



Jan. 24 Update

# Snapshot

The Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana

## PAR Snapshot: Jan. 24 Update

### *Louisiana Trails U.S. in Public Transportation*

#### ***Few Louisiana Residents Commute Using Public Transit***

Louisiana invests little state money in public transit, and with limited public transportation options, few people around the state rely on buses or other transit to get to work.

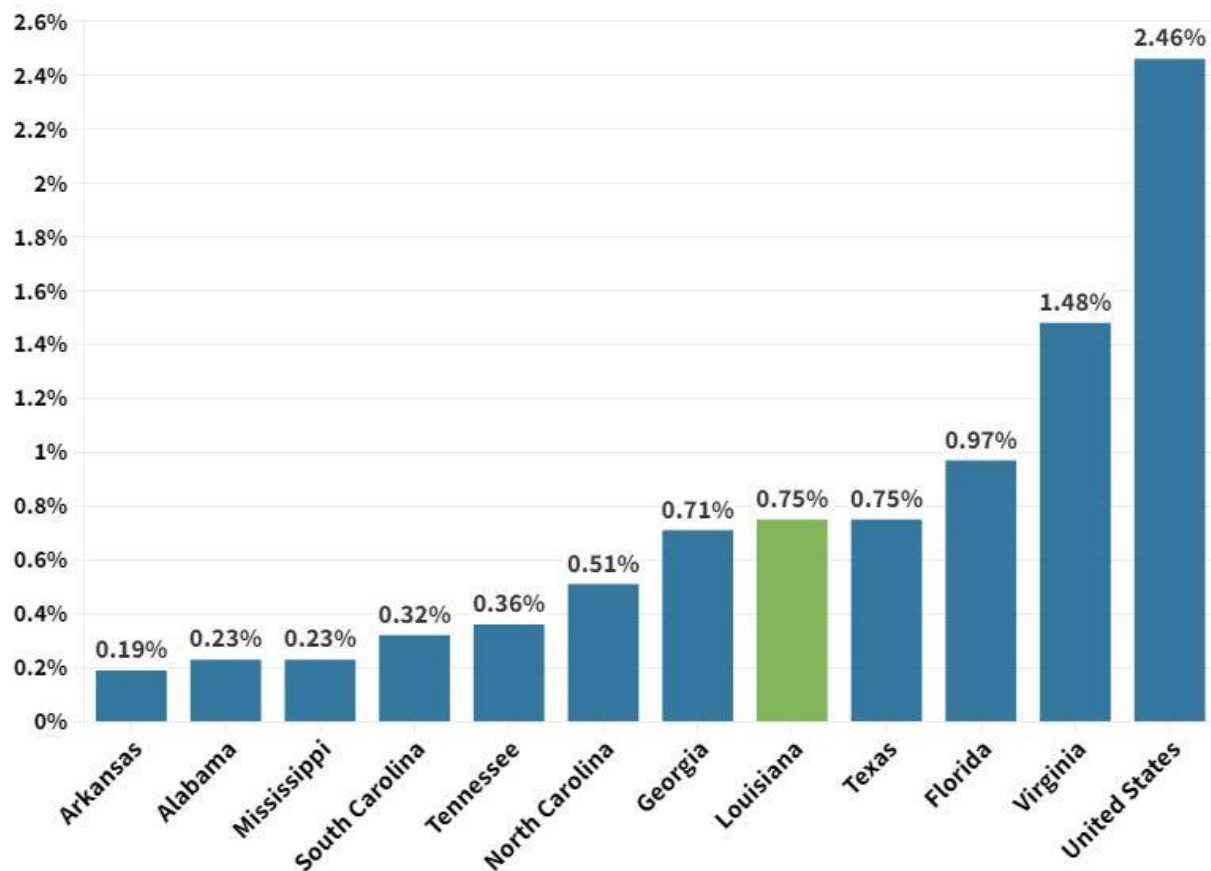
The average percentage of Louisianians commuting to work via public transportation since 2010 was 1.22%, nearly 57,000 people, according to the [U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics](#). Public transportation use, however, has steadily declined in recent years, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bus systems and other public transit options in Louisiana rely heavily on funding from local governments, with Orleans, East Baton Rouge and Caddo parishes spending the most on transportation systems.

In a possible expansion of transit options, the state has received \$20 million in federal funding from the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program for a new passenger rail connecting Baton Rouge to New Orleans, according to [Gov. John Bel Edwards' office](#). But that won't cover the full cost of the project, and a timeline for its construction remains unclear.

Money for the RAISE grant program comes through the bipartisan infrastructure law passed by Congress in 2021

## Public Transportation Use by State, 2021



Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics / U.S. Department of Transportation

In 2021, 0.75% of Louisiana residents -- or about 35,000 people -- used some form of public transit to commute to work, according to the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

Compared to the 10 Southern states listed above, Louisiana has the fourth-highest percentage of public transit use, outranked by only Texas, Florida and Virginia, all of which have some of the largest transit agencies in the country.

A [2021 report by the Census Bureau](#) showed the country's Southern region had the lowest share of workers who commuted by transit at 2%.

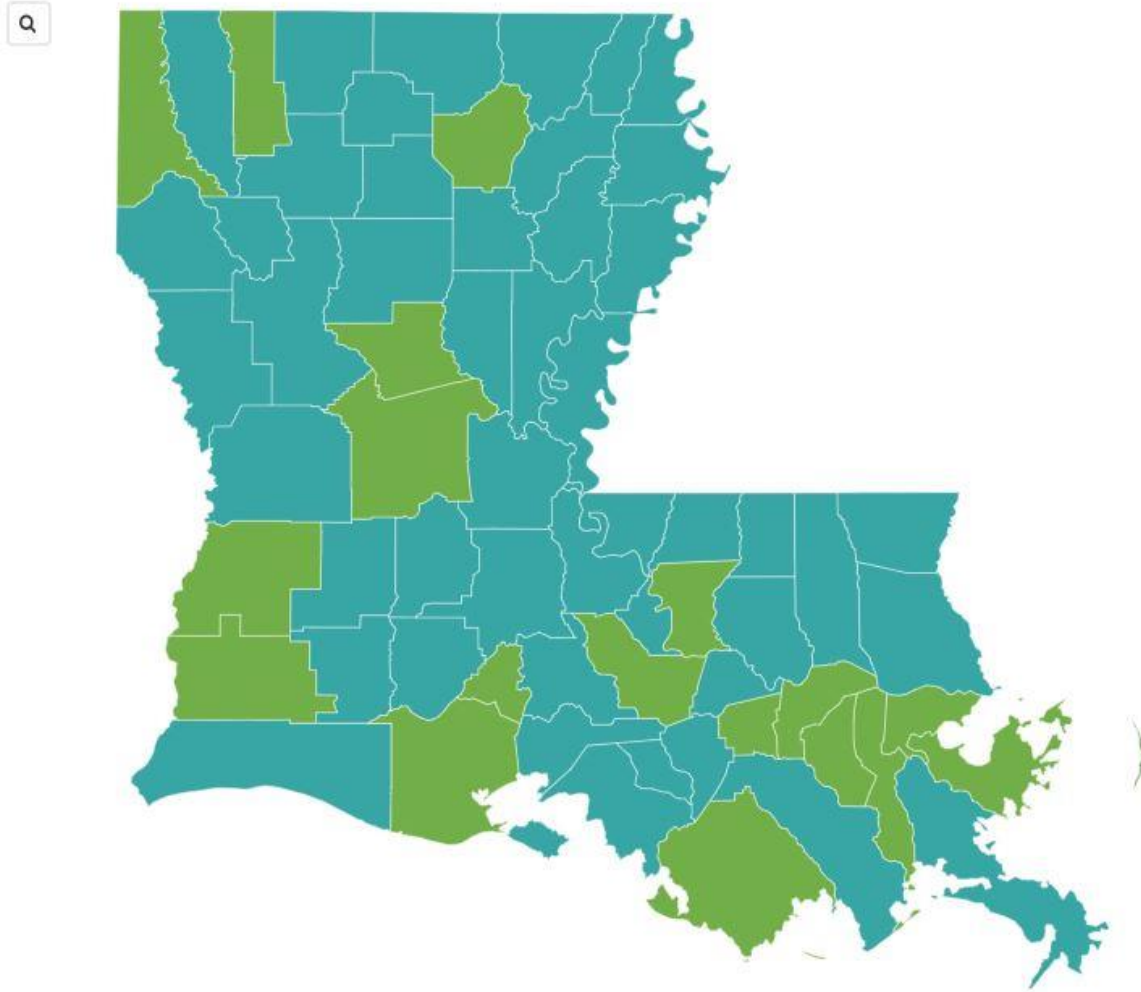
The overwhelming majority of Louisiana workers commuting by public transportation, not surprisingly, live in or near the state's three largest metro areas: New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Shreveport.

According to the [American Public Transportation Association](#) (APTA), the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority, the Capital Area Transit System (CATS) in Baton Rouge and SporTran in Shreveport are the largest transit agencies in the state, with more than 2 million boardings per year.

While public transit use across Louisiana is declining, ridership in New Orleans is growing. As reported by APTA, the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority has experienced a continued rise in weekly ridership since July 2022, surpassing the national average.

## Claims Reported & Paid Losses by Hurricanes Parishes with a Public Transportation System

- Parishes without public transit
- Parishes with public transit



Source: Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development

Only 18 of Louisiana's 64 parishes have a public transportation system, such as a bus system.

In addition, the parishes listed below operate limited transit offerings through either their local Council on Aging or community service programs that provide services for the elderly and disabled, and sometimes the general public.

- Allen
- Assumption
- Avoyelles
- Bienville
- Caldwell
- Cameron
- Claiborne
- De Soto
- East Feliciana
- Evangeline
- Jefferson Davis
- Lincoln
- Livingston

- Madison
- Natchitoches
- Pointe Coupee
- Red River
- St. Helena
- St. James
- St. Landry
- St. Martin
- St. Mary
- St. Tammany
- Vernon
- Washington

Local governments in Louisiana bear the brunt of costs associated with public transit. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development said state government occasionally allocates funding for specific projects, but these funds are negligible compared to local governments' contributions.

The federal government is the second largest contributor of funds to public transportation in Louisiana, providing \$8 million in coronavirus relief aid during the 2022-23 budget year.

When looking at state funding for public transportation, Louisiana is one of many Southern states that does not contribute state funds to transit systems, as reported by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. However, a handful of Southern states direct state funds to public transportation, such as North Carolina that spends \$400 per 100,000 people and Georgia that spends \$343 per 100,000 people.

*Special thanks to the Union Pacific Foundation for supporting PAR's Louisiana Recovery Project.*

Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana | For more information please contact:  
Dr. Steven Procopio, President, 225-926-8414 ext. 221 [steven@parlouisiana.org](mailto:steven@parlouisiana.org)