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FY 2024 HR Management Roll-Up Report



WASHINGTON STATE
Office of Financial Management
State Human Resources



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Report purpose, process and focus areas

Purpose of the FY 2024 HR Management Roll-up Report

The FY 2024 HR Management Report analyzes key executive branch workforce focus areas, highlighting key trends and developments from the past fiscal year. The main objectives of the report include:

- **Facilitating Awareness and Engagement**
Providing senior leadership and partners with clear, data-driven insights into the workforce to foster collaboration on strategic initiatives and inform decision-making.
- **Strategic Alignment**
Identifying HR activities that align workforce initiatives with broader organizational goals, ensuring that HR efforts support business strategies.
- **Workplace Culture Insights**
Evaluating key workforce metrics to gauge workplace culture's health and identify improvement areas.
- **Highlighting HR's Impact**
Showcasing HR contributions by demonstrating how workforce initiatives align with and drive overall business success.

Reporting Process

To compile this report, all executive branch agencies were surveyed on their workforce initiatives for the fiscal year, responding to a set of 31 multi-part questions. For FY 2024 (July 1, 2023–June 30, 2024), 83 out of 84 executive branch agencies submitted responses. The Washington state organizational chart is available on the [OFM website](#).

A team of 16 subject matter experts from the OFM/State Human Resources Division (State HR) reviewed agency responses and conducted a roll-up analysis. The findings presented in this report reflect a collective understanding of the workforce landscape and key trends across the executive branch.

For the purposes of this report, agencies are broken out in sizes for targeted analysis purposes:

- **Small agency (53):** 1–199 employees.
- **Medium agency (16):** 200–699 employees.
- **Large agency (15):** 700 or more employees

FY 2024 HR Management Roll-up Report Focus Areas

This annual fiscal year roll-up provides an analysis of the workforce management strategies for 83 agencies managing a workforce of 75,000+ employees within the executive branch of Washington state government. The report examines these critical areas to assess current practices and identify opportunities for improvement:

- **Hybrid Work Environment Adaptation**
This section explores the transition to a hybrid work model, examining how effectively agencies have adapted to new work arrangements. It reviews policies and feedback to determine the impact on productivity, collaboration, and work-life balance.
- **Recruitment Strategies and Practice**
The analysis in this section evaluates the effectiveness of current recruitment strategies aimed at attracting a diverse and skilled workforce.
- **Workforce Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)**
This section assesses the inclusiveness of workplace practices and the effectiveness of agency efforts to achieve DEIB goals. The analysis focuses on policies and support for agency-internal and statewide employee resource groups and for fostering a culture of belonging, ensuring that all employees feel valued and supported.
- **Employee Retention and Succession Planning**
Addressing talent retention challenges, this section evaluates current retention challenges and mitigation strategies for reducing turnover. It includes an analysis of agency succession planning efforts and outcomes to ensure leadership continuity and a pipeline of skilled talent.
- **Employee Experience**
This section highlights agency actions taken to enhance the overall employee experience.
- **Implementation of New Legislative Requirements**
This section assesses how the executive branch has responded to recent legislative changes impacting workforce management. It reviews compliance measures, policy updates, and proactive steps taken to align with new regulations, ensuring agencies remain compliant and forward-thinking.

Where Can I Find Executive Branch Workforce Data?

Workforce data gives employers strategic insights to manage and develop an engaged, high-performing workforce effectively. By leveraging this data, organizations can make proactive, data-driven HR decisions that enhance recruitment, improve retention, boost employee satisfaction, and foster an inclusive workplace culture.

Throughout this report, you will find topic-specific analytics to inform the analysis and recommendations.

The OFM State HR regularly publishes both fiscal-quarter and fiscal-year workforce data products on the public website. This data aligns key employee lifecycle metrics and meets the State Labor Relations legislative requirements to post annual workforce data. All published data adhere to the Washington Technology Solutions (WaTech) open data policy standards.

We invite you to explore the various dashboards, charts, and graphs available on the [OFM State Human Resources website](#) for comprehensive insights into the executive branch workforce.

Executive branch: fiscal year trend overview example

Topic	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Executive Branch Headcount	67,027	66,085	70,556	75,108
Median Age	46 yrs	46 yrs	45 yrs	45 yrs
Female	51.5%	50.6%	49.2%	48.4%
X/Non-Binary	0.1%	0.3%	0.5%	0.6%
LGBTQ+	1.7%	2.9%	3.9%	4.7%
Persons of Color	21.4%	22.1%	22.8%	23.5%
Persons with Disabilities	3.8%	4.3%	4.7%	5.3%
All Veterans	6.8%	6.4%	5.9%	5.5%
Military Spouse	0.6%	0.9%	1.1%	1.2%
Permanent Employees	89.2%	90.7%	91.0%	91.4%
Median Length of Service	8 yrs	7 yrs	7 yrs	6 yrs
Full-time	95.8%	96.2%	96.3%	96.3%
Turnover Rate (Average)	9.2%	15.7%	10.5%	9.7%
Median Annual Base Salary	\$67,560	\$72,372	\$77,460	\$80,569

Data source: HR Management System (HRMS).

The background of the slide features a photograph of the Washington State Capitol building, a large neoclassical structure with a prominent dome, situated on a hillside. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text 'Hybrid Workforce' is centered in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Hybrid Workforce

How are we adapting to a hybrid workforce?

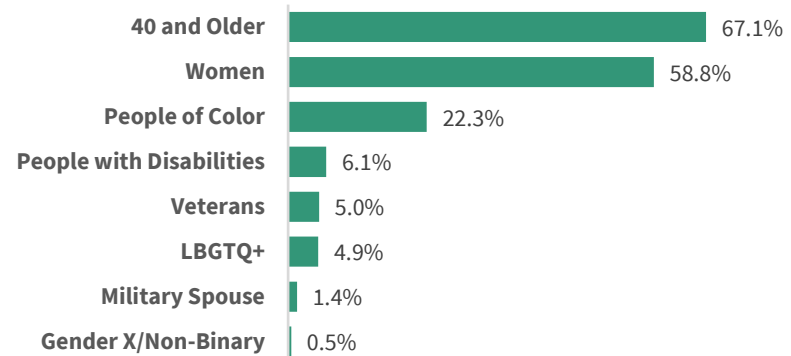
The hybrid workforce model is still relatively new to state government and there are varying perceptions about its operation. Previous fiscal-year human resource reports have focused on standard employee lifecycle themes. This marks the first time we are examining the hybrid workforce model in state government. This introductory information is intended to provide context for this new section.

A hybrid workforce combines remote and on-site workers who collaborate regardless of their physical location. The hybrid workforce model balances employee autonomy, technological enablement, and organizational objectives, creating a productive and agile work environment.

Key Characteristics of a Hybrid Workforce:

- **Flexibility:** Employees may have options on their work locations based on tasks, schedules, or personal and family needs and contingent on supervisory approval.
- **Technology-Driven:** Relies heavily on digital tools for communication, collaboration, and workflow management.
- **Workplace Variability:** Employees can be grouped into categories such as:
 - Fully remote workers
 - Fully on-site workers
 - Flexible workers who alternate between remote and on-site work
- **Focused on Outcomes:** Measures success based on results rather than physical presence.

Executive branch teleworking employee demographics percentages in FY 2024



The executive branch has effectively adapted to and continues to embrace telework and hybrid work models as a standard practice. This has allowed agencies to broaden staffing models to meet operational needs. The benefits of a hybrid workforce model include enhanced flexibility, improved talent recruitment, increased workforce diversity, and significant cost savings.

45% (33,789) of the executive branch workforce participated in Telework as of the end of FY 2024.

Hybrid Work Resources

- OFM/State HR: [Telework and hybrid work](#)
- OFM/Facilities:
 - [Building a modern work environment](#)
 - [OFM's Statewide Space Use Policy](#)

Hybrid Workforce Adaption: Benefits

Agencies of all sizes reported significant organizational benefits from adopting a hybrid workforce model. The consensus is that the benefits outweigh the associated challenges. The key advantages observed by agencies in FY 2024:

Enhanced Flexibility and Talent Recruitment

- Most agencies report that hybrid work has significantly improved work-life balance and the ability to attract new talent.
- The broader applicant pool has contributed to a more diverse workforce increasing employee satisfaction and retention.

Cost Savings and Space Optimization

- Agencies have reduced their facilities footprint by implementing shared "hoteling" workspaces instead of assigned desks.
- The shift has led to substantial annual savings on lease costs.

Workforce Growth Without Space Constraints

- Some agencies have experienced increased demand for services and staff growth, which would only be sustainable with the space efficiencies provided by hybrid work
- With hybrid work, agencies have broadened recruitment statewide to include out-of-state options, which have helped increase applicant pool diversity and retention.

Productivity Maintenance

- No significant loss of productivity has been observed; many agencies even report increased productivity based on work quality and timeliness. Managers continue to monitor performance and service coverage to ensure consistent outcomes.

Expanded Service Coverage

- Hybrid work enables continued service delivery, even during disruptions (e.g., inclement weather), as remote employees can maintain operations.

Hybrid Workforce Adaption: Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

As noted, agencies have adapted to the hybrid workforce, but challenges persist. The top three challenges reported by agencies are maintaining connectivity and effective collaboration, managing decades of paper files and records, and preserving a strong organizational culture.

Reported Agency Mitigation Strategies

#1 Maintaining Employee Engagement in Hybrid Work Environments

- **Engagement Activities:** Continue organizing engagement activities such as lunch-and-learns, 1:1 meetings, and virtual team-building exercises.
- **Pulse Surveys:** Conduct regular pulse surveys to gauge employee sentiment and address concerns promptly.
- **Resource Groups:** Support employee resource groups that foster connectivity and community in a hybrid setup.
- **Mandatory In-Office Days:** Require a minimum number of in-office days to enhance team bonding and collaboration, ensuring a consistent touchpoint for staff.
- **Regular Team-Building Activities:** Schedule regular in-person and virtual team-building activities to maintain a sense of community and connectivity.
- **Regular Check-Ins:** Schedule regular in-person or virtual check-ins with supervisors to discuss challenges and provide support.
- **Wellness Programs:** Continue prioritizing wellness programs, including mental health initiatives focused on loneliness, burnout, and resilience.
- **Support Groups:** Create virtual support groups or forums for employees to connect and share experiences.

#2 Dependence on Paper Files/Records:

- **Digitization Initiatives:** Digitization initiatives for scanning and digitizing remaining paper records, prioritizing critical files and ensuring a consistent electronic filing system.
- **Streamlining Initiatives:** Assess the need for paper records; if required, information can be captured using alternative methods.
- **Streamlined Access Policies:** Implement clear policies for accessing paper records, reducing the need for physical retrieval.

#3 Organizational Culture (OC):

- **Transparent Criteria:** Use consistent, transparent criteria for telework eligibility based on job role and operational needs to address equity concerns.
- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Provide flexibility in work arrangements to help reduce stress and burnout while maintaining team cohesion through planned in-office days.
- **Equity Review Committee:** Establish a committee to review telework requests and ensure fairness in approval processes.
- **Supervisor Training Programs:** Develop specific training programs focused on managing remote teams, communication best practices, and handling technical issues.
- **Peer Learning Sessions:** Facilitate peer learning sessions where supervisors can share experiences and strategies for effectively managing remote staff.
- **Hybrid Retreat Options:** Consider hybrid options for the all-staff retreat to accommodate remote employees while maintaining the benefits of in-person interaction.
- **Post-Retreat Follow-Ups:** Plan follow-up activities to reinforce training and team bonding achieved during the retreat.

Agency Process Improvements:

- **HRMS Updates:** Implement internal business practices for telework agreements and position updates, ensuring timely updates and notifications.
- **Regular Audits:** Conduct periodic audits of telework agreements to ensure that HRMS reflects the most current work arrangements.
- **Policy Updates:** Regularly review and update telework policies to ensure clarity, particularly around approvals, out-of-state work, and travel reimbursements.
- **Standardized Forms:** Create standardized forms for telework agreements, making tracking updates and obtaining necessary approvals easier. Ensure they capture only required information for ease of employee completion and tracking by the employee.

Agencies must continue to seek best practices and new tools, update internal policies and procedures, and invest time and resources in evolving as a successful hybrid organization.

Hybrid Workforce Adaption: Employee Performance

Evaluating employee performance in a hybrid work environment presents unique challenges and opportunities. As agencies have shifted to hybrid models, traditional observational metrics like physical presence and visible work hours have become less relevant, making way for a more results-oriented approach. 77% (64) of reporting agencies continue to use the standard approved [Performance Development Plan](#). Under [WAC 357-37-040](#), employers must use standardized employee performance planning and evaluation procedures and forms developed by OFM or alternate procedures and forms approved by OFM. 14% (12) use approved alternate forms and procedures. The remaining agencies use customized or informal performance planning.

While there has been consistency in *how* agencies document performance, there has been a significant shift in *what* agencies capture in these plans using evolving definitions of performance.

Agencies reported the following adjustments in the performance development plan and evaluation process to address the hybrid workforce:

- **Adopted new practices for performance evaluation.** Regular one-on-one meetings and ongoing feedback are crucial for staying connected with remote employees. This approach prevents reliance on end-of-year reviews and helps address real-time issues. Utilizing digital tools to document performance and feedback also helps managers maintain accurate records and reduce recency bias during evaluations. Providing coaching and training on how to have performance and evaluation discussions virtually.
- **Update performance evaluation policy, expectations, and/or strategies.** Shifting from tracking hours worked to assessing the actual outcomes achieved. This approach shows increased emphasis on trust and accountability in hybrid settings. Performance reviews focus on deliverables, project completion, and the quality of work. Establishing specific, measurable, and time-bound goals using frameworks like SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) or OKRs (Objectives and Key Results). This clarity helps ensure remote and in-office employees understand expectations, reducing ambiguity in performance evaluations.

Hybrid Workforce Adaption: Modern Work Environment Policies

Agencies leveraged existing work done for compliance with [Executive Order 16-07](#), "Building a Modern Work Environment," and as a result of shifting to a hybrid workforce model have met or exceeded the flexible and telework participation targets set by the executive order. However, the pandemic prompted agencies to shift policy priorities, moving from topics called out in the executive order (e.g., infants in the workplace and commute trip reduction) to topics such as adapting flexible and compressed work hour policies, as well as establishing mobile and telework agreements. That shift is still evident today as agencies must actively manage a hybrid workforce. Agencies face ongoing challenges and continue to manage policy compliance.

Changes Made to Support Managing the Hybrid Workforce:

- **Telework Agreements:** Over 90% of agencies now require telework agreements for all employees. The remaining are small agencies who are addressing as situations require.
- **New Resources:** State Human Resources has published and continuously updates guidance for hybrid work, including out-of-state employee policies, form templates for mobile and flexible work agreements, and best practices for supervisors and employees.
- **System Updates:** Enhancements were made to the central Human Resource Management System (HRMS) to better capture details on work locations to support the management of hybrid work.

Ongoing Policy Challenges:

- Keeping policies up to date over time, particularly as workplace dynamics evolve. This is especially difficult for smaller, resource-constrained agencies that may need help with fully implementing telework policies and agreements.
- Defining clear policy requirements for different bodies of work presents challenges, as each may have specific limitations or unique needs that must be addressed.
- Ensuring equitable application of these policies across all employees is also a critical concern, requiring careful consideration to maintain fairness and consistency.

The background of the slide is a blue-tinted photograph of the Washington State Capitol building, featuring a prominent dome, set against a backdrop of a dense forest of evergreen trees.

Recruitment Strategies and Practices

How effective are we at attracting diverse talent?

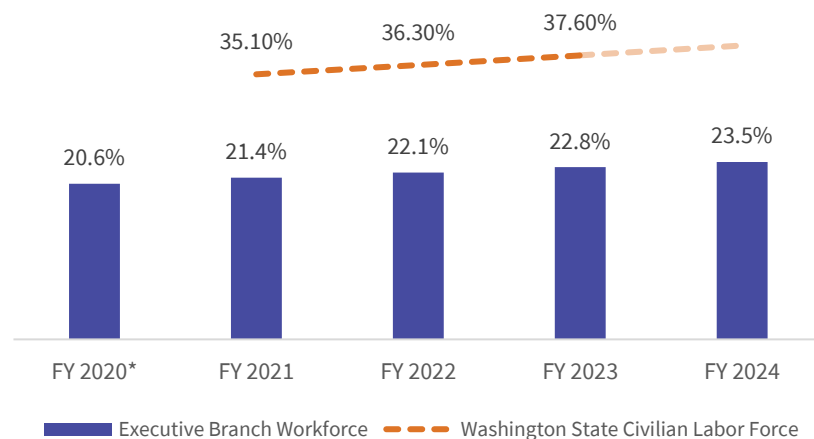
Washington state government has an enriched history of attracting and maintaining a diverse workforce through [Executive Order](#), [State HR Directive](#), and [Affirmative Action laws](#) and reporting.

Agencies reported different approaches to and a focus on recruiting diverse candidates in FY 2024:

- Large agencies made noticeable efforts to attract/recruit Veterans and People with Disabilities (PWD).
- Medium-size agencies prioritized veteran recruitment.
- Small agencies mostly reported no specific focus or efforts on recruiting candidates from diverse communities.

Executive branch data shows that 23.5% of the workforce in FY 2024 identified themselves as People of Color (POC), 14.8% below the POC representation last reported in the Washington state civilian labor force US Census Bureau data.

People of Color representation in Washington state: Civilian labor force vs. executive branch workforce



Data sources: Executive branch workforce data: HRMS.

Washington state labor force data: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates (Table IDs: [B23025](#), [B23002H](#)), excluding Armed Forces data. *Please note that Census data is based on calendar year and no data was available for 2020 due to collection disruptions. The 2024 Census data was not yet published by the time this report was finalized.

The executive branch as a whole, nevertheless, appeared to be shifting away from prioritizing specific race and/or ethnicity protective categories in their recruiting efforts. Only a quarter of the executive branch agencies reported specific race/ethnicity recruitment considerations in FY 2024. Of the 17 large and medium-sized agencies with POC representation below the executive branch level (representing 53.7% of the state workforce), only six agencies reported POC-related recruiting focus.

Instead of focusing only on specific protective category candidates, agencies cohesively reported incorporating various DEI considerations into their recruiting practices. These efforts are reflected through agencies' recruitment strategies (e.g., targeted universalism), community engagement and partnerships, recruitment staff training, usage of inclusive language and emphasized competencies on job postings, improved practices on applicant data collection and data tracking, and refined interview questions to be culturally sensitive and focus on competency requirements.



Attracting Diverse Talent: Advancing Inclusive Recruiting Practices

Recruitment strategies and practices directly influence the talents an organization attracts and hires, shaping its culture and long-term success. Recognizing this, Washington state agencies are working to create equitable recruitment processes aligned with the [Washington Law Against Discrimination](#) and [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act](#). As mandated by [State HR Directive 20-02](#), all recruitment staff must undergo anti-bias training to recognize and mitigate implicit bias and conduct diversity data reviews to foster fairer hiring outcomes.

Agencies Reported on Progress in Key Practices:

Progress and Gaps in Mandated Anti-Bias Training

According to the FY 2024 HRMR survey:

- 61% (51) of state agencies reported using anti-bias training specific to eliminating bias in recruitment activities such as interviews provided by the Department of Enterprise Services (DES).
- Additional training sources included agency-developed programs (27 agencies) and vendor or other learning platforms (11 agencies).

Agencies reported working on meeting the compliance for the mandate, now that the anti-bias training is widely available.

Diversity Data Practices

Tracking diversity metrics throughout the recruitment process is essential to identify barriers and address inequities:

- Over half of the agencies (47) reported accessing diversity data tools, primarily the Online Recruiting System (OLRS).
- 30 agencies (including 20 large and medium-sized agencies) have a dedicated diversity tracking practice.
- Agencies lacking tracking practices are actively working toward establishing them, including hiring specialized staff.

Inconsistent and incomplete use of the OLRS by some agencies has led to unreliable recruitment data, limiting the ability to pinpoint where underrepresented populations are dropping out of the hiring process.

Efforts are underway to standardize and enhance data practices. Through collaborative efforts by DES, OFM State HR, and the Statewide Talent Management Council, agencies are being reminded of the importance of moving candidates through all OLRS recruitment steps. Encouragingly, 64 agencies have committed to improving their use of the OLRS to generate reliable equity data.



Recommendations

- **Standardize OLRS Usage**
 - Regularly audit and monitor the consistent use of the OLRS to ensure reliable data tracking.
 - Offer targeted training for hiring managers to support standardized processes.
- **Invest in Recruiter Development**
 - Provide ongoing training for recruiters, including OLRS training available on the DES website.
- **Utilize OLRS Analytics and Reporting Tools**
 - Access the OLRS Analytics and Reporting dashboard for insights into candidate metrics, EEO reporting, job attractiveness, and other customizable reports.
 - Ensure lead recruiters, at a minimum, have dashboard access by coordinating with DES.
- **Track and Audit Diversity Outcomes**
 - Use HRMS data to evaluate and audit the diverse outcomes of recruitment efforts, identifying opportunities to improve representation in staffing.



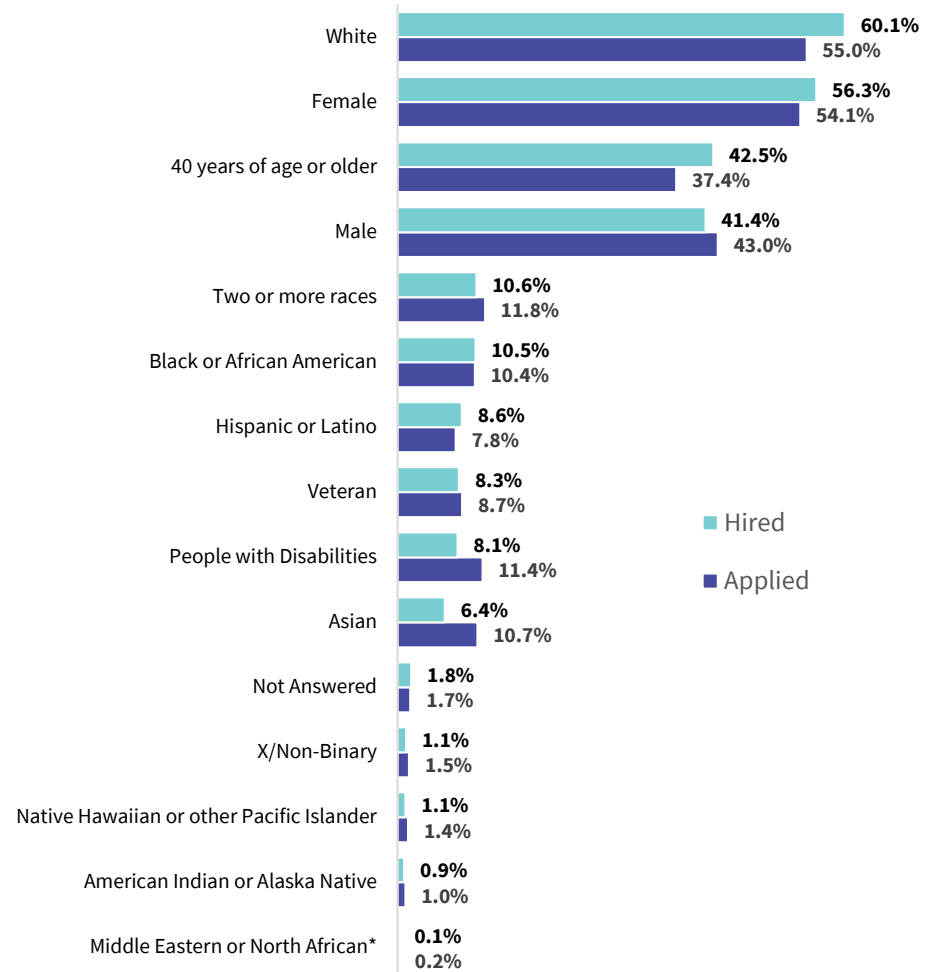
Attracting Diverse Talent: Diversity of Applicant Pools

In FY 2024, 74 executive branch agencies posted a total of 14,424 job postings and received over 467,000 applications, according to the state's Online Recruiting System (OLRS) data. Based on the HRMS data, these recruiting efforts resulted in:

- 9,712 new hires (i.e., recruited from outside of the existing state workforce), which represent 44.2% of the total FY 2024 appointment actions and a 3.1% increase compared to FY 2023.
- 21,979 total appointment actions that include new hires, transfers, promotions, and other appointments.

Agencies' recruiting efforts also showed noticeable movements toward attracting candidates from marginalized or underserved communities. When comparing demographic data of numbers of candidates who applied versus candidates who were successfully hired, OLRs data can highlight applicant demographic categories with lower representation in the final hiring step compared to their representation in the initial application step. This data highlights the critical need to assess equity and inclusion in the hiring process. It underscores why agencies must continually refine recruiting practices, address implicit bias, and ensure that qualified candidates from diverse pools are not disproportionately eliminated during hiring stages.

Applicant demographics in the recruitment process: Applied vs. Hired during FY 2024



Data source: Online Recruiting System (OLRS).

*Middle Eastern or North American designation added to online recruiting system May 2024, reporting represents last two months of the fiscal year.

Attracting Diverse Talent: Veterans Recruitment Case Study

The FY 2024 HRMR survey results underscore a focused but varied approach to attracting veterans, reservists, and military spouses. High engagement in direct recruitment events and employee resource groups indicates that these methods are perceived as effective for connecting with military talent pools. However, 28% of agencies reported lacking a targeted recruitment strategy, potentially hindering their ability to meet the objectives outlined in [Executive Order 19-01](#).

The differing levels of engagement highlight the need for standardized guidance or enhanced support — particularly for smaller agencies — to implement effective recruitment strategies for military-affiliated individuals.



Agencies Top Strategies for Attracting and Recruiting Military-Affiliated Individuals:

41.5%

Military Facility Recruitment Events/Job Fairs

The most widely used strategy, with **34 respondents** attending recruitment events or job fairs at military facilities.

40.2%

Statewide Business Resource Group Outreach

Outreach through Veteran Employee Resource Groups or similar organizations was another popular strategy, with **33 respondents**, likely due to its targeted support for veteran and military-related employee needs.

32.9%

Social Media Communication

Social media platforms serve as a digital outreach tool, used by **27 respondents**, enabling agencies to reach veterans, reservists, and military spouses where they are likely active.

Moderate to Low Utilization of Other Methods:

- **Lesser Utilized Strategies:** Veteran placement programs (13.4%), targeted job postings (12.2%), and advertisements (9.8%) showed comparatively lower usage. These approaches may require more specialized resources, partnerships, or targeted content to be effective.
- **Community Outreach and Other Programs:** Community outreach activities (8.5%) and other strategies (19.5%) indicate agencies employ a broader array of less conventional approaches, reflecting openness to experimentation or diverse tactics, albeit still with modest participation.

Veterans Recruiting Resources:

- **Office of Financial Management (OFM):** Utilize OFM Workforce Strategies job announcements distribution to reach a broader audience for job postings.
- **Department of Enterprise Services (DES) Recruiters:** DES Small Agencies Services can work directly with DES recruiters to expand candidate pool for their agency clients.
- **Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA):** Partnering with the DVA or similar organizations can help agencies develop targeted recruitment programs or job fairs.
- **Digital Training for Outreach:** Training on using social media and newsletters effectively could help agencies with limited outreach experience better engage with military communities.



Recommendations:

- **Develop Standardized Guidance and Support for Compliance:** Agencies can develop a standardized framework or toolkit tailored to attracting and recruiting veterans to ensure that even those in rural or resource-limited settings can adopt effective practices, streamlining efforts across diverse geographic locations.
- **Expand Use of Existing Networks and Partnerships:** Encourage all agencies to leverage state-supported tools like the OFM Workforce Strategies job announcements distribution list or DES Small Agencies Services recruiters for advertising and outreach, ensuring even smaller agencies can access recruitment resources.
- **Encourage Innovative Partnerships and Outreach Efforts:** Utilize unique programs like the Vets on the Farm program, which combines veteran employment with agricultural initiatives, to create unique partnerships that align with their mission and veterans' skills, addressing recruitment challenges in specific fields or regions.



What Recruitment Strategies Were Effective?

Recruitment strategy effectiveness varies by agency size and role requirements. While large agencies found paid advertising largely successful (eight out of nine), medium and small agencies reported mixed results, with 10 out of 31 medium-sized agencies deeming it least effective. Small agencies primarily relied on network outreach due to the specialized nature of their positions, with 97% (28 out of 29) reporting employee referrals as their most successful strategy in 2024.

Recruiting strategies reported by agencies of all sizes consistently highlight Referrals, Paid Advertising, Job Boards, Resume Banks, and Social Media as the top methods.

Agencies' efforts should also be noted for outreach to statewide Business Resource Groups (BRGs) and specific communities to attract and expand diverse candidate pools and the emerging as well as the effective approach of leveraging OLRs "silver medalists" — candidates who applied and qualified but were not hired. The "silver medalists" strategy, endorsed by NEOGOV as a leading practice, is gaining traction among agencies seeking to enhance recruitment outcomes.

The Statewide Talent Management Council Reports the Following FY 2024 Enterprise Recruiting Trends:

- **Increased Candidate Pool via Refined Strategies:** The significant increase in applications over the past year allowed agencies to devote energies to improving job titles, position announcements and candidate experience. Focusing on inclusive language and consistency in announcements has helped elevate the agency's Employer Value Proposition (EVP) and brand.
- **Leveraging Technology and Passive Sourcing:** The On-Line Recruiting System and sourcing tools have enhanced candidate outreach, particularly for hard-to-fill roles. Passive sourcing through paid recruiter accounts on LinkedIn, Dice, and Indeed have also played a key role in identifying potential candidates.
- **Community Engagement:** Partnerships with colleges, veterans' placement programs, and work-study programs have helped address recruitment challenges. Agencies' focus on inclusive language and community engagement has improved application conversion rates. Outreach to stateside BRGs has also helped in some hard-to-fill roles.



Recommendations

- **Reassess Job Fairs**
 - The value of general job fairs is declining. These events often rely on random attendance and host promotion without an industry-specific focus, leading to inconsistent results. Agencies must determine if job fairs align with their branding or networking goals and assess their return on investment using metrics such as:
 - Number of contacts made
 - Number of applications received post-event
 - Quality of candidates (job fit)
 - Conversion rates (contacts to applications)
- **Enhance Referral Programs**
 - Formalize referral efforts with structured programs.
 - Recognize contributors with simple rewards such as honorable mentions, challenge coins, or certificates of appreciation.
 - Expand beyond current employees by engaging new hires, community partners, college career centers, and others to generate leads.
- **Proactive Candidate Engagement**
 - Sharing job postings alone is insufficient; organizations may not prioritize amplifying their opportunities.
 - Recruiters must actively engage passive candidates, a strategy increasingly adopted to fill challenging roles.
- **Leverage WorkSource Resources**
 - Utilize the WorkSource Resume Bank, a free resource with significant potential for all employers.
 - Partner with WorkSource business services to host and promote employer events at state-wide centers.
 - Post job openings directly on the WorkSource website to expand reach.
- **Validate Data-Driven Insights**
 - By refining and diversifying recruitment efforts, agencies can optimize their hiring strategies to attract and retain top talent.

Effective Recruitment Strategies: Funding Recruitment Activities

Of the 23 agencies reporting a dedicated recruitment budget, most allocated funds to job fairs and advertising, while about one-third (seven agencies) also invested in recruiter training.

With intense competition for quality candidates, prioritizing investments in recruiter training, advanced tools, and other resources is essential, especially in today's tight labor market. The public sector's reliance on "free" methods has become unsustainable. Establishing a reliable recruitment budget enables strategic planning and supports efforts to attract high-quality candidates. A key finding of the HRMR survey analysis of agency recruitment strategy feedback is that current enterprise strategies often allocate financial resources to less effective recruitment methods.

According to the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), the average cost per hire in 2022 was approximately \$4,700, though some employers estimate hiring costs can range from three to four times the position's annual salary.

Underfunded and inefficient recruitment strategies can significantly impact the existing workforce and overall business operations, leading to team strain, burnout, increased overtime and temporary labor costs, project delays, decreased morale and productivity, and higher turnover rates due to unfilled positions. To address these challenges, a strategic shift in recruitment investment — emphasizing efficiency and innovation — will enable agencies to compete more effectively in attracting and retaining top talent.



Recommendations:

- Evaluate and adopt proven investments.
- Collaborate with other agencies to identify successful recruiting investments.
- Request demonstrations of recruitment tools or services before committing to purchases.
- Build a Recruitment Budget Case such as highlighting the ongoing cost of vacant positions.

Effective Recruitment Strategies: Alignment with Business Needs

Agencies had challenges in filling agency critical job classes in FY 2024. Using analytics from the state human resources management system (HRMS) and the online recruiting system (OLRS), agencies informed classification and compensation package requests to address issues with job classifications experiencing recruitment issues for the 2024 bargaining cycle.

Top Job Classes Recruited:

Agencies reported a total of 113 job classes targeted for recruitments and focused on the Information Technology Professional Structure Series, Administrative Assistant Series, Fiscal Analyst Series, Management Analyst Series, and Program Specialist Series.

FY 2024 Turnover for the Top Five Job Classes Recruited:

- Administrative Assistant Series (14.7%)
- Management Analyst Series (4.7%)
- Program Specialist Series (4.2%)
- Information Technology Professional Structure Series (4.2%)
- Fiscal Analyst Series (3.4%)

While overall turnover percentages may be low in some cases, for the losing agency, these are positions performing critical work.

Agency targeted job classes

Small Agencies:

Management Analyst 4
 Administrative Assistant 3
 Fiscal Analyst 2
 Program Specialist 3

Medium Agencies:

Administrative Assistant 3
 Fiscal Analyst Series
 IT Application Development Senior/Specialist

Large Agencies:

Social Service Specialist Series
 Administrative Assistant 3
 Customer Service Specialist 2
 Hearings Examiner Series
 Registered Nurse 2

Overall:

Management Analyst 4
 Administrative Assistant Series
 Customer Service Specialist Series
 Fiscal Analyst Series
 Program Specialist Series
 Environmental Planner Series
 Social Service Specialist Series

Additional Job Classifications Highlighted:

Agencies also mentioned specific classifications such as:

- Data Consultant Series
- Weights & Measures Compliance Specialist
- Fiscal Positions
- Food Safety Compliance Specialist
- Hearings Examiners
- Environmental Specialist
- Public Health Series
- Radioactive Series
- Land Surveyor 3

The October 1, 2024, OFM financial feasibility submission as part of the collective bargaining process included targeted increases for nearly all these classifications.

Job Classification and Compensation Changes

During the 2024 biennial bargaining cycle, State HR focused on increasing the starting wage for all classifications to \$18.00 per hour and addressing targeted job classification updates. State HR received 135 class package proposals for the 2025/2027 biennial bargaining cycle, including 52 job classes targeted for recruitment reported in the FY 2024 HRMR survey, with many covering the full series of a classification or multiple levels of a series. All targeted classification and compensation changes that the Unions and the State have tentatively agreed were submitted to the OFM Director in the October 1, 2024, financial feasibility request. These changes will only become final if determined to be financially feasible by OFM and subsequently funded by the Legislature in the biennial budget. It is unknown if these increases will be extended to the non-represented enterprise staff. As with any other compensation elements, even if the decision is made to extend the items to non-represented, the legislature must approve those increases.

Effective Recruitment Strategies: New Employee Onboarding

New hire onboarding is a critical step in reinforcing the success of an agency's recruitment efforts. The goal is to equip hiring managers with best practices that ensure new hires and promotions — especially in remote locations — feel connected, engaged, and welcomed throughout their first year. A comprehensive approach to onboarding ensures that new employees feel valued, supported, and aligned with the agency's mission from the start of their journey.

Key Onboarding Strategies

- Establishing unified agency onboarding processes (34 out of 82 agencies).
- Discussing organizational culture as part of onboarding (34 out of 82 agencies).
- Managers creating onboarding plans with regular check-ins to ensure alignment and support (26 out of 82 agencies).

Onboarding Packet Enhancements

- Employee growth opportunities (e.g., access to employee resource groups).
- Employee benefits such as the Employee Assistance Program or the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program.
- Workplace safety and resources for raising workplace concerns.

Continuous Improvement and Equity Focus

- Improving onboarding through feedback tools like surveys and regular check-ins with new hires.
- Integrating diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) principles into onboarding process.
- Leadership's engagement to foster an inclusive and supportive organizational culture.

Across the executive branch, onboarding practices have evolved beyond issuing equipment, completing forms, and mandatory trainings. According to the FY 2024 HRMR survey, all agencies recognized the importance of effective onboarding and reported efforts to help new hires understand their roles and expectations, setting them up for success from day one. Some agencies have also introduced preboarding to establish rapport with employees even before their first day.

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Workforce Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging

How inclusive are our workplace practices?

Executive branch agencies continue to embrace workforce diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) through the elimination of barriers to growth and opportunity, allowing each employee to contribute their full measure of talent, and building our capacity to deliver innovative, effective, and culturally relevant services to all the people of Washington.

This work happens at all levels, involving employees up to agency executive leadership and again to the Governor's Office. Commitment and involvement at all levels is needed so that we learn and grow together to ensure the entire workforce benefits from a respectful and equitable workplace.

Statewide DEIB Resources

[Statewide Workforce Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council](#)

The DEI Council is the state's advisory and coordinating group, supporting strategic diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts across state government.

[DEI Empowerment Conference](#)

The annual Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Empowerment Conference is a unique learning opportunity designed by and for Washington state employees.

[State Employee DEI Training and Development](#)

[State HR Directive 23-01](#) requires foundational diversity, equity, and inclusion training for all employees of executive branch agencies.

[Statewide Business Resource Groups](#)

Statewide business resource groups bring together groups of employees and their allies who have a common interest or characteristic. Members bring their unique knowledge and perspectives, making them an asset to state business needs, such as recruitment and retention.

[Office of Equity](#)

Works to create a Washington state where everyone has full access to the opportunities, power, and resources they need to flourish and achieve their full potential for the next seven generations and beyond.

Inclusive Workplace: DEIB Policy Requirements Compliance

Agencies were asked to provide status on DEI-related policies in alignment with [State HR Directive 20-03's](#) expectation.

DEI policies required by the directive:

- ✓ Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- ✓ Respectful work environment
- ✓ Anti-discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment
- ✓ Reasonable accommodation

Analysis shows agencies have challenges monitoring and maintaining policy updates:

- Agencies consistently report workload and internal business processes as obstacles to policy maintenance.
- About half of the agencies responded that they do not have policies explicitly related to the inclusion of LGBTQ+ employees.
- Approximately 78% of respondents indicated that every three years, policies are meeting expectations of being reviewed/updated. Of the agencies that provided information regarding why the policies were not in compliance, 61% indicated they are currently working on updates and/or policies will be updated by Q2 2025.

Agencies show inconsistency in reporting compliance status:

- **Policy Reporting and Publishing Confusion**
Agencies may misunderstand the requirement to republish or update a policy or document the latest review, especially if no changes are made after review. This may also cause inaccuracy in self-reported compliance status.
- **Flexibility in Policy Format**
Equal distribution is observed between agencies with stand-alone whistleblower/grievance policies and those integrating them into non-discrimination policies. Some agencies are experimenting with new policies, like affinity group policies.
- **Confusion Over Reasonable Accommodations Policy Expectation**
Compliance reports (67%) suggest confusion over review/update timelines, possibly due to differing expectations in the original executive order and WAC.



Recommendations

By addressing reporting inaccuracies, clarifying compliance standards, refining data collection, and implementing best practices, agencies can better align with DEIB policy goals and ensure meaningful progress.

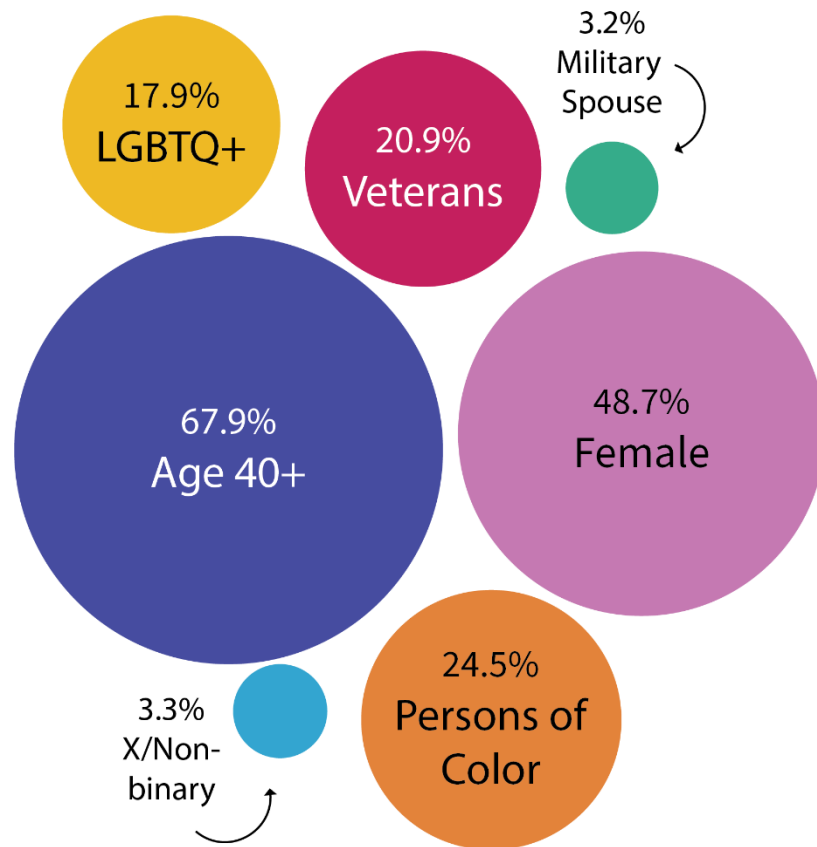
- **Support Small Agencies**
Provide additional guidance and promote standardized policy templates to help smaller agencies meet compliance standards.
- **Ensure Inclusivity in Policies**
As policies are reviewed and updated, concerted efforts should be made related explicitly to the inclusion of LGBTQ+ employees to further align with the state's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Clarify Statewide Policy Requirements**
State HR to provide additional guidance and clarification on the requirements of State HR Directive 20-03.
- **Recognize and Encourage Best Practices**
Highlight innovative policies like affinity group approaches and gender-inclusive bathroom policies to inspire broader adoption.
- **Purposeful Policy Development**
Conduct a gap analysis related to DEI policies, solicit employee feedback from various employee populations, incorporate employee voice, and build a stakeholder plan for drafting policy language and strategic plans.



Inclusive Workplace: People with Disabilities (PWD) Case Study

The PWD community in Washington state's workforce is notably diverse. Data for FY 2024 below shows the demographic representation of PWD employees in the executive branch.

Demographic breakdown of employees reporting with disabilities



Data source: HR Management System. This data is based on employee self-reported data and does not necessarily reflect additional intersectionality they represented.

In FY 2024, PWD comprised 5.1% of the total executive branch workforce, with 5.1% in permanent positions (3,388 employees) and 4.7% in non-permanent and seasonal roles (267 employees). Most PWD employees (92.7%) hold permanent positions, and 6.8% are in management roles.

The 2023 Employee Engagement Survey showed that employees who are PWD were less likely to be engaged in their work compared to those without a disability. A key factor influencing changes in sentiment among employees who are PWD is their telework status. PWD employees in the executive branch had higher rates of eligibility and participation in telework compared to employees without disabilities or those with unknown disability status. PWD employees also had slightly higher eligible rates for flexible work options, such as Flex Work and Compressed Work Week, but their participation in these options remained significantly lower than in telework.

The [FY 2024 Disability Employment Report](#) notes that while progress has been made in increasing representation, state agencies must continue focusing on reducing turnover, improving engagement, and leveraging partnerships with disability employment services to further boost PWD inclusion in the workforce.

Inclusive Workplace: Business and Employee Resource Groups

Washington state government employs a multi-faceted approach to promote DEIB in its workforce. A key strategy focuses on fostering employee engagement through active participation in statewide business resource groups (BRGs) and agency-specific employee resource groups (ERGs).

Foundation for Statewide BRGs

[Executive Order 21-01](#), “Affirming Washington State Business Resource Groups,” establishes the foundation and expectations for agencies to provide universal access to BRGs. These groups are critical for removing systemic barriers, advancing diversity, and cultivating a culture of inclusion, belonging, and respect.

Since 2021, the state has built a robust and growing network of [BRGs](#), uniting state employees and allies around shared interests or characteristics. Through defined charters, missions, goals, and bylaws, BRG members contribute their unique experiences to the state's overall business strategy. These groups provide spaces for employees to connect, feel supported, and thrive, while also addressing key business needs such as recruitment and retention.

Internal ERGs

In addition to BRGs, over one-third (27) of state agencies have established internal ERGs to support employees from various communities, including those of specific racial, ethnic, and cultural heritages, veterans and military families, individuals with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. These ERGs also focus on professional development and personal interests. Agencies work closely with ERGs and employee advisory councils to foster equity, improve employee engagement, and create inclusive workplaces.

BRGs & ERGs

- **BUILD:** Blacks United in Leadership and Diversity
- **DIN:** Disability Inclusion Network
- **HAPPEN:** Hawaiians, Asians & Pacific Islanders Promoting an Empowerment Network
- **LLN:** Latino Leadership Network
- **RAIN:** Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion Network
- **SOVEREIGN:** Supporting Our Voices, Empowering Rights and Indigenous Governance
- **VERG:** Veterans Employee Resource Group
- **WIN:** Washington Immigrant Network
- **ERGs:** Agency Internal Employee Resource Groups



Agency-Level Practices

In FY 2024, agencies employed several strategies to promote participation in BRGs and ERGs:

- Introducing them during new employee onboarding
- Sharing information via agency intranets
- Inviting BRG/ERG speakers to agency meetings or events

A growing number of agencies have adjusted staffing models to support participation, with 23 agencies enabling BRGs involvement and 17 supporting ERGs involvement. Furthermore, 12 agencies have implemented policies or procedures to facilitate employee participation in BRG or ERG leadership roles.

However, some smaller agencies cited resource limitations or lack of recruitment activities as barriers to prioritizing BRG/ERG efforts. This highlights the need for additional resources or training to help these agencies.

Resources:

- State HR guidance: [Supporting Employee Business Resource Group \(BRG\) Participation Policy](#)
- [Employee Resource Groups: A Critical Resource for Unionized Workforces](#)
- [Employee Resource Groups Create a Sense of Belonging, Foster Engagement](#)
- [How To Incorporate Employee Resource Groups In Your Organization](#)

Statewide Initiatives

Across the executive branch, nearly 80% of state agencies adopted at least one practice to support BRGs and ERGs participation in FY 2024. Agencies actively engaged BRGs and ERGs in outreach to diversify recruitment efforts and collaborated with these groups on DEIB initiatives and inclusive policy development.

Statewide workgroups, such as the DEI Council and HR Managers meetings, partnered closely with BRG leadership to incorporate diverse perspectives into enterprise DEIB strategies. This collaboration extended to broader efforts.

Continued Support

Washington state's multi-pronged approach to workforce DEIB demonstrates a strong commitment to creating a supportive, inclusive, and engaging workplace. The continued growth of BRGs and ERGs, coupled with agency and statewide collaboration, ensures ongoing progress in fostering equity and belonging across the enterprise.

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Employee Experience

What actions did we take to improve the workforce experience?

Decades of research have established a strong connection between employee engagement and organizational performance. Engaged employees tend to find their work more meaningful and deliver superior results. In government settings, improving organizational performance can also enhance public confidence in government institutions, further boosting employee morale.

To monitor and improve engagement, agencies use internal tools and statewide surveys to assess employee experience. These surveys provide valuable data to help shape strategies for improving the workplace and retaining talent.

There Are Two Statewide Surveys:

- **State Employee Engagement Survey**
Since 2006, the [State Employee Engagement Survey](#) has served as the primary tool for understanding state employee perceptions of the workplace. Administered by the OFM State Human Resources Division (State HR), this survey is conducted annually in October. While agencies can choose to administer their own surveys, they must share results from standardized questions with OFM for statewide analysis.
- **Statewide Employee Exit Survey**
The [Statewide Employee Exit Survey](#) is a collaborative effort between OFM State HR and state agencies to collect insights on why employees leave, where they go, and areas needing improvement for retention. Managed by OFM's State HR team, this survey allows employees and organizations to conclude their working relationship constructively. Employees are invited to complete the survey before leaving, though participation is optional. The survey is not administered to employees who are terminated.



Improve Workforce Experience: Employee Engagement Survey (EES)

Efforts to enhance the workforce experience through the EES have yielded promising results and the goal is to continue to build on these results especially with the transition to the Qualtrics platform.

In 2023, statewide surveys were moved to the Qualtrics EX platform for enhanced surveying and analysis functionality. Agencies have access to the tracking and analysis tools within the platform. However, most agencies did not fully utilize the action planning and progress tracking tools within Qualtrics. Responses to the survey are anonymized so that responses cannot be attributed to individual employees.

Positive Adoption of Qualtrics:

- 79% (61 of 77) of responding agencies utilized Qualtrics for the 2023 EES, with 87% of users reporting a positive experience.
- Agencies praised the platform for its effectiveness in sharing results across stakeholders, with 84–88% rating this experience as “Good” or “Excellent.”

Action-Oriented Engagement:

- 72% (44 of 61) of agencies acted on their EES results. Actions include broader communication of survey findings, focus groups, targeted surveys, and enhanced training opportunities.
- However, only 55% used Qualtrics tools for action planning, and 42% utilized progress-tracking features, indicating an untapped potential for more profound functionality use.

Improve Workforce Experience: Employee Exit Survey

The Employee Exit Survey remains underutilized, primarily due to low response rates. This challenge makes it difficult for agencies to act on the survey results, as limited responses reduce the data available for analysis and action. Robust survey data can be used to inform and support actions such as change requests related to classification, pay structures, and compensation packages, or to address identified organizational issues. To close the gap on low response rates, agencies continue to offer supplemental exit interviews in order to provide additional insights.

Low Adoption and Participation:

- Only 56% (44 of 77) of agencies used the Exit Survey, and low response rates limited the data value for agencies.
- Despite this, 73% of participating agencies had a positive experience and supplemented the Exit Survey with exit interviews and data-sharing initiatives.

Overall, there continue to be fragmented efforts to capture actionable employee exit data. Incomplete data is an issue at the statewide and agency levels. Boosting exit survey participation and using a consistent tool would provide critical information for agency and statewide retention, engagement, classification, and compensation strategies.

Trends and Recommendations

Engagement Survey Trends

- The adoption of Qualtrics has vastly improved agencies' ability to collect and disseminate engagement data. However, the underutilization of action planning and tracking tools highlights a need for more structured support and training.
- Agencies taking concrete action based on survey results demonstrate a growing commitment to using employee feedback for strategic improvements.

Exit Survey Trends

- The Exit Survey is not reaching its full potential due to low adoption and participation rates, compounded by restrictive reporting rules.
- Supplementary practices like exit interviews help but do not address systemic data collection and utilization challenges.



Recommendations

- Agencies should share EES results broadly throughout the agency, conduct additional surveys on specific areas of interest, engage focus groups, and improve agency leadership communication about agency changes.
- Raise awareness of the Exit Survey's purpose and timing through targeted communication campaigns, ensuring consistent usage across agencies.
- Continue support for the EES-Qualtrics Community of Practice to enhance support for agencies to act on survey results through written resources, meetings, and partnerships with Qualtrics subject matter experts and successful agencies sharing processes and methods.
- Train HR staff, supervisors, and leadership on interpreting survey results, developing appropriate action plans, and communicating with the workforce that their voice has been heard.

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Retention and Succession Planning

How are we keeping and growing our talent?

In the FY 2024 HRMR Survey, agencies were asked to identify challenges, efforts, and outcomes related to employee retention, as well as to share their succession planning practices. The summary analysis provides an overview of the intersectionality of the reported strategies, trends, successes, and challenges in these areas.

Employee Retention

Employee retention is crucial for organizations because it directly impacts productivity, culture, and performance. High retention rates lead to a more experienced and engaged workforce, reducing the need for constant recruitment and training, which are costly and time consuming.

Retaining employees also fosters consistency in operations and strengthens institutional knowledge, which improves overall efficiency. Moreover, a stable workforce contributes to a positive work environment, enhancing morale and collaboration. High retention reflects well on the organization's reputation, helping attract top talent and promoting long-term growth.

Succession Planning

Succession planning is vital for ensuring organizational stability and long-term success. It prepares employers to handle key role transitions by identifying and developing future leaders within the organization. This minimizes disruptions when critical positions become vacant due to retirements, resignations, or unforeseen circumstances.

Effective succession planning ensures continuity of operations, preserves institutional knowledge, and supports strategic growth by having qualified talent ready to step into leadership roles. It also boosts employee morale by demonstrating commitment to career development, helping to retain top performers and fostering a culture of leadership development.

Keeping and Growing Talent: Intersection of Employee Retention and Succession Planning

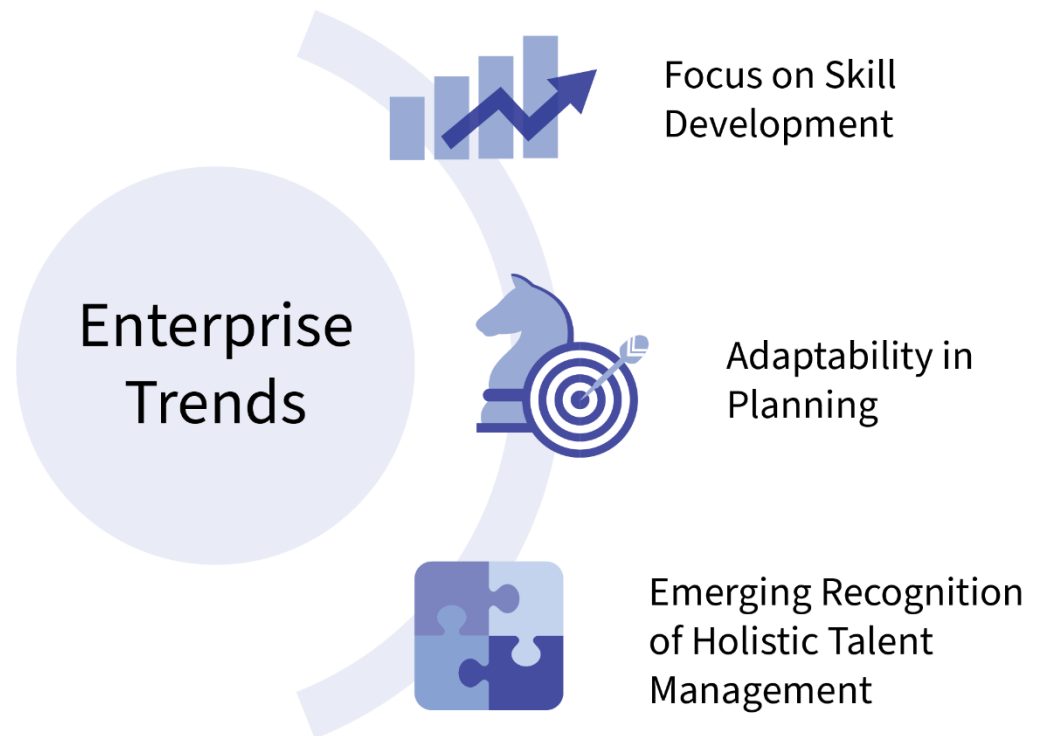
The intersection of employee retention and succession planning highlights critical trends, successes, and challenges in organizational strategies. These efforts are essential for preserving institutional knowledge, ensuring leadership continuity, and promoting workforce stability.

Key Trends

Agencies are increasingly prioritizing skill development through training and leadership programs supported by tuition assistance and wellness initiatives. However, significant gaps remain, including addressing compensation disparities and underutilizing inclusive measures such as affinity groups or ERGs.

In succession planning, agencies utilize strategies like knowledge transfer, mentorships, and developmental roles, while smaller agencies often rely on informal approaches due to limited resources.

This growing focus on aligning retention and succession planning as part of a holistic talent management strategy underscores the importance of development-driven retention while revealing a need for scalable, inclusive, and well-supported frameworks to sustain engagement and leadership pipelines.



Successes

- **Structured leadership programs:** Several agencies have implemented successful leadership programs and mentorship initiatives.
- **Formal knowledge transfer strategies:** These ensure continuity and preserve institutional memory.
- **Cross-agency partnerships:** Some agencies leverage external resources to mitigate costs and resource limitations.

Challenges

- **Resource constraints:** Smaller agencies face disproportionate challenges due to limited budgets and personnel.
- **Inconsistent practices:** Internal informal or ad-hoc approaches lack sustainability and scalability.
- **Competitive pressures:** Retention efforts often fail to address private-sector salary and benefit comparisons.



Recommended Retention Strategies

- **Enhance Recognition:** Introduce performance awards or additional paid leave to enhance existing recognition programs.
- **Strengthen Career Pathways:** Create structured career progression programs with visible advancement opportunities. Expand cross-training and job rotation initiatives to diversify skills and prepare future leaders.
- **Improve Employee Engagement:** Foster community building through resource groups and employee engagement initiatives to create a sense of belonging.
- **Expand Wellness Programs:** Launch comprehensive wellness programs, including mental health support, flexible work options, and initiatives promoting work-life balance.



Recommended Succession Planning Strategies

- **Promote the OFM Succession Planning Toolkit:** Provide smaller agencies with accessible templates and strategies to streamline succession planning efforts.
- **Formalize Informal Practices:** Standardize knowledge transfer, job shadowing, and mentorship methods to ensure consistent and sustainable transitions.
- **Resource Sharing:** Facilitate cross-agency partnerships to share leadership development and training resources.

Integrating retention and succession planning within a holistic talent management framework, coupled with continuous improvement, enables agencies to address current workforce challenges and build a sustainable talent pipeline. By adopting integrated strategies, agencies can address current challenges while building a sustainable workforce that meets future demands.

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New Legislation Implementation

What barriers were faced implementing new legislation?

In Washington state, the Legislature plays a critical role in managing the state government workforce through its responsibilities in budgeting, policymaking, and oversight.

Key Responsibilities Include:

- **Budgeting and Funding:** The Legislature allocates funding for state agencies, including employee salaries, benefits, and workforce programs. It approves collective bargaining agreements and ensures adequate resources for workforce management initiatives.
- **Setting Workforce Policies:** The Legislature enacts laws that shape employment policies, such as workplace rights, diversity initiatives, recruitment, retention strategies, and retirement benefits for state employees.

Through these responsibilities, the Legislature directly influences the structure, priorities, and effectiveness of the state government workforce.

FY 2024 Legislative Impacts

Agencies were asked to provide feedback on the implementation efforts of five recent legislative acts impacting the state's workforce. Successes and challenges are listed for the legislative requirements in the following pages. While no critical barriers to compliance were identified, common themes emerged, including challenges related to change management and resource limitations to support implementation processes across all initiatives regardless of agency size.

Reducing Barriers to State Employment by Eliminating Degree Requirements ([SHB2216/2024 Session](#)):

Removing requirements for degrees where a degree is not legally required to perform the essential functions of a position.

Successes

- **Proactive Implementation:** Several agencies updated job classifications, focusing on skills rather than degrees, through thorough research and collaboration. Initiatives like competency-based hiring and High School to Highways (H2H) talent pipelines tested innovative hiring models. Agencies adopted strategies to update position descriptions during annual reviews or recruitment preparations. HR teams worked with leaders and hiring managers to eliminate specific experience requirements, ensuring fairer evaluations of candidates.
- **Inclusivity Improvements:** Removing degree requirements broadened candidate pools, simplified job descriptions with plain language, and added inclusive statements valuing diverse experiences. Efforts to align essential functions with qualifications and reduce desired qualifications promote equitable hiring practices.
- **HR Training and Resources:** HR teams developed designation forms, internal processes, and resources to guide degree exceptions, facilitating updates to job descriptions.

Challenges

- **Resource Constraints:** Smaller agencies lack specialized HR staff and require more support, especially from contracted services.
- **Skill Identification:** Supervisors struggle to define skills and competencies clearly without defaulting to experience or degree requirements.
- **Uncertainty and Resistance:** HR staff feel unqualified to make changes without clearer guidelines and face resistance tied to perceived standard reductions. Limited training and guidelines hinder HR professionals in implementing skill-based hiring confidently.
- **Legal and Industry Ambiguities:** Defining legally defensible equivalencies to degrees and addressing "industry standards" remains a challenge.

Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Notification ([HB1950](#)/2024 Session):

Supporting employee's PSLF certification, full-time calculation adjustment.

Successes

- **Smooth Implementation:** 90% of agencies reported no issues implementing the PSLF requirement.
- **Enhanced Tracking:** Some agencies leveraged new HRMS fields for better PSLF certification and re-certification tracking.
- **Employee Support:** Several agencies mentioned achieving high employee participation through proactive communication and support for understanding the PSLF program.

Challenges

- **Technical Issues:** Problems with electronic PSLF forms, including timeouts and saving inconsistencies, created administrative burdens. Agencies worked with OFM to address and resolve issues like electronic form timeouts.
- **Lack of Standardization:** Agencies struggled with unclear PSLF certification requirements and inconsistent processes due to legislative updates.
- **Limited Resources:** Manual processing of PSLF forms strained HR teams, especially in under-resourced agencies. Small agencies faced challenges coordinating with DES, leading to duplicated efforts and inconsistent support.
- **Vendor Variability:** Frequent changes in loan processing vendors added complexity for agencies assisting employees.
- **Communication Delays:** Some agencies experienced delays in updates about PSLF notification changes, causing confusion and additional follow-ups.

Modernizing Employee Pay Procedures via Electronic Fund Transfer ([ESHB1361/2023 Session](#)):

This bill was OFM-requested legislation and contained amendments to update statutes related to state employment by removing obsolete language, eliminating unnecessary reports, confirming changing the reporting period to fiscal year, and modernizing employee pay procedures. Agencies were asked to provide feedback on the new requirement for salary payment for employees hired on or after July 1, 2023, which must be made through electronic transfers of funds. For employees without established bank accounts, Pay Cards are issued that employees can use similarly to a credit or debit card.

Successes

- **Smooth Implementation:** All agencies reported minimal challenges with employee pay modernization, noting high compliance with updated electronic payment requirements.

Challenges

- **Enforcement Difficulties:** Only one large agency reported struggles to enforce electronic payment compliance, with some employees continuing to receive paper warrants, increasing costs and workloads.
- **Compliance Monitoring:** One agency reported implementing periodic compliance tracking, identifying noncompliant employees and following up with supervisors, leaving 17 employees still receiving paper warrants by September 2024.
- **Administrative Burden:** Continuous tracking, follow-ups, and managing noncompliance added significant workload to payroll teams.

Employee Data Protection ([ESHB 1533](#)/2023 Session):

Exempting the disclosure of certain information of agency employees or their dependents who are survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, harassment, or stalking.

Successes

- **Clear Data Protection Processes:** One agency reported established an effective system to identify employees needing data protection and update public disclosure coordinators, ensuring compliance and safeguarding data.
- **Established Practices:** Several agencies reported smoothly implemented data protection due to long-standing practices.
- **Centralized Coordination:** One agency reported effectively led efforts to exempt sensitive employee information, streamlining collaboration across divisions.
- **Enterprise Support:** State HR, in collaboration with the Attorney General's Office, provided updated legal data definitions and tools, such as a sworn statement template, to aid compliance.

Challenges

- **Guidance Delays:** Several agencies faced delays in obtaining legal guidance complicating implementation.
- **Monitoring and Renewals:** Compliance with varying timeframes, such as four-year renewals for the Address Confidentiality Program and two-year sworn statement renewals, posed challenges, especially for employees who are transitioning roles.
- **Complex Exemption Decisions:** One agency encountered difficulties in assessing and applying appropriate data protection measures due to variability in the information provided by employees.

Salary Transparency ([ESSB 5761](#)/2022 Session):

Employers to establish a practice for disclosing the wage scale or salary range and the general description of all the benefits and other compensation to be included in each posting for a job opening.

Successes

- **Statewide Success:** 98.75% of respondents did not encounter workforce impacts related to ESSB 5761 on salary transparency.
- **Pre-existing Compliance:** Several agencies reported smooth transitions to salary transparency requirements, having already adhered to similar practices.
- **Ease for Classified Positions:** The state's structured classification and compensation systems enabled straightforward compliance for classified roles.
- **Alignment with Mandates:** Agencies with established state hiring mandates requiring salary disclosure faced no challenges.

Challenges

- **Equity in Management Salary Bands:** Improving transparency and equity in salary ranges for Washington Management Service (WMS) and Exempt Management Service (EMS) positions remain a focus for some small agencies.
- **Resistance from High-Earners:** Several agencies reported encountered discomfort among higher-earning employees regarding salary disclosure, posing challenges to achieving universal transparency acceptance.

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In Conclusion

Executive Branch Workforce Management

Managing a workforce spanning 84 agencies and business lines essential to the health, safety, and prosperity of the citizens of the state of Washington is a formidable challenge. This report highlights the human resources community's achievements and challenges in supporting this mission during FY 2024, as well as the opportunities that lie ahead in future fiscal years.

HR professionals play a vital role in organizations by managing the workforce and aligning people strategies with overarching business goals. Their responsibilities include talent acquisition, employee relations, training and development, compensation and benefits administration, performance evaluation, and ensuring compliance with labor laws.

In addition to these operational tasks, HR professionals are instrumental in strategic workforce planning, advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) and navigating organizations through change management initiatives. By balancing strategic and operational priorities, HR fosters a productive, compliant, and inclusive workplace while championing employee growth and satisfaction.

For the executive branch in FY 2024, the overall staffing ratio for HR professionals stood at 1:100 for a workforce of 75,000+. These dedicated professionals continue to enhance and support the public workforce, helping state government achieve its objectives. This report spotlights HR's vital contributions — an often-overlooked but essential function — deserving of recognition and respect.



Notable Achievements

These notable achievements for FY 2024 highlight a diverse range of agency accomplishments that extend beyond standard operational human resource processes. These initiatives focus on enhancing the employee experience and driving improved business outcomes. Remarkably, most were achieved using existing resources, showcasing the commitment, creativity, and ingenuity of the professionals doing the work.

- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB):**

Several agencies highlighted DEI initiatives' achievements. These initiatives include expanding DEI offices, creating Employee Resource Groups, and implementing DEI training programs. Notable examples include the establishment of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office, DEI Foundational training series, and inclusivity awards like the RAIN Outstanding Agency Award.

Some agencies emphasized inclusive leadership training and the success of DEI discussions that foster a safe environment for employees of diverse backgrounds.

- **Employee Engagement and Workforce Development:**

Many agencies mentioned the establishment of workforce development teams and onboarding improvements. Workforce-related achievements include forming cross-collaborative teams to streamline workforce efforts, new hiring frameworks, and talent development programs, such as the Leadership Empowerment Program and employee onboarding academies.

Agencies also worked on retaining talent through programs like the Nursing Career Pathway and enhancing recruitment processes, often involving partnerships with external consultants.

- **Operational and Process Enhancement:**

Several responses noted achievements in process efficiency, such as automating performance evaluations, implementing case management systems, and improving recruitment and hiring processes. For example, some agencies implemented NEOGOV Onboard to streamline onboarding, while others revised recruitment forms for better compliance and response times.

- **Community Engagement and Public Service:**

Agencies like those involved in law enforcement and public safety launched initiatives to enhance trust with high-risk communities. Examples include establishing the Community Engagement Unit and the “Lived Experience Toolkit,” which values lived experience in hiring practices.

Additionally, there were programs aimed at serving specific groups, such as Veterans, People with Disabilities, and Tribal communities, which reflect a commitment to public service beyond internal agency needs.

- **Recognition and Awards:**

Numerous awards and recognitions were listed, highlighting individual and agency achievements. Awards like Respect, Acceptance, and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (RADD), Manager of the Year, and various state awards reflect external validation of agency efforts. Some agencies received leadership and public service accolades, indicating successful engagement with and contributions to the broader community

Questions?

If you have any questions or need assistance,
please contact us at Strategichr@ofm.wa.gov