

PUBLIC SECTOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CURRENT ISSUES AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Research reveals that public sector employers are using a “one size fits all” approach to recruitment and retention. Public sector employers must prepare for the future by taking a more comprehensive approach to recruitment and retention to recruit top talent and to retain valuable employees.

Recruitment and retention of qualified employees is a workforce challenge for the public sector. Not only must the employer recruit passionate individuals who are dedicated to public service, the public sector employer also must find people with the specific skill sets needed for public sector opportunities. Talent acquisition involves matching opportunities to candidates who want to contribute to the greater good, while servicing their communities and fellow citizens. Public employers face a variety of challenges, including but not limited to, an aging workforce, stale recruiting techniques, and less-than-competitive benefits.

Retaining talented employees is a widespread challenge because unemployment rates are falling, and job opportunities are increasing. Our team has researched the topic of recruitment and retention in the public sector, and recommended opportunities to overcome some of their challenges.

Staff Shortage

Shortages occur in a market economy when the demand for workers for a specific occupation is greater than the supply of workers who are qualified, available, and willing to do that job. Jobs remain vacant as employers seek to hire more workers than are willing to work at the prevailing wage or salary. (Veneri, 1999) For example, the Iowa Department of Corrections (DOC) has said there is a shortage of registered nurses (RNs) at some clinics within its nine prisons. Kathy Weiss, Administrator of Nursing for the DOC, said it is difficult to compete with nearby hospital jobs that offer signing/retention bonuses and student loan repayment options. Further, the latest federal and state data shows the median wage earned by Iowa RN's is \$25.92 an hour, compared to a median wage nationally of \$32.45 an hour. This has led the agency to seek more licensed practical nurses (LPNs), a designation that requires less health care education, but training permits those qualified to perform similar tasks as registered nurses. While LPNs have lower salary requirements than RNs, LPNs are restricted from certain types of interactions with patients and generally require more oversight. There are more than 46,000 RNs in Iowa, according to the Iowa Board of Nursing. Data shows more people in Iowa are seeking educational opportunities to enter the nursing field; however, some may not stay within the state of Iowa. Some unions representing Iowa nurses argue the staffing shortage will only worsen as the effects of recent changes to the state's collective bargaining law begin to set in, though state officials say it is too early to predict the impact on hiring.

The Judicial branch is experiencing dwindling numbers of court reporters, fewer attorneys willing to serve as court-appointed attorneys, and growing caseloads for judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys. Judge Marlita Greve, Chief Judge of Iowa's Seventh Judicial District estimated that, "30-40% of the clerks will reach retirement age in the next five years and there are few new ones in the pipeline to replace those." (DeWitt, 2019) There are less schools that train court reporters and she went on to state that, "the district will request four additional clerks next year to assist with operating audio recording technology in the courtroom." (DeWitt, 2019) Technology is quickly replacing traditional court reporters, which are, "becoming a dying breed." The total number of judges is down roughly 27% in the judicial district and 25% across the state. (DeWitt, 2019) The article went on to say that the courts continue to ask the state legislature annually for more staffing. In the early 2000s, the state's judicial branch employed about 2000 people. "We're down from that and we just haven't gotten back to that level." (DeWitt, 2019) In addition, more public defenders and prosecutors are needed to handle the growing caseloads and ensure defendants receive their right to a speedy trial.

Job Elimination

Iowa's workforce in state government is much leaner than it once was; nearly 3,000 jobs in the executive branch have been eliminated through layoffs, early retirements, outsourcing and voluntary departures since 2011—a drop of roughly 18%, an analysis of state data shows. The ongoing staff reductions through most of that period reflect the "smaller, smarter government" philosophy of that time.

In 2017, a year when Iowa saw \$118 million in state budget cuts, the Des Moines Register reported nearly 2,100 full-time state government jobs had been eliminated since 2011. In the

latest examination of state employment by the Reader's Watchdog, figures show losses have continued under the current Administration, down about 860 more positions through the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018. Some of the deepest cuts in the past eight years have been made in the overcrowded prison system — with almost 400 DOC positions eliminated across eight facilities, down from 2,860 jobs in 2011. As of October 2019, those prisons were 23 % over their state-designated capacity. The overpopulation has forced some inmates to be housed in communal areas and converted spaces.

By sheer numbers, the deepest staff reductions from 2011 to 2018 happened within Iowa's Department of Human Services (DHS), which lost 1,058 workers from 4,998 in 2011. According to state figures, this cut includes the elimination of at least 558 field operation workers --a category that is comprised of social workers and income maintenance employees.

Additionally, cuts were made to the Departments of Transportation (DOT) and Iowa Workforce Development (IWD). The state's Department of Administrative Services, an agency that helps to manage all state agencies and employees, was reduced by 45%, or 162 workers. The good news is that 117 of those workers were moved to the Office of the Chief Information Officer —a new position created by the Legislature to manage the state's information technology. Iowa's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department experienced an elimination of 78 positions— a 59% drop—the biggest for any of the large executive branch agencies.

Across departments, some of the reductions through the years stemmed from decisions to close state facilities. Various agencies including 36 unemployment offices, two mental health facilities, the Iowa juvenile home in Toledo, seven DOT maintenance garages and two driver's license stations.

Outsourcing

Outsourcing means taking a service that was previously handled in-house to a third party, usually a private company. Also known as privatization, governments shift certain duties to private companies to provide a diverse range of services to citizens, from trash collection to parking lot management and even correctional facilities. (Handler, 2014) Outsourcing is a way to increase efficiency by letting the experts do what they do best. The assumption is that a company specializing in a service, has the tools and expertise to handle the specific duty(ies) better, faster, and cheaper than keeping certain functions in-house.

Areas in which some state governments have outsourced services include, but are not limited to, parking management, tree-trimming and other landscaping services, correctional facilities, fleet management, janitorial services, solid waste services, and even certain administrative services. Last year, Iowa's Alcoholic Beverages Division (ABD) handed over warehousing and distribution of alcohol to the Ruan Companies.

Recruitment Challenges

Some of the challenges facing public sector employers have to do with perception. Public sector jobs are not perceived as modern or attractive by recent graduates. New graduates see the offerings and structure of the positions as restrictive and old-fashioned with the traditional eight to five workdays. (US Tech Solutions, 2018) Many job seekers need to find work relatively soon and they cannot spend extended amounts of time waiting to hear back from hiring managers or recruiters.

Another challenge faced by recruiters is appealing to those in the technology sector. While millennials exhibit technological advantages being digital natives, they are scarce in

government workplaces with antiquated systems which restricts technological growth and education. (Brzozowski, 2019)

Public sector jobs face several stereotypical challenges in attracting millennials. “Government is slow, bureaucratic and behind the technology curve, while millennials are entrepreneurial, impatient for results, restless to switch jobs.” (Vyse, 2016) Young professionals also want bosses that coach rather than dictate, facilitating the development of new professional skills. Many millennials are, “no longer as interested in a straight career ladder, but more like a career jungle gym, which turns different experiences into a career.” (Vyse, 2016) Even if millennials interested in government work, they do not view it as a lifelong pursuit.

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment is much more than simply filling a vacancy. The Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM) suggests it is the full cycle of identifying a vacancy, establishing objectives, developing a recruitment strategy, carrying out recruitment activities (posting the jobs, etc.) and measuring effectiveness of the process. (Mauer, 2016) The needs of the organization, duties of the vacant position, salary of the position, team dynamics, advertising of the position, etc., must all occur and be considered. In other words, recruitment cannot occur in a vacuum and it must be a dynamic process.

A “one size fits all” approach to recruitment is not likely to be successful. Public sector employers must think about the individual positions being filled and adjust. For instance, research conducted by NEOGOV – a provider of human resources software and the state of

Iowa's applicant tracking system – surveyed 2,959 respondents. All respondents were applicants for public sector employment through GovernmentJobs.com and all completed an online survey. (NEOGOV, 2019) 61% of respondents said job security was the most important reason to apply for public sector positions. This was found to be even more significant for those applying to law enforcement positions. Job security was not as important for those applying to nursing positions – meaningful work was the most important factor for them. Public sector employers can use this research to tailor recruitment strategies to fit the needs of the employee and the organization.

Regardless of the reason for seeking a job, fewer people are looking for work. Overall, the US unemployment rate is very low. For example, in April and May of 2019 the unemployment rate stayed at 3.6% – a 49-year low. (Moya, 2019) The low unemployment rate makes recruitment for both public and private sectors difficult. Government agencies are forced to fill critical positions with individuals selected from a significantly smaller pool of candidates.

Over the last six years, the public sector has seen an expanding gap between public sector job openings and the number of job seekers applying to fill those positions, with the gap growing to 37%. (NEOGOV Job Seeker Report, 2019) Fewer people are looking for employment considering the unique aspects of the public sector, it is more difficult than ever for the public sector to fill vacancies.

The sections below will outline some of the major challenges facing public sector recruitment today and specifically what the state of Iowa can do to maximize and effectively recruit public employees for the future.

Creative Work Benefits – Compensation, Schedules and Telecommuting

Research consistently shows that millennial aged workers do not find pension programs a key factor when searching for work. Millennial employees are more likely to have numerous jobs throughout their career and typically will not stay with one employer. This makes a pension program less attractive in the recruitment process.

Millennial employees tend to look for more creative retirement options. In survey research conducted by Pew Charitable Trusts, some public sector human resources directors suggested that offering a defined contribution or hybrid retirement plan might help recruit workers who value a more portable benefit. (Recruiting and Retaining, 2014) “Hybrid” plans are more likely to be attractive to younger workers, but public employers need to explain and market the plans when recruiting so it is fully understood to potential employees. This does not mean that a traditional pension program is not important to potential applicants/employees. Our survey results showed that pension was still an important factor to many employees of all age groups.

Flexibility in terms of negotiating benefits (retirement plans, salary, etc.) was also a significant challenge in the recruitment/hiring process. The state of Iowa can continue to look for ways to market and adjust benefits to attract applicants of all ages.

As a state employee, flexible schedules and telecommuting opportunities are not always available options. Workers of all ages are looking for the ability to work different schedules and have the option to telecommute. The state of Iowa needs to continue to look at ways to design work that allows for flexible work schedules and the ability to telecommute.

The Application Process - Time to Hire

Streamlining and improving the online application and hiring process is essential for successful recruitment. By doing this, applicants are more likely to complete the process from start to finish and will have a better overall experience. Difficult application processes have a negative effect on the end user which can impact the number of applications received.

In April 2017, the state of Iowa went to a new applicant tracking system, or ATS, called NEOGOV. The NEOGOV system is specifically designed for government organizations and half of all states, hundreds of county organizations and other public entities use NEOGOV. The system is user-friendly, and data collected over the last five years reveals that positions posted, applications completed, and successful hires have increased for the state of Iowa.

Data from the state of Iowa system show applications and positions posted have been increasing since FY2015. BrassRing Reports showed that 46,126 applications were completed and submitted through the online application system. In FY19 that number increased to 89,984, an astounding 95% increase in application flow. FY 2015 showed 1,812 positions posted which increased to 3,135 in FY 2019. The number of people hired increased during this same time period, with 1,730 hires in FY15 compared to 2,231 hires made in FY 2019.

NEOGOVS has a very user-friendly mobile option to complete applications, which is essential to attracting candidates and could be an additional reason for the increase in positions posted, applications received, and successful hires. A mobile site that is easy and quick to use is essential to the hiring process. Due to NEOGOVS's easy to use mobile application and the ability for NEOGOVS to "screen scrape" job postings from the state of Iowa Jobs site to LinkedIn, Indeed, etc., job postings are seen by more applicants.

NEOGOV is continually addressing system and mobile functionality to ensure the application process is easy to use. It is important for the state of Iowa to track how applicants are discovering job postings and how candidates are applying. Tracking helps agencies know where to market current job openings. Data from the state of Iowa shows that for FY 2019, 36% of all candidates that applied in NEOGOV indicated that they found the job opening on the state of Iowa website and 28% found the job opening on a Career Website (Indeed, etc.). The state must advertise job postings in locations frequented by the talent, , whether that is social media, career fairs, etc. (Brzozowski, 2019)

The length of time it takes to hire a candidate is defined as the “beginning date of posting until the agency codes the candidate “Hired” in NEOGOV.” The state of Iowa shows that the average hiring time is 60 calendar days. Currently, the Iowa Administrative Code requires that all job openings be posted on NEOGOV for a minimum of ten-calendar days. (Iowa Administrative Code, 11.54.1) A reduction in posting time would likely reduce the hiring time and facilitate a successful state hire before the applicant accepts an alternative offer elsewhere. The state of Iowa should review the Administrative code to give agencies more flexibility within the hiring process.

Branding

It is essential that public sector employers consider their branding strategy and determine how applicants will receive the brand message. (Davidson, G., Lepeak, S., & Newman, E., 2007) If an internal employee cannot define and articulate the benefits of working for the company, the message should not be passed on to applicants. The employer must be able to identify its value and have the ability to market itself to applicants. Public sector jobs are often seen as archaic and

unattractive. The public employer can address this hurdle by developing a modern branding strategy.

The state of Iowa requires that state employers utilize the Iowa Jobs website to post job openings. However, each individual agency has the freedom to determine the marketing and additional recruitment efforts. Although all state agency positions are listed on one site, the positions are listed by job title which leads the applicant to believe that the State of Iowa is one employer instead of various separate and distinct agencies. Advertising the possibility of career progression amongst all agencies would likely attract additional applicants. For example, state accountants could progress in state government by transitioning to a more advanced position at a different state agency. Creating a unified brand supplemented by individual agency recruitment would allow applicants to understand the broader picture and envision a future with the state of Iowa.

RETENTION

According to the Department of Labor website, employee retention is defined as, “an effort by a business to maintain a working environment which supports current staff in remaining with the company.” Many employee retention policies are aimed at addressing the various needs for employees to enhance their job satisfaction and reduce the substantial costs involved in hiring and training new staff.

Our research shows that attracting the right talent and retaining that talent is one of the biggest challenges for government entities, specifically millennial employees. Researchers and

popular media use the early 1980's as starting birth years and the mid-1990's to early 2000's as ending birth years, with 1981 to 1996 used as a widely accepted definition for a millennial. According to the Department of Labor website, the millennial workforce is set to make up 75% of the US workforce by 2020, yet that age group only contributes to 17% of the public sector. Data from the Department of Administrative Services, attached in the appendix, demonstrates that turnover is the highest in the millennial generation. The data reflects that 40-44% of employees that voluntarily left within the last ten years had a length of service of two years or less, and a vast majority of those individuals were 40 years or younger. What does the public sector do, as an employer, to keep those employees fully engaged and keep turnover rates low? Our research revealed that the items below account for the biggest retention challenges for public employers in Iowa:

- Competitive Salary
- Advancement Opportunities
- Lack of Flexibility
- Lack of Innovation

Competitive Salary

Currently, the state of Iowa uses a job classification and compensation plan that includes overtime policies, salary and benefit surveys, processing and pre-auditing payroll documents, job evaluations, and rules. According to the Department of Administrative Services website, the job classification system is designed to provide an orderly and equitable process to group job duties and responsibilities. (“Iowa Department of Administrative Services (DAS)”, n.d.) Job classes

provide the basis upon which recruitment and screening, pay grades, and other human resource management decisions are made. The Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ) is critical to the position classification review process and describes the duties, responsibilities, essential functions, organizational relationships, and requirements of a position. The challenge with using the current job classification system is that all positions must fit within a current classification description. If the agency needs to change a job class description, create a new job class, remove a job class, change a class title or change a pay grade of a job class, the agency must endure a long, inefficient process involving substantial paperwork and approval processes. Inadvertently, this can discourage agencies from following protocol and encourages them to fit positions into a current approved classification, resulting in the square peg in a round hole scenario.

There are additional challenges to using the current compensation plan. Typically, public sector salaries are below market, yet their benefits are generally above average. There is a set formula when computing salaries for new state employees that gives little flexibility or discretion to managers when making hiring decisions. Each job class description states the requirements for the position, including education and/or experience. The Department of Administrative Services provides a calculator to compute the salary that may be offered to a new hire. The agency can add an additional 5% above the minimum pay, for each year of direct education/experience applicable to the minimum qualifications that the applicant demonstrates. This leaves very little room for negotiation between the employer and potential hire.

Advancement Opportunities

Our research shows that one of the most important factors when looking for a new job or staying at a current job, 79% of respondents rated advancement opportunity as a 5 or higher

(on a scale of 1-8; 1 being the least important; 8 being the most important). When asked what the employee finds most attractive about working in the public sector, 15% answered with advancement opportunity. According to the Career Builder website, the definition of professional advancement differs from employee to employee, making it particularly difficult to address the needs of everyone. To some individuals, career advancement means reaching a top position at a company; for others, it could mean gaining experience in multiple professional fields in order to create a unique and versatile role for oneself. (Louie, 2014)

Flexibility

According to an article on The Balance Careers website, “flexibility on the job includes the willingness and ability to readily respond to changing circumstances and expectations.” Managers who are flexible provide workers with greater latitude about the way they accomplish goals. They assess the needs of employees and provide feedback, guidance, and recognition individually to optimize performance. (Doyle, 2019)

The following flexibility within a workplace examples were noted on The Balance Careers website and quoted on the comments section within our survey results:

- Allow employees to work from home (work/life balance);
- Analyze the style and preferences of individual subordinates and manage specifically to that employee’s needs;
- Enable workers to vary arrival and departure times, if they work the total number of hours required;

- Reduce workload in certain positions by either hiring more people or allocating resources to automate some of the work; and
- Cross-training employees.

Our research shows that, 78.5% of respondents rated flexibility as a 5 or higher, on a scale of 1-8, 1 being least important, when asked what is important to you when looking for a new job or staying at a job. When asked what the employee finds most attractive about working in public sector, 30% answered with flexibility. Our survey results indicate that there is opportunity for growth in this specific area.

Lack of Innovation

According to an article on the Accenture website, “innovation is more than recruiting the brightest minds, the right culture is needed to flourish.” It is thoroughly documented that in this age of widespread disruption, companies must innovate continuously and create new markets, experiences, products, services, content and/or processes. (Jones, 2016)

Our research shows that over 50% of respondents rated innovative sector as a 5 or higher, on a scale of 1-8, 1 being least important, for the question on items important when looking for a new job or staying at a job. When asked what the employee finds most attractive about working in public sector, 4.5% answered with innovation. In the survey responses, employees suggested more innovative benefits, streamlined processes and training, and an energized work culture which encourages individuals to think outside the box.

National Statistics

NEOGOV published a webinar available to anyone registered on their website entitled, “The Battle for Talent.” Several organizations offered data pulled from applicant systems and through a survey. A cross-functional team from Accenture, NEOGOV, and the National Association of State Chief Administrators (NASCA), reported on their findings. They conducted a survey of 33 Chief Administrative Officers, analyzed over 14 million applications and 260,000 hires, and surveyed 3,000 public and private sector job seekers. They expanded the survey to include private sector applicants to compare the statistics within each sector and to compare trends between sectors. This team wanted to know more about the people applying for public sector jobs and people who had jobs to better understand their motivations and priorities when looking for work.

The group evaluated applicant data, for state jobs, between 2013 and 2018 and found some very interesting results. During this time period, data showed that there was a 30% increase in job postings from 2013 to 2018, over 14 million job postings and over 300,000 people hired. They noted several reasons for this sharp increase, the first being the fact that the private sector was generally more appealing to applicants. The second was related to an increase in the number of people over the age of 55, working in the public sector, a 35% increase since 2000. They also noted that instead of seeing an increase in public sector applicants, they saw the opposite, a decrease in applicants by 19% since 2013. High levels of recruitment create more openings in the public sector so, with fewer people applying, it is more difficult to fill these openings

The cross-functional team identified seven value propositions to determine what factors are motivating people in private versus the public sector, to apply for jobs. As you can see from the chart below, the key motivational factors are very different between public and private sector. Public sector individuals ranked job security as their number one value, followed by company benefits in second, and meaningful work as their third value of consideration.

<u><i>Value Proposition</i></u>	<u><i>Public Sector</i></u>	<u><i>Private Sector</i></u>
Job security	61%	13%
Benefits	58%	31%
Meaningful Work	51%	36%
Community Service	47%	21%
Competitive Salary	33%	50%
Advancement Opportunity	31%	41%
Innovative Sector	11%	33%

Private sector individuals ranked competitive salary first, advancement opportunity second, and meaningful work third.

Local Statistics

National data from the NEOGOV webinar, was used as a foundation to develop a survey that we could implement at the state level. The survey was distributed to three state agencies within the state of Iowa and went to a total of 686 individuals using SurveyMonkey as the means

of capturing the data. The response rate was 32.8% or 225 responses. The survey consisted of ten questions. Three questions pertained to demographics to capture age, type of position held, and length of time working in the public sector. The next four questions focused on value propositions when looking for or staying at a job, challenges during the recruitment/hiring process, what people found most attractive about working in the public sector, and whether their organization had a formal succession plan process.

Questions 8 and 9 were open-ended questions that focused on suggestions for improvement for recruiting and retention. The last question was how likely people were to stay in the public sector.

When analyzing the age of respondents at the state level, 33.8% of those that responded were age 55 and older. This would support the data from the National survey regarding high numbers of people retiring within the next 5-10 years.

We wanted to know what type of positions people taking the survey held to get a better idea of their role within the public sector workforce. The research showed that over 70% of those that responded held professional level positions, manager or director level positions, or executive level positions.

When looking at the length of time individuals spent within the public sector, we weren't surprised to learn that over 62% of the respondents had been working for the public sector for ten years or longer.

Our next question was one we developed to coincide with the value propositions that were used in the National NEOGOV survey. We asked respondents to rank the following items on a scale from 1-8, with 8 being the most important and 1 being the least important; Job Security;

Benefits/Retirement; Meaningful Work; Community Service/Civic Responsibility; Competitive Salary; Advancement Opportunity; Innovative Sector; and Flexible Work Schedule. The results of the data were almost identical to the statistics at the National level. Respondents ranked job security, benefits/retirement, and meaningful work as the most important things they valued, at the state level. Specifically, 78.6% of respondents rated benefits/retirement a 7 or 8; 69.6% rated job security a 7 or 8; and 63.6% rated meaningful work at a 7 or 8.

Our next question focused on the recruitment and hiring process to get a better understanding of the challenges that job seekers faced. The state results support our previous comments and research. This question allowed respondents to select more than one if they had experienced any or all these things. The number one thing that people experienced throughout the recruitment/hiring process was lack of flexibility negotiating benefits; time-off and salary, as we stated previously, in our paper. Other experiences to note was an in-efficient on boarding and training process, and a lengthy hiring process. 33.8% of respondents did say that they did not experience any of the things we listed, below.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Lengthy hiring process	32.84%
Poor communication throughout the process	19.90%
Lack of flexibility negotiating benefits; time-off, salary, etc.	45.77%
In-efficient on-boarding/training	34.83%
I did not experience any of these things	33.83%

For additional information on the survey that we collected, please see complete survey in the Appendix.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After researching the various challenges facing the public sector in the areas of recruitment and retention, the following recommendations should be considered by public employers when developing a plan to overcome these challenges.

Streamline the Hiring Process

According to the NEOGOV webinar there is a greater chance of losing qualified candidates when the hiring process takes more than 81 days. To streamline the hiring process, public entities should implement one or more of the following:

- Update job descriptions to align with the required skill set for the position and review on a regular basis to ensure consistency with current job needs and skills.
- Review current processes for job creation, class title or pay grade and determine how to shorten the time frame.
- Automate the hiring process using an HR management software solution.

In a NEOGOV case study, “The Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) leadership mapped out the entire application process. Today, the process moves three times faster—decreasing from an average of about 181 days to a projected 61 days.” (NEOGOVS Webinar, 2019) The OSHP reduced hiring time by 66% in only five days.

Job Postings and Advertisement

Our research concludes that what motivates job seekers to respond to types of jobs includes those value propositions in the job postings. “State government has an advantage over

private industry when it comes to offering a wide range of career opportunities - especially opportunities that provide meaning. Our goal is to connect that meaning with our job candidates.” (NEOGOV Webinar, 2019) Data concludes that state entities should do the following:

- Attract job seekers through promotion of the job rather than just a description of duties.
 - Job postings should state how the job will add value to the job seeker’s life as well as explaining the job responsibilities, giving the job seeker more reasons to apply for the position.
- Expand the job advertising reach
 - According to NEOGOV, 62% of job seekers look for jobs through online job boards and 61% through state government online portals versus 25% through social media and 8% through job fairs. (NEOGOV Webinar, 2019)

Branding

As previously mentioned, an organizations’ branding strategy should be a primary focus point. A public organization will appear more attractive to job seekers if the agency has adopted a unified branding strategy. A unified strategy will likely increase public support for the organization which will result in greater interest in employment. An employer should consider the following questions to determine the strength of their branding:

1. Does the agency have a comprehensive brand platform across agencies?
2. Is there visual consistency in the agency’s communications?

3. Does the agency's messaging adequately convey the organization's values and the benefits it provides to its stakeholders?

If the agency does not have a branding strategy in place, consider developing one and implement an action plan through the engagement of agencies, employees, and other stakeholders.

Innovative Benefits/Compensation

Trying to compete with the private sector on competitive wages can be difficult based on public sector budgets, but public sector employers can compete by offering innovative benefit packages. "As employees leverage work to gain more fulfillment, pursue their goals, and align their values and experiences more authentically, they're looking to employers to help them manage this new work-life world." (MetLife, 2019) Several suggestions from our research include:

1. Consider providing work from home opportunities for job positions which can be performed away from standard work locations.
2. Provide flexible work schedules to promote better work/life balance.
3. Work with employees to allow time for medical appointments, unanticipated child care needs, and encourage employees to use their vacation time so they do not suffer from burnout.
4. Offer hybrid retirement plans which are more appealing to millennials. In the state of Tennessee, "Most employees who start at age 27 are expected to leave state employment by their early 40s, so the hybrid plan is likely to provide better retirement security for many workers while still offering a substantial replacement for career workers." (The Pew Charitable Trust, 2019)

Advancement Opportunities

Career advancement is a huge area of opportunity for public sector employers. Unlike the private sector, public sector employers offer a wide variety of job positions within one organization or multiple agencies. In a NEOGOV case study, “Michigan requires that every employee have an individual performance plan in place, as well as an individual development training plan. Managers and supervisors are required to meet quarterly with each employee to review performance and development plans, discuss progress and changes, and provide ongoing coaching and feedback. The state believes in supporting employees’ career growth by discussing their goals through the individual performance plan process and meetings.” (NEOGOVB Webinar, 2019)

Several ways to encourage career advancement include, implementing performance evaluations as an opportunity to develop employees and utilizing performance plans to coach employees on developing a career path which could include advancing to job positions in other agencies or departments. As a side note, delayed performance reviews can be counterproductive when it comes to taking corrective action or providing recognition of a job well done. Instead of annual performance evaluations, quarterly performance reviews could help keep employees on track in meeting their career goals and provide guidance to ensure career success. It is imperative that public sector employers take the time to review their performance evaluation processes with regards to effectiveness, transparency, and whether their organization is providing the right tools to implement evaluations in a fair and consistent manner.

Improve Employee Experience

Employers should to transform the employee experience by implementing the following:

1. Offer both professional and skills development training to provide opportunities for up-skilling.
2. Groom the next generation of employees to meet the ever-expanding needs of your organization. The implementation of broad training practices will result in a large pool of potential candidates will be prepared to handle the agency's future needs.
3. Continue to update training opportunities to stay relevant with changing job requirements.
4. Implement advanced workforce planning so there are personnel with the skills that the agency will require in the future.
5. Automate processes and replace outdated technology.

According to NEOGOV, while 92% of private sector employers have or are working on automating tasks and processes through all functions over the next three years. Only 21% of State Chief Administrators have or are currently working on automation through all functions over the next three years. (NEOGOVB Webinar, 2019) Developing a culture that encourages employees to share their ideas and become a part of solutions which affect their daily work routines can add value to an employee's work experience. A government agency can transform the employee experience by implementing workshops for solving problems and encouraging employee participation in shaping their future workplace and roles. In a NEOGOV case study, the state of Michigan developed a brown bag lunch program in which brown bag lunches are held with senior

leadership. Approximately 10 to 200 people participate in these sessions to discuss what is going on in state government while engaging employees. (NEOGOV Webinar, 2019)

CONCLUSION

Public sector employers need to provide a holistic approach to employee recruitment and retention to stay competitive with the private sector. With the continued advancement in technology, work-life balance has now become a major driver for millennial job seekers. Employees can work from anywhere on-demand which allows for more flexibility with employee benefits and job roles. Job seekers want more fulfillment from their jobs and are looking to their employers to be partners in their career and personal success.

The recommendations provided herein are a starting point for how the public sector can begin to change public perception and obtain a competitive edge in the employee recruitment.

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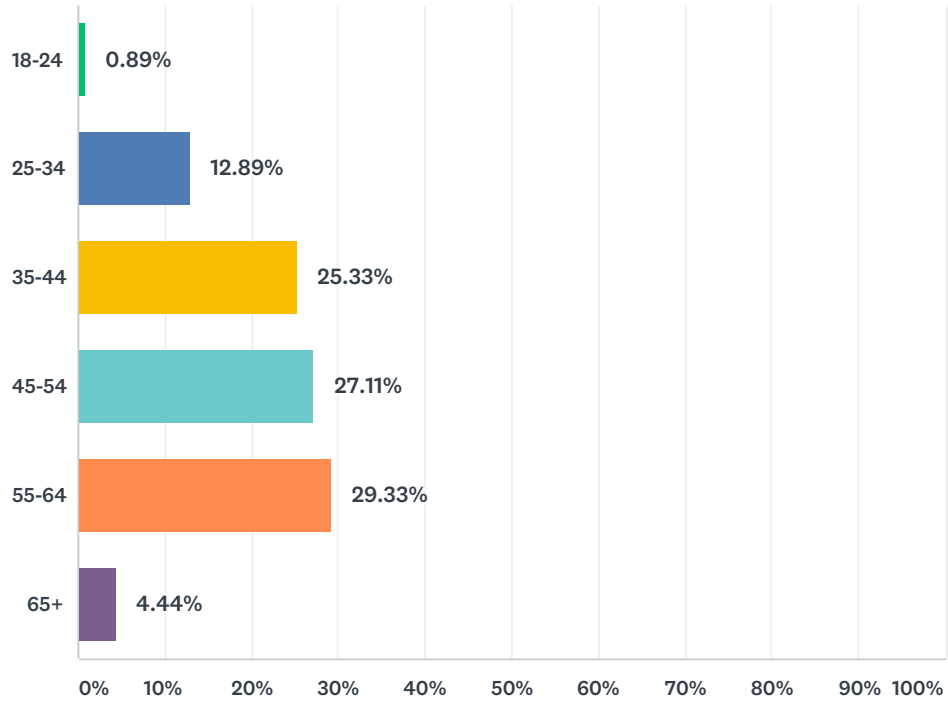
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Appendix

What age group do you fall into?

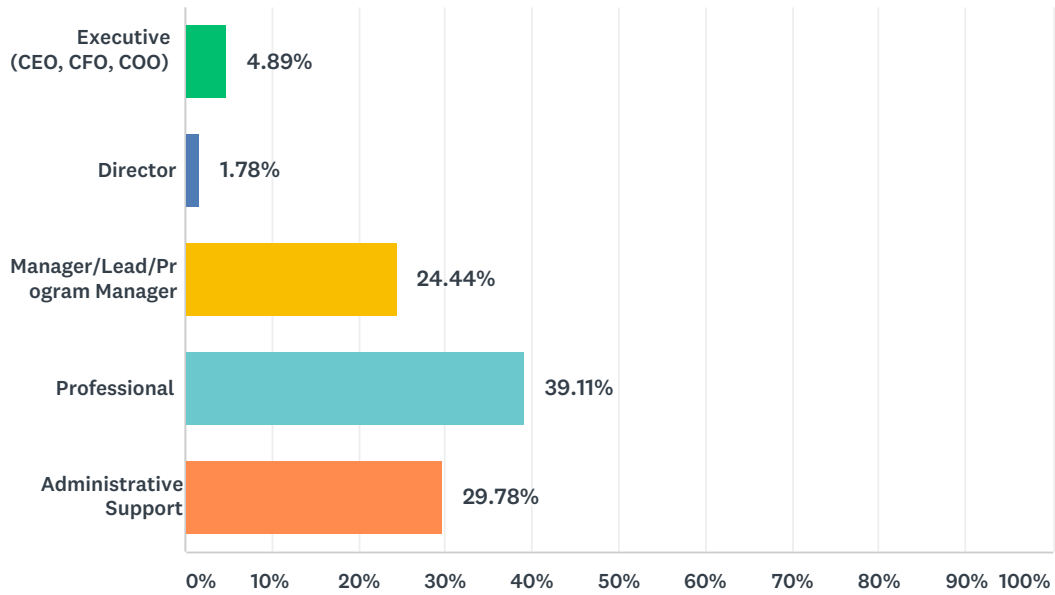
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
18-24	0.89%	2
25-34	12.89%	29
35-44	25.33%	57
45-54	27.11%	61
55-64	29.33%	66
65+	4.44%	10
TOTAL		225

What type of position do you currently hold?

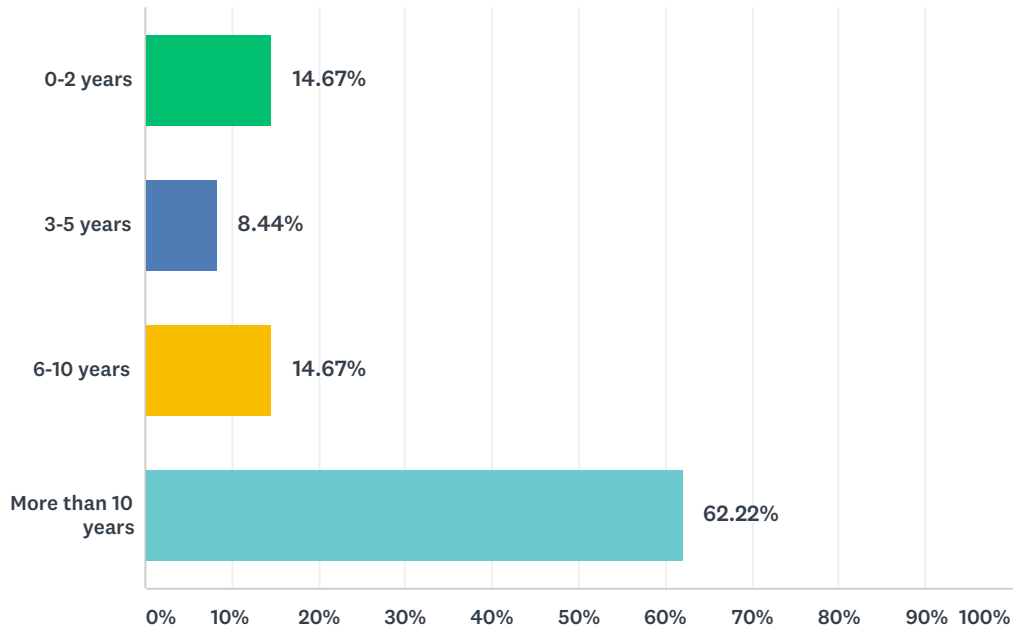
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Executive (CEO, CFO, COO)	4.89%	11
Director	1.78%	4
Manager/Lead/Program Manager	24.44%	55
Professional	39.11%	88
Administrative Support	29.78%	67
TOTAL		225

How long have you worked in the public sector?

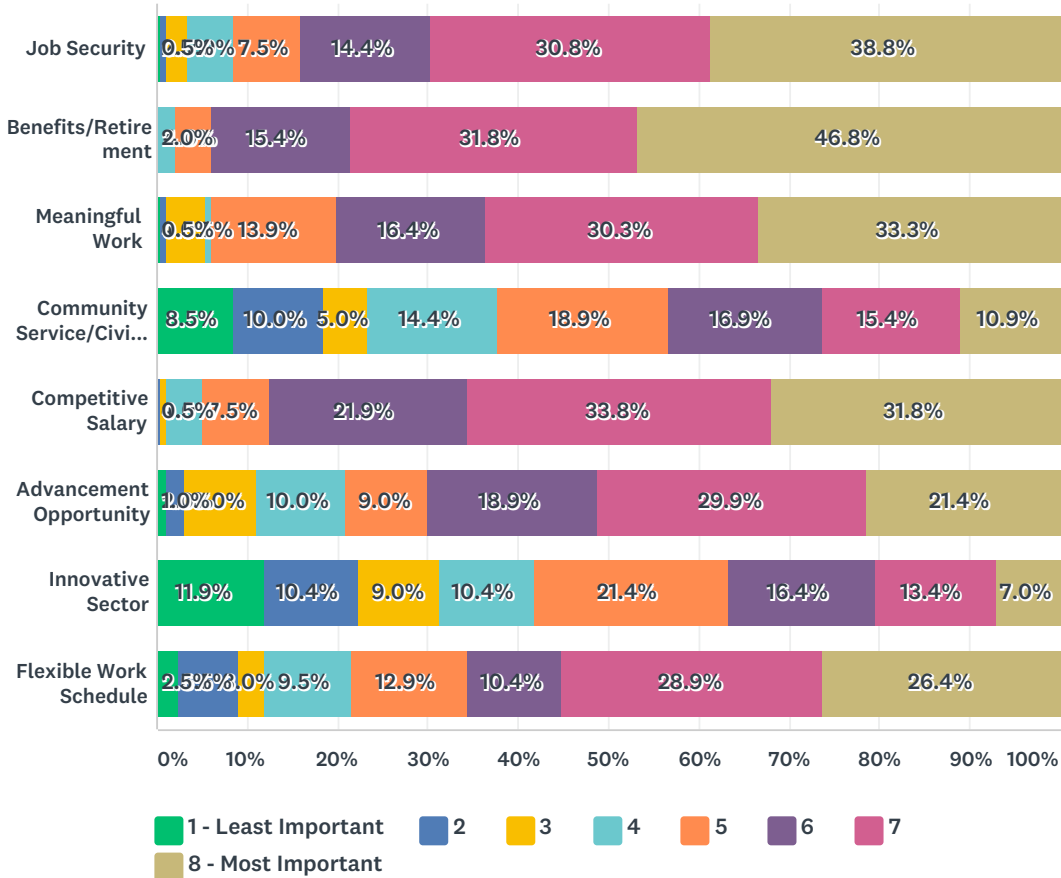
Answered: 225 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0-2 years	14.67%	33
3-5 years	8.44%	19
6-10 years	14.67%	33
More than 10 years	62.22%	140
TOTAL		225

Q4 Please rank the following items on a scale of 1-8 (1 = least important; 8 = most important), based on their importance to you, when looking for a new job or staying at a job

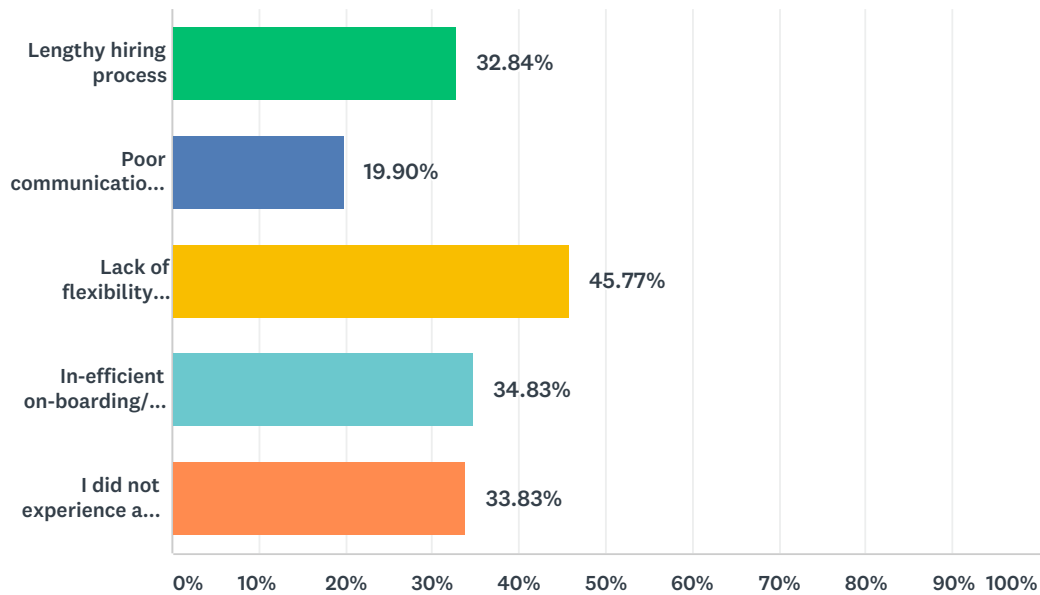
Answered: 201 Skipped: 24



	1 - LEAST IMPORTANT	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 - MOST IMPORTANT	TOTAL
Job Security	0.5% 1	0.5% 1	2.5% 5	5.0% 10	7.5% 15	14.4% 29	30.8% 62	38.8% 78	201
Benefits/Retirement	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	2.0% 4	4.0% 8	15.4% 31	31.8% 64	46.8% 94	201
Meaningful Work	0.5% 1	0.5% 1	4.5% 9	0.5% 1	13.9% 28	16.4% 33	30.3% 61	33.3% 67	201
Community Service/Civic Responsibility	8.5% 17	10.0% 20	5.0% 10	14.4% 29	18.9% 38	16.9% 34	15.4% 31	10.9% 22	201
Competitive Salary	0.0% 0	0.5% 1	0.5% 1	4.0% 8	7.5% 15	21.9% 44	33.8% 68	31.8% 64	201
Advancement Opportunity	1.0% 2	2.0% 4	8.0% 16	10.0% 20	9.0% 18	18.9% 38	29.9% 60	21.4% 43	201
Innovative Sector	11.9% 24	10.4% 21	9.0% 18	10.4% 21	21.4% 43	16.4% 33	13.4% 27	7.0% 14	201
Flexible Work Schedule	2.5% 5	6.5% 13	3.0% 6	9.5% 19	12.9% 26	10.4% 21	28.9% 58	26.4% 53	201

Did you experience any of the following challenges during your recruitment/hiring process? (Check all that apply)

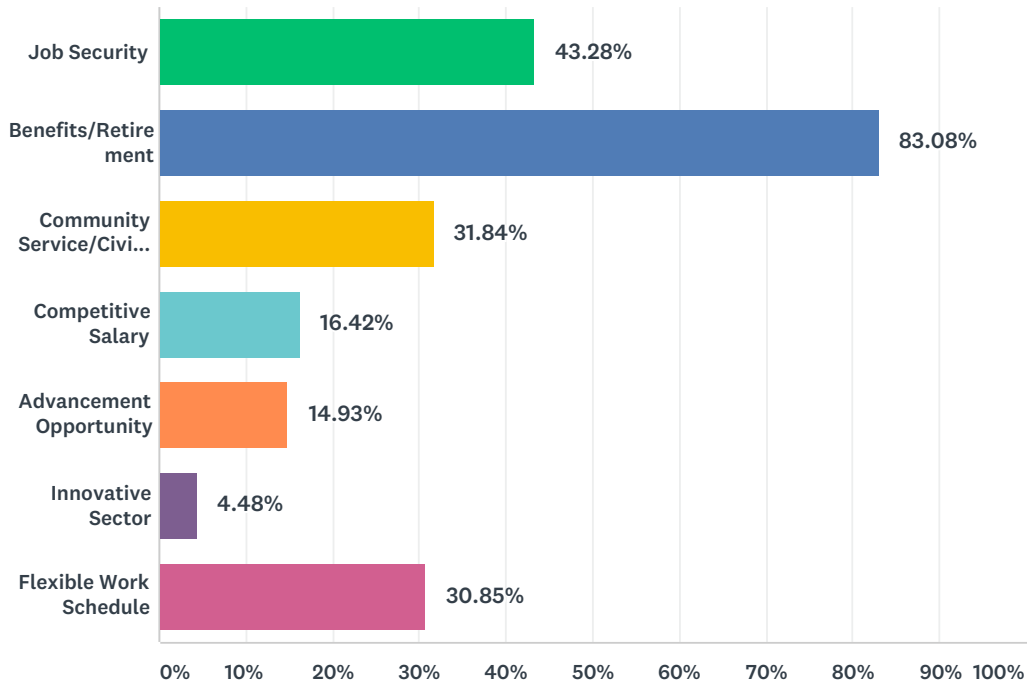
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Lengthy hiring process	32.84%	66
Poor communication throughout the process	19.90%	40
Lack of flexibility negotiating benefits; time-off, salary, etc.	45.77%	92
In-efficient on-boarding/training	34.83%	70
I did not experience any of these things	33.83%	68
Total Respondents: 201		

What do you find most attractive about working in the public sector? (Check all that apply)

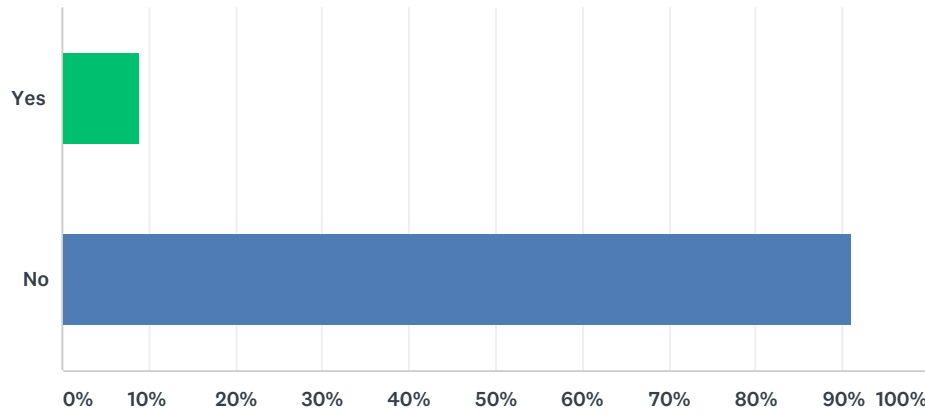
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Job Security	43.28%	87
Benefits/Retirement	83.08%	167
Community Service/Civic Responsibility	31.84%	64
Competitive Salary	16.42%	33
Advancement Opportunity	14.93%	30
Innovative Sector	4.48%	9
Flexible Work Schedule	30.85%	62
Total Respondents: 201		

Does your organization have a formal succession plan process?

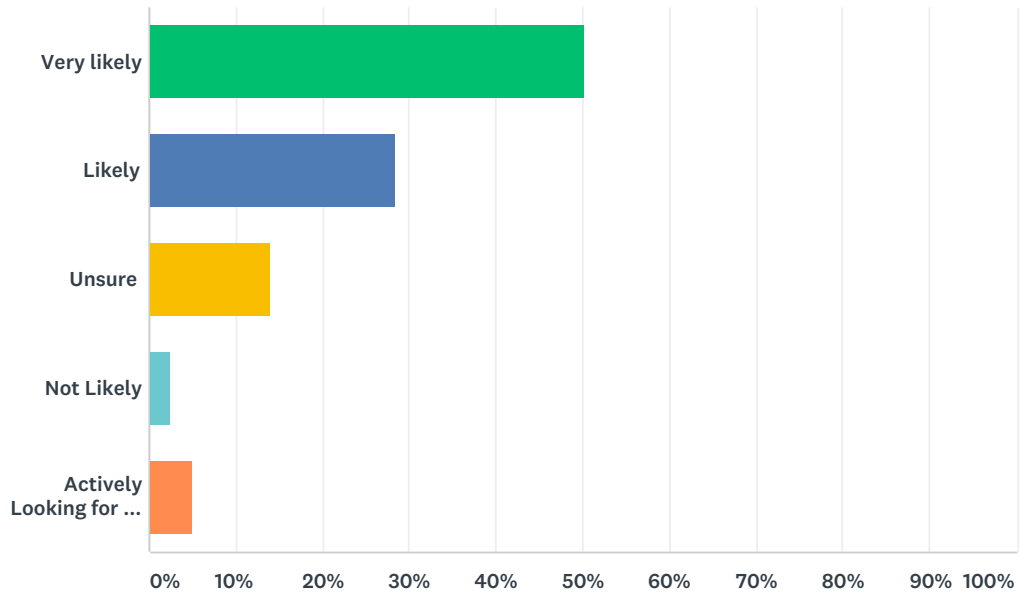
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	8.96%	18
No	91.04%	183
TOTAL		201

How likely are you to stay in the public/government sector

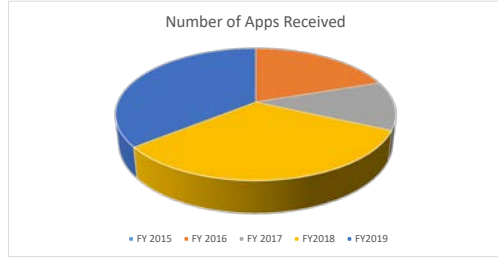
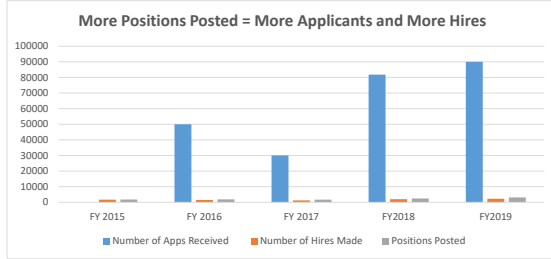
Answered: 201 Skipped: 24



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very likely	50.25%	101
Likely	28.36%	57
Unsure	13.93%	28
Not Likely	2.49%	5
Actively Looking for a New Job	4.98%	10
TOTAL		201

State of Iowa Hiring Statistics	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY2018	FY2019
Number of Apps Received	46,126	49,965	30,025	81,800	89,984
Number of Hires Made	1730	1532	1262	2013	2231
Positions Posted	1812	1911	1706	2500	3135

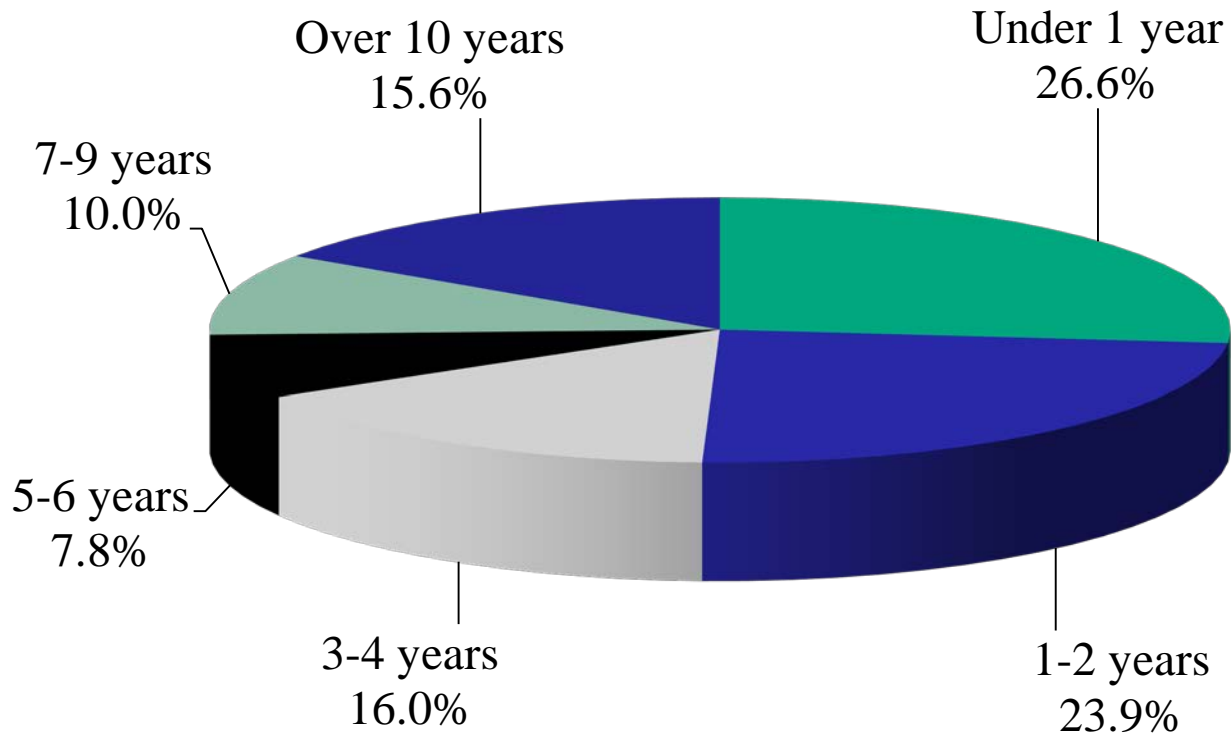
*FY 2018 - reports period 07/01/17 - 06/30/18 and reflects the new applicant tracking system - NEOGOV - which was implemented 4/17/17



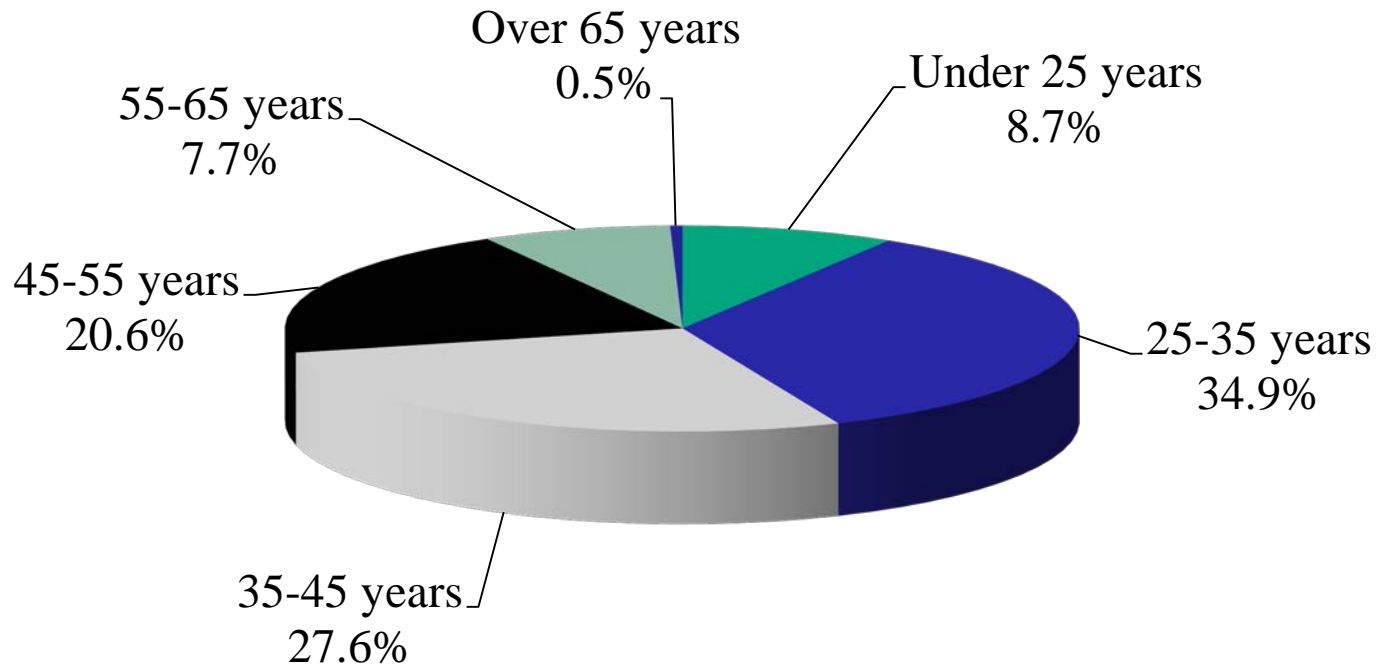
	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	TOTAL (For 5 fiscal years)
Voluntary Term	544	642	675	884	809	3554
Involuntary Term	315	287	259	359	361	1581
Retirement	619	710	752	826	601	3508
Total Number of Employees Who Termed	1,478	1634	1686	2069	1771	8638
Total Number of employees (State of Iowa Executive B	17663	17228	16626	16089	16180	

Voluntary Term - Highest reason for term
Over 5 fiscal years 8638 termed, 3554 voluntary = 41%

LOS By Voluntary 5 yr ave – DONE 8-5-19 for FY19



Age By Voluntary 5 yr ave done 8-5-19 for FY19



Total

LOS			AGE		
0-.99	944	26.6%	<25	309	8.7%
1-2.99	850	23.9%	25-34.99	1241	34.9%
3-4.99	570	16.0%	35-44.99	982	27.6%
5-6.99	278	7.8%	45-54.99	731	20.6%
7-9.99	357	10.0%	55-64.99	273	7.7%
10+	555	15.6%	65+	18	0.5%
	3,554	100%		3,554	100%