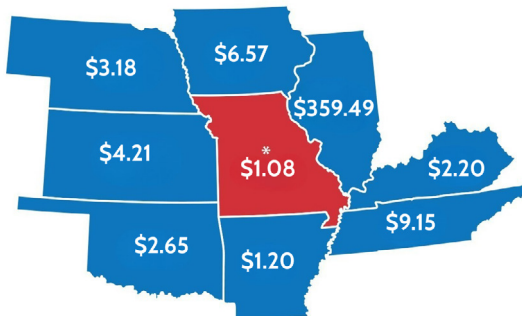
42%

REDUCTION IN STATE FUNDING

Missouri Transit Funding Slashed by 42% in FY26 Budget.

Governor Mike Kehoe signed the SFY26 state operating and capital improvement budget bills on June 30, 2025 – including a 42 percent reduction in State Transit Assistance funding, from \$11.7 million to \$6.7 million, removing \$5 million from General Revenue in HB4.

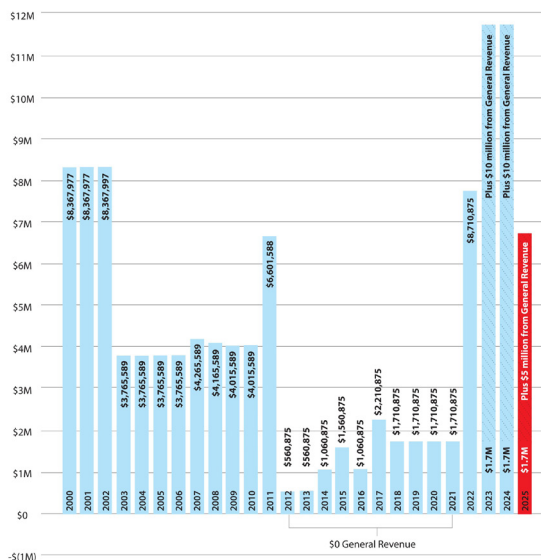
MO per capita spending on transit compared to surrounding states



Federal funding support requires a 50:50 match for transit operations and an 80:20 match for capital programming.

State funding is absolutely crucial as it provides the non-federal or local match required to enable transit providers to draw down some of the \$91 billion in federal funds earmarked for transit as part of the \$1.2 trillion IIJA. Per capita spending has now dropped from \$1.89 to \$1.08.

MO Investment in Operations



However, the demand for transit continues to grow statewide.

A 2025 Transit Needs Assessment Study demonstrated an increase of 55 percent in unmet transit rides, equating to millions of rides annually. It also underscored the cost to deliver those unmet rides will now cost 119% more. The SFY26 cut of \$5 million drastically impacts the number of rides provided and only increases the growing demand for transit rides.

FACES & FUNDING

Behind every ride is a face, a job, a family, a story.

When funding disappears, so do opportunities. Every dollar cut from state transit support means fewer rides to work, fewer drivers on the road, and fewer vehicles replaced in aging fleets.

Across the state, transit providers are facing difficult choices:

OATS Transit: Loss of \$901,387 in state assistance translates to over 43,000 fewer trips and 30,000 lost service hours.

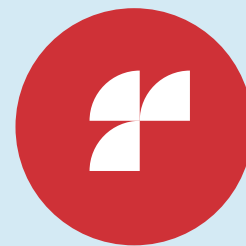
KCATA: Facing route eliminations and layoffs that could affect millions of rides—just as Kansas City prepares to host the World Cup.

Metro St. Louis: Nearly 20 million rides at risk, with reduced federal matching dollars if state funds continue to decline.

SMTS: Potential reduction of fixed routes from five days to three – a 20-25% decrease in service without sustained funding.

Joplin MAPS & Sunshine Trolley: Removal of planned service expansion due to budget cuts.

These aren't just numbers—they represent Missourians who depend on transit for work, healthcare, and independence.



Christian Morgan, Vice President Government Relations, BJC Health shared, "Providing exceptional healthcare across the state of Missouri is BJC Health's top priority. To do so, we've had to add transportation to our service offerings in rural areas across the state. That said, we are healthcare experts, not transportation experts. It is imperative that Missouri funds transit so patients continue to receive much needed rides to and from appointments, and BJC Health can go back to focusing on providing worldclass healthcare."



One centenarian rider, for example, relies on OATS Transit each week to get to her regular hair appointments – a simple routine that brings her joy and sense of normalcy. **Bettie Langford** from Dekalb County, Missouri certainly doesn't let her age stop her from getting out and about in the community. She is an incredible 101 years old. Bettie uses OATS frequently even to run business errands or go shopping. "I ride the OATS bus because it's so convenient and the drivers are so helpful and kind. I have been riding for more than 15 years and truly enjoy it," said Bettie.

Missouri's transit systems are essential infrastructure. To keep our state moving, we must *restore and protect* funding that ensures every Missourian has access to reliable, affordable transportation.

State funding is absolutely crucial as it provides the non-federal or local match required to enable transit providers to draw down some of the \$91 billion in federal funds earmarked for transit as part of the \$1.2 trillion IJA.



Since moving to Missouri in 2019, **Willie Scales** has relied on Cape Girardeau County Transit Authority to stay mobile, connected, and independent. As someone who is visually impaired and unable to drive, Willie quickly familiarized himself with CGCTA. "I use it to get to my doctor's appointments, to go shopping, and sometimes just to meet up with friends," Willie shared. "It helps me stay active and involved."



Beth Langley has worked in transit for 32 years. She is now the OATS Transit Northwest Regional Director overseeing 23 counties. "What we do enables people to stay in their homes, without being a burden on their family because of our transportation. We give them independence and help them maintain their pride. Our drivers become family to our riders, and we take pride in the work that we do."



Jay Hardenbrook, Associate State Director for Advocacy for AARP Missouri, shared that vital services are only as good as they are accessible. "When we talk to our over 700,000 members across the state, we hear about how important reliable public transportation is to access services, community and family. It is imperative that people can get to where they need to go in Missouri, and transit is a critical component of that system."



Charles "Chuck" Lear lives in Hannibal, Missouri and each day is different for him, but often on the road well before 4am taking people to medical appointments. Chuck is one of those drivers who will step up to help transport dialysis riders on holidays to ensure they don't miss their treatment. He has been driving for OATS Transit for 16 years. Chuck said he will do whatever the job calls for. "I know for the people we pick up early, it's a life and death situation, so I am happy to do what I can to make their day easier," added Chuck.



Investing in Transit Is Investing in Missouri's Future

A renewed commitment to public transit means stronger local economies, better access to jobs and healthcare, greater independence for seniors and people with disabilities, and sustained federal investment in Missouri. Now is the time to take action. Increasing state transit funding is not optional—it's essential to keep our communities moving forward, connected, and thriving.



Debbie Legrand began using transit after her multiple sclerosis progressed to the point of needing a mobility aid. Thanks to the county-wide coverage provided by Cape Girardeau County Transit Authority, Debbie attends physical therapy and regained access to the world around her. "I never imagined being in a wheelchair," Debbie said. "CGCTA helps me move forward, past the limitations of my mobility aid."



Len Toenjes, President, Associated General Contractors of Missouri added, "AGC of Missouri recognizes the importance of supporting all modes of transportation to improve the quality of life in Missouri. Safe and accessible transit options are a part of an overall transportation system impacting education, healthcare, workforce, and state-wide economic development underscoring the importance of investment in all modes."



Tambria Wilson comes from a household with only one vehicle, so it's challenging reaching work and school on time. Walking to her job would take over an hour, making transit an essential part of her daily routine. "Getting to work on time is incredibly important," Tambria said. "CGCTA has made that possible for me." A powerful example of how public transit supports the next generation of leaders.



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The MPTA, through its network of members, stakeholders and constituents is committed to improving transit for all in Missouri.

