

FY 2025 Exit Survey Analysis

Local Law 130 (2023)

Table of Contents

- | **Background**2
- | **Introduction**2
- | **Local Law 130 Data Collection and Analysis**.....3
 - Who Participated**.....3
 - Methodology**.....3
 - Data Collection and Analysis.....3
- | **Summary of Key Findings**.....5
- | **Results**5
 - Where Are They Going?**5
 - Why Are They Leaving?**6
 - Workplace Perceptions**7
 - Areas of Strength7
 - Areas of Opportunities.....7
 - Breakdown of the Top Areas of Opportunity**.....8
 - Growth and Development.....8
 - Compensation and Benefits9
 - Work-Life Balance10
- | **Limitations**..... Error! Bookmark not defined.
- | **Conclusion**10
- | **Recommendations**11
- | **Appendix A – Agencies**13
- | **Appendix B – FY2025 Resignations and Retirements by Agency, Title, Managerial Status and Title Classification**.....14
- | **Appendix C – Definition of Categories**.....15
- | **Appendix D – City of New York Exit Survey and Interview Protocol**.....17

| Background

[Local Law 130 of 2023](#) (LL130), requires the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) to create a citywide exit survey for voluntarily departing employees (e.g., resignations or retirements) and establish a standardized protocol for conducting exit surveys and interviews. The law also requires agencies to disseminate the exit survey and offer exit interviews to collect detailed insights into the employees' experiences and reasons for departure, including related factors, such as career changes, workplace conflicts, or compensation concerns. Agencies must submit data collected annually to DCAS and the Equal Employment Practices Commission (EEOC) by September 15. DCAS is required to submit an annual report to the EEOC and the Speaker of the Council that includes a summary and analysis of responses collected through exit surveys and interviews. While LL130 specifies reporting based on the previous calendar year, this report utilizes fiscal year data to provide a more complete and consistent 12-month analysis. This report covers July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

In this report, a resignation from a city agency to move to another city agency is classified as a transfer.

Exit surveys are a valuable tool for organizations to gather insights from departing employees. They help identify patterns in turnover, uncover workplace issues and provide constructive feedback that can drive improvements in management, work culture and operational policies. By understanding the reasons behind departures, organizations can address concerns, enhance retention strategies, and improve overall satisfaction for current and future employees.¹ Additionally, exit interviews and surveys offer a structured way to collect honest feedback, as individuals leaving are often more candid about their experiences. LL130 aims to address issues related to retention in the city government workforce and provide recommendations to make systematic organizational improvements.

| Introduction

Employee separations, which include voluntary resignations and retirements are a key indicator of workforce trends across the U.S.

Nationwide, separation rates fluctuate based on economic conditions, industry demands, and labor market shifts. In recent years, factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, remote work transitions, and economic uncertainty have influenced these rates. In the U.S., it is estimated that 3.2 million people resigned from their jobs in 2025.¹

¹ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/jolts.pdf>

The [New York City Government Workforce Profile Report \(WFPR\)](#), a fiscal year report produced by DCAS, analyzes personnel data, covering 72 city agencies, and offers a comprehensive overview of workforce trends, including hiring and separation statistics, across agencies for the current year and historical trends over the last 10 years. According to the Fiscal Year (FY2025) WFPR, a little over 32,000 employees left city government, of which 43% were resignations and 34% were retirements.

| Local Law 130 Data Collection and Analysis

Who Participated

As part of LL130, DCAS was tasked with creating a citywide exit survey based on existing exit surveys shared by other agencies. Applying insights from these surveys, DCAS created the Workplace Insights Survey for Exiting Employees (WISE-E), which was rolled out to agencies in March 2025. The WISE-E survey replaced DCAS' Workplace Insights Survey for Exiting (WISE) managers, which was limited to voluntarily departing managers only.

Methodology

Data Collection and Analysis

DCAS requested that agencies complete the exit survey and interview template with their respective agency data for FY2025 and return them to DCAS. For this fiscal year's report, data was collected from 54 city agencies. This was an increase from the prior fiscal year's report where data was received from 35 agencies.

Table 1 shows a breakdown of the number of employees who were offered an exit survey and/or interview and the number who completed it. Of the 54 participating agencies, a total of 3,794 employees were offered an exit survey with 40% choosing to participate and of the 5,078 employees who were offered an exit interview, 77% participated. Comparatively, in Fiscal Year 2024 (FY2024), of the 4,134 employees who were offered an exit survey, 53%² had participated and out of the 2,672 employees who were offered an exit interview, 86% had participated.

Table 1: Fiscal Year 2025 Breakdown of Departing Employees Offered and Completed Exit Surveys and Interviews

	FY2025	FY 2024
Offered exit survey	3,794	4,134 ²
Completed exit survey	1,533	2,173
Offered an exit interview	5,078	2,672
Participated in exit interview	3,902	2,298

As the WISE-E Survey was rolled out in March 2025, toward the end of the reporting period, agencies utilized varying exit procedures which included agency specific exit surveys, formal exit interviews, or during check-in meetings where employees returned agency equipment.

The data provided by agencies were combined with the data from DCAS’ surveys to create a comprehensive dataset. Exit survey data included multiple-choice and open-text questions. Wherever possible, the rating scales on multiple-choice questions were standardized (e.g., consolidating five point or 10-point scales to three categories: positive, neutral and negative). In last year’s report, rating scales were standardized to a four-point scale. The methodology was changed for this report to further simplify the analysis and better understand overall sentiment by question. Questions were organized and analyzed by similar themes or categories to aid in the analysis and interpretation of the data.

| Limitations

There are some limitations to this analysis. First, the survey and interviews were not uniform. Each agency had their own survey. While DCAS attempted to consolidate and combine similar questions and standardize the data by grouping into categories, the number of respondents are not equal across each category. DCAS expects some of these limitations will be ameliorated as more agencies disseminate the WISE-E survey to their voluntarily departing employees.

² Corrected from FY 2024 report

A second limitation is that participation in the exit survey and exit interview is voluntary. This can result in a self-selection or volunteer bias³ and thus, the results of this analysis may not be reflective of the experiences of all employees who are retiring or resigning.

| Summary of Key Findings

Based on this fiscal year's responses, here are a few key takeaways, including the leading category of separation, areas where agencies are doing well (Strengths), and where improvements can be made (Opportunities).

- **Resignations as the Leading Exit Reason:** Resignations continue to significantly outpace retirements.
- **Strengths:** Work Environment (69%), Leadership and Supervision (63%), Communication (62%), Equity and Inclusion (58%), Job Alignment and Role Clarity (56%) and Recognition and Support (57%) are categories that were rated more positively by departing employees.
- **Opportunities:** Compensation and Benefits (39%), Work-Life Balance (46%) and Growth and Development (47%) continue to be areas rated more negatively by departing employees and present areas of opportunity for improvement.

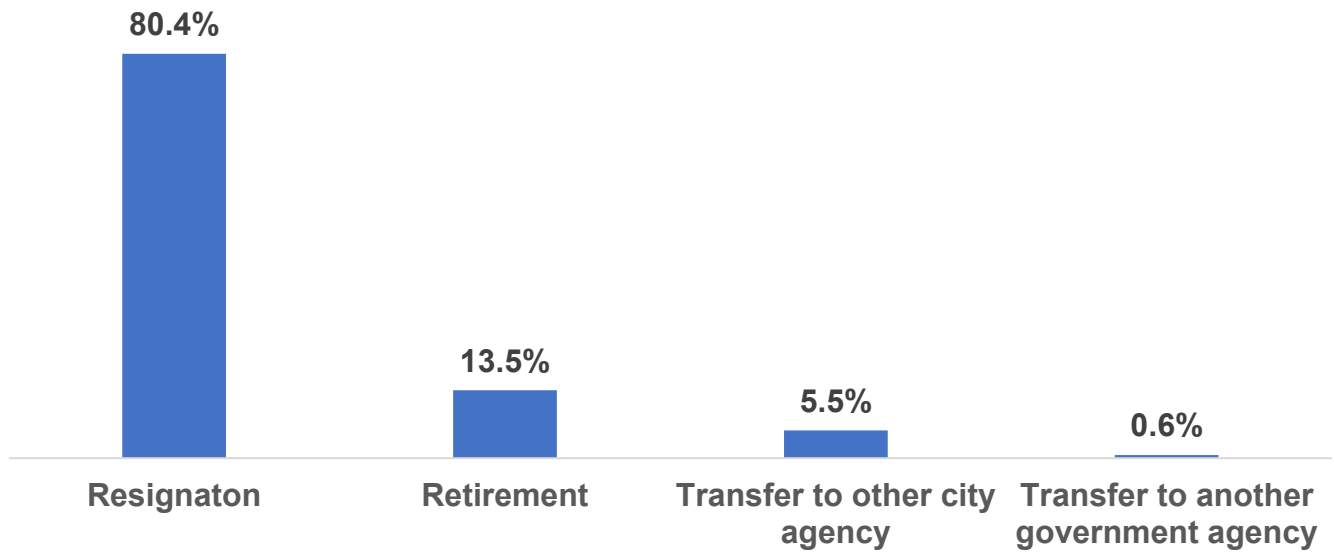
| Results

Why Are They Separating?

The primary reason for separation was resignation. In FY2024, 71% of respondents, who participated in an exit survey or exit interview, were resignations, and 20% were retirements. Transfers to another city agency or other government organization made up approximately 6% of responses compared with 9% in FY2024. Figure 1 reflects these separations for FY2025.

³ <https://www.qualtrics.com/articles/strategy-research/selection-bias/>

Figure 1 - Separation Type



Why Are They Leaving?

Figure 2 - Reasons for Leaving

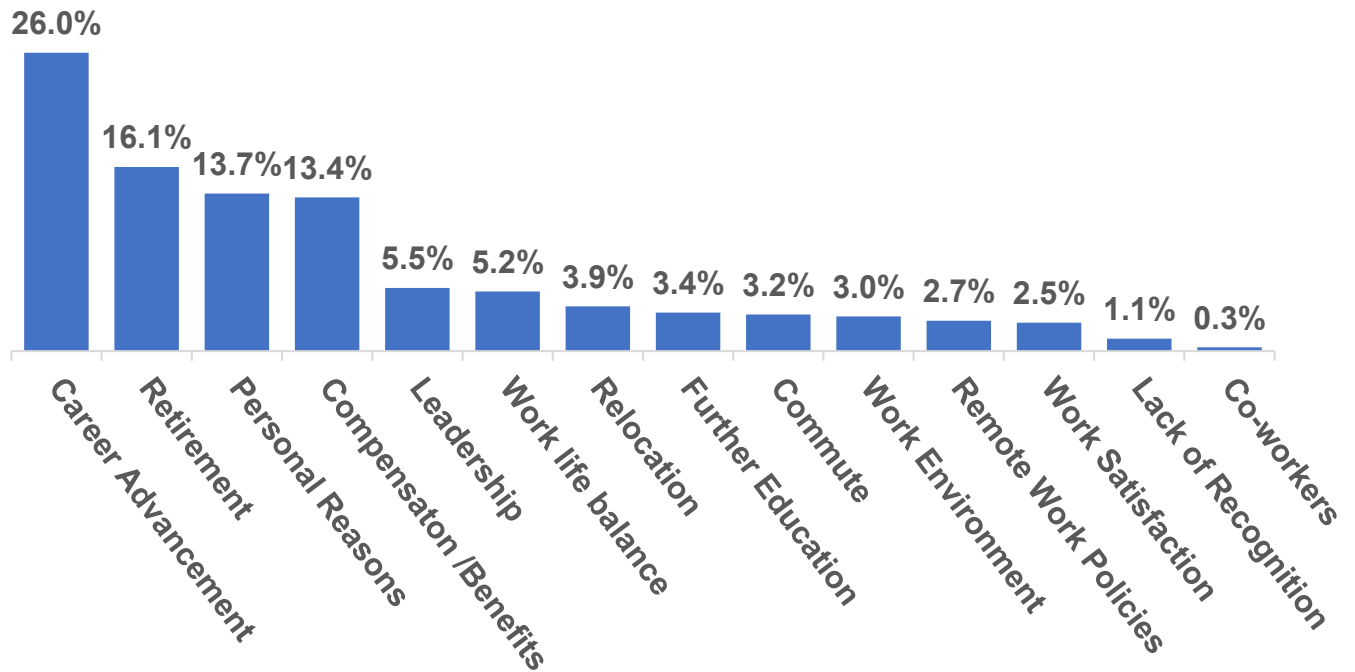


Figure 2 illustrates the various reasons employees reported for leaving their position in FY2025 from highest to lowest. Career Advancement was the top factor, accounting for 23.4% of responses (similar to 25.4% in FY2024) followed by Retirement, Personal Reasons and Compensation and Benefits at 14.4%, 12.3% and 12.0%, respectively. For the FY2024 report, the other top factors for leaving other than Career Advancement were Compensation and Benefits (20.7%), Leadership (9.3%) and Personal Reasons (5.9%).

Workplace Perceptions

Figure 3 - Employee Sentiment by Category

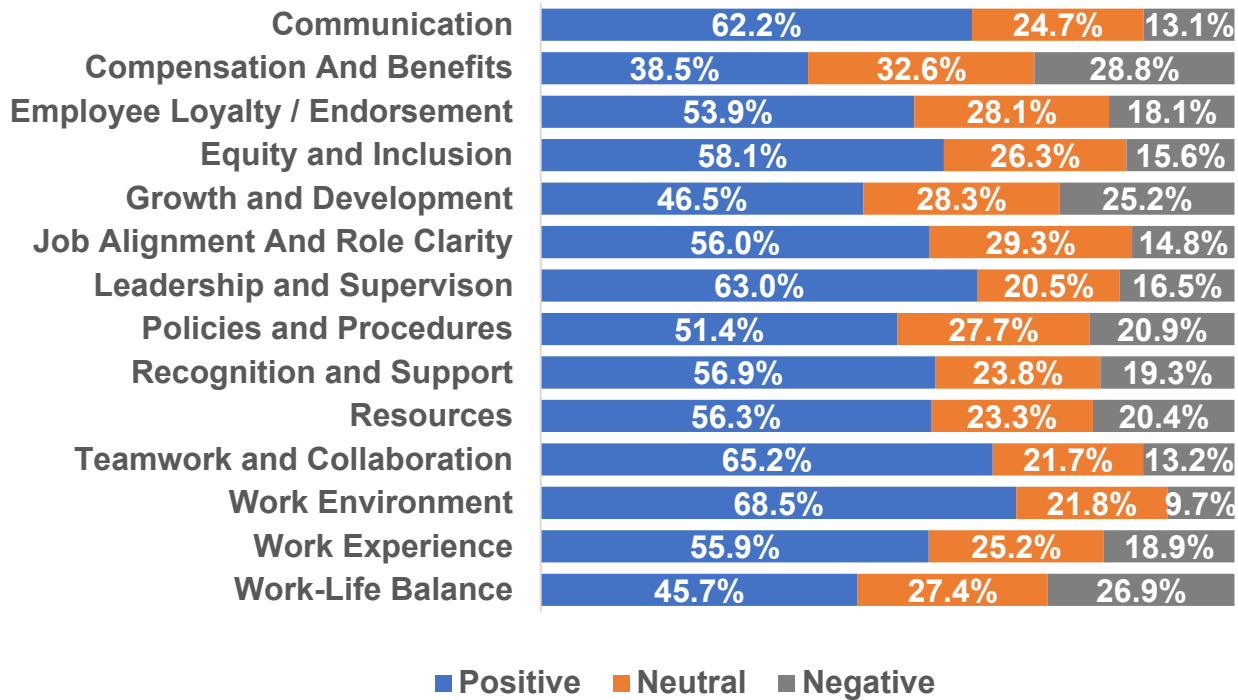


Figure 3 presents a detailed view of employee sentiment by category highlighting areas of both positive and negative sentiment and domains where opinions are more mixed. Definitions of each of the 14 categories can be found in Appendix C.

Areas of Strength

Eleven out of the 14 categories received mostly positive ratings indicating that employees felt positive about their overall work experience. The top five categories were related to Work Environment (68.5%), Teamwork and Collaboration (65.2%), Leadership and Supervision (63.0%), Communication (62.2%), and Equity and Inclusion (58.1%). These findings suggest that employees experience a supportive work environment, worked well with their colleagues, experienced strong day-to-day management especially with their immediate managers/supervisors, received clear and transparent communication, and felt that their workplace was committed to equity and inclusion. These findings are similar to last year where the top categories were Diversity and Inclusion, Work Environment, Co-Workers, Communication and Supervisor.

Areas of Opportunities

In contrast, several categories fell below the 50% threshold and represent key areas of opportunity. Specifically in the areas of Compensation and Benefits (38.5%), Work-Life Balance (45.7%) and Growth and Development (46.5%). Lower scores in these areas suggest

dissatisfaction with salary, career advancement pathways, and workload were pain points for departing employees.

When analyzing Figure 3 in relation to Figure 2, some key connections emerge between employee dissatisfaction drivers and the reasons behind their decisions to leave. Together, the two charts show that employees are not primarily leaving because of negative workplace experiences but instead due to lack of perceived long-term opportunities or value in staying. The highest exit drivers outside of retirement and personal reasons were related to career advancement, compensation, and work-life balance. This suggests that departing employees may like their job and where they work but may feel stalled, undervalued, or overworked. This is the same as last year when career advancement opportunities and compensation and benefits were the top reasons for exiting employees to leave.

Breakdown of the Top Areas of Opportunity

Growth and Development

Figure 4 - Growth and Development

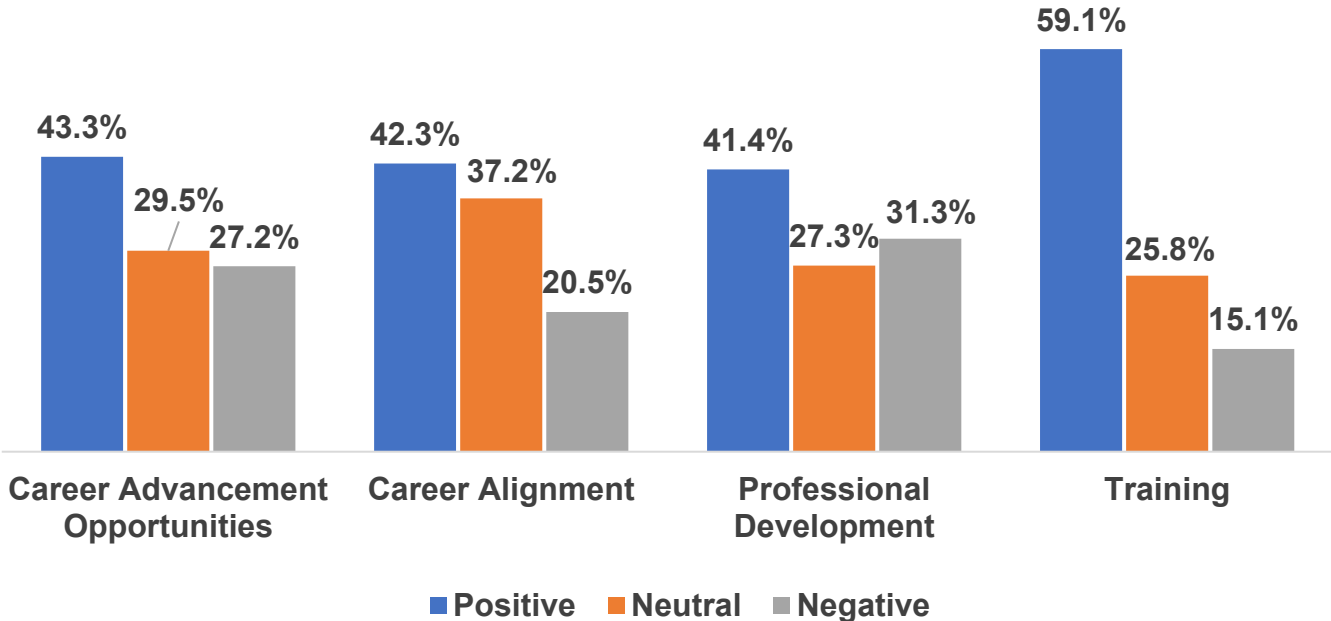


Figure 4 examines employee sentiment across four subcategories that make up Growth and Development: Career Advancement Opportunities, Career Alignment, Professional Development, and satisfaction with Training.

This chart shows that almost 60% of employees felt positive about the trainings that were available to them and the opportunities to grow and develop their skillset. However, sentiment drops in the overall category when looking at other areas related to career mobility. Only about 43% felt positive about career advancement opportunities, and over half of respondents rated it

as either neutral or negative. Similarly, only 42% felt that their current position aligned with their career goals and another third were unsure. Lastly, only 41% of employees felt like there were other professional development opportunities available to them such as mentoring and stretch assignments or projects.

Compensation and Benefits

Figure 5 - Compensation and Benefits

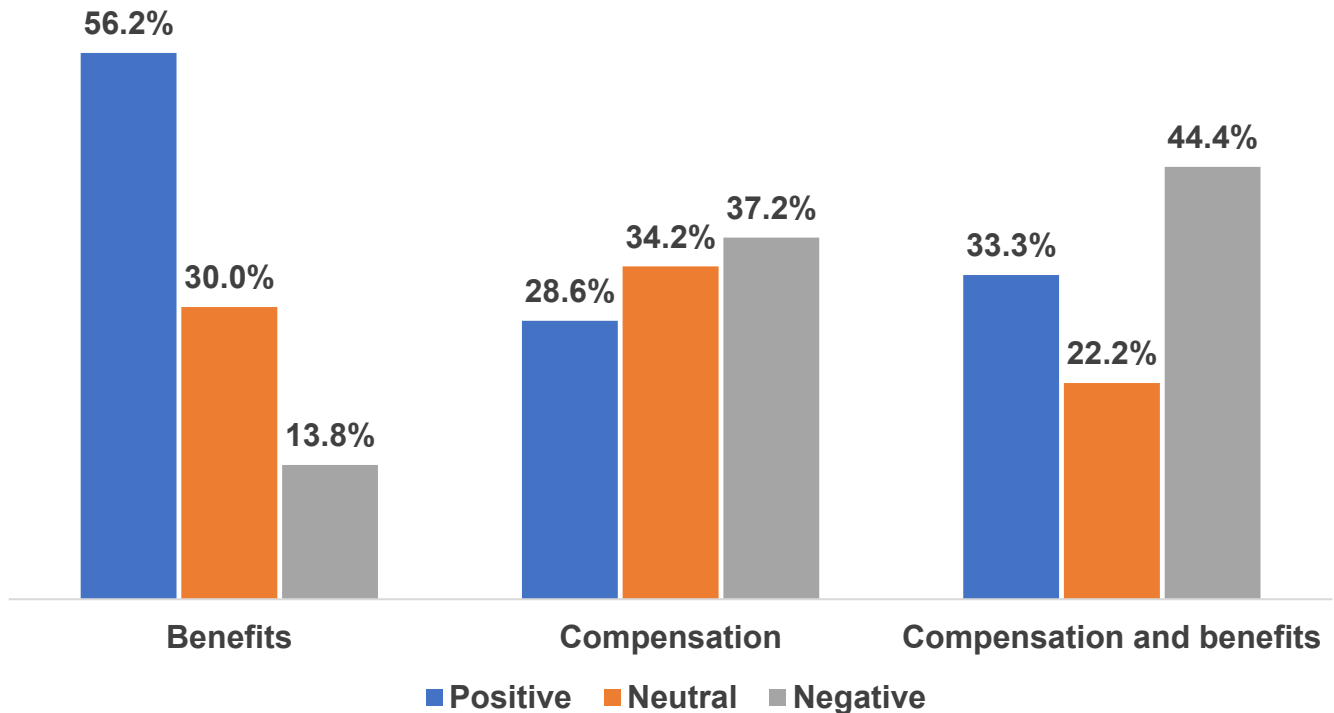


Figure 5 reveals a clear divide between how employees view benefits versus pay. Benefits stand out favorably, with over 56% positive responses, indicating employees were satisfied with their options for health coverage, time and leave, and retirement. In contrast, compensation alone generates the highest dissatisfaction across the category, with nearly 37% negative and only 29% positive, showing that base salaries are widely perceived as inadequate or uncompetitive. Some agencies combined the two concepts into a single “Compensation and Benefits” question. For the combined category, overall sentiment sits between the extremes, suggesting that strong benefits may partially offset pay concerns but do not fully resolve them. Overall, the data suggests that while employees appreciate the city’s benefits packages, pay levels may likely be a contributing factor to retention challenges, particularly when paired with perceived limitations toward career growth.

Work-Life Balance

Figure 6 - Work Life Balance

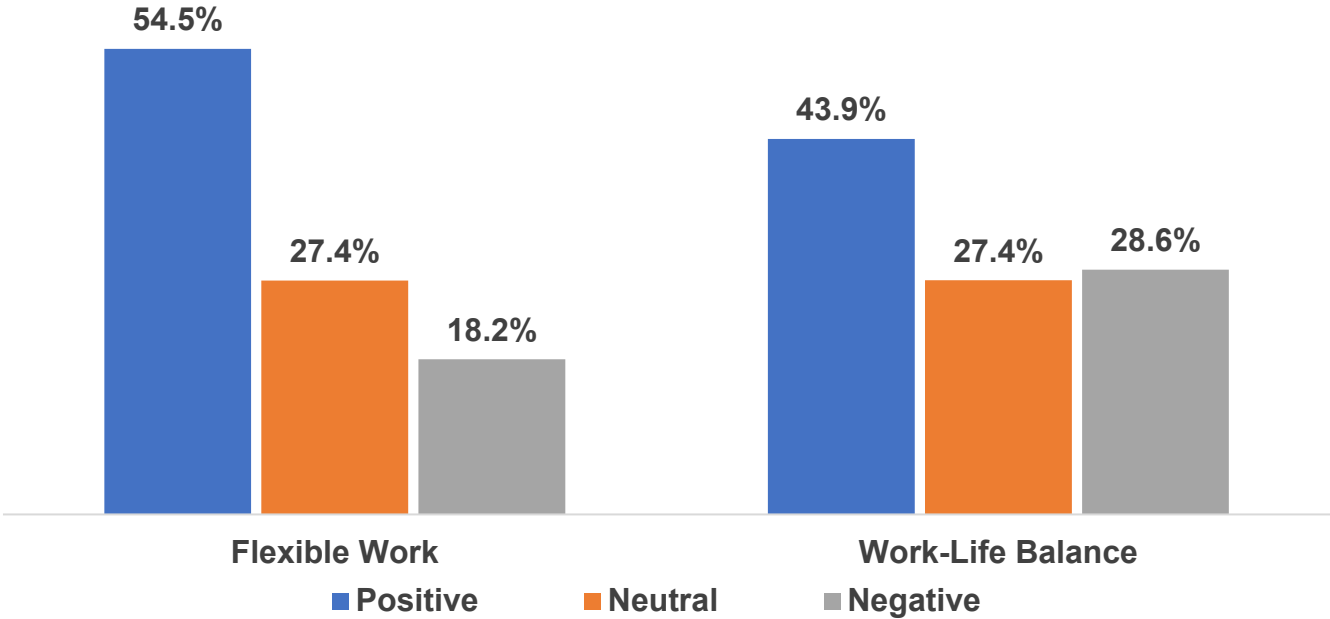


Figure 6 provides a breakdown across two components of work-life balance: Flexible Work and Work-Life Balance. Flexible Work assesses employee’s perceptions related to flexible work schedules (e.g., telework and compressed work schedules). Work-Life Balance includes questions about workload, employee health and well-being, commute times, and whether employees can effectively manage work and life responsibilities.

While most respondents (54.5%) view flexible work positively, fewer employees report a positive experience with overall work-life balance (43.9%). At the same time, more than half of the respondents express either neutral or negative views on work-life balance, with nearly 29% reporting a negative experience. This contrast suggests that flexibility alone may not be sufficient to support employees’ ability to manage workload, expectations, and personal responsibilities. The higher level of dissatisfaction with work-life balance points to underlying challenges such as workload intensity, schedule management, or work culture that may limit the effectiveness of flexible work arrangements.

Conclusion

While there are some limitations to this analysis, including a self-selection bias, the feedback received from voluntarily departing employees was generally more positive than negative. Employees reported positive experiences in their workplace, good relationships with their managers and coworkers, feeling supported in their work, and a sense of respect and belonging. These findings are similar to the feedback received on the Citywide Employee Viewpoint Survey

(CEVS), which was sent to employees citywide in Fall 2025 and also found that 60% of employees were not planning on leaving their jobs within the next year.

The reasons cited for why employees chose to leave their jobs are similar to typical reasons in any sector: lack of perceived career advancement, desire for increased compensation, and more flexible work-life balance. At the same time, the WFPR shows that separation rate in city government is low and has consistently been on average under 10% when compared to the separation rate across all jobs in NYC which is on average 17%.

The sizable neutral shares in the weaker categories also highlight areas that agencies can focus on to move the needle toward increased engagement and retention. DCAS also administers other employee surveys aimed at understanding employees' experience working for the City of New York and factors related to employee engagement. Linked below are the latest published reports on those survey results.

- [Citywide Employee Viewpoint Survey \(Local Law 76 – 2024\)](#): The Citywide Employee Viewpoint Survey (CEVS), first administered in Fall 2025, assessed the workplace factors that contribute to employee engagement and retention.
- [Career Counseling \(Local Law 75 – 2024\)](#): The first career counseling report was published in January 2026 and reports on career counseling activities conducted in FY 2025 which include the results of the employee career counseling feedback survey.
- [Citywide Workplace Climate Survey \(Local Law 101 - 2018\)](#): The Workplace Climate Survey aims at understanding employees' understanding of the city's EEO policy and the complaint and investigation process and their experiences with workplace discrimination.

| Recommendations

Agencies can leverage a range of programs and initiatives to help address the identified gaps contributing to retention challenges. The following recommendations provide actionable steps agencies can take.

1. Strengthening Career Mobility and Internal Advancement Pathways

Agencies should expand their use of career counseling to support internal mobility planning. Developing career maps and pathways that illustrate advancement routes across titles within the agency can help employees better understand growth opportunities. Agencies should also promote participation in Civil Service 101 information sessions to educate employees about the civil service examination process and how it can be leveraged to take greater control of their career progression.

2. Increase Visibility and Access to Professional Development

Agencies should promote citywide training as part of a career progression strategy rather than standalone learning. Courses offered through DCAS' Citywide Training Center support skill development ranging from technical competencies and effective business writing to preparing employees to transition from individual contributors to managers. Completion of relevant training courses can be incorporated into performance management and development plans. Managers and emerging leaders should also be encouraged to participate in citywide leadership development programs such as the Management Academy and Leadership Institute. These 12-week, cohort-based programs equip supervisors and leaders with practical tools to manage people, lead teams, navigate city systems, and drive performance. Expanding awareness and participation in these programs can strengthen leadership pipelines and support long-term workforce sustainability.

3. Use Engagement and Exit Data to Drive Agency Action Plans

Agencies can address retention challenges by reviewing the results of the Citywide Employee Viewpoint Survey (CEVS) issued in summer 2025. Insights and sentiments from the survey should be integrated into workforce and retention planning efforts. Agencies should also compare these findings with themes emerging from exit surveys to identify gaps, validate trends, and prioritize targeted interventions. In addition, sharing the best practices citywide can help agencies adopt proven strategies to improve engagement and retention.

4. Strengthen Total Rewards Messaging and Compensation Awareness

Agencies should emphasize the full value of the city's total compensation package, including pension and retirement security, comprehensive health benefits, job stability, paid leave, and eligibility for Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF). Agencies should also promote participation in student loan support programs such as Summer, an online platform available to city employees that provides step-by-step guidance on enrolling in income-driven repayment plans, completing PSLF paperwork, tracking qualifying payments, and accessing one-on-one support to reduce student debt. Increasing awareness and utilization of these resources can strengthen the overall value proposition of city employment and support financial well-being.

5. Expand Recruitment Messaging to Emphasize Career Pathways

Agencies can engage employees from the outset by positioning city employment as a career journey rather than a single job. Recruitment and onboarding messaging should highlight opportunities for mobility across agencies and titles and emphasize long-term career growth within city service. Clearly communicating advancement pathways can help employees envision a future with the city and strengthen retention.

| Appendix A – Agencies

The below agencies submitted data from their own surveys or offered DCAS' WISE or WISE-E surveys.

Admin. for Children's Services	Dept. of Veteran Services
Board of Corrections	Dept. of Youth and Community Development
Borough President - Manhattan	District Attorney - Manhattan
Borough President - Staten Island	District Attorney - Special Narcotics
Business Integrity Commission	Equal Employment Practices Commission
Campaign Finance Board	Fire Dept. of New York
Conflict of Interest Board	Financial Information Services Agency / Office of Payroll Administration (FISA/OPA)
NYC Commission on Human Rights	Housing Preservation and Development
City Clerk	Human Resources Administration
Civilian Complaint Review Board	Landmark Preservation Commission
Dept. for Aging	Law Dept.
Dept. of Buildings	Mayor's Office of Contract Services
Dept. of Citywide Administrative Services	Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice
Dept. of City Planning	NYC Employees Retirement System
Dept. for Consumer and Worker Protection	NYC Police Pension Fund
Dept. of Corrections	Office of the Mayor
Dept. of Design and Construction	Office of the Actuary
Dept. of Environmental Protection	Office of Admin. Trials and Hearings
Dept. of Finance	Office of the Comptroller
Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene	Office of Labor Relations
Dept. of Homeless Services	Office of Management and Budget
Dept. of Investigation	Office of Technology and Innovation
Dept. of Labor Relations	Public Advocate
Dept. of Parks and Recreation	Small Business Services
Dept. of Probation	Tax Commission
Dept. of Sanitation	Taxi and Limousine Services
Dept. of Transportation	Teachers Retirement Services

| Appendix B – FY2025 Resignations and Retirements by Agency, Title, Managerial Status and Title Classification

To view the FY2025 resignations and retirement data disaggregated by agency, title, managerial status and title classification, please click below:

https://bit.ly/FY2025_separations

| Appendix C – Definition of Categories

Communication captures employee perceptions toward effectiveness of agency communication and level of support that employees perceive they receive. It includes subcategories of agency communication and support given by the division of Human resources to the employees.

Compensation and Benefits measures employee perceptions of total rewards, capturing satisfaction with pay, benefits offerings, and the perceived fairness and adequacy of total compensation.

Employee Loyalty and Endorsement reflects employees' attachment to and endorsement for their agency and the city government overall. It also measures an employees' inclination to return to city government and whether they would recommend their agency and the city as an employer of choice.

Equity and Inclusion assesses employee perceptions of diversity, fairness, respect, inclusion, and equitable treatment in the workplace.

Growth and Development measures opportunities for learning, skill development, and career progression. Subcategories include career advancement opportunities, career alignment, professional development, and training, reflecting employees' ability to grow and advance within the organization.

Job Alignment and Role Clarity captures how well employees understood their roles and how aligned their work was with expectations based on the job description and initial interview. It includes the subcategories: job alignment, job description and role clarity.

Leadership and Supervision assesses perceptions of leadership effectiveness and supervisory relationships. Subcategories include agency leadership, participatory management (the extent to which employees feel their feedback is considered in decision making) and multiple aspects of supervision, including supervisor communication, fairness, qualifications, support, recognition, satisfaction, and feedback, as well as the supervisor's openness to feedback.

Policies and Procedures reflects employee perceptions of agency policies and their implementation. It also captures the extent to which employees view the clarity, fairness, and consistency in how policies are applied.

Recognition and Support measures the extent to which employees feel valued and supported in their work. Subcategories include recognition at work, respect, and discretionary effort.

Resources assess the extent to which employees feel they have adequate tools, staff, and materials needed to perform work effectively.

Teamwork and Collaboration captures the quality of working relationships among employees. Subcategories include teamwork, collaboration with others, and coworkers, reflecting cooperation, trust, and effective collaboration.

Work Environment measures perceptions of the physical work environment as well as perceptions of the agency's culture.

Work Experience reflects overall job experience and satisfaction. It includes work satisfaction, skill utilization, involvement at work, respect at work, and cultural work environment, capturing how employees experience their roles on a day-to-day basis.

Work-Life Balance assesses employees' ability to balance work and personal responsibilities. Subcategories include work-life balance and flexible work, reflecting flexibility and workload stresses.

| Appendix D – City of New York Exit Survey and Interview Protocol

In accordance with LL130, DCAS created an Exit Survey and Interview Protocol to help agencies navigate the new exit survey and interview guidelines as set forth in the law. This guide also includes template emails for voluntarily departing employees, the survey questions for the WISE-E survey and sample exit interview questions. The guide can be accessed at the link below:

https://bit.ly/WISEE_guide

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