

# FY 2024 Exit Survey Analysis

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*Local Law 130 (2023)*



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## Background

Local Law 130 of 2023 (“LL130”), requires the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (“DCAS”) to develop a standardized citywide exit survey and interview protocol for voluntarily departing employees (e.g., resignations or retirements) and requires agencies to offer all voluntarily departing employees 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, and compensation concerns.

To develop the citywide exit survey, LL130 requires city agencies to share their existing offboarding processes – including exit surveys and interviews – with DCAS by January 1, 2024. In addition to providing this information, agencies must submit data from administered exit surveys and interviews to DCAS and the Equal Employment Practices Commission (EEPC) annually by September 15. Furthermore, by March 30, 2025, and each year thereafter, DCAS must submit to the EEPC and the Speaker of the Council a copy of the comprehensive exit survey and interview protocol, along with a report summarizing responses from the previous calendar year and an analysis of the collected data. Due to the nature of the information being collected, the reporting timeline for agencies, and the need to ensure the most comprehensive data is captured, all reports will be based on fiscal year data rather than calendar year data.

Exit surveys are a valuable tool for organizations to gather insights from departing employees. They help identify patterns in turnover, and can uncover workplace issues while providing 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. Additionally, exit surveys and interviews offer a structured way to collect honest feedback, as individuals leaving are often more candid about their experiences. LL130 aims to address retention issues within the city government workforce and provide recommendations for systematic organizational improvements.

## Introduction

Employee separations 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 2024<sup>1</sup> and the voluntary turnover rate was 13.5%<sup>2</sup>.

In New York City, employee separations reflect both national trends and local economic pressures, including the high cost of living and the dominance of industries such as finance, technology, and hospitality. New York City has also seen fluctuations in separations due to company downsizing, restructuring, and shifts in remote work policies. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a little over 1.9 million people resigned from their jobs, an approximate 2% voluntary turnover rate in New York.<sup>3</sup> In FY2024, 13,721 employees left city government due to retirement or resignation.

## Local Law 130 Data Collection and Analysis

The first part of Local Law 130 required agencies to submit to DCAS their existing exit surveys and policies by January 1, 2024. Forty-six (46) out of 76 agencies shared this information. Forty agencies reported that they have their own exit survey.

### Who Participated?

At the time of this report, the citywide exit survey was still under development and had not been rolled out for agency use. DCAS' citywide exit survey was rolled out in March 2025.

To prepare for this first report, data was collected from 35 out of the 40 city agencies that administer their own exit surveys. A total of 3,105 employees across these agencies were offered a survey, with 70% choosing to participate (see Appendix B for retirement and resignation

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

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.imercer.com/articleinsights/workforce-turnover-trends>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.bls.gov/regions/northeast/news-release/jobopeningslaborturnover\\_newyork.htm](https://www.bls.gov/regions/northeast/news-release/jobopeningslaborturnover_newyork.htm)

breakdown by agency, title, managerial status and jurisdictional class<sup>4</sup>). Additionally, 2,672 employees were offered an exit interview, with 86% choosing to participate.

Agencies had varying exit procedures which included agency-specific exit surveys, dissemination of DCAS' existing survey for voluntarily departing managers (Workplace Insights Survey (WISE)), and the conducting of formal exit interviews or check-in meetings where employees return agency-issued property and other specific information related to their offboarding.

## Methodology

Excel templates were provided to agencies that reported having an exit survey or exit interview, asking them to complete the templates with FY2024<sup>5</sup> data and return them to DCAS. The data from the templates were combined to create one 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 (5)-point or 10-point scales to a four (4)-point scale) to aid in the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Questions were organized under broader themes, including compensation and benefits, communication, co-workers, diversity and inclusion, job description, job satisfaction, opportunities for career advancement, policies and procedures, recognition and support, resources, supervisor feedback, training, work environment, and work-life balance.

## Summary of Key Findings

- **Resignations as the Leading Exit Reason:** Resignations significantly outnumber retirements as the primary reason for employee exits, highlighting the need to understand and address why employees choose to leave.
- **Career Advancement Opportunities:** Many employees expressed dissatisfaction with opportunities for career growth, identifying this as a critical area for improvement.

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<sup>4</sup> Business title was not included in the aggregation as many employees do not have a business title listed in the system.

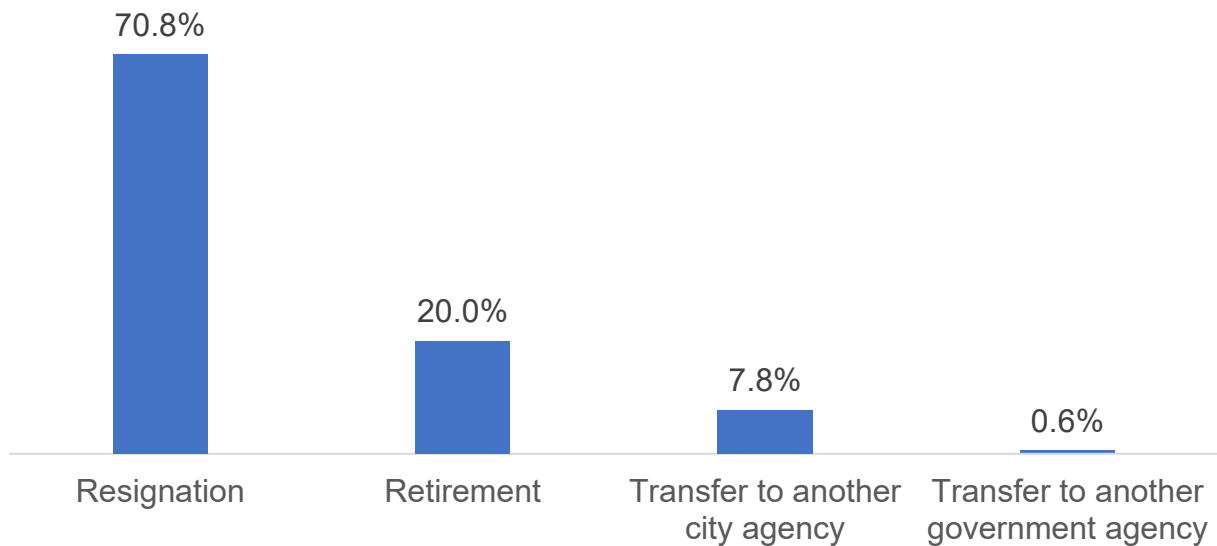
<sup>5</sup> LL130 specifies that agencies submit their exit survey and interview data to DCAS and the EEPD by September 15 which would only provide data for 9 months of the calendar year. DCAS requested fiscal year 2024 data for this first report to allow for reporting for a full 12 months. We invite the Council to amend the law to allow for fiscal year reporting for future reports to identify year over year trends.

- **Compensation Concerns:** Both salary and benefits received mixed satisfaction levels, with notable dissatisfaction regarding compensation levels.
- **Work-Life Balance Issues:** While some employees were satisfied with their work-life balance, a substantial number expressed dissatisfaction with workloads, making this another recurring area of concern.
- **Supervisor Feedback:** Supervisor-related categories, such as those related to feedback and communication with managers, showed overall positive satisfaction, but recognition and support from supervisors need improvement.
- **Job Description Satisfaction:** Employees generally feel satisfied with their job roles and the utilization of their skills, making this a strength for the City.
- **Recognition and Respect:** Many employees felt a lack of recognition and respect at work, emphasizing the need for stronger employee recognition programs and inclusive work cultures.
- **Agency Goals and Training:** Satisfaction levels for training and alignment with agency goals were moderate, showing potential for improvement in these areas.

## Results

### Where Are They Going?

Figure 1 - Separation Type



The primary reason for FY2024 voluntary separations were resignations, which accounted for 71% of departures. The second most frequent reason was retirement, at 20%. Other reasons

included "Transfer to another city agency" (8%) and "Transfer to another government agency" (1%).

## Why Are They Leaving?

Figure 2 - Reasons for Leaving

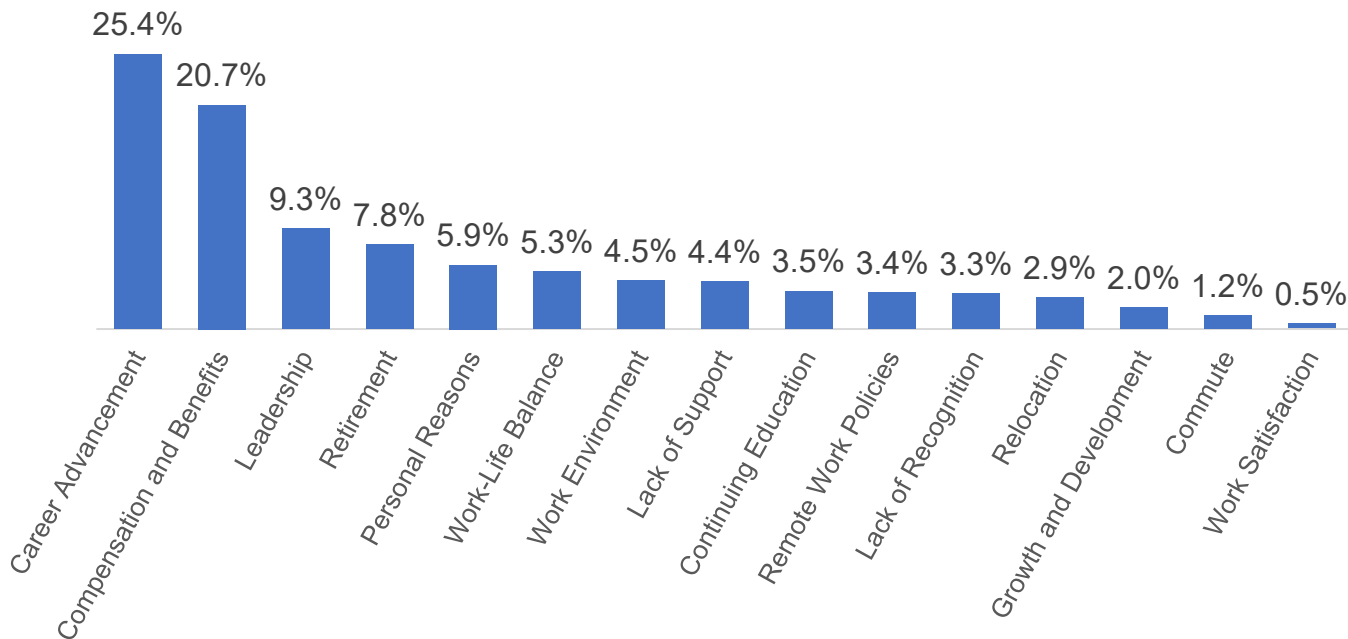


Figure 2 illustrates the various reasons employees reported for leaving their position in FY2024, from highest to lowest. "Career Advancement" was the top factor, accounting for 25.4% of responses, followed closely by "Compensation and Benefits" at 20.7%. This suggests that career growth and financial considerations may be primary motivators. "Leadership," at 9.3% is also a notable contributor. Categories such as "Personal Reasons" (5.9%) and "Work Life Balance" (5.3%) are less impactful but still relevant. This distribution highlights that, while career and financial aspects are critical, other factors like leadership and personal reasons also play a role, albeit to a lesser extent.

## Workplace Perceptions

Responses to multiple-choice questions were summarized by aggregating all responses and calculating the mean or average across all the responses. This average provides a single score that represents the overall trend of the responses. For example, an average score of three (3) or above based on a scale of one (1) to four (4) indicates a positive trend.

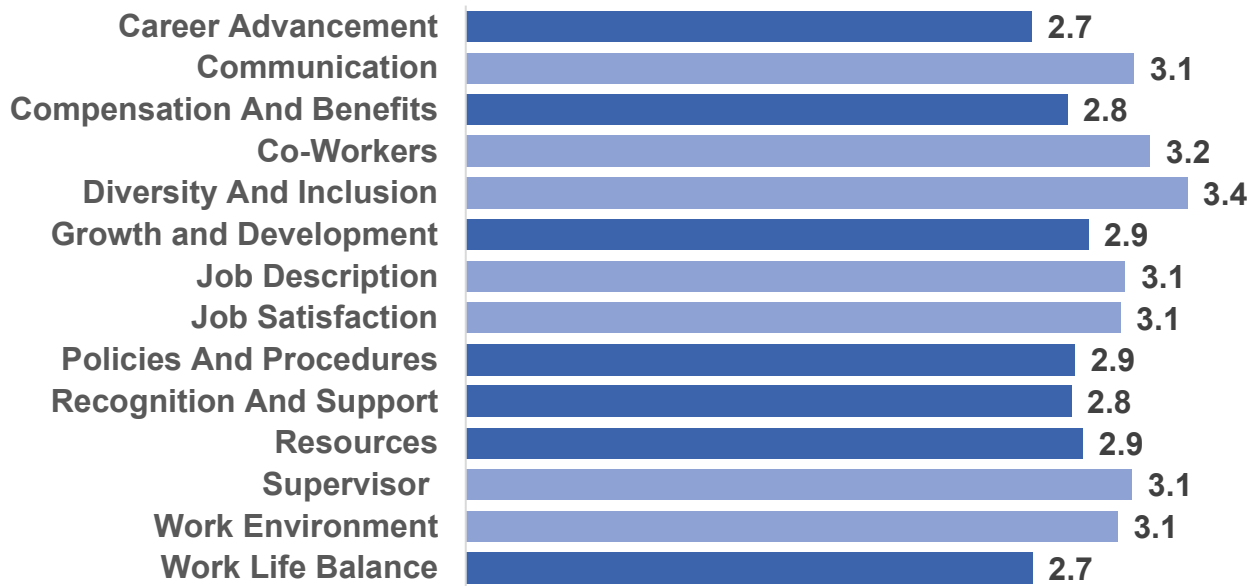
**Figure 3 - Employee Perceptions by Category**

Figure 3 provides a breakdown of employee perceptions in various areas related to their job and agency. The lighter blue bars in the chart indicate areas rated more positively, and the darker blue bars indicate areas rated more negatively.

### Areas of Strength

The highest mean score was in the category related to "Diversity and Inclusion" (3.4), indicating that employees feel that their agencies and the City, overall, are committed to fostering an environment of diversity and inclusion where employees feel a sense of belonging. Employees also rated their relationships with co-workers as highly positive (3.2). Other positive areas include: "Communication" (3.1), which include perceived communication within the agency, "Supervisor" (3.1), "Job Description" (3.1.), which includes employees' perceptions of how well the job description and initial interview aligned with their actual responsibilities, and "Work Environment" (3.1).

### Areas of Opportunities

The average scores in other areas were slightly under three (3), suggesting moderate satisfaction but also room for improvement. "Policies and Procedures," "Resources," and "Growth and Development" had average scores of 2.9.

The areas that received the lowest average scores were "Opportunities for Career Advancement" (2.7) and "Work-Life Balance" (2.7), which align with the primary reasons for employee departures.



Figure 4 - Employee Satisfaction Levels by Category

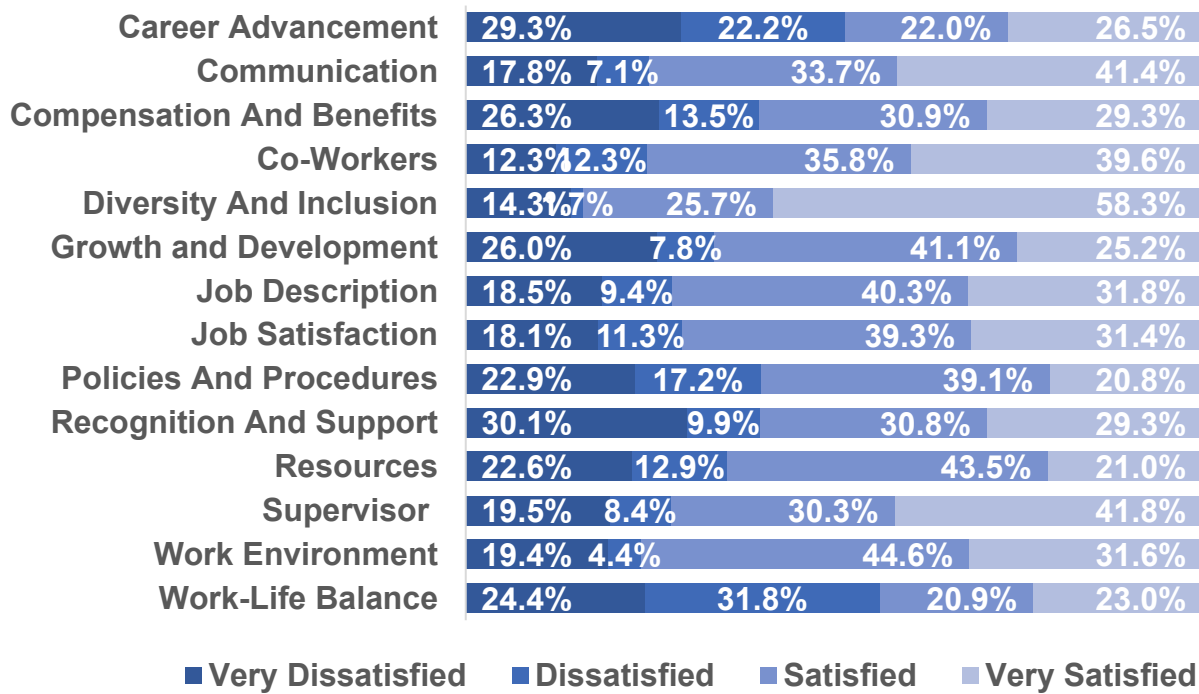


Figure 4 provides a closer look at the distribution of satisfaction levels across workplace categories, ranging from "Very Dissatisfied" to "Very Satisfied." "Diversity and Inclusion" stands out, with 58.3% of departing employees reporting "Very Satisfied" in this category.

"Communication" and "Supervisor" were other areas rated with high satisfaction levels, with over 40% reporting "Very Satisfied." On the other end of the spectrum, areas like "Recognition and Support," "Career Advancement" and "Training" had a higher proportion of employees reporting "Very Dissatisfied."

When analyzing Figure 4 in relation to Figure 2, some key connections emerge between employee dissatisfaction drivers and the reasons behind their decisions to leave. Figure 2 shows that "Career Advancement" and "Compensation and Benefits" were the primary reasons influencing decisions, which aligns with the current chart showing that approximately 51% of employees reported dissatisfaction with opportunities for career advancement opportunities and 40% reported dissatisfaction with their compensation and benefits. This suggests a direct relationship between these dissatisfaction points and employees' motivations to seek other opportunities.

Similarly, while "Work-Life Balance" was a less influential factor in decisions to leave according to Figure 2, it is an area where the majority of departing employees reported dissatisfaction. This indicates that, although not a primary driver for choosing to leave, it still significantly affects employee well-being and overall sentiment.

## Breakdown of the Top Categories

### Opportunities for Career Advancement

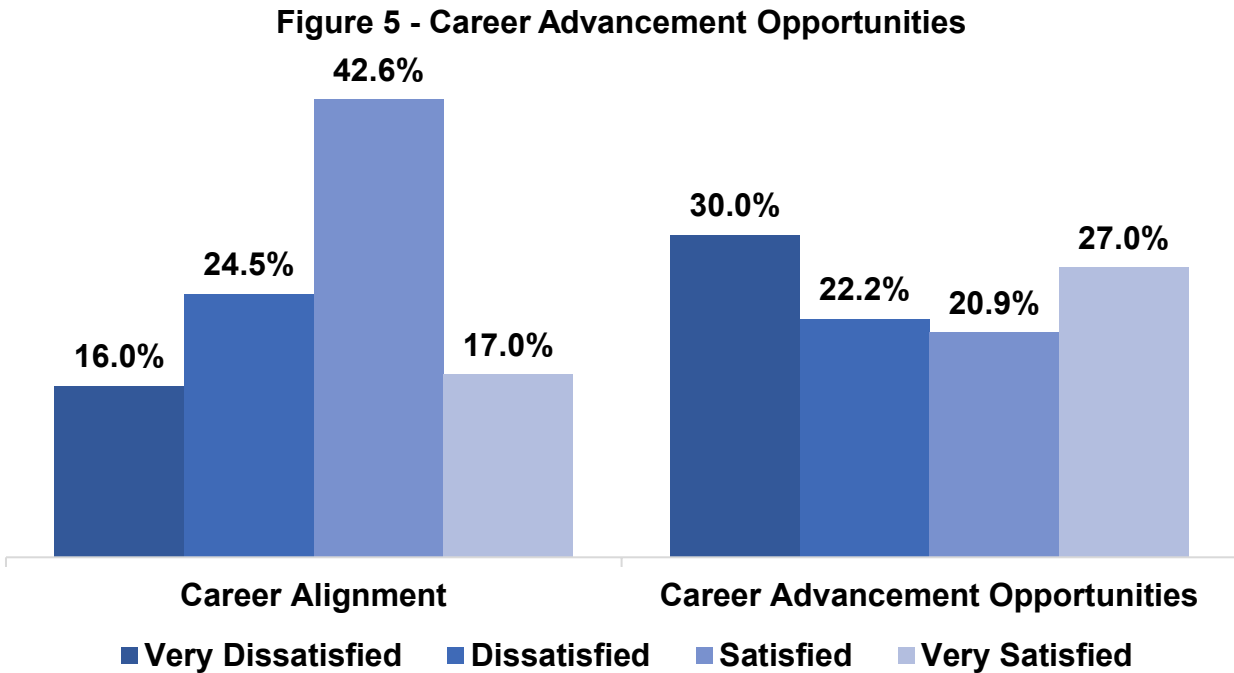


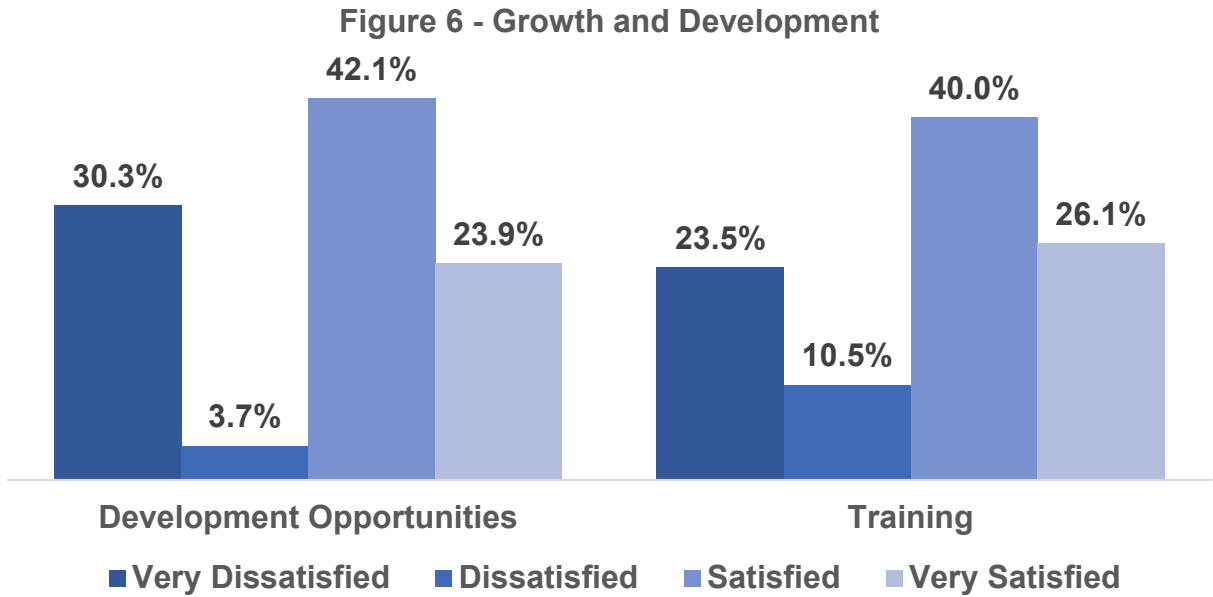
Figure 5 examines employee satisfaction across two (2) subcategories that make up career advancement: "Career Alignment," which asks the employee if the role they are leaving aligned with their career goals, and "Career Advancement Opportunities," measured on a Likert scale from "Very Dissatisfied" to "Very Satisfied."

For "Career Alignment," most responses were positive, with 43% reporting "Satisfied" and another 17% reporting "Very Satisfied." This suggests that while most employees generally felt that their work aligned with their career goals, approximately 40% perceived that their role was not a good fit or match.

"Career Advancement Opportunities" shows that most respondents were dissatisfied, with one-third of departing employees reporting "Very Dissatisfied" (30%) and another 22% reporting "Dissatisfied."

Overall, dissatisfaction with career advancement opportunities is a dominant theme, emphasizing the need to help employees understand the various paths for professional growth within city government.

Growth and Development



To better understand perceptions around career and growth within the City, a breakdown of the “Growth and Development” category was provided, which includes training and other development opportunities such as networking and mentoring. Figure 6 shows the subcategories of “Development Opportunities” and “Training.”

For “Development Opportunities,” most participants rated this area positively, with 42.1% reporting “Satisfied” and 23.9% reporting “Very Satisfied.” However, one-third of participants were on the other extreme end and rated “Very Dissatisfied.”

Regarding “Training,” which includes on the job training and opportunities for training, most respondents reported satisfaction. However, one-third of employees also rated this area negatively. This highlights the need for improvement in development and training opportunities. Agencies may also benefit from conducting a training needs assessment to identify areas where employees could benefit the most.

## Compensation and Benefits

Figure 7 - Compensation and Benefits

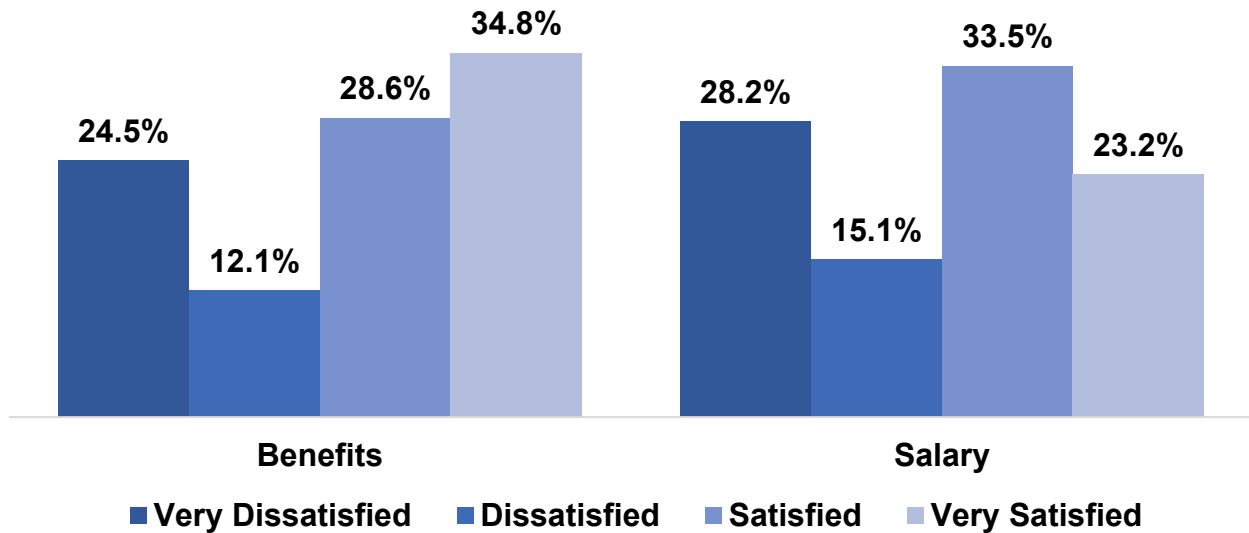


Figure 7 evaluates employee satisfaction with two (2) subcategories of compensation: "Benefits" and "Salary," measured on a Likert scale from "Very Dissatisfied" to "Very Satisfied."

For "Satisfaction with Benefits," most employees reported satisfaction: 35% reported being "Very Satisfied" and 29% were "Satisfied." However, a quarter of respondents indicated being "Very Dissatisfied" (24.5%) with their benefits.

For "Satisfaction with Salary," most employees reported being satisfied with their salary: 33.5% reported being "Satisfied," and 23.2% were "Very Satisfied." However, a large proportion also reported dissatisfaction in this area, with 28.2% reporting being "Very Dissatisfied" and 15.1% "Dissatisfied."

Overall, while a considerable number of employees are satisfied or highly satisfied with their compensation, a substantial proportion expresses dissatisfaction, particularly with salary.



## Work-Life Balance

Figure 8 - Work-Life Balance

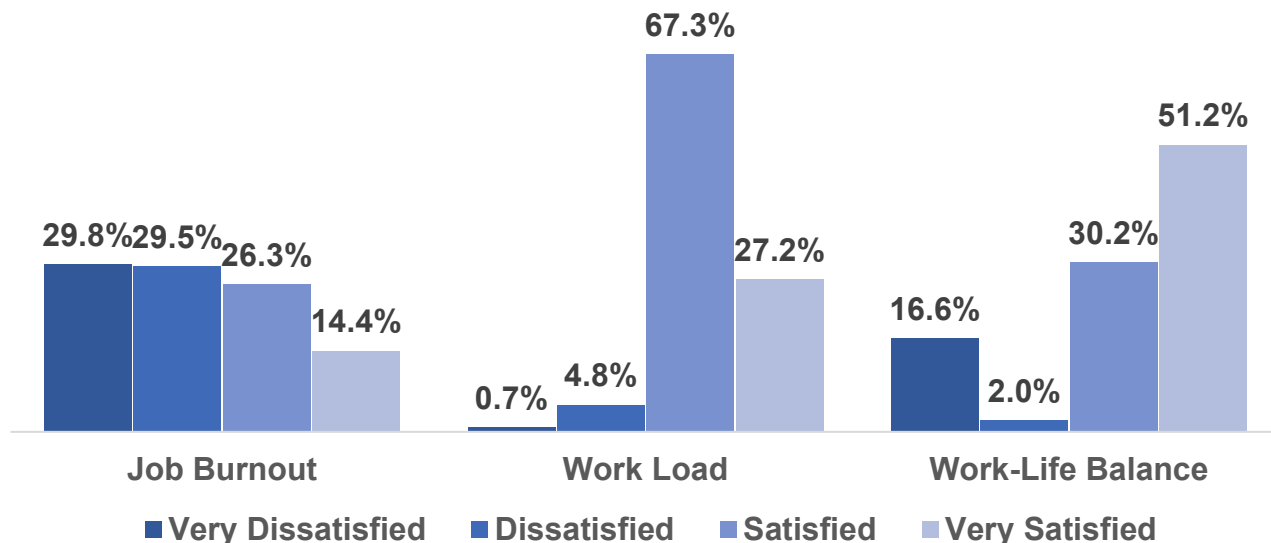


Figure 8 provides a breakdown across three (3) components of work-life balance: "Job Burnout," "Workload," and "Work-Life Balance."

"Work-Life Balance" was rated positively, with over 80% reporting satisfaction in this area.

"Workload" was also rated positively, with overwhelmingly almost all respondents reporting either being "Satisfied" (67.3%) or "Very Satisfied" (27.2%). Only a small fraction (5.5%) expressed dissatisfaction in this area.

Interestingly for "Job Burnout," the majority of respondents (~60%) reported negative feelings in this area, more specifically endorsing questions related to feeling burned out or drained on the job.

Satisfaction with work-life balance stands out as a relative strength. However, job burnout could undermine overall job satisfaction, highlighting the need for agencies to address employee concerns regarding excessive demands.

## Limitations

There are some limitations to this analysis. First, the survey and interviews were not uniform, each agency used its own survey. Although we attempted to consolidate and combine similar questions and standardize the data by grouping them into categories, the number of respondents is not equal across each category. These limitations will be ameliorated in the next report, as DCAS will have rolled out the citywide exit survey.

## Conclusion

Despite the limitations, this analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the key factors affecting employees' experiences working for the City and influencing their decision to leave. Resignations are the primary reason that employees choose to leave the City, with a perceived lack of career development opportunities and dissatisfaction with compensation as the primary factors for voluntarily departing employees. Areas that were rated positively include, diversity and inclusion, relationships with co-workers, team and interagency communication, supervisors, and alignment between job responsibilities and the job description. Continuing to enhance these areas may potentially help boost retention rates. Areas for improvement include increasing knowledge around career advancement opportunities, increasing accessibility to growth and development opportunities, making compensation and benefits more competitive, and enhancing work-life balance.

## Recommendations Based on Findings

There are a variety of programs and initiatives that the City offers that can help address these identified areas of weakness that are contributing to issues related to retention.

- **Career Counseling** (Local Law 75 of 2024 (LL75)) – Employees can request career counseling after one (1) year of service within an agency. This allows employees to have the opportunity to better understand the various pathways that are available to help employees develop their careers.
- **Citywide Training and Development** – DCAS' Citywide Training and Development Center offers training in a variety of areas to help employees further enhance their existing skillsets or reskill in other areas of interest. NYCityLearn is a new platform where employees can easily search and register for courses in their area of interest.
- **Civil Service 101 (CS101)** – CS101 classes are offered several times throughout the year. These classes are designed to help employees better understand the civil service system and take exams to help cultivate and advance their career within the City of New York.
- **Citywide Employee Viewpoint Survey** (Local Law 76 of 2024 (LL76)) – DCAS will roll out a citywide engagement survey in the summer of 2025. This survey will further enhance our understanding of the factors that impact employee engagement and retention.
- **Pay Equity** – While compensation and benefits are negotiated between the Municipal Labor Unions and the Office of Labor Relations (OLR) to ensure employees receive competitive salaries and benefits, the passage of several local laws in NYC help provide a deeper understanding of pay equity across the city to ensure that employees are fairly and equitably compensated. Local Law 27 of 2023 (LL27) requires DCAS and the Pay Equity Cabinet to collaborate with a pay equity consultant to identify issues related to pay equity and provide policy recommendations that may help address areas of inequity.

- **WorkWell NYC** - WorkWell NYC is a benefit offered through the Office of Labor Relations (OLR) to all NYC employees. They provide classes and other resources to enhance physical and mental wellbeing to help employees find more balance between their work and personal lives.

## Appendix A– Agencies

The below agencies submitted data from their own surveys or offered DCAS' Workplace Insights Survey for Exiting Employees (WISE) survey for voluntarily departing managers.

- Administration for Children's Services
- Borough President – Bronx
- Business Integrity Commission
- Campaign Finance Board
- NYC Commission on Human Rights
- City Clerk – WISE survey
- Civilian Complaint Review Board
- Department for Aging
- Department of Buildings
- Department of Citywide Administrative Services
- Department of City Planning
- Department for Consumer and Worker Protections
- Department of Cultural Affairs – WISE survey
- Department of Corrections – WISE survey
- Department of Design and Construction
- Department of Environmental Protection – WISE survey
- Department of Finance – WISE survey
- Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- Department of Homeless Services – WISE survey
- Department of Investigation
- Department of Parks and Recreation
- Department of Probation
- Department of Records and Information Services



- Department of Transportation
- Department of Veteran Services
- Department of Youth and Community Development – WISE survey
- District Attorney – Manhattan
- Fire Department of New York
- Financial Information Services Agency / Office of Payroll Administration (FISA/OPA)
- Housing Preservation and Development
- Human Resources Administration – WISE survey
- Law Department
- Mayor's Office of Contract Services – WISE survey
- NYC Employees Retirement System
- Office of the Comptroller
- Office of Labor Relations
- Office of Management and Budget
- Office of Technology and Innovation
- Small Business Services

## **Appendix B – FY2024 Resignations and Retirements by Agency, Title, Managerial Status and Title Classification**

For FY2024 resignations and retirement data that is included in this report disaggregated by agency, title, managerial status and title classification, please click here:

<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dcas/downloads/pdf/reports/local-law-113-2023-for-fy-2024-report-retirements-resignations.pdf>

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