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Press Release

April 14, 2020

[MTA Headquarters](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA, TWU Local 100, SMART, IBT Reach COVID-19 Family Benefits Agreement

Agreement Reached to Recognize the Sacrifice Made by Heroic Frontline Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), Transport Workers Union Local 100 (TWU), the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART), and International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 808 (IBT) today reached an agreement on COVID-19 family benefits for transportation workers tragically lost in the pandemic. The benefits include a payment of \$500,000 from the MTA to the surviving family of any worker who lost their life as a result of COVID-19, in addition to providing health insurance to the spouse and dependents to the age of 26 of the surviving family for three years. The MTA continues to have ongoing discussions with all labor partners to extend the COVID-19 family benefits agreement to all members of its represented workforce. The agreement will also be extended to all non-represented employees. The agreement is subject to Board ratification on April 22.

"Transportation workers are the heroes moving heroes of this public health crisis, continuing to get healthcare workers, first responders and other essential personnel where they need to go and saving lives," **MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick J. Foye Foye said.** "What our frontline workers have done during this pandemic is nothing short of heroic and we believe this agreement is another crucial step in recognizing their sacrifice. The losses the MTA family has suffered are heartbreaking and our thoughts are with the families of our beloved colleagues during this challenging time."

"We can't bring back our heroic co-workers but we can make sure their families are taken care of," **TWU Local 100 President Tony Utano said.** "We will continue to fight in Albany for additional benefits to help the families left behind and to further honor our lost heroes' great sacrifice to this city and state."

"New York wouldn't have a fighting chance against this virus if transit workers weren't getting the blue collar heroes of this pandemic – nurses, paramedics, food service workers – to the front lines of the battle all across the metropolitan region," **TWU International President John Samuelsen said.** "This COVID-19 death benefit is a recognition of the incredible contributions and sacrifices our workforce has made."

"This is a major step in reassuring our workers out there on the frontlines that we know the risk they are taking," **General Chairman of SMART, Anthony Simon said.** "Without our engineers, conductors, mechanics, and countless others reporting to work, essential workers would not be able to get around Long Island and New York City to help in the fight against COVID-19."

"The work and sacrifice made by our frontline workers during this pandemic can never be properly quantified," **Secretary-Treasurer of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 808., F. Christopher Silvera said.** "We mourn with the families of those lost and hope that this is a step towards the healing process."

The MTA has taken aggressive action to battle the COVID-19 pandemic since the early days of its arrival in New York. The organization has distributed millions of pieces of personal protective equipment, including 2.7 million pairs of gloves and nearly 750,000 masks, [since March 1](#). In order to protect employees, the MTA also disregarded federal guidance and began handing out masks to all employees before the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention later issued new guidance recommending all Americans wear masks. The MTA continues its comprehensive disinfecting efforts systemwide with trains and buses being disinfected nightly, with the entire fleets for all agencies – more than 8,000 train cars and 5,000 buses – completed every 72 hours or less, [since March 2](#).

The MTA has also implemented rear-door boarding and eliminated cash transactions to prevent person-to-person contact to ensure the safety of operating employees. The MTA launched the nation-leading "Temperature Brigade" on March 24 and later expanded the force to 22 locations testing tens of thousands of employees across New York City Transit, Metro-North and Long Island Rail Road. The MTA is also working to install plexiglass barriers at work locations across all 28 bus depots to further protect frontline employees. The health and safety of the MTA's employees and customers continues to be the agency's top priority.