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Fiscal Year 2023

Statewide Human Resources Management Strategy Roll-up Report



Office of Financial Management
State Human Resources



OFM

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Office of Financial Management
P.O. Box 47500 • Olympia, WA • 98501
Telephone: 360-725-5100
Email: StateHR@ofm.wa.gov

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Executive summary

All sectors across the nation are facing the continued challenges of recruiting and retaining an engaged and competent workforce, identifying what hybrid work looks like to achieve both employee and employer needs, and addressing continuous and rapidly evolving change. The Human Resources Management Report for fiscal year 2023 showed that Washington State Agencies are facing similar challenges and have identified the need to focus on recruitment efforts, build more equity and belonging into workplace culture, and support telework where it meets business needs as the most common strategies across the enterprise.

Although executive branch turnover and quit rates have decreased over the last year and remain below the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) averages, vacancies continue to have operational impacts, especially in traditionally hard-to-fill sectors such as healthcare, social services, law enforcement and emergency response. To attract more job applicants, agencies have expanded how and to whom they market job openings, worked to remove barriers and unnecessary requirements in the application process, and emphasized the benefits of state employment. Agencies are also investing in more on-the-job training and are partnering with workforce and education institutions to create talent pipelines into state careers.

To improve retention rates, agencies reported building out more comprehensive onboarding programs, establishing policies that support employees from historically marginalized communities, and investing in policies, technology and workflow that support a more hybrid workplace while also maintaining meeting business and customer service needs. Despite agencies reporting the impacts of continued retention challenges, their efforts to address these issues appear to be helping, as Executive Branch turnover rates decreased by 6.5 percentage points from fiscal year 2022 to fiscal year 2023.

Workforce Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) has remained a top priority for agencies since fiscal year 2019, with agencies utilizing statewide employee surveys, HR Management Systems (HRMS) data, and agency-specific surveys to measure engagement and monitor progress. Despite these efforts, there remains a gap between the representation of people of color in the state's labor force and the executive branch

workforce. People of color comprise 33.3% of Washington’s labor force yet make up only 22.6% of the executive branch workforce. Additionally, statewide employee engagement survey data shows that people from historically marginalized communities experience lower rates of belonging and inclusion in the workplace with that rate decreasing based on the number of intersecting marginalized identities an employee may have.

Another challenge that persists is data integrity and employee trust in providing demographic information. The rates of voluntary, self-reported demographic information are lower in HRMS than in the Statewide Employee Engagement Survey. Additionally, an increasing number of employees are declining to provide their demographic information in the Statewide Employee Engagement Survey. We know, however, that the work to support DEIB continues to evolve, and the state is making measurable improvements to workforce diversity and belonging. We believe that the progress made to date indicates that if agencies continue to prioritize these efforts, we will see continuous improvement.

Report highlights

State Human Resources (State HR) staff analyzed responses and data from state agencies’ annual Human Resource Management Report (HRMR). We compiled the results to get a picture of the top priorities and strategies listed below. Key highlights include:

Workforce challenges and strategies

- Perceived competition with the private sector and less competitive employee compensation were still the main reported challenges in hiring and retaining a skilled workforce.
- Agencies reported success in attracting and recruiting more diverse candidates by providing “remote optional” career opportunities.

Workforce representation

- Over the last five fiscal years, the representation of people of color in the executive branch workforce is on average 5.6 percentage points below what’s available in the state labor force.

- The rates of self-reporting disabilities and gender identity are higher in the Statewide Employee Engagement Survey (EES) than they are in HRMS. 13% of the EES respondents self-identified as having a disability, while 4.5% of the executive branch workforce disclosed having a disability in HRMS. 1% of the EES respondents self-identified as Gender X compared to 0.5% of the executive branch workforce disclosed as Gender X in HRMS.

Job seeker and candidate experience

- Most agencies invested in social media and online platforms to communicate with candidates and post their job announcements on job advertisement platforms.
- Agencies reported efforts to create a more inclusive recruitment process by crediting candidates' lived experiences, removing non-skill-related requirements from job announcements and removing attachments from applications.

Employee development and performance evaluation

- The most common strategies agencies reported for employee development are providing funds for training and tuition assistance.
- Eight agencies reported they have an established succession planning process.

Employee experience and retention

- Statewide employee surveys and HRMS data remain the most commonly used barometers to measure employee engagement and monitor agency progress.
- Agencies employ various data collection methods to assess the employee experience at different points in the employee life cycle.

Employee turnover

- Turnover rates in the executive branch decreased from 20.3% in fiscal year 2022 to 13.8% in fiscal year 2023, a 6.5 percentage point decrease and almost seven percentage points below the national rate for state and local government employers.
- 63% of agencies reported using their exit survey results to inform policy, up from 55% in fiscal year 2022.

Background

Executive branch agencies with more than 100 employees must submit an annual agency human resource management report (HRMR). Agencies with fewer than 100 employees submitted a reduced report related to their DEI policies, modern work environment and employment plans.

Executive branch agencies reporting in the 2023 HRMR	78
Agencies with 100 or more employees completed the full version of HRMR Survey (68 questions)	38
Agencies with less than 100 employees completed the abbreviated version of HRMR survey (26 questions)	40

We encourage agencies to use the [Workforce Performance Measures data file](#) that State HR produces to complete their agency report analysis. The workforce performance measures data report includes data on all executive branch agencies, including those with fewer than 100 employees.

Agencies submitted HR management reports using an online survey. The full version of the survey asked 68 questions related to the following topics:

- Workforce challenges and strategies
- Workforce representation
- Job seeker and candidate experience
- Employee development and performance evaluation
- Employee experience and retention
- Employee turnover and exit survey

Statewide HR Management Strategy Roll-up Report

This report combines agency HR management report survey responses and workforce performance measure data to analyze the workforce and summarize agency and enterprise strategies.

This report pertains to the executive branch only and does not include the legislative and judicial branches. The following 78 agencies, representing 99.8% of the executive branch workforce, submitted reports for the fiscal year 2023.

Agencies with 100 and more employees (full report)

Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals	Employment Security Department
Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth	Department of Transportation
Department of Agriculture	Liquor and Cannabis Board
Department of Children, Youth and Families	Military Department
Department of Commerce	Office of Administrative Hearings
Department of Corrections	Office of Financial Management
Department of Ecology	Office of Insurance Commissioner
Department of Enterprise Services	Office of the Attorney General
Department of Financial Institutions	Office of the Secretary of State
Department of Fish and Wildlife	Office of the State Auditor
Department of Health	State Health Care Authority
Department of Labor and Industries	State Investment Board
Department of Licensing	State Lottery Commission
Department of Natural Resources	State Parks and Recreation Commission
Department of Retirement Systems	State School for the Blind
Department of Revenue	Superintendent of Public Instruction
Department of Social and Health Services	Utilities and Transportation Commission
Department of Veterans Affairs	Washington State Patrol
	Washington Student Achievement Council
	Washington Technology Solutions

Agencies with less than 100 employees (reduced report)

Board of Accountancy	Office of Independent Investigations
Board of Pilotage Commissioners	Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises
Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors	Office of the Governor and Governor Affiliated Agencies
Board of Tax Appeals	Office of the State Treasurer
Board for Volunteer Firefighters and Reserve Officers	Pollution Liability Insurance Agency
Caseload Forecast Council	Public Disclosure Commission
Columbia River Gorge Commission	Puget Sound Partnership
Commission on African American Affairs	Recreation and Conservation Office
Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs	Transportation Improvement Board
Commission on Hispanic Affairs	Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials
County Road Administration Board	Washington Economic Development Finance Authority
Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation	Washington Health Care Facilities Authority
Department of Services for the Blind	Washington Horse Racing Commission
Eastern Washington State Historical Society	Washington State Arts Commission
Economic and Revenue Forecast Council	Washington State Conservation Commission
Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council	Washington State Gambling Commission
Environmental and Land Use Hearings Office	Washington State Historical Society
Housing Finance Commission	Washington State Leadership Board
Human Rights Commission	Washington Traffic Safety Commission
Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Plan 2 Retirement Board	Workforce Education and Training Coordination Board

For questions about this report, contact StrategicHR@ofm.wa.gov.

The Employee Life Cycle

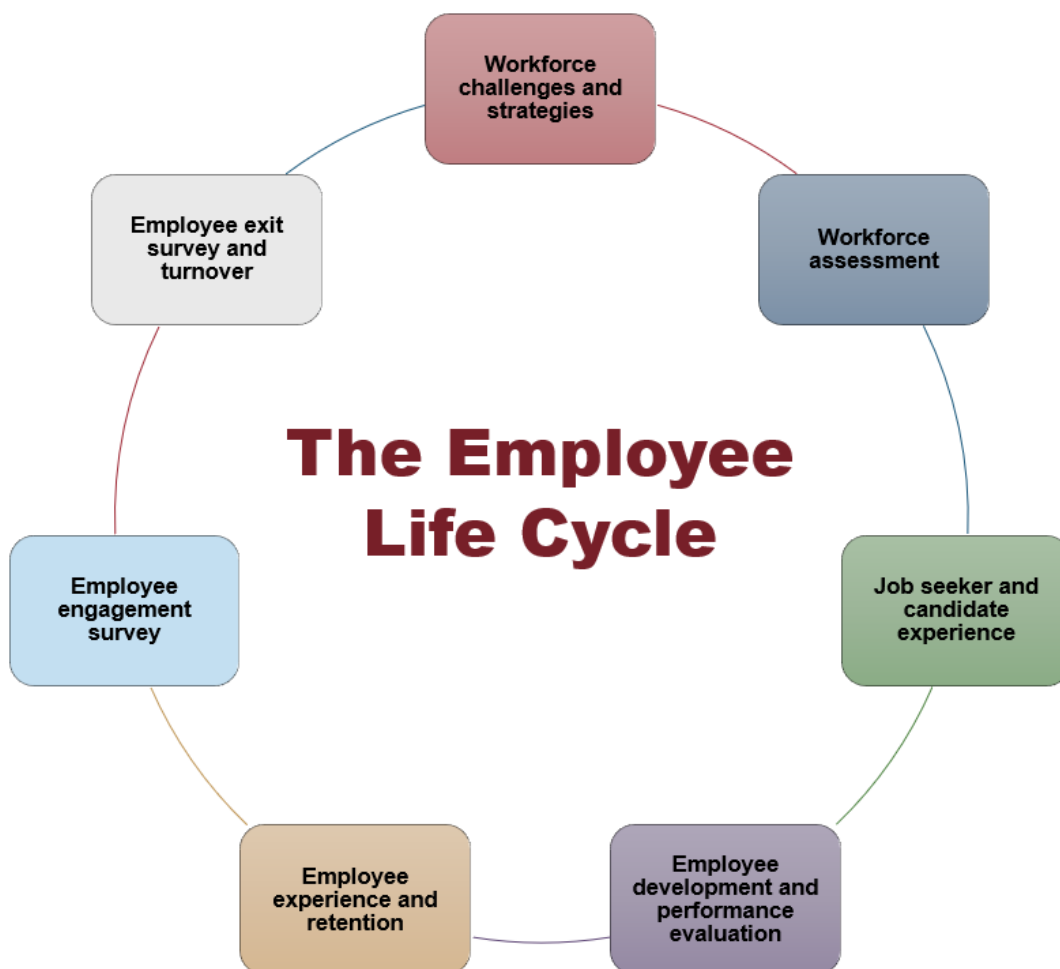
The employee life cycle covers the entire relationship between an employee and the employer.

We begin by assessing key workforce challenges and strategies.

Next, we complete a workforce assessment to prepare for current and future staffing needs.

After the workforce assessment, we analyze the job seeker and candidate experience, employee development and performance evaluation, employee experience and retention, employee engagement, and employee turnover.

Data-driven decisions and meaningful changes can be achieved by taking the time to evaluate important metrics related to employee life cycle.



Workforce challenges and strategies

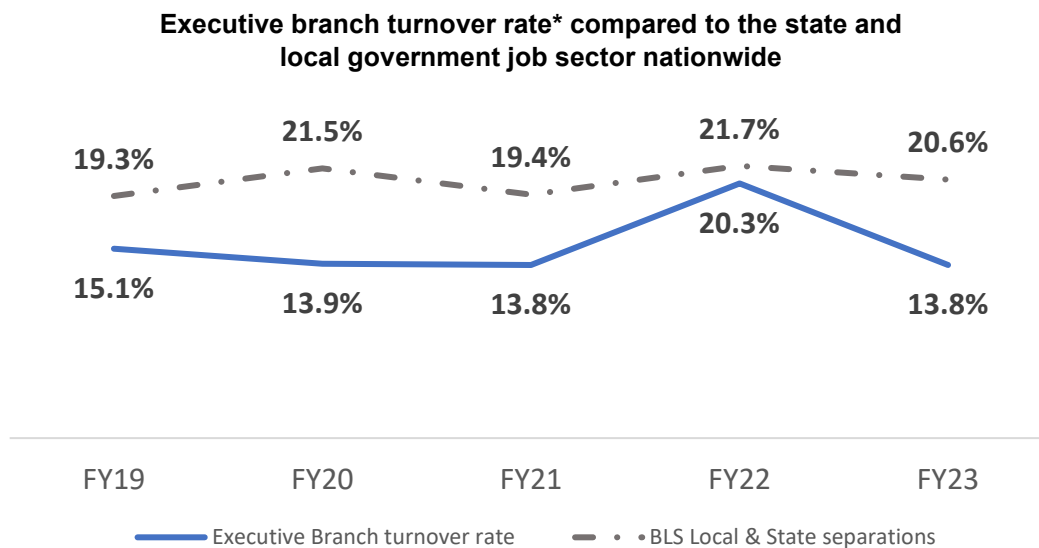
Agencies reported prioritizing their fiscal year 2023 recruitment and retention efforts with considerations for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

HR management report survey responses revealed the following most mentioned agency priorities:

1. Recruitment and retention (33 of full reporting agencies)
2. Workforce diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (31 of full reporting agencies)

Recruitment and retention

Recruitment and retention are the most reported workforce challenges in fiscal year (FY) 2023. According to the Bureau of Labor Statics, turnover rates for the state and local government job sector nationwide have remained relatively consistent over the past five fiscal years, hovering between 19% and 22%. The executive branch turnover rate is consistently lower than the state and local government job sector rates, dropping to 13.8% in FY 2023.

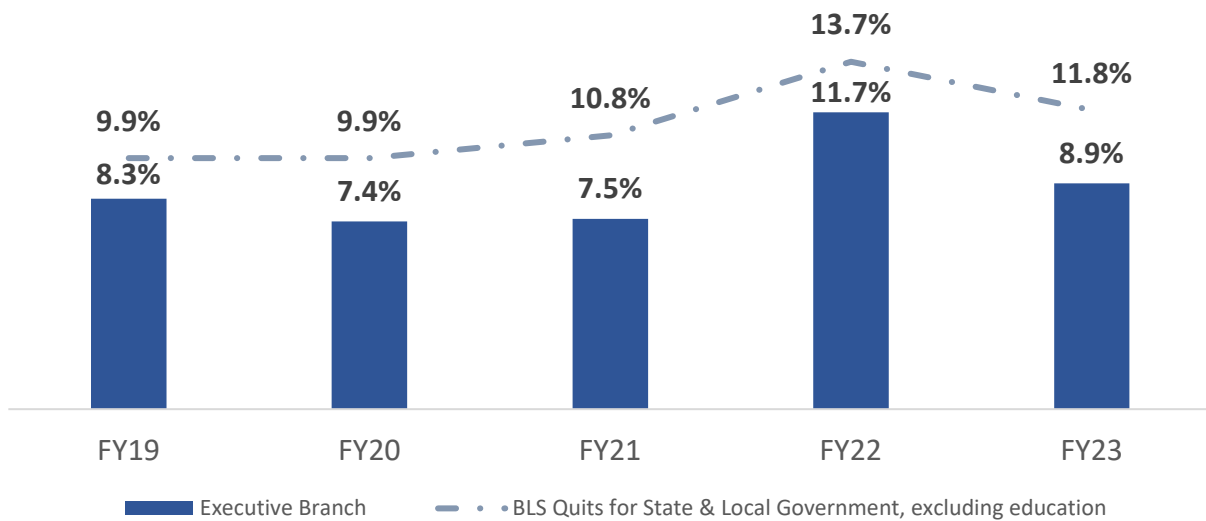


*Executive branch turnover rates for permanent and non-permanent employees, including resignations, retirements and other miscellaneous reasons.

BLS data source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Job Opening and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS), not seasonally adjusted. Total U.S. state and local government job sector, excluding education. <http://data.bls.gov/PDQWeb/jt>.

Quits rates (employees who voluntarily separate) decreased nationwide from 13.7% in FY 2022 to 11.8% in FY 2023. Again, the executive branch rate is consistently lower than the quits rates for the state and local government job sector at only 8.9% in FY 2023.

'Quits' rates for the executive branch compared to the state and local government job sector nationwide*



*"Quits" are employees who left voluntarily, including resignations and movement to another agency for permanent, seasonal and non-permanent employees. It does **not** include retirements, layoffs, dismissals or transfers to another agency. Transfers to another agency refers to agency organizational structure changes. Employees do not initiate this transfer or have an option.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics [Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey](#), not seasonally adjusted. Total U.S. state and local government job sector, excluding education.

As in FY 2022, agencies report challenges in attracting and retaining highly specialized positions (i.e., financial and legal professions). Perceived competition with the private sector (30 of 38 full reporting agencies) and less competitive employee compensation (36 of 38 full reporting agencies) perceived by agencies were still the main reported challenges in hiring and retaining skilled talent. Some agencies also reported salary compression issues due to the minimum wage increases (from \$14.49 per hour in 2022 to \$15.74 per hour in 2023). Agencies reported using starting wage increases, new job classifications, salary retention tools and generous professional development opportunities to attract and retain employees.

Agencies specializing in social services and emergency response functions continue to experience high vacancy rates and employee burnout in fiscal year 2023.

Agencies also reported prioritizing efforts to incorporate considerations for diversity, equity and inclusion on multiple fronts. Agencies worked on improving candidate sourcing by reviewing their diversity flow data for outreach plans; enhancing application equity and inclusion by using inclusive language in job postings, removing non-skill related requirements, and providing accessible processes; and reducing hiring biases by providing implicit bias trainings for hiring panels.

With agencies' enhanced capability to accommodate and support staff with in-person, hybrid and remote working environments, agencies also reported success in attracting and recruiting more diverse candidates by providing "remote optional" career opportunities.

As agencies transition out of pandemic-mitigation work in fiscal year 2023, we observe a significant decrease of agencies reporting workforce issues related to employee morale and mental health in the workplace. Compared to fiscal year 2022, agencies reported employee morale as an important workforce priority decreased from 41 agencies to 12 agencies. Similarly, 29 fewer agencies (from 34 agencies to 5 agencies) reported mental health in the workplace as an important workforce priority.

What agencies are doing

- The Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth uses American Sign Language (ASL) video to advertise on online recruitment platforms specific to the Deaf community. They are also working with WorkSource to attract, recruit and provide formal ASL training to veterans in the effort to remove perceived barriers about obtaining employment at a Deaf-centered agency.
- The Department of Agriculture improved the application process by updating position descriptions, creating diverse hiring panels with other state partners and increasing starting wages for hard to fill positions.
- The Department of Transportation expanded in-training programs to engineering positions and partnered with higher education institutions to develop a talent pipeline.
- The Office of Financial Management used online recruitment system data to identify barriers in the hiring process.
- The State Health Care Authority trained hiring managers on the applicant tracking system to increase system usage and applicant communication.

- The Student Achievement Council refined the application process to focus on skills, experience and abilities. Demographic information is redacted from application materials. They also require at least one neutral observer from a different work group to hedge against bias in the interview and hiring process.

What State HR recommends

- Promote the benefits of work flexibility and culture to expand applicant pools and increase retention.
- Communicate what workers want and promote the benefits of working for the state by emphasizing the benefits and resources available for state employees:
 - Health insurance
 - Retirement
 - Vacation and sick leave
 - Paid holidays
 - Paid leave for jury or other civil duties
 - Leave for military service
 - Newborn, adoptive and emergency childcare leave
 - Leadership opportunities
 - Learning and professional growth opportunities
- Improve application process to remove barriers such as non-essential qualification requirements, selection process bias and un-accessible application materials.
- Shift recruiting needs for talent strategy to anticipate hiring managers' needs, solve problems and spotting opportunities.
- Promote diversity in the workforce as a top agency priority to recruit and retain a workforce that reflects the people we serve.
- Improve new employee onboarding and retention to provide holistic onboarding supports and resources, streamlined onboarding task tracking, and evaluate and improve new employee experiences with regular check-ins and surveys.
- Assess the "minimum qualifications" for job postings to only include those qualifications that are essential to accomplish the job.

Workforce diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging

Governor Jay Inslee directed all state agencies to implement the Washington State Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) Plan and Playbook ([Executive Order 22-04](#)) in fiscal year 2022. The executive order calls on all state agencies to partner with the Office of Equity in a commitment to be an anti-racist government system. This new focus was emphasized in agencies' workforce-related efforts reported in the 2023 HR Management Report survey.

Agencies must incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion into all stages of the employee life cycle to engage, motivate, and support their employees.

Workforce diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) has been reported as agencies' top priority since fiscal year 2019. In 2023, agencies reported implementing holistic strategies and actions to better engage and support their employees. Reported strategies include using surveys and listening sessions, DEIB trainings, proactive respectful workplace policies, and initiatives and plans based on employee feedback.

Agencies also report supporting employee work-life balance for better well-being, providing mental-health and wellness resources and incentive activities, providing hybrid and remote options to support individuals' working styles, and adjusting work shifts/schedules for easier commutes.

What agencies are doing

- The Department of Ecology conducts an annual survey to better link employee experiences with agency efforts and action planning.
- The Department of Licensing hired a DEI trainer to provide DEI training and develop a mentorship program for supervisors to cultivate a people-first, agency values-based leadership culture.
- The Department of Natural Resources created a Workplace Culture and Development Office to provide workplace culture training for leadership and offer multiple DEI and wellness training for employees.
- The Office of Insurance Commissioner completed a culture assessment for executive leadership to identify and prioritize key initiatives to promote and enhance employee experience and retention.

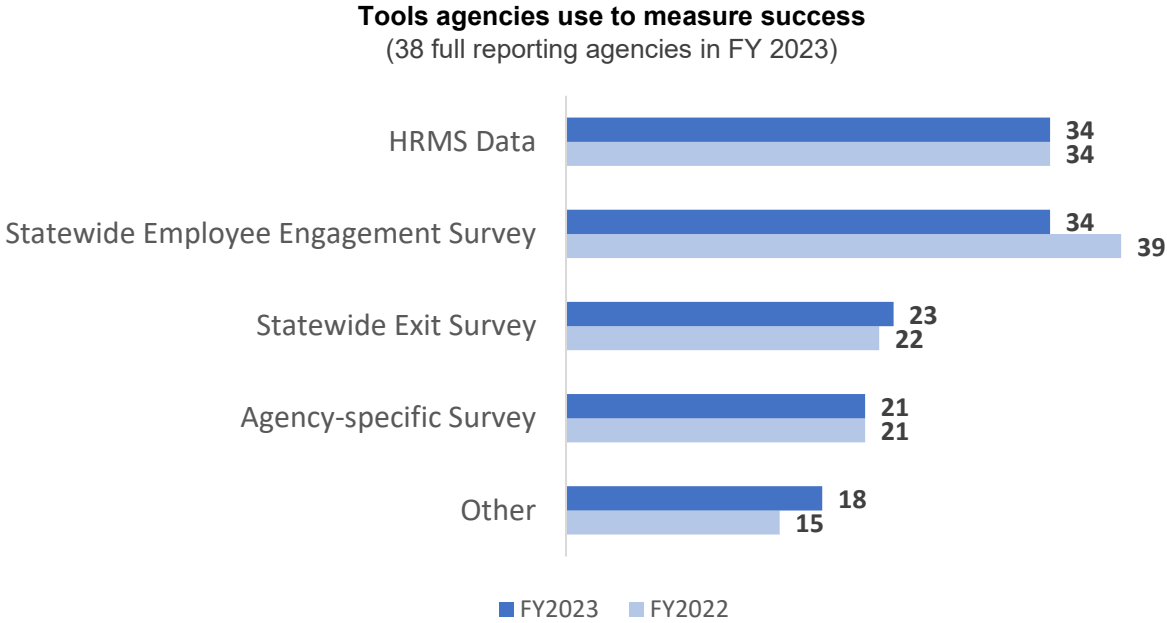
- The State Investment Board’s DEI committee identified diversity metrics to establish a baseline and create success measures. They also worked on demographic data collection and educated staff about the purpose, importance and use of the data.

What State HR recommends

- State HR will continue to work with the Office of Equity, the Department of Enterprise Services and the Statewide DEI Council to ensure DEI policies, strategies and key workforce measures are aligned on the statewide level.
- State HR will continue to provide guidance and strategic advice for agencies’ DEIB policy decisions to align with the directions of executive orders, directives and memoranda.

How we can measure success

It is important for agencies to identify and adopt performance measures and metrics for gauging agency success and employee sentiment. Statewide employee surveys and HRMS data remain the most used barometers to measure employee engagement and monitor progress toward agency goals. Other popular tools for agencies include the Online Recruiting System, Learning Management System, strategic plans and PEAR objectives, and employee feedback.



Agencies use a combination of these tools to separate data into different groups. Many of the data sets include age, gender identity, 2SLGBTQIA+ (Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and additional sexual orientations and gender identities) status, race and ethnicity, disability status, veteran status, supervisor status, county, and job classification. State HR works with agencies to create an inclusive workforce and agency culture by referencing data trends and observations summarized by this analysis.

What agencies are doing

- The Office of the Attorney General conducts an internal survey with leaders and HR staff to assess efficacy of HR support and identify priorities going forward.
- The State Health Care Authority hosted all-staff listening sessions to gather employee experiences and perspectives.

What State HR recommends

- Use the OFM [workforce data center](#) dashboards for data insights to help workforce planning and strategies.
- Analyze data from the Online Recruiting System to accurately track recruitment metrics related to applicant movement with consistent data entry. This will help agencies identify when employees drop out of the process and help agencies make data-driven decisions.

Workforce representation

Executive branch agencies must develop an annual affirmative action plan to address the underrepresentation of people of color, people with disabilities, veterans, and women in the workforce Orders [13-02](#), [16-04](#), [17-01](#), [19-01](#) and [22-02](#).

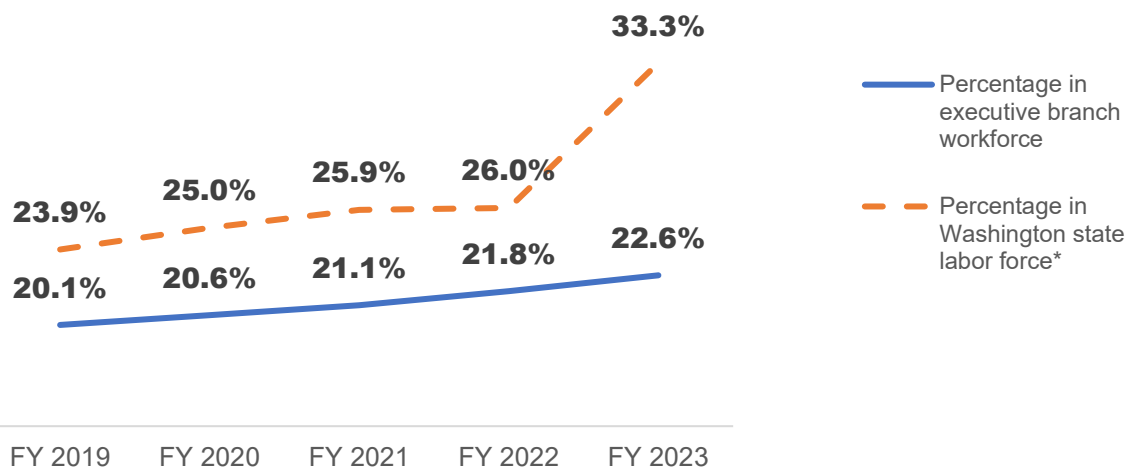
Improvements to the 2020 Census reveal that the U.S. population is much more multiracial and diverse than what we measured in the past.

People of color

People of color comprise 33.3% of Washington’s labor force yet make up only 22.6% of the executive branch workforce. Over the last five fiscal years, the average gap between the representation of people of color in the labor force and the executive branch workforce was 5.6 percentage points.

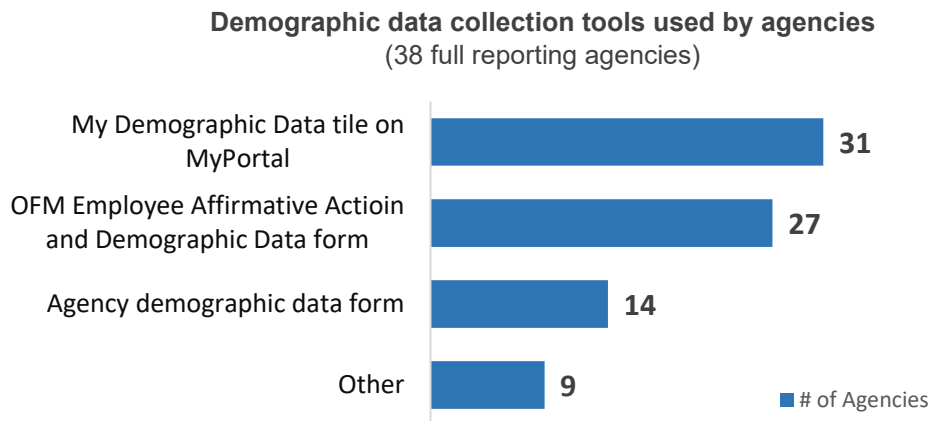
The U.S. Census Bureau redesigned two questions during the 2020 Census for race data collection. These changes are the reason for the increase in the representation of people of color in Washington state’s labor force (as seen in the chart below). The changes more accurately depict how people self-identify race. The improvements reveal that the U.S. population is much more multiracial and diverse than what we measured in the past. Nearly all groups saw population gains and the ‘two or more races’ population was especially large (up 276%). The ‘white alone’ population declined by 8.6% since 2010.

The percentage of people of color in the executive branch remains lower than those available in the state’s labor force



*American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates (Table ID: S2301). U.S. Census Bureau. Includes people of color in Washington’s civilian labor force.

In fiscal year 2023, 14% of the executive branch workforce had not disclosed their race and ethnicity. This is up 4 percentage points since fiscal year 2019. Agency strategies to encourage demographic reporting include providing a demographic data form during new employee orientation, reminding employees to update data using the My Portal application, and sharing workforce data with employees about how data is used to increase employee trust and inform business decisions. Agencies also reported conducting regular data reviews to identify data integrity and improvement strategies.



What agencies are doing

- The Department of Natural Resources partnered with the Department of Corrections to establish a new special employment program that focuses on employing transitioning inmates and formerly incarcerated individuals in permanent full-time positions to expand existing wildfire, forest health and silvicultural programs.
- The Department of Veterans Affairs analyzed data from the Online Recruiting System to see where people of color dropped out of the recruitment process. They learned that certain ethnic groups were dropping out at higher rates than other groups. To address the issue, bias and systematic racism training are required for all hiring panels. They found a significant increase in diverse candidates moving forward in the hiring process after implementing the training.

- The Washington State Department of Transportation ran a recruitment campaign with King 5 and the Seattle Seahawks, airing ads on broadcast and streaming platforms. There was a 50% increase in their Careers page web traffic and a 5% increase in diversity amongst applicants compared to the previous year.

What State HR recommends

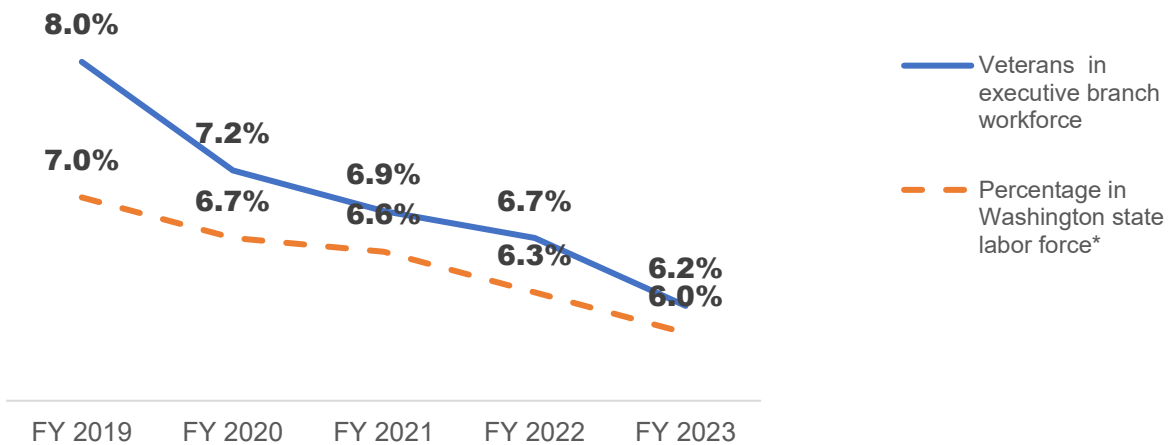
- State HR is partnering with the Department of Enterprise Services and the Office of Equity to establish a way to regularly report our collected statewide demographic data for applicants and candidates. This will enhance the state's ability to identify barriers to inclusion and employment with the state.
- State HR will continue to assess workforce demographic data sources, data integrity and identify demographics data improvement strategies. Working with agency partners, State HR will continue to provide resources, education and guidance on reporting and monitoring of workforce demographics.

Veterans, National Guard and Reserve members

In 2019, Governor Inslee signed an [executive order](#) that requires agencies to develop employment plans that include veterans, reservists, National Guard members and military spouses.

Internships are the most common employment strategy that transitioning service members can use to find jobs after they leave military service.

The percentage of veterans in the executive branch remains higher than those available in the state's labor force



* U.S. Census Bureau. Includes all veterans in Washington's civilian labor force, ages 18 to 64. (Table ID S2101).

Veterans represent 6.2% of our workforce in fiscal year 2023. This exceeds the available labor force. The percentage of veterans represented in the state workforce has decreased during the last five years and continues to trend downward. According to the [PEW Research Center](#), this trend is happening across the US. It coincides with decreases in active-duty personnel and is expected to continue declining over the next 25 years.

Many agencies developed mechanisms to track employment opportunities to help transitioning service members find jobs (16 of 38 agencies reporting). Similarly, an increasing number of agencies (20 agencies, 6 more agencies than fiscal year 2022) have strategies to attract National Guard and Reserve members.

What agencies are doing

- The Department of Agriculture sends emails to any military service member that applies but is not hired. The email contains resources for service members in Washington state.
- The Department of Labor and Industries has a Veterans Placement Program which includes military spouses. The program provides direct placement in non-permanent jobs.
- The Department of Revenue has a dedicated military recruiter who maintains close contact with the career center at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) and with Camp Murray.
- The Washington State Patrol recruiting team meets weekly with transitioning soldiers on JBLM and other Washington state military bases to assist them in finding state jobs.

What State HR recommends

- State HR will continue to promote the Society for Human Resource Management Foundation [Veterans at Work certification](#), a training course to learn about and better understand employment circumstances and challenges for transitioning military members, veterans and military spouses.
- State HR will continue to advise and support the Veterans Employee Resource Group to increase the veteran and military spouse representation in the state workforce and recognize employee military service.
- We encourage agencies to create bridging and flexible scheduling opportunities to meet the needs of job seekers in the military community.
- We encourage agencies to begin or improve employment opportunities and craft specific strategies to attract and retain National Guard, Reserve members and military spouses.

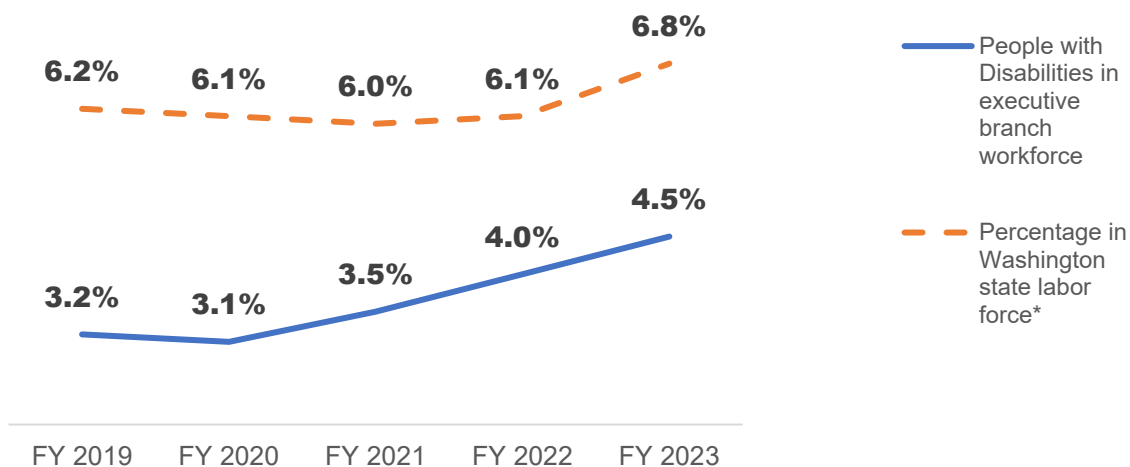
Hire more people with disabilities

The governor signed a formal order that requires executive branch agencies to develop an annual employment plan to address the underrepresentation of people with disabilities ([Executive Order 13-02](#)). Agencies submit annual plans to State HR but the statewide representation of people with disabilities continues to fall short of the 5% target.

The percentage of people with disabilities identified through the Statewide Employee Engagement Survey is higher than currently reported in the HRMS data.

The percentage of people with disabilities in our workforce is 4.5%. This is an increase of 0.5 percentage points from the previous fiscal year. While this is a positive trend, the workforce is still below the 6.8% available in Washington’s labor force and below the 5% target that the executive order sets.

The percentage of people with disabilities employed by the state compared to the percentage in the labor force



*American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates (Table ID: S2301). U.S. Census Bureau. Includes Washington civilian labor force.

People with disabilities are retiring at higher rates than those without a disability (2.8% retirement rate compared to 2% for those without a disability).

Agency strategies to encourage disability disclosure include reminding employees to use the My Portal application to update demographics, sharing workforce data with employees, and letting them know how we use the data to inform business decisions. Disability representation could be higher, according to the 2023 Statewide Employee Engagement Survey results. These show 13% of survey participants identify as having a disability, while only 4.5% of the workforce identifies as having a disability in the HR management system.

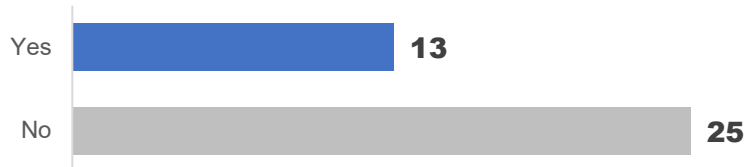
What agencies are doing

- The Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth reports that Deaf employees do not typically consider themselves disabled. They hope that a “culturally Deaf” option can be added to the affirmative action demographic data form, HRMS, and the My Demographics data tile in My Portal.
- The Department of Financial Institutions includes information about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations in their job postings to ensure candidates are informed and the information is easily accessible.

Involve the Supported Employment program

The [Supported Employment](#) program provides competitive, paid employment opportunities for individuals with developmental and other significant disabilities.

Number of agencies participating in the Supported Employment program
(38 full reporting agencies)



What State HR recommends

- Participate in and increase the usage of the [Supported Employment program](#).
- Provide training for managers and supervisors on removing barriers in the hiring process and reasonable accommodations (required by State HR [Directive 20-02](#)).
- Establish stronger relationships with the Department of Social and Health Services [Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services](#) and the [Department of Services for the Blind](#) to obtain resources for recruitment and retention.
- Re-survey employees to improve the disability representation data integrity.
- Increase engagement in agency employee resource groups and the statewide [Disability Inclusion Network BRG](#).
- Incorporate disability employment strategies within agency's PEAR Plan.
- Attend [The Reasonable Accommodation Roundtable Events](#).

Additional resources

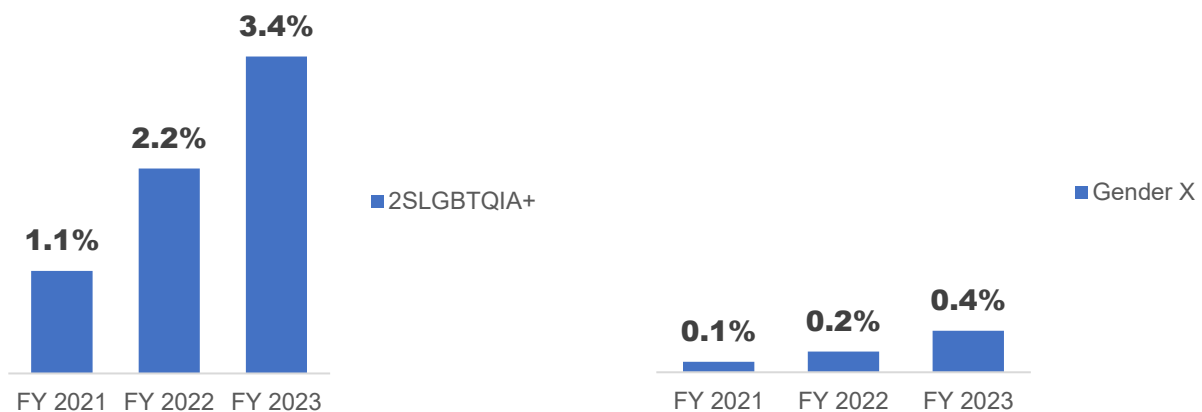
- [Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment \(GCDE\)](#)
- [State Human Resources – Persons with disabilities in state government](#)

2SLGBTQIA+ community

The LGBTQ Inclusion and Safe Places Initiative, [Directive 16-11](#), charges Washington state cabinet and small-cabinet agencies to support a 2SLGBTQIA+ employee resource group, a best practices committee, and Safe Place program.

Sexual orientation and gender identity are included in the protected class status against workplace discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

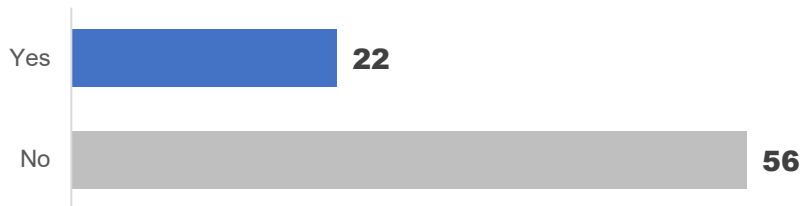
The percentage of 2SLGBTQIA+ and Gender X employees in the workforce



Agencies began measuring 2SLGBTQIA+ and gender X/non-binary representation in the workforce in 2020. In fiscal year 2023, 3.4% of the workforce identified as 2SLGBTQIA+(an increase of 1.2 percentage points from last fiscal year), while 0.4% identified as gender X/non-binary. In fact, 2SLGBTQIA+ and gender X/non-binary representation could be higher, according to the 2023 Statewide Employee Engagement Survey results. Nine percent of the survey participants identified as 2SLGBTQIA+ and 1% of the participants identified as gender X/non-binary. The general fear of discrimination reported by the 2SLGBTQIA+community both in the state and across the nation may be the lead cause of lower self-reporting rate reflected in the state HRMS data.

While the [Washington State LGBTQ Commission](#) and statewide Business Resource Groups are taking the lead to create and promote best practices to support our 2SLGBTQIA+ workforce, agencies also continue to make progress on 2SLGBTQIA+ related matters. This includes using gender-affirming restroom signage and encouraging employees to use pronouns. In fiscal year 2023, 10 more agencies reported (22 agencies total) established or/and use these policies.

Number of agencies with policies related to inclusion of 2SLGBTQIA+ employees
(78 agencies reporting)



What agencies are doing

- The Health Care Authority has implemented Gender X options on the PEBB/SEBB health insurance plan forms. The agency also has gender-affirming signage at all restrooms and a very active internal employee resource group, the Pride ERG.
- The Department of Labor and Industries updated restroom signage for gender-inclusive restrooms, posted an article on their intranet, created a Frequently Asked Question document, and held a community forum in which employees could ask questions and share concerns.

What State HR recommends

State HR will continue to advise and support the [Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion Network \(RAIN\) BRG](#) as they work with agencies to identify best practices to provide safe and inclusive environments for 2SLGBTQIA+ employees. State HR also recommends agencies use best practices guides and trainings developed by the RAIN BRG. These include:

- [Transitioning in the Workplace Toolkit](#)
- [Adding Pronouns to Your Signature Line FAQ](#)
- [Use of Pronouns in External Communication](#)
- [Including a Gender X Option on Forms](#)
- [Inclusive Bathroom Signage Recommendations](#)
- [Training: The Importance of Pronoun Usage](#)
- [Training: Supporting Trans and Nonbinary Customers](#)

Job seeker and candidate experience

Agencies use a variety of methods to recruit candidates from historically marginalized populations. For the most part, agency recruitment methods do not differ based on the diverse group. Job fair attendance is back in vogue now that post-pandemic, in-person events are regaining popularity. The use of technology such as QR codes, talent sourcing site licenses and social media is gaining ground.

Investment in recruiter training and resources is vital with the limited supply of candidates with high-demand skills.

The candidate's experience remains important to an agency's reputation as an employer of choice. Communication is the key strategy that can create a positive experience for job seekers and candidates. It is important to communicate the recruitment timeline, the interview process, sample questions, what to expect and how to prepare, and notify candidates who are not selected.

Agencies reported the following strategies to make sure job seekers and candidates have a positive experience during the hiring process:

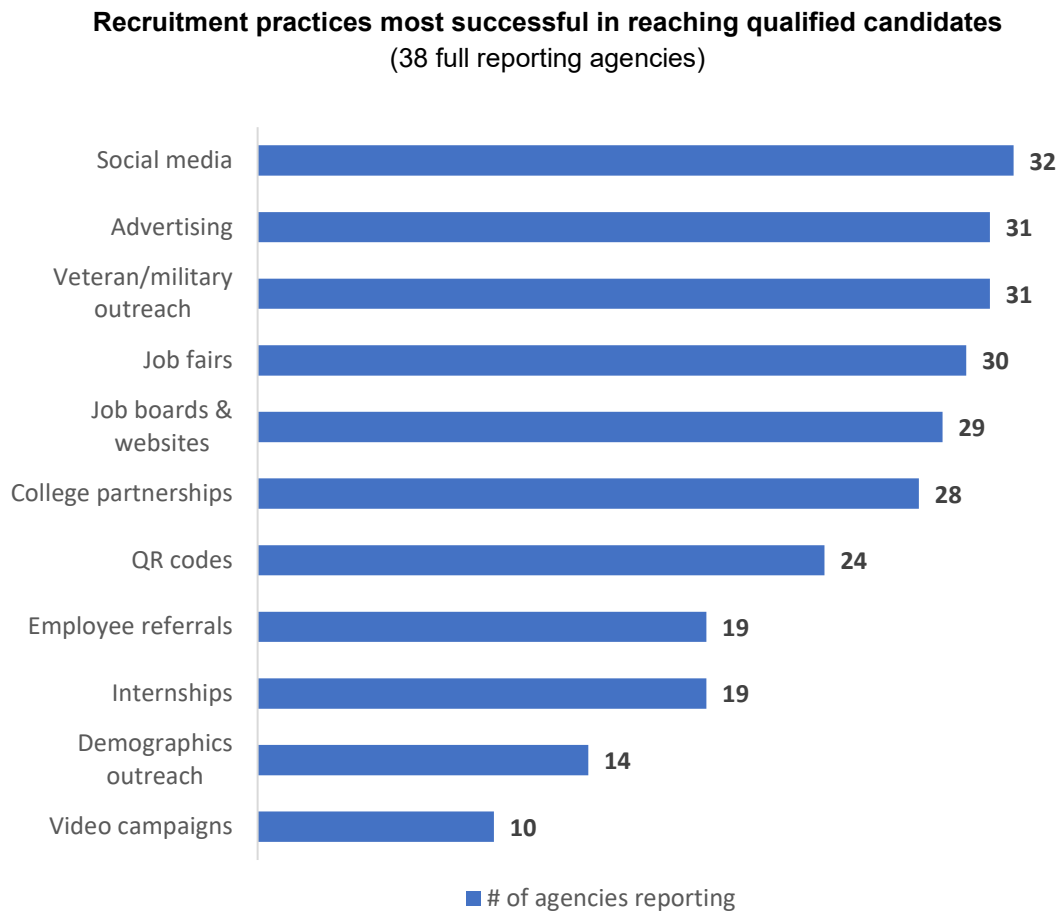
- Provide a clear job description (36 of 38 full reporting agencies)
- Provide training to interview panel (35 of 38 full reporting agencies)
- Communicate with candidates regularly (34 of 38 full reporting agencies)
- Diverse interview panel (32 of 38 full reporting agencies)
- Provide information about the interview process (29 of 38 full reporting agencies)

Invest in recruitment resources

The current decline in job applicants for the public and private sector has created a talent war that demands more investment in training and resources for recruitment. It is also vital to invest in recruiter training with the limited supply of skilled candidates.

Less than half of the agencies (15 of 38 full reporting agencies) reported they have a dedicated recruitment budget. The recruitment budget is mainly allocated for advertising, marketing, and outreach and recruiting activities. Most agencies invested in social media and online platforms to communicate with candidates, such as LinkedIn,

Facebook, Instagram, Glassdoor, Indeed, HireEZ, Monster, WorkSource and Handshake (used for college/university outreach). Several agencies also reported using the Online Recruiting System features (Job Boost and NeoGov Attract) to post their job announcements on job advertisement platforms.



The public sector nationwide is experiencing an increase in job openings while facing challenges of declining application rates¹. Posting jobs and attending low-participant job fairs will no longer meet agencies' increasing hiring demands. It is important for agencies to consider a proactive approach to finding candidates using alternative sourcing methods, innovative outreach campaigns and informational interviews. Consider also partnering with communication teams to plan and implement recruitment marketing campaigns. Communications has expertise in creating branded messages and access to distribution channels for improved visibility.

¹ [Webinar 2022: Public sector hiring crisis: How to attract more applicants](#). National Association of State Personnel Executives. 2022

Recruit candidates from historically marginalized populations

Agencies reported a variety of approaches to recruit candidates from historically marginalized populations including job boards, community events and professional associations. Agencies also partner with their internal Pro-Equity Anti-Racism team and statewide BRGs.

Remote/hybrid options remain popular with job seekers and virtual interview options have helped agencies to expand recruitment efforts statewide and reach diverse communities across Washington.

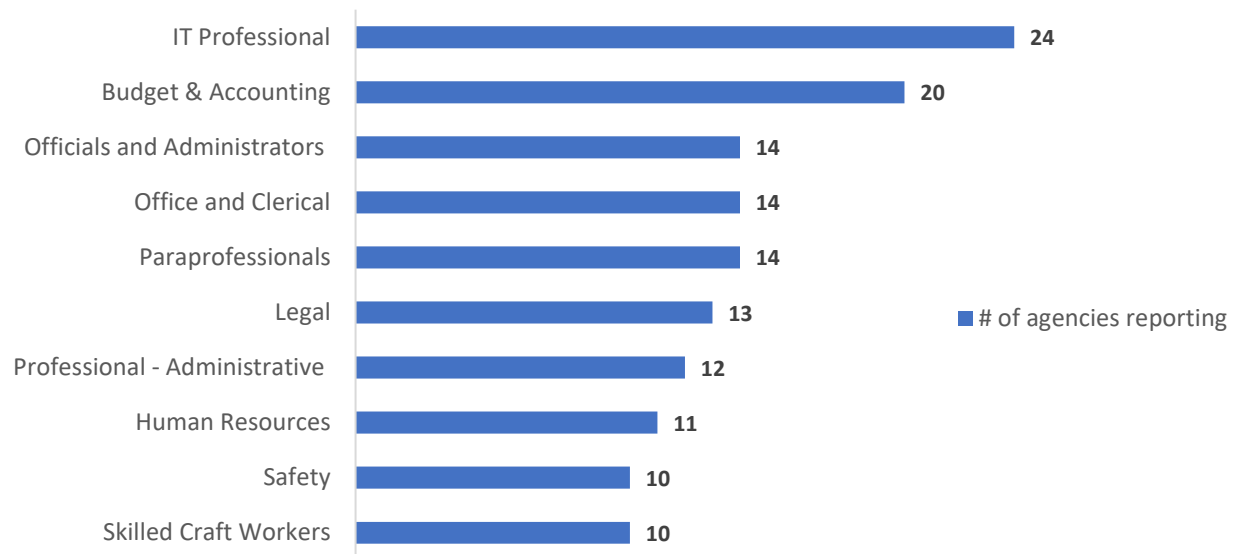
Recognizing historical barriers embedded in the state recruitment practice, State HR collaborated with the Department of Enterprise Services to remove the drivers' license question from the state's online recruiting system (effective January 1, 2024).

Several agencies reported efforts to create a more inclusive recruitment process by crediting candidates' lived experiences, removing non-skill related position requirements from job announcements and removing attachments from applications.

'Hard-to-fill' job groups

Many agencies continue to report difficulties filling positions in information technology, legal and budget/accounting. Some of the most common perceived difficulties were high educational and experience requirements, salary competition from the private sector, and where a job is geographically located. Talent acquisition teams should partner with their hiring manager to identify other candidate sources for hard-to-fill positions.

Recruitment and retention efforts focus on these job groups (38 full reporting agencies)



What agencies are doing

- The Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals promoted remote work to recruit hard-to-fill legal assistant positions. They successfully expanded the applicant pool to candidates outside of the duty station and increased new hire diversity to 33%.
- The Department of Commerce launched a pilot program to allow candidates with lived experience with homelessness or housing instability to receive up to two years of experience credited to their overall qualifications.
- The Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) launched the DVA Nursing Assistant Academy Pilot at the Washington Soldier's Home campus to train and develop candidates into qualified and credentialed caregivers.
- The Liquor and Cannabis Board advertises and sources from Indeed.com, Monster.com, WorkSource, Handshake and others. They also utilize LinkedIn and Instagram to attract candidates.
- The State Parks and Recreation Commission created marketing videos that are shown in local theaters of targeted recruitment areas. They also developed partnerships with colleges that have national park ranger law enforcement programs.

What State HR recommends

- Use the Online Recruiting System (OLRS) consistently. It will greatly improve the reliability of applicant flow data. Knowing where diversity falls out of the recruitment process will help identify barriers to state employment.
- Re-consider top candidates who were interviewed but not hired. Continue to reach out to these “silver medalist” candidates with other agency opportunities.
- Use workforce data to plan and refine recruitment strategies. Data can be retrieved from the OLRs analytics and reporting dashboard and the [OFM Workforce data dashboards](#).
- Use OFM’s [Diversity Recruiting Resources page](#) to find associations and organizations for diverse candidate sourcing.

New employee experience

The first day at a new job often brings a mix of excitement but can also be overwhelming and stressful. It is important for agencies to set their new hires up for success with a holistic approach to support and onboard their new employees.

Onboard new employees

Onboarding is an opportunity to educate new hires about the agency's mission and work. Being familiar with the agency will help new employees fit in. Frequent check-ins are essential to keep them from feeling lost or forgotten. New employees must be introduced to coworkers. It's a team effort to make sure employees get off to a successful start. Hiring managers and HR must collaborate to get an employee onboarded and trained while also instilling agency values and connecting them with colleagues.

Onboarding is a team effort, working together to help employees find success in their new roles.

The top four strategies agencies incorporated in the onboarding process were:

- Make sure new hires know the policies and procedures for raising concerns and filing complaints about their work environment (37 of 38 full reporting agencies).
- Ensure new hires are aware of policies and procedures for requesting reasonable accommodations for their work environment (35 of 38 full reporting agencies).
- Ensure new hires know about the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (35 of 38 full reporting agencies).
- Inform new hires about internal and statewide business resource groups (35 of 38 full reporting agencies).

Strategies that agencies incorporate into the onboarding process (38 full reporting agencies)



What agencies are doing

- The Department of Health has an onboarding webpage where new employees, new supervisors and hiring managers can find resources related to the onboarding process.
- The Department of Veterans Affairs created 30/60/90-day new hire surveys, provide training for supervisors to conduct one-on-one employee check-ins at regular intervals.
- The State Investment Board implemented the FreshService Onboarding Module to track the onboarding process. They established service agreements to promote the understanding of roles, expectations, consistency and transparency.

What State HR recommends

- Assign a mentor or “buddy” to ensure that new employees are connected right away.
- Inform new hires about [Washington State Employee Assistance Program](#), [Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program](#), [statewide business resource groups](#) (BRGs), agency employee resource groups (ERGs), and other wellness program information to enhance inclusiveness.
- Develop an onboarding checklist to keep new hires on track and to ensure nothing essential is missed during the onboarding process.

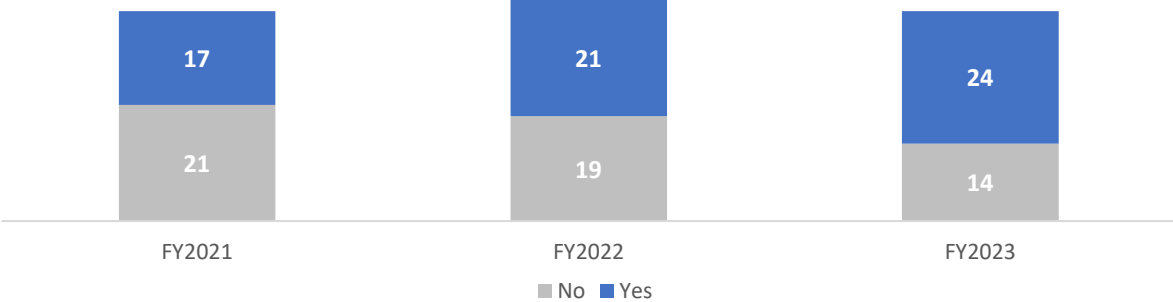
Internal employee resource groups and affinity groups

Employee resource groups (ERGs) and affinity groups improve employee engagement and enhance diversity, equity and inclusion practices in the workplace by enabling employees to participate in activities that appeal to their personal interests.

ERGs improve employee engagement and enhance DEI practices in the workplace.

The common theme among agencies for welcoming people from historically marginalized communities is to promote employee participation in ERGs and statewide business resource groups (BRGs). Many agencies also introduce and encourage new employees to join the groups during new employee orientation (35 of 38 full reporting agencies).

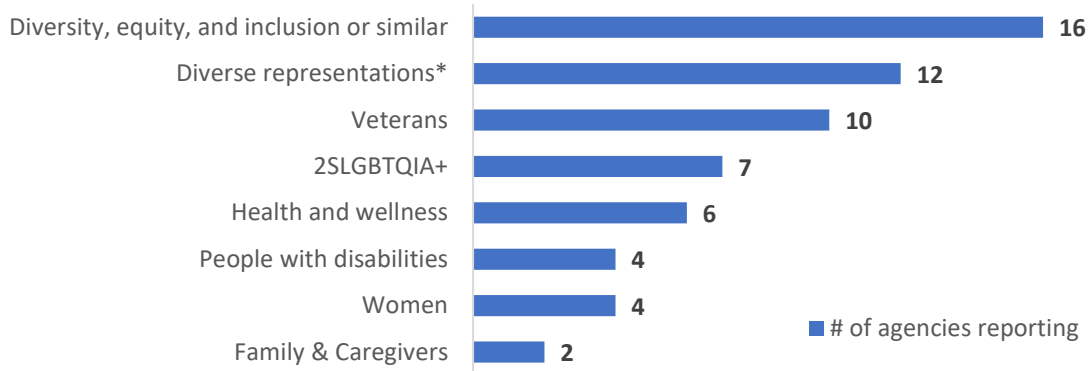
Agencies* with internal employee resource groups or affinity groups
(38 full reporting agencies in FY 2023)



*The total number of agencies reporting varied each year due to the number of agencies required to submit HR Management Report (i.e. agencies with 100 or more employees) may change every year.

Twenty-four agencies formed or continued to host internal groups to support the interests of their employees. The groups can be as unique and varied as the workforce. These include groups formed for DEIB, specific ethnic groups, veterans, 2SLGBTQIA+, disabilities, women, professional development, health and wellness, caregivers of children with special needs, and hobbies. Twelve of 38 full reporting agencies have ERGs for ethnic or racial groups, either separated (e.g., Black Employee Inclusion Network and White Responsibility Gatherings) or grouped (e.g., BIPOC, multi-ethnic, and AANHPI). Some agencies have more than one ERG for ethnic or racial groups.

Types of internal employee resource groups and affinity groups
(38 full reporting agencies)



*A total of 20 race/ethnicity-focused ERGs were established by 12 agencies.

On the enterprise level, there are seven [statewide business resource groups](#):

- [Blacks United in Leadership and Diversity \(BUILD\)](#)
- [Disability Inclusion Network \(DIN\)](#)
- [Hawaiians, Asians, and Pacific Islanders Promoting an Empowerment Network \(HAPPEN\)](#)
- [Latino Leadership Network \(LLN\)](#)
- [Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion network \(RAIN\)](#)
- [Veteran’s Employee Resource Group \(VERG\)](#)
- [Washington Immigrant Network \(WIN\)](#)

What agencies are doing

- The Department of Transportation and Department of Ecology lean on their Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Respect ERGs as an advisory body to support diversity efforts throughout the agency and to advise their leadership teams.
- The Department of Health has healing, support, learning and unlearning spaces that are intentional identity spaces focused on needed conversations and actions.
- The Department of Commerce and the Department of Corrections have an ERG for tribal or Native American/Alaska Native people.

What State HR recommends

- State HR will continue to educate agencies about the distinction between business resource groups, employee resource groups, and affinity groups and their function within the agency.
- Use OFM best practices to encourage and support employees' participation in the statewide BRGs: [Supporting Employee Business Resource Group Participation Policy](#) and [BRG Participation Policy FAQ](#).
- Support employees' participation in BRG and ERG leadership teams. This will also help employees to develop their leadership skills.

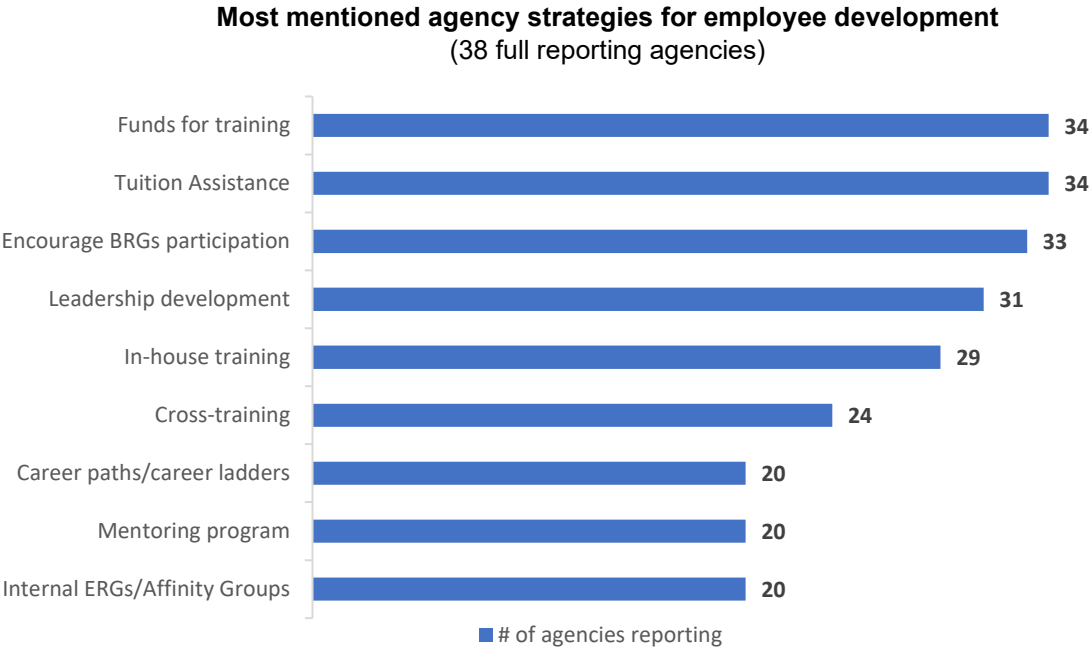
Employee development and performance evaluation

Employee development

State agencies reported investing in a wide range of strategies for employee development. Employees have choices from both internal and external resources to enhance their technical growth, leadership skills and professional connections.

Tuition assistance programs are vital to attracting and retaining a skilled workforce. They also promote a culture of growth, development and innovation.

The most common strategies agencies reported for employee development were providing funds for training and tuition assistance.



What agencies are doing

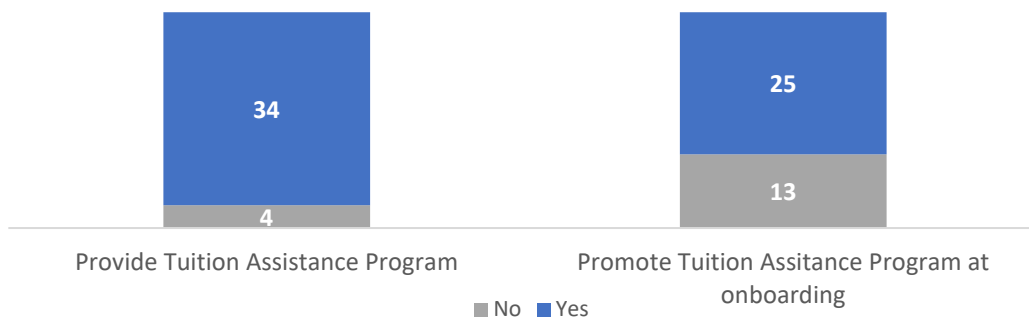
- The Department of Labor and Industries' Continuous Improvement Academy provides a series of progressive continuous improvement certification courses for Lean Six Sigma.
- The State Parks and Recreation Commission partnered with DES to provide Leading Others and Crucial Conversations training for supervisors and managers.
- The Superintendent of Public Instruction developed an agency training plan for supervisors and hiring managers on employee performance development, expectations and evaluation process.

Tuition assistance program

Tuition assistance programs demonstrate that agencies are invested in their employees by supporting education and skill development. Supporting employee professional development benefits both the agency and the state workforce. Most tuition assistance policies require that covered coursework pertains to a function of the Washington state government.

Thirty-four agencies (90% of full reporting agencies) provide tuition assistance programs and 25 of those agencies promote their tuition assistance program during their onboarding process. Agencies have unique tuition assistance policies, procedures and forms. Some agencies have set tuition assistance budgets, while others do not. Agencies also vary in the amount they will reimburse, what types of employees qualify for the tuition assistance program, and what types of courses they will reimburse for.

Numbers of agencies with tuition assistance program and promotion efforts
(38 full reporting agencies)



What agencies are doing

- The Department of Commerce offers up to \$7,500 per calendar year for accredited higher education courses. Their reimbursement rate is 75% of the University of Washington Tacoma undergraduate rate.
- The Department of Natural Resources, Department of Financial Institutions, Office of Financial Management, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Lottery Commission offer pre-payment options for course registration fees.

What State HR recommends

- Create a tuition assistance policy with qualifying criteria and application processing times.
- Train supervisors on the eligibility and approval criteria for the tuition assistance program. Set eligibility standards, approval criteria and appeals process across the agency.
- Include information about the agency's tuition assistance program in the onboarding process. Post information in a shared location and remind employees where to find it.
- Offer employees prepay options for tuition assistance to increase equitable access.

Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program

Public Service Loan Forgiveness is a federal program that forgives the remaining balance on direct loans for full-time public service employees after they have made payments under a qualifying repayment plan while working for an eligible public employer.

"The positive impact PSLF has on staff can improve the quality of life for people who work in a very demanding field. It also enables a higher retention rate for agencies."
- Department of Children, Youth and Families

OFM partnered with the Student Loan Advocate's Office and a group of public servants from state agencies to increase awareness and remove barriers to the PSLF program, as well as equip agencies with resources to help their employees access this benefit.

The PSLF program can aid recruitment and retention efforts. State HR recently added a PSLF tracking feature in HR Management System to help agencies track employee participation. State HR also partnered with the Department of Retirement Services to add a PSLF application reminder on retirement preparation checklists and seminars.

What State HR recommends

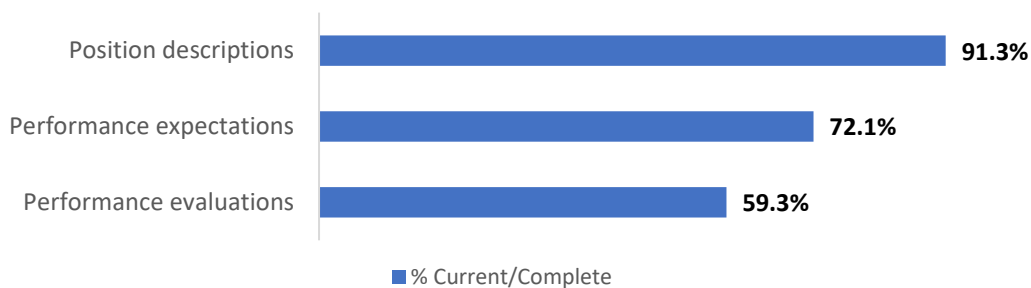
- Use HRMS to track employees PSLF employment certification status.
- Encourage employees to use the resources on the [Washington Student Loan Advocate's PSLF webpage](#) and submit complaints via the [Washington Student Complaint Portal](#).
- Provide separated employees with PSLF information and remind them to apply while still eligible.
- Refer to the [PSLF webpage](#) for templates, guidance and frequently asked questions.
- Learn PSLF best practices for employers from OFM's HR Lunch & Learn webinars:
 - [Understanding PSLF and the Limited Waiver Opportunity](#)
 - [PSLF Help Tool E-Sign Guidance for Employers](#)
 - [PSLF Employer Guidance - Q&A](#)

Performance management

Performance development plans (PDPs) provide written expectations and assessments of an employee's demonstrated key results and competencies. A state law requires supervisors to give classified employees performance feedback at least annually ([WAC 357-37](#)). Many agencies also provide employee reviews for exempt and management service employees.

Performance management, when handled skillfully can increase job satisfaction, employee retention, loyalty and overall performance of the organization.

State employees with current evaluations, expectations, and position descriptions
(38 full reporting agencies)



What agencies are doing

- The Office of Administrative Hearings offers “Giving and Receiving Feedback” training to employees and supervisors in advance of the annual performance evaluation process.
- The State Health Care Authority piloted the annual PDP automation process using Microsoft ServiceNow to reduce processing and filing time. They also created alternative PDP expectation and evaluation forms that are streamlined and have DEI competency-relevant performance expectations. They hosted an enterprise-wide [lunch and learn webinar](#) to illustrate successes, challenges and practices.

What State HR recommends

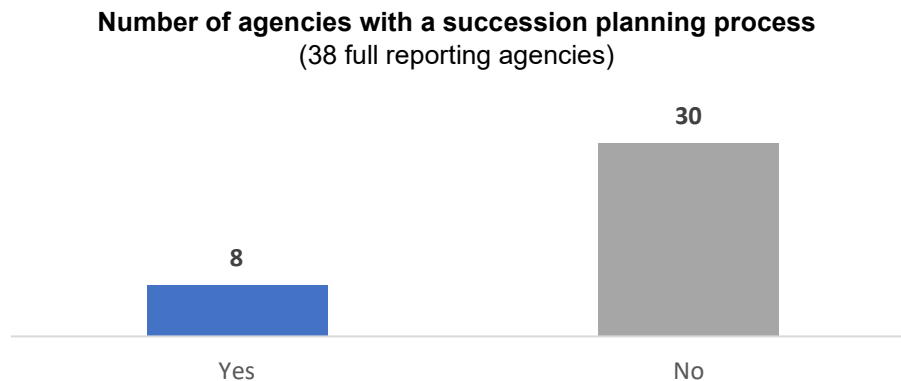
- Develop a knowledge retention program to help mitigate potential skill shortages in key functions. A knowledge transfer approach includes training sessions, coaching, mentoring, documentation and job shadowing.
- Conduct competency assessments to see if current competency levels match or are close to those required for critical current and future positions.
- Identify and develop career paths for individuals within an organization who show interest in and/or have the potential to assume key positions in the future.
- Continued emphasis on monitoring employee performance through various performance appraisal methods, such as check-ins and feedback.
- Conduct frequent rating of performance through constructive summaries and reviews.
- Continue marketing the [Choice Performance Confirmation program](#) to increase participation.

Succession planning

State HR launched a [Succession Planning Toolkit](#) in 2020 to help agencies develop succession plans that help employees develop skills and get promoted. Succession plans typically include individual development plans, mentoring programs, developmental job assignments and training programs.

To be successful, succession planning teams must identify the core competencies required for a broad range of key positions, including those that may not even exist today.

State HR published a [succession planning dashboard](#) that provides agency workforce data to help identify, assess and develop agency succession plans. The dashboard focuses on age and tenure groups related to succession planning indicators.



What agencies are doing

- The Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals has a succession planning intranet webpage listing steps an employee can take to be a competitive candidate for future opportunities.
- The Department of Agriculture's leadership discussed retirements within a three-year timeframe. Divisions set goals to train new staff before the retiring employees leave their positions.
- The Department of Labor and Industries' Succession Planning Program works with incumbents to collect information about their position and use it to update position descriptions, create job postings, manage performance, create valid selection systems, inform how to build skills in required competencies, and create qualified candidate pools for filling vacancies.

- The Department of Transportation uses the succession planning tool to analyze position requirements and document core competencies, skills, and institutional knowledge critical for success. They also create action plans and training opportunities to develop staff to meet the agency's future needs when those positions become vacant.

What State HR recommends

- State HR will continue to improve the [Succession Planning Toolkit](#) to help agencies align their staffing and leadership needs with their goals.
- Utilize other talent management and succession planning tool such as [9 Box Grid](#).

Employee experience and retention

Statewide employee engagement survey

Since 2006, Washington has conducted a statewide employee engagement survey to collect vital information on its perceived status as an employer. The survey is a tool for agency leadership to measure success and inform areas of growth and policy decisions.

A positive employee experience is highly correlated with a feeling of belonging.

Nearly 90 agencies participated in the 2023 survey. However, there are other important times to gather employee sentiments. Agencies also reported conducting onboarding surveys, employee experience surveys, stay interviews and pulse surveys to assess employee experience at various points of the employee life cycle.

2023 Statewide Employee Engagement Survey highlights:

Agency Successes

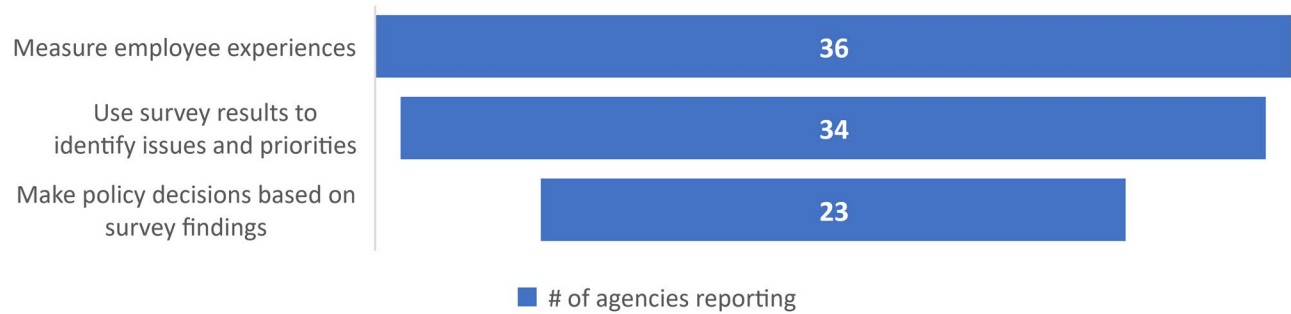
- 86% of respondents felt their immediate supervisor treated them with respect.
- 79% of respondents felt their immediate supervisor created an environment of openness and trust.
- 78% of respondents agreed that their immediate supervisor is a good leader.
- 76% of respondents indicated that they are satisfied with their telework and remote work opportunities.

Areas for improvement

- 56% of respondents indicated they are appropriately involved in decisions that affect their work.
- 51% of respondents indicated they had opportunities for advancement.
- 48% of respondents indicated senior leadership at their agency did a good job of communicating the reasons behind important changes that are made.
- 48% of respondents felt supported during organizational change at their agency.

Most agencies reported utilizing survey results to identify agency priorities, and more than half of the agencies indicated they made policy decisions based on survey findings.

How agencies use Statewide Employee Engagement Survey results (38 full reporting agencies)



What agencies are doing

- The Department of Commerce provided leadership with detailed results analysis and improvement recommendations, published agency results through email and its intranet, and shared agency/division/unit-specific results via video conferences.
- The Health Care Authority focused on improving survey scores for employee recognition. They developed a supervisor resource guide and training for recognition, created a LinkedIn Learning pathway for recognition and appreciation, and created a survey to learn how their employees prefer to be recognized.
- The State Lottery Commission created employee listening sessions and anonymous quarterly pulse surveys to gather experiences, needs and input for improving the agency's practices, policies and strategies.

What State HR recommends

- Use statewide employee survey data to identify issues and develop strategies. Visit OFM [Employee Engagement Survey page](#) for more information.
- Use the “Engagement Correlations” page on your agency’s employee engagement survey (Qualtrics) dashboard to see your top five drivers of engagement. Then act on your results!
- Conduct “stay” interviews, which focus on what the agency can do to help employees remain with the agency. Find out why your employees leave, where they go and build relationships with those who work there.
- Explore the use of pulse surveys to measure agency-specific initiatives. Start with short and infrequent pulse surveys but act based on the survey results and communicate to employees of what you have done or will do with those results.

Modern work environment

Governor Inslee directs Washington’s modern workplace strategy initiative ([Executive Order 16-07](#)). Led by State HR, the initiative helps agencies to identify, experiment with, and adopt innovative ways to support business performance. This includes modernizing the physical environment, providing greater workplace flexibility and enabling a more mobile workforce. State HR began collecting eligibility and participation data for telework, flexible schedules and compressed workweeks in 2017.

“In this era of hybrid work, belonging is essential in fostering successful teams, as it drives meaningful collaboration, innovation, and engagement between employees.” – Department of Transportation.

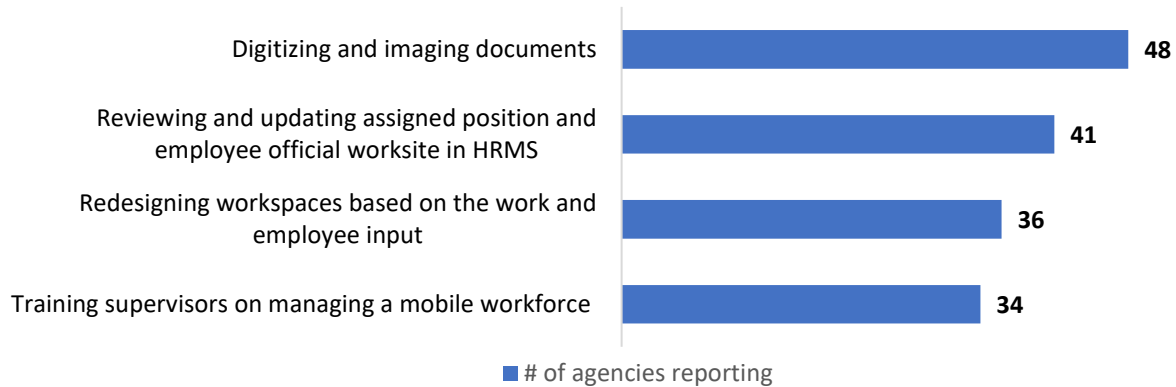
Agencies implemented numerous strategies to support a hybrid work environment. The top two strategies reported in fiscal year 2023 were marketing modern work strategies when recruiting and increasing position eligibility in telework, flex time and compressed workweeks.

Top six accomplished modern work environment strategies
(78 agencies reporting)



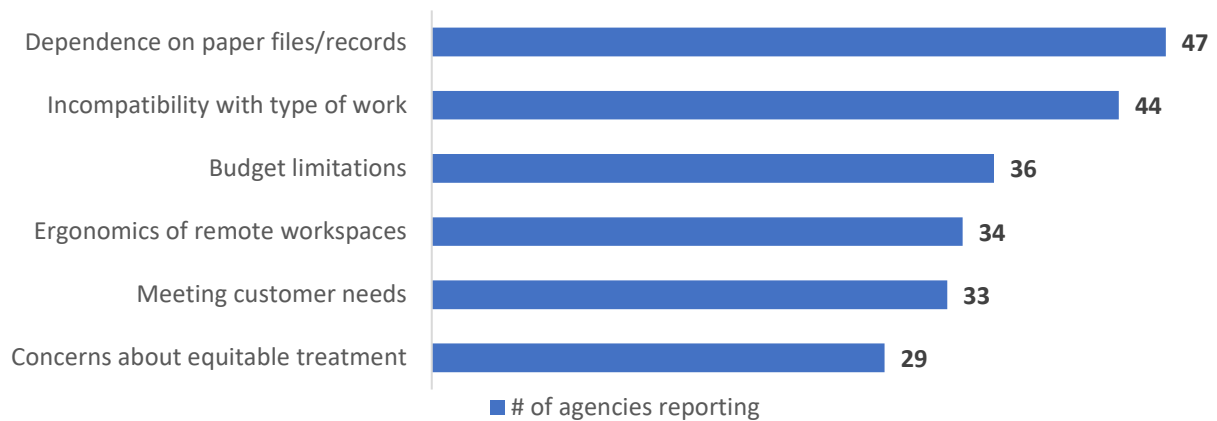
Agencies also identified strategies they are in the process of implementing but haven’t yet completed. The top two strategies still in progress were digitizing/imaging documents and reviewing/updating assigned positions and employee official worksites in HRMS.

Top four strategies in the process of implementation
(78 agencies reporting)



Agencies are still facing some barriers to support a modern work environment. The most frequently mentioned barriers were dependence on paper files and incompatibility with work.

Top six barriers to implementing a modern work environment
(78 agencies reporting)



What agencies are doing

- The Department of Commerce provided supervisor training for managing remote teams and hosting agency-wide daily check-ins and weekly virtual meetings.
- The Department of Enterprise Services provides multiple work options to support work life balance and working styles (i.e., onsite, up to 100% telework, flexible schedules, etc.).
- The Department of Labor and Industries ensures their office spaces are functional to support a hybrid workforce by setting up touchdown stations, revamping meeting spaces, and investing in conference room technology to support hybrid meetings.
- The Department of Social and Health Services launched a podcast focused on connecting employees with resources to create a safe and inclusive workplace.
- The Office of Administrative Hearings updates position descriptions for telework eligibility.

Maintain telework data integrity

Accurate telework data is crucial to making decisions for space use, facility planning, budget development, workforce planning and legislative initiatives. OFM asked agencies to audit and clean up their telework data. Beginning May 1, 2024, OFM will import telework data to the Facilities Portfolio Management Tool and use it to inform the state's [Six-Year Facilities Plan](#) and budget approvals for lease renewals.

What State HR recommends

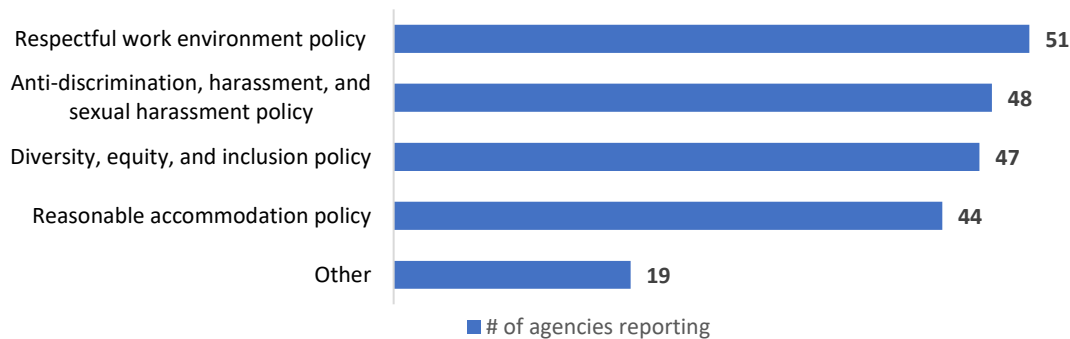
- Maintain accurate telework data as work schedules and/or telework agreements change. Create a monthly validation process. Ensure data processors are notified of telework changes. Encourage employees to submit telework agreement requests on MyPortal.
- Have a clear process and policy for approving and monitoring out-of-state employee telework. Ensure the agency has the resources and capacity to manage the work.
- Use HRMS resources:
 - [HRMS data definitions resources guide](#)
 - [HRMS data validation guide](#)
 - Telework user procedures and scripts on the [HRMS Support Hub](#)
- Use the [Modern Work Environment Dashboard](#) to review monthly data on employee eligibility and participation rates for telework, flextime and compressed workweeks.
- Find creative ways to stay connected while teleworking to foster belonging and collaboration. Consider hosting agency-wide virtual meetings with leadership to highlight the agency's work, build connections, and recognize individual employees and teams.
- Offer childcare solutions to support parents returning to the office. Agencies with offices on the capitol campus should remind staff that the [Capitol Childcare Center](#) is prioritizing enrollment for children of state employees. Agencies should also consider implementing an Infants in the Workplace program.
- Conduct remote ergonomic assessments for teleworking employees to support their health and safety.

- Offer training for supervisors on managing remote and hybrid teams.
- Learn more about the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program. Visit [OFM's CTR webpage](#) to find updated guidance.
- Find additional information on [OFM's Statewide Telework and Hybrid Work Resources webpage](#).

DEI-related policies

Agencies continue to update and establish DEI-related policies that prohibit disproportionate impacts on historically marginalized or under-represented groups. According to the [State HR Directive 20-03](#) guidance, state agencies should review and update their DEI-related policies at least every three years.

Number of DEI-related policies updated or established since 2021
(78 agencies reporting)



What agencies are doing

- The Department of Financial Institutions has a policy providing religious accommodations.
- The Department of Social and Health Services has a cultural competence policy to create and maintain an environment that values and supports cultural competence and embraces respect for the individual differences of our employees and clients.

What State HR recommends

- Agencies should commit to review and/or update their DEI-related policies at least every three years.
- Use the DEI Policy Committee's [Model Policies and Considerations for a Diverse, Equitable, Inclusive and Respectful Work Environment](#) as a guide to ensure the agency's policy language meets all the requirements and expectations.

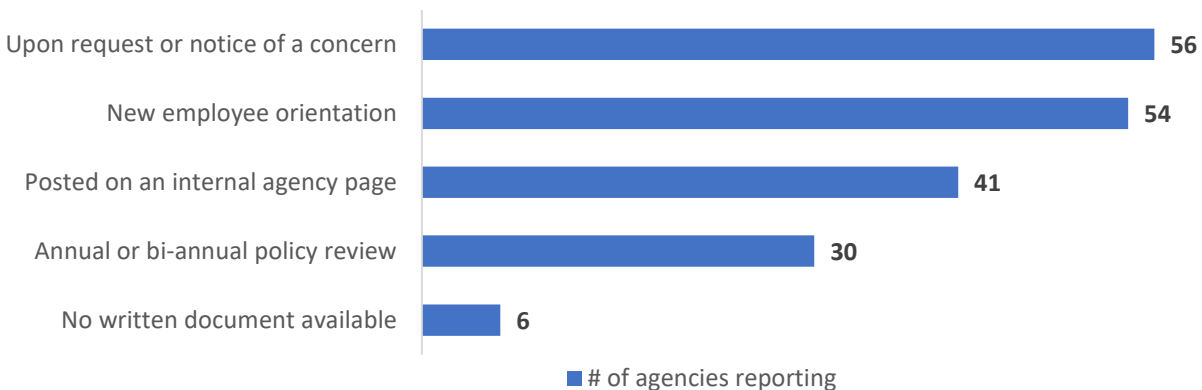
Complaints and investigations

Employees are encouraged to report conduct that is not consistent with respectful, ethical or appropriate workplace behavior. This allows agencies an opportunity to address or mitigate negative impacts on the workplace culture.

Agencies have increased efforts to ensure employees have knowledge and access to policies and procedures for filing workplace complaints.

Over 90% of agencies with over 100 employees have established written complaint filing policies and procedures, while less than half of the agencies with fewer than 100 employees have such policies or procedures.

How employees are notified about written complaint filing process, policy or procedure (78 agencies reporting)



What agencies are doing

- The Center of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth (CDHY) employees are informed by supervisors on how to contact the HR department when issues arise. This is the strategy to increase policy accessibility for the agency's native American Sign Language users (85% of CDHY employees are deaf and hard of hearing and are native ASL users).
- The Department of Fish and Wildlife holds virtual sessions with senior leadership and the DEI team to discuss complaint reporting platforms, processes and continuous improvement efforts.

What State HR recommends

- Agencies should continue to comply with [State HR Directive 20-03](#) and incorporate DEI principles in workplace policies and practices to avoid inadvertent, disproportionate impact on marginalized groups and promote a diverse, respectful and inclusive work environment anchored in equity.
- Agencies should continue to encourage employees and supervisors to utilize [Washington State Employee Assistance Program](#) for confidential consultations and resource referrals.
- Visit the OFM page "[Resources for employees when they have a workplace issue or complaint](#)" for additional state resources.

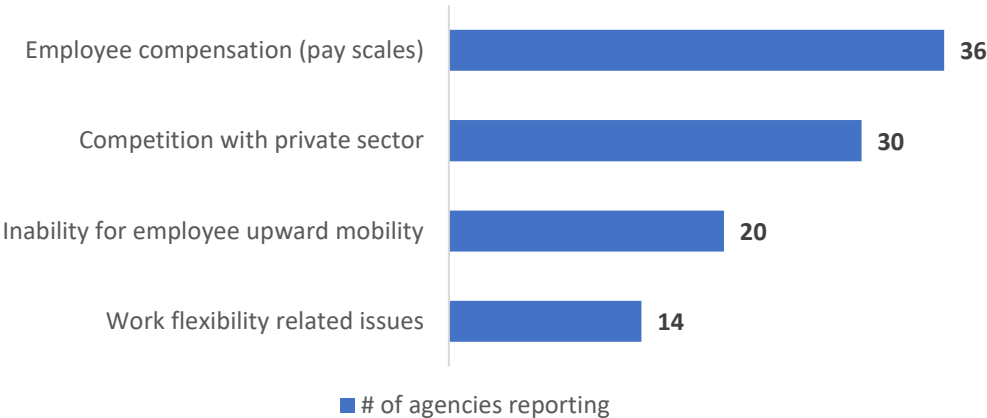
Retention challenges

Employees leaving the workplace is natural. In addition to retention strategies mentioned in the previous section, agencies can take additional steps to retain their employees. This includes listening to their suggestions, empowering them to improve, keeping them engaged and ensuring they are comfortable in their daily routine.

Agencies can optimize employee retention by understanding employee needs, providing growth opportunities, cultivating a positive work environment, offering competitive compensation and regularly evaluating retention strategies.

The top perceived retention challenge reported by agencies was employee compensation. Many agencies also reported perceived competition with the private sector and limited promotional opportunities. Compared to fiscal year 2022, the number of agencies reporting retention challenges related to work flexibility doubled in fiscal year 2023.

Top retention challenges reported by agencies
(38 full reporting agencies)



What agencies are doing

- The Department of Labor and Industries’ Wellness 360 Program hosts events and provides resources to support employees’ physical, emotional and mental well-being.
- The State Health Care Authority launched an employee recognition program to aid retention efforts.

What State HR recommends

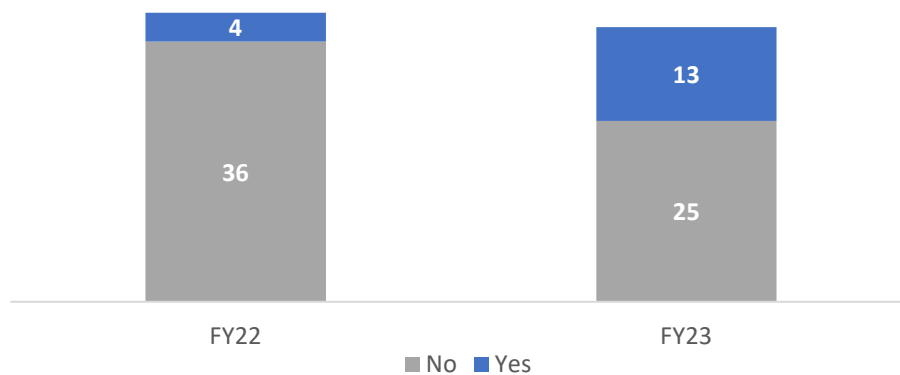
- Embrace and encourage work-life balance to reduce burnout and enhance employee experience, well-being and retention.
- Adopt a recognition approach, whether through verbal praise, awards, or other forms of acknowledgment to boost morale and job satisfaction. Shout-outs and celebrating small wins can make a significant difference in retention rates.

'Stay' interviews

"Stay" interviews measure the reasons employees stay at their current job. The methodology and dissemination of stay interviews vary, but all collect employee opinions on concerns, strategies, roles and expectations. They also provide a space for employees to voice concerns, opinions and positive change.

Stay interviews were adopted by more than a quarter of the full reporting agencies in fiscal year 2023.

Agency conducts stay interviews/surveys
(38 full reporting agencies in FY2023)



What agencies are doing

- The Department of Social and Health Services implemented a stay interview program that provides supervisor resources for conducting stay interviews to improve retention and reduce turnover.

What State HR recommends

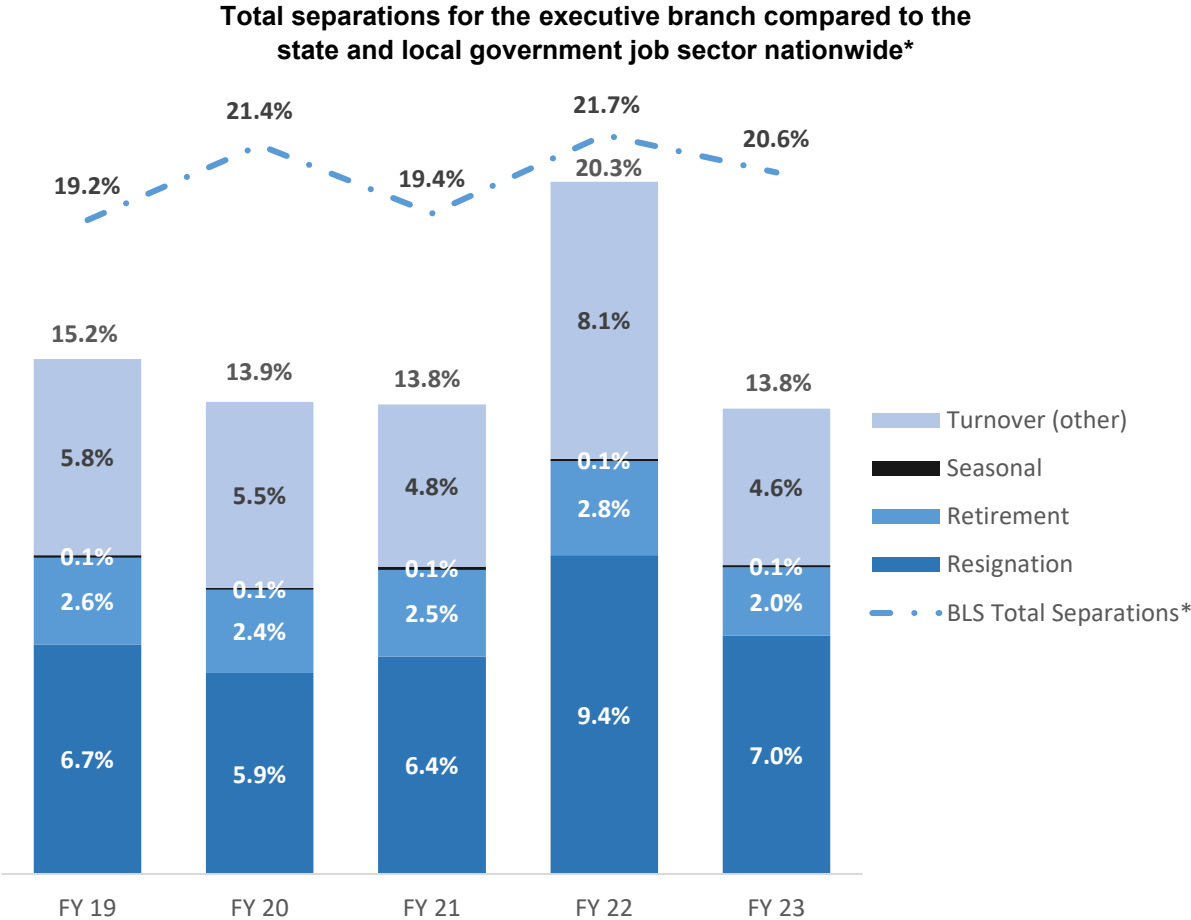
- Agencies can use stay interviews to provide a space for employees to voice concerns, opinions and positive change.
- Agencies are encouraged to use insights and strategies from the employee engagement survey to improve their employee morale, development and retention processes.
- Employee pulse surveys are a substitute for stay interviews. A pulse survey can also address retention concerns, but they should be infrequent, short and clear.

Employee turnover and exit survey

Statewide turnover rates decreased 6.5 percentage points from fiscal year 2022 to 2023.

Turnover

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, total separations in the state and local government job sector decreased nationwide from 21.7% in fiscal year 2022 to 20.6% in fiscal year 2023, a decrease of 1.1 percentage points. During the same time, executive branch turnover rates decreased from 20.3% to 13.8%, a decrease of 6.5 percentage points and almost 7 percentage points below the national rate for state and local government. In addition, separations by resignation in fiscal year 2023 also showed a decrease of 2.4 percentage points (from 9.4% in fiscal year 2022 to 7.0% in fiscal year 2023).



Turnover rates include permanent, non-permanent and seasonal employees. Data is from HRMS. Other turnover includes dismissals, layoffs, disability, death and other miscellaneous actions.

*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, not seasonally adjusted. Total U.S. state and local government job sector, excluding education. The BLS defines total separations as all employees separated from the payroll during the month.

What agencies are doing

- The Office of State Auditor strategic goal team analyzes the causes of turnover and makes recommendations to their cabinet.
- The Superintendent of Public Instruction tracks turnover data by demographic information to help with decision and policy making efforts.

Statewide employee exit survey

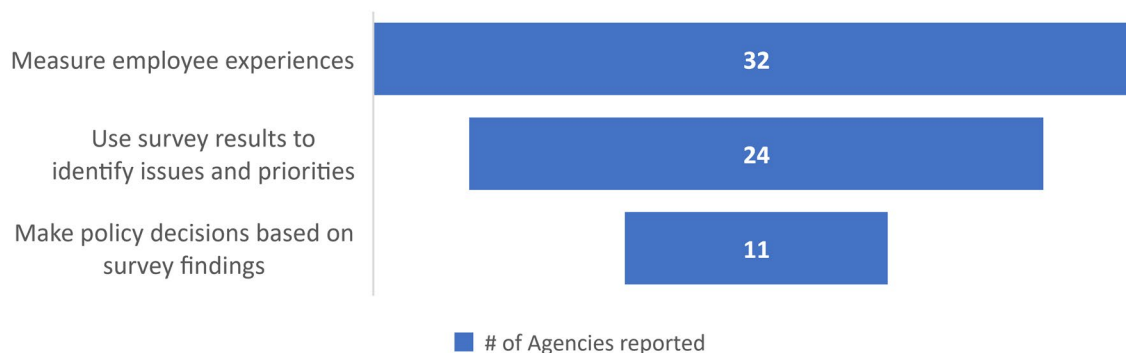
The exit survey helps agencies learn about why employees leave. State HR manages the statewide survey, collects data and analyzes responses. Agency survey contacts distribute the survey link and can use the data to make improvements for their employees.

State employees leaving their positions are encouraged to take the statewide employee exit survey.

Currently, the statewide employee exit survey consists of 34 standard questions and 13 demographic questions. The exit survey had 2,837 respondents in fiscal year 2023, down from 3,643 respondents in fiscal year 2022. However, the survey participation rate in fiscal year 2023 (roughly 42%) was comparable to its previous year (roughly 44%). This decrease of survey responses aligns with the decreased statewide turnover rate in fiscal year 2023.

- 63% of agencies (24 of 38) reported using their survey results, up from 55% in 2022.
- 61% of agencies (23 of 38) use the statewide exit survey to measure agency success.

**How agencies use statewide employee exit survey results
(38 full reporting agencies)**



The statewide employee exit survey will:

- Capture sentiments from employees who voluntarily separate, retire or end a non-permanent role.
- Provide access to agency-specific dashboards that display live results.
- Contain questions that crosswalk with the statewide employee engagement survey.

What State HR recommends

- Continue to administrate the statewide employee exit survey to employees separating voluntarily from an executive branch agency.
- Visit the [Employee Exit Survey page](#) for data dashboard and additional resources.
- Compare data from engagement survey, exit survey and HRMS data for actionable insights.