

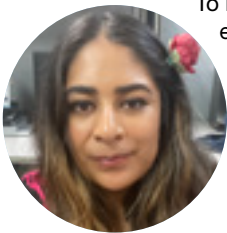
Culture & Climate

TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM

Meet some of the VTA staff creating change through the Culture and Climate Workstreams:

JOANNA AMEZCUA

Information Systems Analyst II



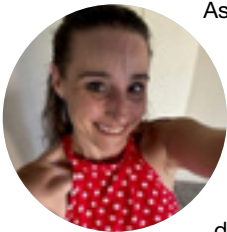
To me, culture change at VTA signifies a journey towards creating a more inclusive, collaborative, and effective workplace. As an Information Systems Analyst II in the technology department, I joined VTA in January 2021 during the pandemic, which presented unique challenges and opportunities. Through my role and as a representative of SEIU employees in the Culture and Climate Change Community Through Collaborative Communication (C3) Workstream, I have a deep appreciation for the importance of communication in driving this cultural shift.

Culture change means fostering an environment where every employee, regardless of their role, feels valued and heard. It involves breaking down silos between departments and encouraging open, transparent communication. For frontline employees, who are often the face of our organization, this change is about ensuring they have the information, support, and resources they need to perform their jobs effectively and feel connected to the broader mission of VTA.

Ultimately, culture change is about building a work environment where employees feel supported, recognized, and motivated. It's about celebrating our successes, learning from our challenges, and working together towards common goals. For me, being part of this initiative means actively contributing to a workplace where everyone can thrive and where communication bridges the gap between various roles and departments.

THALIA YOUNG

Culture and Climate ESLD Co-Coordinator



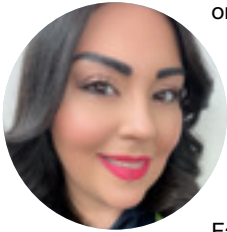
As a Coordinator I am responsible with Angelina for running and the preparation for the Employee Support and Leadership Development (ESLD) workstream meetings. This is giving me the opportunity to practice skills that I feel have been a weakness or maybe I am not comfortable with. My job at VTA is a Board Assistant meaning I support the Board of Directors and all of their meetings. As a result I am comfortable being in meetings and preparing for them. I do less facilitating at my "day job" meetings than I do as a Workstream Coordinator. I am comfortable performing both roles.

I think the most important part of being a Coordinator is to make the workstream meetings and work done effective and efficient while supporting my co-coordinator. That changes from week to week – sometimes it is more active in the meeting and others it is doing more behind the scenes work. I am so proud of the work that all of the workstreams have done so far even if all of VTA is aware of it. The next few months will showcase the work being done if you haven't seen the results or aren't aware of them. I know that the changes may be small or seem insignificant but change is hard and slow so any positive change is good. I believe in a year we can look back and have a good list of improvements. Another important part of my role is to support the other Coordinators and their Workstreams. We are a team and work as one to make VTA a better place.

I am in a place of having a great group in my regular work so to hear for several years that not all of VTA was like my group I was surprised. I was surprised by the degree and frequency of an unhealthy work climate. Having worked at toxic workplaces previously I did not feel that VTA was that way or at least not how I had experienced it. In the past 3 years I started hearing more about other groups, departments, and divisions at VTA and was surprised by how prevalent it was. I even thought there was some exaggeration about it. Since joining a workstream (and more recently as a Coordinator) and talking to people in different Unions, divisions, positions, and work places I am hearing about it more. This has given me more motivation to make VTA better and healthier for current and future employees. We spend so much of our time at work we shouldn't dread going because of the environment. Small wins from the workstreams will add up and make a noticeable difference. One workstream and set of Coordinators cannot make the change alone. Some of the changes need the other workstreams to be as successful as they can be. Working with the other Coordinators can make the changes happen and advertise them. The coordinators are a small group but our workstreams are bigger and if each person in a workstream tells a few people or their work group the word will spread about what is going on.

ANGELINA SILVA

Culture and Climate ESLD Co-Coordinator



My journey here at VTA started November 5, 2001 I had just turned 20 years old. I started as a Bus Operator on the Extra Board at Chaboya. I stayed on the extra board for my first six years, in 2006 I had my third child and needed a set schedule to accommodate my kids school schedule so that's when I decided to get a regular run.

Being a bus driver and a mom of three was definitely a challenge. I also have eight other family members that work here at VTA including my son that is now a bus operator. I was driving the bus when I was pregnant with him and now here he is driving at 19 years old starting his career at VTA. I spent 21 years as a Bus Operator before I decided to move to Maintenance as a Service Worker, Facility Worker and now a Parts Clerk. I've worked here now for 23 years, moved around VTA and have been an eyewitness of how much the culture has changed over the years.

Now with my family and friends I've made over my years here it has been extremely important for me to be a part of this Culture Change program for the change I want to see happen is for them. When I started this Culture Change Journey in Employee Support and Leadership Development I was very skeptical because over the years this has been something that VTA has tried before but didn't follow through on. I continued in the Culture Change Program because I'm passionate about making this change and I told myself I have to believe in change in order for change to happen. That's when I put in for a Leadership position as a Workstream Coordinator for ESLD. Being a Workstream Coordinator has given me the opportunity to work with and collaborate with so many amazing people here at VTA from the floor level to the highest level of leadership, as well as people outside VTA that are working with us on this project. It has also given me training on skills that I didn't have and now can use to further my career here at VTA. If you would have told me a year ago I would be Facilitating meetings, doing presentations moving our Culture Change program forward I wouldn't believe you. But that is my reality and I love everything about what I'm doing in this program and what I'm doing for this program. This has changed who I am as a person and the leader I've become. I am very grateful for this opportunity to be part of this change, and continue to look forward to all the positive changes to come here at VTA.

ERIC BROWN

Culture and Climate PPHSS Co-Coordinator

I started as a Bus Operator August 4 2014. Didn't last very long as I moved to Rail shortly after.

Why rail? My father did 47 Years on big rail, my brother has 24 years as engineer on big rail so know I'm part of the Brown Rail tradition.



I'm Currently a Mentor, Critical Incident Support Team (CIST) member, Peer Support and now PPHSS Co-Coordinator with Lisa Bradley. Examples of helping while working at VTA. I don't believe in leaving people behind.

Look, bus and rail isn't for everyone but we're here to help each other. We have demanding hours because we're getting people back and forth to work, school or just around town. The Tech Trainers, Line Instructors and Mentors help others to grow and get into positions that help the employees and their families make long lasting careers at VTA. At times we have a high turnover rate as people move around into different positions.

But VTA should be proud of these Tech Trainers, Line Instructors and Mentors for setting a good foundation for new employees to grow from. As a mentor I have many Mentees that I help daily. I also help Veterans or anyone else that wants or needs help. It takes more coordination to keep rail going or to pass a train that's broke down. What I like about the program is we have workers from all over VTA and Executive Leaders working together to try and find common ground on how to improve many different areas at VTA.

It all starts with good communication and trust and there's signs of improvements already. Sure there's going to be set backs and discussions when things don't go as smooth as possible but that's how we grow together.

All Coordinators along with everyone in the work streams are motivated to continue to make VTA a stronger and safer place to work for everyone.

If you want more information about what the groups are working on feel free to ask any of the six coordinators or ask questions at the town hall meetings.

LISA BRADLEY

Culture and Climate PPHSS Co-Coordinator

Eric and I are co-coordinators of the group with the longest name, Physical, Psychological Health Safety and Security (PPHSS). I know it is a mouthful but to encompass all that we are trying to accomplish it was necessary. I am second generation transit; my mom was an operator and retired in 2013. I also have a husband that started working as a Coach Operator after the pandemic, so my heart's passion is in providing support and protection for the operators and all other frontline workers.

This year will make 25 years that I have been with VTA and in my time here I have been a staunch advocate for our operators. I have spent many years as a union advocate and sit on the ATU 265 Executive Board representing all dispatchers. I also sit as the Recording Financial Secretary for the 265 Latino Caucus, and a member of WIT (Women Innovating Transit).

Serving as a co-coordinator for PPHSS is a challenge that I am ready to take head on. This is a new endeavor for me, and I am excited to learn how to facilitate these meetings effectively. I am hopeful that each meeting I can build upon the lessons that I have learned from the previous and get better as I go along. A couple of our Quick Wins are conjoined in what other groups at VTA have been working on for a while now. De-Escalation Training is an item that we are attempting to help push along to get it going faster than it was slated for. Reimplementation of the ERT (Emergency Response Team) and CPR training for the members at large is another issue we are trying to fast track into existence. We feel that these are essential tools for health and well being of the workforce, especially our frontline workers. We are also working on getting better restroom facilities out on the road for our operators and because we are a voice in the room where decisions are being made, we were able to shed light on the areas that needed to be a priority.

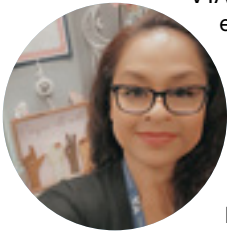
My hope as a coordinator is to work diligently to accomplish our goals and help create an environment where all workers feel supported.

Rosie Dominguez

Senior Information Representative

Workstream coordinator for Community Through Collaborative Communication (C3)

What VTA Culture Change means to me is having the ability to work in a positive environment where equality, inclusion and transparency is present in my day-to-day work life at VTA. It also means being able to speak freely and know that VTA is a safe place to work. I believe that through the Culture Change Program in all workstreams VTA will eventually show great transparency. As a workstream coordinator for Community Through Collaborative Communication (C3), I find that building bridges among all divisions, equally, to share knowledge will create new ways to help VTA departments find solutions to underlying issues will ultimate help in a more profound way. This is our first newsletter and I'm very much proud of the hard work our quick win group has put into it. I hope we continue to progress.



I started at VTA in 2015 right before the Superbowl 50 at Levi's stadium. I have been with VTA as an Information Services Representative (ISR) in Customer Service ever since. I've learned all the job positions that our department offers, including working out of class as a Senior ISR over the years, as it is my current role. I am the ATU Safety Steward to others, including ISRs, SIRs, and Fare Inspectors. Additionally, I am also CPR certified as well as a member of the Emergency Response Team at VTA! I have dedicated myself to making sure that employees working conditions are safe and manageable – with no issues. The key for me is communicating clearly and efficiently! I am also part of the PTASP committee with Safety and Security representing ATU. I want to also share that I am in the peer-to-peer support group.

I look forward to continuing my role as a workstream coordinator and hope those that do make decisions for all of VTA understand that for me, working as a Workstream member, a voice. I would like to walk hand in hand with positive results, however can we change the old ways or old past practice culture? Yes. It starts with me, you, us, we. Let us show how VTA is not only considered a Safe Place for our community, let's hold this same value to each other as one VTA. Si se puede!