CLASSIFICATION, COMPENSATION, AND BENEFITS
STUDY

An evaluation of employee retention, job satisfaction, and workforce stability among JOHS-funded agencies serving people experiencing homelessness.

Joint Office of Homeless Services

Table of Contents

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Contributors

About Homebase

We are a collective of legal, policy, and subject matter experts who are also data geeks, skilled facilitators, and strategic thinkers and planners dedicated to addressing homelessness and its root causes.

Applying over three decades of experience in the homelessness response field and expertise that spans disciplines and geographies, Homebase works directly with communities to develop strengths-based, customized responses to their most pressing challenges. We partner with clients to identify barriers and key resources, refine their ideas and goals, and design scalable solutions.

We believe that meaningful impact results from robust and intentional collaboration across sectors and systems, cultivation of passionate leaders, and skillful execution of policy and practice to achieve sustainable results.

About North Third

North Third Partners LLC is an information services company based in McKinney, Texas that specializes in data & visualization, reporting, project and product management, research, and content and service design.

They are data & visualization experts who help get the right information to the right people in the right ways and are connectors & thought partners who manage complex data and reporting projects from start to finish.

About the Joint Office of Homeless Services

The Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS) was established in 2016 to oversee the delivery of services to people experiencing homelessness in Multnomah County. The office represents a shared commitment between Multnomah County and the City of Portland to address homelessness by providing housing assistance, shelter, outreach, case management and other services.

The Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS) works with community-based organizations and local governments partners to provide participant-driven, coordinated and equity-based services focused on people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Executive Summary

Wage Study – Context, Purpose and Goals

Employee retention, job satisfaction, and workforce stability have long been issues among agencies serving people experiencing homelessness. In developing Multnomah County's Metro Supportive Housing Services Measure (SHS) Local Implementation Plan, the Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS) discovered through outreach and consultation that workforce development challenges were among the top concerns of service providers and other stakeholders in implementing a significant expansion of programming. As a result, Multnomah County included in its SHS Local Implementation Plan as an investment priority "assessing the capacity of CBOs that currently deliver services, including a review of their ability to attract and retain talent given current compensation levels and approaches to equity."

The resulting study, conducted by JOHS with the support of Homebase (a nonprofit technical assistance provider dedicated to building communities' capacity to address homelessness) and North Third (a research and analysis firm) was designed to evaluate:

(1) classification, compensation and benefits practices across JOHS-funded agencies,
(2) primary factors contributing to employee satisfaction, burnout, and turnover intentions, and
(3) how best to support workforce stability and equity for JOHS-funded agencies and the region's homelessness system of care.

The primary goal of this study is to understand how to improve the retention of a strong workforce across JOHS-funded agencies, to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of JOHS-funded programming, and to support a strong homelessness system of care across the region.

JOHS has already begun to increase its support for workforce development in advance of completing the wage study. During fiscal year 2022-23, JOHS provided funding increases for agencies up to 8 percent of their operating budgets with the goal of increasing spending on compensation and benefits for front-line staff. JOHS' current fiscal year 2023-24 budget includes a 5 percent cost-of-living adjustment for contracts, and projects funded by the County General Fund include an additional 3 percent cost-of-living adjustment. The current budget also includes funding for capacity building grants for new and expanding providers. Agencies can choose to use these funds on a broad range of

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

capacity-building activities, including HR and fiscal business services, equity planning, and general strategic planning.

In general, this study supports a tailored approach to improving workforce stability and equity that's responsive to each agency's needs, rather than one-size-fits-all directives regarding staffing and compensation that lack specific relevance to each workplace.

Participants, Methodology and Data Collection

The data collection and analysis considers three areas of inquiry:

- ❖ **Compensation and Benefits**: How does the system currently compensate employees? How much variation in compensation and benefits is there across the system? How much variation in compensation and benefits is there within agencies? How does variation in compensation and benefits affect workforce equity?
- ❖ **Retention**: What factors do employees consider most important in deciding to remain at an agency? How do compensation, benefits, supports at work, workplace culture, organizational and DEI practices affect staff turnover rates?
- ❖ **Improving Outcomes**: How do we improve outcomes around workforce equity, job satisfaction, and employee retention?

Homebase reached out to 40 agencies among our contracted providers, selected because they provide primarily homelessness services. Of those, 26 agreed to participate and 20 submitted data. The study included four data collection elements:

(1) an employee compensation and benefits table completed by agency HR or leadership that included wages and benefit information for staff in different job classifications,

(2) a survey completed by agency HR or leadership of benefits, policies, and practices implemented agency-wide,

(3) a survey completed by employees that asked about their satisfaction with compensation, benefits, supports at work, and workplace culture, and about their experiences of burnout and turnover intentions, and

(4) employee and agency-leader focus groups that explored in more depth themes uncovered in the survey.

Data collection for the study took place between May and August 2022 and included employee classification, compensation, and benefits data that was in effect for fiscal year 2022. To encourage agencies to submit data and to alleviate concerns about its

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

potential use by the JOHS or Multnomah County, JOHS agreed to relinquish our access to the data. JOHS does not have access to the raw data collected in this study, and Homebase and North Third conducted all statistical analyses for the main system-wide report and the agency-specific reports.

System-wide, the study analyzed classification, compensation, and benefits in the aggregate and compared small and large organizations. The project also produced agency-specific compensation benchmarking reports that are confidential to each agency, comparing its data to a comparison group of small or large agencies.

Key Findings

Compensation & Benefits

Compensation is low, especially for entry level staff.
- Study-wide, the median annualized salary was around $46,000. The median salary for associate (entry) level staff was $42,795.
- Fewer than one-third (31 percent) of employees felt their compensation allows them to take care of their basic needs.
- When asked which financial benefits would increase job satisfaction, employees ranked increased paid time off above other benefits, with 50 percent of employees naming it in their top 3.
- When asked about efforts to advance diversity, equity and inclusion, 52 percent of employees cited increased transparency in salary structure as the number one effort they'd like to see.

Employee Retention

Turnover intentions are high and strongly tied to compensation.
- Median years of experience at an organization was 2.4 years, and 30 percent of employees had less than 1 year of experience at their organization.
- **Over 50 percent of employees surveyed said they were somewhat or very likely to look for a new job during the next year.**
  - When asked about the top reasons they would leave their current organization or stay at their current organization, 78 percent of employees said they would leave their current job for better pay somewhere else, while 86 percent of employees said they would stay at their current organization for better pay.
  - Employees also cited opportunities for professional growth as a reason they would leave their current organization (36 percent) and increased paid time off as a reason they would stay (29 percent).

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

- Employees also cited better benefits as reasons they would leave for another organization (30 percent) or stay at their current organization (26 percent).
- Nearly 1 in 5 employees said they would leave for better work-life balance (19 percent) or lower workload (18 percent).
- When asked to identify the top three things that would help them feel more supported at work, employees emphasized more efforts to prevent/reduce burnout (42 percent), professional development opportunities (41 percent), and clearer pathways for career advancement (35 percent).

In general, employees who were more satisfied with supports at work (such as professional development opportunities and support for work-life balance) and the workplace's culture were less likely to report burnout and intentions to leave the workplace during the next year.

Workplace Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Transparency, communication, and responsiveness to feedback could improve employees' satisfaction with agencies' efforts to advance diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

- Employees identified transparency in salary determination (53 percent), communication about things that affect staff (50 percent) and improved processes for collecting and responding to staff feedback (47 percent) as the top 3 actions that their agency could take to advance DEI efforts.
- In particular, salary transparency may be an opportunity for improvement, as only 47 percent of organizations made their compensation policies available and fewer than a third (32 percent) shared their salary schedule with staff.
- Employees who were more satisfied with their workplaces' efforts to advance DEI were less likely to report burnout and look for a new job in the next year.

Policy Recommendations and Next Steps

The findings and policy recommendations presented in this study aim to be informative rather than prescriptive. The goal of this stage of the project is to encourage and financially support agencies in developing plans to address the classification, compensation, and benefits issues identified in their agency-specific reports, and engage with these plans in future contracting activities. This approach is preferable to creating one-size-fits-all directives that lack specific relevance to each workplace. Our policy recommendations also affirm and support our shared commitment to JOHS' mission and equity priorities.

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Our policy recommendations, which are described in detail in the study, are grouped into five categories:

- ❖ **Technical Assistance**, which includes follow-up outreach to participating agencies, agency-specific workforce development planning, and tools to assess improvements in workforce stability.
- ❖ **Contracting Incentives,** which include contract increases to fund investments in staffing and other financial incentives to address issues in classification, compensation, and workforce stability.
- ❖ **Compensation, Benefits and Other Supports**, which focus on addressing burnout by improving work flexibility and employees' ability to use benefits, as well as developing a framework for agencies to benchmark wages and benefits.
- ❖ **Equity Priorities,** such as increasing wage transparency and opportunities for advancement within organizations, as well as including classification and compensation goals in agencies' required equity work plans.
- ❖ **Coordination Among Funding Organizations,** which works toward a system-wide strategy for increasing wages and benefits in the regional homelessness services sector by organizing local funders and building an evidence-based workforce development plan.

JOHS' next steps to implement these policy recommendations include:

- ❖ **Follow-up Outreach** with participating agencies to understand their initial reactions to the study findings, and hear their initial thoughts on how the information can be used to address classification, compensation, and benefits issues and improve workforce stability for their employees.
- ❖ **Technical Assistance** to develop agency-specific plans to address key issues identified in this study's agency-specific data collection. JOHS currently is working to secure funding for capacity building grants for SHS-funded agencies, to complement existing funding for capacity building grants for new and expanding providers.
- ❖ **Assess impact of the fiscal year 2022-23 contract increase** that JOHS provided to agencies for front-line staffing expenditures, with a particular focus on which job categories were primarily affected by this increase, the impact on workplace equity, and the administrative burden of allocating the additional funds.
- ❖ **Include classification and compensation goals in equity work plans** that contracted providers are required to submit as part of their initial and renewal

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

contract applications, to encourage agencies to include workforce equity in their planning.

❖ **Sharing the results of the study** with other Portland-area local administrative units supporting homelessness services (such as the cities of Portland and Gresham, the Washington County and Clackamas County Continuums of Care, Metro, the SHS Tri-County Planning Body, and nonprofit grant-makers such as United Way) as a first step in a coordinated approach to improving workforce stability and equity across the regional homelessness services sector.

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Introduction

Compensation, benefits, and equity are a challenge for homelessness service systems nationally. Recognizing this national and local struggle, the Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS) commissioned a study on compensation and related practices among its funded service providers.

This study aimed to understand (1) classification and compensation practices across JOHS-funded agencies, (2) where benchmarking of roles and salaries would support equity and competitive compensation across these agencies, and (3) what is contributing to turnover across the system.

What is a classification and compensation study?

A Classification and Compensation Study is a process organizations use to understand how they are paying their employees in relation to one another or compared to other organizations. This helps them assess if they are paying a fair salary or if they need to reevaluate pay to keep and attract talented employees and promote equity. The result is an analysis of the current compensation landscape that can be used to inform changes.

This study chose to also examine other factors that might contribute to employee retention, recognizing that multiple factors can contribute to employee turnover.

Areas Of Inquiry

Area	Research Questions	Data Collected & Analyzed
Compensation	How do contracted agencies currently compensate employees? How much variation is there across the system?	• Salaries / wages • Benefits • Policies and operations
Retention	What factors do employees consider most important in deciding to remain at an agency?	• Satisfaction with: 　o Compensation 　o Benefits 　o Supports at work 　o Workplace culture • Turnover intentions

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Improving Outcomes	How do we improve outcomes around equity, retention, and compensation?	• Job descriptions and titles • Policy changes • Compensation alignment

Benefits of the Study

The current study provides an opportunity for the Multnomah County JOHS and its funded agencies to strengthen their employee workforce through compensation benchmarking, ensuring equitable pay, pay that meets (at minimum) the cost of living, and through addressing other factors that contribute to employee retention or turnover.

Methodology

Homebase, North Third, and the Joint Office of Homeless Services collaboratively designed this study based on the study purpose, research questions, and feasibility. The design process included engagement sessions with stakeholders, agencies, and JOHS and Multnomah County staff for critical feedback on research questions, data collection, and timing of the study.

The analysis considered three overarching areas of inquiry:

(1) Compensation & Benefits: How does the system compensate employees? How much variation in compensation and benefits is there across the system? How much variation in compensation and benefits is there within agencies?

(2) Retention: What factors do employees consider most important in deciding to remain at an agency? (Factors included: compensation, benefits, support at work, workplace culture and organization DEI practices, and turnover intentions.)

(3) Improving Outcomes: How do we improve outcomes around equity, compensation, benefits, and retention?

Agency Selection & Participation

Participation was open to all agencies receiving funding from the Joint Office for human services-related programming to primarily support people experiencing homelessness in Multnomah County. Participation was voluntary for all agencies.

Agencies were invited to participate if they had an active contract through the Joint Office for providing housing, outreach, or support services to people experiencing homelessness as of Spring 2022. Organizations with contracts outside of core human services were excluded due to the different nature of their workforces and relatively few

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

numbers of employees in comparable roles, thus making meaningful comparisons of wages and benefits difficult. Very large organizations that also provide services to clients not experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness were asked to report on roles connected to homeless service delivery only.

All eligible organizations were invited to attend information sessions about the study and given the option to opt into participation. In total, 21 organizations submitted data: We received organization-level data from 19 organizations, employee-level data from 19 organizations, and both datasets for 17 organizations. Employees from 24 organizations responded to the employee survey.

Data Collection

To consider these questions, we collected data through four processes:

(1) Employee Compensation Data

Each agency provided individual level compensation data for roles filled as of May 1, 2022. This excluded roles that were budgeted for but unfilled or open as of that time. Agencies anonymously categorized each employee into one of 71 unique roles. Detailed descriptions of each role, including key functions, educational and experience requirements, and reporting structure allowed agencies to categorize their particular job titles into a standard set of titles to allow for accurate comparison across agencies.

All hourly wage data was converted to annualized salaries by multiplying the hourly wage by 2,080 hours per year. To ensure standardized comparisons, all data in this document refer to these annualized salaries. In total, we received data on 3,399 employees from 19 organizations.

(2) Agency-level compensation practices, benefits, and DEI practices

Each agency provided information on organizational compensation policies and practices; benefits offered to employees; diversity, equity, and inclusion policies and practices; and how organizations protect employee workload and work to prevent burnout. We received organization-level data from 19 organizations; of these 19 organizations, 17 also provided employee compensation data.

(3) Employee survey of employee experiences

We distributed an anonymous electronic survey directly to employees, with coordination and support from participating agencies. The survey collected data on employee experiences of and perspectives on compensation, benefits,

supports at work, workplace culture and organization DEI practices, and turnover intentions. Overall, employees from 24 agencies responded to the survey, with a total of 1,667 responses.

(4) Confidential Focus Groups

We conducted 5 focus groups with employees of JOHS-funded agencies to contextualize survey data and discuss actionable solutions. Focus groups were organized in coordination with agencies and conducted virtually with employees, and included the following target populations: front-line staff, staff with lived experience of homelessness, LGBTQ+ staff, BIPOC staff, and leadership.

Importantly, the survey and focus group processes included only staff who were currently employed by the participating organizations. We do not have data from staff who departed their organizations prior to the focus group and employee survey processes.

Overview of Participating Agencies

The homeless system of care in Multnomah County comprises a variety of organizational types, sizes, and structures, and employs a diverse workforce. This variation allows for organizations to specialize in different service types, target populations, and geographies, but it also adds complexity to interpreting system level employment practices.

Over the past years, homeless systems of care nationally have adapted and changed to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, new and diversified resources coming into the system, service models, and the needs of clients. Due to the emergency nature of the pandemic, response systems are still adjusting policies and practices in ways that may influence data collected during this study and its applicability to subsequent system conditions. For example, this study period covered a time when some employees were being compensated additionally by "hazard pay" funded by federal Covid-19 response funding that, at the time of publication, has expired.

Additionally, the Joint Office and participating agencies are continuing to respond to rapidly changing economic conditions, including an increase of agency budgets by 8% for the use of increasing employee compensation that was announced after data collection for this study. The following section describes some features of the system's organizational and workforce landscape as of the time of data collection.

Participating Agencies

This report reviews agency-level data from 19 homelessness service providers that varied significantly in size. Annual operating budgets ranged from under $1 million to over $114 million, and total employees ranged from fewer than 10 individuals to over 1,000. For this analysis, we define "Small" organizations as organizations with fewer than 100 FTEs. This roughly corresponds to annual operating budgets under $10 million. We define "Large" organizations as organizations with more than 100 FTEs. This roughly corresponds to annual operating budgets larger than $10 million.

Agencies also ranged significantly in the amount they rely on JOHS for funding. JOHS funding comprised as little as 40% and as much as 100% of the operating budget of participating organizations. Organization size did not correlate with the percent of revenue that each organization received from JOHS.

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Table 1. Organization Size as Determined by Operating Budget and Number of FTEs.

Organization Name	Operating Budget 2022	FTEs 2022	% of Revenue from JOHS
Beacon Northwest	$500,000	8	90%
Portland Street Medicine	$993,068	8	40%
Cultivate Initiatives	$2,524,455	30	85%
Northwest Pilot Project, Inc.	$3,252,444	23	75%
Raphael House of Portland	$3,353,453	38	57%
YWCA of Greater Portland	$3,640,635	32	54%
Portland Homeless Family Solutions	$4,080,000	28	44%
All Good Northwest	$4,900,000	88	100%
JOIN	$8,561,998	55	96%
New Avenues for Youth	$13,000,000	156	80%
Janus Youth Program	$13,747,708	139	95%
Do Good Multnomah	$14,528,731	156	95%
Cascade AIDS Project	$20,000,000	147	46%
Human Solutions, Inc. (HSI)	$22,300,000	155	75%
Volunteers of America, Inc.	$22,424,605	200	85%
Self Enhancement, Inc.	$22,886,000	143	89%
Transition Projects, Inc.	$30,000,000	325	96%
Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.	$72,000,000	763	95%
Central City Concern	$114,510,789	1,089	53%

Employee Demographics

Of the 19 agencies that provided agency-level data, 12 provided data on the race/ethnicity of employees and 13 provided data on gender.

Race & Ethnicity

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Across organizations that provided race/ethnicity data, the majority of employees identified as White (62.6%, *n*= 1,448), followed by Black or African American (14.4%, *n*= 334), and Hispanic origin of any race (9.6%, *n*= 223). A larger share of individuals identified as Black or African American in the workforce than Multnomah County in general. However, the workforce had less representation of BIPOC staff than among persons experiencing homelessness in the County.

Table 2. Race/Ethnicity of Employees (for whom agencies submitted data).

Race / Ethnicity	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
American Indian and Alaska Native	39	1.7%
Asian	86	3.7%
Black or African American	334	14.4%
Hispanic origin of any race	223	9.6%
Middle Eastern	*	*
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	13	0.6%
Other race	26	1.1%
Two or more races	141	6.1%
White	1,448	62.6%
Indicates rows with insufficient data (fewer than 5 employees or fewer than 3 organizations)		

The breakdown of ethnic/racial representation is consistent across organizations of all sizes. In both small and large organizations, white employees represent, on average, 61% to 63% of all staff for whom we have data. That said, diversity of race/ethnicity did vary significantly across individual agencies. For example, across all organizations the workforce was about 65% white; however, the range was between 17-78% white. White was the majority in all but one organization, with one agency reporting 59% of staff to be Black/African American. It is important to note that over 35% of agencies did not provide sufficient demographic data on employees, so these conclusions are not definitive and more information should be collected in the future.

Table 3. Representation of BIPOC vs. white Employees by Organization Size.

Org Size	Employees for whom we have race/ethnicity data	BIPOC	White

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

		n	%	n	%
All	2,314	866	37%	1,448	63%
Small	164	64	39%	100	61%
Large	2,150	802	37%	1,348	63%

Gender

Thirteen agencies provided data on employee gender. Most employees identified as cisgender women (59.6%, *n*= 1,351), followed by cisgender men (37.8%, *n*= 858). Transgender women, transgender men, and non-binary or non-conforming employees made up approximately 2.6% of all employees (*n*= 58) reported in the study.

Table 4. Gender of Employees (for whom agencies submitted data).

Gender	n	%
Cisgender Man	858	37.8%
Cisgender Woman	1,351	59.6%
Non-Binary or Non-Conforming	41	1.8%
Transgender Man	11	0.5%
Transgender Woman	6	0.3%

Employment Types & Tenure

Much of the workforce were full-time, non-union employees, though this varied significantly by agency. Across the 19 agencies that provided data, 85% of employees were full-time (*n* = 2,900) rather than part-time (15%, *n*= 499). However, there are some organizations with marked variations from this trend, for example, one organization employs 57% of roles part-time.

Five of the participating agencies reported having unionized workers as a portion of their workforce. The percentage of unionized workers in those organizations ranged from 28% to 67%.

Table 5. Employment Types Across All Included Employees.

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Total Employees	Hourly	Salaried	Full Time	Part Time	Contractors	Union Members
3,399	68%	32%	85%	15%	0%	35%

Generally speaking, employees had only a few years of experience at their current organization. The median years of experience at the current organization was 2.4 years with a standard deviation of 5.1 years (this means that 95% of employees were within 7.5 years of their tenure, with a median of 2.4 years). The lack of employee longevity at their organizations suggests frequent staff turnover.

Median tenure increased by level of responsibility: at associate levels employees had a median of 1.9 years at the organization, while director level roles had a median of 3.6 years. Just over 30% of employees have less than 1 year of experience at their current organization (n = 900).

Table 6. Median Year of Experience at Current Organization by Role Level.

Role level	Median Years of Experience at Current Organization
Associate	1.9
Manager	3.1
Director	3.6

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Compensation Across the System

In this study, participating agencies provided salary data for 3,399 employees spanning 71 unique roles. Overall, there were 64 roles that had a large enough sample size to report their compensation for. This section reports on the annualized (yearly) salary of those employees. All hourly salary data was converted to annualized salaries by multiplying the hourly salary by 2,080 hours per year. Unless otherwise specified, all salary numbers included below represent the median annualized salary for each employee group.

When we provided these 71 unique roles in the data collection template, we included:

- A role title (or titles) to describe various ways that this role might be referred to;
- A description about what the role primarily does and any key parameters (e.g., possible education or specialization requirements);
- A functional area for the role;
- An example of who the role might report to (to illustrate the functional area and team composition); and
- A general level for the role: the most executive roles were within the director category, mid-level roles in the manager category (e.g., someone with some supervisory or managerial responsibilities), and non-managerial roles in the associate category.

Overview of Compensation

Study-wide, the median annualized salary was $46,000. Median salaries varied significantly between role levels, with staff at the associate role level receiving a median salary of $42,795, managers receiving a median salary of $60,000, and directors receiving a median salary of $94,439.

Highest & Lowest Compensated Roles

Overall, the lowest-paid roles were primarily associate-level roles, including several roles with large numbers of employees: Case Managers, Shelter Support Staff, Residential Staff, and Maintenance Staff. Chart 2 shows the distribution of median salaries for each role, organized by role type and the number of employees in each role. The roles with the most employees are distributed at the lower end of the salary range, with higher paid roles having fewer employees in each role. Associate roles are also the most prevalent in the system, and clustered at the lower end of the wage range. There are several manager level roles with more than 100 employees in the role across the system that, on average, earn less than some associate level roles. The majority of associate and

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

manager roles pay less than $75,000 annually, while nearly all director roles pay more than $75,000.

Figure 1. Distribution of Median Salary Across System
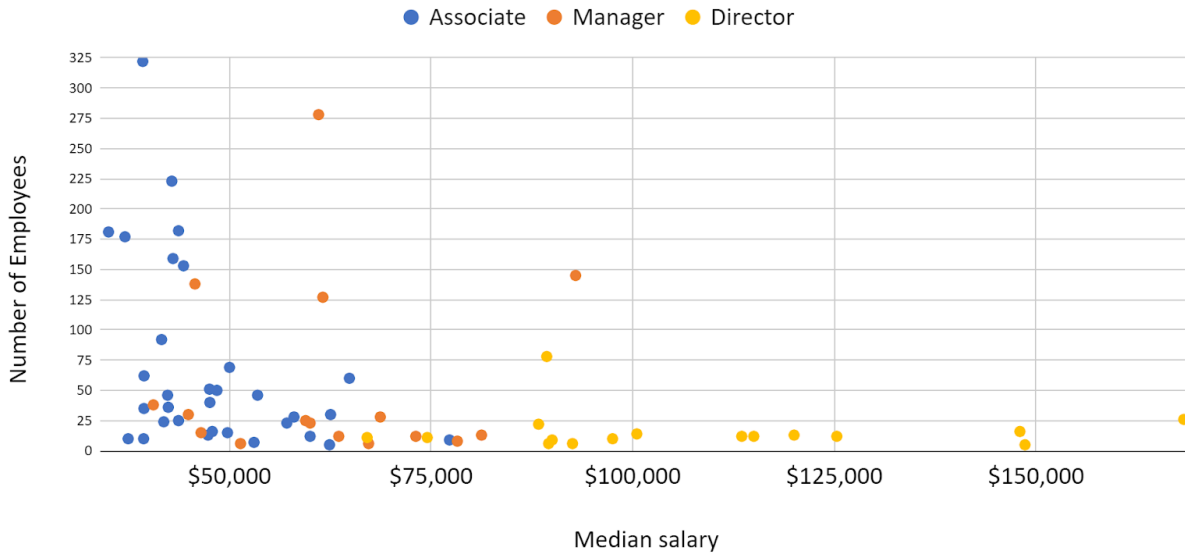
Table 7. Roles (*n*=18) with Median Compensation Below Living Wage (across all participating agencies).
(Living Wage Benchmark is $44,928)

Role	# Of Employees in Role	Median Salary	% of Employees Below Living Wage Threshold
Housing Front Desk Manager	30	$44,897	50%
Program Intake Specialist	153	$44,304	55%
Services Navigator; Services Coordinator	182	$43,680	65%
Outreach Worker	25	$43,680	68%
Community Health Worker	159	$42,998	72%
Case Manager 1 (General, Staff Aid or Peer Support)	223	$42,848	78%
Peer Support Specialist - Behavioral Health	36	$42,411	69%

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Role	#	Median	%
Employment Services Coordinator	46	$42,328	67%
Front Desk Clerk; Receptionist	24	$41,850	92%
Case Manager 2 (Qualified Mental Health Associate)	92	$41,579	63%
Residential Coordinator	38	$40,560	74%
Peer Support Specialist - General	62	$39,406	89%
Office Receptionist (Not on-site at shelters/housing/other service locations)	35	$39,395	74%
Kitchen Staff	10	$39,354	90%
Shelter Support Staff	322	$39,250	74%
Residential Peer Counselor	10	$37,440	90%
Residential Counselor	177	$37,045	98%
Maintenance Staff	181	$35,006	92%
Total	45.5% of all employees are below the living wage. 63.9% of employees in Associate roles are below the living wage.		

The highest-paid roles were primarily director-level roles. Fewer than 30 employees across the study held these positions. The highest paid role was Medical Director ($168,315). The highest paid non-director role was Nurse Practitioner ($92,914).

Table 8. Roles with Median Compensation <u>Above</u> a Living Wage (across all participating agencies).

Role	*# Of Employees in Role*	*Median Salary*	*% <u>Above</u> Living Wage Threshold*
Social Work Director; Social Work Program Manager	11	$74,520	100%
Grant Writer	9	$77,279	100%
Development Manager	8	$78,250	100%

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Learning and Evaluation Manager	13	$81,250	100%
Clinic Director	22	$88,319	100%
Program Director	78	$89,331	99%
Chief Diversity Officer; Equity Director; DEI Director	6	$89,565	100%
Housing Director	9	$90,000	100%
Communications Director (CCO); Director of Communications; Communications Officer	6	$92,526	100%
Nurse Practitioner	145	$92,914	99%
Controller; Finance Manager	10	$97,498	100%
Human Resources Director	14	$100,500	100%
IT Director	12	$113,510	92%
Chief Development Officer; VP of Development; Director of Development (CDO)	12	$115,000	100%
Chief Operating Officer (COO); Chief of Staff; VP of Operations; Deputy Executive Director	13	$120,000	100%
Chief Finance Officer (CFO); VP of Finance; Finance Director	12	$125,291	100%
Executive Director (CEO)	16	$148,000	100%
Chief Impact Officer; Director of Strategy; Learning and Evaluation Director	5	$148,625	100%
Medical Director	26	$168,315	100%

A report providing detailed benchmarks for each role has been made available in an interactive format under separate cover.

Economic Landscape

This compensation study was undertaken during a period of significant financial challenges for the national and local workforce. In the United States inflation rose 7% in 2021 and nearly 8% in 2022, compared to rates of less than 2.5% each year since 2012. This rapid rise in the cost of goods and services in the US economy effectively reduces

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

the purchasing power of businesses and households at a rate not seen in the United States since the early 1980s.

In addition, following national trends, the cost of housing in the Portland region has increased measurably in the last several years. From 2021 to 2022 the median rental price has increased by an average of $210 per month. Nearly half of all Portland residents are renters, therefore it is likely that much of the workforce in the system of care is experiencing rapid housing cost increases, further stressing household budgets.

This analysis should be considered against the backdrop of these factors and the financial impacts and uncertainty resulting from this evolving landscape.

MIT calculates $44,938 as the wage a single adult in Multnomah County would need before taxes to cover their basic needs (i.e. $21.60 per hour for 2,080 hours per year). While living wage calculations are complex and difficult to apply at the system level due to differences in family structure, we use this conservative estimate as one benchmark indicator against which to compare wages in the study. Another common benchmark, the 70% AMI for the region, returns a similar number of $47,481. Throughout the rest of this report, we compare salaries to the MIT cost of living benchmark.

Over 45% of employees in this study were compensated below this $44,928 living wage threshold (*n*=1,547). The vast majority of these employees are in associate-level positions (92%, *n*=1,417).

Additionally, many of the roles with the largest number of employees in the study are roles where the median salary is below a living wage. For example, 7 of the top 10 most common roles (based on total number of employees represented) are roles where the median salary is lower than the living wage benchmark.

Annual Cost of Living Adjustments
There is some indication that an employee's ability to meet cost of living may be compounded by some degree of salary stagnation, as many employees do not receive regular salary adjustments. Of the 19 participating agencies, 11 (58%) said they offer an annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) to all staff, and 4 (21%) said they offer this COLA to some staff. Three (16%) of the organizations do not provide COLAs to any staff.

The lack of regular annual adjustments for at least some staff were reflected in focus group comments:

> "There is a lot of performative acknowledgment of staff's hard work, but it is not reflected in the pay they take home. There are no raises – people don't feel like

they are rewarded for the amount of work they are putting in if they get paid the same amount three years in as they did when they first joined. They should be given a raise; an acknowledgement only goes so far." – Employee Focus Group Participant

Variation in Compensation

Compensation practices varied significantly across the individual agencies that provided compensation data, with some organizations paying their employees significantly differently than their peer organizations. This includes variations in how agencies compensate roles at different levels of the organization and overall employee pay by percentile.

Variations by Organization Size

Generally speaking, smaller organizations offer higher salaries for associate roles but lower salaries for manager and director roles. For associate roles, the median salary for employees at small organizations is $7,030 higher than the median salary for associate roles at large organizations.

Conversely, when comparing the median salary for manager roles at small and large organizations, it is $4,102 less at small organizations. Similarly, when comparing the median salary for director roles at small and large organizations, it is $30,900 less at small organizations.

Table 9. Median Annualized Salary by Organization Size and Role Level.

Org Size	All		Associate		Manager		Director	
	n	Median	n	Median	n	Median	n	Median
All Orgs	3,399	$46,000	2,218	$42,795	915	$60,000	266	$94,439
Small Orgs	279	$52,749	169	$49,920	64	$58,120	46	$70,000
Large Orgs	2,738	$45,718	1,781	$41,995	748	$62,222	209	$100,900

When looking more specifically at the roles with the highest number of employees system wide that are present in both small and large organizations, we find that in all but one

median pay is higher at smaller organizations, with differences ranging from just over $7,000 per year to over $13,500 per year. The one exception to this observation is community health workers, where the median pay per year is about $1,500 more at large organizations.

Table 10. Difference between median pay at small and large organizations.

Role	n	Small Org	Large Org	Difference
Shelter Support Staff	322	$49,920	$36,400	$13,520
Program Manager	278	$70,000	$60,862	$9,138
Case Manager 1 (General, Staff Aid or Peer Support)	223	$49,920	$42,848	$7,072
Services Navigator; Services Coordinator	182	$54,995	$43,826	$11,169
Maintenance Staff	181	$49,920	$35,006	$14,914
Community Health Worker	159	$41,600	$43,160	($1,560)
Case Manager; Social Work	138	$52,749	$45,282	$7,467

Employee Pay by Percentile

Throughout this report, we present salary data and other compensation data using the 25th percentile, the 50th percentile (i.e., the median), and the 75th percentile. The 25th percentile represents the cut-off where 25% of participants were at or below. For example, if the 25th percentile of salary for Shelter Support Staff is $34,632, that means that 25% of employees in the study with the role of Shelter Support Staff made $34,632 or less.

Overall, percentages of staff earning more than 75th or less than 25th varied significantly by agency. Three agencies had more than 46% of staff earning more than the 75th percentile. One agency had more than 46% of staff earning less than the 25th percentile.

Table 11. Number of Agencies Paying Staff in 75th and 25th percentiles.

% of staff earning more than 75th percentile	Number of Agencies	% of staff earning less than 25th percentile	Number of Agencies
0–15%	6	0–15%	5

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16–30%	6	16–30%	9
31–45%	4	31–45%	4
46+%	3	46+%	1

Variations in Compensation Across Demographics

There are some indications that annualized salary may vary depending on gender identity and race/ethnicity.

For example, in associate and manager level roles, cisgender women earned a higher median salary than cisgender men. For example, in associate roles, cisgender women earned a median salary of $43,680 compared to $41,641 for cisgender men. Notably, the trend is reversed in director level roles, where cisgender women earned a median salary of $95,112 (*n*=122) compared to $109,000 for cisgender men (*n*=83).

Table 12. Median Annualized Salary by Gender and Role Level.

Gender	All		Associate		Manager		Director	
	n	Median	*n*	Median	*n*	Median	*n*	Median
Cisgender Man	858	$47,694	565	$41,642	210	$62,812	83	$109,000
Cisgender Woman	1,351	$50,305	816	$43,680	413	$66,365	122	$95,112
Non-Binary or Non-Conforming	41	$45,760	34	$41,868	5	$53,000	*	*
Transgender Man	11	$45,147	7	$43,285	*	*	*	*
Transgender Woman	6	$47,575	5	$45,147	*	*	*	*
* Indicates rows with insufficient data (fewer than 5 employees or fewer than 3 organizations)								

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With respect to race/ethnicity, Asian employees had the highest median salary of any group at the associate, manager, and director level roles.

Table 13. Median Annualized Salary by Race/Ethnicity and Role Level.

Race/Ethnicity	All		Associate		Manager		Director	
	n	Median	*n*	Median	*n*	Median	*n*	Median
American Indian and Alaska Native	39	$39,395	32	$38,553	6	$51,112	*	*
Asian	86	$52,179	45	$43,680	26	$73,100	15	$140,000
Black or African American	334	$48,006	233	$43,160	79	$59,400	22	$98,000
Hispanic origin of any race	223	$45,032	153	$41,558	55	$59,280	15	$105,727
Middle Eastern	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	13	$39,520	9	$39,187	*	*	*	*
Other race	26	$45,786	19	$41,600	*	*	*	*
Two or more races	141	$42,702	89	$39,520	42	$59,862	10	$96,575
White	1,448	$47,788	880	$41,752	437	$62,858	131	$96,445
* Indicates rows with insufficient data (fewer than 5 employees or fewer than 3 organizations)								

Notably, these findings are limited by several factors: (1) we do not have full gender and race/ethnicity data for all employees, and (2) the categories of associate, manager, and director encompass a variety of roles and employees with a variety of experience levels.

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Representation in Manager / Director Roles

Asian employees and white employees had an oversized representation in manager and director-level roles.

For example, 60% of employees in associate-level roles were identified as white, while over 66% of employees in manager-level roles and director-level roles were white. Similarly, only 3.1% of employees in associate-level roles identified as Asian, while 7.6% of employees in director-level roles identified as Asian (*n*=15).

Table 14. Race / Ethnicity of Employees by Role Type.

Race / Ethnicity	All		Associate		Manager		Director	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
American Indian and Alaska Native	39	1.7%	32	2.2%	6	0.9%	*	*
Asian	86	3.7%	45	3.1%	26	4.0%	15	7.6%
Black or African American	334	14.4%	233	15.9%	79	12.1%	22	11.2%
Hispanic origin of any race	223	9.6%	153	10.5%	55	8.4%	15	7.6%
Middle Eastern	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	13	0.6%	9	0.6%	*	*	*	*
Other race	26	1.1%	19	1.3%	*	*	*	*
Two or more races	141	6.1%	89	6.1%	42	6.4%	10	5.1%
White	1,448	62.6%	880	60.2%	437	66.8%	131	66.5%
n = the count of employees *** indicates rows with insufficient data (fewer than 5 employees or fewer than 3 organizations)*								

Smaller organizations have slightly higher levels of representation of BIPOC staff in management roles than larger organizations. The differences in the percentage of white staff in manager or director roles varied slightly across organizations of different sizes. At large organizations, 67% of managers or directors were white compared to 62% at smaller organizations.

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Table 15. Race / Ethnicity of Managers and Directors by Organization Size.

Org Size	Manager or Director Roles					
	Employees for whom we have race/ethnicity data	BIPOC		White		
		n	%	n	%	
All	851	283	33%	568	67%	
Small	78	30	38%	48	62%	
Large	773	253	33%	520	67%	

Employee Experiences of Compensation

In addition to the administrative data from agencies, the employee survey also asked about two different components of employee experiences of their compensation's ability to cover living costs.

First, employees were asked a series of questions about their satisfaction with various components of their compensation. These answers were combined into a single scale to create a composite measure, which we call *Satisfaction with Compensation and Related Practices*.

Second, employees were also asked to rate the extent to which they disagree or agree with *Whether Compensation Meets the Cost of Living*. This composite score included three items about cost of living (e.g., "The compensation and benefits I receive allow me to take care of my financial needs") that employees rated from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5).

Satisfaction with Compensation and Related Practices

Satisfaction with Compensation and Related Practices is a composite of 7 individual questions relating to 1) perspectives on one's actual compensation and 2) perspectives of compensation-related practices at an employee's organization. Composite scores range from 1-5, reflecting the range from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). For more methodological information on the creation of scales in this section please see Appendix A.

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Across all responses, the mean *Satisfaction with Compensation and Related Practices* was 2.59 (on a 1 to 5 scale), indicating that, on average, employees are slightly dissatisfied with their compensation.

However, certain employee groups demonstrated less satisfaction. For front-line staff, the mean *Satisfaction with Compensation and Related Practices* was 2.47 (SD = 0.79), as compared with 2.85 (SD = 0.04) for non-front-line staff [$t(1449)$ = -8.2, p < .000]. Front-line staff demonstrated less satisfaction both with *Compensation* and *Related Practices* (the two subscales of *Satisfaction with Compensation and Related Practices*).

For BIPOC staff, there was not a significant difference in overall *Satisfaction with Compensation and Related Practices* as compared to white staff. However, when just looking at the subscale of *Satisfaction with Compensation*, BIPOC staff are significantly less satisfied (M = 2.48, SD = 1.14) when compared to white staff (M = 2.62, SD = 1.12) [$t(1401)$ = -2.18, p < .03]. There was no difference in perspectives on *Compensation Related Practices* between BIPOC and white staff. The difference in *Satisfaction with Compensation* for BIPOC as compared with white staff is driven by perceptions of fairness in pay: BIPOC staff are more likely to disagree with the statement *"I think the amount of my salary or hourly pay is fair, compared to other employees doing similar work at this organization"* when compared to white staff.

Hispanic / Latinx staff were also less satisfied with their *Compensation* than non-Hispanic / non-Latinx staff, though there was no difference in perspectives on *Compensation Related Practices*.

Table 16. Significant Differences in *Satisfaction with Compensation and Related Practices* and *Whether Compensation Meets the Cost of Living* for Comparison Groups (*t-test: comparison of means*)

Scale or Subscale		front-line staff	non-front-line staff	BIPOC	white	Hispanic / Latinx	Non-Hispanic / non-Latinx
Satisfaction with Compensation and Related Practices	mean	2.47	2.85	-	-	-	-
	SD	0.79	0.04	-	-	-	-
	t, p	$t(1449)$ = -8.2, p < .000		-		-	

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Satisfaction with Compensation (subscale)	mean	2.4	2.94	2.48	2.62	2.41	2.61
	SD	1.09	1.15	1.14	1.12	1.02	1.14
	t, p	$t(755) = -8.3$, $p < .000$		$t(1401) = -2.18$, $p < .03$		$t(249.3) = -2.35$, $p < .019$	
Satisfaction with Compensation-Related Practices (subscale)	mean	2.56	2.7	-	-	-	-
	SD	0.57	0.55	-	-	-	-
	t, p	$t(1446) = -4.1$, $p < .000$		-		-	
Whether Compensation Meets the Cost of Living	mean	2.07	2.77	-	-	-	-
	SD	1.02	1.17	-	-	-	-
	t, p	$t(709) = -10.753$, $p < .000$		-		-	

- = non-significant result, not reported

Whether Compensation Meets Cost of Living

Whether Compensation Meets the Cost of Living is a composite of three individual questions asking employees to report whether their compensation allows them to take care of their own financial needs, the financial needs of their family, and/or are able to save money each month. Composite scores range from 1-5, reflecting the range from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). For more methodological information on the creation of scales in this section please see Appendix A.

Across all participating agencies, the mean score on whether employees agreed their pay allowed them to meet the cost of living was 2.29, indicating that, on average, employees do not feel like they are able to meet their cost of living with the pay from their job. The hourly pay rate that respondents self-reported in the survey was <u>positively</u> correlated with *Whether Compensation Meets Cost of Living* ($r = .070$, $p < 0.007$), meaning that the higher someone's pay is, the more likely they are to feel like that pay meets the cost of living.

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Table 17. Scores on Survey Variables across Survey Respondents (Employee Survey)

	Satisfaction with... (1 = low satisfaction; 5 = high satisfaction)					1 = low burnout / turnover; 5 = high burnout / turnover	
	Comp. and Related Practices	Whether Comp. Meets the Cost of Living	Benefits	Supports at Work	Culture and DEI	Burnout	Turnover Intentions
Mean	2.59	2.29	3.34	3.36	3.35	2.49	2.94
Median	2.57	2.00	3.40	3.44	3.46	2.40	3.00
Mode	2.57	1.00	4.00	3.89	4.00	2.00	3.25

Survey data also suggest that front-line staff are significantly less satisfied with *Whether Compensation Meets the Cost of Living* than non-front-line staff, which is in alignment with the agency data demonstrating that many staff in front-line roles do not have compensation that meets the cost of living for the region.

More generally, survey feedback suggests that compensation is likely to have the most significant impact on retention: 85.96% of surveyed staff identified increased pay as one of the top three changes that would encourage them to stay at their current organization, and 78.08% said that a higher salary offered to them elsewhere would be one of the top three reasons they would leave their current organization.

These survey data support focus groups findings that highlight the importance of pay to employees in the current economic climate.

Focus group participants emphasized their inability to take care of their needs with their current compensation and the strains this puts on the sustainability of their work:

> "I am seeing people leave to other fields, I'm seeing people leave to be bartenders and sex workers so that they can make more money. I'm seeing people who really feel passionate about the work and want to stay in this field do side hustles in order to stay in the field just to make it work and make ends meet."-Employee Focus Group Participant

> "Rent is so expensive today. The $2 increase is good, but I'm barely making it. They want $1,600 for a 1-bedroom that is only 500 square feet. There's just no way I can afford that. I have to have a side job just to make my rent now. We definitely need more in order to be able to just live." -Employee Focus Group Participant

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Employee Benefits

Employer benefits add significant value to an individual employee's compensation above and beyond salary. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates benefits represent on average an additional 30% of an individual employee's total compensation package.[1] Differences in benefits packages can contribute to employee recruitment and retention. Greater benefits enhance an employee's overall financial support as well as contributing to quality of life and workplace satisfaction.

This analysis reviewed various benefits provided by participating organizations, including:

- Health Plans and Coverage
- Retirement
- Time Off – Holidays, Sick Days, Vacation, and Other Leave
- Other Benefits

Employees were also surveyed about their *Satisfaction with Benefits*. Resulting data was analyzed to assess potential correlations with other variables, such as *Burnout* and *Turnover Intentions*, as well as to see if different groups of employees have significantly higher or lower *Satisfaction with Benefits*. Overall employees were more satisfied with benefits than compensation; however certain groups, such as front-line staff and transgender staff, were less satisfied with their benefits than other groups. Additionally, employee feedback indicated that other factors may constrain employees' ability to take full advantage of the benefits, such as paid time off, to which they are entitled.

Health Plans & Coverage

All organizations (*n*=19) reported subsidizing at least 1 healthcare plan and 1 dental plan for full-time employees. Within health plans, the majority of organizations offered HMO (*n*=13) or PPO (*n*=10) plans. Additionally, 79% (*n*=15) reported subsidizing at least 1 vision plan.

Health plan coverage for part time employees varied; nearly half of organizations offered only partial healthcare benefits (*n*=9), and over a third offered no benefits at all for part-time workers (*n*=7). Employer health plan coverage of spouses/dependents also varied significantly, ranging from 0% to 100% coverage.

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[1] https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ecec.pdf

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Table 18. Median Percent of Premium Covered by Organization for Individual Employee, Individual + Spouse, Individual + Spouse + 2 or More Dependents.

Benefit	Orgs	Individual		Spouse		Family	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
HMO	13	10	100%	7	60%	7	60%
PPO	10	10	98%	8	50%	8	45%
POS*	6	5	88%	5	50%	5	50%
HRA/QSEHRA**	3	3	100%	3	100%	3	100%
Vision	15	12	100%	8	56%	8	55%
Dental	19	16	100%	12	50%	12	40%
This calculation only includes organizations who cover a non-zero percent of premiums. ** POS = Point-of-Service Plan* ** HRA / QSEHRA = Health Reimbursement Account / Qualified Small Employer HRA*							

Approximately 1-in-4 participating organizations offered a cash payment to full-time, non-executive employees who opted out of employer sponsored healthcare coverage (26%, *n*=5). Of these, the median cash incentive was $1,800/year. Three organizations also offered a cash incentive for part time employees who opted out of the healthcare subsidy (16%, median $900/year).

Retirement

After healthcare subsidies, retirement plans and matching contributions were the second most common type of benefit offered by organizations. Sixteen of the 19 participating organizations (or 84%) offered one or more retirement plans. The primary type of retirement plan offered was an individual savings mechanism such as 401(k) or 403(b) plan. Only 1 of the 16 organizations offered a pension plan.

Employee Match Contributions

Several organizations that offered an individual retirement savings plan also offered an employer matching contribution (58%, *n*=11[2]), though this varied significantly by organization size. Nine of the 10 large organizations provided a retirement match, while

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[2] There were 10 organization who offered a match for 401k or 403b (which is why Table 19 has an *n* of 10), but there was also 1 organization not represented in those 10 who offers a pension match (which is why the *n* here is 11).

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only 1 of the 5 small organizations provided a match. The amount of an employer's matching contribution to retirement plans ranged from 0 to 10%.

Table 19. Retirement offers by organization size (whether they offer a retirement plan, whether they provide a match, and autoenrollment).

	Retirement Offer	n	%
All Orgs	Offers 401k or 403b	16	84%
	Auto-enrolls in plan	8	50%
	Offers a match	10	63%
Large Orgs	Offers 401k or 403b	10	100%
	Auto-enrolls in plan	5	50%
	Offers a match	9	90%
Small Orgs	Offers 401k or 403b	6	67%
	Auto-enrolls in plan	3	50%
	Offers a match	1	17%

Across organizations offering 401(k) or 403(b) plans, employees qualified for participation, qualified for matching contributions, and fully vested almost immediately.

Automatic Elections

Automatic enrollment in retirement benefits is an approach where the organization sets an automatic election amount for employees to contribute to their retirement plan upon enrollment, unless the employee takes active steps to opt out. Policies that automatically enroll employees in retirement savings plans have been shown to result in higher rates of participation and higher retirement savings.

Contribution election choices affect not only the amount set aside from a paycheck, but also the amount of match which is activated for that employee. For example, an employer may offer a 6% match, but an individual employee may elect only 4% of their pay toward retirement savings. In this situation that employee missed an opportunity for an additional 2% match.

Only around half of the organizations that offered 401(k) or 403(b) accounts automatically enrolled employees (50%, *n*=8/16). More organizations may wish to consider adopting an automatic enrollment policy to support their staff.

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Table 20. Percentage of Organizations Offering Each of the Following Retirement Plans and Automatically Enrolling Employees in the Plan.

Benefit	401k	403b	Pension	Public Plan
Offers this Plan	42%	42%	5%	0%
Automatically Enrolls Employees	75%	25%	0%	0%

Time Off: Holidays, Sick Days, Vacation, and Other Leave

Time away from work, such as holidays, sick days, or vacation, allows employees to manage work-life balance for themselves and their families and can support a more sustainable workplace. This section will review the typical amount of time off available to employees at participating organizations.

It is important to note that the data presented here did not quantify the ability of employees to utilize the paid time off (PTO) or other leave offered by organizations' self-reported policies. In focus group conversations, some employees highlighted an inability to take days off. This can happen because of social pressure in the workplace to remain productive, pressure from an oversized workload leaving an employee unable to step away, etc. Employees also reported using their PTO to work extra jobs to make ends meet. In both instances, the organizational survey report of how much PTO is offered will be an overstatement of the actual PTO benefit experienced by employees.

Paid Holidays

The majority of organizations offered paid holidays (*n*=15). The median number of paid holidays offered was 11 days (8.5 days at the 25th percentile, 12.2 days at the 75th percentile). Approximately half of organizations (*n*=9) allowed employees to apply these holidays flexibly based on personal preferences, culture, or belief systems.

Paid Sick Days & Vacation

Participating organizations identified two different approaches to managing paid time off: pooled time off or separately managed vacation and sick time.

A policy that pools time off provides a single number of paid time off days that can be used as either vacation or sick time. Organizations were nearly evenly split on whether they offered a single pool (*n*=9) or separate vacation and sick days (*n*=10).

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There was a considerable variation in total paid time off offered across the organizations, ranging up to as many as 38 total (vacation + sick) days. For most organizations, the amount of paid time off was primarily determined by tenure (n=13) and occasionally by role (n=5).

At organizations with a single pool, for example, the difference in median PTO days for employees with 0-1 years at the organization versus employees with 10+ years at the organization was over 50% (i.e., 20 days vs. 32 days).

Table 21. Time Off Based on Years at the Organization and Exemption Status.

Years at this organization	Single Pool of PTO		Separate Pool of Vacation & Sick Days			
	PTO Days		Vacation Days		Sick Days	
	Exempt	Non-Exempt	Exempt	Non-Exempt	Exempt	Non-Exempt
0 to 1 years	20	20	15	15	9.5	9.5
1 to 2 years	21	21	15	15	9.5	9.5
2 to 3 years	26	26	15	15	9.5	9.5
3 to 4 years	26	26	15	15	9.5	9.5
4 to 5 years	26	26	15	15	9.5	9.5
5 to 6 years	26	26	18	18	9.5	9.5
6 to 7 years	29	29	18	18	9.5	9.5
7 to 8 years	29	29	20	20	9.5	9.5
8 to 9 years	29	29	20	20	9.5	9.5
9 to 10 years	30	30	20	20	9.5	9.5
10+ years	32	32	20	20	9.5	9.5

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Table 22. PTO Days and Vacation Days for Exempt and Non-Exempt Staff Based on Exemption Status and Role Type.

Single Pool vs. Separate Pools		25th percentile	Median	75th percentile
PTO days (single pool)				
Exempt	Executive	15	20	21
	Management	12	15	20
	All other	12	15	20
Non-exempt	Executive	15	20	21
	Management	12	15	20
	All other	12	15	20
Vacation days (separate pools)				
Exempt	Executive	15	15	20
	Management	15	15	20
	All other	14	15	20
Non-exempt	Executive	14	15	20
	Management	14	15	20
	All other	15	15	20

For organizations who separated PTO and sick leave, the median sick days offered per employee per year was 9.5 days, with slight variation between organizations (8.0 days at the 25th percentile, 11.8 days at the 75th percentile). The maximum number of sick days that employees could accrue varied, with a median of 12.5 days (6.9 days at the 25th percentile, 17.4 days at the 75th percentile).

Family Leave & Additional Time Off Benefits

Organizations are required to provide at minimum 3 months unpaid Family Leave by the Oregon Family Leave Act (OFLA), but some organizations also incorporated paid leave or extra time off for OFLA-covered life events. Very few organizations reported offering paid family leave benefits for adoption, birthing, non-birthing, surrogacy, or kin care.

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Table 23. Weeks of Family Leave Offered, Paid and Unpaid.

Leave	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile
Paid Leave			
Adoption	0	0	3
Birthing	0	0	3
Non-birthing	0	0	3
Surrogacy	0	0	2
Kin Care	0	0	0
Unpaid Leave			
Adoption	0	12	12
Birthing	6	12	12
Non-birthing	2	12	12
Surrogacy	0	6	12
Kin Care	0	12	12

In addition to OFLA, other reasons for leave may be added to organizational policy. Almost all organizations (*n*=18) reported offering survivor leave and nearly two thirds reported offering leave for employees experiencing domestic violence and leave for mental health (*n*=12). Almost no organizations offered leave for birthdays or for loved ones returning from incarceration.

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Table 24. Number and Percentage of Organizations Offering Various Types of Leave.

Leave	n	%
Survivor / bereavement	18	95%
Survivors of domestic violence	12	63%
Mental health or wellness days	12	63%
Trauma leave	8	42%
Additional COVID-related leave	7	37%
Birthday	2	11%
Loved ones returning from incarceration	1	5%

Other Benefits

Organizations reported on a series of further benefits that could be offered to full-time, non-executive employees. This includes financial support for professional development activities and an array of other health, wellness, and financial benefits.

Professional Development & Education

In identifying the top 3 financial benefits that would increase their employment satisfaction, employees identified increased contributions toward professional development (30.29%) and contributions/increased contributions toward student loan repayment (29.39%) as top choices, behind only increased PTO and retirement plan/employer contributions.

The majority of organizations reported that they provide support for professional development in the forms of continuing education, conference attendance, professional development stipends, or support towards professional membership fees or license renewals (see table below). In addition, one organization reported the option to make contributions towards student loan repayment.

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Table 25. The Number and Percentage of Participating Organizations that Offer Professional Development and Education Benefits.

Professional Development and Education	n	%
Contributions toward student loan repayment (excluding PHMSA)	1	5%
Contributions towards professional development	17	89%
Contributions towards professional membership fees or license renewals	13	68%
Sabbatical after a certain number of years on the job	8	42%

Other Health, Wellness, and Financial Benefits

Organizations varied significantly in their provision of other health, wellness, and financial benefits. The most common such benefits were employee assistance plans (*n*=16, 84%), long-term disability insurance (*n*=16, 84%), and life insurance (*n*=15, 79%).

Table 26. The Number and Percentage of Participating Organizations that Offer Other Health, Wellness, and Financial Benefits.

Other Health, Wellness, and Livelihood Benefits	n	%
Physical health wellness programs, gym passes, or fitness reimbursement	4	21%
Counseling/therapy reimbursement	4	21%
On-sites or incentives for vaccines and boosters	10	53%
Employee assistance plan (EAP)	16	84%
Flexible spending accounts (FSA)	11	58%
Contributions to flexible spending accounts (FSA)	1	5%
Short-term disability insurance	14	74%
Emergency housing assistance	3	16%
Retirement/other financial planning assistance	13	68%
Legal services assistance	10	53%

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Long term disability insurance	16	84%
Dependent care flexible spending account (DCFSA)	6	32%
Financial contributions for childcare (DCFSA or otherwise)	0	0%
On-site childcare	0	0%
Contributions to 529 accounts	0	0%
Life insurance	15	79%
Transportation stipend, parking reimbursement, and/or commuter benefits	10	53%
Cell phone stipend	10	53%

Eligibility for Certain Financial Benefits

Many of the 'other' financial benefits were available only to some staff members rather than all staff members. For example, more than a third of organizations said they offered longevity/retention bonuses, referral bonuses, signing bonuses, market-based salary increases, and hazard or hardship pay to some staff members, while only 1 or 2 organizations offered these benefits to all staff.

That said, certain employer benefits also may not have been widely received by a significant number of staff in practice. Nearly half of organizations (n=9) responded that they offer performance bonuses to some or all of their staff. However, only three organizations reported that any employees received a performance bonus in 2021. Across those three organizations, only 30 employees total (out of the 3,399 in the study) were reported by the organization to have received a performance bonus.

For organizations that did offer bonuses, these bonuses were primarily determined by manager discretion (n=7), performance review (n=6), and negotiation with staff (n=3). Six organizations said that they do not offer bonuses. On the other hand, nearly every organization reported providing employees with performance reviews from their supervisors, with the majority of organizations providing these reviews annually (68%, n=13).

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Table 27. Number and Percentage of Organizations Offering Various Financial Incentives to Employees in Fiscal Year Ending 2022.

Benefit	All Staff		Some Staff		No Staff	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Annual cost of living adjustment (COLA)	11	58%	4	21%	3	16%
Annual performance-based or merit-based salary increase	5	26%	4	21%	9	47%
Market-based salary increase for particular roles	2	11%	9	47%	5	26%
Performance-based lump-sum bonus; spot bonus for specific success	2	11%	7	37%	9	47%
Signing bonus	0	0%	8	42%	10	53%
Referral bonus	2	11%	3	16%	11	58%
Longevity/retention bonus	1	5%	11	58%	6	32%
Compensation for taking on additional duties (e.g., to fill staffing or supervisor gaps)	0	0%	11	58%	7	37%
Compensation for bilingual/multilingual staff	6	32%	8	42%	5	26%
Compensation for lived experience of homelessness	0	0%	2	11%	16	84%
Compensation for background/experience in culturally-specific organizations	0	0%	4	21%	13	68%
Hazard/hardship pay	2	11%	12	63%	4	21%

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Employee Satisfaction with Benefits

In addition to the organization-level data, the employee survey also asked employees about their *Satisfaction with Benefits*. Employees rated their satisfaction from (1) very dissatisfied, to (5) very satisfied. Employees overall expressed a moderate level of satisfaction, with a mean of 3.34 out of 5.

Generally speaking, *Satisfaction with Benefits* was negatively correlated with *Burnout* ($r = -.486$, $p < .000$) and *Turnover Intentions* ($r = -379$, $p < .000$). In other words, those with less *Satisfaction with Benefits* reported higher *Burnout* and *Turnover Intentions*.

For most employee groups compared (such as, BIPOC staff vs. white staff; Hispanic / Latinx staff vs. non-Hispanic / non-Latinx staff) there were no significant differences observed in satisfaction with benefits. However, both front-line staff (as compared to non-front-line staff) and staff identifying as transgender (as compared to non-transgender staff) had lower satisfaction with benefits.

Table 28. Significant Differences in *Satisfaction with Benefits* for Comparison Groups *(t-test: comparison of means)*

Scale		Front-Line Staff	Non-Front-Line Staff	Transgender staff	Non-Transgender Staff
Satisfaction with Benefits	mean	3.21	3.63	3.07	3.35
	SD	0.83	0.74	0.98	0.81
	t, p	$t(890) = -9.35$, $p < .000$		$t(62.5) = -2.25$, $p < .028$	

When asked to identify the top three financial benefits that would increase their employment satisfaction, over half of employees identified increased paid time off (50.09%) followed by better retirement plan/increased employer contributions (36.17%) and increased contributions toward professional development (30.29%).

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Table 29. All responses to "Please select the top 3 financial benefits that would increase your employment satisfaction (even if they are not currently offered)."
(Respondents selected their top three)

Response Options	Percentage of Respondents who Selected as Top 3
Increased paid time off (e.g., holidays, vacation, sick time)	50.09%
Better retirement plan / increased employer contributions	36.17%
Increased contributions toward professional development, such as professional membership fees, continuing education, conferences	30.29%
Direct contributions/increased contributions toward student loan repayment (beyond the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program)	29.39%
Better healthcare coverage for employees / increased employer contributions	25.91%
Other*	23.70%
Increased amount of paid leave (e.g., family/parental, medical)	23.28%
Increased transportation, parking, or commuter contributions	22.98%
Better healthcare coverage for dependents / increased employer contributions	17.52%
Short/long term disability coverage	7.26%
Increased contributions to a flexible spending account (FSA) for healthcare expenses	5.58%
Life insurance program/increased contributions to life insurance	5.40%
Increased contributions for childcare such as a Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (DCFSA)	5.34%
*Note: under "Other," many employees wrote in that they would prefer an increased wage / salary as opposed to increased benefits.	

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While this study did not collect data that would allow us to compare the difference between PTO hours allowed and PTO hours used, focus group and employee survey data suggested there were multiple complex reasons that at least some employees may be taking less time off than the maximum allowed.

The factors identified by focus groups included saving PTO to cover unexpected illness for themselves or their dependents; limited staff to cover while they are gone; unpredictability of staffing (due to colleagues leaving unexpectedly); a lack of structural or managerial support to take time off; high caseloads and concern about clients having continuous care while the staff person is out.

> "I always have anxiety around taking my PTO as vacation time because what if I get sick, then what do I do? I always end up with extra PTO at the end of the year that I lose because I'm always trying to save it in case I get sick." – Employee Focus Group Participant

> "There is so much turnover that we don't plan vacations because we don't know if there will be enough staff [to cover us while we're out]." – Employee Focus Group Participant

Approximately 29% of staff identified increased vacation time as one of the top three changes that would encourage them to stay at their current organization (only increased compensation scored higher).

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Employee Retention

In order to better understand what contributes to employee retention, employees at participating agencies were asked about their satisfaction with various factors that are associated with turnover, including their satisfaction with: compensation, benefits, supports at work (e.g., social activities, professional development and supervision, work-life balance, health and wellness, and workload), and workplace culture (e.g., transparency, DEI). The following section reviews survey data from 1,600 employees from 24 agencies.

Workforce Turnover Intentions

To understand employee retention, we assessed employees' *Turnover Intentions*. Evaluating *Turnover Intentions* allowed us to assess the likelihood that employees would leave their current organization in the near future and why.

Turnover Intentions was assessed using an adapted version of the Turnover Intentions Scale-6 (TIS-6; Martin & Roodt, 2008), which has been validated and widely used in Organizational Psychology research (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). We added three additional items to the scale that more directly asked about turnover intentions (e.g., *"How likely is it that you will look for a job outside of this organization during the next year?"*).[3] The overall scale in this study includes items related to how often an employee considers getting another job, as well as how likely they are to look for and accept another job.

Employees' scores on the *Turnover Intentions* scale averaged 2.94 out of 5 (*median* = 3, *mode* = 3.25), where 1 = *low turnover intentions* and 5 = *high turnover intentions*. This means that, overall, employees were leaning toward turnover more than retention.

Over half (51%) of the employees participating in the survey responded that it was "somewhat likely" or "very likely" that they would look for a job outside of their current organization during the next year.

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[3] Bothma, C.F.C., & Roodt, G. (2013). The validation of the turnover intention scale. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management, 11*(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ sajhrm.v11i1.507; Martin, A., & Roodt, G. (2008). Perceptions of organizational commitment, job. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 23*, 440-455. doi:10.1177/1548051816645748

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Figure 2. Employee survey turnover intentions item

"How likely is it that you will look for a job outside of this organization during the next year?"
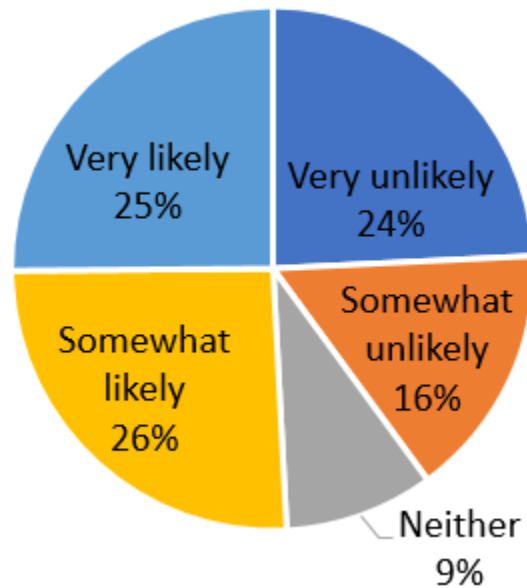
Employees were also asked for the top three reasons they would leave their current organization as well as the top three changes that would encourage them to stay at their organization. For both, employees overwhelmingly selected higher pay as their top factor for retention and turnover. Similarly, employees selected better benefits as their third reason for both.

Table 30. Top Three Reasons for Turnover and Retention across Participating Employees.

Top three reasons you would leave your current organization:		Top three changes that would encourage you to stay at your current organization:	
Reason	*% of employees who selected*	*Reason*	*% of employees who selected*
Increased salary offered to me somewhere else	78%	Increased pay	86%
More opportunities for professional development / growth somewhere else	36%	Increased vacation time	29%
Better benefits offered to me somewhere else	30%	Increased benefits	26%

Notably, employees scored low on *Whether Compensation Meets the Cost of Living* (*mean* = 2.3 / 5, *median* = 2, *mode* = 1). Further, the higher that an employee scored on *Whether Compensation Meets the Cost of Living*, the lower they scored on *Turnover Intentions* (e.g., those items were negatively correlated: $r = -.374^{**}$, $p < 0.000$). Overall *Satisfaction with Compensation and Related Practices* was also negatively correlated with *Turnover Intentions* ($r = -.538^{**}$, $p < 0.000$).

Overall, it is clear that low compensation issues are strongly connected to *Turnover Intentions* among employees, and that increased compensation would help encourage employees to stay at their current organization.

Workplace Culture, Burnout, and Turnover

A supportive workplace culture is important to the health and well-being of organizations and their staff. Supportive workplaces have environments that are both mentally and physically supportive for staff while simultaneously reducing employee turnover and improving employee productivity and organizational performance.

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Two recent resources, both published in 2022, offer important strategies for effective workforce supports:

- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) published "Addressing Burnout in the Behavioral Health Workforce through Organizational Strategies"[4]
- The Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being[5]

Effective workplace cultures invest in supports that help to prevent and reduce burnout, and promote transparency, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

SAMHSA's "Addressing Burnout" report identifies opportunities for strengthening workplace cultures through role clarity, balanced effort-reward, teamwork, equity, and social cultures of support, among others. Leaders in a supportive workplace encourage staff well-being and demonstrate adaptability and willingness to change to provide better support.

The SAMHSA report describes five core organization-level strategies to improve workplace support:

- Practice Delivery Improvements
- Workflow Modifications
- Institutional Policy Changes (e.g., time off and leave policies)
- Expanding Resources for Staff (e.g., childcare and family support programs)
- Organizational Culture Change

The USSG framework goes further, stating that a supportive workplace culture centered on worker voice and equity can deeply impact the lives of staff at an organization and improve an organization's overall health. Their latest report provides a detailed list of organizational-level policies recommended to encourage a supportive workplace culture.

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[4]https://www.samhsa.gov/resource/ebp/addressing-burnout-behavioral-health-workforce-organizational-strategies

[5] https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/priorities/workplace-well-being/index.html.

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US Surgeon General - Five Essentials for Workplace Mental Health and Well-being	
	Recommended Component
Protection from Harm	• Prioritize workplace physical and psychological safety • Enable adequate rest • Normalize and support mental health • Operationalize DEIA (diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility) norms, policies, and programs
Connection and Community	• Create cultures of inclusion and belonging • Cultivate trusted relationships • Foster collaboration and teamwork
Work-Life Harmony	• Provide more autonomy over how work is done • Make schedules as flexible and predictable as possible • Increase access to paid leave • Respect boundaries between work and non-work time
Mattering at Work	• Provide a living wage • Engage workers in workplace decisions • Build a culture of gratitude and recognition • Connect individual work with organizational mission
Opportunity for Growth	• Offer quality training, education, and mentoring • Foster clear, equitable pathways for career advancement • Ensure relevant, reciprocal feedback

These frameworks provide insight into strategies the homeless system of care and its employer organizations can use to strengthen workplace culture, satisfaction, and retention.

Employee Burnout

Recognizing that burnout may be contributing to employee turnover, we aimed to assess how burnout might relate to other factors studied, including *Turnover Intentions*. To measure *Burnout*, we combined the *"Work-Life Balance," "Health and Wellness,"* and *"Workload"* subscales of *Satisfaction with Supports at Work*, and then reserved their scores[6]. This means that those with **low** work-life balance, poor health and wellness support at work, and high workload would be considered to have high levels of *Burnout*.

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[6] When we examined the correlation between *Burnout* and *Supports at Work*, we removed these subscales from the *Supports at Work* scale, so that the two measures would not depend on the same questions.

The items that went into the *Burnout* scale included Likert-rated (i.e., intensity of agreement or disagreement rated on a 1–5-point scale) phrases such as *"My employer supports me taking paid time off for rest and rejuvenation"* (Work-Life Balance); *"My employer provides support for staff to learn about and prevent work burnout"* (Health and Wellness); and *"I am consistently able to get all of my work done during my standard work hours"* (Workload). The composite score was reversed so that a higher score means greater *Burnout*.

Across all employees, the mean *Burnout* score was 2.49 (out of 5), meaning that, across all employees, *Burnout* is close to neutral (not particularly high or low; scale was from 1 to 5).

How "Turnover Intentions" Relates to Other Examined Factors

Turnover Intentions was positively correlated with *Burnout* ($r = .555$, $p < .000$), meaning that those experiencing more *Burnout* also have higher *Turnover Intentions*.

However, both *Turnover Intentions* and *Burnout* were negatively correlated with the other variables. Employees with less satisfaction in these areas have higher scores in *Burnout* and *Turnover Intentions*:

1) *Satisfaction with Compensation and Related Practices*,
2) *Whether Compensation Meets the Cost of Living*,
3) *Satisfaction with Benefits*,
4) *Satisfaction with Supports at Work* (specifically, *Satisfaction with Social Activities* and *Satisfaction with Professional Development*), and
5) *Workplace Culture, Transparency, and DEI*.

Theoretically, this means that low satisfaction in all these areas could be contributing to *Turnover Intentions* both directly as well as indirectly, through *Burnout* (we did not study causality, only correlations, so causal conclusions cannot be drawn).

Table 31. Correlations of Survey Variables Across All Survey Respondents (employee survey).

Survey Scale:		2	3	4	5	6	7	8. Turnover Intentions
1. Hourly rate	Pearson Correlation	0.017	.070**	0.004	-0.022	0.006	0.012	0.019

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Homeless Services

	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.518	0.007	0.864	0.386	0.803	0.651	0.470
	N	1504	1504	1504	1504	1504	1504	1504
2. Satisfaction with Compensation & Related Practices	Pearson Correlation		.660**	.435**	.558**	.476**	−.515**	−.538**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N		1667	1667	1615	1584	1615	1560
3. Whether Compensation Meets the Cost of Living	Pearson Correlation			.397**	.366**	.310**	−.337**	−.374**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N			1667	1615	1584	1615	1560
4. Satisfaction with Benefits	Pearson Correlation				.505**	.451**	−.486**	−.379**
	Sig. (2-tailed)				0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N				1615	1584	1615	1560
5. Satisfaction with Supports at Work	Pearson Correlation					.768**	−.547**^, −.701**^	−.610**
	Sig. (2-tailed)					0.000	0.000	0.000
	N					1584	1560	1560
6. Satisfaction with Workplace Culture, Transparency, and DEI	Pearson Correlation						−.722**	−.539**
	Sig. (2-tailed)						0.000	0.000
	N						1584	1560
7. Burnout	Pearson Correlation							.555**

			0.000
Sig. (2-tailed)			
N			1560

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

^. The "Burnout" measure was created by combining the "Work-Life Balance," "Health and Wellness" and "Workload" subscales, and then reversing their score. These subscales were also used in the "Supports at Work" measures, which also includes the subscales of "Social Activities at Work" and "Professional Development". This correlation thus looks at the two subscales of *Supports at Work* that are <u>not</u> included in the *Burnout* measure: (social activities at work: $r = -.547$, $p < .000$; professional development: $r = -.701$, $p < .000$).

Across the employees who participated in the survey, certain employee groups experience higher *Burnout* and *Turnover Intentions* than other employee groups. Specifically, front-line staff experience significantly greater levels of *Burnout* and *Turnover Intentions* than non-front-line staff.

Table 32. *Burnout* **and** *Turnover Intentions*, **Front-Line Staff versus Non-Front-Line Staff** (*t-test: comparison of means*).

Scale or Subscale		Front-Line Staff	Non-Front-Line Staff
Burnout	mean	2.57	2.32
	SD	0.85	0.74
	t, p	$t(907) = 5.45$, $p < .000$	
Turnover Intentions	mean	3.00	2.83
	SD	0.66	0.67
	t, p	$t(1449) = 4.47$, $p < .000$	

Employee Satisfaction with Supports at Work

Employees were asked about their *Satisfaction with Supports at Work*, which included items related to each of the *Supports* subscales: *"Social Activities", "Professional Development and Supervision", "Work-Life Balance", "Health and Wellness,"* and *"Workload"*. Similar to other variables in this study, each of these subscales was a composite score of multiple items, and each subscale was averaged to get an overall score on *Satisfaction with Supports at Work*.

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Overall, employees were more satisfied with *Supports at Work* (M = 3.36, out of 5) than other work-related factors, such as *Compensation* (M = 2.59) and *Benefits* (M = 3.34). Employees who had greater satisfaction with support at work had lower levels of *Burnout* and *Turnover Intentions*.

However, certain groups of employees had significantly lower *Satisfaction with Supports at Work* than other groups. This was most pronounced for front-line staff (as compared to non-front-line staff), whose dissatisfaction with supports was prominent across four of the five subscales of *Satisfaction with Supports at Work* assessed (*"Social Activities"*, *"Professional Development and Supervision"*, *"Work-Life Balance"*, and *"Health and Wellness"*; only *"Workload"* was not significantly different for front-line vs. non-front-line staff). In addition, transgender staff demonstrated greater dissatisfaction with *"Work-Life Balance"*, as compared with non-transgender staff.

Table 33. Significant Differences in *Satisfaction with Supports at Work* for Comparison Groups
(t-test: comparison of means).

Scale		Front-Line Staff	Non-Front-Line Staff	Transgender Staff	Non-Transgender Staff
Satisfaction with Supports at Work	mean	3.29	3.52	-	-
	SD	0.82	0.73	-	-
	t, p	$t(892) = -5.22, p < .000$		-	
Social Activities (subscale)	mean	2.72	3.04	-	-
	SD	1.11	1.07	-	-
	t, p	$t(825) = -5.12, p < .000$		-	
Professional Development (subscale)	mean	3.24	3.41	-	-
	SD	0.96	0.93	-	-
	t, p	$t(1449) = -3.09, p < .002$		-	

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Work-Life Balance (subscale)	mean	3.71	4.08	3.48	3.86
	SD	1.05	0.86	1.31	0.98
	t, p	$t(968) = -6.88$, $p < .000$		$t(61.9) = -2.19$, $p < 0.33$	
Health and Wellness (subscale)	mean	3.4	3.72	-	-
	SD	1.02	0.86	-	-
	t, p	$t(934) = -6.25$, $p < .000$		-	

- = non-significant result, not reported

When asked to identify the top three things that would help them feel more supported at work, employees emphasized more efforts to prevent/reduce burnout (42.17%) and opportunities for professional growth and advancement, with 40.50% of respondents identifying *"professional development opportunities that better support my growth and success,"* and 35.11% identifying *"clearer pathways for advancement and promotion."*

Table 34. All responses to "Please select the top 3 things that would help you feel more supported at work."
(Respondents selected their top three.)

Response Options	Percentage of Respondents who Selected as Top 3
More efforts to prevent / reduce burnout.	42.17%
Professional development opportunities that better support my growth and success.	40.50%
Clearer pathways for advancement and promotion.	35.11%
Better relationship or team building activities during work time.	27.37%
Decreased or more balanced workload.	22.41%
Improved safety and security on / around the job site.	20.19%

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

More support for my work-life balance overall.	19.20%
Supervision that is more supportive or of higher quality.	16.16%
A more flexible work schedule.	15.48%
Other (please specify)	13.13%
More support for taking time off.	11.89%
More flexibility for last-minute personal things that come up.	10.34%
Better protection of my health during the pandemic.	7.49%

Note: Under "other" many employees wrote-in "increased pay" and "increased paid time off."

Efforts to Prevent / Reduce Burnout

In addition to the correlation identified between burnout and turnover intentions described previously, 19% of employees said *"benefits or support to prevent burnout"* would encourage them to stay at their organization. This is consistent with a breadth of literature suggesting that burnout leads to turnover.[7]

Occupational burnout "[results] from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions:

- feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion;
- increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and
- reduced professional efficacy."[8]

Direct service provider employees perform work that can be extremely demanding and emotionally challenging. As one focus group participant explained:

> "The emotional part of the job is probably what gets the people the most…
> You want to help people, but the rules and regulations don't make it so that
> you can help them easily or help them stay afloat. It can be frustrating, and
> it can feel like a waste of energy, depending on how you look at it. I've

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[7] www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2014/stress-report.pdf

[8] https://www.who.int/news/item/28-05-2019-burn-out-an-occupational-phenomenon-international-classification-of-diseases

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Homeless Services

watched a person walk out on the job." – Employee Focus Group Participant

Employees' burnout-related factors reported in focus group conversations were varied and complex. Some employees described the desire to potentially leave their jobs due to stress, some to a lack of advancement, some due to pay or benefits, and others due to the interaction between these experiences (e.g., needing to work a second job because of low compensation, which leads to both emotional and physical exhaustion and thus contributes to burnout).

Specific supports we reviewed in this study included work balance, flexible schedules, and structured wellness activities and supports. However, it is important to emphasize that burnout is a broad concept, linked to many of the other factors considered throughout this report such as compensation and paid time off. The best way to address burnout is to address the structural drivers of burnout within a particular organization.

Work Balance & Flexible Schedules[9]

Almost 1 in 5 employee survey respondents reported that they would leave their current organization for better work-life balance (18.72%) or less workload elsewhere (18.27%). This may be due to potentially interrelated challenges of insufficient time off and/or an overly burdensome workload.

Several participating organizations did not have client or supervisory caps that could moderate workload. Only 58% of organizations (*n*=11) reported that they have a "maximum number of clients" that a case manager can be assigned.

Additionally, the experience of an over-extended workload can be compounded by taking on additional duties and responsibilities. Over 40% of employees indicated that they are frequently asked to take on work that is beyond their job description. However, fewer than 10% of employees report that they are compensated for these extra tasks. Overall, barely half of staff agreed or strongly agreed that they have enough time to do their work well or that they are able to get all their work done during standard work hours.

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[9] See section "Employee Satisfaction with Benefits" regarding challenges employees experience in taking paid time off of work.

Table 35. Responses to *Workload* Items (subscale of *Supports at Work*).

Workload	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel like I have enough time to do my work well.	11.58%	20.56%	14.49%	41.49%	11.89%
I am consistently able to get all of my work done during my standard work hours.	12.57%	21.11%	14.92%	40.50%	10.90%
I have a similar workload to others in the same position as me.	9.04%	14.12%	25.70%	41.30%	9.85%

Similarly, at the manager level, only 37% of organizations (*n*=7) reported a "maximum number of direct supervisees" for whom a supervisor can be responsible. Protections on managers' time is important, not only to support them from overwork as employees, but also to support their effectiveness in their role as supervisor. Fewer than half of supervisors felt their organizations allowed sufficient time for management in the workday to provide effective support to their staff. Yet, as suggested by focus group participants, support from supervisors is important to prevent burnout.

> "If you don't have yourself together, you can't help anyone else. The job can be a lot, we tend to forget about ourselves... my managers do a good job of giving me a couple hours to decompress, reset, and take care of myself. They're really understanding, really open. When the union conversation came up, it was like: let's talk about it. It wasn't good or bad, it was just a conversation... a supportive manager always helps." – Employee Focus Group Participant

Flexible schedules can also support employees in their work-life balance. Several organizations reported providing some form of flexible work schedule to their employees, but it is not clear how many employees participate in these flexible arrangements.

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Table 36. The Number and Percentage of Participating Organizations that Offer Scheduling Benefits.

Scheduling Benefit	n	%
Flexible work schedules	16	84%
Remote or hybrid work models	18	95%
4-day work week	11	58%
Early off on Fridays	4	21%
Work days without clients for breaks from direct contact	5	26%

Structured Wellness Activities or Support

Most of the participating organizations reported providing some form of structured wellness activity for staff to promote a supportive work culture. The most common activities were social activities for team building or morale, with 74% of organizations providing such activities according to organization-level data.

That said, there may be opportunities to expand structured wellness activities and support. 27.37% of employee survey respondents identified "better relationships or team-building activities during work time" as one of the changes that would help them feel more supported at work. Also, only 33.19% of employees agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the type of social activities provided by their employers, and just 28.17% agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the frequency of structured social activities.

While it is important to note that organizational-level structural changes are much more impactful, organizations were surveyed about their investment in individual level interventions. Individual level support can be added to supplement broader efforts to reduce burnout. Training for frontline staff can offer strategies such as self-care, meditation, and counseling, while professional training for management can help supervisors learn to better identify and respond to the signs of burnout in their direct reports before it becomes pervasive. Nearly half (47%, *n*= 9) of participating organizations offered training specifically on burnout. Still, in outside studies, these types of small-scale interventions have been shown to be ineffective, resulting in no statistically significant improvement to burnout.

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Table 37. Structured Wellness Support Offered by Employers.

Structured Wellness Supports	Monthly	Quarterly	Semi-Annually	Annually	Other	Never
Organization provided structured, compensated social activities for team building, support, morale	11%	26%	11%	11%	16%	26%
Organization provided formal training for managers/supervisors on identifying, responding to, and preventing burnout	0%	5%	5%	11%	26%	53%
Organization provided formal training for staff with direct client support responsibilities on their own wellness and burnout	0%	5%	5%	11%	26%	53%

Focus group participants emphasized a need for greater support with the emotional aspects of the job, and better access to mental health and behavioral health resources. This is particularly pronounced for front-line staff whose day-to-day work can be emotionally challenging and triggering:

> "At my site in particular all the staff have mentioned needing mental health services. Having an onsite person to talk to would help with dealing with our own triggers." – Employee Focus Group Participant

Focus group participants noted that these triggers can be heightened for employees with lived experience of substance use disorders or homelessness:

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

"Our work is very triggering at times: I'm in recovery myself, like some clients. It is easy to drop that at the door when I show up to work, but it takes a toll on me." – Employee Focus Group Participant

Compounding these challenges are the difficulties employees experience in attending public support groups due to HIPAA laws and their clients potentially being at these groups.

To address these issues, focus group participants recommended that employers provide direct mental health services:

"It would be helpful if organizations had an on-call mental health professional, specifically for our organizations (not the hotlines that are for everyone). They could do it by shift or something like that. But definitely we need somebody onsite. A Zoom meeting isn't enough. It's better to have someone sitting in front of you who you can let it all out to. A lot more emotional support that way." – Employee Focus Group Participant

While all participating employers stated that they subsidize a health plan for employees – which likely provides some mental health coverage – only 21% (*n*=4) of organizations offered additional reimbursement for counseling or therapy services. Employee data suggests that strategies for deepening employee access to mental health services may be particularly crucial to addressing burnout in the workforce.

Professional Development Opportunities & Advancement Pathways

A supportive work environment includes a supportive culture and system of professional development. Supervisors and their staff benefit from clear policies and dedicated, compensated time to spend building their skills.

Professional development for staff may encompass both formal and informal professional development processes and training opportunities, quality supervision and oversight, and opportunities for advancement. For example, an annual review may be one type of professional development held 1 on 1 between a supervisor and employee, while a formal training may be provided to a group of employees by an outside consultant, resulting in a certificate of completion.

Most organizations (18 of 19) stated they provide employees with performance reviews from their supervisors, typically annually (68%, *n*=13). However only three quarters of organizations offer formal opportunities for professional development (74%, *n*=16) and frequency of these supports varied significantly.

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Table 38. Workplace Support Offered by Employers.

Workplace Support	Number of Organizations	Percentage of Organizations
Staff received performance reviews from supervisor	18	95%
Staff received performance reviews from supervisor more than annually.	4	21%
Organization provided structured, compensated social activities for team building, support, morale	14	74%
Organization provided formal training for managers/supervisors on effective team management	14	74%
Organization provided formal training for managers/supervisors on identifying, responding to, and preventing burnout	9	47%
Organization provided formal training for staff with direct client support responsibilities on their own wellness and burnout	9	47%
Organization provided formal training for staff on trauma informed care practices with clients	16	84%
Organization provided formal opportunities for staff to build their skills and grow in their jobs	16	84%

Overall, employees were less satisfied with professional development and supervision than other areas of *Supports at Work*. In the employee survey, 36% of employees cited "more opportunities for professional development/growth elsewhere" as a reason they would leave their current organization.

While 54% of employees agreed that their employer cares about their professional growth and success, 33% of employees were dissatisfied with professional development support received from their employer, with the opportunities to build skills and grow in their current job, and with the opportunities to advance to higher positions (with greater pay and responsibilities) at their organization.

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Table 39. Responses to Professional Development and Supervision Items (subscale of Supports at Work)

(percentages are rounded – see appendix for exact numbers).

Professional Development and Supervision	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
My employer cares about my professional growth and success.	9%	15%	22%	40%	14%
I am satisfied with the overall professional/career development support I receive from my employer.	11%	22%	24%	35%	9%
I am satisfied with the opportunities my employer provides for staff to build their skills / grow in their job.	11%	23%	24%	33%	9%
If I wanted to, I could advance to higher positions (with greater pay and responsibilities) at this organization.	14%	20%	27%	31%	9%
I am satisfied with the quality of supervision I receive from my supervisor.	10%	11%	15%	38%	26%
I am satisfied with how frequently I meet with my supervisor or manager.	8%	10%	15%	40%	27%

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging are part of a workplace culture that values individual identities and protects those workers from harm. The USSG Report defines inclusive workplace culture:

> *In inclusive workplace cultures, all workers—including those from diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds—feel safe to be authentic and express their feelings. This depends on a culture of trust where all co-workers welcome and value each other's unique perspectives. When diversity is celebrated as a source of strength, workers experience less stress and anxiety as bias and prejudice is not tolerated. Employers can prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) norms by putting relevant policies and programs in place. Inclusive leadership is vital for fostering diversity among teams and is required to support a work environment where all team members feel valued and represented.*

DEI Investment by Participating Organizations

Participating organizations appeared to be deepening their investments in DEI, with organizations self-reporting significantly more DEI-related activities in 2022 than 2021. In 2022, nearly all organizations reported 1 or more DEI-related initiatives, with the most common being staff training, employee feedback processes, and audits of recruitment policies and procedures. The number of organizations engaging in DEI activities increased in nearly every activity from 2021 to 2022.

Table 40. Number and Percent of Orgs Offering DEI Support in 2021 and 2022.

DEI Supports	2021		2022	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*
DEI-related staff trainings	13	68%	18	95%
Internal employee feedback process	14	74%	17	89%
Recruitment policies & procedures audit or revisions	13	68%	17	89%
DEI-related management trainings	14	74%	16	84%
Program evaluation or plan to strengthen equity of outcomes	9	47%	15	79%
Has a formal DEI philosophy or values statement	*	*	15	79%

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Compensation wage gap analysis	11	58%	14	74%
HR staff handbook/policy audit or revisions to advance DEI	10	53%	14	74%
Has a formal agency-wide DEI, workplan, and/or action steps	*	*	13	68%
Affinity groups	8	42%	10	53%
Agency DEI assessment or audit	8	42%	10	53%
Retained a DEI consultant	11	58%	9	47%
One or more staff committed to DEI full-time	*	*	6	32%
DEI staff retreat	2	11%	4	21%
* Indicates data that was only collected for 2022				

While the majority of organizations retained a DEI consultant in 2021 or 2022, organizations varied considerably in how much staff time they allot to DEI activities:

- Eleven of the 19 reporting organizations retained a DEI consultant in 2021, and 9 in 2022.
- Six organizations dedicated 1 or more FTEs to DEI work, with a median commitment of 1 FTE.
- Of the organizations that did not have at least one full FTE dedicated to DEI work (*n*=13), 8 organizations still invest non-dedicated staff time to DEI, with a median of 20 hours/week (0.5 FTE) spent on DEI work across various staff.
- Ten organizations said they do not provide compensation for DEI work.

Employee Experience of DEI

Overall, the employee survey suggested that the commitment of participating organizations to DEI initiatives was clear to employees. A large majority (70%) of employees either agreed or strongly agreed that their employer was committed to advancing DEI at their organization. However, overall satisfaction with DEI initiatives varied considerably across staff.

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Table 41. Responses to *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* Items
(subscale of *Workplace Culture, Transparency, and DEI*).

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
My organization's plan to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion at our organization.	6.50%	11.36%	28.28%	36.93%	16.92%
The extent to which my employer incorporates staff feedback into organization planning and action.	11.62%	20.08%	27.97%	29.55%	10.80%
The ways in which policies related to diversity, equity and inclusion are carried out in practice.	9.53%	14.77%	32.07%	30.68%	12.94%
The ways in which conflict resolution policies are carried out in practice.	11.24%	15.28%	37.69%	26.58%	9.22%

Focus group participants suggested that more is needed to protect staff from racist or other inappropriate interactions from other staff, or to prevent them from feeling obligated to take on the burdens of educating their peers:

> "We experience and witness racism and misgendering at work, which makes us feel further demoralized." – Focus Group Participant

> "We are burdened with having to educate our colleagues on issues related to the LGBTQ+ community. We field a lot of questions related to our identities: *'if I say this, is it transphobic?'*. We also receive inappropriate questions from people about our identities, then we have to return to work with them the

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

next day. How do you tell someone they shouldn't ask you something, and then go back to work with them the next day?" – Focus Group Participant

Focus group participants also noted that their identities can impact the work they are assigned, resulting in more triggering work:

"When you have one of these identities and proclaim that you do, they give you all of those clients. But it is more triggering for that staff person to work with those clients and hear about their experiences." – Focus Group Participant

More generally, staff noted a lack of supports targeted to BIPOC staff:

"I don't really have enough support or peer groups at work to talk through challenges that impact me as a BIPOC person." – Focus Group Participant

Staff felt that more widespread and meaningful DEI efforts would help prevent some of these issues or better address them when they arise.

Transparency, Communications, and Feedback

Employee survey respondents' top 3 areas most noted for DEI improvement were all connected to transparency, staff communication, and staff feedback.

Table 42. All responses to "The top 3 things that my organization could do to better advance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are..."
(Respondents selected their top three.)

Response Options	Percentage of Respondents who Selected as Top 3
Increased transparency of salary structure at the organization.	52.53%
Increased communications about things that impact staff.	50.06%
Improved processes for collecting and acting on staff feedback.	47.60%
Training for all staff on topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.	33.33%
More support for people with different identities, such as race, religion, gender, disability, and sexual orientation.	24.05%
Trainings for supervisors on working with multicultural teams.	20.45%

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Treat everyone more equitably.	19.76%
Better plans for improving DEI at the organization.	12.50%
Other (please specify)	10.04%
Better policies related to DEI at the organization.	7.89%
*Note: Under "other" many employees wrote-in "increased pay" and "increased paid time off."	

Transparency in Compensation

Salary transparency may be a clear opportunity to improve DEI in several participating organizations. 52.53% of employee survey respondents identified increased transparency of salary structure as one of the top 3 things their organization could do to advance DEI.

Only 39.35% of employees agreed or strongly agreed that the amount of their salary or hourly pay is fair, compared with other employees doing similar work at their organization, suggesting that a significant number of employees may believe that pay practices are inequitable across their organizations.

In practice, organization-level data demonstrated varying degrees of transparency around compensation. Of the 19 participating organizations, 59% had a written compensation policy and 63% had a written salary scale. However, only 47% of organizations made their compensation policy available to staff and fewer than a third (n=6, 32%) shared their salary schedule with staff. Organizations may be moving toward greater transparency, however; 79% of organizations always shared compensation on job postings (n=15) and the remaining organizations sometimes shared this information.

Importantly, a significant number of organizations reported they either negotiate salaries and/or leave salaries to manager discretion, which can further exacerbate pay inequity.

Table 43. Salary Strategies Across Participating Organizations.

Salary strategy	n	%
Negotiate salaries for new hires	15	79%
Negotiate salaries for promotions	8	42%
Negotiate for annual pay increases	4	21%

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Salary increases at least partially informed by performance review	8	42%
Salary increases at least partially informed by manager discretion	7	37%
Salary increase at least partially informed by negotiation with staff	5	26%

Organizational Transparency and Feedback More Generally

More generally, staff identified opportunities to improve DEI through increased communications about things that impact staff (50.06%) and improved processes for collecting and acting on staff feedback (47.60%). Interestingly, 89% of participating organizations (*n*=17) reported having an internal employee feedback process (an increase from 74%, *n*=14 in 2021).

The extent to which employees identified increased communications/feedback processes as a top 3 strategy for advancing DEI, despite many organizations' current efforts, suggests that the employee communications and feedback processes may benefit from additional or new approaches. It is possible that while many organizations collect feedback, employees do not feel that the feedback is incorporated into decision-making or that they are provided with adequate notice of changes that will impact them.

Additionally, focus group feedback indicated a need for more intentional opportunities and appropriate spaces for staff from marginalized identities to provide feedback, particularly when their identities are not reflected in organizational leadership:

> "Being so snow-capped [e.g., the organizations are led by white people] makes it harder for BIPOC staff to feel like their voices are heard within their organizations. This is the first time we've even had a BIPOC designated focus group for our voices to be centered." – Focus Group Participant

Processes to effectively gather and incorporate feedback within an organization can advance key components of supportive workplace culture such as cultivating trusted relationships, engaging workers in workplace decisions, or building a culture of gratitude and recognition.

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Policy Recommendations & Next Steps

As the first project of the newly-created Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS) Evaluation Framework, which was developed in 2022, this wage study and its resulting recommendations seek to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our programming, with the end goal of reducing homelessness. Employee retention, job satisfaction, and workforce stability have long been issues among agencies serving people experiencing homelessness. In the process of developing Multnomah County's Metro Supportive Housing Services Measure (SHS) Local Implementation Plan, JOHS held a series of community engagement sessions with these service providers, as well as stakeholders and community members, to assess the feasibility of this significant expansion in programming. Workforce development challenges, the lack of workforce stability, and resulting challenges in service provision were among the top concerns of consultation participants. As a result, Multnomah County included in its Local Implementation Plan that as a part of system and program evaluation,

> "Immediate evaluation priorities include assessing the capacity of CBOs that currently deliver services, including a review of their ability to attract and retain talent given current compensation levels and approaches to equity." (p.20)

The Local Implementation Plan also recommended as a part of the work to increase community-based organization (CBO) capacity,

> "Following an evaluation, there will likely also be a significant investment in current organizational capacity to address pay equity concerns, help stabilize staffing, and enhance outcomes. CBO capacity will be a shared priority of all three counties, and investments will likely be made on a regional basis." (p.20)

JOHS has already begun to increase its support for workforce development in advance of completing the wage study. During fiscal year 2022-23, JOHS provided funding increases for agencies up to 8 percent of their operating budgets with the goal of increasing spending on compensation and benefits for front-line staff. JOHS' current fiscal year 2023-24 budget includes a 5 percent cost-of-living adjustment for contracts, and projects funded by the County General Fund include an additional 3 percent cost-of-living adjustment. The current budget also includes funding for capacity building grants for new and expanding providers. Agencies can choose to use these funds on a broad range of

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

capacity-building activities, including HR and fiscal business services, equity planning, and general strategic planning.

Following from the purpose of the wage study, its main findings, and the goals of any resulting policy changes, the policy recommendations offered here aim to be informative rather than prescriptive. In general, the recommendations encourage an agency- and role-specific approach to addressing the issues relevant to a particular group of employees, rather than one-size-fits-all directives regarding staffing and compensation that lack specificity and relevance. As this approach was a foundational element of the entire study, JOHS prioritized the development of agency-specific reports that allow each agency to compare its role-specific wages to a comparable group of agencies.

Our policy recommendations also acknowledge and affirm our shared commitment to JOHS' mission and equity priorities. We encourage and support the development of staffing, classification, compensation, benefits and other policies that increase equity among employees and address disparities suffered by employees from historically marginalized groups, including persons with lived experience of homelessness.

Our policy recommendations are grouped into five categories: technical assistance; contracting incentives; compensation; benefits and other supports; equity priorities; and coordination among funding organizations.

Technical Assistance

- **Wage Study Follow-Up Outreach:** As a follow-up to releasing the study and the agency-specific data reports, JOHS could consider holding listening sessions between JOHS and agency decision-makers. These sessions would allow JOHS to understand agencies' initial reactions to the study findings, and their initial thoughts on how the information could be used to improve workforce stability.
- **Agency-Specific Technical Assistance:** In this effort, a technical assistance provider who is knowledgeable about both the homelessness services sector and workforce development strategies would work with individual agencies, developing agency-specific action plans to address key issues identified in this study's agency-level data collection. Agency-specific technical assistance builds on the work of this study by developing individualized goals and targeted policy actions that align with each agency's priorities, goals and capacity.
- **Tools to Assess Improvements:** The wage study data collection provided a baseline assessment of classification, compensation, benefits, and employee

satisfaction. In order to identify changes in these outcomes and the effects of any policy changes, it will be necessary to collect similar data in the future (or on an ongoing basis). Providing access to assessment tools enabling agencies to set clear goals and measure progress toward outcomes for workforce stability would improve the effectiveness of any policy actions taken.

- **Cross-Agency Collaboration:** Building on agency-specific technical assistance, JOHS could support collaboration across agencies as they implement strategies to improve workforce stability. JOHS currently convenes a number of stakeholder committees that provide critical insight on important plans and decisions. A cross-agency collaboration could provide an even more functional space, where agencies learn from each others' experiences in work sessions facilitated by a technical assistance provider, and then share these insights with the JOHS in listening sessions.

Contracting Incentives

- **Assess impact of FY23 8 percent contract increase:** During fiscal year 2022-23, JOHS provided funding increases for agencies up to 8 percent of their operating budgets, with the requirement that these additional funds be used to address wage pressures that hinder recruitment and retention among entry-level positions. It is important for the JOHS to assess the impact of these additional funds on the compensation, classification, and benefits of staff funded by these contracts. The assessment would focus on identifying which job categories were primarily affected by the contract increase, and what specific changes were implemented for these roles – above and beyond a generalized assessment of how the increase was spent on staffing. If possible, it would be informative to explore the effects of these improvements on employee satisfaction, retention and productivity.
- **Contracting Incentives:** JOHS could offer contracting incentives, such as increased funding in continuing contracts or scoring preferences in contract proposals, to agencies that propose wages and benefits at or above relevant benchmarks. JOHS also could offer the option of providing advance payments for staffing expenses to agencies proposing wages above these benchmarks. In developing this policy, it is important to consider the equity consequences for culturally specific providers, smaller organizations, and newer organizations. Other incentives could be made available to these agencies if they are unable to meet the relevant wage and benefit benchmarks.

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Compensation, Benefits and Other Supports

- **Improved Work Flexibility:** Most organizations in this study offer a robust array of benefits, including paid time off, health care, and educational benefits. The main issue identified in this area was that staff were not able to use these benefits. Staff reported that there was no one able to cover for them if they missed a shift, or that no one was available to continue work on their projects in their absence. This lack of work flexibility led to employee burnout. To allow employees to use paid time off and other benefits — important components of their total compensation — agencies could consider a number of options. Increased staffing would make it easier for employees to cover each others' absences, and cross-training staff in more than one role also would increase the number of employees able to cover for one another's tasks. Encouraging employees to take time off also would build a culture of improved work-life balance.
- **Improved Mental and Behavioral Health Care Benefits:** Many employees in the study reported significant burnout and decreased productivity related to the stress and trauma of their work responsibilities — responsibilities which often triggered distress related to their own lived experiences. While many agencies offered mental and behavioral health care benefits, agency staff sometimes were unable to use these options because they were overworked, or their clients participated in the same programs, making them an uncomfortable space. First, agencies could consider increasing their support for employees in taking time off to address their personal needs, in the ways described above. If, for whatever reason, the mental and behavioral health options offered to employees do not meet their needs, agencies and JOHS could work together to identify alternatives.
- **Increasing Other Staff Supports:** JOHS could identify and support additional interventions to reduce burnout, provide professional development opportunities, and provide clear pathways for career advancement. Examples of these supports might include training opportunities, technology and other capital investments to reduce duplicative work, and mentorship opportunities provided across agencies.
- **Providing Wage and Benefit Benchmarking Information:** In conducting this study, JOHS has made the first step toward developing wage and benefit benchmarks by documenting average and median wages and benefits across participating agencies, and by providing reports to agencies that compare their wages to those of similar agencies. In the study report, we also compare wages to the Portland-area "living wage" as a measure of the compensation required to meet one's needs without relying on public benefits.

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

We acknowledge both that certain roles within the homelessness services sector are "stepping stones" whose total compensation also provides the intangible benefits of extensive on-the-job training and workforce experience for employees who may have experienced disruption in their employment histories due to their lived experience of homelessness; and also that persistently low wages among front-line staff in the homelessness services sector contribute to housing and health insecurity among the most vulnerable members of this workforce. We also acknowledge that while the ultimate goal for employees of our contracted providers is to be able to meet their basic and housing needs, many of these employees may have entered housing through participation in the employer's housing program and may prefer to maintain housing stability rather than to face the "benefits cliff".

While acknowledging the complexities involved in determining the appropriate levels of compensation and benefits for different roles, it may be helpful for JOHS or a technical assistance provider to develop a framework for including all of these factors relevant to wage and benefit benchmarks, and to provide this information to our contracted providers. This framework could be used for informational purposes only, or could be used to incentivize agencies to address imbalances in their compensation schedules.

Equity Priorities

- **Wage Transparency:** A lack of clarity in how compensation and benefits are determined for different roles and different staff is a recurring theme of many wage studies in the homelessness services sector, including this one. Agencies may consider providing detailed information on the responsibilities, required experience and qualifications, and compensation ranges for each role. Without this information, employees may perceive that roles, compensation, and benefits are determined arbitrarily and inequitably.

- **Opportunities for Advancement:** There are numerous benefits to providing clear pathways to career advancement within each agency. Employees who gain useful workplace-specific experience and expertise may be less likely to leave the organization, taking these valuable investments with them, if they have opportunities to improve their role and increase their compensation within the agency. Well-established and direct career pathways also may provide a path for entry-level staff, many of whom bring relevant lived experiences of being BIPOC, LGBTQIA2S+, or experiencing homelessness, to gain independence and financial

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

security in their lives. Improving policies in this area likely would uplift the most historically marginalized employees. For each agency, career advancement pathways will differ depending on the services they provide and the composition of roles in their workforce. Developing this structure could be a goal of the technical assistance suggested earlier in this section.

Equity Work Plan Classification and Compensation Goals: JOHS currently is introducing a new policy for all contracted providers to develop an Equity Work Plan as a part of their initial and renewal contract applications. To encourage agencies to include workforce equity in their planning, we recommend requiring agencies to develop and include goals for equity in employee classification, compensation, and/or workforce stability. Currently, programs funded by SHS are required to report on an annual basis the pay range (lowest and highest pay), pay for front-line direct service roles, and the demographic composition of employees whose positions are funded by SHS funds. JOHS can use this information to track progress towards internally-defined workforce equity goals.

Coordination Among Funding Organizations

- **Local Coordination:** Most of the policy recommendations above focus on actions that can be taken in the near-term by JOHS and its contracted providers, with limited requirements or mandates from JOHS regarding agencies' budgetary decision making or minimum compensation and benefits levels. Most of JOHS' contracted providers receive only a share of their total budget from JOHS. As a result, additional funding provided by JOHS to support workforce development and stability excludes the majority of staff at these agencies. Increasing funding for employee compensation and benefits in a sustainable way will require a coordinated approach which includes other organizations funding these agencies — other County departments, the cities of Portland and Gresham, the Washington County and Clackamas County Continuums of Care, Metro, and nonprofit grantmakers such as United Way. Addressing workforce stability and equity is a goal of the SHS Tri-County Planning Body. JOHS or another funder could convene a working group to address the feasibility, timing and targeting of funding increases to increase employee compensation and benefits.
- **Building Evidence-Based Practice:** Organizations in many cities have recently completed studies of workforce stability and support in the homelessness services

sector, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego and New York City.[10] This study contributes to the evidence-based research literature on the connection between compensation, benefits, workplace climate and culture, and workforce stability for a representative sample of homelessness services providers. The results inform workforce development efforts not only in the homelessness and housing services sectors, but in other fields that serve similarly vulnerable populations, such as behavioral and mental health care, long-term care for individuals experiencing difficulty with activities of daily living, and other human services. The policy changes implemented as a result of this study can serve as a guide to effectively translate research into action. By sharing the results of this study and policy work regionally and nationally, our work can add to the growing consensus that there are many opportunities to improve service delivery and employees' effectiveness by addressing similar issues in this area.

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[10] City and County of San Francisco Office of the Controller, "Memorandum - Findings and Recommendations for Addressing Nonprofit Wage Pressures", May 2022.
KPMG and the United Way of Greater Los Angeles, "Current State Assessment Report – Homeless Sector Workforce Analysis", August 2022.
RAND and Social Justice Partners, "Living Wages in Los Angeles County's Homeless Response Sector", May 2023.
San Diego Housing Commission, "Homelessness Services Compensation Study", March 2023.
The News School Center for New York City Affairs, "The Case for Ending Poverty Wages for New York City's Human Services Workers", March 2022.

Appendix A: Employee Survey

Methodology

An electronic survey was sent out to JOHS-funded agencies and their employees and was open for two months (mid-May to mid-July 2022). Overall, employees from 24 agencies responded to the survey, with a total of 1,667 responses.

Agency	Frequency	Percent
Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare	411	24.7
Central City Concern	343	20.6
Transition Projects, Inc	159	9.5
Cascade AIDS Project	86	5.2
Human Solutions	83	5
Do Good Multnomah	78	4.7
New Avenues for Youth	62	3.7
Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization	58	3.5
Self Enhancement, Inc	58	3.5
All Good Northwest	53	3.2
JOIN	34	2
Portland Homeless Family Solutions	32	1.9

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Raphael House of Portland	32	1.9
El Programa Hispano Catolico	29	1.7
Native American Youth and Family Center	28	1.7
Janus Youth Program	27	1.6
Northwest Pilot Project	20	1.2
Cultivate Initiatives	17	1
Volunteers of America	17	1
Native American Rehabilitation Association	14	0.8
YWCA of Greater Portland	14	0.8
Portland Street Medicine	6	0.4
Beacon Village	4	0.2
Outside In	1	0.1

The survey aimed to assess employee's perspectives on the following factors:

- Compensation
    - Satisfaction
    - Fairness
    - Perspectives of employer compensation practices
- Whether Compensation Meets the Cost of Living

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

- Benefits Provided by Employer
- Supports at Work
    - Social activities
    - Professional development and supervision
    - Work-life balance
    - Health and wellness
    - Workload
- Workplace Culture and DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) Practices
    - Workplace culture
    - Transparency
    - DEI efforts in the workplace
- Turnover Intentions

Three subscales from *Supports at Work* were used to assess *Burnout* (work-life balance, health and wellness, workload).

Respondents were also asked to provide demographic and employment information (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, level of formal education and licensure, job title, job category, hours worked per week, salary, and tenure of employment at agency and in current role).

Survey Results
Averages of Scales

Each of the below measures is an average of multiple items, each rated on a 1-5 Likert scale. For example, *Satisfaction with Compensation* included seven items related to both perspectives on one's actual compensation as well as perspectives of compensation-related practices at the employee's organization.

- Across all JOHS-funded agencies, employees score particularly low in *Whether Compensation Meets Cost of Living*, meaning that employees do not feel like their compensation is keeping up with cost of living in the area.
- Employees scored higher-than-desired for *Turnover Intentions*. Over 50% of employees said it was "somewhat likely" or "very likely" that they will look for a job outside of their current organization during the next year.

Scores on Survey Variables Across all Survey Respondents (Employee Survey)							
	Satisfaction with... (1 = low satisfaction, 5 = high satisfaction)					1 = low burnout / turnover, 5 = high burnout / turnover	
	Compensation and Related Practices	Whether Compensation Meets the Cost of Living	Benefits	Supports at Work	Culture and DEI	Burnout	Turnover Intentions
Mean	2.59	2.29	3.34	3.36	3.35	2.49	2.94
Median	2.57	2.00	3.40	3.44	3.46	2.40	3.00

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Mode	2.57	1.00	4.00	3.89	4.00	2.00	3.25

Correlations of Study Variables

This section presents results of correlation analyses with all of the primary study variables. Non-significant correlations are not presented.

- Hourly rate is positively correlated with cost of living (e.g., those with higher pay feel more like their pay meets the cost of living than those with lower pay; $r = .070$, $p = 0.007$). This was the only measure that hourly rate was correlated with.
- *Burnout* and *Turnover Intentions* were negatively correlated with all of the satisfaction study variables, including: satisfaction with compensation, whether pay meets cost of living, satisfaction with benefits, satisfaction with supports at work[11], and satisfaction with workplace culture. This means that employees with lower satisfaction have higher rates of burnout and turnover intentions.
- Also as expected, *Burnout* was positively correlated with *Turnover Intentions* ($r = .555$, $p < 0.000$), meaning that those with greater levels of *Burnout* also had greater *Turnover Intentions*.

Survey Scale	2	3	4	5	6	7	8. Turnover Intentions

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[11] *The "Burnout" measure was created by combining the "Work/Life Balance," "Health and Wellness" and "Work-Load" subscales, and then reversing their score. These subscales were also used in the "Supports at Work" measures, which also includes the subscales of "Social Activities at Work" and "Professional Development". Burnout is negatively correlated with these two subscales (social activities at work: $r = -.547$, $p < .000$; professional development: $r = -.701$, $p < .000$).*

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1. Hourly rate	Pearson Correlation	0.017	.070**	0.004	-0.022	0.006	0.012	0.019
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.518	0.007	0.864	0.386	0.803	0.651	0.470
	N	1504	1504	1504	1504	1504	1504	1504
2. Satisfaction with Compensation & Related Practices	Pearson Correlation		.660**	.435**	.558**	.476**	-.515**	-.538**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N		1667	1667	1615	1584	1615	1560
3. Whether Compensation Meets the Cost of Living	Pearson Correlation			.397**	.366**	.310**	-.337**	-.374**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N			1667	1615	1584	1615	1560
4. Satisfaction with Benefits	Pearson Correlation				.505**	.451**	-.486**	-.379**
	Sig. (2-tailed)				0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N				1615	1584	1615	1560
5. Satisfaction with Supports at Work	Pearson Correlation					.768**	-.547**^, -.701**^	-.610**

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	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000
	N		1584	1560	1560
6. Satisfaction with Workplace Culture, Transparency, and DEI	Pearson Correlation			-.722**	-.539**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			0.000	0.000
	N			1584	1560
7. Burnout	Pearson Correlation				.555**
	Sig. (2-tailed)				0.000
	N				1560

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

^. The "Burnout" measure was created by combining the "Work/Life Balance," "Health and Wellness" and "Work-Load" subscales, and then reversing their score. These subscales were also used in the "Supports at Work" measures, which also includes the subscales of "Social Activities at Work" and "Professional Development". This correlation thus looks at the two subscales of *Supports at Work* that are not included in the *Burnout* measure: (social activities at work: $r = -.547$, $p < .000$; professional development: $r = -.701$, $p < .000$).

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Comparisons of Means

To understand if certain groups scored significantly higher or lower on the survey variables, we conducted comparison of means analyses (e.g., *t*-tests). The below table shows the statistically significant results for these comparisons (non-significant results are not shown), which are also described below the table.

Scale or Subscale		Front-Line Staff	Non-Front-Line Staff	BIPOC	white	Hispanic / Latinx	Non-Hispanic / non-Latinx	Transgender Staff	Non-Transgender Staff
Satisfaction with Compensation and Related Practices	mean	2.47	2.85	-	-	-	-	-	-
	SD	0.79	0.04	-	-	-	-	-	-
	t, p	$t(1449) = -8.2$, $p < .000$		-		-		-	
Satisfaction with Compensation (subscale)	mean	2.40	2.94	2.48	2.62	2.41	2.61	-	-
	SD	1.09	1.15	1.14	1.12	1.02	1.14	-	-
	t, p	$t(755) = -8.3$, $p < .000$		$t(1401) = -2.18$, $p < .03$		$t(249.3) = -2.35$, $p < .019$		-	
Satisfaction with Compensation Practices (subscale)	mean	2.56	2.70	-	-	-	-	-	-
	SD	0.57	0.55	-	-	-	-	-	-
	t, p	$t(1446) = -4.1$, $p < .000$		-		-		-	

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Whether Compensation Meets the Cost of Living	mean	2.07	2.77	-	-	-	-	-	-
	SD	1.02	1.17	-	-	-	-	-	-
	t, p	t(709) = –10.753, p < .000		-		-		-	
Satisfaction with Benefits	mean	3.21	3.63	-	-	-	-	3.07	3.35
	SD	0.83	0.74	-	-	-	-	0.98	0.81
	t, p	t(890) = –9.35, p < .000		-		-		t(62.5) = –2.25, p < .028	
Satisfaction with Overall Supports at Work	mean	3.29	3.52	3.43	3.34	3.51	3.37	-	-
	SD	0.82	0.73	0.84	0.76	0.85	0.77	-	-
	t, p	t(892) = –5.22, p < .000		t(964) = 2.08, p < .038		t(1355) = 2.24, p < .026		-	
Social Activities (subscale)	mean	2.72	3.04	2.90	2.77	2.41	2.61	-	-
	SD	1.11	1.07	1.18	1.06	1.02	1.14	-	-
	t, p	t(825) = –5.12, p < .000		t(956) = 2.03, p < .043		t(1355) = 2.39, p < .017		-	
Professional Development (subscale)	mean	3.24	3.41			3.46	3.31		
	SD	0.96	0.93			1.04	0.92		

	t, p	t(1449) = –3.09, p < .002				t(1355) = 2.04, p < .041			
Work-Life Balance (subscale)	mean	3.71	4.08	-	-	-	-	3.48	3.86
	SD	1.05	0.86	-	-	-	-	1.31	0.98
	t, p	t(968) = –6.88, p < .000		-		-		t(61.9) = –2.19, p < .033	
Health and Wellness (subscale)	mean	3.40	3.72	-	-	-	-	-	-
	SD	1.02	0.86	-	-	-	-	-	-
	t, p	t(934) = –6.25, p < .000		-		-		-	
Work Load (subscale)	mean	-	-	3.33	3.17	-	-	-	-
	SD	-	-	1.02	1.00	-	-	-	-
	t, p	-		t(1403) = 3.02, p < .003		-		-	
Satisfaction with Workplace Culture, Transparency, and DEI	mean	3.29	3.50	-	-	3.51	3.36	2.96	3.39
	SD	0.87	0.81	-	-	0.88	0.85	1.01	0.84
	t, p	t(1449) = –4.26, p < .000		-		t(1355) = 2.25, p < .025		t(62.6) = –3.31, p < .002	

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Satisfaction with Workplace Culture (subscale)	mean	3.51	3.74	-	-	-	-	3.13	3.62
	SD	0.93	0.87	-	-	-	-	1.13	0.89
	t, p	$t(851) = -4.44$, $p < .000$		-		-		$t(62.2) = -3.3$, $p < .002$	
Satisfaction with Transparency (subscale)	mean	3.04	3.21	3.21	3.06	3.27	3.10	2.83	3.13
	SD	0.92	0.86	0.89	0.90	0.99	0.88	0.92	0.89
	t, p	$t(1449) = -3.12$, $p < .002$		$t(1403) = 3.16$, $p < .002$		$t(1355) = 2.38$, $p < .018$		$t(1452) = -2.56$, $p < .004$	
Satisfaction with DEI (subscale)	mean	3.15	3.37	-	-	3.38	3.22	2.80	3.26
	SD	1.02	0.97	-	-	1.05	0.99	1.18	0.99
	t, p	$t(1449) = -3.82$, $p < .000$		-		$t(1355) = 2.08$, $p < .038$		$t(62.6) = -2.98$, $p < .011$	
Burnout	mean	2.57	2.32	2.41	2.51	-	-	-	-
	SD	0.85	0.74	0.85	0.80	-	-	-	-
	t, p	$t(907) = 5.45$, $p < .000$		$t(1403) = -2.16$, $p < .031$		-		-	
Turnover Intentions	mean	3.00	2.83	-	-	-	-	-	-
	SD	0.66	0.67	-	-	-	-	-	-

		t(1449) = 4.47, p < .000	-	-	-
	t, p				

- = non-significant result, not reported

Front-Line Staff vs. Non Front-Line Staff

Front line staff (FL staff) as compared to non-front-line staff (non-FL staff) are <u>less satisfied</u> with *Compensation and Related Practices* (including both subscales); *Whether Compensation Meets the Cost of Living*; *Benefits Offered by Employer*; *Supports at Work* (including each all subscale except *Workload*); and *Satisfaction with Workplace Culture, Transparency, and DEI* (including all subscales).

Front-line staff also scored <u>significantly higher</u> on *Burnout* and *Turnover Intentions* than non-Front-Line staff.

BIPOC vs. White Staff

The overall score of *Satisfaction with Compensation and Related Practices* was not significantly different for BIPOC staff as compared to White staff.

However, BIPOC staff have <u>significantly lower Satisfaction with Compensation</u> (a subscale that includes feelings of fairness) as compared to White staff. (When looking at this subscale by-item, the driver of this is "*I think the amount of my salary or hourly pay is fair, compared to other employees doing similar work at this organization*," where BIPOC are significantly less satisfied than White staff.) The other subscale, *Satisfaction with Compensation Practices*, was not significantly different for BIPOC staff as compared to White staff.

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BIPOC staff have significantly greater satisfaction with Overall Supports at Work as compared to White staff. The subscales of *Satisfaction with Social Activities at Work* and *Satisfaction with Work Load were* the only significant subscales (whereas *Satisfaction with Professional Development, Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance*, and *Satisfaction with Health and Wellness* were not significantly different for BIPOC vs. White staff).

BIPOC staff also have greater satisfaction with *Workplace Transparency* (a subscale of *Satisfaction with Workplace Culture, Transparency, and DEI*) as compared to White staff.

BIPOC staff also have significantly lower levels of *Burnout* compared to White staff.

Transgender vs. Non-Transgender Staff

Transgender-identifying staff (TG staff) score significantly lower than non-transgender-identifying staff (non-TG staff) in their satisfaction with: *Benefits Offered by Employer; Work-Life Balance* (subscale of *Overall Supports at Work*); and *Workplace Culture, Transparency, and DEI* (including all three subscales of *Culture, Transparency*, and *DEI*).

Hispanic / Latinx vs. Non-Hispanic / Non-Latinx Staff

Hispanic / Latinx (HL) employees have significantly lower satisfaction with *Satisfaction with Compensation* (a subscale of *Satisfaction with Compensation and Related Practices*) than non-Hispanic / non-Latinx (non-HL) employees.

However, Hispanic / Latinx employees have greater satisfaction with *Overall Supports at Work* (and the subscales of *Social Activities* and *Professional Development*, whereas the other subscales were not significantly different) as well as *Satisfaction with Workplace Culture, Transparency, and DEI* (including the subscales of *Transparency* and *DEI*, whereas *Workplace Culture* was not significantly different).

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Results for All Items

The below tables show the percentage of employee participants who selected each response for each survey item. The sections are organized by variable (e.g., *Satisfaction with Compensation and Related Practices*) and subscale (e.g., *compensation satisfaction* and *compensation practices*).

Satisfaction with Compensation and Related Practices

Compensation Satisfaction	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	I am not sure
I think the amount of my salary or hourly pay is fair, compared to other employees doing similar work at this organization.	17.22%	23.04%	16.26%	28.85%	10.50%	4.14%
I think the amount of my salary or hourly pay is fair, compared to other people doing similar work.	27.65%	32.93%	12.00%	18.78%	6.48%	2.16%

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	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	I am not sure
I am satisfied with my overall compensation (salary/hourly rate/bonus).	30.89%	32.81%	12.84%	16.20%	6.72%	0.54%
Compensation Practices	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither disagree nor agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**	**I am not sure**
I am regularly asked to do work that is beyond my job description, such as taking on supervisory tasks or other duties that are not ordinarily part of this role.	10.56%	29.81%	18.12%	23.16%	17.04%	1.32%
I receive extra compensation or a pay raise when I am asked to do work that is beyond my job description.	35.99%	35.81%	16.02%	7.80%	1.80%	2.58%
At my organization, employees who do better work (e.g., higher quality, more efficient, above-and-beyond) receive increased compensation.	35.45%	31.25%	19.02%	5.04%	1.68%	7.56%

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Employees are informed ahead of time about if and when they will receive pay increases (e.g., cost of living raises, annual merit increases, etc.).	9.12%	12.30%	19.14%	36.89%	15.42%	7.14%

Whether Compensation Meets Cost of Living

Cost of Living	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree	I am not sure
The compensation and benefits I receive allow me to take care of my financial needs.	25.91%	30.47%	12.54%	25.91%	4.86%	0.30%
The compensation and benefits I receive allow me to take care of my family's financial needs.	31.07%	30.95%	15.60%	18.00%	3.66%	0.72%

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The compensation and benefits I receive allow me to save money over the course of the year.	41.21%	29.93%	11.28%	13.98%	3.00%	0.60%

Satisfaction with Benefits

Benefits	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
The amount of paid time off (holidays, vacation, sick time) I am given.	7.32%	14.64%	13.02%	41.63%	23.40%
The healthcare coverage offered by my employer for employees (health, vision, dental).	7.56%	11.10%	22.26%	42.71%	16.38%
The healthcare coverage (health, vision, dental) offered for dependents.	11.94%	12.78%	45.95%	21.30%	8.04%
The retirement plan offered by my employer.	7.92%	11.82%	31.43%	34.97%	13.86%

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Other benefits offered by my employer.	8.04%	9.36%	38.93%	34.43%	9.24%

Please select the top 3 financial benefits that would increase your employment satisfaction (even if they are not currently offered). SELECT 3 (three):	
Increased paid time off (e.g., holidays, vacation, sick time)	50.09%
Better retirement plan / increased employer contributions	36.17%
Increased contributions toward professional development, such as professional membership fees, continuing education, conferences	30.29%
Direct contributions/increased contributions toward student loan repayment (beyond the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program)	29.39%
Better healthcare coverage for employees / increased employer contributions	25.91%
Other*	23.70%
Increased amount of paid leave (e.g., family/parental, medical)	23.28%

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Increased transportation, parking, or commuter contributions	22.98%
Better healthcare coverage for dependents / increased employer contributions	17.52%
Short/long term disability coverage	7.26%
Increased contributions to a flexible spending account (FSA) for healthcare expenses	5.58%
Life insurance program/increased contributions to life insurance	5.40%
Increased contributions for childcare such as a Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (DCFSA)	5.34%

*Note: under "Other," many employees wrote that they would prefer an increased wage / salary as opposed to increased benefits.

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Satisfaction with Supports at Work

Social Activities	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am satisfied with the type of social activities my employer provides for relationship and team building at work.	14.80%	22.41%	29.60%	26.75%	6.44%
I am satisfied with the frequency of structured social activities.	16.47%	23.59%	31.76%	23.34%	4.83%
Professional Development and Supervision	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither disagree nor agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
My employer cares about my professional growth and success.	9.10%	14.98%	22.29%	39.63%	13.99%
I am satisfied with the overall professional/career development support I receive from my employer.	10.90%	21.61%	23.65%	34.55%	9.29%

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	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am satisfied with the opportunities my employer provides for staff to build their skills / grow in their job.	10.59%	23.03%	23.78%	33.31%	9.29%
If I wanted to, I could advance to higher positions (with greater pay and responsibilities) at this organization.	14.37%	19.69%	26.81%	30.53%	8.61%
I am satisfied with the quality of supervision I receive from my supervisor.	10.03%	11.15%	15.29%	37.59%	25.94%
I am satisfied with how frequently I meet with my supervisor or manager.	7.80%	10.09%	15.23%	39.94%	26.93%
Work-Life Balance	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither disagree nor agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
My employer supports my work-life balance.	6.75%	10.22%	15.98%	41.80%	25.26%
My employer provides enough flexibility for me to take care of	4.21%	6.69%	10.28%	47.55%	31.27%

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personal appointments and other things that unexpectedly come up.					
My employer supports me taking paid time off for rest and rejuvenation (e.g., they encourage and make it easy to take vacation).	5.82%	7.99%	13.93%	41.86%	30.40%
Health and Wellness	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Neither disagree nor agree*	*Agree*	*Strongly agree*
My employer takes adequate or reasonable precautions to protect my health during the pandemic.	6.07%	8.48%	11.70%	43.22%	30.53%
My employer takes adequate or reasonable precautions to protect my physical safety on the job / around the job site.	7.06%	11.08%	16.72%	42.79%	22.35%
My employer provides support for staff to learn about and prevent work burnout.	12.76%	22.23%	22.79%	31.08%	11.15%

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	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
My employer provides time and space to debrief challenging situations.	7.86%	15.73%	17.28%	40.37%	18.76%
My employer takes adequate or reasonable precautions to protect my health during the pandemic.	6.07%	8.48%	11.70%	43.22%	30.53%
Workload	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neither disagree nor agree**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
I feel like I have enough time to do my work well.	11.58%	20.56%	14.49%	41.49%	11.89%
I am consistently able to get all of my work done during my standard work hours.	12.57%	21.11%	14.92%	40.50%	10.90%
I have a similar workload to others in the same position as me.	9.04%	14.12%	25.70%	41.30%	9.85%

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Please select the top 3 things that would help you feel more supported at work. SELECT 3 (three):	
More efforts to prevent / reduce burnout.	42.17%
Professional development opportunities that better support my growth and success.	40.50%
Clearer pathways for advancement and promotion.	35.11%
Better relationship or team building activities during work time.	27.37%
Decreased or more balanced workload.	22.41%
Improved safety and security on / around the job site.	20.19%
More support for my work-life balance overall.	19.20%
Supervision that is more supportive or of higher quality.	16.16%
A more flexible work schedule.	15.48%
Other (please specify)	13.13%

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More support for taking time off.	11.89%
More flexibility for last-minute personal things that come up.	10.34%
Better protection of my health during the pandemic.	7.49%
*__Note__: Under "other" many employees wrote-in "increased pay" and "increased paid time off."	

Management

Management	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
My organization provides sufficient training and professional development for me to be an effective supervisor	13.21%	26.88%	19.82%	33.03%	7.06%
My organization provides sufficient time for me to be an effective supervisor	9.36%	22.60%	23.52%	35.16%	9.36%

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Satisfaction with Workplace Culture, Transparency, and DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) Practices

Workplace Culture	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
My employer is committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion at our organization.	5.11%	9.34%	15.59%	43.62%	26.33%
My employer has processes for staff to provide candid feedback about how the organization can improve.	9.60%	18.75%	21.65%	36.55%	13.45%
My organization's leadership listens to staff's feedback when making decisions.	14.52%	18.69%	24.37%	30.81%	11.62%
Our organization has a culture of support for staff with different identities, such as gender, race, religion, disability, and sexual orientation.	5.56%	8.90%	16.86%	42.87%	25.82%

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	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
My supervisor is effective at working with and supporting people from different backgrounds.	4.55%	5.43%	17.30%	42.49%	30.24%
The organizational culture supports staff to be authentic at work (e.g., to share their culture and identity).	5.49%	7.20%	19.95%	43.12%	24.24%
My employer is committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion at our organization.	5.11%	9.34%	15.59%	43.62%	26.33%
Workplace Transparency	*Strongly disagree*	*Disagree*	*Neither disagree nor agree*	*Agree*	*Strongly agree*
My employer's policies are accessible (e.g., I know where to find them and they are understandable).	5.56%	12.50%	16.86%	49.12%	15.97%
My employer's salary structure is published for staff to see.	21.78%	25.76%	31.06%	15.03%	6.38%

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My organization communicates openly with staff about things that will impact staff.	13.07%	16.92%	22.98%	36.49%	10.54%
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	**Very dissatisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied**	**Satisfied**	**Very Satisfied**
My organization's plan to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion at our organization.	6.50%	11.36%	28.28%	36.93%	16.92%
The extent to which my employer incorporates staff feedback into organization planning and action.	11.62%	20.08%	27.97%	29.55%	10.80%
The ways in which policies related to diversity, equity and inclusion are carried out in practice.	9.53%	14.77%	32.07%	30.68%	12.94%
The ways in which conflict resolution policies are carried out in practice.	11.24%	15.28%	37.69%	26.58%	9.22%

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The top 3 things my organization could do to better advance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are... SELECT 3 (three):	
Increased transparency of salary structure at the organization.	52.53%
Increased communications about things that impact staff.	50.06%
Improved processes for collecting and acting on staff feedback.	47.60%
Trainings for all staff on topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.	33.33%
More support for people with different identities, such as race, religion, gender, disability, and sexual orientation.	24.05%
Trainings for supervisors on working with multicultural teams.	20.45%
Treat everyone more equitably.	19.76%
Better plans for improving DEI at the organization.	12.50%
Other (please specify)	10.04%
Better policies related to DEI at the organization.	7.89%

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Turnover Intentions

The following items were adapted from Bothma and Roodt (2013)[12] to assess employee turnover intentions.

During the past 9 months...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
How often do you think about quitting your job at this organization?	17.69%	21.79%	30.19%	22.24%	8.08%
How often are you frustrated when not given the opportunity at work to achieve your personal work-related goals?	16.15%	29.36%	31.35%	17.37%	5.77%
How often do you dream about getting another job that will better suit your personal needs?	12.82%	18.33%	27.24%	25.26%	16.35%

[12] Bothma, C.F.C., & Roodt, G. (2013). The validation of the turnover intention scale. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management, 11*(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ sajhrm.v11i1.507.

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How often do you look forward to another day at work?	6.86%	20.64%	36.54%	26.54%	9.42%
Please rate the likelihood of each of the following:	**Very unlikely**	**Somewhat unlikely**	**Neither**	**Somewhat likely**	**Very likely**
How likely are you to accept another job at the same compensation level at a different organization, should it be offered to you?	39.10%	21.15%	11.35%	19.04%	9.36%
How likely is it that you will look for a job outside of this organization during the next year?	24.23%	15.71%	9.23%	25.71%	25.13%
Please rate the extent of each of the following statements:	**Not at all**	**Hardly**	**Somewhat**	**Mostly**	**Very much**
To what extent is your current job satisfying your personal needs?	5.64%	13.53%	39.36%	32.18%	9.29%
If it were possible, to what extent would you like to get a new job?	13.40%	20.90%	31.15%	17.69%	16.86%

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What are the top 3 reasons you would leave your current organization? SELECT 3 (three):	
Increased salary offered to me somewhere else.	78.08%
More opportunities for professional development/growth elsewhere.	36.28%
Better benefits offered to me somewhere else.	29.81%
Less chance of burnout elsewhere.	26.67%
I would move into an entirely different field of work.	19.04%
Better work-life balance elsewhere.	18.72%
Less workload elsewhere.	18.27%
Better workplace culture elsewhere.	17.24%
Other (please specify)	11.86%
Schedule (e.g., your current schedule isn't flexible enough or doesn't work well for you)	10.58%
More support (from supervisor, colleagues) elsewhere.	9.49%

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Interpersonal dynamics in the workplace.	8.78%

Which of the following changes would encourage you to stay at your current organization? SELECT 3 (three):	
Increased pay.	85.96%
Increased vacation time.	28.59%
Increased benefits.	26.22%
Improved career trajectory.	22.05%
Benefits or support to prevent burnout.	19.36%
Decreased workload.	17.24%
Seeing how my work makes a positive difference.	14.74%
Greater attention to work-life balance.	12.05%
Greater flexibility with schedule.	11.41%

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Improved working environment (e.g., physical space).	10.45%
Improved interpersonal dynamics.	10.13%
Other (please specify)	9.81%
Greater recognition from others (e.g., supervisors, colleagues).	8.97%
Being treated fairly and equitably.	7.69%
Have more control over my day-to-day work.	3.91%

Participant Demographics

Overall, employees from 28 agencies responded to the survey, with a total of 1,667 responses. Below are the demographic data from survey respondents (however, a small portion of respondents opted to not provide demographic information).

Racial Background	
African	1.16%
American Indian and Alaska Native	2.91%
Asian	2.46%

Black or African American	8.54%
Hispanic origin of any race	6.99%
Middle Eastern	0.71%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.65%
Slavic	0.71%
Two or more races (multi-racial)	7.44%
White	57.83%
Decline to state	8.80%
Not specified above (please specify)	1.81%
	N = 1,546

Ethnicity	
Hispanic / Latinx	11.38%
Non-Hispanic / Non-Latinx	73.80%
Decline to state	11.90%

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Not specified above (please specify)	2.91%
N = 1,546	

Gender	
Woman	60.22%
Man	25.87%
Gender expansive (Non-binary, Genderqueer, Gender Fluid, etc.)	7.37%
Questioning	0.39%
Two Spirit	0.39%
Don't know	0.13%
Decline to state	4.98%
Not specified above (please specify)	0.65%
N = 1,546	

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Do you identify as transgender?	
Yes	3.88%
No	90.17%
Don't know	0.65%
Decline to state	5.11%
Not specified above (please specify)	0.19%
	N = 1,546

Sexual Orientation	
Asexual	3.10%
Bisexual	9.90%
Gay	3.75%
Heterosexual	50.58%
Lesbian	2.91%
Pansexual	5.63%

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Queer	8.47%
Don't know	1.55%
Decline to state	12.87%
Not specified above (please specify)	1.23%
N = 1,546	

Age	
18-24	4.98%
25-34	29.56%
35-44	27.94%
45-54	18.82%
55-64	9.90%
65+	3.69%
Decline to state	5.11%
N = 1,546	

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Do you have a disability?	
Yes	26.26%
No	63.78%
Don't know	1.62%
Decline to state	8.34%
	N = 1,546

What is your level of formal education?	
Less than high school diploma	1.42%
High school diploma	7.57%
Some college	19.66%
Associate degree (2-year college degree)	9.96%

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Bachelor's degree (4-year college degree)	33.83%
Some graduate-level education	5.63%
Master's degree	19.79%
Doctoral degree (PhD, MD, etc.)	2.13%
	N = 1,546

Licenses or Certifications	
Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor (CADC)	6.14%
Certified Case Manager (CCM)	1.75%
Certified Intentional Peer Support Specialist (CIPSS)	3.88%
Certified Medical Manager (CMM)	0.32%
Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)	2.46%
Licensed Clinical Therapist	0.78%

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National Certified Peer Specialist (NCPS)	1.29%
Qualified Mental Health Associate (QMHA)	15.01%
Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP)	8.28%
Social Work Case Manager Certification (C-SWCM)	0.78%
Other (please specify)	17.01%
None of the above	56.66%
	N = 1,546

Participant Roles and Job Characteristics

Job Category	
Case management	21.00%
Clinical	10.63%
Communications	1.38%

Executive leadership	2.43%
Finance and operations	3.41%
Human Resources	2.36%
Information Technology	2.36%
Learning and evaluation	0.85%
Policy	0.66%
Operations	5.38%
Outreach	3.74%
Social work	8.73%
Supportive services	10.83%
Residential Services	12.27%
Volunteer support/coordination	0.52%
Program staff not specified above	3.81%
None of the above / other (please specify)	9.65%
	N = 1,524

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Do you consider yourself "front-line staff"?	
Yes	67.26%
No	27.95%
I am not sure	4.79%
	N = 1,524

What level most closely aligns to your current position?	
Non-Management Staff	73.03%
Manager or Supervisor	22.11%
Director	4.86%
	N = 1,524

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On average, how many hours a week do you work at this organization?	
0-5	0.13%
6-10	0.92%
11-15	0.85%
16-20	2.43%
21-25	1.97%
26-30	1.97%
31-35	3.22%
36-40	49.93%
41-45	26.77%
46-50	7.48%
51-55	2.62%
56-60	1.71%
	N = 1,524

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Appendix B: Employee & Leadership Focus Groups

In order to contextualize the survey results and develop solutions for the issues that employees voiced throughout data collection, we conducted five focus groups for employees of JOHS-funded agencies.

Methodology

Focus groups were formulated based on key self-identified categories that emerged as important to employees' experiences based on the survey data. These focus group categories were:

- Front-line staff
- Staff with lived experiences of homelessness
- BIPOC-identified staff (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color)
- Queer and transgender-identified staff
- Leadership

Questions for the focus groups centered on how experiences like a lack of satisfaction with pay, benefits, and workplace culture, or contributors to burnout in the workplace, are contributing to staff's turnover intentions. The focus groups were semi-structured and allowed for participants to share about topics or experiences that the facilitators and research team may not have considered previously.

For each focus group, we ensured that facilitators were persons who held the same identities as the focus group (e.g., a facilitator with lived experiences of homelessness; a facilitator that identified as BIPOC; etc.) in order to support a space where participants would feel safe to share openly about their experiences.

Thematic analysis was used to understand both key takeaways from each focus group as well as trends across focus groups.

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Focus Group Findings

Overall Summary

All staff focus groups emphasized the following as factors that would help to decrease turnover at their organizations:

(1) Pay that meets the cost of living for the region, family sizes, and other factors.

(2) Flexible PTO combined with robust structural, interpersonal, and staffing supports to use that PTO.

Additionally, each focus group emphasized the following needs:

- Increased mental healthcare support for a high-stress, sometimes triggering job;
- Decreased caseloads and better setups to support staff to do their jobs well;
- More meaningful and widespread DEI efforts to help BIPOC and queer staff feel safe and supported.

Staff from each focus group described experiences of being under-paid, overworked, and unable to take meaningful paid time off.

What Contributes to Turnover

In discussions about **why colleagues may leave and what drives turnover**, participants explained that both a low compensation and structures that contribute to burnout are driving turnover.

Low compensation:

- "I am seeing people leave to other fields, I'm seeing people leave to be bartenders and sex workers so that they can make more money. I'm seeing people who really feel passionate about the work and want to stay in this field do side hustles in order to stay in the field just to make it work and make ends meet."
- "I've seen other people that have left and gone to the trades – things with more consistent pay and less emotional duress."

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Structures that contribute to burnout:

- "I think the caseloads and work load has a lot to do with [turnover]... One thing we saw that helped reduce our turnover a bit was reducing the caseloads and having the ability to have a 4-day fulltime work week. But even then, we're still seeing our best folks leaving to go to union-protected positions at the county."
- "There is no 5pm time to end the day when your client is in crisis; it's harder to have a clear breakaway. Having more flexibility where if you worked until 7pm one day then you can end the next day an hour early would be helpful."

Increased Pay

When asked what might help prevent turnover, participants clearly stated that increased pay that meets the cost of living is the number-one need:

- "The only way I can afford to continue in this position is that my partner works in a union-protected position, so I'm able to get appropriate benefits and my partner's income makes up for my severe lack of income."
- "The temporary $2 increase is helpful. But once that goes away, we're worried we won't be able to afford anything. A $2 increase plus annual COLA increases would help a lot."
- "Rent is so expensive today. The $2 increase is good, but I'm barely making it. They want $1,600 for a 1-bedroom that is only 500 square feet. There's just no way I can afford that. I have to have a side job just to make my rent now. We definitely need more in order to be able just to live."
- "I recently learned that the rent cap increase is 14.6%, and this will impact everyone. If we could get paid more that would help a lot."
- "It depends on lifestyle, whether or not you have children or two working adults in the household. I would need a 20% increase as well as a COLA that is tied to inflation so that we're not using income year-over-year."

Related to pay, staff also emphasized the need for equitable pay across the organization.

- "It feels like amount of work and size of caseloads and amount of emotional and physical labor that goes into this line of work isn't compensated as equitably as it should be. With the cost of living, many have taken on a third job

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

because their current pay at this job isn't enough to keep thing afloat. Holding down three jobs stretches them thinner and impacts their ability to give their 100% at this position."

- "There is a lot of performative acknowledgment of staff's hard work, but it is not reflected in the pay they take home. There are no raises – people don't feel like they are rewarded for the amount of work they are putting in if they get paid the same amount three years in as they did when they first joined. They should be given a raise; an acknowledgement only goes so far."
- "Changes could/should be made to have differentials that support people to receive compensation for providing multilingual services or for leveraging their lived experience. There can be paid differentials to acknowledge these value adds staff are bringing and utilizing to build connections with clients.

Overall, increased pay would help staff to meet the cost of living, empower staff to use paid time off (as they would not be concerned about taking time off nor would they have to work multiple jobs during their time off), and thus would support staff in decreasing their burnout and turnover intentions.

Increased PTO and the Support to Use It

Second to pay was increased PTO and the structural support to actually use it:

- "PTO doesn't matter unless you have the institutional support to utilize it."
- "The things I'm seeing that are helping with keeping folks in positions are having higher amounts of PTO, having that PTO be flexible; having different buckets of PTO that cover different circumstances that are not a part of a general PTO. I wish our PTO had a separate sick leave. Our PTO ends up being lower than union-protected position because they have a separate bucket of sick leave. So, we have to use our vacation time (which is meant to have a respite) in order to recover from an illness. Especially with COVID."
- "I always have anxiety around taking my PTO as vacation time because what if I get sick, then what do I do? I always end up with extra PTO at the end of the year that I lose because I'm always trying to save it in case I get sick."

- "There is so much turnover that we don't plan vacations because we don't know if there will be enough staff [to cover us while we're out]."
- "More PTO would help due to the high stress level and the catastrophic events that can happen on site. Take some time, get a vacation in, unwind, relax, take a minute to forget about work and have more than just your days off. The day off work is taken to unwind, but the day before is taken to get ready for whatever might happen. [We need more PTO to prevent] burnout."
- "I am unsure how to access mental health care days. More transparency about how to navigate the system of benefits would help."

This inability to take meaningful time off was due to numerous factors that compound each other, including: limited vacation time; limited staff to cover while they are gone; unpredictability of staffing (due to colleagues leaving unexpectedly); a lack of structural or managerial support to take time off; high caseloads and concern about clients having continuous care while the staff person is out; having to work extra jobs to make ends meet; or needing to save vacation time in case they are sick (as they do not have separate vacation and sick time).

Increased PTO combined with robust structural (including increased pay), interpersonal (e.g., managerial support), and staffing supports to use that PTO would help to decrease staff burnout and turnover.

Front-Line Staff

For front-line staff specifically, an important factor to help prevent turnover was **decreased caseloads and better setups to support staff to do their jobs well**:

- "The emotional part of the job is probably what gets the people the most… You want to help people, but the rules and regulations don't make it so that you can help them easily or help them stay afloat. It can be frustrating, and it can feel like a waste of energy, depending on how you look at it. I've watched a person walk out on the job."
- "If you don't have yourself together, you can't help anyone else. The job can be a lot, we tend to forget about ourselves… my managers do a good job of giving me a couple hours to decompress, reset, take care of myself.

They're really understanding, really open. When the union conversation come up, it was like: let's talk about it. It wasn't good or bad, it was just a conversation... a supportive manager always helps."

- "I don't know how I am supposed to ethically do my job [without private space to speak with clients]. Maybe we need to create those spaces, uber the participants to a private office. But that conversation keeps getting pushed aside. Our participants are so vulnerable and marginalized, and I am not trying to have their business out there for everyone to hear."

Staff with Lived Experience of Homelessness

Staff with lived experiences of homelessness specifically described **how this work poses challenges to their mental health**, and that they need additional benefits to help support their well-being.

- "I really like helping people in their recovery. I know there are clients that struggle, and I'm able to help them because I've been homeless. It is nice to be able to relate and also help in a way I wasn't able to be helped."

First, employees with lived experiences of homelessness discussed how that experience makes it hard to "clock out" of the job:

- "For those of us who go above and beyond – working up to 80 hours a week while getting a minimal salary – it is all about the person we are helping: we've been there, so we care a lot. Yeah, I want to be paid for it, and I understand I should only be doing 40-44 hours a week, but homelessness does not have a clock-in, clock-out."
- "I'll be at home on my day off and I'll get emails and I have to answer them because they're important. If I have an emotional or draining day, I take that with me, and I'm worried about whether I have this client to help, or if I have this going on at the shelter. It is very hard to find balance."

Further, these employees discussed how encountering some of the things their clients are facing can be triggering to their own mental health:

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- "Our work is very triggering at times: I'm in recovery myself, like some clients. It is easy to drop that at the door when I show up to work, but it takes a toll on me."
- "I get triggered all the time, I get cussed out, things thrown at me. I get triggered [in relation to my sobriety]. I would like to see more support for employees to maintain their recovery and their mental health."

Staff with lived experiences of homelessness emphasized that **better healthcare and mental healthcare support** would be one of the most important factors for them to prevent turnover:

- "We are front lines always putting ourselves at risk: sharps, infectious disease, blood borne pathogens. We live a life of service, and it would be nice to feel appreciated for the risk that we take, and an excellent medical package is part of that. I would like to see support for my coworkers in their recovery and their mental health."
- "At my site in particular all the staff have mentioned needing mental health services. Having an onsite person to talk to would help with dealing with our own triggers."

These employees described how it is difficult for them to find mental health support, especially because they can't attend public support groups due to HIPAA laws and their clients potentially being at these groups:

- "Having a support person, like a behavioral health specialist on each shift, or having a support person for the traumatic experiences when somebody has a mental health issue that triggers me… that would be great. But right now, there aren't even enough staff to cover me so that I can go for a walk to decompress."
- "It would be helpful if organizations had an on-call mental health professional, specifically for our organizations (not the hotlines that are for everyone). They could do it by shift or something like that. But definitely we need somebody onsite. A Zoom meeting isn't enough. It's better to have someone sitting in front of you who you can let it all out to. A lot more emotional support that way."
- "In the field, if we are in recovery, we can't be open (e.g., in an AA meeting) because we have all of the HIPPA laws we have to abide by. The staff with lived experience need to have support groups within the orgs so they can be open about things that go on at work that we can't tell anyone else because of HIPPA laws."

Overall, more specific mental health support for staff with lived experiences of homelessness would help to prevent these experiences of burnout for these staff.

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BIPOC-Identified Staff (Black, Indigenous, People of Color)

BIPOC staff discussed how institutional racism impacts their work and their ability to do their job well.

First, this racism can make it more difficult for them to get an apartment (e.g., it affects their credit history, savings, pay, etc.), which negatively impacts their ability to get by:

- "It can be harder for BIPOC staff because 'proof standards' tend to be higher in turns of putting upfront proof of payment, or credit scores are lower because of institutional racism."
- "Everyone is so passionate about the work so it's disheartening to not feel like you can afford to stay at the job."

BIPOC staff also described how a lack of diversity in the workplace is negatively impacting them, which contributes to turnover:

- "Being so snow-capped [e.g., the organizations are led by white people] makes it harder for BIPOC staff to feel like their voices are heard within their organizations. This is the first time we've even had a BIPOC designated focus group for our voices to be centered."
- "We are getting some diversity here, but so far it has felt more tokenizing and performative – it's too small of a change."
- "I don't really have enough support or peer groups at work to talk through challenges that impact me as a BIPOC person."
- "We experience and witness racism and misgendering at work, which makes us feel further demoralized."
- "White staff are more open with airing their grievances. When I express my grievances, I am used to either being dismissed or being seen as the problem."

More meaningful and widespread DEI efforts at these organizations would help to better support BIPOC staff.

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Homeless Services

Queer & Transgender-Identified Staff

Staff who identified as queer and transgender described many of the same contributions to turnover as other focus groups. Specific to their identities, they explained how their organizations place additional burdens on them related to those identities:

- "When you have one of these identities and proclaim that you do, they give you all of those clients. But it is more triggering for that staff person to work with those clients and hear about their experiences."
- "We are burdened with having to educate our colleagues on issues related to the LGBTQ+ community. We field a lot of questions related to our identities: *'if I say this, is it transphobic?'*. We also receive inappropriate questions from people about our identities, then we have to return to work with them the next day. How do you tell someone they shouldn't ask you something, and then go back to work with them the next day?"

Similar to other focus groups, these employees also emphasized the need for more mental health resources as well as supports in navigating these resources:

- "Navigating mental health benefits can be a convoluted process and employees could use support learning how to navigate benefits they may already have."
- "Sometimes the benefits are on paper, but not necessarily real or usable. Making sure staff across teams are able to access benefits is important."

To solve some of these contributors to turnover, these employees suggested that organizations "figure out how to take the burden of education away from queer people". Further, these employees described the burden of "code switching" and having to be careful about how they say things to other staff related to their queer identities.

Similar to the experiences of BIPOC staff, queer staff felt that more meaningful and widespread DEI efforts would help to prevent some of these issues, better address them when they arise, and thus help to prevent some of the burnout staff are experiencing due to their queer identity and these harmful interactions.

Joint Office of
Homeless Services

Leadership

The focus group for leadership was specifically designed to understand issues of compensation, burnout, turnover, and other study factors from the perspective of the leaders of the JOHS-funded organizations.

Similar to the employee focus groups, leadership identified staff turning over to go to agencies that pay better, offer better or more predictable schedules.

- "I would say we've seen at least 50%-75% turnover at the direct service level, a little less at managerial. The reasons are varied, but compensation is a factor. We're a small organization, so sometimes it is employees questioning what their future or role could be at the organization."
- "One person didn't come back after maternity leave because child care costs versus wages weren't worthwhile. Another person went to a facility where wages are higher, and the schedule allowed her to be a single mom."

Alternatively, sometimes employees leave to go work with a specific population (e.g., "The money may not be better, but at least they get to work with the population they want to.").

There were several potential solutions put forth by agency leadership to help prevent turnover, including increased pay, lower caseloads for staff, flexible schedules, support for using PTO – and potential for creative, collaborative solutions with the Joint Office of Homeless Services to support these solutions.