

THE TIDES OF TURNOVER IN SOCIAL SERVICES

Stemming the tides of burnout and turnover today can help strengthen the workforce of tomorrow.

The helpers are tired. This has been a problem for years, but now the stakes are higher than ever. The workforce is in crisis while clients' needs keep getting more complex.

What's Weighing on the Workforce?

A combination of historic and current factors is contributing to critical levels of burnout and turnover today across many social services programs.



By the Numbers

Our partner agencies have shared statistics that highlight the depths of the problem:

100+

The number of open positions many agencies at both the state and local level need to fill

50%

Many agencies are reporting over at least half of their staff turning over, if not more



1 out of 10: One large county in New York said only 10 people recently sat for the local civil service exam compared to 100 previously; another small county had no one at all



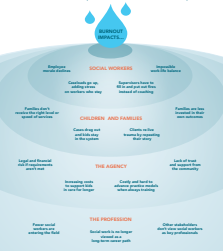
1/3: Open positions sitting vacant for extended periods of time, on average



64%: Burnout that's work-related and stems from paperwork, bureaucracy, and inability to effect change *

What Are the Ripple Effects?

The impact of burnout and turnover isn't limited to individual workers. It also creates ripple effects across families, the agency, and even the social work profession. Child welfare is one example.



Turning the Tides

Just like you can't stop a wave from crashing, you can't control every contributing factor of burnout and turnover. But you can provide tools to support workers today and make the entire industry stronger tomorrow. A few tips to get started:



EMPHASIZE SUPERVISOR AND PEER SUPPORT

Prioritize mentorship, coaching, and quality supervision. Ask: What's working? What's not? Where are workers getting stuck? What other resources do they need?



FOSTER A CULTURE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Make your workers feel connected, engaged, accepted, and supported. Well-being stems from organizational culture and can't be an individual worker's responsibility.



EMBRACE FLEXIBILITY AND HYBRID WORK

Workers know flexibility is possible with current technology. If you don't make policy changes to support those people want to work, you may see staff leave for other agencies that do (or leave the field).



OFFER PROMOTIONAL PATHWAYS

Opportunities for education, training, and professional development are critical in keeping your workers fulfilled. Tuition stipends for staff to get advanced degrees are also powerful retention tools.



STAY COMPETITIVE IN THE LABOR MARKET

Many workers will leave the field to find higher wages elsewhere. Pay raises, bonuses, and benefits are more valuable than ever right now.



PROVIDE THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY

Minimize administrative obstacles to help overwhelmed workers better manage their time. Empower them to focus on making a difference and doing the work they love.

Want to Dive Deeper?

Check out our full guide for more insights, best practices, actionable strategies, and additional resources on this important topic.

A Deep Dive into Social Work Burnout (and What Your Human Services Agency Can Do About It)

*Source: <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/391669/burnout.aspx>