



**Whatcom Transportation Authority  
Bellingham, WA**

**HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR**

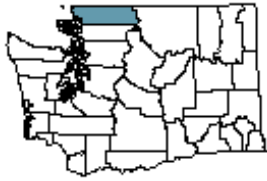
**\$100,056 - \$134,076**

**(2020 COMPENSATION)**  
*Plus Excellent Benefits*

*Apply by*  
**May 24, 2020**  
*(First Review, Open Until Filled)*



## WHY APPLY?



Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) is a financially sound transit agency with a dedicated team of employees and a supportive Board of Directors. The

agency is highly regarded in the community for its organizational integrity and the quality of services provided. WTA is fiscally sustainable with healthy cash and reserve balances. The new Human Resources Director will have the opportunity to positively shape the future of WTA in one of the most vibrant, beautiful areas in the Pacific Northwest.

## THE REGION

Whatcom County is located in the northwest corner of Washington State. With its proximity to Mt. Baker, beautiful Puget Sound and the world-renown San Juan Islands, it is an extremely desirable place to live and work.

Situated just south of the Canadian Border, Whatcom County (population 229,000) is made up of several rural communities and smaller towns, as well as Bellingham (population 90,000), the county seat. Bellingham—home to WTA's headquarters—is located about 90 miles north of Seattle and 51 miles south of Vancouver, British Columbia.

Bellingham enjoys a wide variety of lively community events, including a Farmers Market, food and music festivals, and recreational races for runners, kayakers, skiers, cyclists, and more. Bellingham is home to an award-winning school system, and a historic downtown area that consists of restaurants, art galleries and specialty shops, along with a mix of brew pubs, wine bars and cafes. Nearby institutions of higher learning include Western Washington University, Whatcom Community College, and Bellingham Technical College, all of which call Bellingham home.

With 15,000 students, Western Washington University (WWU) is the largest employer in Bellingham, as well as a major contributor to Bellingham's liveliness and culture. WTA enjoys a strong partnership with WWU, with their students accounting for 40% of WTA ridership. In addition to WWU, Bellingham is home to a community college, a technical college and Northwest Indian College.



The county's largest employers are educational, health care and government organizations. However, its robust economy also supports a mix of small and medium sized business, including firms specializing in engineering and technology.

Whatcom County is a recreational haven. Skiers, hikers, kayakers, cyclists, boaters and other adventurers enjoy unparalleled access to the outdoors. The county also supports a thriving cultural community, with a lively theater and music scene and an eclectic mix of museums and annual festivals.

Bellingham's climate is typical for the Pacific Northwest. While cloudy and rainy days are not uncommon, Bellingham receives less annual precipitation (36 inches) than Miami, New York City or Boston. A typical winter may bring one to five days of snowfall. More commonly, however, winter highs are in the 40s and 50s. Summer days are often warm, sunny and temperate with highs in the 70s and 80s and cooler temperatures at night.





## THE ORGANIZATION

### WTA's mission is to enhance their community by:

- Delivering safe, reliable, efficient and friendly service.
- Offering environmentally sound transportation choices.
- Providing leadership in creating innovative transportation solutions.
- Partnering with our community to improve transportation systems.

WTA provides public transportation services throughout Whatcom County. Services include fixed routes, paratransit service and a vanpool program. WTA serves the City of Bellingham, as well as the smaller towns and communities of Ferndale, Lynden, Blaine and Birch Bay, Lummi Nation, Sudden Valley, Kendall, Everson, Nooksack and Sumas. WTA also cooperates with Skagit Transit in neighboring Skagit County to provide service between Bellingham and Mount Vernon.

WTA is composed of seven divisions overseen by the Executive Department: Finance, Fleet and Facilities, Human Resources, Information Technology, Marketing and Community Relations, Operations and Planning. WTA has an operating budget of \$37.2 million and employs about 270 FTEs, including bus operators, mechanics, customer service representatives, route maintenance workers and administrative personnel. Of those 270 employees, 171 are transit operators.

Most of WTA's funding is from a 0.6 percent sales tax which is collected within its Public Transportation Benefit Area (most of Whatcom County). WTA properties include agency headquarters in north Bellingham, downtown's Bellingham Station, Cordata Station, Ferndale Station and Lynden Station, as well as approximately 1,000 bus stops and 140 bus shelters. WTA's fleet is comprised of 61 full-size buses, including eight hybrid electric buses, 43 Paratransit minibuses, 21 vanpool vans and 39 administrative and shop vehicles. WTA's fixed route service features 27 routes, including a network of four high-frequency corridors within Bellingham. Service runs seven days a week. In 2019, WTA provided 4.6 million fixed route boarding's, or 15,100 per weekday. In 2008, WTA was recognized by the Federal Transit Administration for achieving the highest annual ridership increase in the nation.

WTA is governed by a 10-member Board of Directors composed of nine elected officials from jurisdictions throughout Whatcom County, plus one non-voting member representing labor. Board relations are positive and productive, with Board Members expressing strong support for the work of the General Manager, staff, and the service provided to the community. Pete Stark has been the General Manager since 2014 after serving as Director of Fleet and Facilities for over 18 years.



## THE POSITION

Working under the direction of the General Manager, the Human Resources Director is responsible for developing and administering a full range of human resource programs including recruitment and selection, policy development and administration, employee compensation and benefits, training and development, collective bargaining, and employee and labor relations.

The Human Resources Director assures the highest quality of human resources programs for WTA while also complying with all local, state and federal laws. The Human Resources Director supervises three staff members within the Division. Because of the small staff size, in addition to setting the strategic direction for the Division the Director also handles day-to-day HR matters including specific recruitment tasks, employee relations, trainings, etc.

The HR Director is also a member of the agency's Executive Staff providing input on decisions with organization-wide impact.

For a full job description, please view the attachment found [here](#).

## OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

- The Human Resources Director leads the labor relations and collective bargaining agreement (CBA) negotiations for the agency, which are set to take place in 2021. The Director is expected to be a mentor, coach and guide for directors, managers and supervisors relating to labor relations, CBA interpretation, and personnel issues. The HR Director also prepares the labor package for the General Manager including costing, management requests and interests, well in advance of the beginning of CBA negotiations. The Human Resources Director also briefs the Board of Directors regarding the proposed labor package to request formal bargaining authority and keep the Board apprised of major negotiation developments and issues.
- The Human Resources Director will be active in professional associations to stay apprised of trends, new regulations and laws. The Director will have the opportunity to use the associations to participate in continual learning.
- Covid-19: Managing through the current challenges to include new rules and regulations relating to employee and passenger safety, as well as adapting changes to service levels, and planning for changes to service levels and delivery as the virus subsides will be a priority for the new Human Resources Director.
- The Director has the opportunity to aid in the recruitment and on boarding of a new General Manager later in 2020.
- The Human Resources Division uses a Payroll/HRIS system, in partnership with the Finance Division, for employee personnel transactions. Working through assigned staff, the new Director will have an opportunity to potentially enhance that system, leading to efficiencies and workflow enhancements.



## IDEAL CANDIDATE

### Education and Experience:

A bachelor's degree in business or public administration, human resources management, or a related field is required. In addition, the successful candidate will have at least five (5) years of progressively responsible experience in human resources management, experience as an HR generalist with recruitment and selection, labor relations, benefits and compensation administration, and experience working in a union labor environment, including contract administration and negotiations. Additional experience may substitute for a degree. Certification as Professional in Human Resources (PHR) or a master's degree in human resources management is preferred. Candidates must have a valid Washington State driver's license at time of hire.

### Necessary Knowledge, Skills & Abilities:

- Skill in labor relations including leading collective bargaining. Have a respect and appreciation for labor representation. Ability to develop trust with labor leadership through transparency and responsiveness.
- Senior leadership generalist HR skills and experiences that provide a thorough understanding of all the responsibilities and technical elements of a human resources department.
- Strong communication skills, allowing for information presented to be easily understood.
- Ability to understand the operations of all agency divisions and adapt human resource procedures and policies to assist throughout the agency.
- An understanding of the financial elements of personnel costs to an agency, including compounding expenses of fiscal decisions made relating to personnel.
- Ability to develop processes to stay informed on changing laws and regulations relating to personnel and the organization, and the ability to ask the right questions and listen to understand new information relating to human resource issues.
- Ability to take a big picture and global approach to personnel policies and decisions yet have the understanding and empathy to guide individual personnel decisions as well.
- The ideal candidate will be unflappable, calm and gracious in difficult situations, and have the ability to take initiative to address issues early and decisively.

- Ability to be a mentor and coach for division staff as well as agency leadership and supervisory staff.
- Be an advocate for a healthy work/life balance who maintains a sense of humor and creates an enjoyable work environment.
- Adept in strategic planning and decision making.
- The selected candidate will keep an open door and be welcoming and approachable with staff from any level of the organization. The ability to be an active listener to all sides of an issue and the ability to communicate comfortably with managers and line staff is essential.
- Ability to make decisions with an understanding to the impacts on the entire agency.
- Candidates must have a willingness to seek ideas, perspectives and assistance from others, and to try new ideas. The ideal candidate will be a creative problem solver who is solution driven, agile, and has the ability to pivot, with the ability to anticipate impending issues.
- The selected candidate will be honest, ethical, empathetic, authentic and thoughtful of others, and have the ability to be discrete and confidential.

## COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

- **\$100,056 - \$134,076 DOQ**
- Medical insurance with full family coverage. Employee contributions range from \$0 - \$200 per month (2020 rates).
- Employer paid family dental and vision insurance.
- Life insurance at two times annual salary.
- Long-term disability insurance.
- PERS State Retirement System.
- 6 paid holidays per year.
- 24-37 vacation days per year based on length of service.
- 12 days of sick leave accrual per year.
- WTA bus passes for family members.

Please visit:  
[www.ridewta.com](http://www.ridewta.com)



Whatcom Transportation Authority is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified candidates are strongly encouraged to apply by **May 24, 2020** (first review, open until filled). Applications, supplemental questions, resumes and cover letters will only be accepted electronically. To **apply online**, go to [www.prothman.com](http://www.prothman.com) and click on "Open Recruitments", select "Whatcom Transportation Authority, WA – Human Resources Director", and click "Apply Now", or click [here](#). Resumes, cover letters and supplemental questions can be uploaded once you have logged in.



[www.prothman.com](http://www.prothman.com)

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