



SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN COMMUNITY ALLIANCE TURNOVER STUDY RESULTS



CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT:	2
Purpose and Goals	2
Key Findings	2
MWA Regional Overview	3
Cross Comparison with Full Region	4
A Note on Response Rates, Significance, and Response by Question	4
RESULTS BY QUESTION:	5
Employer Response Profile	5
Staffing	6
Employee Tenure	8
Human Resources Management	10
Retention Strategies	12
Employee Satisfaction	14
Staff Retention Challenges	16
APPENDIX:	18
Works Cited for Best Practice Research	18

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT:

Purpose and Goals

In February 2019, six Michigan Works! Agencies (MWAs) contracted with the Workforce Intelligence Network for Southeast Michigan (WIN) to examine employee turnover in the region. This work aims to provide the MWAs with a comprehensive understanding of the root causes of employee turnover and the potential gaps that exist in the development of career pathways for those with barriers to employment. Information gathered from a region-wide employer survey, convenings of local employers, and nationwide best practice research is included here.

The results of the employer survey represent a unique data source for our region, as this information is not currently tracked or reported by federal, state, or local entities. The information about the challenges and opportunities within our region is intended to assist MWAs in better serving employers and workers. In particular, this will help to inform the resources aimed at reducing employee turnover.

Key Findings

- 1. The occupations experiencing the highest rates of turnover are entry-level positions such as stock clerks and packaging workers and medical aides.
 - Occupations in which workers tend to remain with a company for a long time, however, face their own challenges in keeping jobs filled. Skilled trades, management, and nursing roles have high average tenure but also typically take a long time to fill, and an oncoming retirement cliff for many skillsets may leave employers with small talent pools to choose from in the future. For more details on tenure by occupation, see page 8.
- 2. SEMCA employers estimate median turnover costs of \$2,900 per worker.
 - This includes factors such as hiring search costs, training, and lost revenue and productivity. Training costs alone are estimated to be about \$1,000 per employee. Additional training and detailed onboarding are reported as effective, yet expensive, retention strategies. See page 17 for more detail about turnover costs.
- 3. The most common reason cited "very frequently" for employee turnover is a desire for higher pay or benefits, followed by transportation, child care, and other personal conflicts.
 - Scheduling concerns and opportunities to advance within the company were also major reasons for leaving. See page 16 for more detail about reasons for turnover.
- Competition for a shrinking talent pool is driving changes in retention strategy for many employers. Employers often face fierce competition for workers, and most are experimenting with changes in pay, benefits, and other workplace features to attract and retain talent. Employers cited a tight labor market, changing workforce demographics, and an insufficient number of workers being trained in the necessary skills as reasons for updating their policies. For detail about benefits and compensation, see page 14.

Additional Context

To best focus the survey, several avenues were explored to find existing challenges and best practices. A literature review sought national information on employee turnover causes and effects. This search emphasized the uniqueness of this data set. Additionally, preliminary employer convenings were held within each MWA to provide in-depth feedback and encourage discussion among local employers.

Turnover research has been occurring in some fashion since the early 20th century, with a primary focus on predictive turnover modeling for firms' internal use. Job satisfaction and alternatives, external shocks to businesses or workers, and employee traits were the focus of mid-century literature. More recent studies are typically based on a job embeddedness model, which represents a broad analysis of the reasons a worker will choose to remain at their job, and consider additional factors such as HR techniques and more advanced models of why workers stay. This body of research provides valuable insights into why employees may leave, but seldom refers to regional aggregate turnover studies or includes surveys that were conducted on employers. There are also some findings regarding consequences; negative correlation has been reported between turnover and measures such as customer satisfaction, profit margin, efficiency, and error/ loss rates. Sources and works for this are included on page 18.

Convenings of focus-industry employers took place throughout the month of March at all MWAs. Large convenings provided a consensus across many employers sharing similar concerns, while those with fewer employers in attendance allowed for more detailed discussion. Key themes from those meetings are included alongside survey analysis. The convenings included 67 total employers, whose industry mix is indicated in figure 1, across all six MWAs. Overwhelmingly, the convenings served to show that the causes of high turnover and barriers to work are consistent across the region and across industries.

Retail and Hospitality: 8 Health Care: 6 Workforce/ Social Construc-Sales, Business, Manufacturers: 32 or R&D: 12 tion: 3 TDL: 2

FIGURE 1: EMPLOYER CONVENING PARTICIPANTS BY BUSINESS TYPE

MWA Regional Overview

This report focuses on survey results from the Southeast Michigan Community Alliance (SEMCA) service area, which includes outer Wayne and Monroe counties. Though a wide range of employers were surveyed, the Energy and Utilities, Manufacturing, Health Care, and Retail Trade industries were the subject of focus.

Cross Comparison with Full Region

The survey results from outer Wayne and Monroe counties represented a broad range of industries and generally tracked quite closely with the region overall. Given the volume of responses from the service area, the results here are often discussed in light of results from the region overall. Key differences in the responding employers include an especially even distribution of business sizes and larger human resources departments. These employers, primarily in Manufacturing, Health Care, TDL, and Retail Trade, also appear to staff for a higher proportion of entry-level, high turnover occupations than southeast Michigan overall; turnover costs, time to fill an open position, average tenure, and amount of time for a new employee to be as productive as an existing one were all comparatively low. Wages are typically just above the full 16-county region average for the occupations specified here.

A Note on Response Rates, Significance, and Responses by Question

WIN would like to thank each MWA's business services team for their hard work in pushing the survey out to employers, and to thank everyone who took time to fill out the survey. Across all MWAs, 612 individuals responded to the call to help improve employee retention resources.

The survey was open between April 3, 2019 and May 14, 2019. During that time, 77 employers in the service area responded to the survey. Many of the questions did not pertain to all employers, such as those regarding multiple locations or some specific programs. These are represented by the sharp drops like those in questions 4 or 22.

FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF RESPONSES BY QUESTION



The 77 responses to the survey represent with a 95 percent likelihood the opinions of the general employer population in the two counties, with a margin of error of plus or minus 11 percentage points. Though the response volume does not allow for statistical precision, the feedback here is considered alongside regional trends and notes from employer convenings to provide specialized context for turnover challenges within the service area. More responses would decrease the margin of error, indicating less variability across the population in the opinions of the employers. In general, however, the statistical significance of a sample size in a multiple question employer feedback survey is less important than in other designed (i.e., binary) surveys, since the goal of a project like this is to receive information that might be helpful to other employers in the region.

RESULTS BY QUESTION:

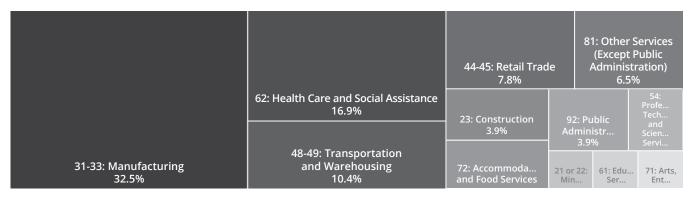
Employer Response Profile

Industry mix from responses

The greatest portion of responding employers in these counties identified themselves as Manufacturing firms, accounting for 32.5 percent of responses. Health Care and Social Assistance employers made up 16.9 percent of respondents, while Transportation and Warehousing employers were the third largest group.

About 10.3 percent of respondents were unsure how their business classifies for OCEW purposes. Those that responded this way were asked to describe their business' primary function and were then categorized as closely as possible; this may not perfectly represent the way businesses in the region file.

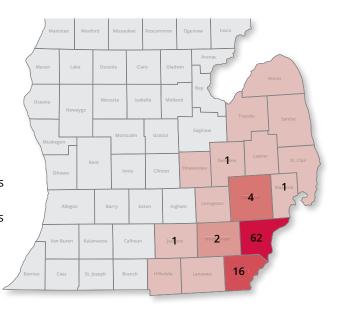
FIGURE 3: EMPLOYERS BY INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION



County locations of primary operations and any additional locations

The map in figure 4 shows the total number of responses that mentioned each county, including both primary and additional locations. Just over one third of employers operating in this service area have multiple locations. Regarding primary operations, 57 respondents, or 77.0 percent, primarily operate in Wayne county, while 14 employers primarily operate in Monroe county. Secondary locations were primarily located within nearby southeast Michigan counties, with Wayne and Oakland counties mentioned most frequently but extending as far as Genesee or Jackson counties. The wide geographic spread is important considering that transportation barriers heavily impact the area, especially as many workers were indicated in convenings to travel from Genesee county to the other MWAs. Insurance, licensing, and car repairs are prohibitively expensive, and transit is limited; employees mitigating costs through carpools are jointly susceptible to breakdowns.

FIGURE 4: PRIMARY AND ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS BY COUNTY



Staffing

Full-time employee counts

Small to mid-sized businesses make up the bulk of the employers that responded to the survey, with 27.7 percent of respondents reporting between 10 and 49 full-time employees, and another 24.6 percent reporting between 100 and 499. Employers in this service area represent a more evenly distributed range of business sizes than was typical across all six MSAs.



1.5%



Occupational Breakdown

- Which of the following roles are employed at your location?
- What is the approximate percentage of your staff in these roles?
- How long does it typically take to fill a position in these roles?

Some positions are significantly harder to fill and retain than others, and some skillsets are unusually rare. One of the primary concerns for this study was to quantify which occupations those may be. Employers often indicate that skilled trades roles have especially small talent pools and face an exceptional threat from the region's aging workforce. In this service area, drivers and production workers were also reported to be unusually hard to find and keep. The average and median values presented in this section reflect only SEMCA service area responses, but major differences with the overall region are highlighted where present.

In figure 6, the broad range of industries represented within responses is clear, as roles applicable to most businesses such as office and administrative workers and general managers top the list. Skilled trades and production roles have a high place as well. These occupations were chosen by many respondents and make up large portions of employers' total staffing. It was reported here to take, on average, around six weeks to fill a skilled trades position, though they generally indicate high retention. The ever-growing need for health care workers is also clear, as nursing positions often take over three months to fill. In convenings and turnover commentary within the survey, many employers commented that workers in many roles that make it through an initial threshold period are likely to stay for years.

FIGURE 6: EMPLOYMENT AND PERCENT OF STAFF BY NUMBER OF RESPONSES

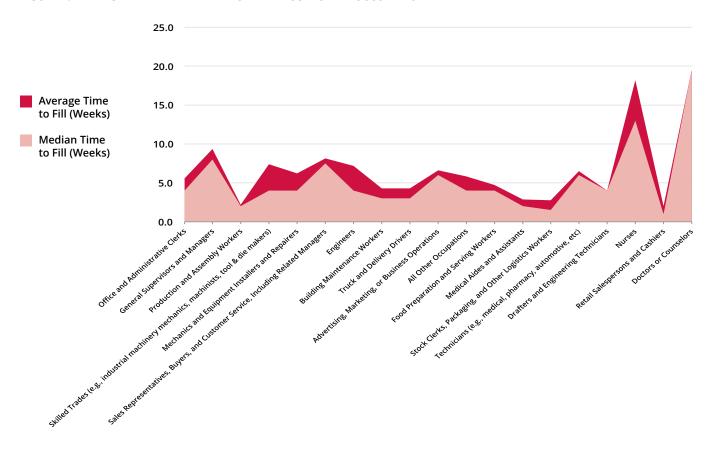
OCCUPATION	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	AVERAGE PERCENT OF STAFF	MEDIAN PERCENT OF STAFF
Office and Administrative Clerks	39	20.6%	10.0%
General Supervisors and Managers	34	11.1%	8.0%
Production and Assembly Workers	20	70.5%	60.0%
Skilled Trades (e.g., industrial machinery mechanics, machinists, tool & die makers)	20	16.4%	7.0%
Mechanics and Equipment Installers and Repairers	17	19.8%	10.0%

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OCCUPATION	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	AVERAGE PERCENT OF STAFF	MEDIAN PERCENT OF STAFF
Sales Representatives, Buyers, and Customer Service, Including Related Managers	17	15.6%	8.0%
Engineers	16	18.4%	7.5%
Building Maintenance Workers	14	4.7%	3.0%
Truck and Delivery Drivers	14	53.8%	22.5%
Advertising, Marketing, or Business Operations	12	6.9%	2.0%
All Other Occupations	10	53.7%	50.0%
Food Preparation and Serving Workers	9	41.3%	38.0%
Medical Aides and Assistants	8	92.3%	50.0%
Stock Clerks, Packaging, and Other Logistics Workers	8	24.6%	10.0%
Technicians (e.g., medical, pharmacy, automotive, etc)	7	15.6%	5.0%
Drafters and Engineering Technicians	5	8.0%	8.0%
Nurses	4	40.0%	35.0%
Retail Salespersons and Cashiers	4	15.5%	15.5%
Doctors or Counselors	3	20.5%	20.5%

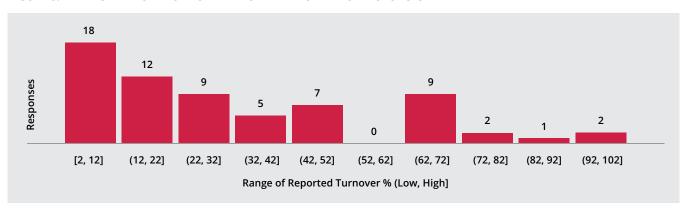
FIGURE 7: AVERAGE AND MEDIAN TIME TO FILL A POSITION BY OCCUPATION



Employee Tenure

Estimated annual turnover rate

FIGURE 8: AVERAGE ANNUAL TURNOVER PERCENT BY NUMBER OF RESPONSES

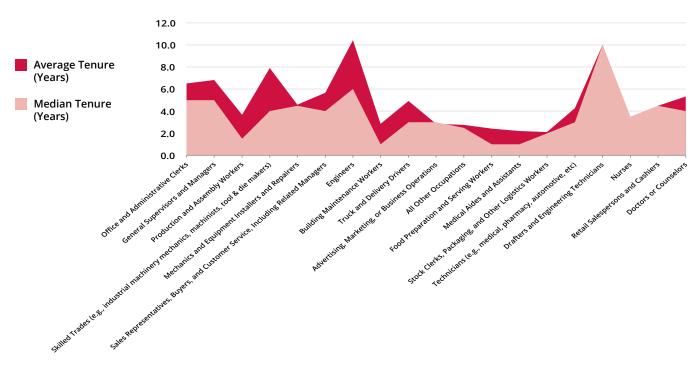


Responding employers experience a wide range of turnover rates as depicted in figure 8. The greatest portion, or 18 employers of the 65 responses, have a 12 percent or smaller annual turnover. However, a total of 14 employers experience greater than 50 percent turnover each year, or more than half of their staff.

Tenure estimates by occupation

Patterns among tenure rates were consistent between this service area and the full region. Medical aides, production workers, and other entry-level positions have both very low tenure and low time to fill, while the opposite is true for high-skilled roles such as doctors, skilled trades, and engineers.

FIGURE 9: AVERAGE AND MEDIAN TENURE BY OCCUPATION



Tenure differences between hourly and salaried workers

Just over half, or 60.0 percent, of responding employers stated that tenure is noticeably different between their hourly and salaried workers. Below is a depiction of the distribution of tenure for both groups. Hourly workers have much greater numbers of individuals remaining in their positions for one year or less, while salaried workers are much more likely to remain with a company for five years or more.

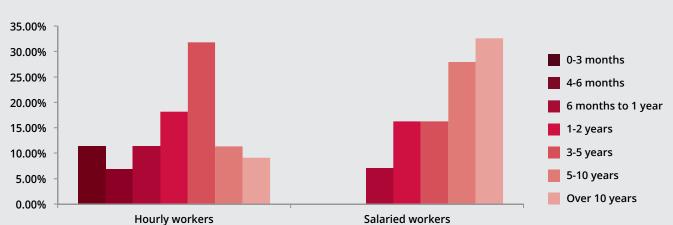


FIGURE 10: DIFFERENCES IN TENURE FOR HOURLY AND SALARIED WORKERS

Tenure differences between entry-level and management workers

Nearly three quarters, or 72.7 percent, of responding employers stated that tenure is noticeably different between their entry-level and management workers. Below is a depiction of the distribution of tenure for both groups. Individuals that begin working at these companies in entry-level roles exhibit a range of tenure periods, with the greatest portion remaining between six months and two years but roughly equal portions remaining under six months or three or more years. Individuals in management roles are likely to stay for long periods, with over half remaining with a company for at least five years.

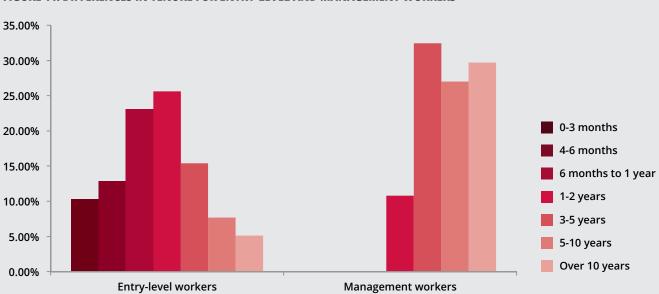


FIGURE 11: DIFFERENCES IN TENURE FOR ENTRY-LEVEL AND MANAGEMENT WORKERS

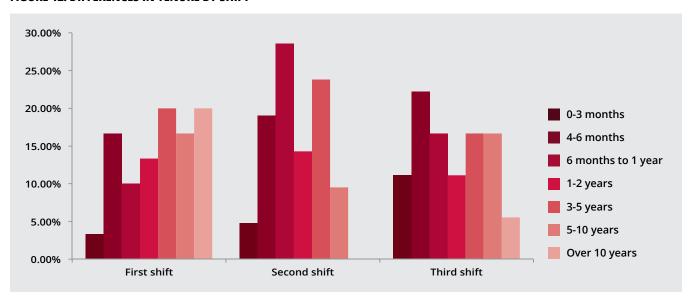
Tenure changes from additional training

Three quarters of employers either have not noticed any change in tenure with additional training or train all workers no matter what. Most of those that have noticed a difference typically indicated that additional training has a positive overall effect on retention due to a feeling of investment in the company. A few employers did note that trained workers are likely to become more marketable and leave. In convenings, employers expressed excitement over additional training resources, which reinforced survey responses that employers would like to offer more training.

Tenure differences between day and night shifts

Over half, or 61.4 percent, of responding employers stated that they employ workers on multiple shifts, reflecting the high numbers of manufacturing employers. Most noticeably, first shift workers are by far the most likely to remain with a company for over ten years, while many individuals appear to test whether they can adapt to a third shift schedule for six months or fewer. All three shifts have similar rates of working between one and five years, and in general the differences between shifts in this service area are less pronounced than across the region. This reflects employer comments from convenings; second and third shift positions are often initially difficult to fill, but typically once a good fit is found the employee is likely to stay. Shift scheduling, alongside conflicts like repetitive work and tough working conditions, can make it especially difficult to fill jobs in manufacturing and construction businesses.

FIGURE 12: DIFFERENCES IN TENURE BY SHIFT



Human Resources Management

Capacity of human resource departments

A major employer concern during convenings was that rapid growth and heavy staffing and coaching needs outpaced the capacity of their small human resources departments. From the survey, 72.7 percent of responses reported that their company has dedicated human resources staff. Of them, 25.0 percent have just one individual managing talent and 31.3 percent each have either two or three to ten individuals. Responding SEMCA service area employers have larger human resources staff than the region as a whole, with both a greater proportion having dedicated staff and larger reported departments. For those without dedicated HR staff, all but one indicated that this is handled by another internal management role or that the duties are spread around office staff. While 19.3 percent of responses state that they typically use a staffing agency to fill open positions, several others indicate that they will use a staffing agency for difficult to fill positions or other situational reasons.

FIGURE 13: NUMBER OF HUMAN RESOURCES WORKERS BY RESPONSES



FIGURE 14: HR DISTRIBUTION BY LOCATION

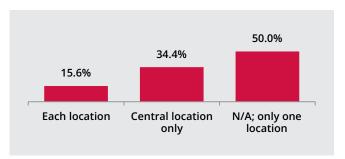


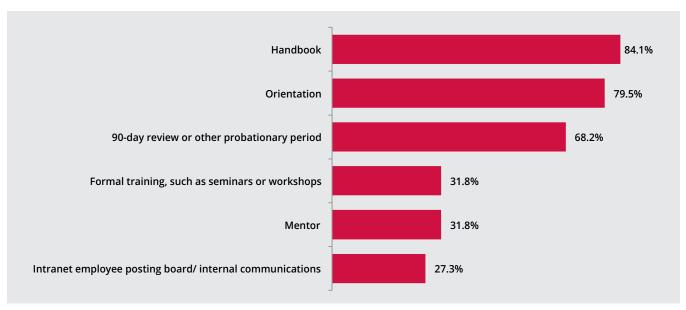
FIGURE 15: USE OF A STAFFING AGENCY BY PERCENT OF RESPONSES



Onboarding strategies

In both survey responses and convenings, employers indicated that one of the best strategies that can be used to keep workers in their companies is to provide excellent training and clear expectations from the moment a person is hired. Though the high percentage of one-person HR departments may not have capacity to implement more handson methods, nearly all employers utilize some kind of official onboarding. Figure 16 shows the percent of responses utilizing each of the indicated onboarding strategies.

FIGURE 16: ONBOARDING STRATEGIES BY PERCENT OF RESPONSES

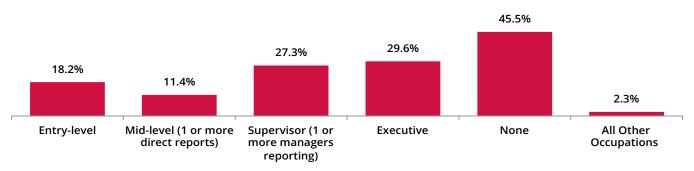


Formalized feedback strategies

About 52.3 percent of responses indicated that they do not have any formalized feedback strategies. Most of those employers that do have feedback strategies primarily utilize annual reviews or new hire performance evaluations to glean employee feedback. A few employers each either encourage feedback through open door policies and employee suggestion boxes or survey their employers on a regular basis.

At what level do you have succession planning procedures in place?

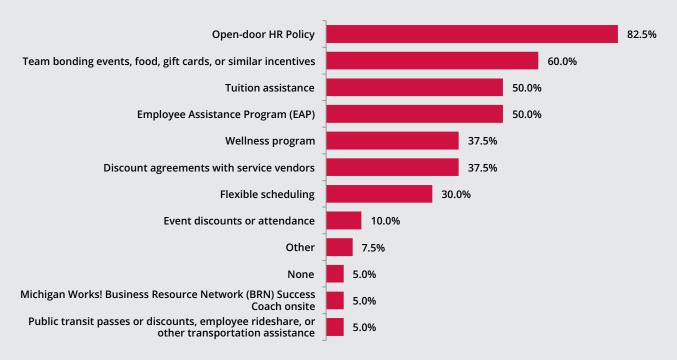
FIGURE 17: PERCENT OF RESPONSES WITH SUCCESSION PLANNING BY JOB TYPE



Retention Strategies

What retention strategies do you have in place, and how often do you update them?

FIGURE 18: RETENTION STRATEGIES BY PERCENT OF RESPONSES



Responding employers described flexible scheduling as referring to leeway regarding commute, doctors' appointments, and child care needs. Several responses mentioned that employees may set their own start and end times within a given range. Employers responding with "other" typically referred to additional training or greater health and wellness benefits. Transportation was identified as a key issue for turnover in convenings, this survey, and across MWAs, and especially for this primarily rural region. To this end, 5.0 percent of responses indicate that their company provides any transportation-specific assistance.

Different businesses take different approaches to implementing these strategies; though 95.0 percent of responding employers have at least one of the above retention strategies in place, just over one quarter have never formally evaluated their policies. Another third of employers indicated that they evaluate their retention policies on an as-needed basis.

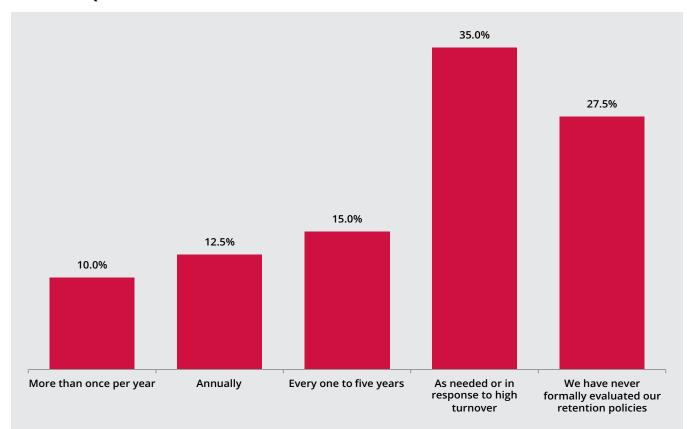


FIGURE 19: FREQUENCY WITH WHICH EMPLOYERS EVALUATE RETENTION POLICIES

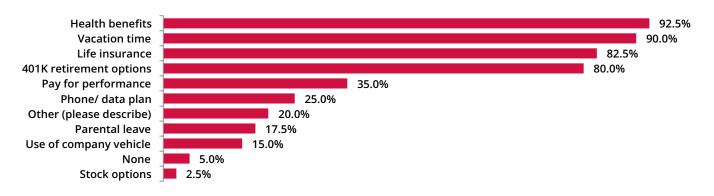
Effectiveness of retention strategies

When considering the broad array of retention strategies that utilized, 32 employers reported strategies they find especially effective. Many among them focused on flexibility and recognition. An assortment of incentives, financial and otherwise, were also acknowledged as being very effective. Of the options in figure 18, the open-door HR policy, flexible scheduling and many team bonding and food incentives were mentioned.

Not all results have been positive, however, and 13 employers reported strategies that have not been helpful to them in the past. Across the region, these typically pertained to wages, indicating that changes in pay or benefits did not increase employee retention on their own. Within this service area, 401K and EAP programs were both described as being ineffective or underutilized.

Employee Satisfaction

FIGURE 20: BENEFITS OFFERED BY PERCENT OF RESPONSES



Compensation considerations: salary and benefit comparisons

Wages are often considered a primary cause of turnover; during convenings, many employers noted that workers will leave for very small changes in pay. Employers indicating that they generally offer above average pay also cite low turnover rates, in many survey responses. Just over a third, or 37.5 percent, of surveyed employers have standardized salary bands for their workers and another 7.5 percent are working to implement this. Both a distribution of reported wages by occupation group from this survey and Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) wages for the SEMCA service area is shown below. In convenings, employers reported both cost and logistic barriers in adjusting wages. However, as competition for talent grows, businesses are finding it increasingly important to keep up with regional average wages. Benefits are key as well, and for many workers, a range of the right benefits may make up for slightly lower wages or unusual schedules. Tuition reimbursement, schedule flexibility, incentives, and other broad benefits are becoming increasingly common, though workers that are young or do not have families may not account for above average health insurance in making compensation decisions.

FIGURE 21: APPROXIMATE SALARY DISTRIBUTION BY OCCUPATION



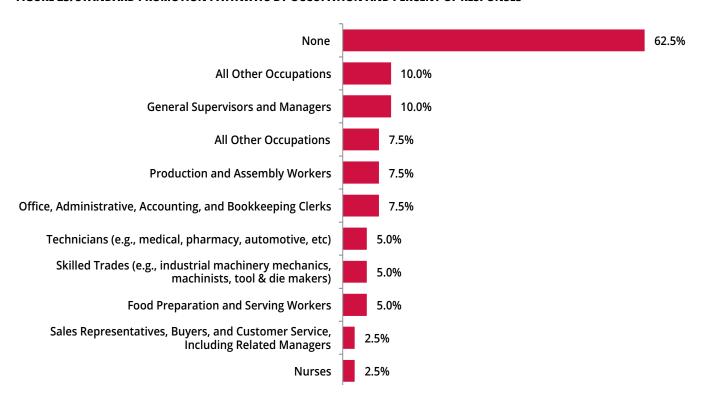
FIGURE 22: WAGE SCALE FOR TOP 12 SURVEY OCCUPATIONS IN WAYNE AND MONROE COUNTIES

SOC	OCCUPATION	PCT. 10 HOURLY EARNINGS	PCT. 25 HOURLY EARNINGS	MEDIAN HOURLY EARNINGS	PCT. 75 HOURLY EARNINGS	PCT. 90 HOURLY EARNINGS
43-9199	Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other	\$15.28	\$20.93	\$24.99	\$27.23	\$30.15
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	\$26.29	\$37.09	\$53.11	\$77.65	\$103.83
51-2098	Assemblers and Fabricators, All Other, Including Team Assemblers	\$12.81	\$16.31	\$21.04	\$27.70	\$30.22
51-9199	Production Workers, All Other	\$11.04	\$15.67	\$18.03	\$21.23	\$24.12
51-4041	Machinists	\$11.01	\$13.74	\$18.22	\$23.36	\$28.82
51-4111	Tool and Die Makers	\$18.25	\$23.84	\$30.33	\$35.71	\$38.64
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	\$9.65	\$10.97	\$15.91	\$25.41	\$29.54
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	\$17.32	\$22.08	\$28.08	\$34.17	\$37.85
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	\$15.80	\$21.37	\$29.75	\$44.73	\$58.98
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers	\$31.68	\$37.19	\$45.63	\$55.35	\$62.94
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	\$13.23	\$15.96	\$19.34	\$23.10	\$27.94
53-3033	Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	\$10.02	\$12.45	\$16.55	\$23.30	\$30.92

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Does your company have clearly defined promotion pathways for any of these roles?

FIGURE 23: STANDARD PROMOTION PATHWAYS BY OCCUPATION AND PERCENT OF RESPONSES



Promotion pathways and necessary training

Over half of employers (62.5 percent) stated that they do not have set advancement pathways for any of the roles chosen here, though several employers that do have advancement pathways indicated that they are available have them for multiple roles. There were 25 total occupation pathways selected here by employers. Nearly all of these employers indicated that funding for training, where required, is always available, and the last will provide it depending on the situation. Half of the responses stated that training is completed during normal work hours, while others offer schedule flexibility or other case by case accommodations.

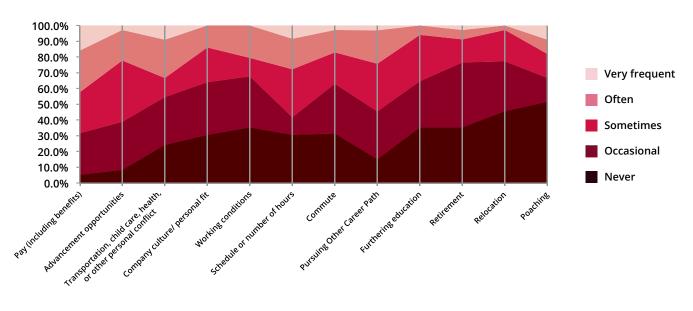
Staff Retention Challenges

Employers indicated a variety of reasons for being concerned about turnover, and 76.9 percent of responses stated that they are worried about staff retention. Small pools of workers with high-demand skillsets are shrinking further as the workforce ages, which is especially worrying to many manufacturers. The burden and expense of training a new worker and the impact on company performance are felt as well. Monetary concerns, such as the ability to pay higher wages to keep up with larger companies, may impact even employers who feel that the higher wages are fair. Finally, as employers broaden their search for talent, they are increasingly finding that workers must be coached in workplace soft skills. This was noted across all MWAs and industries, and extended to factors like attendance and punctuality, work-life balance, motivation and dedication, and personal fit with the company.

Reasons given for leaving a job

Employers were asked to rank employees' stated reasons for leaving by frequency, ranging from "never" (employees do not ever express this was the primary reason) to "very frequent". The most common reason cited "very frequently" for employee turnover is a desire for higher pay or benefits, followed by transportation, child care, or other personal conflicts, poaching, and scheduling concerns. These reasons were echoed in convenings. Reasons cited "often" also include opportunities to advance within the company, pursuit of a different career path, and difficult working conditions common among physically demanding production and construction environments.

FIGURE 24: EMPLOYEES' REASONS FOR LEAVING BY FREQUENCY



Personal barriers and court-ordered payroll deductions

As shown in figure 24, barriers such as housing, child care, transportation, and medical issues continue to frustrate both workers and their employers. Individuals struggling with poor attendance often face unseen barriers at home; transportation is the most commonly cited, but housing, child care, and health are also important. Legal barriers and court-ordered wage deductions can be difficult as well. About a fifth, or 18.0 percent, of employers report retention issues for employees burdened by court-ordered payroll deductions. Among those indicating that payroll deductions are an issue, nearly all (88.9 percent) cited child support. Debt collections, with 44.4 percent, were about half as common while student loan collections represent a distant third.

FIGURE 25: REASONS FOR COURT-ORDERED PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS BY PERCENT OF RESPONSES



Estimated costs of turnover and new hire learning curve

FIGURE 26: ESTIMATED COSTS OF TURNOVER



Figure 26 shows the number of responses indicating that their cost to replace an employee falls within the given range. Search costs, with an average of about \$2,200 per worker and a median of \$650, are typically the smallest portion of the expense. Suggestions for "other" costs included lost productivity or revenue while being short-staffed or lacking experienced workers. Here, most employers stated that it takes between one and three months for a new worker to be as productive as an existing one, but region-wide this figure was typically over six months. "Other" costs had a median of \$1,250 and a high number of estimates over \$5,000. Estimated costs to train a new worker were \$1,000, but average training costs were \$4,200, possibly indicating tuition assistance or other costly certifications. Altogether, the median estimate of the cost to bring on a new worker when an employee leaves was estimated to be \$2,900 but can easily range over \$10,000 depending on the position. The SEMCA service area median cost of turnover is estimated to be slightly lower than other areas in the region, which are typically around \$4,000 per worker but range up to \$6,000.

APPENDIX:

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