Fiscal Year 2022

Statewide Human Resources Management Strategy Roll-up Report

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Visit our website at **www.ofm.wa.gov.**

Executive summary

Report highlights

State HR staff analyzed responses and data from state agencies' annual human resource management report. We compiled the results to get a picture of the top priorities and strategies, which we listed below.

Here are the key highlights

- The top two priorities for agencies are:
    - Recruitment and retention
    - Turnover

- Employees continue to transition into or from three modes of work: telework, hybrid, or in-person. This caused agencies extra layers of uncertainty and challenges to retain or adjust their staffing models.

- Surveys remain the most used barometers to measure employee engagement and monitor progress toward agency goals.

- Agencies must incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion into all stages of the employee life cycle.

- As the state's population becomes more diverse, agencies must keep implementing strategies to increase diversity.

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

- The percentage of people with disabilities in the workforce continues to increase.

- Agencies continue to make progress in LGBTQ+-related matters such as gender-affirming restroom language.

- Agencies state that communication is the most mentioned strategy to create a positive experience for job seekers and candidates.

- Many agencies host internal employee resource groups and affinity groups (these are groups based on an employee's personal interests) to support the business and personal interests of their employees.

- Agencies report their progress on developing succession plans to identify and develop future leaders.

- Increased remote work has accelerated a trend toward more frequent feedback and greater focus on career development.

- Employees remain resilient and increasingly engaged at work. What the work world referred to as the "new normal" is now becoming just "normal."

- Record numbers of state employees continue to work remotely full time. Many agencies are exploring how to continue supporting these substantial telework rates while planning to safely reopen the workplace with hybrid work models.

- Tuition reimbursement programs are a valuable recruitment and retention tool.

- The best employee retention strategies directly connect to employee feedback and preferences.

- Turnover rates increased 6.5 percentage points from fiscal year 2021 to 2022.

Background

Executive branch agencies with more than 100 employees must submit an annual agency human resource management report. Agencies with fewer than 100 employees may choose to participate. 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 survey asked 46 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

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. However, one higher education institution completed the survey this year. The following 40 agencies, representing 96.1% of the state workforce, submitted reports for fiscal year 2022:

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

For questions about this report, contact SHRPlanning@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 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, finally, **employee turnover**.

By taking the time to evaluate the employee life cycle and understand our current metrics, we can make data-driven decisions and meaningful change to create a workplace that's more enjoyable, engaging, and productive.

The Employee Life Cycle

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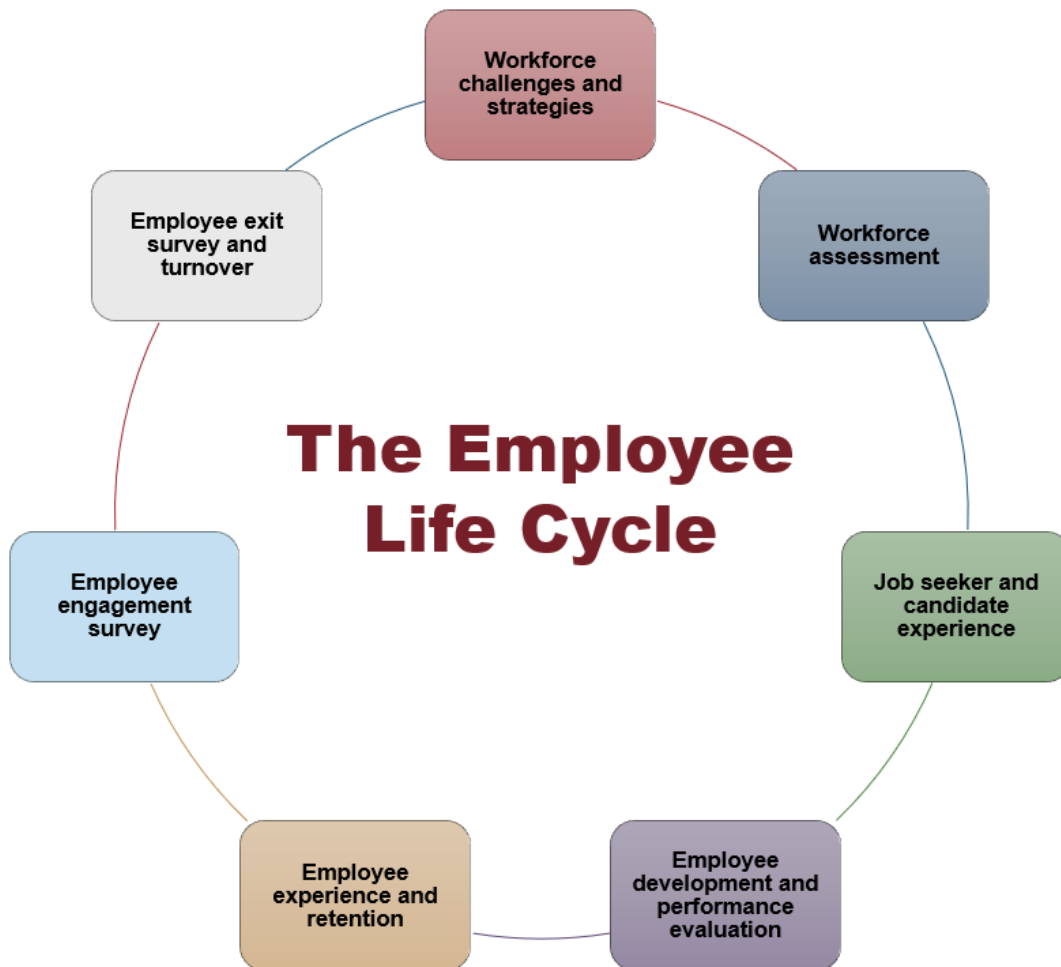
Workforce challenges and strategies

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

> *Employees continue to transition into or from three modes of work: telework, hybrid, or in-person. This caused agencies extra layers of uncertainty and challenges to retain or adjust their staffing models.*

1. Recruitment and retention (35 of 40 agencies reporting)
2. Turnover (30 of 40 agencies reporting)

Recruitment and retention

Agencies overwhelmingly report that recruitment and retention was their greatest challenge. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 'quits' (employees who voluntarily separate), increased nationwide from 10.9% in fiscal year 2021 to 13.7% in fiscal year 2022. This was for the state and local government job sector. During this same time, 'executive branch quits' (someone resigns or moves to another agency) increased from 7.5% to 11.7%. Executive branch 'quits' remain below the national state and local government rate but saw a significant increase from our last fiscal year.

**'Quits' rates for the executive branch compared to the
state and local government job sector nationwide***
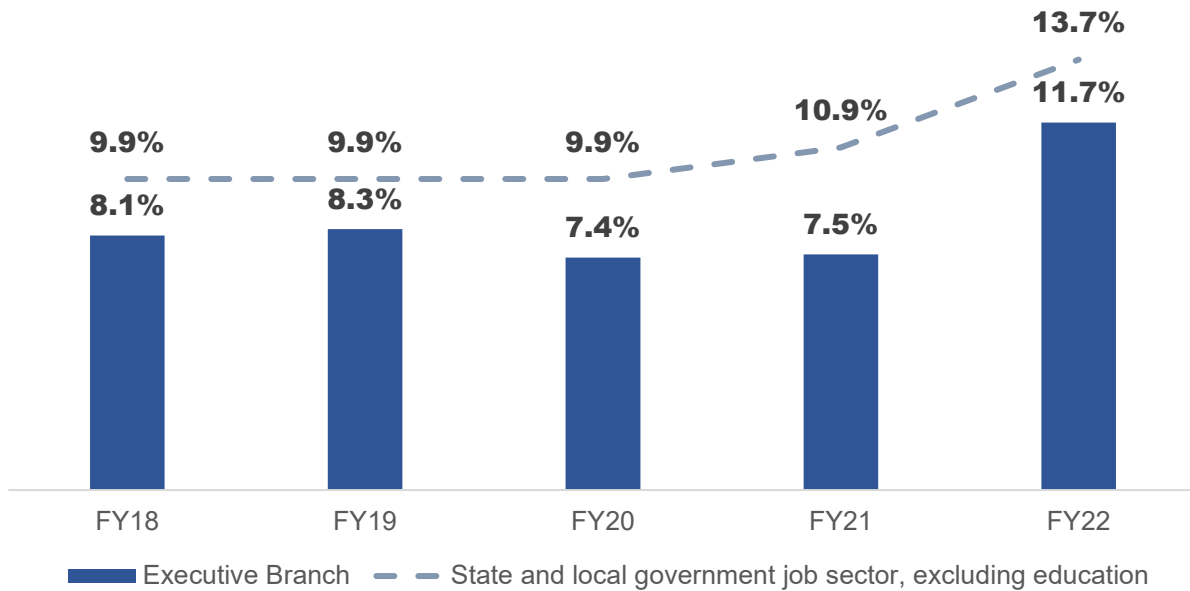
'Quits' are employees who left voluntarily, includes resignations and movement to another agency for permanent, seasonal, and non-permanent employees. It does **not include retirements, layoffs, dismissals, or transfers to another agency. Transfers to another agency refers to agency organizational structure 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.

Agencies report struggles in attracting *and* retaining talent, especially for positions that are highly specialized (e.g., certified professionals, engineering, financial, legal, nursing, IT, etc.). Recruiters blame comparatively lower starting wages, lack of hiring/retention bonuses, and work-life balance considerations.

Agencies reported smaller applicant pools and challenges attracting diverse candidates. Lower wages, higher qualification requirements and lengthy hiring processes created prolonged recruiting time and additional barriers to fill vacant positions.

Agencies also reported a higher-than-average turnover, increased internal movement and the need to examine qualifications. These qualifications need to include developing in-training positions or internal mechanisms so that employees can develop the skillsets to fill current vacancies.

Turnover rates for permanent and non-permanent executive branch employees*

				20.3%
15.4%	15.1%	13.9%	13.8%	

| FY18 | FY19 | FY20 | FY21 | FY22 |

—— Turnover Rate
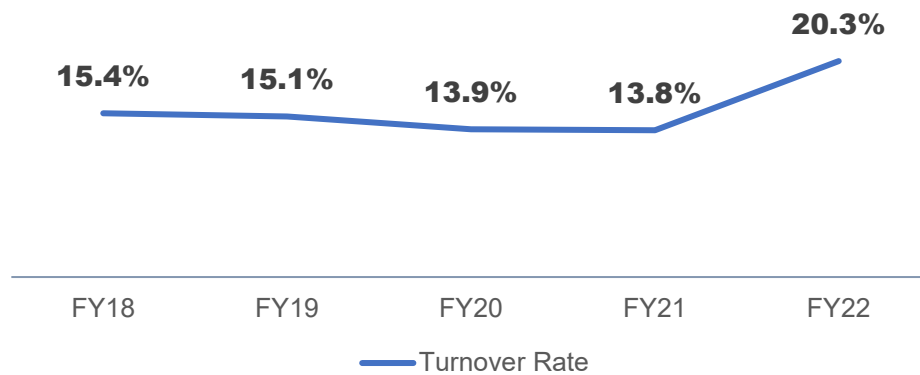
*'Turnover includes an employee separating from the agency for any reason (resignations, retirements, layoffs, and other miscellaneous reasons). It includes permanent, non-permanent and seasonal employees.

In addition to the competitive job market, agencies found it hardest to retain skilled talent because of limited career and professional growth opportunities. while employees continued to transition into or from three modes of work (telework, hybrid, or in-person), this caused agencies extra layers of uncertainty and challenges to retain or adjust their staffing models. And, recruitment and retention challenges increased workload, which increased employee burnout and missed deadlines.

What agencies are doing

- The Department of Agriculture is promoting their agency as an employer of choice by offering flexible work options, promoting state health benefits, creating bilingual positions, creating in-training plans and more.

- The Department of Transportation implemented the High School to Highways program for recent high school graduates seeking full-time career opportunities in highway maintenance, construction, and other trades. Selected candidates are hired into the entry-level highway

maintenance worker position with a formal in-training plan. They also get paired with a mentor for guidance and support as they get the experience and licensure they need to progress in their career.

- The Department of Natural Resources partners with the Department of Corrections to hire recently incarcerated individuals who will work on wildfire hand crews.

- The Department of Corrections streamlined its processes, which shortened candidates' wait times to attend the Correctional Workers Academy. In addition, they proposed an employee referral program and a nursing mentorship program during the 23-25 bargaining cycle.

- The State Health Care Authority established an out-of-state telework policy and created collaboration space for in-person work to strike a balance between supporting remote work and ensuring team connections and strong relationships in the workplace.

- The Washington State Pollution Liability Insurance Agency offers employees flexible work options. These include working from home, from Oregon and from Idaho.

- The Department of Health established an employee experience program that, among other things, provides support and development opportunities to help employees thrive at work.

Here's what State HR recommends

- **Communicate what workers want.** Job seekers want flexibility, well-being, and purpose as well as competitive pay, good working conditions and skills development. Recruiters need to communicate how the state will meet these expectations.

- **Promote the benefits of flexibility and work culture**. Most agencies provide flexible work hours and telecommuting options. Promoting these benefits will increase retention.

- **Promote the benefits of working for the state**. This means focusing on the many other benefits of working for the state:
  - 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 child care leave
  - Leadership opportunities
  - Learning and professional growth

- **Promote the benefits of living in Washington**. Washington is a great place to live. Promote the culture, recreation, economic diversity, no state income tax, and a strong education.

- **Promote diversity in the workforce**. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is a top priority for agencies. The goal is to recruit a diverse workforce that reflects the people we serve.

- **Improve application process**. Remove application process barriers (for example, make sure applicants can apply through their mobile phones, not just a desktop computer).
- **Recruiting needs to become less about execution and more about talent strategy.** Recruiters are HR business partners responsible for anticipating hiring managers' needs, solving problems, and spotting opportunities.

How can we measure success

It is important that we give employees the chance to provide feedback. Surveys remain the most used barometers to measure employee engagement and monitor progress toward agency goals. We saw an increase during fiscal year 2022 in agencies using the state employee engagement survey and HRMS data to measure their success. Other resources we can use to measure success include the online recruiting system and direct employee feedback.

Number of tools agencies use to measure success
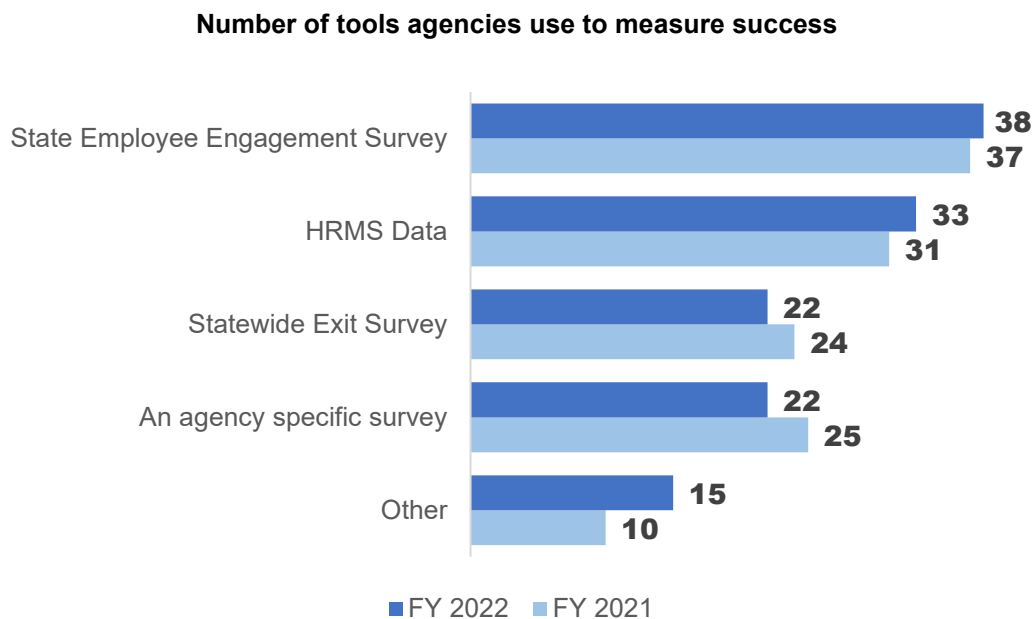
Agencies use some of these tools to separate data into different groups. Many of the data sets include age, gender identity, LGBTQ+ status, race and ethnicity, supervisor status, county, disability status, veteran status, and job classification. State HR analyzes differences between these groups to look for possible inequities. We can then work with agencies to redirect resources or investment. In this way, we can create a workforce that includes and welcomes all employees.

What agencies are doing

- The Department of Labor and Industries used the employee engagement survey and pulse survey data to develop a work location analysis toolkit for supervisors. The toolkit fosters transparency, inclusivity, and fairness in work location/flexibility decisions.

- The Office of Financial Management engaged staff in strategic plan development, increased communication regarding key agency decisions and used exit surveys to find more ways to improve.

- The Employment Security Department analyzed employee engagement survey data and saw opportunities to improve the employee experience for underrepresented communities. As a result, the agency created an all-staff equity training, a twice-a-month "speak your truth" event, a mentorship program and standardized developmental job assignments to improve equity among staff.

- The Military Department surveys new employees and conducts 'stay' interviews to find areas of improvement.

What State HR recommends

- **Use employee engagement survey data to develop strategies.** For more information, visit the employee engagement survey website.

- **Conduct 'stay' interviews instead of exit interviews.** 'Stay' interviews 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.

- **Use the virtual workforce data center.** Connect to several workforce data dashboards available on OFM's website. Use the data to help develop targeted strategies and inform workforce planning decisions.

- **Analyze data from the Online Recruiting System.** Agencies can track metrics related to applicant movement through the recruitment process. This will help them identify when employees drop out of the process and help agencies make data-driven decisions.

- **Assess the 'minimum qualifications' for job postings.** Agencies should only include necessary qualifications on a job posting if the qualifications help the employee accomplish the job; these should be listed as minimum qualifications.

Diversity, equity and inclusion

Building respectful, supportive, and inclusive work environments requires intentional effort on multiple fronts. Agencies must create environments that engage, motivate and support staff as they do their best work. Agencies must also address problems that stand in the way of respectful work environments and promote diversity, equity and inclusion in the services they provide.

Agencies must incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion into all stages of the employee life cycle.

Late in fiscal year 2022, Gov. Jay Inslee charged all state agencies to implement the Washington State Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) Plan and Playbook (Executive Order 22-04). 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 will be a new focus for agencies in fiscal year 2023.

Agencies report diversity, equity and inclusion as a top priority. Specifically, they expect the workforce to reflect the diversity of the customers they serve.

- People of color and people with disabilities in the workforce continues to lag. These populations are also underrepresented in management positions across state government. While we've made progress to close these gaps, we have more work to do as a state.

- As the state's population becomes more diverse, agencies must continue to implement strategies to increase workforce diversity. Strategies should include creating work environments that support belonging. This will help agencies retain a diverse workforce

- The state recognizes there are ways to improve its data collection, and recruitment and retention strategies. These could remove barriers to employment for underrepresented and historically marginalized groups.

What agencies are doing

- The State Healthcare Authority's "multi-ethnic resource group for employees" launched a revised courageous conversations forum on "how to talk about race" basics.

- The Department of Natural Resources partnered with Washington State Parks, Fish and Wildlife, Ecology, Puget Sound Partnership, and the Recreation and Conservation Office to host two screenings of the short documentary Expedition Reclamation. The Brave Space Project created it to redefine "outdoorsy" and reclaim belonging in the outdoors for Black, Indigenous, and women of color by highlighting their joyful, resilient and transformative relationships to outdoor recreation.

- The Washington State Patrol diversity, equity, and inclusion office hosts monthly DEI-related 'lunch and learns' for all employees.

What State HR recommends

- State HR will work closely with the Department of Enterprise Services Workforce Support and Development division, Results Washington and the Office of Equity ensuring DEI policies, strategies, goals, and performance measures align with the statewide level.

- State HR will continue to strategically guide and support the seven statewide Business Resource Groups and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statewide council. These groups help agencies create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workforce through strategy recommendations and best practices.

- State HR will continue to monitor the implementation and progress of executive orders, directives and memorandum related to the state's workforce diversity, equity, and inclusion. It will also provide strategic advice to executives and senior leaders on diversity, equity, and inclusion policy 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 (Executive Orders 13-02, 16-04, 17-01, 19-01 and 22-02).

As the state's population becomes more diverse, agencies must keep implementing strategies to increase diversity.

People of color

People of color comprise 26% of Washington's labor force yet make up only 22.1% 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 4.1 percentage points.

The percentage of people of color employed by the executive branch remains below the available labor force
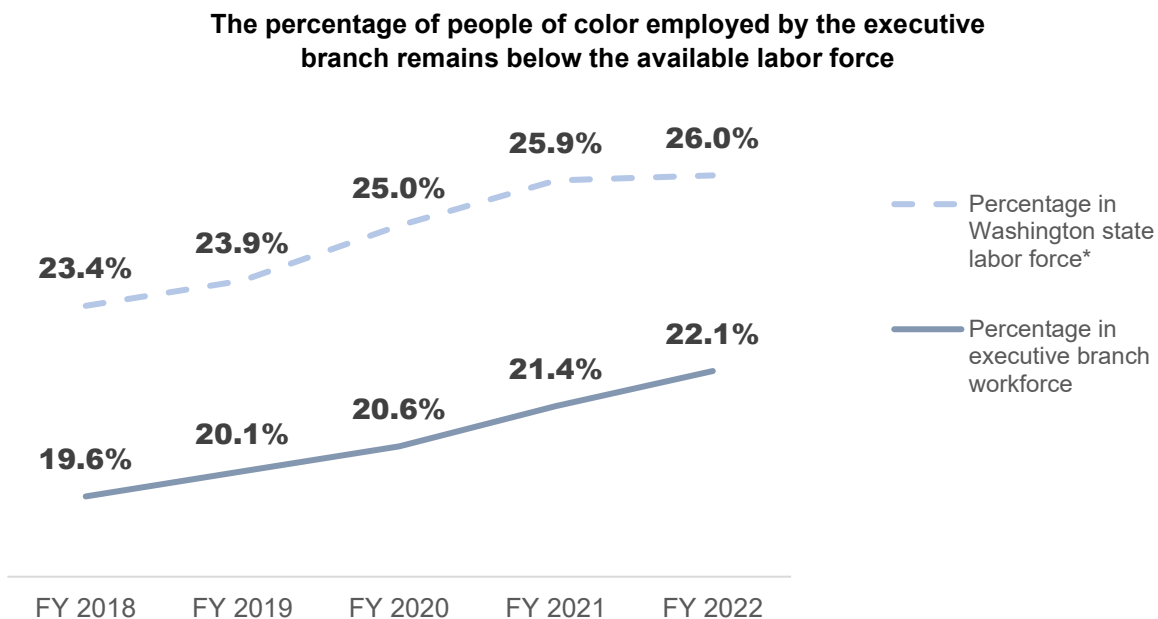
*American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates (Table ID: S2301). U.S. Census Bureau. Includes people of color in Washington's civilian labor force.

What agencies are doing

- The Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals held two continuing legal education sessions for minority bar association members promoting careers as an administrative law judge.

- The Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals judges volunteered to serve as liaisons with minority bar associations to network and inform members about the agency and jobs.

- The State Investment Board is rebuilding their internship program to expand partnerships with financial programs within historically Black and Latino colleges and universities.

- The Department of Fish and Wildlife is developing an internship program that will focus on community colleges with diverse student populations.

- The Department of Natural Resources trains hiring managers on how to source diverse candidate pools and remove barriers to hiring diverse talent.
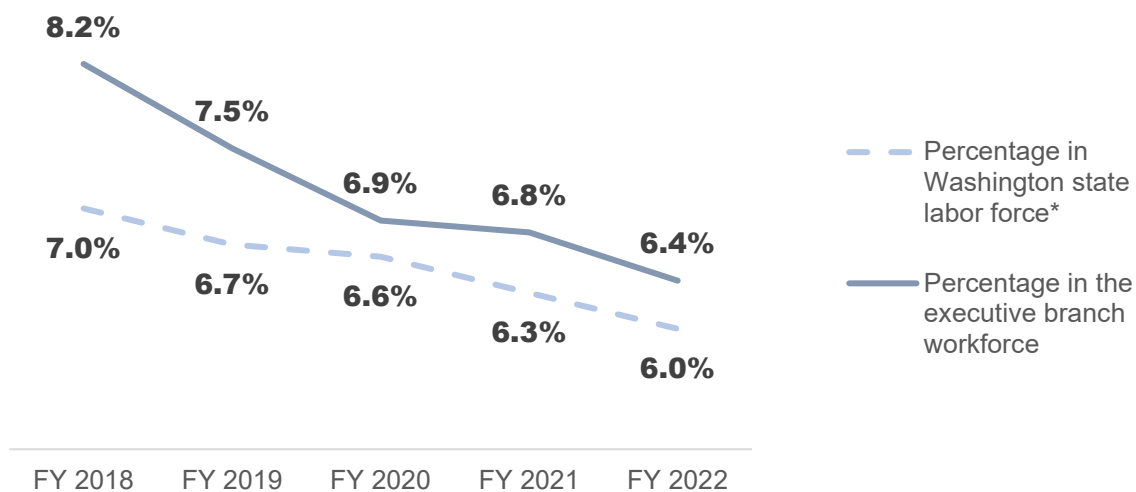
What State HR recommends

- State HR will continue to provide agencies with semi-annual affirmative action utilization reports. This report highlights affirmative action data that we can use to assess the available workforce. State HR will also provide regular training, coaching, and strategy consultation.

- State HR is partnering with DES 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.

Veterans, National Guard, and reserve members

In 2019, 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

Legend:
- - - - Percentage in Washington state labor force*
- ——— Percentage in the executive branch workforce

Executive branch workforce: 8.2% (FY 2018), 7.5% (FY 2019), 6.9% (FY 2020), 6.8% (FY 2021), 6.4% (FY 2022)

Washington state labor force: 7.0% (FY 2018), 6.7% (FY 2019), 6.6% (FY 2020), 6.3% (FY 2021), 6.0% (FY 2022)

FY 2018   FY 2019   FY 2020   FY 2021   FY 2022

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

Veterans represent 6.4% of the workforce. 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 (15 of 40 agencies reporting). Similarly, 14 agencies have strategies to attract National Guard and reserve members.

What agencies are doing

- The Department of Labor and Industries participates in the [Work Ex]() program. This program helps transitioning service members and military spouses participate in hands-on work-based learning and bridge the gap in the skills and experience they need to land a full-time career opportunity within the civilian workforce. The department also created a veterans placement program that hires veterans and military spouses into non-permanent positions.

- The State Healthcare Authority partners with [Pacific Mountain Workforce Development]() to help veterans transition into civilian work life.

- The Department of Veterans Affairs partners with the Employment Security Department to provide listening sessions for military spouses that highlight the agency's work.

- The Department of Revenue has a military liaison on their staffing team dedicated to recruiting and sourcing transitioning service members and military spouses.

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 begin or improve how they document 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 continue to fall short of the 5% target.

The percentage of people with disabilities in the workforce continues to increase.

The percentage of people with disabilities in our workforce is 4.3%. This is an increase of half a percentage point from the previous fiscal year. While this is a positive trend, the workforce is still below the 6% 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

- - - Percentage in Washington state labor force*

—— Percentage in the executive branch workforce
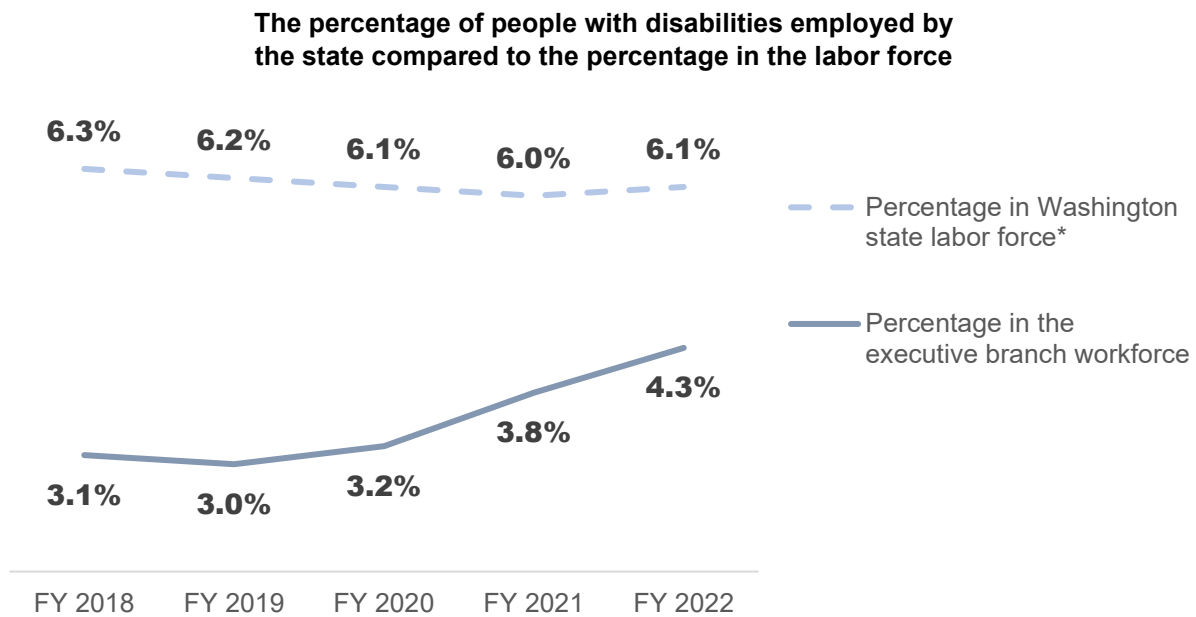
*American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates (Table ID: S2301). U.S. Census Bureau. Includes Washington civilian labor force.

People with disabilities are closer to aging out of the workforce as a group, with a median age of 50, when compared to the entire executive branch (median age of 46). People with disabilities are also retiring at higher rates than those without a disability (5% retirement rate compared to 2.9%).

Agency strategies to encourage disability disclosure include reminding employees to use the My Portal application to update demographics, share workforce data with employees and let them know how we use the data to inform business decisions. Disability representation could be higher, according to the 2022 employee engagement survey results. These show 17% of survey participants identify as having a disability, while only 4.3% of the workforce identifies as having a disability in the HR management reporting system.

What agencies are doing

- The Center for Death and Hard of Hearing Youth partners with organizations, universities and consumer groups with emphasis on deaf and hard of hearing education to find culturally competent applicants.

- The State Lottery Commission distributes job postings to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department of Services for the Blind.

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

Legend: ■ Number of agencies reporting

(No: 22; Yes: 18)

What State HR recommends

- Participate in the Supported Employment program.

- Provide or find training for hiring managers and supervisors to remove barriers in the hiring process (now required by State HR Directive 20-02) and analyze current position description language and required job qualifications.

- Provide training for managers and supervisors on reasonable accommodations.

- Establish stronger relationships with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department of Services for the Blind to obtain resources for recruitment and retention.

- Re-survey employees to improve the integrity of disability representation data.

- Increase engagement in agency employee resource groups and the enterprise Disability Inclusion Network business resource group.

LGBTQ+ community

LGBTQ Inclusion and Safe Places Initiative, Directive 16-11, charges Washington state cabinet and small-cabinet agencies to support an LGBTQ+ employee resource group, a best practices committee, and Safe Place program development. The Safe Place program identifies safe and secure spaces where LGBTQ+ community members can wait for police assistance.

There is no requirement under Washington law to keep statistical or equal employment opportunity data on sexual orientation.

Agencies began measuring LGBTQ+ and gender X/non-binary representation in the workforce in 2020. In fiscal year 2022, 2.97% of the workforce identified as LGBTQ+, while .3% identified as gender X/non-binary. In fact, the LGBTQ+ and gender X/non-binary representation could be higher, according to the 2022 Employee Engagement Survey results. Eight percent of the survey participants identified as LGBTQ+ and 1% of the participants identified as gender X/non-binary.

Agencies continue to make progress on LGBTQ+ related matters such as gender-affirming restroom signage and encouraging employees to use pronouns. In fiscal year 2022, 12 agencies reported they use these policies.

Number of agencies with policies related to inclusion of LGBTQ+ employees
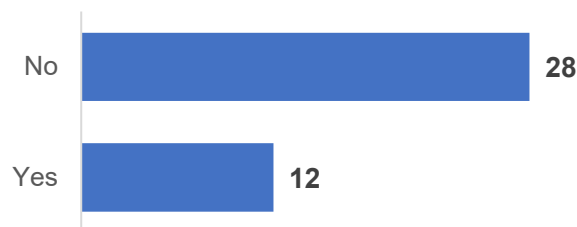
What agencies are doing

- The Department of Social and Health Services and the Department of Enterprise Services received 2022 Outstanding Agency Awards from the Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion Network to recognize their efforts and impacts on improving the LGBTQ+ employee experience.

- The Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth established a gay-straight alliance policy.

- The Department of Financial Institutions participates in the Tumwater Safe Place program. This provides a safe place for LGBTQ+ community members to wait for police support.

- The Department of Fish and Wildlife created a Red Flag Report for employees to anonymously report workplace safety and DEI policy violations.

- The State Health Care Authority encourages agency leaders to use (model) their pronouns during meeting introductions and is reviewing their practices around name-change requests.

What State HR recommends

- State HR will continue to advise and support the Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion Network as they work with agencies to identify best practices to provide safe and inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ employees. This includes facilitating panel format training and publishing inclusive LGBTQ+ guidelines.

- State HR recommends agencies use best practices guides to improve inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ employees. These include: [Adding Pronouns to Your Signature Line FAQ](#), [Use of Pronouns in External Communication](#) , [Including a Gender X Option on Forms](#), and [Inclusive Bathroom Signage Recommendations](#).

Job seeker and candidate experience

Agencies should build trust with job seekers and candidates by designing a hiring process that maximizes human connection.

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

Communication is the most mentioned strategy to create a positive experience for job seekers and candidates.

- Communicate with candidates (28 of 40 agencies reporting)
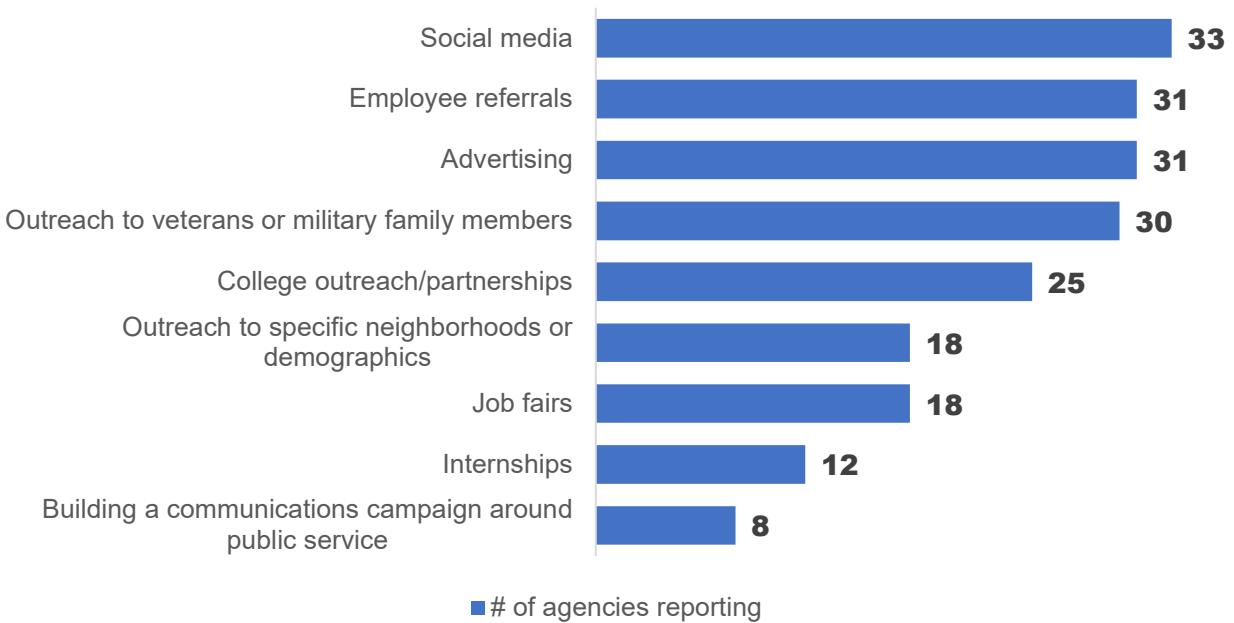
- Time to hire (14 of 40 agencies reporting)

Practice communication skills

Communication is the most mentioned strategy that can create a positive experience for job seekers and candidates. It is important to communicate the recruitment timeline, the job, the interview process, sample questions, what to expect and how to prepare. And, we recommend agencies personally notify candidates who are not selected. Many agencies use social media to communicate with diverse candidates: LinkedIn, Twitter and websites such as Indeed, Handshake and YouTube.

What agencies are doing

- The Washington State Gambling Commission uses a vendor to conduct background and reference checks for law enforcement positions. This will shorten hiring time so that candidates know their hiring status more quickly.

- The Department of Veterans Affairs provides QR codes to make it easier for candidates to find job postings.

- The State Lottery Commission meets with candidates before interviews to test video, audio and chat features.

- The State Parks and Recreation Commission is developing a marketing pitch to help recruitment efforts: "State Parks is a fulfilling and beautiful place to work – an agency with a compelling mission for almost everyone."

- The Department of Children, Youth, and Families created TikTok videos featuring HR staff who talk about the agency's mission, employee benefits, why people work here, and specific job openings.

- The Department of Retirement Systems invites all qualified job seekers to an orientation to learn more about the agency and current job openings.

Recruitment practices most successful in reaching qualified candidates

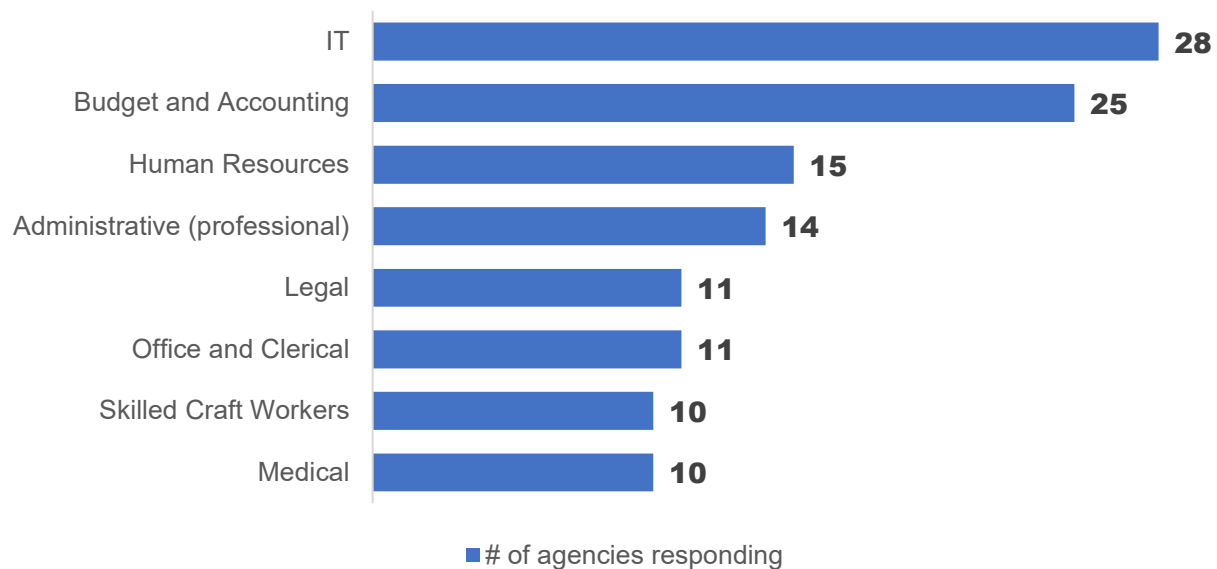| Practice	# of agencies reporting
Social media	33
Employee referrals	31
Advertising	31
Outreach to veterans or military family members	30
College outreach/partnerships	25
Outreach to specific neighborhoods or demographics	18
Job fairs	18
Internships	12
Building a communications campaign around public service	8

■ # of agencies reporting

Recruit candidates from historically marginalized populations

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. However, a majority stated that their outreach has targeted specific groups such as ethnic communities, veterans, and college students. Agencies use statewide business resource groups for outreach. And, telework and virtual interview options have helped agencies expand recruitment efforts statewide and reach diverse communities across Washington.

'Difficult to fill' job groups

Many agencies report difficulties filling positions in information technology, budget/accounting and human resources, among others. 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. The information technology, budget and accounting, human resources, and administrative professional job groups were the hardest to fill.

Recruitment and retention efforts focus on these job groups

Job Group	# of agencies responding
IT	28
Budget and Accounting	25
Human Resources	15
Administrative (professional)	14
Legal	11
Office and Clerical	11
Skilled Craft Workers	10
Medical	10

■ # of agencies responding

What agencies are doing

- Several agencies use Handshake to connect with college students. Handshake is a website that helps students explore career options, find jobs and internships, and connect with employers.

- The Employment Security Department uses a gender-decoder to neutralize job posting language to make postings more accessible.

- Washington State Patrol recruiters collaborate with civic organizations to connect underrepresented communities with law enforcement and help bridge perceived differences.

- The Department of Revenue created an award-winning recruitment video.

- The Department of Commerce provides a hiring manager checklist and a training video on recruiting in a virtual environment.

What State HR recommends

- **Leverage recruitment tools outside of careers.wa.gov.** Casting a wider net using resources such as LinkedIn, career fairs and other job hosting sites can increase the visibility of openings and bring a greater quantity and diversity of applicant pools.

- **Evaluate how to increase occupational flexibility**. What opportunities exist relating to remote or hybrid work?

- **Rethink how you approach recruitments**. Employ strategies to reach unexplored talent pools. The "set it and forget it" style of posting a position and doing no further outreach is not optimal. Work with your communication leads to create persuasive, engaging job postings.

- **Assess your internal workflows.** Improving processes like 'time to fill position' will improve candidate experience.

- As employee mobility options increase in the private sector, **agencies must articulate the benefits of state employment**.
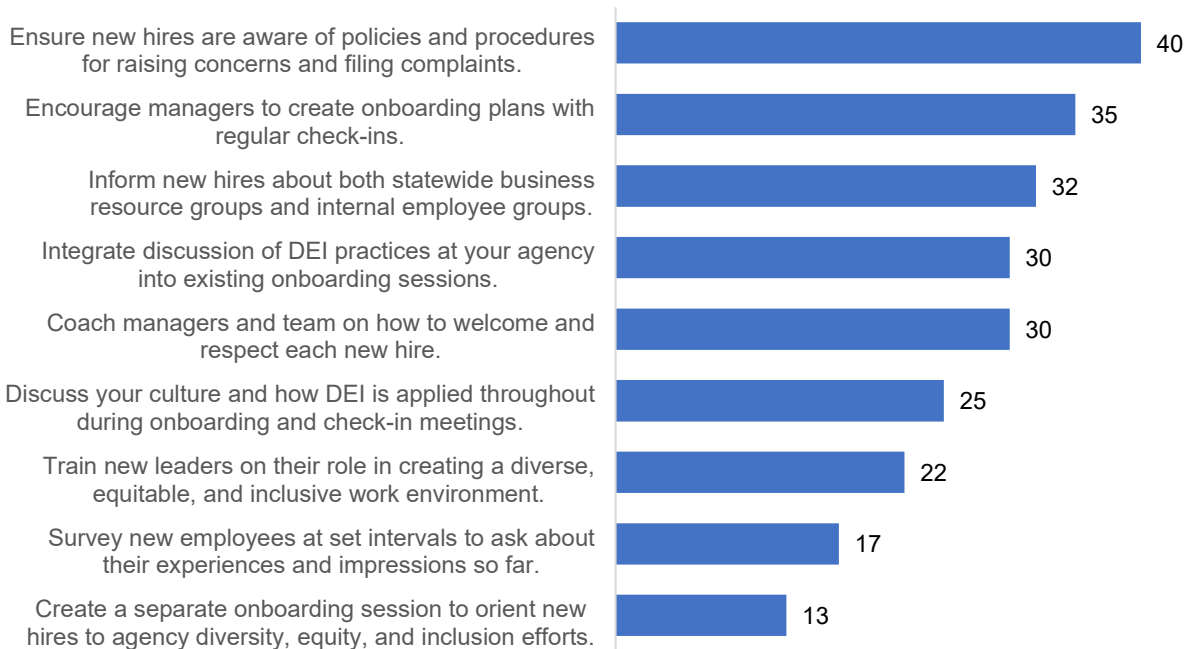
Onboard new employees

An employee's first day of work can be exciting, overwhelming, and stressful. That's one reason why 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 as efficiently as possible while also instilling agency values and connecting them with colleagues.

Making sure employees get off to a successful start is a team effort.

The top three strategies that 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 (40 of 40 agencies reporting).

- Encourage managers to create onboarding plans with regular check-ins (35 of 40 agencies reporting).

- Inform new hires about internal and statewide business resource groups (32 of 40 agencies reporting).

Strategies that agencies incorporate into the onboarding process

Strategy	# of agencies reporting
Ensure new hires are aware of policies and procedures for raising concerns and filing complaints.	40
Encourage managers to create onboarding plans with regular check-ins.	35
Inform new hires about both statewide business resource groups and internal employee groups.	32
Integrate discussion of DEI practices at your agency into existing onboarding sessions.	30
Coach managers and team on how to welcome and respect each new hire.	30
Discuss your culture and how DEI is applied throughout during onboarding and check-in meetings.	25
Train new leaders on their role in creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environment.	22
Survey new employees at set intervals to ask about their experiences and impressions so far.	17
Create a separate onboarding session to orient new hires to agency diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.	13

■ # of agencies reporting

What agencies are doing

- The Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth offers new employees tours of the School for the Deaf campus. Alumni also provide personal stories and historical information during orientation.

- Washington State Patrol surveys new employees during orientation asking them to describe their recruitment experience so they can improve their processes.

- The Employment Security Department assigns new employees a "Buddy" who can answer questions, provide support, and social connections.

- The Superintendent of Public Instruction created a new employee ambassador program. Employees volunteer to coach and mentor new hires.

## Internal employee resource groups and affinity groups

Employee resource and affinity groups (these are groups based on employee's personal interests) improve employee engagement and enhance diversity, equity and inclusion practices in the workplace.

The common theme among agencies for welcoming people from historically marginalized groups is to promote the statewide business resource groups, employee resource groups, and affinity groups. Many introduce and encourage new employees to join the groups during new employee orientation.

> *Twenty-three agencies formed internal employee resource groups or affinity groups to support the varied interests of their employees. This is a 35% increase from last fiscal year.*

- Encourage employee participation in internal employee resource groups (34 of 40 agencies reporting).
- Encourage employee participation in statewide business resource groups during new employee orientations (32 of 40 agencies reporting).

Number of agencies with internal employee resource groups or affinity groups

Yes — 17 (FY2021), 23 (FY 2022)
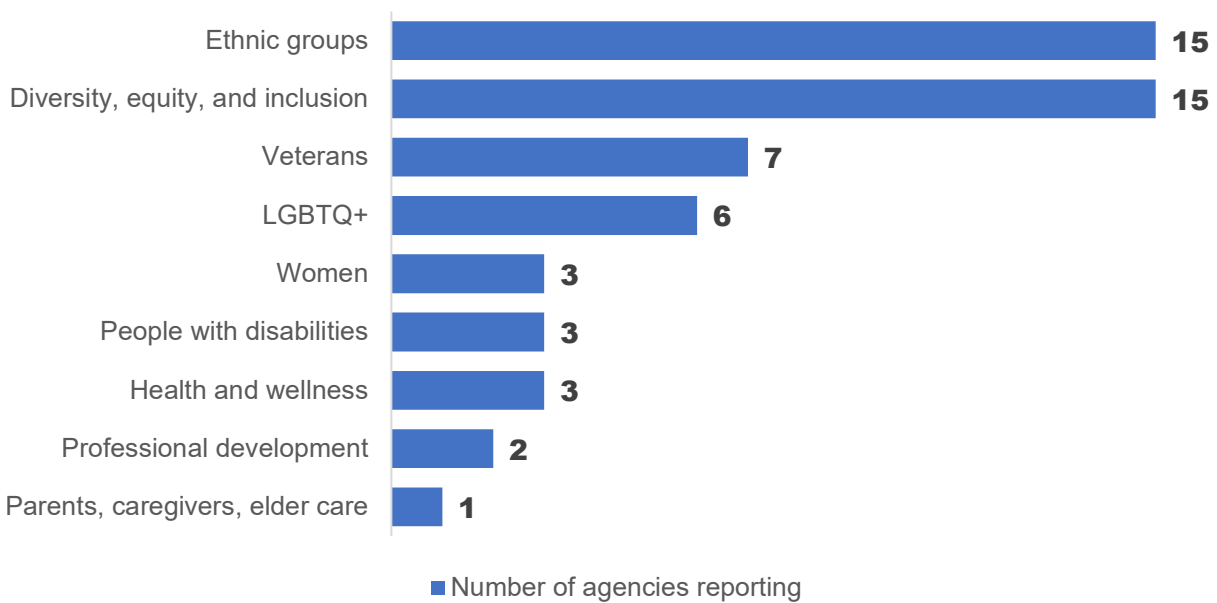No — 21 (FY2021), 17 (FY 2022)

FY2021   FY 2022

23
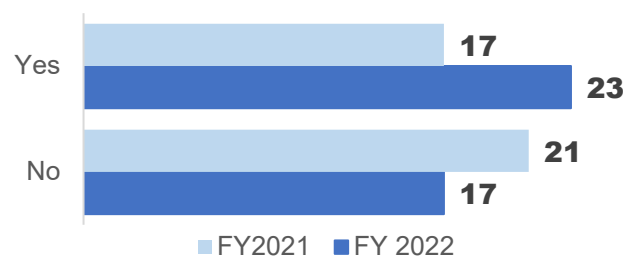
Twenty-three agencies formed or continued to host internal groups such as these to support the interests of their employees. The groups can be as unique and varied as the workforce. They include DEI, specific ethnic groups, veterans, LGBTQ+, disabilities, women, professional development, health and wellness, caregivers of children with special needs, and hobbies.

The state has seven business resource groups statewide:

- 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)

Types of internal employee resource groups and affinity groups

Type	Number of agencies reporting
Ethnic groups	15
Diversity, equity, and inclusion	15
Veterans	7
LGBTQ+	6
Women	3
People with disabilities	3
Health and wellness	3
Professional development	2
Parents, caregivers, elder care	1

■ Number of agencies reporting

What State HR recommends

- State HR will continue to support agencies as they form and host internal employee resource groups.

- State HR will continue to educate agencies about the distinction among business resource groups, employee resource groups, and affinity groups and their function within the agency.

Employee development and performance evaluation

Succession planning

State HR launched a Succession Planning Toolkit in 2020 to help agencies develop succession plans to support employees to improve their skills and get promoted.

*Succession planning is a key part of business continuity plans.*

Succession plans typically include individual development plans, mentoring programs, developmental job assignments, and training programs.

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.

Several agencies report they are creating succession plans (9 of 40 agencies reporting).

Number of agencies with a succession planning process

■ Number of agencies reporting
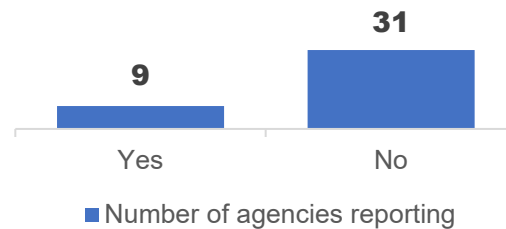
What agencies are doing

- The Department of Labor and Industries created the Career Lattice Dashboard that lets employees view position requirements and development activities to learn required skills.

- The Department of Corrections formed an office of executive excellence that helps prepare the next generation of leaders. They also created an executive mentorship program, executive leadership academy and an executive coaching program.

- The Department of Revenue created success plans for critical positions and offers employees developmental opportunities so they can apply for future job openings.

- The Office of the State Auditor developed an in-house 'emerging leaders' program. Executive leaders provide quarterly classroom training and monthly one-on-one mentoring for aspiring leaders.

- The Superintendent of Public Instruction has an employee advisory group that focuses on employee professional development.

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.

Performance management

Supervisors manage their employees' performance development plans, or PDPs. These documents help the employee measure their competencies and expectations in the job. A state law requires supervisors to give classified employees performance feedback at least once a year (WAC 357-37). Many agencies also provide exempt and management service employees with employee reviews.

Increased remote work has accelerated a trend toward more frequent feedback and greater focus on career development.

Agencies report that most employees have current evaluations, expectations, and position descriptions

Position descriptions	91.7%
Performance expectations	75.7%
Performance evaluations	71.7%

■ % current/complete
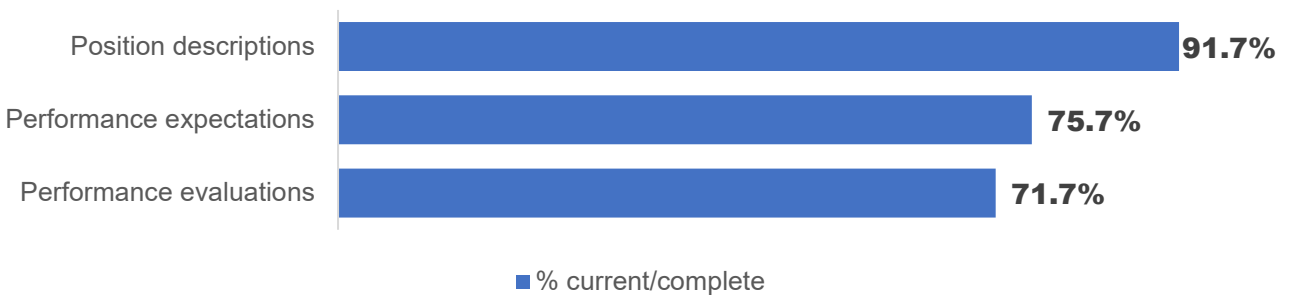
What agencies are doing

- Increase emphasis on coaching and ongoing feedback to help employees improve and grow.
- Solicit feedback from multiple sources.
- Use employee skill sets, recognize their successes, and encourage them where they falter.
- Accurately assess performance and make sure it's strategically aligned with an employee's job description.

What State HR recommends

- Investigate and collaborate with other stakeholders to develop an automated performance management tool.
- State HR and multiple agencies continue to use insights from the employee engagement survey to improve the employee development and evaluation process.
- Continue marketing the Choice Performance Confirmation program to increase participation.
- Continue to provide performance management resources.

Employee experience and retention

Employee engagement survey

Since 2006, Washington has conducted an employee engagement survey to collect vital information on its perceived status as an employer. The survey is a tool for decision makers. About 66% of the workforce (45,713 state employees), representing 79 agencies and two higher education institutions, participated in the 2022 employee engagement survey.

> *Employees remain resilient and increasingly engaged at work. What was referred to as the "new normal" is becoming just "normal."*

As employees gradually reenter the workplace and COVID-19 protocols change, employees remain resilient and increasingly engaged at work. Many continue to telework (49% of those surveyed) or use a hybrid work schedule with in-office and telework days (14% of those surveyed). Others provide critical on-site services and don't telework at all. Agencies continue to implement hybrid work models and use 'lessons learned' to improve job satisfaction, flexibility, and the ability to stay connected to one another.

Survey highlights:

Highest scoring

- 90% of respondents felt their supervisors treat them with dignity and respect.
- 86% of respondents indicated they know what is expected of them at work.
- 79% of respondents identified that they find meaning in their work.
- 77% of respondents indicated they were satisfied with the hybrid or remote work opportunities available to them.

Areas for improvement

- 62% of respondents felt they receive helpful communication from their agency.
- 58% of respondents with disabilities indicated they would recommend their agency to others with disabilities.
- 56% of employees said their agencies help them navigate change.
- 55% of employees indicated they know how their agency measures success.

What agencies are doing

- The Department of Social and Health Services provided over 450 statistical reports to leadership, managers, divisions, and administrations. They used Inside DSHS articles, videos, newsletters and emails to message results and action planning.

- Agency leadership share survey results broadly to all employees and organizational units through meetings, emails, and dashboards.

- Many agencies also communicated results to organizational units with actionable information to improve their engagement.

What State HR recommends

- State HR will partner with agencies to review and analyze engagement data focusing on DEI, PEAR, and ADA issues. The continued addition of voluntary demographic questions has provided unprecedented visibility into the experiences of diverse groups within our workforce.

- State HR will continue to collaborate with agencies to develop a rotating question for 2023 to address and test new ideas or areas of concern.

Additional resources

- State HR's website provides background and resources pertaining to the [State Employee Engagement Survey](#).

Modern work environment

Inslee directs Washington's modern workplace strategy initiative ([Executive Order 16-07](#)). Led by State HR, the initiative helps agencies identify, experiment with, and adopt innovative ways to support business performance. It does this by 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.

> *Agencies are supporting substantial rates of telework while planning to safely reopen the workplace with hybrid work models.*

In March 2020, the [Stay Home, Stay Healthy](#) proclamation directed all Washingtonians to stay home unless they were performing essential work. State agencies were required to rapidly shift in-office workers who *could* work from home *to work* from home so we could reduce COVID-19 risk.

Today, record numbers of state employees continue to work remotely full time. Many agencies are exploring how to continue supporting these substantial rates of telework while supporting hybrid work models.
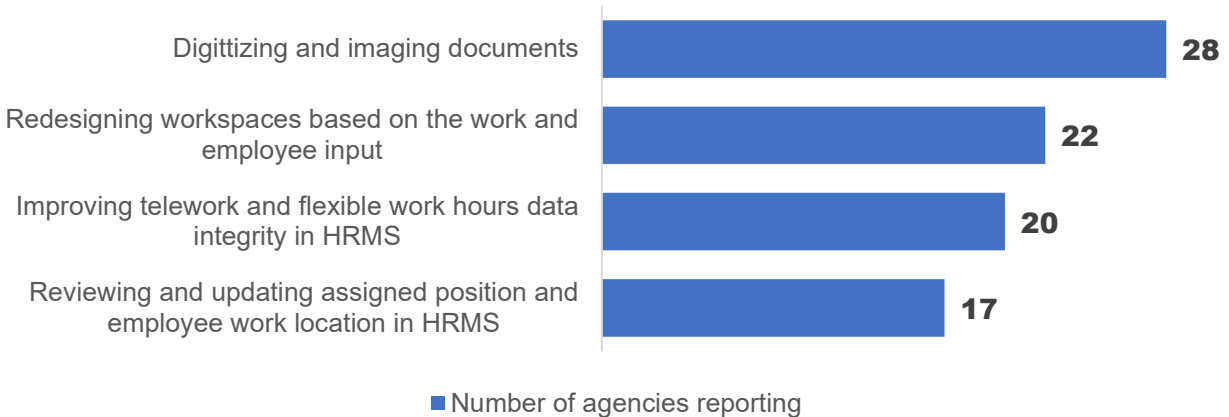
With such a monumental change in the work environment, agencies implemented many strategies. The two most common strategies were marketing modern work strategies when recruiting new employees and encouraging employees to participate in the Commute Trip Reduction program.
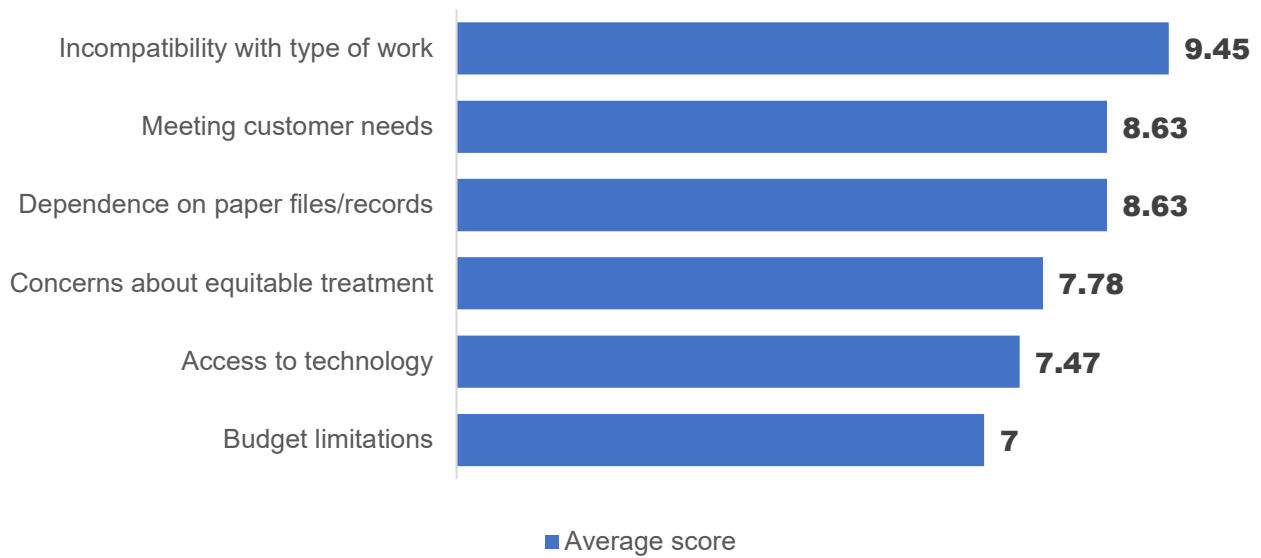
Top six accomplished strategies

Strategy	Number of agencies reporting
Marketing modern work strategies when recruiting	30
Participating in the Commute Trip Reduction program	29
Increasing position eligibility in telework, flex time, and compressed workweeks	25
Updating internal policies on telework and mobile work and participation targets	22
Offering financial incentives for the Commute Trip Reduction prgoram	21
Infants in the workplace program	21

■ Number of agencies reporting

Agencies also identified the strategies they are currently implementing. The most common one is digitizing and imaging documents.

Top four strategies in the process of implementation

Strategy	Number of agencies reporting
Digittizing and imaging documents	28
Redesigning workspaces based on the work and employee input	22
Improving telework and flexible work hours data integrity in HRMS	20
Reviewing and updating assigned position and employee work location in HRMS	17

■ Number of agencies reporting

There are still some barriers for agencies to support a modern work environment. The most frequently mentioned barriers were the type of work, meeting customer needs and dependence on paper files. Other barriers include concerns about equitable treatment, access to technology, and budget limitations.

Top six barriers to implementing a modern work environment

Barrier	Average score
Incompatibility with type of work	9.45
Meeting customer needs	8.63
Dependence on paper files/records	8.63
Concerns about equitable treatment	7.78
Access to technology	7.47
Budget limitations	7

■ Average score

Maintaining an effective, engaging, and inclusive workplace while working remotely

It has been a busy year for HR staff who continue to deal with pandemic-related workplace challenges. Several agencies report that employees feel isolated while teleworking and many report feeling stressed by increased workloads. Agencies continue to deal with COVID-19 challenges such as screening employees, reporting symptoms and mitigating outbreaks. Staffing shortages also created heavier workloads.

Agencies must make sure their employees are engaged, connected, and appreciated while many employees work remotely, some are back in the office and others are working a hybrid environment.

Many agencies reported creative solutions to keep employees connected.

What agencies are doing

- The State Health Care Authority offered an audiobook library to ensure equitable access to professional development books for all employees, provided books for the leadership lending library, and held an annual virtual college fair for employees.

- The Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals hosts scavenger hunts and brain games during employee breaks.

- The Department of Ecology created a "team connectivity for a mobile workforce" dashboard to promote connectivity and provide practices and resources to connect teams.

- The Utilities and Transportation Commission hosts virtual games.

- The Liquor and Cannabis Board held a drive-thru employee recognition event at headquarters and field offices. Staff could either drive-thru or park and walk up to the event, chat with leaders, and receive goodie bags in recognition of their hard work and dedication.

- The State Investment Board hosted several return-to-office events that included games and treats in the parking lot to normalize being together again.

- The State Lottery Commission celebrated its 40th anniversary by sharing history, trivia contests, old commercials, and advertising.

What State HR recommends

- **Stay connected while teleworking.** State HR heard that some employees find it difficult to maintain social connections in a virtual environment. (The employee engagement survey results support this.)

- **Encourage the Employee Assistance program.** Remind your employees about the Employee Assistance program. It's a free, confidential program created to promote the health, safety, and well-being of public employees.

- State HR, with the assistance workplace strategy council, will review and update guidance and recommendations for telework policy challenges.

- State HR published a Modern Work Environment dashboard that reports employee participation and eligibility rates for telework, flextime, and compressed workweeks by agency, county, job class, and fiscal year. The data from this dashboard comes from the Human Resources Management System.

- State HR published a "My Modern Work Environment" tile in the MyPortal site that allows employees to update their telework schedule upon supervisor approval.

- You can find additional resources related to state employee telework on the OFM Emergency Telework webpage.
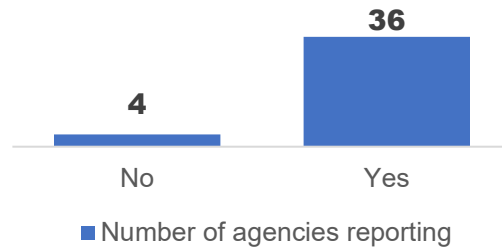
Tuition reimbursement program

Offering a tuition reimbursement program shows employees you value their education and willingness to improve their skill sets. Relevant coursework can sharpen workers' skills and know-how, strengthening the agency and the state workforce.

Tuition reimbursement programs are a valuable recruitment and retention tool.

Agencies develop their own tuition reimbursement policy. Programs include a budget, policy, and reimbursement procedure. They may include partnerships with affiliate schools for discounts. Each agency has unique funding thresholds, restraints, approved degree types and reimbursement requirements. Thirty-six agencies (90%) provide tuition reimbursement programs.

Number of agencies with a tuition reimbursement program

Number of agencies reporting

What agencies are doing

- Department of Licensing employees may use the tuition reimbursement funds for books as well as tuition and fees.

- The Student Achievement Council offers prepay options for employees.

- The State School for the Blind finds grants to help cover employee tuition costs.

- The Department of Natural Resources established a DEI certification pilot program fund to support employees as they prepare for Certified Diversity Professional and Certified Diversity Executive certification programs.

What State HR recommends

- State HR will continue to collaborate with agencies to gain insight on how to mitigate program administration challenges.

- State HR, in collaboration with Washington State Student Achievement Council, will continue to make information about the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program available to agencies and employees.

Complaints and investigations

Agencies that handle complaint and investigation processes in a consistent, fair, and thorough way help foster a work environment where employees feel heard, valued, and respected.

Agencies use investigations to gather facts and learn about the gravity of an observed or reported workplace issue. Information from an investigation can help employers determine gaps in policies, training, or workplace practices.

An interagency work group is developing a complaint data reporting system for agencies.

It's important that agencies know about reported issues to develop effective strategies that improve workplace culture and reduce instances of misconduct, conflict, and harassment.

Frequency of agency review of investigation data and trends

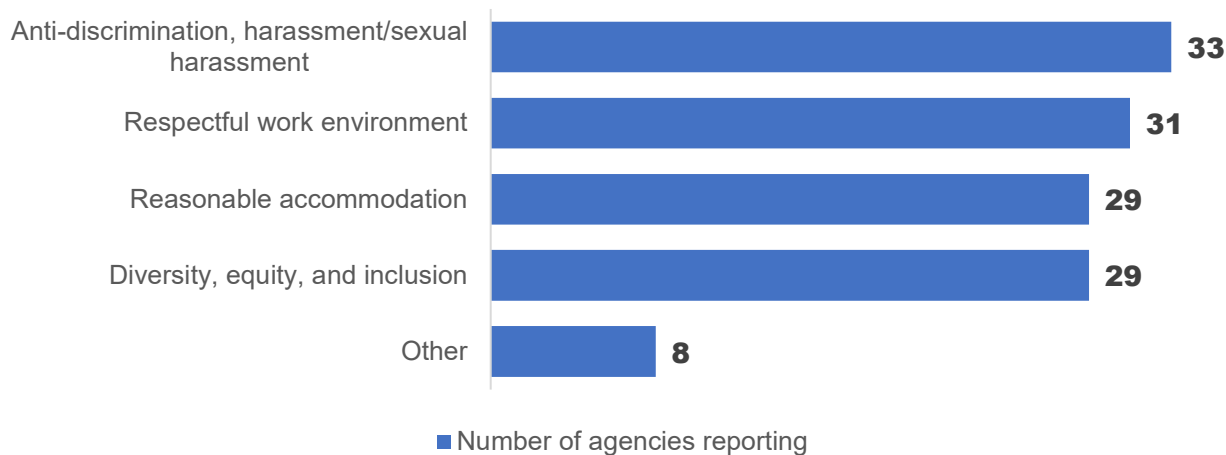| Category	Number of agencies reporting
Randomly or as needed	26
Annually	5
Other	4
Quarterly	4
Monthly	1

■ Number of agencies reporting

What State HR recommends

- State HR will collaborate with an interagency work group to create a complaint data tool for collecting and reporting workplace complaints.

DEI-related policies

Agencies continue to update and establish DEI-related policies that include language that prohibits disproportionate impacts on historically marginalized or under-represented groups.

Number of DEI-related policies updated or established since July 2020

Category	Number of agencies reporting
Anti-discrimination, harassment/sexual harassment	33
Respectful work environment	31
Reasonable accommodation	29
Diversity, equity, and inclusion	29
Other	8

■ Number of agencies reporting

What agencies are doing

- The Office of the Secretary of State includes core values in employee expectations and position descriptions in lieu of a respectful work environment policy.

- The Office of Administrative Hearings developed an internal complaint policy and established an anti-retaliation policy.

- The Department of Children, Youth and Families published policies for clients and caregivers who are limited-English proficient and for individuals with disabilities.

What State HR recommends

- Agencies should continue incorporating DEI principles in workplace policies and practices to avoid inadvertent disproportionate impact on marginalized groups.

- State HR will continue to encourage policy compliance.

Retention challenges

Employees leaving the workplace is natural. However, agencies can take more 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.

The best employee retention strategies directly connect to incorporating employee feedback and preferences.

When we asked agencies about retention challenges, they reported several issues. Compensation was the most reported issue (25 of 40 agencies reporting). Many agencies report limited growth and promotional opportunities, predominately in health services and natural resources. New in fiscal year 2022, 26% of agencies saw a noticeable increase in concerns for employee burnout and employee morale.

Retention challenges

Challenge	# of agencies reporting
Compensation	25
Growth/promotional opportunities	12
Burnout	10
Lack of telework opportunities	7
Other	5

■ # of agencies reporting

What agencies are doing

- Agencies continue to encourage wellness programs and flexibility in work schedules.

- The State Investment Board introduced a distinguished career pathways program to promote growth and promotional opportunities.

- The Washing State Gambling Commission supports supervisors and leaders to take a hands-on approach to onboarding and an employee's first year at the agency.

- WaTech submitted salary exemptions to address compensation concerns amongst in-demand job classes.

What State HR recommends

- State HR will partner with agencies to administer the Statewide Employee Engagement Survey and Employee Exit Survey to help distinguish and address the employee life cycle.

- State HR will continue to help agencies make data-driven decisions by making data easy to access with the virtual workforce data center.

Stay interviews

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

Agency stay interviews/surveys

- No: 32
- Planning or in the process: 5
- Yes: 4

■ # of agencies reporting
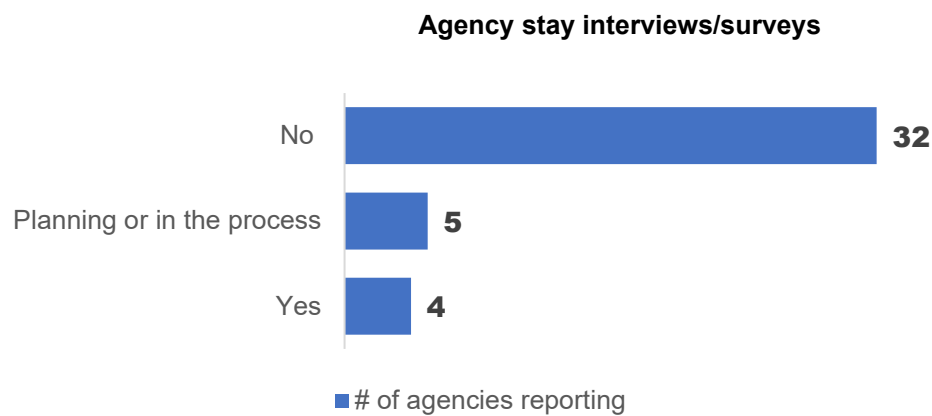
What agencies are doing

- The Department of Retirement Systems and Green River College conduct stay interviews.

- The Office of the State Auditor managers and supervisors conduct stay interviews. They share results with HR when appropriate.

- The Washington State Pollution Liability Insurance Agency rotates their stay interview questions to help address current retention strategies.

**What State HR recommends**

- Agencies can use stay interviews to provide a space for employees to voice concerns, opinions, and positive change.
- 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 exit survey and turnover

Turnover

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, total separations increased nationwide from 19.4% in fiscal year 2021 to 21.7% in fiscal year 2022 an increase of 2.3 percentage points. This was for the state and local government job sector. During this same time, executive branch separations increased from 13.8% to 20.3% an increase of 6.5 percentage points. Executive branch separations remain below the national state and local government rate.

> *Turnover rates increased 6.5 percentage points from fiscal year 2021 to 2022.*

Total separations for the executive branch compared to the state and local government job sector nationwide*
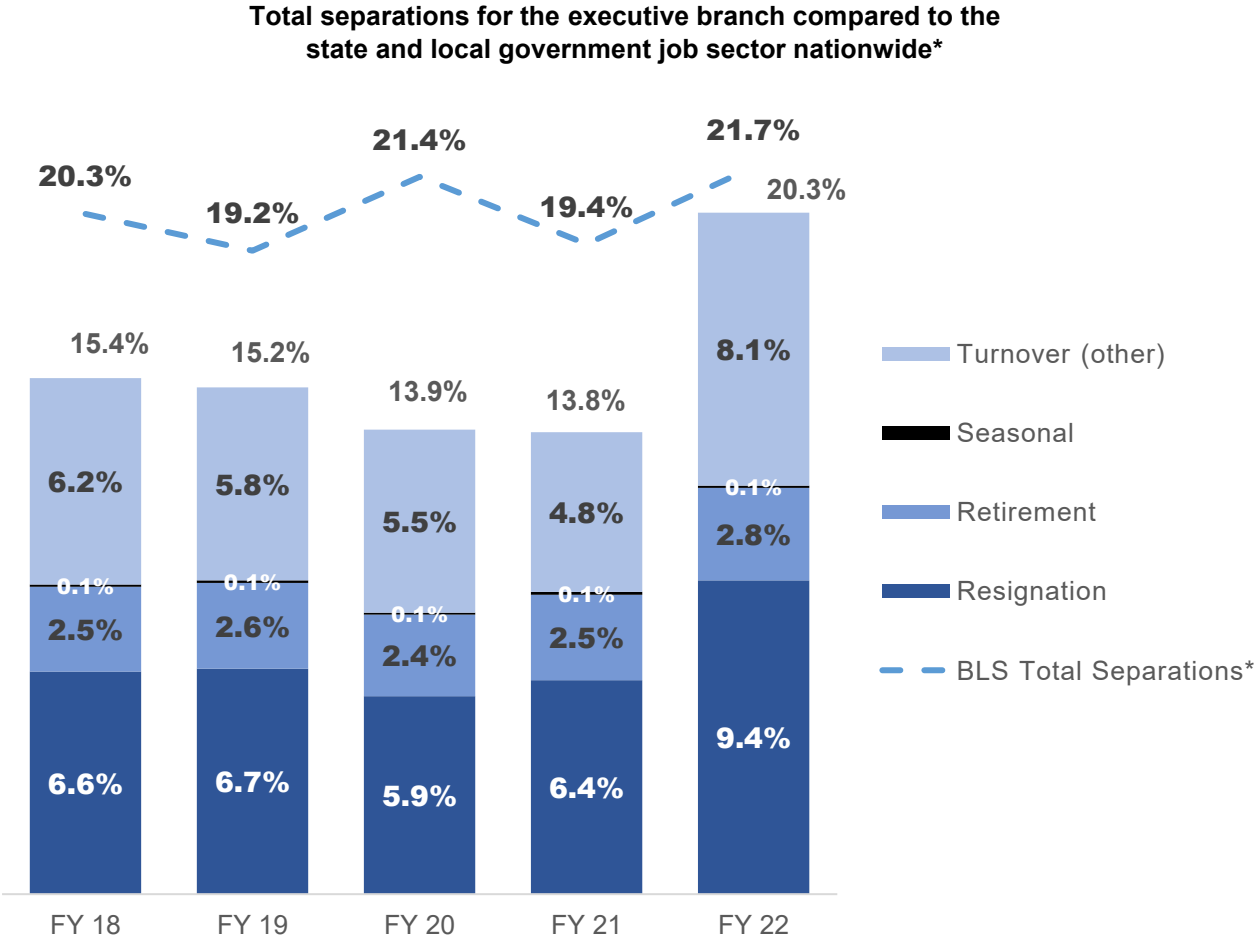
Turnover rates include permanent, non-permanent and seasonal employees. Data is from HRMS. Other turnover includes dismissals, layoffs, disability, death, and other miscellaneous actions.

*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.

Exit survey

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

Make sure you take the time to understand why your employee is leaving and get honest feedback on what you can do to make the agency a better place to work in the future.

Currently, the exit survey has 30 standard questions and has a 75% completion rate. The exit survey had over 3,600 respondents in fiscal year 2022 up from 1,487 respondents in fiscal year 2021.

- 55% of agencies (22 of 40) use the statewide exit survey, down from 63% in fiscal year 2021.

The statewide exit survey will:

- **Create an adaptive and innovated state government.** Organizations must learn from employees themselves — why they stay, why they leave, and how the work environment needs to change.

- **Consolidate statewide data collection.** State HR will collect exit survey data that will ensure data integrity and comparability.

- **Compare and report on statewide data.** State HR can compare data from the engagement survey to the statewide exit survey to HRMS. This will provide agencies, the Legislature and other stakeholders with more actionable data and analysis.

- **Aggregate statewide exit survey data.** State HR will ensure data integrity, security, and efficiency.

- **Innovate new metrics and methodology.** State HR will continue to evolve survey methodology, collection, and processes to better serve agencies and the enterprise.

What State HR recommends

- The statewide exit survey webpage launched fall 2019. This central location allows the public to access information about the survey.

- State HR, in collaboration with agency contacts, will review and update exit survey questions and create tools to help agencies make data-driven decisions.

- State HR will continue to encourage employees to complete the survey when they give notice.