MissionSquare Research Institute has been tracking state and local government employee sentiment since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest data from a survey of public employees shows they are increasingly inclined to leave their jobs. But there are practical steps employers can take to stem resignations as we enter the next phase of the pandemic.

Public Sector Employees are Considering Leaving Their Jobs

- 52% of state and local workers are considering leaving their jobs due to COVID-19 to do any or all of the following: change jobs, retire, and/or leave the workforce entirely.
- 36% are under age 40.
- 33% are African American.
- 28% are under age 40.
- 25% of those considering changing jobs would like to leave the government sector entirely.

Why Employees Are Leaving

- Top 3 Reasons Employees Are Considering Changing Jobs:
  - Want a higher salary or better benefits package
  - Feel burned out from job during pandemic
  - Need better work-life balance

- Top 3 Reasons Considering Retiring and/or Leaving the Workforce Entirely:
  - Feel burned out from job during pandemic
  - Want time to do things that bring joy
  - Tension have faced working with the public (or students’ parents)

- Top 3 Reasons Causing Increase In People Leaving Their Jobs Voluntarily:
  - Added stress due to the pandemic
  - Concern about safety due to COVID-19
  - People are rethinking what they want to do

- 8 in 10 say the increase in number of people voluntarily leaving has put a strain on their workload.

Employee Views on How Public Employers Can Curb the Great Resignation

To Reduce Stress
- 54% Provide salary increases
- 15% Help workers reduce workload
- 15% Provide emotional support

To Retain More Employees
- 44% Improve salaries
- 27% Show more appreciation and recognition of employees and the work they do
- 26% Provide salary increases

In November/December 2021, MissionSquare Research Institute conducted an online survey of 1,100 state and local government employees, fielded by Greenwald Research, to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public sector workers (prior surveys were conducted in May 2020, October/November 2020, and May 2021). Final data were weighted by gender, age, income, and industry type to reflect the distribution of the state and local government workforce as found in the U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey and the U.S. Census of Government.