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Employee Retention in a Post-Pandemic Workplace

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Missouri Department of Natural Resources

National Tanks Conference
September 2025
Spokane, Washington

Overview

Challenges hiring and retaining workforce during and after COVID pandemic

What Missouri Department of Natural Resources did

Lessons learned moving forward

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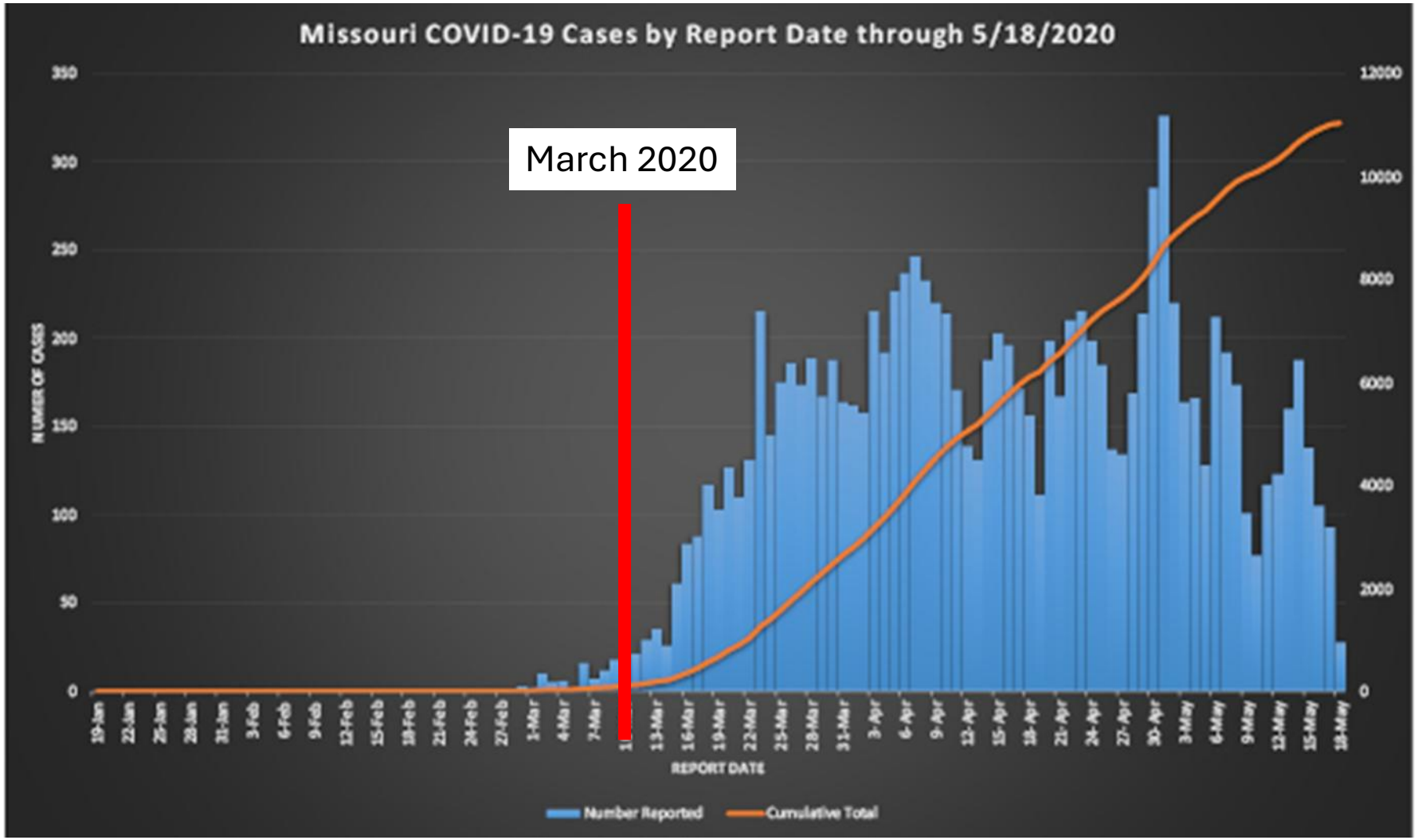
Missouri COVID-19 Cases through May 2020



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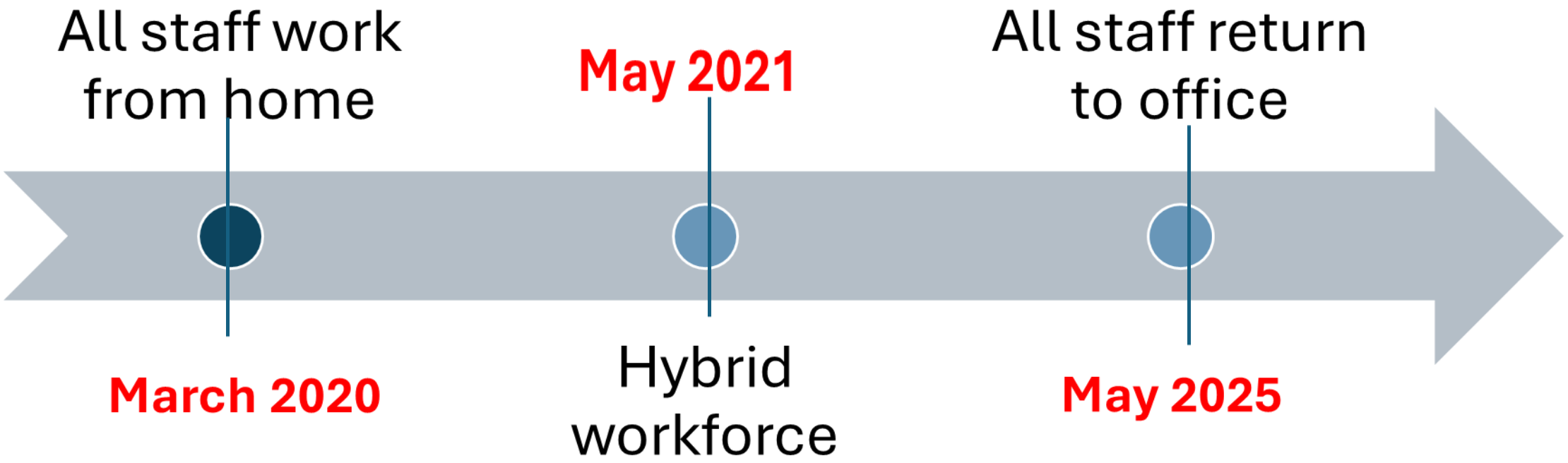
Missouri DNR Employees



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Working at Home in the Beginning

- No policies
- Equipment needs – laptops
- Connecting to mainframe
- Management of team meambers

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Challenges of Remote Work

FEELING DISCONNECTED

COLLABORATION WITH COWORKERS

PUBLIC PERCEPTION

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY

BUILDING A TEAM ATMOSPHERE AT WORK

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Benefits of Remote Work

- Increased productivity (possible)
- Employee retention
- Reduce absenteeism
- Flexibility and work life integration
- Cost savings for employees (no commute)

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MoDNR Distributed Teams Policy 3.02 Purpose and Scope

May 2021	Formal policy for team members working from home
	Provided definitions, policy and procedures
	Established expectations for team members

Hybrid Work Locations

- Work at home office part of week
- Work at main office part of week

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Do generations view remote work differently?

- Yes, different generations tend to view remote work differently.

Younger generations, like Gen Z and Millennials, generally favor remote work for its flexibility and work-life balance, while older generations, like Baby Boomers and some Gen Xers, may prefer a more traditional, in-office setting.

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- May 2025 Missouri Governor decided to require state workers return to their offices and not work out of their homes.

- “This decision was made to enhance customer service through face-to-face interactions and improve collaboration among team members. As we consistently work towards achieving innovation and efficiency, we are confident that reintroducing in-person interactions will leverage our success and provide mutual benefits for both individual team members and the agency.” Governor Kehoe

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May 2025

All Employees return to main office to work

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Challenges of Returning to Work in Primary Office after Hybrid Work

50% OF STAFF NEVER WORKED IN THE OFFICE

EMPLOYEE RETENTION

HIRING OF NEW STAFF

OFFICE SPACE ALLOCATION

REESTABLISH TEAM ATMOSPHERE

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Benefits of In Office Work

- Face to face collaboration
- Clearer work/personal life boundaries
- Face time with supervisor and team members
- Structured Environment: Regular schedules and dedicated workspaces
- More opportunity for mentorship
- Foster a sense of belonging

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Lessons Learned from Hybrid Work Place

- TECHNOLOGY IS A CRITICAL ENABLER – CLOUD BASE, A.I., EQUIPMENT
- BE FLEXIBLE AS MUCH AS POLICY ALLOWS
- EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH ARE CRUCIAL
- ADAPTABILITY AND RESILIENCE ARE ESSENTIAL SKILLS
- HIRE AND RETAIN STAFF IN A COMPETITIVE JOB MARKET

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Governor's years-of-service retention plan (July 2025)

Key Benefits of the Years-of-Service Pay Plan:

- **Longevity Recognition/Appreciation:**
- **Enhanced Retention:**
- **Increased Loyalty and Commitment:**
- **Improved Morale: Attracting and Retaining Top Talent:**

The years-of-service pay plan is a 1% pay differential provided to eligible state employees for every two years of continuous state service, up to a maximum of 10% with 20 or more years of service.

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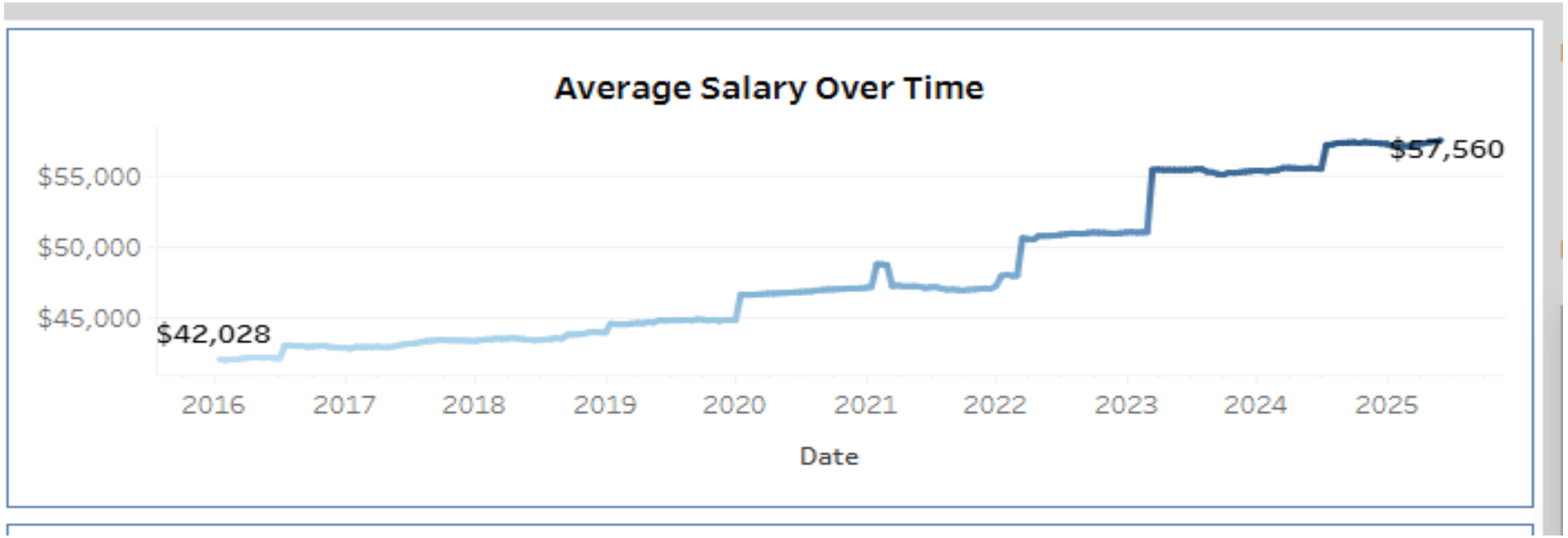
Average DNR Salary over Time

State attempt to increase salaries to attract and retain employees



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FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT

- 1,410 DNR Team Members

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DNR Employees Length of Employment with State Government

- 0-5 years: 50%
- 5-10 years: 17%
- 10-15 years: 9%
- 15-20 years: 8%
- 20-25 years: 8%
- 25-30 years: 5%
- 30-35 years: 2%
- 35-40 years: < 1%
- Greater than 40 years: < 1%

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Eligible to Retire Projections

DNR Employees

13% - At retirement age
23% - Within retirement age in 0-5 years
12% - Within retirement age in 5-10 years
8% - Within retirement age in10-15 years
8% - Within retirement age in 15-20 years

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MoCareers – Online Job Search

MO Careers - Department of N | Job openings

mocareers.mo.gov/hiretrue/ce3/job-board/5effe9b2-4b89-494b-ac76-c45e25190768?division=Department%20of%20Natural%20Resources

MoCareers

Create Job Alert | Help | Existing

Keyword | Department: Department of N... | Division | Occupation | Location | Include Nearby Locations | Clear Filters

Apply (0)

Bus Grants Planner - 7010930
Department of Natural Resources
Jefferson City, MO
We respect and embrace the experiences, knowledge and contributions of our team members. We strive for a culture

Construction Worker - 7010875
Department of Natural Resources
Brookfield, MO
5d ago
CLOSES ON Jul 25 2025
We respect and embrace the experiences, knowledge and contributions of our team

Construction Worker - 7010886
Department of Natural Resources
Jefferson City, MO
1d ago
CLOSES ON Jul 22 2025
We respect and embrace the experiences, knowledge and contributions of our team

Environmental Engineer - 4120917

#160273

Apply to Position | Apply With LinkedIn

- Jefferson City, MO
- Full-Time Salaried
- $58,776 - $64,968 Per year
- 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- Department of Natural Resources
- Division of Environmental Quality
- Engineering
- Lewis and Clark State Office Building
- ^^ 4120917 ASST/ASSOC ENG
- --

Job Summary | Responsibilities | Qualifications | Job Details | Contact Details

We respect and embrace the experiences, knowledge and contributions of our team members. We strive for a culture of belonging and balance by upholding our values: Stewardship, Integrity, Collaboration, Respect and Innovation. We are passionate about Missouri, our role to preserve, protect and enhance our environment and we are committed to serving its' citizens. We believe our mission and vision serves a greater purpose and will be felt for generations to come.

Please Note: The salary range listed in this job description is a base salary. Applicants eligible for years-of-service adjustments or shift differentials may exceed salary range listed above.

The engineering section assists communities and consultants in developing cost effective infrastructure designed to protect

• Privacy Policy • Accessibility Policy • Data Policy

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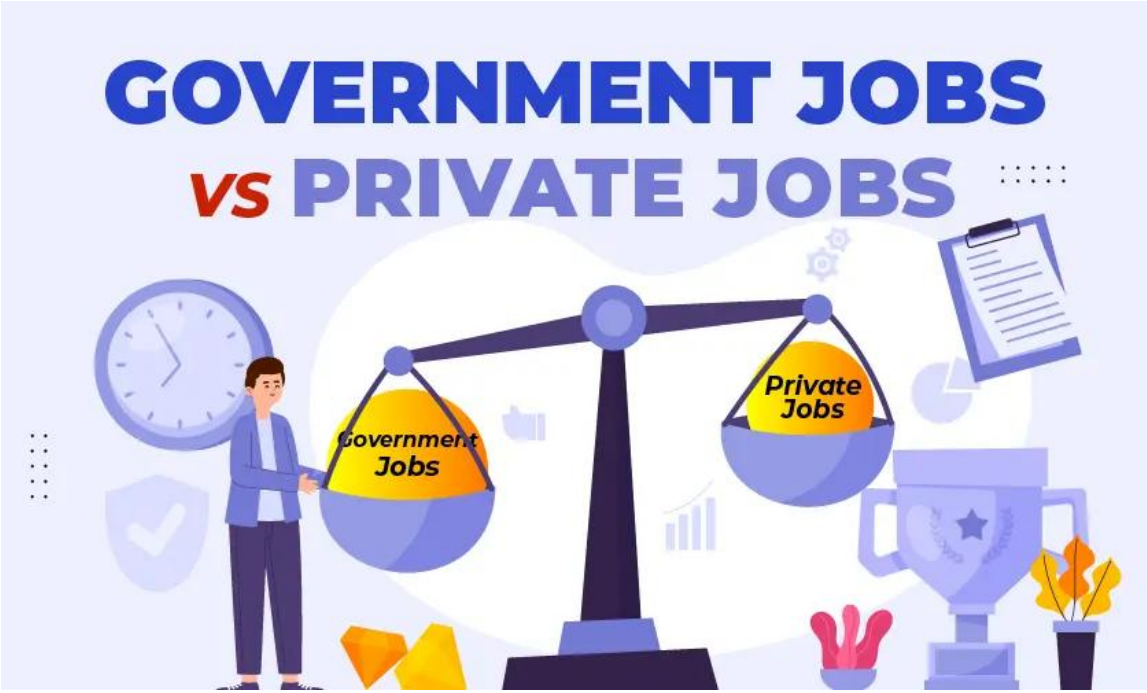

Government Job vs Private Job

- Job market is now more competitive
- Both sectors have their advantages and cons
- Ultimately, the choice between private and government jobs depends on individual priorities, including financial goals, career aspirations, and personal values.

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Why Work for the State of Missouri Government

- Public Service and Community Impact
- Career Growth and Stability
- Work-Life Balance
- Benefits
- Contributing to a Larger Mission

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MOCareers

WHY WORK WITH US | BENEFITS | DEPARTMENTS | HIRING EVENTS | FIND JOBS

SERVE A HIGHER CAUSE

Start Your Public Service Job in Missouri

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SHOW ME'S GOT TALENT is a statewide employee referral program, created to help motivate current state team members to refer applicants to jobs with State of Missouri. Eligible employees could qualify to receive $250 or $500 at new team member 90-day tenure.

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Today's interns are tomorrow's leaders!

Internships at DNR

The department's Summer Professional Development Program is designed to provide college students or recent graduates with real-life experience working alongside the department's engineers, scientists, natural resource managers and other professionals. Not only do the gain the experience they need, but they get to show off their hard-earned knowledge and skills.

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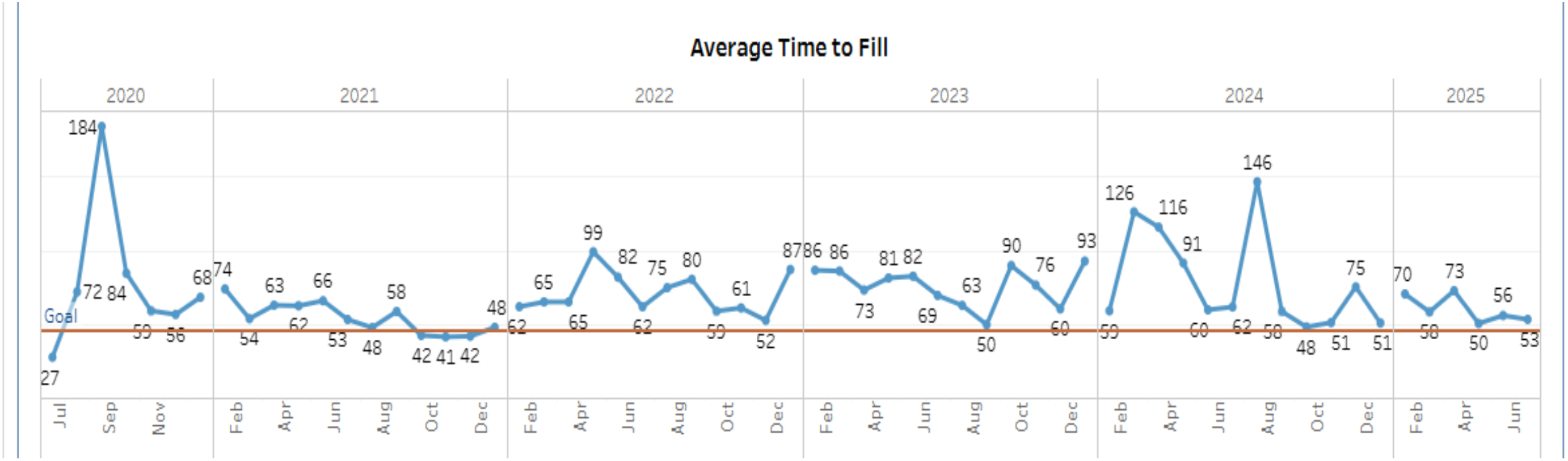
Average Time to Fill a DNR Position



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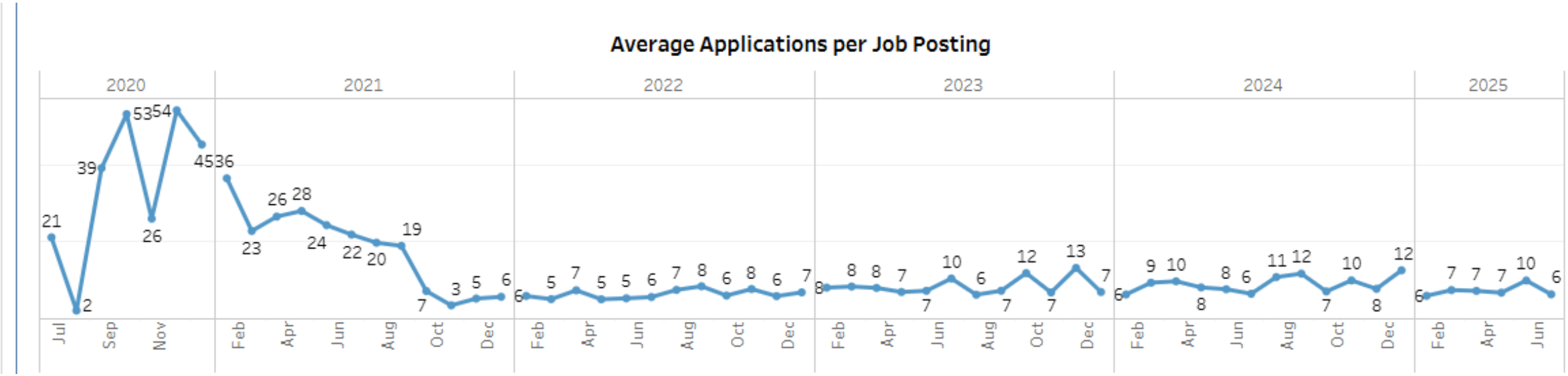
Average Applications per DNR Job Posting



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90-Day Exit Rate for all Departments

- 3% - MoDNR
- 17% - Statewide

(July 2025)

90 Day Exit Rate Detail and Internal Transfers for Executive Branch Departments

90 Day Exit Rate Detail

Agency	May 2024	Jun 2024	Jul 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	Mar 2025	Apr 2025	May 2025	Grand Total
DCI	0%	40%	18%	0%	0%	13%	25%	0%	40%	0%	0%	0%	14%	12%
DED	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
DESE	4%	6%	0%	18%	5%	6%	11%	8%	7%	13%	8%	21%	11%	9%
DHEWD	0%	0%	13%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	3%
DHSS	8%	0%	6%	11%	12%	22%	0%	9%	8%	13%	7%	0%	9%	8%
DMH	20%	31%	17%	18%	22%	22%	22%	21%	27%	17%	20%	25%	24%	22%
DNR	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	0%	6%	0%	6%	4%	12%	3%
DOC	25%	23%	25%	22%	20%	19%	25%	22%	17%	21%	19%	23%	19%	22%
DOLIR	0%	7%	14%	0%	33%	0%	0%	13%	0%	11%	0%	0%	20%	9%
DOR	27%	7%	25%	13%	11%	23%	14%	13%	13%	15%	18%	19%	14%	17%
DPS	26%	22%	19%	40%	26%	20%	35%	18%	23%	10%	28%	25%	12%	24%
DSS	17%	7%	18%	14%	13%	19%	19%	16%	13%	16%	13%	19%	13%	15%
MDA	11%	22%	0%	0%	0%	17%	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%	14%	0%	10%
MDC	9%	0%	8%	0%	8%	0%	13%	0%	0%	20%	20%	6%	0%	5%
MNG	0%	0%	9%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%	13%	25%	0%	7%
MODOT	3%	13%	10%	8%	6%	11%	3%	8%	8%	4%	9%	8%	2%	7%
OA	9%	5%	0%	11%	5%	8%	0%	0%	4%	29%	7%	31%	3%	8%
STATEWIDE	18%	18%	17%	16%	17%	17%	19%	17%	16%	16%	16%	20%	15%	17%

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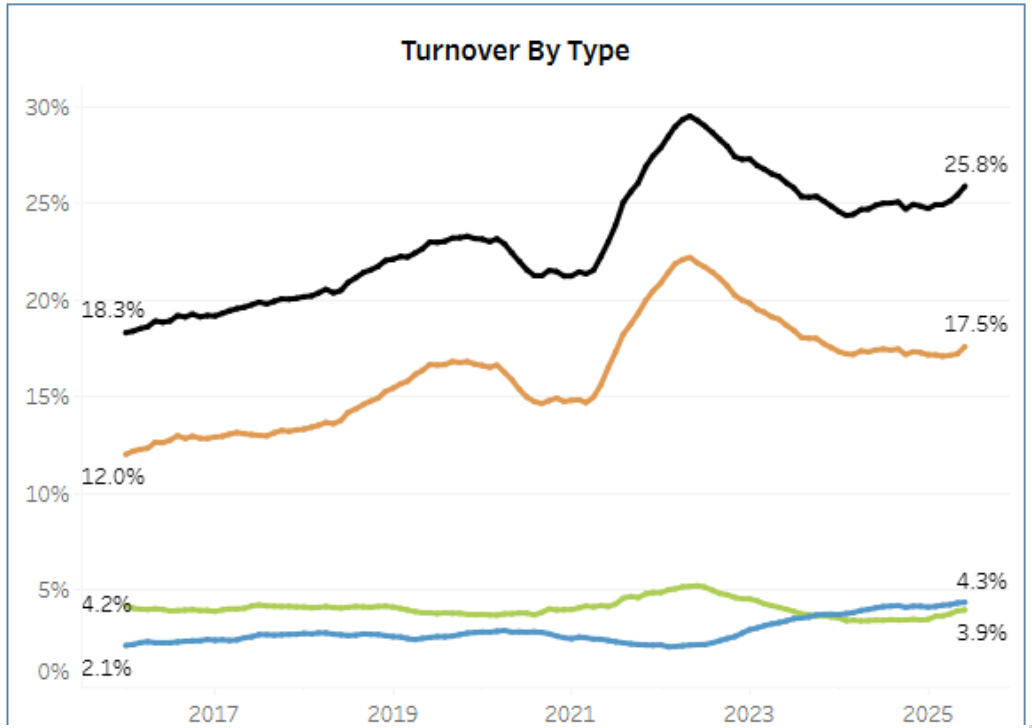
Fulltime State Employee Turnover Rate June 2025



Total Turnover	Total Voluntary Turnover	Total Involuntary Turnover	Other Turnover
25.8%	17.5%	4.3%	3.9%
Total Turnover Percentage = Total "Separation" actions divided by Total "Full Time Employees"	Voluntary Turnover = Total "Resigned State" actions + Total "Resigned Agency" actions divided by Total "Full Time Employees"	Involuntary Turnover = Total "Dismissal" actions divided by Total "Full Time Employees"	Other Turnover = Total "Retirement" actions + Total "Other Termination" actions divided by Total "Full Time Employees"

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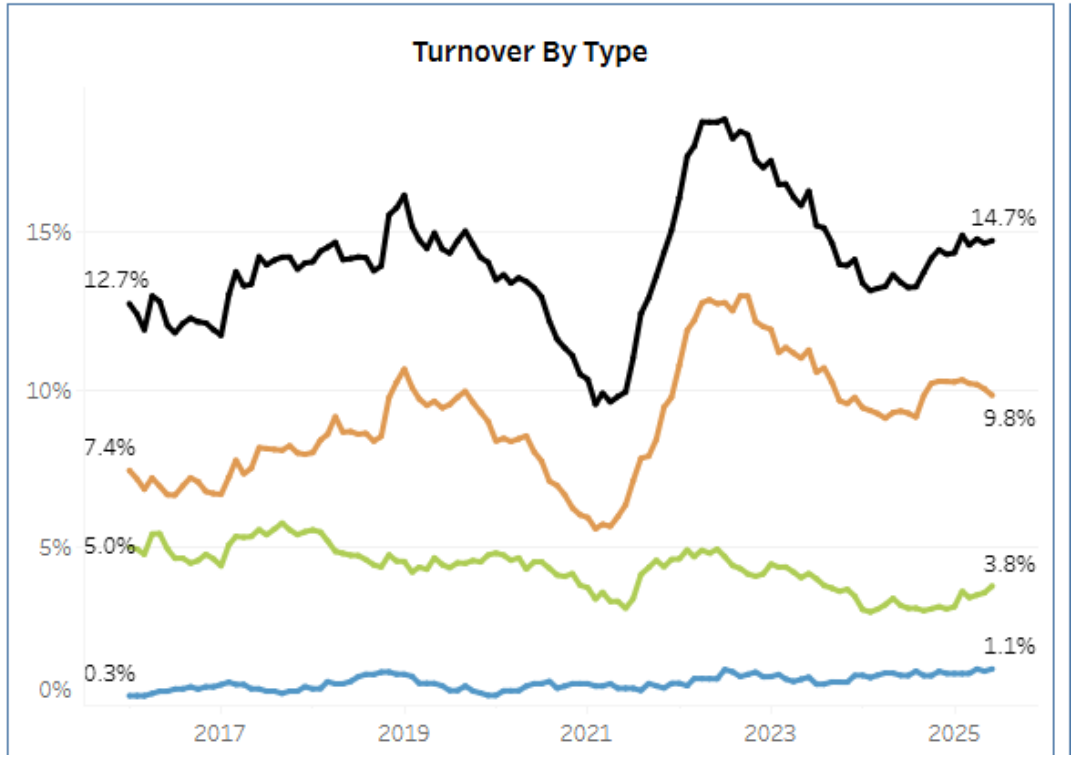
Fulltime DNR Employee Turnover Rate June 2025



Total Turnover	Total Voluntary Turnover	Total Involuntary Turnover	Other Turnover
14.7%	9.8%	1.1%	3.8%
Total Turnover Percentage = Total "Separation" actions divided by Total "Full Time Employees"	Voluntary Turnover = Total "Resigned State" actions + Total "Resigned Agency" actions divided by Total "Full Time Employees"	Involuntary Turnover = Total "Dismissal" actions divided by Total "Full Time Employees"	Other Turnover = Total "Retirement" actions + Total "Other Termination" actions divided by Total "Full Time Employees"

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Hiring Chill Summer 2025

MoDNR, Division of Environmental Quality slowed down hiring to only essential positions

100 open positions

Concern of federal budget shortfall and uncertainly

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Hiring Thaw
Fall 2025

- DNR Management has better feel of budget
- Certain open FTE positions allowed to be filled

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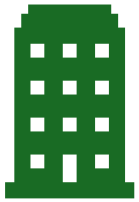
Employee Turnover

Retirement



Transfer within the company

Quit

Terminated

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Why Employees Leave

- Lack of work-life balance
- Lack of recognition and appreciation
- Lack of training
- Poor workplace culture
- Lack of growth opportunities
- Inadequate compensation
- Poor management
- Feeling disrespected

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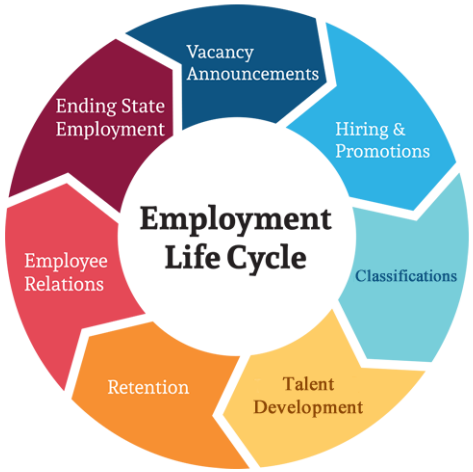
Ever-turning Wheel



- At the end of the day, employee turnover is a fact of life.
- Sometimes, even after you try to understand “why do employees leave their jobs” an employee will still leave. Maybe they’ve found a dream role elsewhere, better benefits, or perhaps they’re seeking a completely different path in life
- While you can’t eliminate turnover entirely, you can significantly reduce it by creating a company culture where employees feel valued, supported, and inspired to grow.

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Thank You

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