

MAY 2026

# Recruitment & Retention Guide

*For court leaders at all levels*

NCSC

  
State Justice Institute

# Acknowledgments

The NCSC staff gratefully acknowledges the following court officials and professionals for their engagement in this project. Without their knowledge, expertise, and dedication, this resource would not be possible.

## RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Stephanie Smith** CHAIR

Judicial Administrator, Kansas Office of  
Judicial Administration

**Dana Bartocci**

Human Resources and Development Director,  
Minnesota Judicial Branch

**Lisa Falgiano**

Municipal Court Administrator, Toledo  
Municipal Court

**Julie Hamil**

State Court Administrator, Rhode Island  
Administrative Office of the Courts

**Marci Hoffman**

Court Executive, Weld County (Colorado)

**Aaron Hood**

Chief Financial Officer/Chief Operating  
Officer, Indiana Supreme Court

**Judge Don Johnson**

District Court Judge, 19th Judicial District  
of East Baton Rouge

**Mark Kleinschmidt**

Clerk of Superior Court, Orange County  
(North Carolina)

**Gayle Lafferty**

State Court Administrator, Delaware  
Administrative Office of the Courts

**Kathy Lloyd**

State Court Administrator, Missouri Office of  
the State Court Administrator

**Andrea Powers**

Human Resources Director, Idaho  
Administrative Office of the Courts

**Chief Justice David K. Thomson**

Chief Justice, New Mexico

The NCSC also thanks the Colorado Judicial Branch, the Maricopa (Arizona) Superior Court, the Minnesota Judicial Branch, the New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts, the South Dakota Unified Judicial System, and the Toledo Municipal Court for sharing their resources and information as referenced in this guide.

---

*This resource is part of a National Center for State Courts project funded by the State Justice Institute, grant number SJL-22P015. The project is in collaboration with the CCJ-COSCA Pandemic Rapid Response Team and their efforts to help state courts. The authors' expressed viewpoints do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the State Justice Institute.*

**Suggested Citation:** *Recruitment and Retention Guide* (Williamsburg, VA: National Center for State Courts, 2026).

Copyright © 2026 National Center for State Courts.

This document may be reproduced with attribution to National Center for State Courts.

# Contents

<b>ii</b>	<b>Acknowledgments</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
5	Court Landscape
6	Recruitment and Retention Research
10	Employment Events, Trends and Impact
<b>16</b>	<b>Recruitment Strategies</b>
17	Historical Recruitment Strategies
19	Utilize More Creative Recruiting Strategies
23	Update and Clarify Job Titles and Descriptions
26	Streamline the Application Process
27	Conduct and Promote Classification and Compensation Studies
28	Allow Workplace Schedule Flexibility
29	Highlight the Compensation Package
30	Implement Hiring Incentives
31	Emphasize Professional Growth Opportunities in the Court
31	Promote the Court's Strategic Plan and Mission
32	Collect and Analyze Recruiting Data
<b>34</b>	<b>Retention Strategies</b>
35	Focus on Workplace Culture
38	Invest in Managerial Training
39	Allow for Flexibility in Work Schedules and Arrangements
40	Ensure Effective Hiring Practices
42	Effectively Onboard New Employees
47	Solicit and Utilize Employee Feedback
50	Connect Work to the Court's Mission, Purposes, and Strategic Plan
51	Provide Feedback on Employee Performance
53	Invest In and Offer Employee Wellness Activities and Appreciation Events
54	Ensure Sufficient Staffing Levels
55	Conduct and Utilize Classification and Compensation Studies
55	Strategize Legislative and/or Funding Body Engagement
56	Offer Opportunities for Professional Development and Career Advancement
57	Ensure Accuracy of Job Titles and Descriptions
58	Develop Community, Connection, and Mattering in Courts
60	Ensure Employees are Recognized for their Contributions
60	Find Opportunities to Coach Staff
62	Collect and Analyze Retention Data
<b>64</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
<b>67</b>	<b>Appendix</b>
68	Quick Reference Guide
73	Recruitment Checklist
75	Retention Checklist

# Executive Summary

Courts across the United States are experiencing significant challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified staff – a trend that began around 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic and has persisted due to broader workforce, economic, and generational shifts. As courts evolve technologically and operationally, staffing shortages increasingly jeopardize court performance, access to justice, and public trust. This executive summary synthesizes the key findings and recommended strategies from the full report to help court leaders strengthen recruitment pipelines, reduce turnover, and create resilient, high-performing court workforces.

Modern courts differ dramatically from their counterparts even a decade ago. Advances such as electronic filing, digital case management, and remote work have fundamentally altered court operations. At the same time, courts are seeing increased numbers of self-represented litigants – many using AI-generated filings – which heightens staff workloads and customer service demands. Employee expectations have also shifted; hybrid work, flexibility, work-life balance, and psychologically safe work environments are becoming essential components of competitive employment.

National workforce trends show that up to 50% of U.S. employees are open to leaving their current employer, with the key drivers being workplace culture, work-life balance, pay, and management. Court employee focus groups echoed national trends and are seeing shrinking applicant pools and the need for more competitive pay, greater flexibility in work arrangements, and more opportunities for professional growth and development.

This guide highlights several strategies for state and local court leaders and managers to consider and implement that would improve recruitment and retention. In many instances, strategies that improve recruitment also support retention, such as ensuring that job titles and position descriptions are accurate and clearly defined.

Addressing the issues identified in this guide is essential for courts seeking to recruit and retain a qualified workforce. Courts must also take steps to understand their own specific challenges that may not be mentioned. A collaborative approach among court leadership will be needed to create a concrete action plan to make necessary and visible improvements. However, the guide also identifies specific actions that managers and supervisors can take on their own, such as working to create a positive workplace culture and utilizing a coaching approach to empower employees and foster both individual and collective growth.

## RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

- Utilize More Creative Recruiting Strategies
- Update and Clarify Job Titles and Descriptions
- Streamline the Application Process
- Conduct and Promote Classification and Compensation Studies
- Allow Workplace Schedule Flexibility
- Highlight the Compensation Package
- Implement Hiring Initiatives
- Emphasize Professional Growth Opportunities in the Court
- Promote the Court's Strategic Plan and Mission
- Collect and Analyze Recruiting Data

## RETENTION STRATEGIES

- Focus on Workplace Culture
- Invest in Managerial Training
- Allow for Flexibility in Work Schedules and Arrangement
- Ensure Effective Hiring Practices
- Effectively Onboard New Employees
- Solicit and Utilize Employee Feedback
- Connect Work to the Court's Mission, Purposes, and Strategic Plan
- Provide Feedback on Employee Performance
- Invest In and Offer Employee Wellness Activities and Appreciation Events
- Ensure Sufficient Staffing Levels
- Conduct and Utilize Classification and Compensation Studies
- Strategize Legislative and/or Funding Body Engagement
- Offer Opportunities for Professional Development and Career Advancement
- Ensure Accuracy of Job Titles and Descriptions
- Develop Community, Connection, and Mattering in Courts
- Ensure Employees are Recognized for their Contributions
- Find Opportunities to Coach Staff
- Collection and Analyze Retention Data

# Introduction

The background is a solid blue color. In the lower half, there are two thin, white, curved lines that sweep across the page from the bottom left towards the right, creating a sense of movement and design.

# Introduction

Hiring and retaining qualified, knowledgeable court staff is crucial to court operations, recordkeeping, case management, enforcing orders of the court, and ensuring public trust and confidence. Courts across the country are facing challenges with recruiting court employees to staff key positions within the courts, as well as retaining both new and long-time employees. This is not necessarily a new trend but rather one that courts started experiencing around 2020. This, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic, transitioned into what has been coined “the great resignation” and has continued with generational shifts in the workforce that have impacted workforces nationwide, not just local and state court systems.

This guide focuses on recruitment and retention of court staff. However, court leaders should also continue to identify ways to retain judicial officers and maintain qualified candidates for judgeships to support the stability of the judiciary.

## COURT LANDSCAPE

Today’s courts operate very differently from courts fifty years ago and in many ways, even from 10 years ago. Technological advancements, employee expectations, economic conditions, and the COVID-19 pandemic created a shift that has forever changed court operations, which naturally impacts employee recruitment and retention.

Electronic case management systems, electronic filing, and “paperless courts” have automated some processes but complicated others. These new systems are far more robust and in turn, more complex than the legacy systems that simply recorded case dispositions and court events. They have also made court staff, as well as judges, less reliant on paper files. This shift has increased the technological demands of court staff and judges, requiring new training and skill development alongside adjustments to workflows.

While parties representing themselves in court is not new, courts report seeing greater numbers of self-represented litigants opting to serve as their own attorney. This may be due to a variety of factors, for example, financial reasons or a lack of attorneys in the community. According to a 2023 National Center for State Courts (NCSC) report, more than 30 million Americans encounter civil legal problems without the assistance of an attorney. The report goes on to say that Americans with low incomes receive no legal help or insufficient legal help for 92% of their civil

legal issues.<sup>1</sup> This often results in court staff needing to provide more customer service and take time to explain court processes. This can be stressful for court staff due to liability concerns but also because they are interacting with often disgruntled parties and/or litigants. Self-represented litigants are also using artificial intelligence (AI) at higher rates to generate court pleadings, which may or may not yield accurate information, further complicating the work of court staff. In the 2025 NCSC State of the State Courts survey, 51% of respondents stated that AI will “hurt state courts by increasing the risk of mistakes that judges and staff can’t always catch and making it harder for people to trust court decisions.”<sup>2</sup>

Six years ago, a remote work arrangement was largely unheard of. In recent years, it has become more common for court staff to work fully remote or to have a flexible or hybrid work schedule, allowing them partial remote work arrangements, depending on their position. This was largely driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, when courts had to pivot to utilize remote work in order to continue necessary court operations and provide services while protecting the health and safety of employees. Now, whether a court offers a remote or hybrid work arrangement is a common question that is asked during employee interviews. Additionally, it has become a frequently identified reason employees may accept or leave a position.

## RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION RESEARCH

A number of factors have directly or indirectly impacted court recruitment and retention efforts. When considering recruitment and retention strategies, court leaders need to understand why employees decide to join an organization, why they choose to leave an organization, and why they decide to stay with an organization. Using this knowledge and supporting data collected by the employer can help organizations evaluate their court culture to minimize turnover and attract top talent.

### National Research

Several polls have been conducted by Gallup, a global analytics and advisory firm, to understand trends in employment, particularly retention and attraction. According to Gallup, 50% of

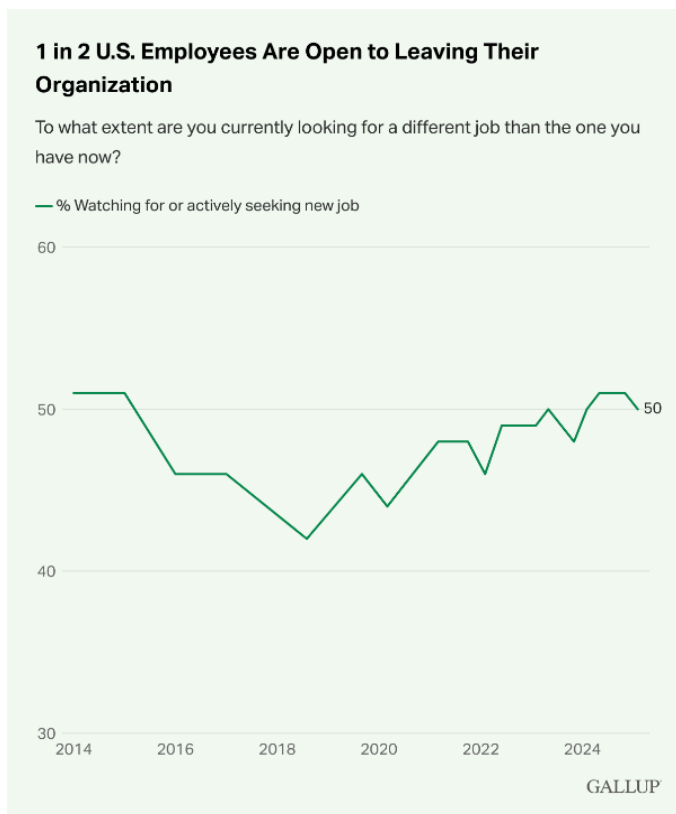
---

1 A. Souza, L. Summers, K. Pulliam, D. Silva eds. Court-Based-Self-Help Centers. [Williamsburg, VA: National Center for State Court, 2023]. <https://www.ncsc.org/resources-courts/court-based-self-help-centers-national-survey-findings-recommendations-best>

2 2025 NCSC State of State Courts Survey. [Williamsburg, VA: National Center for State Court, 2025]. <https://www.ncsc.org/resources-courts/state-state-courts-2025-public-opinion-poll-findings>

employees are open to leaving their current employer.<sup>3</sup>

For the last four years, from 2020 to 2024, the Gallup poll has asked why U.S. employees have voluntarily left their jobs. The poll shows pay and benefits consistently have been the primary reason employees have left their jobs. After pay and benefits, the top four reasons people reported leaving their jobs in 2024, in order of responses, were for personal reasons, relocation, supervisor, management, or leadership issues, and advancement, development, or career opportunities. It is noteworthy that advancement, development, or career opportunities decreased as a response from 15% in 2020 to 9% in 2024 while pay and benefits decreased from 21% to 16% since 2020. Other factors identified as to why employees voluntarily left their positions are that they no longer found the job interesting or a fit, unrealistic job expectations/responsibilities, work-life balance, or they were not treated with respect.<sup>4</sup>



Source: Gallup Poll

When looking at all of the various reasons employees provided for leaving their positions, Gallup grouped them into categories to identify themes. They found the four most common themes that led employees to leave their jobs in 2024 were engagement culture (37%), well-being or work-life balance (31%), pay and benefits (16%), and management or leadership (9%).

When asked what factors are most important when seeking new employment or accepting a position in a different organization, employees most frequently cited greater work-life balance. This was the top response consistently from 2022 to 2025. Closely behind work-balance,

<sup>3</sup> Employee Retention & Attraction. (2025). Gallup. <https://www.gallup.com/467702/indicator-employee-retention-attraction.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> Employee Retention & Attraction, Gallup.

greater stability and job security was identified, followed by an increase in pay or improved benefits. Other top reasons include a position that better suited the employee’s skills, leaving a bad manager, organizational diversity, and the reputation or branding of the organization. Interestingly, between 2021 and 2025, the importance of a significant increase in pay and benefits as a factor in what employees wanted in their next job decreased by 11%.<sup>5</sup>

According to Glassdoor, an online job search engine and review site, 92% of employees would consider leaving their job for no additional salary if the position were with an employer with an excellent reputation. Further, almost 86% of those currently looking for a job would not consider working for a company with bad social standing.<sup>6</sup> Another study said that more than half of employees would be open to a 20% reduction in pay in exchange for a better work-life balance.<sup>7</sup>

A Harvard Business Review article suggests that compensation strategies and traditional benefits (e.g., health insurance, leave, and retirement programs) are not the only ways to improve employee retention. Employers can also enhance retention by offering flexible work arrangements and investing in better workplace design, including ergonomic features and improved lighting.<sup>8</sup>

## Court Focus Groups

In December 2025, NCSC staff conducted focus groups with court staff to better understand recruitment and retention factors specific to the courts. Focus groups consisted of three groups: non-supervisor court employees, managers and supervisors, and human resources professionals. A total of nine focus groups, three of each grouping, were conducted with court staff across the country. The court employee focus groups were asked what drew them to the courts. The most common responses were the benefits (e.g., consistent work schedules, paid holidays, emphasis on well-being), the nature of the work or the position (e.g., public service, means to institute systemic change, interest in criminal justice), and job security.

---

5 Employee Retention & Attraction, Gallup.

6 Windley, David. (2022, June 24). The Value of Employer Branding. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2022/06/24/the-value-of-employer-branding/>.

7 Howard, Phoebe Wall. (2024, January 11). New trend survey shows workers willing to take 20% pay cut for better work/life balance. *Detroit Free Press*. <https://www.freep.com/story/money/cars/ford/2024/01/11/2024-trend-report-ford-salary-work-life-balance/71963699007/?gnt-cfr=1&gca-cat=p&gca-uir=true&gca-epti=z114020e1194xxv114020d--44--b--44--&gca-ft=177&gca-ds=sophi>.

8 Hennelly, Debra, Sabatini and Schurman, Bradley. (2023, January 25). Bridging Generational Divides in Your Workplace. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2023/01/bridging-generational-divides-in-your-workplace>.

Court human resources professionals and managers and supervisors were asked why employees leave the courts. The following reasons were identified: higher compensation, a flexible or fully remote work arrangement, poor management, and insufficient opportunities for advancement or growth. While compensation was mentioned as a factor, many participants in the court employee focus groups stated that other factors, such as the work environment or the workplace culture, recognition for their work, flexibility in work schedules, and the ability to learn and grow were more important than an increase in pay.

Court employees were asked what factors could make them consider leaving their current position. They echoed those listed above by the manager and human resource professional focus groups. Additionally, they would consider leaving their current position for an employer who offers bonuses, a position with performance-based pay, a position with more personal safety (referencing both litigants and the general public), a less stressful job that does not involve secondary trauma exposure, and a position where there are fewer frustrations with unclear work processes.

Employee focus groups were also asked what makes them stay with the courts. The top responses that were identified included the customer service aspect of the job and being able to help people during stressful times, a dedication to public service and the feeling they are making a difference, feeling appreciated and valued by their manager, the autonomy, variety, and flexibility of their work, and the nature of government work (e.g., benefits, pension, stability).

When asked how the courts could improve employee retention, employee focus groups suggested more competitive pay, reviews of compensation structures, more flexible schedule options (i.e., hybrid, remote, flexible hours), improved safety in court facilities, separate entrances for employees, improved parking location and cost (i.e., free, reduced, or subsidized), offering networking opportunities, tuition (or certification) reimbursement, and ensuring managers and supervisors receive training in creating a healthy and supportive workplace environment.

Overall, the court staff focus group feedback closely aligned with national research on why employees are leaving positions and what employees are seeking in new positions.

## EMPLOYMENT EVENTS, TRENDS AND IMPACT

This section addresses specific employment events and trends and how those are affecting or have had an impact on recruitment and/or retention.

### COVID-19 Impact

In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted employment in a variety of ways, including creating employment trends that affected recruitment and retention. Some people left employment to stay home with family, to avoid exposure to the coronavirus, and to be with their children since schools closed during this time. The pandemic emphasized and perhaps initiated a shift towards prioritizing employees' personal lives and their physical and mental well-being. Since that time, the desire for employment that offers work-life balance has been more prominent. Awareness of and increased discussions on secondary trauma and compassion fatigue also emerged. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated retirements with reports saying that the retirements would not have occurred if not for the pandemic.<sup>9</sup> This “retirement boom” resulted in a loss of institutional knowledge and experience.

In many court systems, court employees themselves were deemed essential, a label that did not exclusively apply to healthcare workers. These essential employees continued going into the workplace during the pandemic while taking safety precautions. Employees were needed to ensure constitutional guarantees, such as due process. However, not all court employees were required to work from an office and many began a “working from home” trend, which was relatively unknown to the courts at that point. When the pandemic subsided, many employees resumed their “in office” work culture, while others continued to work remotely or followed a hybrid work schedule.

The immediate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was visible with an increase in the unemployment rate — from 3.8% in February 2020 to 14.4% in April 2020. However, by the end of 2021, the unemployment rate returned to pre-pandemic levels, at 4%. The unemployment caused by the pandemic impacted certain groups more than others. Those most impacted by early job losses were women, young workers, low income workers, and workers who had not completed high school.<sup>10</sup>

---

9 Montes, Joshua, Christopher Smith, and Juliana Dajon (2022, November). “The Great Retirement Boom”: The Pandemic-Era Surge in Retirements and Implications for Future Labor Force Participation. Finance and Economics Discussion Series 2022-081. Washington: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, <https://doi.org/10.17016/FEDS.2022.081>

10 Pew Research Center. (2025, February 2025). 5 Years Later: America Looks Back at the Impact of COVID-19. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2025/02/12/5-years-later-america-looks-back-at-the-impact-of-covid-19/>

According to Pew Research, hybrid work is now the most common arrangement for American workers with jobs that can be performed remotely. About one-third reported working remotely full-time, as of October 2024. Forty-three percent (43%) of workers have a hybrid schedule where they work from home some of the time and go to an office some, according to a 2025 Pew Research Center Report. However, more employers are requiring employees to work in the office at least some days of the week, with 75% reporting this hybrid arrangement, a 12% increase from 2023.<sup>11</sup>

In late 2024, the U.S. Census Bureau indicated that full-time and part-time employment in state and local governments has never fully recovered after the “economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic”.<sup>12</sup>

## Great Resignation

Just one year after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics noticed a trend emerging: an increase in the job quit rate.<sup>13</sup> This trend has been conceptualized as the Great Resignation, occurring between 2021 and 2023, when well over 100 million U.S. workers quit their jobs, often in pursuit of higher salaries or better benefits.<sup>14</sup> However, some attribute the trend to a “mattering deficit”. Different from belonging, where a person feels welcomed and accepted, mattering is the feeling of being significant. With employees, this occurs when they feel they are valued and when they recognize that they add value.<sup>15</sup>

Both blue collar and white collar sectors were impacted by the Great Resignation although the government appeared to have been affected the least. Apparel retail, management consulting, internet (e.g., social media, search engines), and enterprise software were the industries most

---

11 Pew Research Center. (2025, February 2025). 5 Years Later: America Looks Back at the Impact of COVID-19.

12 Maloney, Dylan (2024, November 20). Employment Bounced Back Faster for Private Industry Than for State and Local Governments. United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2024/11/pandemic-effects-on-employment.html>

13 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022, July). The “Great Resignation” in Perspective. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2022/article/the-great-resignation-in-perspective.htm>

14 Chugh, Abhinav. (2021, November 29). What is ‘The Great Resignation’? An Expert Explains. World Economic Forum. <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2021/11/what-is-the-great-resignation-and-what-can-we-learn-from-it/>

15 Mercurio, Zach. (2025, June). The Power of Mattering at Work. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2025/05/the-power-of-mattering-at-work>

impacted by the Great Resignation.<sup>16</sup> Since the Great Resignation impacted both blue collar and white collar industries, it can be inferred that industry alone is not an indicator of an employee leaving their position. While some studies may attribute the Great Resignation to less than satisfactory wages, this has only a moderate impact on employees leaving their positions. Research indicates that the work culture of an organization may be a more telltale sign.

A toxic work culture is a far greater predictor of employee attrition than compensation. For example, private sector companies with a reputation for having a healthy workplace culture showed a lower turnover rate. Also, while the research is not as strong, companies known for their innovation showed lower retention rates than their competitors. Examples of innovative companies include SpaceX, Tesla, and Netflix.<sup>17</sup>

Research on corporations that was conducted between April and September 2021 identified five factors that predicted attrition during the Great Resignation. Ranked in order from greatest to least impact were: toxic culture, job insecurity and reorganization, high levels of innovation, failure to recognize employee performance, and a poor response to COVID-19.

For context, in relation to compensation, a toxic work culture was 10.4 times more likely to contribute to attrition than compensation while job insecurity and reorganization were just 3.5 times more likely to contribute to turnover than compensation. By contrast, research during the same period indicated the following were the greatest predictors of employee retention: lateral career opportunities, remote work opportunities, company sponsored social events, and predictable work schedules.<sup>18</sup>

Some say that the great resignation has waned in many industries, the reason being that people have settled into positions that best suit their skills, interests, and salary requirements and are satisfied with those positions.<sup>19</sup>

---

16 Sull, Donald, Charles Sull, and Ben Zweig (2022, January 11). Toxic Culture is Driving the Great Resignation. *MIT Sloan Management Review*. <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/toxic-culture-is-driving-the-great-resignation/>

17 Sull, Sull, and Zweig, Toxic Culture is Driving the Great Resignation.

18 Sull, Sull, and Zweig, Toxic Culture is Driving the Great Resignation.

19 Davidson, Paul. (2024, March 18). Is the Great Resignation over? Not quite. Turnover stays high in these industries. *USA Today*. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2024/03/18/great-resignation-still-happening-some-industries-quitting/72982291007/>

## Multi-Generational Workforce

Research indicates today's workforce consists of up to five different generations: the silent generation, baby boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z. Each group has its own unique experiences that can be based on the era in which a person grew up, and the habits and preferences associated with that particular era. For example, studies assert that younger generations may prefer instant messaging while older generations prefer meetings and phone calls. These generational differences can impact both recruitment and retention efforts. This guide will focus on baby boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z as the groups that largely comprise the current workforce.

- **Baby Boomers, born 1946-1964**
- **Gen X, born 1965-1980**
- **Millennials, born 1981-1996**
- **Gen Z, born 1997-2012<sup>20</sup>**

While it is beyond the scope of this guide to discuss all of the variations between the generations, court leaders should recognize that communication, management strategies, and recruitment and retention techniques may all be impacted. Please note that the descriptors referenced in this guide are intended to offer broad characteristics. It is important not to stereotype, as employees will not necessarily exhibit all or any of the characteristics of their generational cohort. In short, court leaders and employees alike should not interact with others based solely on stereotypes. It is important to understand each person on an individual level.

While making assumptions based solely on a person's age can be dangerous, there can be value in understanding what different generations have faced throughout their careers. For example, this may include when a person entered the workforce and what was happening socially, globally, politically, and technologically.<sup>21</sup> In fact, recognizing and embracing these differences results in a highly diverse, innovative, empathetic, and productive workforce when managed properly and the different generational perspectives are leveraged.<sup>22</sup> The impact of a multi-generational workforce will be addressed as part of certain recruitment and retention strategies.

---

20 Mauer, Roy. (2025, January 2). Managing Multi-Generational Communication in the Workplace. <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/flagships/all-things-work/managing-multi-generational-communication-workplace>

21 Waldman, Emma. (2021, August 31). How to Manage a Multi-Generational Team. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2021/08/how-to-manage-a-multi-generational-team>

22 Hennelly and Schurman, Bridging Generational Divides in Your Workplace. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2023/01/bridging-generational-divides-in-your-workplace>

## Quiet Quitting

The exact origins of the term quiet quitting varies, with some saying it dates back to 2008 to a trend seen in China, known as “lying flat”. Different from overt quitting, where an employee submits a resignation to their employer, quiet quitting is characterized by employee disengagement, which is often a demonstration of employee frustrations with their work environment. It may take the form of employees doing only what is required, and contributing the minimum of time, effort, or enthusiasm. It is estimated that more than half of the U.S. workforce are quiet quitters.<sup>23</sup> There can be financial costs associated with quiet quitting in the form of lost productivity, absenteeism, collaboration, and staff turnover.<sup>24</sup>

Often, quiet quitting is an indicator of a poor work culture. Quiet quitting can occur when an employer has unrealistic expectations of their staff, leaving the employee feeling like they are not valued or appreciated. Asking employees to do more without an increase in compensation can foster resentment. Quiet quitting can also breed when people do not have a way to voice their concerns or their work needs, where there is no psychological safety, and where there is a poor work-life balance, a toxic work culture, and insufficient growth opportunities.<sup>25</sup>

When an organization or an employer notices disengagement, appropriate action should be taken to understand the reason for the apathy. This may be done through surveys or focus groups, which can show staff that the employer cares about their opinions. It is important to note that for this to be effective, the employer needs to communicate the purpose of such strategies and how the results will be used before putting them into action.<sup>26</sup> Signs of quiet quitting include constant complaining, regularly missing deadlines, minimal interaction with colleagues, and disengagement in meetings or discussions.<sup>27</sup>

---

23 Daugherty, Greg. (2026, April 30). Understanding Quiet Quitting: Trend or Misnomer. <https://www.investopedia.com/what-is-quiet-quitting-6743910>

24 Hamilton, Diane. (2025, January 15). Quiet Quitting: Why Employees Are Demanding Fairness And Boundaries. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/dianehamilton/2025/01/15/quiet-quitting-why-employees-are-demanding-fairness-and-boundaries/>

25 Whitney, Heather. (2024, May). Quiet Quitting: Meaning, Signs, and How To Prevent It. <https://www.paychex.com/articles/human-resources/quiet-quitting>.

26 Wiczorek, Kate. (2024, July 8). What Companies Should Learn From Employees ‘Quiet Quitting’. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/katewiczorek/2024/07/08/what-companies-should-learn-from-the-quiet-quitting-trend/>.

27 Whitney, Quiet Quitting: Meaning, Signs, and How To Prevent It.

Showing that an employer trusts their employees and allowing for autonomy can combat quiet quitting. This is one reason why it is so important for employers to recognize employee achievements and hard work, to show them they are important, to instill a sense of empowerment, and to demonstrate that the employer values their work.<sup>28</sup>

Employees also seek recognition and validation for their work and performance in the form of increased compensation. Recognizing that financial compensation may not always be possible, rewarding employees in non-monetary ways, such as time off or flexibility in work schedules, is another meaningful way to demonstrate that an employee is valued. Employers can combat quiet quitting through various ways of investing in their employees, including offering opportunities for professional growth, such as certifications or building new competencies.

Quiet quitting is sometimes referred to as soft quitting. However, this is a slightly different phenomenon and may go unnoticed by managers. It is marked by a subtle lack of enthusiasm and reduced connection to their work while still maintaining the same level of productivity. Some of the same strategies that an organization may use to combat quiet quitting may not necessarily work to address soft quitting – an organizational response may be needed to mitigate soft quitting.

Because soft quitting indicates detachment from their work or the organizational mission, leadership must ensure employees have a connection to their work and identify ways to motivate them. However, similar quiet quitting strategies may effectively address soft quitting, such as allowing for professional growth opportunities, contributing to projects outside of their normal job, implementing feedback loops, and having individual meetings with staff.<sup>29</sup>

The remainder of this guide will focus on recruitment and retention strategies. Thoughtfully employing these strategies can ensure a qualified workforce and improve job satisfaction and retention. For prioritization purposes, court leaders should consider the resources that are needed to implement the strategy and identify those strategies that are most likely to have the greatest impact on recruitment and/or retention in their respective court(s).

---

28 Wiczorek, What Companies Should Learn From Employees 'Quiet Quitting'.

29 Hamilton. Quiet Quitting: Why Employees Are Demanding Fairness And Boundaries.

# Recruitment Strategies

The background is a solid blue color. In the lower half, there are two thin, white, curved lines that sweep across the page from left to right, creating a sense of movement and design.

# Recruitment Strategies

The term “recruitment” is frequently used, but what exactly does it entail? What is recruitment? In a 2022 article in *Forbes*, Joshua Siler identified recruiting as engaging job applicants and ushering them through the hiring process.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, it can be an ongoing process that does not end once a person is hired. Before discussing various recruitment strategies that courts should employ, some historical recruitment methods and trends — past, present, and future — will be reviewed.

## HISTORICAL RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Traditional recruitment methods have included newspaper advertisements, job boards, or an applicant simply providing potential employers with their resumes. There is nothing inherently wrong with these traditional methods, and they are still widely used, but there are more efficient, faster, and more effective ways to reach a wider audience. The digital age has introduced new methods that have some added benefits. In fact, some suggest that traditional methods are proving to be ineffective in what has transformed into a more hybrid work environment.<sup>31</sup>

Technology, both the internet and digital innovations, has resulted in recruitment methods that allow employers to reach a broader population faster and with greater efficiencies that were not available in the past. Current popular methods of recruitment include online job sites (e.g., LinkedIn, Indeed, Glassdoor), government job sites (e.g., state agencies, neogov.com), and social media (e.g., LinkedIn, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook). Employers are also using applicant tracking systems that streamline recruitment processes by screening resumes, scheduling interviews, and communicating with job candidates.

Organizations are placing a greater emphasis on employer branding. Branding can be described as how your organization is packaged or presented. It can determine how job candidates perceive your organization by demonstrating your values, workplace culture, and employee experiences. An employer can enhance its branding through an increased social media presence and by incentivizing employees to share job postings on their social media profiles (e.g., sharing

---

30 Siler, Joshua. (2022, September 9). The Importance of Branding Your Recruiting Process. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2022/09/09/the-importance-of-branding-your-recruiting-process/>

31 Kemp, Andy. (2024, July 31). The Recruitment Process is More Digital Than Ever. <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/647831/recruitment-process-digital-ever.aspx>

positions on their LinkedIn profile). Branding, demonstrating an employer’s culture, and social media presence are important when competing with other employers and to appeal to and establish connections with prospective employees.<sup>32</sup>

A recent poll shows that recruiters have increased their “poaching” efforts, targeting employees from other companies or organizations who may not even be seeking new employment. In fact, about 50% of U.S employees who were recently recruited reported that companies had learned about them through an online professional network (e.g., LinkedIn). This is an 11% increase from 2015, making online professional networks the top recruiting source, followed by referrals from friends or colleagues (31%), and online job sites (21%).<sup>33</sup>

The future of recruiting includes an increased focus on using technology, both by employers and prospective applicants.

- **Artificial Intelligence.** The use of AI can make reviewing and screening applications more efficient so staff can focus more time and energy on the interviewing and onboarding processes. Using applicant tracking systems can also shorten hiring times.<sup>34</sup>
- **Virtual reality interviews.** This technology may allow for virtual tours of office settings or immersive experiences to give the applicant an idea of the work environment and type of work they may be expected to perform.
- **Gamification.** Companies are incorporating game design elements into the recruiting and hiring process to assess prospective employees’ qualifications and skills. This may include online quizzes or simulation of real-life job scenarios. This strategy can be used to assess a candidate’s creativity, innovation, and problem-solving skills while also enhancing their recruitment experience.<sup>35</sup>
- **Mobile-friendly recruitment platforms.** Recruitment sites and platforms are and will become more mobile-friendly as prospective applicants use their mobile device (i.e., smartphone) as a job seeking mechanism rather than desktop or laptop computers.

---

32 Gruzd, Marni. (2024, May 29). The Evolution of Recruiting: Past, Present, and Future Trends. <https://www.allmedsearch.com/2024/05/29/the-evolution-of-recruiting-past-present-and-future-trends/>

33 Kemp, The Recruitment Process is More Digital Than Ever.

34 Emmer, Marc. (2023, April 27). The Evolution Of Recruiting: How Sourcing Candidates Has Changed In The Hybrid Environment. *Forbes Business Council*. <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbesbusinesscouncil/2023/04/27/the-evolution-of-recruiting-how-sourcing-candidates-has-changed-in-the-hybrid-environment/>

35 The Jeya Group Ltd. (2024, September 4). Gamification in Recruitment: Engaging Candidates in a Digital Age. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/gamification-recruitment-engaging-candidates-digital-age-vxf1c/>

- **Wider applicant pools.** With an increase in remote work, the applicant pool will not necessarily be limited to those within a specific geographic area, thereby broadening the pool of skilled applicants.

For more focused recruiting efforts, private companies are creating talent acquisition teams, which is a proactive way of identifying and recruiting employees. However, companies with talent acquisition teams are also focused on improving the applicant experience and incorporating these future trends, such as AI, in recruitment strategies.<sup>36</sup>

Recruiting practices have been impacted by the multiple generations currently in the workforce, and entering the workforce. Some research suggests that hiring practices should be modernized to appeal to younger generations, as traditional methods can be off-putting.<sup>37</sup> For example, Millennial and Gen Z candidates are estimated to make up the majority of the workforce, with Millennials comprising 35-50% of the 2024 workforce.<sup>38</sup> However, employers are cautioned against pandering to specific generations since what may be inclusive for some may be exclusive for others. Therefore, courts should review recruitment practices and retention methods to ensure they appeal to all generations. Examples of these practices and methods will be discussed in the Recruitment and Retention Strategy sections that follow.

The remainder of the recruitment section will focus on strategies that courts may utilize to improve their recruiting efforts. Some of the strategies referenced are currently being applied by courts, while others are considerations or suggestions based on court focus groups and/or national research.

## UTILIZE MORE CREATIVE RECRUITING STRATEGIES

As described [earlier](#), the recruiting strategies and methods that were used in the past may no longer be the most effective way to attract candidates. In fact, court focus group participants indicated that position advertisements are increasingly drawing smaller applicant pools and attracting candidates whose qualifications do not overtly align with the skills needed for court vacancies. Further, they say courts are not doing a good job recruiting younger generations. Employing more creative strategies, as well as utilizing traditional recruiting strategies, is needed to target and augment a qualified applicant pool and to reach applicants of all ages.

---

36 Emmer, The Evolution Of Recruiting: How Sourcing Candidates Has Changed In The Hybrid Environment.

37 Emmer, The Evolution Of Recruiting: How Sourcing Candidates Has Changed In The Hybrid Environment.

38 Heymans, Yuma. (2023, December 12). Recruitment Strategies per Generation (Boomers, GenX, Millennials, GenZ). <https://www.herohunt.ai/blog/recruitment-strategies-per-generation>.

## OUTREACH

Employee focus group participants noted that the public lacks awareness of the different job opportunities that are actually available within the courts. Often, the public simply thinks that the only two court career options are attorney or judge. Courts can improve recruitment through community outreach efforts, such as educating the public about careers in the courts and encouraging judicial officers and court staff to invest time in visiting colleges, high schools, and attending community events to explain the different jobs within the courts. Some courts are also attending local career and job fairs, even when positions are not open, which can be effective in educating and informing the public about jobs within the courts.

As mentioned earlier, companies are creating talent acquisition teams to be more proactive in their recruiting while also improving the applicant and recruiting experience. However, this is not unique to the private sector. Some courts have also developed talent acquisition teams.

Within the Colorado Judicial Department, the Career Services Team in the State Court Administrator's Office oversees the Talent Management Program and supports statewide recruitment and workforce initiatives across Colorado's judicial districts and central offices. The team partners with hiring managers and judicial leadership throughout the full recruitment lifecycle, including recruitment strategy, outreach, screening guidance, interview processes, conducting criminal history checks, supporting onboarding processes, and enhancing the overall candidate experience.

The team of four professionals supports a judicial workforce of more than 4,000 employees statewide. By centralizing recruitment expertise through the Talent Management Program, they provide consistent guidance, tools, and strategic support to hiring managers while helping ensure hiring practices remain structured, transparent, and aligned with employment laws and judicial policies. Beyond recruitment, the Career Services Team leads broader career development initiatives, outreach efforts, and employer branding strategies to attract mission driven professionals to public service.

The department's recent contract with LinkedIn has expanded its outreach capabilities and increased visibility of career opportunities within the Colorado Judicial Department. The LinkedIn contract includes the following services:

- Unlimited job posting slots so that any job posted in Colorado's applicant tracking system will automatically appear on the Colorado Judicial LinkedIn page;
- Traffic Driver Ads, which allows Colorado to reach a significantly larger audience, generating roughly 700,000 impressions;

- LinkedIn Life Page that highlights the Colorado Judicial Department from a career and culture perspective, including company spotlights, career growth information, work-life balance, benefits, and employee testimonials;
- Leadership features that allow Colorado to showcase 2–4 leaders, helping candidates learn more about their leadership team; and
- Unlimited LinkedIn InMail for sourcing to proactively find and reach out to qualified candidates, rather than waiting for applicants to come to them.

The team has also developed specialized training for hiring managers and interview panel members to equip them with the tools, knowledge, and best practices needed to conduct fair, consistent, and legally compliant hiring processes. This training emphasizes structured interviewing, objective candidate evaluation, and adherence to employment laws and judicial policies.

### EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Focus groups suggested that employers should offer paid programs for college students or internship programs to expose a wider audience to career opportunities within the courts while simultaneously providing work experience. In addition, courts can leverage existing partnerships or create partnerships with educational institutions or similar programs to create pathways for skills development or credentials that are needed for core court functions.

### BRANDING

Focus group participants commented that modernizing court branding can attract qualified candidates from younger generations. Branding, defined as “a mix of aesthetics, experiences and values that people associate with a company”, has an obvious impact on recruitment since it can attract job candidates and potential employees, showcasing an organization’s reputation and shaping perceptions of the organization.<sup>39,40</sup> This includes all aspects of the human resources cycle and extends into the workplace culture.

---

39 CPS HR Consulting. Best Practices for Employer Branding in Recruitment. <https://cpshr.us/blog-article/employer-branding-in-recruitment/>

40 Siler, The Importance of Branding Your Recruiting Process.

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE RECRUITMENT PORTALS

Courts are expanding position postings to online recruitment portals like LinkedIn and state government websites. Current employees indicated that they learned of their job through a government job website (e.g., governmentjobs.com), a state-specific court job website, Indeed, ZipRecruiter, and LinkedIn. Others learned of their positions by “word of mouth” or being directly recruited from another government branch (e.g., the executive branch).

Focus group participants have had recruiting success using social media, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, to expand their search pool and reach a wider audience. Beyond just state government websites and LinkedIn, courts have expanded position postings to other online recruitment portals, such as Indeed and Zip Recruiter.

Social media is key to an employer’s branding strategy. The branding provides a glimpse into an employer’s workplace. Therefore, it is important to have a strong social media presence across multiple platforms, which can support recruitment efforts. Employers should post regularly on social media platforms to emphasize their employees, diversity efforts, awards, social events, and work culture.<sup>41</sup> Using such platforms for recruitment also allows the use of other creative recruiting strategies, such as videos. Prospective employees appreciate and expect the convenience and familiarity offered by video solutions.<sup>42</sup> Videos can provide more detailed information and a real life look at the job that a job posting or even an interview cannot adequately capture.

The use of new recruitment strategies reflects a changing job market that is increasingly mediated online and populated by younger generations of workers with unique work histories and needs. Focus groups discussed that they were rethinking their approach to court staffing. For example, manager focus groups reported that job candidates routinely have work histories populated by 2-3 years or less in positions. In the past, hiring managers viewed this negatively, but several participants noted that nearly the entirety of their applicant pools demonstrates such work histories. Others spoke to how keeping an employee for 2 to 5 years was the new normal, and how seeking a candidate willing to spend ten-plus years in a position or with the courts was no longer realistic or the norm.

---

41 Windley, The Value of Employer Branding.

42 The Trust Cost of a Bad Hire. (2015, September 18). Glassdoor. <https://www.glassdoor.com/blog/the-true-cost-of-a-bad-hire/>.

## UPDATE AND CLARIFY JOB TITLES AND DESCRIPTIONS

Considering its significance as a recruiting tool, courts should ensure job titles, job descriptions, and job postings are current and accurately convey the duties of the position. Court focus groups shared that position advertisements are increasingly drawing smaller applicant pools and candidates whose qualifications do not overtly align with the skills needed for court vacancies. Often, position titles and descriptions are not updated regularly, and this leads to outdated reflections of the actual duties of positions. For example, position descriptions may not be updated to reflect the increased automation in the courts, and therefore, the responsibilities listed may no longer be applicable. The descriptions may fail to identify new responsibilities that have been added to a position. This often can be the case when a long-time employee leaves a court and their position is posted. The posting may include the same description from twenty years ago, when court operations and the position have clearly changed.

The first thing that may catch someone's eye is the job title. As such, job titles should be clear and reflect the role's purpose. Courts should consider if the job titles accurately convey the work of a position and also how the title will appear in candidate job searches. Rewording job titles and/or descriptions with more current terminology and using plain language can attract more relevant candidates for open positions. Court focus groups stated that the salary range should be included on the posting to attract the right candidates and save time in the hiring process.

LinkedIn says that a job description should outline the primary duties and responsibilities of the role as well as offer the prospective employee an overview of the organization and the employer's expectations. This is the first opportunity for a candidate to learn about the position and perhaps their first time learning about your court.<sup>43</sup> And, as the adage goes, you only get one chance to make a first impression. A job candidate will review a job posting and often quickly decide if it aligns with their interest, skill sets, and compensation requirements.

When writing or revising job descriptions, courts should make sure the description:

- clearly describes the reason the role exists.
- explains how the role functions within the court.
- defines the key responsibilities and areas of accountability.
- describes the type of work produced or outcomes delivered.
- identifies the skills, qualifications, and requirements.

---

43 What is a Job Description? LinkedIn. <https://business.linkedin.com/hire/resources/talent-acquisition/what-is-a-job-description>.

- discusses the working conditions (e.g., hours, location, physical requirements, travel requirements).
- explains the reporting structure and working relationships with others.
- outlines the compensation and benefits.
- demonstrates how the role contributes to the larger court context.<sup>44,45</sup>

People want to know their work matters and that they make a difference, so understanding the contribution of their role to the organization by including it in the position cannot be overlooked. Hiring managers should review descriptions with an eye for how candidates will be assessed. Therefore, having clear criteria is key. Accurate job descriptions that outline key responsibilities, state the skills needed to perform the job, and identify potential professional growth or career paths will allow candidates to assess if the role aligns with their interests and career objectives.<sup>46</sup>

Job descriptions and postings should be inclusive. To ensure it is clear that the position is open to applicants of all ages and abilities, courts should avoid using descriptive words, such as “young” and “energetic”. Rather, the description should focus on the qualifications.<sup>47</sup>

Many barriers in job postings can discourage qualified applicants from applying for positions for which they may be qualified. These barriers can negatively impact job seekers and result in a less diverse and/or limited applicant pool. To promote fairness and improved outcomes, it is important to be aware of these barriers and to consider removing them from job postings or reframing them. The following information is derived from training provided by the Minnesota Judicial Branch, which describes strategies to remove barriers and biases in the recruiting and hiring process.

---

44 See <https://www.rolemapper.tech/what-is-a-job-description/>

45 See <https://business.linkedin.com/hire/resources/talent-acquisition/what-is-a-job-description>

46 Kemp, The Recruitment Process is More Digital Than Ever.

47 How to Attract – and Keep – a Multigenerational Workforce. (2026, March 9). *WSJ Business*. <https://partners.wsj.com/indeed/leading-the-way-on-talent/how-to-attract-and-keep-a-multigenerational-workforce/>

Potential Barrier/ Bias Language	More Inclusive Alternative Language	Understanding the “Why”
Driver’s License	Access to Reliable Transportation	Many individuals do not have a driver’s license or the ability to obtain one. It is important to consider that there are many alternatives that can be used to get to and from work each day. Examples include public transportation, rideshare service, family member, etc.
Ability to Travel	Include frequency and distance.  <i>Example: Ability to travel up to twice a month between two courthouses located 30 miles apart.</i>	A lack of clarification causes potential candidates to interpret the travel requirements. This leads to candidates who are primary caregivers, unable to fly, or travel long distances not applying.
Unnecessary Physical Requirements (e.g., ability to lift heavy objects, ability to stand for long periods of time)	When possible, remove this language all together. If the language must remain, be specific in the weight and frequency of lifting or duration of standing.	This removes barriers for those with various physical limitations.
Too Many “Preferred Qualifications”	Avoid too many “nice to have” bullets.	Some candidates will not apply if they do not have all of the preferred qualifications. This can lead to a smaller candidate pool and confirmation bias in the interview process.
Naming a Specific School or Program as a Preferred Qualification	Use a program name and offer alternatives.  <i>Example: Bachelor’s degree in computer sciences, management information systems or related field or equivalent related experience.</i>	This can limit the applicant pool. Instead use language that clarifies the desired education and allows for substitution of related work experience.

## STREAMLINE THE APPLICATION PROCESS

In today's environment, job candidates expect the recruitment process to be simple and convenient. Prioritizing an applicant's experience can result in more successful recruitment of qualified candidates. Employers can streamline the application process to improve the candidate experience by avoiding asking excessive and unnecessary questions and focusing only on those questions that assess the candidate's relevant experience and skills.

Siler says organizations can brand their recruiting to ultimately attract and retain top talent by ensuring their application process makes the candidate's experience a priority, by ensuring meaningful and tailored communication with the applicant.<sup>48</sup> To make the application and interview process convenient, consider making phone calls to candidates after hours and schedule interviews at flexible times, based on their schedule.<sup>49</sup> Communication throughout the application process should be clear and consistent and with sufficient follow-through to either make a formal offer or inform them they were not selected.

Using technology can optimize an applicant's experience. One simple way for courts to make use of technology is to ensure that their job searches are mobile device-friendly as more people are using cell phones to peruse job postings.<sup>50</sup> Employers can also use platforms that make applying for jobs easy and where creating an account is optional. If an organization's hiring practices looks and feels dated, potential employees and applicants may believe that it is indicative of the organization's performance.<sup>51</sup>

Automating administrative recruitment tasks can improve the candidate's experience by hastening the recruitment process.<sup>52</sup> The length of the hiring process can affect an employer's ability to retain a quality applicant since an employee could get another job offer before getting the offer from the employer. Court focus group participants noted that they try to fill open positions within four weeks, but it can often take longer to fill vacancies. As mentioned earlier in this guide, applicant tracking systems can help streamline the application process for human resources staff, which increases efficiency while improving recruiting outcomes.

---

48 Siler, The Importance of Branding Your Recruiting Process.

49 Aggarwal, Reena. (2025, August 25). 7 Strategies for Effective Interview Scheduling: A Comprehensive Guide. Timify. <https://www.timify.com/en/blog/seven-strategies-for-effective-interview-scheduling/>

50 Heymans, Recruitment Strategies per Generation (Boomers, GenX, Millennials, GenZ).

51 Siler, The Importance of Branding Your Recruiting Process.

52 Siler, The Importance of Branding Your Recruiting Process.

Being transparent about the nature of the work is important for recruitment but also for retention if the person is hired. The application process creates an opportunity to establish realistic expectations of the work. In addition to this type of transparency, courts should emphasize the rewarding nature of public service and purpose-driven work where they can make a difference.

## CONDUCT AND PROMOTE CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION STUDIES

Focus group participants stated that courts are competing with other state agencies, local and county government agencies, private sector information technology businesses, and law firms that can exercise greater discretion over their position descriptions and compensation packages. This allows those employers to be more competitive in the job market. Human resource professionals focus groups were asked how competitive court compensation and benefits are in comparison to other employers. While still lagging behind the private sector, they indicated that courts are doing a better job of bridging the wage gap and that the total compensation package (e.g., insurance, retirement plans, pension, holidays) may be better than their competitors. This, however, may depend on the company or organization.

Courts should regularly employ classification and compensation studies to improve their ability to recruit qualified applicants. Classification and compensation studies are intensive analyses that focus on the compensation of employees and how positions are classified. Such studies attempt to align court compensation and classification with the current market for jobs with similar responsibilities. Regular compensation studies ensure that a court is offering fair compensation for positions and that it remains competitive with other employers in both the private and public sector. These analyses are often conducted by external entities or contractors or by internal court staff. Some courts have employees who focus on classification and compensation and conduct market research to ensure the court remains current and competitive with compensation trends.

It is important for courts to conduct these studies on a regular review schedule, but it is also important that courts promote to prospective employees that classification and compensation studies are conducted. This demonstrates that the court values its employees and wants to remain competitive with other branches, other state agencies, other government employers, and private sector employers.

For more information about conducting a classification and compensation study in your court, contact the NCSC.

## ALLOW WORKPLACE SCHEDULE FLEXIBILITY

One factor that can improve recruiting is offering a flexible work schedule. This does not necessarily mean a fully remote position as many positions within the court are public facing, but rather it could mean a hybrid position or one that is not strictly an 8-5 schedule. If a remote work arrangement is not possible, even the possibility of a hybrid work schedule is appealing to job candidates.

Focus groups said that remote work and flexible work schedules have been challenging to navigate with younger staff and has proven to be a challenge when hiring. Job candidates want more flexible work hours and more remote or hybrid opportunities. This is often the first question that is asked during the interview. The inability to offer flexible schedules and remote options is a factor that drives candidates to other employment opportunities. This is an issue for recruiting front-line staff positions that, as currently envisioned, can generally only be staffed in person.

If neither a fully remote or hybrid work arrangement is permitted, courts should consider offering flexible hours that still allow for the work to be completed and the needs of the public to be met, while considering the personal life of the employee. For example, considering part-time employment or full-time employment where the employee works 11-7.

Offering flexible work schedules can reduce the occurrence of the quiet quitting phenomenon discussed [earlier](#) since it allows employees to balance their work life and personal life. A recent Forbes article noted that younger generations are, in fact, pushing back on what is being called “the work first culture”. They value a balance between their professional and personal lives, while still respecting the importance of each.<sup>53</sup> Employers that permit flexible work schedules and/or work arrangements publicize that they value this balance and embrace it to recruit and retain employees of all ages.

Courts should consider flexible work arrangements and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages when making the decision to allow remote work schedules. According to Pew Research, remote work allows for a greater work-life balance and can increase productivity. In fact, 60% believe their work arrangement has helped them accomplish their work and meet deadlines. However, it can also cause some employees to feel disconnected and can affect the opportunities available for mentorship.<sup>54</sup>

---

53 Hamilton, Diane. (2025, January). Why Soft Quitting At Work Could Be More Dangerous than Quiet Quitting. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/dianehamilton/2025/01/10/why-soft-quitting-at-work-could-be-more-dangerous-than-quiet-quitting/>

54 Pew Research Center, 5 Years Later: America Looks Back at the Impact of COVID-19.

## HIGHLIGHT THE COMPENSATION PACKAGE

A large percentage of state court budget expenditures are used to fund salaries and benefits for judicial officers and court staff. However, depending on the state's funding structure, staff may also be funded solely from local government budgets or possibly from a combination of state and local funding.

An obvious draw for anyone seeking employment or seeking a new position is the compensation package. The compensation package is not just weekly, monthly, and annual salary, but the full benefits complement in addition to the pay. Depending on the court, this may include but is not limited to paid holidays, paid time off for vacation, paid time off for sick leave, family leave, parental leave, bereavement leave, state retirement plans, health insurance, life insurance, pension plans, tuition reimbursements, employee assistance programs, and paid parking. Less tangible but appealing aspects of court work include job stability and better work-life balance (compared to the private sector).

The full compensation package offered by a court should be offered and emphasized as part of the recruiting process in every way possible. Often, the benefits offered by the courts are much more enticing than what the private sector can offer. To demonstrate this, courts should attempt to monetize the value of the benefits package. This is also a good place to communicate that a court regularly conducts classification and compensation studies to show commitment to offering fair, competitive compensation.

Courts should consider generational differences to appeal to a wide range of applicants. For example, research indicates that younger generations value well-being-focused benefits (e.g., mental health treatment, tuition assistance, physical wellness) while older generations prioritize benefits that focus on health care and retirement plans.<sup>55</sup> Consistent with research, court focus group participants stated that the benefits portion of the compensation package (e.g., a state retirement plan) is less important to most entry-level hires. The employees in these positions are more focused on paying for basic needs, such as housing and food, particularly with the rising costs of living, which was noted as a concern.

Focus groups suggested that courts could work to improve the amount of leave offered early in employment, since the available leave time available to new employees is not as abundant in the first year. Offering parking stipends or subsidized parking to those who are required to work in the office may offset additional out-of-pocket costs in those areas where employees must pay for parking.

---

<sup>55</sup> Heymans, Recruitment Strategies per Generation (Boomers, GenX, Millennials, GenZ).

## IMPLEMENT HIRING INCENTIVES

Focus groups suggested that sign-on bonuses could be instrumental in recruiting qualified candidates for positions that are more challenging to fill due to the competitive salaries that are offered in the private sector.

The South Dakota Unified Judicial System implemented a hiring incentive program to assist with the recruitment of “hard to fill vacancies and positions” as identified by the state court administrator. These positions are identified based on how difficult the position is to recruit and the ability to locate qualified applicants, including but not limited to court reporters, court-assisted court recorders, deputy court clerks, court clerk magistrates, court services officers, staff attorneys, and computer support positions.

The hiring incentive varies by position but varies from \$1,000-\$2,000, and it is only paid if funding is available. After the employee is hired, the new employee is paid \$100 of the incentive bonus three months from their hire date in their paycheck. The remaining hiring incentive amount is paid in two bonus payments in their paycheck: half at six months from the hire date and the remaining half at sixteen months from the hire date. New hires who do not complete three months of work will not receive any incentive payments. Employees will not receive additional bonus payments if they resign their position or are terminated prior to the six or sixteen months in their position.

In addition to sign-on bonuses, focus groups also suggested courts could create incentives for internal court employees when they refer qualified candidates for open positions. In the private sector, referral bonuses are being used to locate quality applicants and streamline recruitment. Organizations are using employee advocacy programs and social media to incentivize employees to share job postings on their profiles. Companies are finding that these referral bonuses allow for time savings, more cost-effective hiring, a higher retention rate, better access to a more relevant talent pool, and quicker adaptation to the position.<sup>56</sup>

One court offers a \$250 referral bonus to employees who refer a candidate who is hired. That employee then also receives an additional \$250 bonus if the new employee stays for one year. This depends on the availability of funds. In another court, the county commissioners authorized a referral incentive for the new employee and the employee who referred them.

---

<sup>56</sup> Emmer, The Evolution Of Recruiting: How Sourcing Candidates Has Changed In The Hybrid Environment.

## EMPHASIZE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COURT

A major draw for prospective employees is the promise of future opportunities with an employer. Employees do not want to be stagnant in a position and want to know they have the ability to advance, learn, and develop their skills in a position. Emphasis on career progression and learning development has been identified as one of the recruiting draws for Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z.<sup>57</sup> However, the value of personal and professional growth is enticing to all generations.

According to focus groups, courts are losing talent due to a lack of professional development opportunities. If courts want to attract a qualified pool of applicants, demonstrating their commitment to employees by way of developing their talent shows they value staff and their contribution to the organization. The availability for progression and professional development should be highlighted as part of the branding, on the website, through social media platforms, on job postings, and in the interview process.

## PROMOTE THE COURT'S STRATEGIC PLAN AND MISSION

Strategic plans, vision, and mission statements demonstrate to candidates what the court values, why it exists, how it sees its purpose, and the future direction of the court. People want to feel like they are making a difference and that their work matters, not simply that they are cogs in a machine or a process.

Courts that have engaged in strategic planning efforts and developed a strategic campaign, a mission and vision statement, and core values should leverage this information during recruiting. At a minimum, it should clearly be displayed on the court's website, so it lends to the court's branding and reputation.

Court human resources professionals, court administrators, and hiring managers should be familiar with the strategic plan and reference it during hiring events, screening calls and interviews, and incorporate the plan and mission into job postings. This allows prospective employees to visualize how they may fit into the mission, vision, and future of the organization and lets them know if the court's values align with their own priorities, ensuring a good fit for both the employee and organization. This can reduce potentially costly hiring mistakes.<sup>58</sup>

---

57 Heymans, Recruitment Strategies per Generation (Boomers, GenX, Millennials, GenZ).

58 The Trust Cost of a Bad Hire. (2015, September 18). Glassdoor. <https://www.glassdoor.com/blog/the-true-cost-of-a-bad-hire/>

Contact NCSC if your court does not have a strategic plan or the strategic plan needs updating. The NCSC staff have knowledge of strategic planning practices, including group facilitation; evaluating and revising mission and vision statements; assessing organizational strengths, challenges, and opportunities; and identifying strategic priorities and action steps.

## COLLECT AND ANALYZE RECRUITING DATA

One strategy that may not be as obvious for improving recruiting is the use of data. Collecting and reviewing data related to recruitment can help courts identify which of these strategies may be most effective and impactful and enhance hiring processes. This will generally be collected and maintained by a court's human resources staff or the court administrator, depending on the size and structure of the court.

Human resources analytics is the collection and analysis of human resources data to allow organizations and businesses to make evidence-based decisions. There are four types of HR analytics methods: descriptive, diagnostic, predictive, and prescriptive analytics. Descriptive analytics consider historical data to understand events that have occurred in the workforce during a specific period while diagnostic analytics attempt to understand the cause of past events. Predictive analytics use data to predict what may happen in the future and/or how employees may behave and prescriptive analytics offer recommendations on how courts may deal with potential challenges by considering possible scenarios and outcomes of those challenges.<sup>59</sup>

When deciding the metrics that courts should collect and assess, court leaders should consult with managers, supervisors, and human resources staff. The data may be qualitative as well as quantitative. Courts must determine:

- if they have the ability to collect certain data points and if not, they should weigh the value of the information,
- if the data to be collected will be accurate and reliable,
- the frequency of the data analysis and sharing (e.g., monthly, quarterly),
- how the data will be shared (e.g., through what medium),
- with whom the data will be shared, and
- how the data will be used (i.e., for what purpose).

---

<sup>59</sup> Boatman, Andrea. 4 Types of HR Analytics. Academy to Innovate HR. <https://www.aihr.com/blog/types-of-hr-analytics/>.

Data points that courts may consider collecting and analyzing to understand recruiting successes and challenges include:

- applicant and employee information to include demographics,
- number of vacant positions currently posted,
- number of applicants per position,
- number of days the position is or has been posted,
- number of days to fill the position and average number of days to fill all positions overall,
- number of new hires,
- number of employment offers accepted and declined,
- reasons why offers were declined, and
- what recruiting methods were used for the position.

Courts may also want to track information related to attendance at or participation in career fairs, such as the number of events attended, the location (e.g., high school, trade school, college), and virtual career fairs. While it may be construed as more retention-related, courts may also track why staff are leaving and when they are leaving to help inform recruiting efforts.

# Retention Strategies

The image features a solid blue background. In the lower half, there are two thin, white, curved lines that sweep across the frame from the bottom left towards the right, creating a sense of movement and design.

# Retention Strategies

To understand and improve retention, it is important to understand what motivates employees. Focus groups conducted in December 2025 with court employees, managers, supervisors, and human resources professionals provide insights as to challenges with retaining court employees, which will be discussed throughout the section, as well as strategies based on national research. Many of the strategies that were identified to improve recruitment in the previous section, such as workplace flexibility, professional growth, mission statement connection, and data collection and analysis, can also improve retention. Therefore, these strategies may be repeated through the lens of employee retention.

When courts experience turnover, excessive or otherwise, institutional knowledge is lost and court leaders must focus their efforts on recruiting, interviewing, and training, which can be costly. Succession planning is often an area where courts struggle. Succession planning, in simplest terms, is identifying key roles and positions within an organization and creating a “talent” pipeline.<sup>60</sup> Several of the strategies in this section, while positively impacting retention, also assist courts in succession planning. For example, investing in managerial training and offering opportunities for professional growth and career advancement. Both focus on retaining employees, either by improving management and supervisory skills or increasing job satisfaction by offering new professional opportunities.

When employees leave, especially more seasoned employees, the loss of institutional knowledge is difficult to replace. While the court can replace the position, the knowledge lost and the void left is often felt for months or even years. Engaging in succession planning, for example, through those retention strategies, helps the court keep star employees while also providing a career path for employees who demonstrate high-potential. It ensures the court can be flexible when employees leave.<sup>61</sup>

## FOCUS ON WORKPLACE CULTURE

A 2022 article in the *Harvard Business Review* stated that people are 10 times more likely to quit jobs due to a toxic work culture, as opposed to quitting due to compensation or in exchange

---

<sup>60</sup> Dennison, Kara. (2024, June 25). The Importance of Succession Planning, Now More Than Ever. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/karadennison/2024/06/25/the-importance-of-succession-planning-now-more-than-ever/>

<sup>61</sup> Dennison, The Importance of Succession Planning, Now More Than Ever.

for a position that offers greater work-life balance.<sup>62</sup> Workplace culture can be described as its personality – how work gets done, how communication occurs, how employees interact. Courts should be concerned about the workplace culture because it can impact staff engagement, job satisfaction, and their performance, all of which have an impact on retention, collaboration, and the court’s success.<sup>63</sup>



*Being part of a compassionate culture at work can increase emotional commitment to the organization, productivity, work quality, and engagement.*

**Zach Mercurio**

Court employee focus groups were asked how workplace culture affects employee decisions to stay or leave. Participants noted that workplace culture has a huge impact on retention and that people will leave when they are not happy with the culture. They also added that it impacts productivity. Workplace cultures that improve retention and productivity were described as environments where management is supportive and recognizes that an employee needs assistance and addresses it, where psychological safety is present, where staff are empowered, where there is communication between leadership and employees (and often a variety of communication channels), and where employees feel valued, appreciated, and receive recognition. Conversely, cultures that have a negative impact on retention include environments where gossiping, bullying, and inappropriate relationships are permitted and when supervisors are resistant to change even when processes do not work.

A culture that embraces psychological safety can improve retention and ensure an effective team.<sup>64</sup> According to the American Psychological Association, psychological safety exists when

---

62 Ravishankar, Rakshitha Arni. (2022, December 1). A Guide to Building Psychological Safety on Your Team. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2022/12/a-guide-to-building-psychological-safety-on-your-team>

63 Keefe, Kelly. (2024, October 8). Workplace Culture: What It Is, Why It Matters, and How to Define It. ERC. <https://yourerc.com/blog/workplace-culture-what-it-is-why-it-matters-how-to-define-it/>

64 Hennelly, Bridging Generational Divides in Your Workplace.

employees can be themselves, feel they can take appropriate risks, admit and discuss mistakes, request help, trust their fellow employees, and feel that they are valued.<sup>65</sup>

Manager and supervisor focus groups also reported that a positive and collaborative workplace culture had a major impact on job satisfaction. Often unable to compete on pay or benefits, courts and court departments with strong and positive workplace cultures were able to retain staff for longer than they otherwise could. Participants specifically noted that departments and courts with strong workplace cultures were better able to retain staff and had higher levels of employee satisfaction and morale while departments with poor culture often suffer higher rates of turnover. Managers and supervisors also noted that employees who felt valued by the court and their managers expressed more positive levels of satisfaction within their roles.

Further, reiterating the feedback from the employee and manager/supervisor focus groups, court human resource professionals discussed the workplace factors that improve retention and productivity: supportive management, flexibility, psychological safety, and ensuring employees feel valued, appreciated, and receive recognition.

To help build psychological safety, court leaders can celebrate the concept of learning from mistakes, encourage employees to openly discuss issues and problems, allowing discussion of such issues in a constructive and non-judgmental way, and openly recognize each employee's skills, talents, abilities, successes, and contributions.<sup>66</sup>

### ASSESSING PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN YOUR COURT

- Are employees able to admit when they make a mistake?
- Can employees raise issues or problems?
- Do employees reject other employees who may be different?
- Are employees able to ask for help?
- Do employees undermine one another?
- Are employee skills and talents valued?

Source: American Psychological Association

---

65 What is Psychological Safety at Work? (2024, March 4). American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/topics/healthy-workplaces/psychological-safety>.

66 What is Psychological Safety at Work?, American Psychological Association.

## INVEST IN MANAGERIAL TRAINING

According to a 2022 *Harvard Business Review* article, three out of four people say their boss is the most stressful part of their job.<sup>67</sup> In fact, human resource professional focus groups identified the following factors as negatively impacting retention: work environments with low morale due to poor leadership, micromanagement by managers and supervisors, and limited engagement and collaboration opportunities.

One way courts can create, prevent, or possibly correct a negative workplace culture and improve retention is by providing training for employees who are promoted to a managerial or supervisory role, as well as employees who are currently in those roles. This is important because, while a person may be excellent at their job and warrant a promotion, courts should not assume that the person has managerial and leadership skills.

The New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) offers a Supervisory Mentorship Program and provides current supervisors and managers, as well as supervisor trainees, with vital supervisory skills and knowledge. The AOC provides at least 2 trainings per calendar year. Since its inception, 482 supervisors have attended the Supervisory Mentorship training.

The course offers ten defined training modules, which include individual work, small-group work, and presentation development. Employees are trained in supervisory techniques, such as coaching, management skills, techniques to enhance and improve written and oral communications, recruitment and selection, interviewing and screening applicant skills, performance planning and evaluations, employee progressive discipline and documentation, investigating complaints, the New Mexico Judicial Branch (NMJB) Personnel Rules, the NMJB Code of Conduct and personnel policies, harassment, discrimination and retaliation prevention, drug and alcohol prevention, loss control, Workers' Compensation administration, safety and active shooter awareness, behavioral health and wellness, and the NMJB Judicial Code of Conduct and the Judicial Standards Commission. Participants have the opportunity to work together to develop and write performance planning and evaluation criteria and disciplinary actions.

The AOC training is offered to all judiciary employees statewide, and the class includes all levels of management, from lead workers to directors. There is no eligibility requirement to participate. Employees are either referred by management or required to attend due to disciplinary or investigative outcomes.

In general, managerial training may focus on a variety of topics, such as those included in the New Mexico training course. Courts should consider incorporating training on leading a

---

<sup>67</sup> Ravishankar, A Guide to Building Psychological Safety on Your Team.

multi-generational workforce into training curriculums, such as managing and building a multi-generational workforce, which requires empathy, flexibility, and inclusivity.<sup>68</sup> The training may include understanding common characteristics of the different generations but also focus on avoiding stereotypes and reducing conscious and unconscious biases.

## ALLOW FOR FLEXIBILITY IN WORK SCHEDULES AND ARRANGEMENTS

As [previously mentioned](#) in this guide, offering alternative work arrangements, such as remote or hybrid work, is a draw for prospective employees. It can also be appealing to existing employees, particularly if such an arrangement is offered to other staff and/or if the arrangement was offered in the past with success (e.g., allowing remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic).

However, not all employees may find a remote work schedule desirable; some feel they may miss networking opportunities or connections with their fellow team members. Some research has shown that employees believe remote work created more siloes and reduced collaboration, as well as slightly reducing the mentorship opportunities.<sup>69</sup>

Court employee focus groups indicated that remote and hybrid work arrangements are highly sought after and appreciated. Human resource professionals focus groups echoed this, stating that flexibility in working hours and/or the ability to work in remote and hybrid positions were factors that positively impacted employee satisfaction. It was noted that managers allowing employees to ‘flex’ their working hours to accommodate needs in their personal life, such as attending an event for their child, had a positive impact on employee satisfaction.

An employer failing to offer flexibility in the work schedule to accommodate personal commitments, such as family obligations, was noted as a reason why staff may leave their current job. This is true even for staff who do not seek a remote or hybrid work arrangement or where such an arrangement is not possible due to the nature of the employee’s work (e.g., front-line staff). While an organization may not be able to provide all employees with the **same type** of work schedule flexibility, generally, **some type** of schedule flexibility may be available, even if it varies by employee. If this occurs, it is important to communicate to employees the reason for the variations.

---

68 Mauer, Managing Multi-Generational Communication in the Workplace.

69 Pew Research Center, 5 Years Later: America Looks Back at the Impact of COVID-19.

## ENSURE EFFECTIVE HIRING PRACTICES

While typically associated with recruitment, effective hiring practices, including interviewing practices, are positively correlated with improved employee retention. This is because keeping an employee may be dependent on selecting the correct candidate in the beginning stages. Hiring the wrong candidate can be costly, including the time to post a position, recruit qualified applicants, conduct interviews for the position, onboard a new employee, and the impact the turnover has on employee morale.<sup>70</sup>

An inadequate interview process can impact an organization's ability to retain a quality employee. To ensure an effective interview process, employers should have a consistent interview strategy. Employers should also create a checklist of questions from which interviewers may choose at each phase of the interview and implement a protocol for who will conduct interviews (e.g., supervisor, manager, administrator, judge) and who will be involved at each stage of the interview process.<sup>71</sup>

Asking specific questions during the hiring process can ensure the candidate is qualified for the responsibilities of the job but is also a good fit, both for the position and within the courts. For example, an interviewer may ask the candidate what is something that they love about their current role or a previous position. This can determine the level of interest that someone has in their job and whether the person is just looking for a job or truly has a passion for the work. Employers may also want to ask about their favorite boss or manager's characteristics.<sup>72</sup>

While not necessarily a strategy on its own, focus groups emphasized the need for transparency in the recruitment process. Courts must be open with applicants about the challenging nature of the work within the courts (e.g., exposure to stress and trauma) while also emphasizing the rewarding nature of public service and purpose-driven work.

The following information is derived from training provided by the Minnesota Judicial Branch, which describes strategies to remove biases in the hiring process. If not actively recognized and managed, unconscious biases can unfairly influence decisions. To promote fairness, consistency, and better outcomes, it is crucial to understand common biases and to have structured hiring practices in place. Examples include the following:

---

70 The Trust Cost of a Bad Hire, Glassdoor.

71 The Trust Cost of a Bad Hire, Glassdoor.

72 Whitney, PayChex.

### CONFIRMATION BIAS

- Occurs when quick decisions are made, sometimes within the first 15 minutes of an interview, based on perceived truths and then, whether subconsciously or not, questions are asked in a way to seek information that justifies the bias.
- **Example:** A hiring manager assumes a candidate is unprepared because the candidate appears nervous at the start of the interview. The hiring manager focuses primarily on answers that reinforce that perception while overlooking candidate strengths.
- **Tips to avoid this bias in the hiring process:**
  - » Maintain an open mind.
  - » Ask only job-related questions.
  - » Ensure the same questions are asked to each candidate.

### STEREOTYPE BIAS

- Occurs when decisions are made based on surface-level characteristics, such as age or appearance, rather than relevant qualifications.
- **Example:** A candidate is dismissed because the hiring manager believes the candidate may struggle with technology or retire soon, based on their age.
- **Tips to avoid this bias in the hiring process:**
  - » Focus on demonstrated skills listed on the candidate's resume.
  - » Focus on the job-related requirements in the job description.

### POSITIVE/NEGATIVE ANCHOR BIAS

- Occurs when one trait, either favorable or unfavorable, disproportionately influences an overall perspective.
- **Positive Anchor** may lead to over emphasizing one strong qualification despite other qualification gaps.
  - » **Example:** A candidate shares that they have extensive experience similar to a current important project underway at a court. The candidate's experience and background otherwise indicate that they are not a good fit; however, this is overshadowed by the candidate's highlight of that one piece of experience.
- **Negative Anchor** may lead to dismissing a candidate based on one concern without further inquiry.
  - » **Example:** A short employment at a previous job drives the decision to not hire a candidate.

- **Tips to avoid this bias in the hiring process:**
  - » Assess the candidate's full background before making a decision.
  - » Ask clarifying questions before drawing conclusions.

## COMPARE/CONTRAST BIAS

- Occurs when candidates are evaluated against one another instead of making decisions based on candidate skills and attributes, as displayed on their resumes.
- **Example:** After interviewing two candidates back-to-back, the hiring manager makes the decision to hire the more outgoing candidate, even though the position requires a candidate to have strong analytical skills rather than interpersonal skills.
- **Tips to avoid this bias in the hiring process:**
  - » Eliminate the practice of conducting back-to-back interviews.
  - » Utilize structured evaluation and scoring criteria based on job competencies.

## SIMILARITY BIAS

- Occurs when decisions are made based on favoring candidates that share similar backgrounds, interests, or experiences to those making the hiring decisions.
- **Example:** A candidate attended the same alma mater as the hiring manager.
- **Tips to avoid this bias in the hiring process:**
  - » Utilize structured evaluation and scoring criteria based on job competencies.
  - » Ensure the same questions are asked to each candidate.

## EFFECTIVELY ONBOARD NEW EMPLOYEES

Effective onboarding is a critical factor in employee retention. The first few weeks on the job shape how new hires perceive the organization and determine their long-term potential. Without guidance, support, and connection during the onboarding period, new hires can become confused and disengaged, which can lead to early turnover. Structured onboarding processes help new hires integrate into their new workplace, understand the expectations of their role, and navigate the workplace culture.

Onboarding and training are two distinct activities. Training focuses on the employee learning the technicalities, or the how of doing one's job. Onboarding is commonly thought of as a human resources function, where employees learn and make decisions about their benefits, sign up for payroll, etc. However, onboarding is much more. It is about integrating the employee into the existing culture, the role, management, and with other employees. For the courts, it should include a discussion of the purpose of the courts and how the employee and their work fit

into that purpose. Onboarding can also include identifying a mentor, or a buddy for the new employee to build connection and to better understand processes.<sup>73</sup>

Onboarding	Training
Focuses on familiarizing new employees with the organization	Focuses on development of skills and knowledge
Aims to integrate employees into the new culture and team	Aims to enhance employee skills and competencies
Begins immediately after offer accepted	Begins after employee's first day
Provides information on organizational culture, values, and mission	Provides technical knowledge and tools, teaches skills and concepts

Source: iSeazy. <https://www.iseazy.com/blog/onboarding-vs-training/>.

Prioritizing a structured, thoughtful onboarding experience leads to more engaged, productive, and committed employees. To better ensure employee retention, consider scheduling an onboarding appointment prior to the new hire's start date and creating a welcome guide to lay the foundation for success. The following information is derived from onboarding training provided by the Maricopa Superior Court Human Resources Department.

## Onboarding Appointment

The goal of a new employee onboarding appointment is to establish a supportive framework that sets the stage for long-term success. This initial meeting is far more than a procedural step; it is an opportunity to welcome the new employee, clarify expectations, review essential policies and procedures, and provide the necessary resources for the new employee to start their first day with confidence and enthusiasm. During this onboarding appointment, consider the following:

<sup>73</sup> Sanchez, Cristina. (2024, February 20). Onboarding vs. Training: How to Tell the Difference? iSeazy. <https://www.iseazy.com/blog/onboarding-vs-training/>.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

- Review and complete applicable employment forms, tax forms, and employee benefit options.
- Enter the new employee into applicable systems so that they have access to get started on their first day.
- Enter the new employee into payroll so that they are paid in a timely fashion.

## SECURITY

- Fingerprint the new employee, if applicable.
- Issue the employee an identification (ID) badge, if applicable.
- Issue the employee access cards, if applicable.

## Welcome Guide

A welcome guide can play a significant role in employee retention during the onboarding process by helping new hires navigate their first few days and weeks with more clarity and confidence. A welcome guide aims to provide essential information to reduce uncertainty and help employees feel better prepared to succeed in their roles within the organization from the onset.

Below are suggested sections, based on the Maricopa County Superior Court Onboarding Guide, to consider including in a welcome guide for newly hired employees based:

## WELCOME MESSAGE

- A welcome letter from the Executive Team and/or Presiding/Chief Judge signals that leadership is committed, intentional, and invested in the employee's success.

## EMPLOYEE CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

- A section on employee conduct helps to lay the foundation for culture and behavior to ensure new hires have a clear understanding of expectations.

## WORKING HOURS AND BREAKS

- Outlining operating hours, lunch periods, and break allowances provides new hires with a starting point and encourages them to raise any questions or concerns with their direct supervisor.

### DRESS CODE

- Providing the dress code in writing creates clarity and helps reduce unnecessary uncertainty for new hires.

### MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

- Including the mission and vision statements in a welcome guide provides new employees with a clear understanding of the purpose, direction, and core values of the court. This helps new employees establish a shared sense of purpose which strengthens employee satisfaction and drives long-term retention.

### EMPLOYEE LEAVE INFORMATION

- Including links to vacation, sick, family, medical, parental and any other types of leave policies provides new employees with a place that they can easily reference when questions regarding leave arise.

### AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

- Including ADA information signals to new hires that the organization is committed to creating an environment where all employees can succeed.

### PAYROLL AND HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

- Having early access to payroll and observed holiday information helps new employees manage their finances with confidence and allows them to plan their personal commitments appropriately.

### BENEFIT INFORMATION

- Similar to leave information, providing benefit information including but not limited to retirement plans, insurance options, flexible spending accounts, health savings accounts, employee assistance program (EAP), employee wellness, childcare, education reimbursement, and discounts and links to these policies helps new employees access information with ease.

## KEY CONTACTS

- Providing a list of key contacts within the organization, such as human resources, finance, and security, is helpful for new employees to identify the appropriate point of contact for specific issues.

## TRAINING

- Highlighting the required training requirements for employees in the welcome guide helps new hires prioritize their responsibilities effectively and reinforces the organization's commitment to professionalism.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Explaining the safety and security measures that must be followed as an employee of the organization sets clear expectations and reduces confusion for new employees. Additionally, clearly outlined safety and security measures signals to new hires that safety is a priority for the organization.

## COURTHOUSE AND/OR COMMUNITY MAP

- Presenting the local courthouse, regional courts, and/or local community map in the welcome guide helps new hires acclimate more quickly and feel more connected to their surroundings.

## NEW HIRE CHECKLIST

- Offering a new hire checklist at the conclusion of the welcome guide allows new hires to navigate their onboarding process. Below are a few things to consider adding to this checklist:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Set up direct deposit and tax deductions (if not done during the onboarding appointment). | <input type="checkbox"/> Review key contact information                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Review benefits, employee leave, payroll, and holiday schedule.                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Review emergency evacuation plan.                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complete benefits selection (if not done during the onboarding appointment).              | <input type="checkbox"/> Review employee conduct materials.                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss work schedule with supervisor/manager.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Review mission and vision statements, if applicable.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm dress code with supervisor/manager.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Tour of assigned department and courthouse, if applicable. |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask about parking, if applicable.                          |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Complete assigned trainings.                               |

Court focus groups discussed the importance of training and onboarding in relation to staff retention. It is important that new employees feel welcomed on their first day, which means greeting them upon their arrival, having their workday schedule planned, and their workstation ready (e.g., computer, phones). Failure to do so leaves the employee feeling unprepared and uncertain about their role in the courts. Courts that are unsure as to what should be included in the onboarding process or are even looking to update their onboarding process may want to gather feedback from new and veteran employees. This can be through surveys, listening sessions, and/or convening a committee.

Courts must recognize that onboarding a new employee does not stop after the first day or even the first week. Courts should treat onboarding as an ongoing process, the length of which may depend on the employee and the position, but some courts have an onboarding checklist at the 30-day, 60-day, and 90-day intervals (or even longer) from the date of hire.

The NCSC is currently developing a “Working in Courts” e-learning self-study course for new court employees. The course seeks to improve job satisfaction and retention by establishing a baseline of knowledge for court staff and emphasizing the significance of their work. It will be available to all courts to load into their learning management systems. The course is tailored primarily for new hires and aims to highlight the essential role courts play by exploring the purpose of courts, the rights and responsibilities of citizens interacting with them, and how courts differ from other branches of government. The course will also highlight how every role within the courts contributes to their overall mission, fostering a sense of purpose and pride in public service. This free resource will be available by summer 2026.

## SOLICIT AND UTILIZE EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK

Courts often wonder what motivates employees, what matters most to them, and how the employer could improve job satisfaction. One simple way to understand the factors that affect motivation and satisfaction is to ask employees. This can be done in a variety of ways, including interviews, surveys, focus groups, and less formal methods.

Exit interviews, a discussion with a departing employee that is facilitated by human resources or a third party,<sup>74</sup> allow an employer to gather honest feedback about the court culture, the employee’s experience working in the court, and to uncover unknown issues in the workplace. The exit interview can also be about creating a positive exit experience for the employee. A 2024 Gallup poll shows that only 43% of departing employees reported being satisfied with

---

74 Are you conducting effective exit interviews? (2025). Thomson Reuters. <https://legal.thomsonreuters.com/en/insights/articles/are-you-conducting-proper-exit-interviews>

how their employer handled the exit process. A positive exit experience can improve the organization's reputation as an employer and can create a strong network of former employees. This can attract future talent and strengthen the organizational culture since employees will see that the departing employee was treated with respect. It may also result in former employees returning to the organization. Improving the reputation and court culture are both factors that improve retention.<sup>75</sup>

While most people are familiar with exit interviews, stay interviews may not be as common a term or practice. A stay interview, as defined by Richard Finnegan, is “a structured discussion a leader conducts with an individual employee to learn the specific actions [the leader *can*] take to strengthen the employee's engagement and retention with the organization.”<sup>76</sup> Good stay interviews show employees their loyalty is appreciated and recognized, they are valued beyond just their performance, and the employer is open to making changes to improve job satisfaction. They can also help an employer identify signs that an employee needs more support or direction and learn how to retain valuable employees.<sup>77</sup>

Another option is to conduct anonymous surveys of current employees, to gather candid responses without fear of retribution. Conducting focus groups with staff, such as the ones conducted as part of this project, can also be useful in understanding employee perspectives. Focus groups and surveys may be conducted internally by human resources court staff or by using a third party to ensure confidentiality and neutrality.

Manager and supervisor focus groups show that several courts conduct surveys and solicit feedback to monitor employee satisfaction and organizational culture. Exit interviews were common and several participants shared that their courts also conducted stay interviews. Stay interviews focused on what keeps employees in their positions and what could be done to improve satisfaction and morale. The use of organizational surveys seemed split in terms of frequency of occurrence. Some courts routinely conducted surveys, while others commissioned surveys on multi-year schedules or as needed.

Human resource professionals focus groups recommended that courts that are not already doing so should obtain feedback to better understand and address employee concerns. This creates opportunities for court leaders to assess the court's strengths and what needs

---

75 Tatel, Corey and Ben Wigert. (2024, July 16). Enhancing the Employee Exit Experience Is Worth It. Gallup. <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/646937/enhancing-employee-exit-experience-worth.aspx>

76 The Power of Stay Interviews: We Wrote the Book. Finnegan Institute. <https://www.finneganinstitute.com/stay-interviews/>

77 Stay Interviews: Why and How to Use Them Successfully. (2025). University of Iowa Human Resources. [https://hr.uiowa.edu/sites/hr.uiowa.edu/files/2025-03/using\\_stay\\_interviews\\_successfully.pdf](https://hr.uiowa.edu/sites/hr.uiowa.edu/files/2025-03/using_stay_interviews_successfully.pdf)

improvement. Several focus group participants emphasized the importance of engaging with employees in ways that show appreciation and recognition to help court employees feel more valued for the work that they perform.



In 2024, NCSC created a court employee engagement tool kit. The toolkit offers court leaders practical guidance on conducting surveys, interviews, and listening sessions to understand employee perspectives and improve court operations. This toolkit may be accessed from the NCSC website.<sup>78</sup>

While the surveys and focus groups mentioned above can be effective, they are more formal ways to obtain employee feedback. Not all feedback needs to be collected in a formalized manner. Having informal conversations with employees can also provide useful information that has a dual purpose: providing information courts can use to improve and connecting with employees on a meaningful level. Earlier in this guide, the impact of a toxic work culture was mentioned. Failing to communicate with and have quality conversations with employees can breed a toxic work culture. A quality conversation is one that makes people feel engaged, that their needs are met, encourages their best work, and makes them feel like the employer is invested in them.<sup>79</sup>

78 See <https://ncsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/hr/id/270> to access the Court Employee Viewpoint Toolkit.

79 Baird, John, and Sullivan, Edward. (2022). How to Protect Your Team from a Toxic Work Culture. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2022/06/how-to-protect-your-team-from-a-toxic-work-culture>.

Regardless of how feedback is captured, courts should utilize the information. The perspectives of current and past employees can be reviewed and translated into concrete actions to improve job satisfaction, morale, and employee retention. Collecting information without using it can be detrimental to court culture, demonstrating that despite appearances, leadership may not truly value opinions and can erode trust.

## CONNECT WORK TO THE COURT'S MISSION, PURPOSES, AND STRATEGIC PLAN

As important as the strategic plan is in recruiting, it is equally important in retention for several reasons. The first being, strategic plans change. Even mission and vision statements may change. While the work of the court to administer justice remains constant, the means to that end may vary with new technological advancements, cultural shifts, environmental trends, and the needs of court users.

**Mission statements** *explain why a court exists and what it values.*

**Vision statements** *offer an aspiration for what the court hopes to achieve.*

Court leaders should continuously use their strategic plan to show the court's direction and how an employee's work complements the mission and vision. As new strategic plans are created, typically every three to five years, the new strategic plan, mission, vision, and core values should be communicated to the entire organization but also on an individual level to each employee. It is important that they see themselves in the work of the court and value the work. One focus group participant stated that a change in the organizational values of the court or a change such that the court's values no longer aligned with the employee's core values would be a reason they would seek other employment and leave their position.

Employee focus group participants stated that a love of public service, the feeling they are making a difference, and a desire to institute systemic change from within the court were all factors that drew them to their current position in the courts. This was echoed by court human resource professional focus groups who shared that employees appreciate the purpose-driven work of the court, and that it is important for courts to ensure they are taking the time to check in with their employees and to periodically engage employees in meaningful ways that remind them of the "why" behind what they do.

Employee focus group participants shared that courts need to ensure they are communicating the importance of the work of each role to employees and discussing with their employees the

mission and purpose of the courts and the significance of the employee's work in that mission and purpose. The conversation should also stress how the work impacts public trust and confidence.

Court managers and leaders should, as applicable to the employee:

- Connect their work to the mission, vision, and values of the court.
- Explain how their role and their work relate to the eight purposes of the courts.<sup>80</sup>
- Emphasize the significance of procedural fairness in ensuring and improving public trust and confidence.
- Demonstrate how their work relates to and impacts court performance measures (e.g., CourTools).<sup>81</sup>

One way to help employees connect their work to the mission of the court or to meaningful outcomes is through laddering. Laddering is a process where a manager places the mission, value, team vision, or a specific outcome at the top of a visual ladder diagram. The more specific the outcome at the top of the ladder, the better. At the bottom of the ladder diagram, note the employee's contribution. Then, demonstrate the employee's contribution to the overall outcome or mission by working up each "rung" of the ladder and showing how their work is important to getting to the top of the ladder. Employees should routinely see their "ladder" to understand the significance of their work.<sup>82</sup>

## PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

A manager who communicates well can significantly increase retention. Part of that communication includes providing regular and frequent feedback on the employee's performance, good or bad.<sup>83</sup> The feedback can and should occur through both formal and informal avenues.

In a 2019 Gallup poll, 51% of employees who recently left their jobs said their manager had not spoken to them about their job satisfaction or their future in the organization in the three

---

80 For the eight purposes of the courts as identified by Ernest Friesen, see <https://nacmnet.org/nacm-information-for-students-and-educators/what-is-court-management/>.

81 For more information about CourTools, see <https://www.ncsc.org/our-centers-projects/courtools>.

82 Mercurio, The Power of Mattering at Work.

83 Kieckhaefer, Grant. (2024, March 22). What Is Employee Retention? Importance, Benefits, and Calculation. Oracle. <https://www.oracle.com/human-capital-management/employee-retention/>.

months before they left and that their manager could have prevented them from leaving.<sup>84</sup> Frequent one-on-one meetings, outside of the formal review process, provide managers opportunities to engage with employees about their performance and their goals.<sup>85</sup>

A formal performance evaluation or employee performance appraisal is a documented process that organizations use to provide feedback to their employees on their performance, which is what most people think of when discussing employee performance feedback.<sup>86</sup> In this setting, the employer can discuss what the employee is doing well, areas where improvement may be needed, or areas for opportunity to grow in their position. This also allows a venue for employees to express their concerns, what they like about their work, and areas of interest. This type of dedicated communication provides for honest communication and feedback about the employee's performance. Such feedback should also include discussions about the prospect of growth and professional development opportunities for the employee.<sup>87</sup>

Performance reviews, particularly in a narrative format as opposed to a numerical format alone, where review rankings are number-based, provide more context to the employee about their performance while allowing for a discussion of their strengths. Narrative feedback may also be more beneficial when an employee is receiving negative feedback and helps reduce the feeling that they are being unfairly evaluated. However, numerical review may also be used to determine incentives, such as bonuses or pay increases. Therefore, there are benefits to a combined review system.<sup>88</sup>

Feedback on employee performance should also include more informal interactions that are not regularly scheduled. These informal interactions, where the employer is taking the time to have informal, one-on-one meetings outside of the formal review process, can make an employee feel valued and the feedback less routine or procedural.

---

84 McFeely, Shane and Wigert, Ben. (2019, March 13). This Fixable Problem Costs U.S. Businesses \$1 Trillion. Gallup. <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/247391/fixable-problem-costs-businesses-trillion.aspx>

85 Kieckhafer, What is Employee Retention? Importance, Benefits, and Calculation.

86 Williams, Cassandra. (2025). Employee Performance Evaluation: Definition, Benefits, and How to Prepare. Indeed. <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/employee-performance-evaluation>

87 Kim, Joonyoung and Zitek, Emily. (2024, November 7). Research: Performance Reviews that Actually Motivate Employees. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2024/11/research-performance-reviews-that-actually-motivate-employees>

88 Kim and Zitek, Research: Performance Reviews that Actually Motivate Employees.

Managers should ensure that these feedback sessions, informal or formal, are held in a confidential setting and that they are actively listening and focused on the conversation, not multi-tasking (e.g., checking their phone, checking emails, taking phone calls). This can result in these encounters, while initially well-meaning, having a negative effect on the employee, leading them to feel unheard, undervalued, and not respected.

## INVEST IN AND OFFER EMPLOYEE WELLNESS ACTIVITIES AND APPRECIATION EVENTS

Employee wellness programs can improve retention by providing services or opportunities that focus on employee physical, emotional, mental, financial, and social well-being.<sup>89</sup> A 2018 Forbes article reports that employees whose organization offers a wellness program are less likely to leave their jobs.<sup>90</sup> Employee focus groups support this research by noting that their court's emphasis on wellness and employee well-being was appealing. Benefits such as offering time to volunteer in community events were also recognized as having a positive impact on employee satisfaction. Examples of wellness programs that can increase employee retention include stress management, time management, access to mental health services, fitness benefits (e.g., gym memberships), clubs, and social activities.<sup>91</sup>

Manager/supervisor focus groups suggested that courts could encourage job satisfaction through regular employee appreciation efforts. The participants shared examples of employee appreciation efforts their courts have provided. Examples included week-long employee appreciation programming, catered lunches or cookouts, offering 8 hours of birthday personal time off, and annual court awards for employee contributions. Other activities include sports activities (e.g., a kickball or softball team, pickleball league), potluck lunches, team-building events, or any event outside of the workplace that strengthens team connection and unity. These varied examples showed how courts worked with available resources to provide meaningful recognition for their staff.

A court may not always be able to increase employee pay, but offering wellness activities as part of its compensation package can be a more plausible and still attractive option. In addition to generally improving morale, it can improve team dynamics depending on the type

---

89 Aldana, Dr. Steve. (2022, June 14). How Wellness Programs Increase Employee Retention in the Workplace. Wellsteps. <https://www.wellsteps.com/blog/2022/06/14/wellness-programs-increase-employee-retention/>

90 Wein, Debra. (2018, August 27). Win With Wellness — Attract and Retain Talent. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinessdevelopmentcouncil/2018/08/27/win-with-wellness-attract-and-retain-talent/>

91 Aldana, How Wellness Programs Increase Employee Retention in the Workplace.

of activities offered and can even improve employee health. Courts can start or improve their wellness programs by creating a wellness committee to coordinate events and activities and survey employees about the type of programs they would prefer. If funding is an issue, consider reaching out to national organizations (e.g., American Cancer Society) and local organizations or businesses for resources.<sup>92</sup>

As part of the focus on wellness, more courts are becoming trauma-informed — not just for litigants, victims, witnesses, and jurors — but employees as well. Secondary trauma can and does impact court staff physically, mentally, and emotionally. In the workplace, this can show up as increased absences, reduced productivity, staff turnover, and low morale. Court leaders should consider adopting policies that promote self-care, ensure the work environment is safe, provide education on secondary trauma, establish peer mentoring programs, offer supportive services, and set manageable work and caseload expectations.<sup>93</sup> For more information about peer-to-peer mentoring training, contact NCSC. The NCSC can help courts build programs in this area.

## ENSURE SUFFICIENT STAFFING LEVELS

It is difficult to retain employees if they feel they are not fully staffed to handle the workload or if staffing resources are unequally distributed in an office. Insufficient staffing leaves employees feeling underappreciated and overworked, which is dangerous if there are other issues in the court (e.g., poor compensation, lack of schedule flexibility, toxic work culture). Therefore, it is imperative that court leadership ensure that there are sufficient staff resources to handle the caseload and the workload to avoid employee burnout.

More courts are using workload assessments, also referred to as weighted caseload studies, to more accurately determine resource needs for state and local court staff. These studies use empirical data, collected from court staff, to assess a court's caseload and workload following a methodology that typically “weights” case types (e.g., felony, misdemeanor, contract) to account for the varying complexity of cases and the amount of staff resources needed to process specific case types. By weighting different types of cases, a more accurate assessment can be made of the amount of staff time required to manage caseload and workload.

The resulting workload model that is developed after collecting data from court staff provides objective and standardized assessments of case processing times, which is used to identify the personnel resources that are needed to handle a court's volume and caseload. The data

---

92 Wein, Win With Wellness — Attract and Retain Talent.

93 Secondary Trauma and the Courts. (2022, June). National Center for State Courts. <https://ncsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/famct/id/1753/>

collected during these studies can also be used to assess the number of full-time equivalent staff positions needed by each department (e.g., criminal, civil, family) to ensure the workload is evenly distributed across the various departments.

For more information about workload assessments, contact the NCSC.

## CONDUCT AND UTILIZE CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION STUDIES

Conducting classification and compensation studies and utilizing the results were **previously identified** as a recruiting strategy. As a recruiting tactic, these studies demonstrate a court's commitment to competitive compensation and ensure that a court is offering fair compensation for positions based on a comparison of other positions and/or organizations that perform similar functions.

Court human resource professionals focus groups stated that courts could improve retention by reviewing their existing compensation structures to ensure that a court remains competitive with other employers. This, in turn, can reduce staff attrition, since compensation is mentioned as one factor, though not the only factor, that causes employees to leave the courts for other employment.

Actively employing classification and compensation studies communicates to employees that the court recognizes that compensation should be and will be periodically reviewed to ensure staff are fairly paid for the work they perform. Courts may use existing human resources staff to conduct these studies and the research needed to update the classification and compensation schedules or employ external assistance, such as a third-party organization.

## STRATEGIZE LEGISLATIVE AND/OR FUNDING BODY ENGAGEMENT

As mentioned earlier, a significant portion of court budgets are used to provide compensation for both judicial officers and court staff. A court's compensation package may be funded from state court budgets, local court budgets, or a combination of the two.

The compensation package, particularly the benefits mentioned in the recruiting strategy section, is a draw to many potential employees. However, increased compensation is also a reason staff leave the courts for other employment opportunities. To improve the compensation package offered, court leaders should build relationships with state legislatures and/or local funding bodies (e.g., county commissioners, city managers) year-round, not just when

funding is needed. Courts should prioritize developing relationships with the legislative and executive branch and other funding bodies outside of the legislative and budget sessions so the relationship already exists when and if increased funding must be requested or to prevent reductions in funding, which often impacts staff.

Courts can also identify community advocates who can campaign for court funding. When advocating for additional staff resources, courts should use existing data to support their budget narratives. For example, a court may explain that, without sufficient staff to support court operations, court users will experience court delays, a reduction in services to constituents, inefficiencies in the courts due to a lack of staff, reduced court revenue streams, and impact businesses. Some courts conduct and use the results of workload assessments to support their request for additional and continued funding for staff.

## OFFER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Courts face losing talent due to a lack of promotional opportunities for either increased pay, more responsibilities, or skills building that would advance an employee's long-term career opportunities. Court focus groups noted that stagnant careers and pay often lead talented employees to seek employment elsewhere. Several participants expressed that a lack of career progression or pay progression, especially for younger or less tenured employees, often led to talented staff eventually having to seek other opportunities where they can grow or progress professionally.

According to the focus groups, an effective retention strategy is for courts to invest in their employees by ensuring opportunities are offered for advancement and professional growth. Employees who feel that they have opportunities for growth and development have higher levels of job satisfaction, according to court human resources professionals.

Research has shown that a lateral career move is 12 times more predictive of retention than an employee promotion. This is likely because not all employees want to “climb the ladder” or move to a leadership or supervisory role. Some employees just simply want the opportunity to try a new role for a change of pace.<sup>94</sup> Court employee focus groups seemed to support this by suggesting that retention could be improved if courts offered cross-training to allow staff to learn another area. Therefore, courts may want to consider lateral career movements as part of the career advancement and professional development process.

---

94 Sull, Sull, and Zweig, *Toxic Culture is Driving the Great Resignation*.

Focus group participants were asked what growth or learning opportunities are most important. Employee focus group participants identified the following: learning about best practices, new research, emerging trends, developing leadership skills, possibly through supervision or mentorship, and other soft skills, the ability to attend in-person training opportunities (both in-state and national), and offering motivational interviewing skills. Other training opportunities identified were the ICM fellows program and certifications, such as project management and supervisory training. While not part of the compensation package, some courts offer tuition reimbursement or will pay for certifications sought by employees where the certification or degree directly applies to their work.

Court human resources professionals focus groups stated that courts should offer clearly defined tracks for internal promotional opportunities, non-promotional leadership opportunities, certification and/or tuition reimbursement, and skill-development training. During focus groups, one court shared that their court had taken steps to cultivate skills training through cross-training assignments to better prepare employees for internal promotional opportunities, thereby retaining talent and institutional knowledge. This is also important for succession planning. To offer an opportunity for professional growth, the Toledo (Ohio) Municipal Court has instituted a course called LEAD — i.e., Leaders Emerging and Developing. It is a year-long course that posits a person can lead from any position and targets individuals who are not yet in supervisory positions, but would like to be, or would like to exercise more influence in the workplace. Court staff, as well as city staff and staff from stakeholders (PD, Prosecutor and Clerk's Office), are eligible to participate.

## ENSURE ACCURACY OF JOB TITLES AND DESCRIPTIONS

Employees are more engaged and are more satisfied with their job when their responsibilities correspond with their skillset and interests. Therefore, it is not surprising that role misalignment is often a common reason employees leave their jobs.<sup>95</sup> In fact, employee focus groups indicated that a lack of clarity in their job responsibilities would be a reason they would leave their current position.

While a court should update and clarify job titles and job descriptions as [previously mentioned](#) as a recruitment strategy, it is important to ensure the accuracy of the job title and description for retention of the employee once they are hired. Accurate job descriptions create clear expectations so employees understand the role they accepted, and are therefore more likely to stay, grow, and succeed.<sup>96</sup>

---

95 Prugh, Jane. (2026, January 19). Clear Job Descriptions: A Hidden Driver of Retention and Engagement. LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/clear-job-descriptions-hidden-driver-retention-prugh--fzjic/>  
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/clear-job-descriptions-hidden-driver-retention-prugh--fzjic/>

96 Prugh, Clear Job Descriptions: A Hidden Driver of Retention and Engagement.

If the position title and description for which the employee applied, interviewed, and was hired do not accurately convey the work that the employee is expected to perform, this can impact the retention of that employee.

It is also important that the job description and responsibilities are accurate because managers can use them to connect performance discussions to the responsibilities that are outlined in the description. Having these stated descriptions makes feedback from supervisors more objective and actionable, which can give the employee more clarity on how they can improve in their role and perhaps set themselves up for other career opportunities within the organization.<sup>97</sup>

## DEVELOP COMMUNITY, CONNECTION, AND MATTERING IN COURTS

By nature, humans want to connect with others and to feel important. We want to belong and form meaningful connections.<sup>98</sup> This holds true personally but also professionally. Courts and managers can take action to cultivate this atmosphere in the workplace.

Community and connection are employment benefits that are derived from being and feeling part of a larger group, not from a compensation package or other perks. This includes feeling appreciated and being valued. In essence, a culture that demonstrates community and connection is one that energizes, allows people to express themselves, and creates an environment where people feel they belong.<sup>99</sup>

In his article “The Power of Mattering at Work”, Zach Mercurio also discusses mattering as a primal need. As noted [earlier](#), mattering is the feeling of being significant, which occurs when people feel they **are** valued and recognize that they **add** value. People thrive at work when they feel like they matter. This also leads to greater retention and job satisfaction. Mattering is not a product of the compensation package or other perks of a job. It comes from a feeling and often stems from interpersonal interactions that occur daily, where managers show the employee they

---

97 Prugh, Clear Job Descriptions: A Hidden Driver of Retention and Engagement.

98 Perina, Kaja. (2024, September 12). Why Most Crave Connection — and Why Some of Us Don't. *Psychology Today*. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/beyond-school-walls/202408/why-we-crave-connection-and-why-some-of-us-dont>

99 Mortensen, Mark and Amy C. Edmondson. (2023, February). Rethink Your Employee Value Proposition. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2023/01/rethink-your-employee-value-proposition>

are seen and heard. These daily interactions are not merely transactional but relational.<sup>100</sup>

Noticing a person is the first step to letting a person know they matter. It includes seeing and hearing the person. Seeing a person means paying attention to the details of their work and their life, not just knowing them. Hearing a person means displaying an interest in the meanings beneath their words and asking them to share experiences and perspectives.<sup>101</sup>

Mercurio suggests conducting a mattering audit to identify mattering gaps in teams or organizations. The audit includes identifying individual teams or employee groups and then documenting what actions show them they are seen and heard. It also involves noting what actions are taken to show them they are significant and that they are needed.

One factor that can impact an employee's community and connection is remote work. In a post-COVID-19 pandemic survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, 49% said that working from home has made it harder for them to feel connected to their colleagues.<sup>102</sup> Research shows that some employees appreciate the energy, fellowship, and sharing of ideas that come with being in the same physical workspace with their coworkers.<sup>103</sup>

Court leaders should assess the needs of their employees through surveys and interviews to understand how to build community and connection among them. Each court culture will be different; therefore, leaders should not make assumptions about their court based on the needs, preferences, and practices in another court. However, Mercurio cautions against incorporating mattering just for the organizational outcomes that can be achieved – increased engagement, reduced attrition, and less burnout. It should be done to fulfill people's need to feel valued and significant.<sup>104</sup>

---

100 Mercurio, *The Power of Mattering at Work*.

101 Mercurio, *The Power of Mattering at Work*.

102 Pew Research Center, *5 Years Later: America Looks Back at the Impact of COVID-19*.

103 Mortensen and Edmondson, *Rethink Your Employee Value Proposition*.

104 Mercurio, *The Power of Mattering at Work*.

## ENSURE EMPLOYEES ARE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

According to court focus groups, a major factor that improves retention and productivity is when employees feel valued, appreciated, and receive recognition. This recognition, appreciation, and sense of value should come from the organization as a whole as well as immediate supervisors/managers, and court leadership, including administrators and judicial officers. Employers that do not recognize and reward strong performers show reduced retention rates; these strong performing employees are the ones most likely to resent not being recognized for their work. This is problematic as it is these high performers that organizations typically want to retain.<sup>105</sup>

Focus groups stated that the recognition of an employee's work contributes to job satisfaction, which in turn improves staff retention. In fact, employee focus groups as well as human resources groups said that recognition by their employer may outweigh a salary increase. Focus group participants also shared that it was important for courts to ensure employees are being recognized for their contributions and emphasized the importance of engaging with employees in ways that show appreciation and recognition to help court employees feel more valued for the work that they perform.

Several participants across the three focus groups emphasized that positive and consistent engagement by front-line supervisors with their staff aided in employee retention. Actions that support employee morale include actively listening to and supporting employees and making it clear that employees are valued and that the work they perform is significant.

Courts should take the time to openly recognize the skills, talents, abilities, and contributions of staff. Celebrations of employee accomplishments, such as anniversaries, years of service, promotions, retirements, and other achievements (e.g., certifications) are simple ways to recognize staff. Some courts publish these in a monthly newsletter that may be distributed to all court employees and judicial officers, statewide or at the court level, as applicable.

## FIND OPPORTUNITIES TO COACH STAFF

Much has been mentioned in this guide about professional development and growth, making staff feel appreciated and recognized, and creating a positive work culture. Court employee focus groups also conveyed that they value positions where they are allowed some discretion in their daily work. However, managers may be reluctant to provide employees with discretionary authority as it requires a certain degree of managerial trust. How can managers feel

---

105 Sull, Sull, and Zweig, *Toxic Culture is Driving the Great Resignation*.

comfortable granting this type of autonomy and discretion to employees? It often comes with an employee's tenure, but can also be cultivated through employee coaching.

Managers and supervisors may sometimes feel they lack the time to coach their employees, although they recognize the benefits. Rather than thinking of coaching in terms of a structured session, coaching can exist on a spectrum, occurring in formal but also less formal settings. Managers can seize spontaneous opportunities to work with their staff to solve problems and mentor them.

Employee coaching does not have to equate to hours of formalized discussions with employees, which is often not possible due to the demands of the court. An article from the *Harvard Business Review* reports that some of the most powerful coaching moments happen in daily interactions when work is getting done, as opposed to in formal meetings with the employee. Managers just have to learn to take advantage of these opportunities and to provide coaching in these moments.

In specific situations where an employee may be faced with a challenge, managers can take the time to ask the employee pointed questions, intentionally pause before providing responses to those questions, and guide the employee through brainstorming solutions to the problem or task at hand. This takes substantially less time and can be more meaningful than having structured meetings and sessions since it can cultivate staff's analytical and problem-solving skills. Staff then become more capable of thinking analytically and proposing solutions before approaching a manager for assistance. In this way, managers are developing future managers and supervisors while perhaps inadvertently engaging in succession planning.<sup>106</sup>



*Many coaching opportunities arise in brief, spontaneous moments.*

**Monique Valcour**

---

106 Valcour, Monique. (2025, October). How to Be a Great Coach — Even When You're Busy. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2025/10/how-to-be-a-great-coach-even-when-youre-busy>

Informal and formal coaching can result in managers having greater trust in their employees and empowering them to identify solutions to problems and make decisions on their own. This type of autonomy was touted by employee focus groups as increasing job satisfaction and causing them to want to stay in their current positions. As noted previously, NCSC offers individual and team coaching services, as well as peer-to-peer coaching training programs. For more information, please contact NCSC.<sup>107</sup>

## COLLECT AND ANALYZE RETENTION DATA

Another strategy that serves dual purposes for both analyzing recruitment and retention is using human resources data. Collecting and reviewing human resources analytics can help courts assess and analyze trends in the workforce, can help identify trends and inefficiencies, and reduce employee attrition by understanding reasons employees may leave the organization. As mentioned, there are four types of HR analytics methods: descriptive, diagnostic, predictive, and prescriptive analytics, and each serve a specific function. See the [recruitment strategy](#) for a description of each type of data.

Data points that courts may consider collecting and analyzing that are related to retention include:

- the number of employees exiting employment,
- exit interview outcomes, such as the reason(s) an employee is severing employment (also gathered through surveys),
- when they are leaving (e.g., first 30 days, 60-90 days, within one year),
- the average length of employment of employees who leave (may be tracked overall and by division/office/county/etc.),
- the amount of leave (e.g., vacation and sick leave) being used and when it is taken,
- the number of vacancies,
- new hire survey outcomes (bimonthly),
- conference and training information (e.g., the number of conferences and training offered, the number of attendees, number of webinars and attendees/views),
- human resources actions, such as pay increases, transfers, promotions, etc.,
- demographics of employees leaving (i.e., age, race, gender, tenure, etc.),
- work arrangement (e.g., remote, hybrid, in-person only), and
- hourly rates of employees overall and those leaving.

---

<sup>107</sup> For more information about coaching, see “The Coaching Habit” by Michael Bungay Stanier.

Court leaders and human resources staff can share data with managers and supervisors to show trends of job satisfaction or why staff may be leaving. The data may be compiled and shared in written and printed reports, on data dashboards, and through sharing mediums, including Tableau and Power BI.

Courts may review this information through the development of reports, while some courts are working to develop dashboards to make this information easily accessible. This can help create a “story” about the court so efforts can be made to identify patterns (e.g., an increase in staff leaving after 90 days from the date of hire) and identify ways to improve retention. Using data from surveys and exit interviews can reveal areas where employee satisfaction is low, as well as where the court is doing a good job with employee engagement and satisfaction.<sup>108</sup>

One court noted it had been piloting offering sign-on bonuses to increase applicant pools and attract qualified candidates. Collecting data about this strategy, such as the length of time to fill the position, how long an employee stayed in the position, and their performance in the role, could be used to determine the effectiveness of offering hiring bonuses. Note: The court noted that it did not yet have enough data to make a correlation.

---

108 Boatman, 4 Types of HR Analytics.

# Conclusion

The image features a solid blue background. In the center, the word "Conclusion" is written in a large, white, serif font. Below the text, there are several thin, white, curved lines that sweep across the bottom half of the page, creating a modern, abstract design.

# Conclusion

***Public service. Making a difference. Employment stability. Paid holidays. Benefits. Positive systemic change from within. Work-life balance.*** Despite the numerous benefits of working within the courts that current employees identified, state and local courts across the country continue to report issues recruiting and hiring qualified employees to support efficient court operations and ensure access to justice. Retaining those same skilled employees is also a challenge.

This guide has identified various strategies that courts may consider to improve recruiting efforts and reduce staff attrition. If courts are to attract and retain qualified staff, court leaders must address the issues identified in this guide but also understand the individual challenges in their state or their court that may not be mentioned.

While some strategies that have been identified are more within the purview of a specific position (e.g., chief justice or chief presiding judge, court administrator, or human resources staff), implementation of most of these strategies will require a more collaborative effort. If a court seeks to implement a recommendation that requires additional funding, such as improving compensation as a result of a classification and compensation study, the chief justice may need to work with the legislative branch to advocate for the funding to conduct the study and then implement the outcomes of the study. This may include educating the funding bodies on the importance of retaining knowledgeable and qualified staff. The state court administrator will need to work with the human resources manager (and potentially additional staff) to conduct the study and oversee the internal employees conducting the study or work with the external entity that will conduct the study.

A Supreme Court chief justice, as the head of a state's judiciary, or a local chief/presiding judge should focus their attention on galvanizing efforts by leading by example and building relationships needed to improve funding. This may include strategizing legislative funding engagements and emphasizing the importance of strategic planning efforts within the court.

State court administrators or the local court administrator should lead efforts to assess those strategies that will be most impactful for improving recruitment and retention for their court. This may include assessing workplace culture and focusing time and attention on improving it, which will be done in coordination with managers, supervisors, and human resources professionals. However, the court administrator must provide direction as to the strategies on which the human resources court staff will focus. The court administrator will identify and prioritize strategies based on the court's needs, the court culture, and the availability of funding and staff needed to implement the recommendations.

Human resources professionals should focus their efforts on strategies, once identified by the court administrator, that are within their domain, such as streamlining application processes, reviewing job titles and descriptions, gathering and utilizing metrics that can be used to understand recruiting and retention trends. They may also work to develop onboarding guides that will be used by managers and supervisors.

Managers and supervisors will typically work with the court administrator and human resources staff, as applicable, to implement strategies, such as ensuring the job titles and position descriptions are accurate and convey the responsibilities of the position and the ability to offer flexibility in employee work schedules. However, there are some strategies that managers and supervisors can implement without additional funding, such as finding opportunities to coach their staff, ensuring employees are recognized, and connecting employees' work to the court's mission, vision, and strategic plan.

# Appendix

[Recruitment and Retention Strategy Quick Reference Guide](#)

[Recruitment Checklist](#)

[Retention Checklist](#)

# Recruitment and Retention Strategy

## Quick Reference Guide

To focus court officials, court administrator, and court staff efforts, this quick reference guide is intended to identify those recruiting and strategies that are most relevant to specific positions within a state or court. However, implementation of most of these strategies will generally be a team effort. For example, the Supreme Court chief justice will have to work with the state court administrator who will have to work with the court’s human resources team. Each strategy is linked to the location in the guide where that specific strategy is discussed.

### SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTICE

---

#### RECRUITMENT

- [Conduct and Promote Classification and Compensation Studies](#)
- [Allow Workplace Schedule Flexibility](#)
- [Implement Hiring Initiatives](#)
- [Promote the Court’s Strategic Plan and Mission](#)

#### RETENTION

- [Invest In and Offer Employee Wellness Activities and Appreciation Events](#)
- [Ensure Sufficient Staffing Levels](#)
- [Conduct and Utilize Classification and Compensation Studies](#)
- [Strategize Legislative and/or Funding Body Engagement](#)

### LOCAL CHIEF/PRESIDING JUDGE

---

#### RECRUITMENT

- [Utilize More Creative Recruiting Strategies](#)
- [Conduct and Promote Classification and Compensation Studies](#)
- [Allow Workplace Schedule Flexibility](#)
- [Highlight the Compensation Package](#)
- [Implement Hiring Initiatives](#)
- [Promote the Court’s Strategic Plan and Mission](#)
- [Collect and Analyze Recruiting Data](#)

#### RETENTION

- [Focus on Workplace Culture](#)
- [Invest in Managerial Training](#)
- [Allow for Flexibility in Work Schedules and Arrangement](#)
- [Solicit and Utilize Employee Feedback](#)
- [Connect Work to the Court’s Mission, Purposes, and Strategic Plan](#)
- [Provide Feedback on Employee Performance](#)
- [Invest In and Offer Employee Wellness Activities and Appreciation Events](#)
- [Ensure Sufficient Staffing Levels](#)

## LOCAL CHIEF/PRESIDING JUDGE (CONTINUED)

### RETENTION

- Conduct and Utilize Classification and Compensation Studies
- Strategize Legislative and/or Funding Body Engagement
- Offer Opportunities for Professional Development and Career Advancement
- Develop Community, Connection, and Mattering in Courts
- Ensure Employees are Recognized for their Contributions
- Collect and Analyze Retention Data

## STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

### RECRUITMENT

- Utilize More Creative Recruiting Strategies
- Streamline the Application Process
- Conduct and Promote Classification and Compensation Studies
- Allow Workplace Schedule Flexibility
- Implement Hiring Initiatives
- Emphasize Professional Growth Opportunities in the Court
- Promote the Court's Strategic Plan and Mission
- Collect and Analyze Recruiting Data

### RETENTION

- Focus on Workplace Culture
- Invest in Managerial Training
- Allow for Flexibility in Work Schedules and Arrangement
- Solicit and Utilize Employee Feedback
- Connect Work to the Court's Mission, Purposes, and Strategic Plan
- Invest In and Offer Employee Wellness Activities and Appreciation Events
- Ensure Sufficient Staffing Levels
- Conduct and Utilize Classification and Compensation Studies
- Strategize Legislative and/or Funding Body Engagement
- Offer Opportunities for Professional Development and Career Advancement
- Develop Community, Connection, and Mattering in Courts
- Ensure Employees are Recognized for their Contributions
- Collect and Analyze Retention Data

## LOCAL COURT ADMINISTRATOR

---

### RECRUITMENT

- Utilize More Creative Recruiting Strategies
- Update and Clarify Job Titles and Descriptions
- Streamline the Application Process
- Conduct and Promote Classification and Compensation Studies
- Allow Workplace Schedule Flexibility
- Highlight the Compensation Package
- Implement Hiring Initiatives
- Emphasize Professional Growth Opportunities in the Court
- Promote the Court's Strategic Plan and Mission
- Collect and Analyze Recruiting Data

### RETENTION

- Focus on Workplace Culture
- Invest in Managerial Training
- Allow for Flexibility in Work Schedules and Arrangement
- Ensure Effective Hiring Practices
- Effectively Onboard New Employees
- Solicit and Utilize Employee Feedback
- Connect Work to the Court's Mission, Purposes, and Strategic Plan
- Provide Feedback on Employee Performance
- Invest In and Offer Employee Wellness Activities and Appreciation Events
- Ensure Sufficient Staffing Levels
- Conduct and Utilize Classification and Compensation Studies
- Strategize Legislative and/or Funding Body Engagement
- Offer Opportunities for Professional Development and Career Advancement
- Ensure Accuracy of Job Titles and Descriptions
- Develop Community, Connection, and Mattering in Courts
- Ensure Employees are Recognized for their Contributions
- Find Opportunities to Coach Staff
- Collect and Analyze Retention Data

## HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS

### RECRUITMENT

- Utilize More Creative Recruiting Strategies
- Update and Clarify Job Titles and Descriptions
- Streamline the Application Process
- Conduct and Promote Classification and Compensation Studies
- Allow Workplace Schedule Flexibility
- Highlight the Compensation Package
- Implement Hiring Initiatives
- Emphasize Professional Growth Opportunities in the Court
- Promote the Court's Strategic Plan and Mission
- Collect and Analyze Recruiting Data

### RETENTION

- Focus on Workplace Culture
- Invest in Managerial Training
- Allow for Flexibility in Work Schedules and Arrangement
- Ensure Effective Hiring Practices
- Effectively Onboard New Employees
- Solicit and Utilize Employee Feedback
- Connect Work to the Court's Mission, Purposes, and Strategic Plan
- Provide Feedback on Employee Performance
- Invest In and Offer Employee Wellness Activities and Appreciation Events
- Ensure Sufficient Staffing Levels
- Conduct and Utilize Classification and Compensation Studies
- Strategize Legislative and/or Funding Body Engagement
- Offer Opportunities for Professional Development and Career Advancement
- Ensure Accuracy of Job Titles and Descriptions
- Develop Community, Connection, and Mattering in Courts
- Ensure Employees are Recognized for their Contributions
- Find Opportunities to Coach Staff
- Collect and Analyze Retention Data

## SUPERVISORS AND/OR MANAGERS

---

### RECRUITMENT

- Utilize More Creative Recruiting Strategies
- Update and Clarify Job Titles and Descriptions
- Streamline the Application Process
- Allow Workplace Schedule Flexibility
- Highlight the Compensation Package
- Emphasize Professional Growth Opportunities in the Court
- Promote the Court's Strategic Plan and Mission
- Collect and Analyze Recruiting Data

### RETENTION

- Focus on Workplace Culture
- Allow for Flexibility in Work Schedules and Arrangement
- Ensure Effective Hiring Practices
- Effectively Onboard New Employees
- Solicit and Utilize Employee Feedback
- Connect Work to the Court's Mission, Purposes, and Strategic Plan
- Provide Feedback on Employee Performance
- Invest In and Offer Employee Wellness Activities and Appreciation Events
- Offer Opportunities for Professional Development and Career Advancement
- Ensure Accuracy of Job Titles and Descriptions
- Develop Community, Connection, and Mattering in Courts
- Ensure Employees are Recognized for their Contributions
- Find Opportunities to Coach Staff
- Collect and Analyze Retention Data

# Recruitment Checklist

## PREPARATION (BEFORE POSTING JOB VACANCY)

### Update and clarify job title and description

- Ensure job title is clear, modernized, and searchable
- Clearly define job duties, responsibilities, and expectations
- Utilize plain language
- Specify salary range and benefits
- Evaluate and remove potential applicant barriers
- Evaluate remote/hybrid work or flexible schedule opportunities

## HIRING PROCESS PHASE I: APPLICATION PROCESS

### Utilize more creative recruiting strategies

- Partner with local colleges, universities, and law schools
- Leverage social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.)
- Attend job fairs
- Develop employee referral programs
- Create internship, externship, or fellowship opportunities
- Targeted outreach for desired skills

### Streamline the application process

- Simplify online application forms and remove unnecessary fields
- Ensure a mobile-friendly application experience
- Reduce number of steps in application submission process
- Provide clear instructions and timelines

## **HIRING PROCESS PHASE II: INTERVIEWS AND CANDIDATE SELECTION**

Utilize structured interview questions to promote fairness, consistency, and better outcomes

Emphasize job stability and non-monetary benefits (work-life balance, mission-driven work, etc.)

Provide total compensation summary to candidates

Promote the Court's mission and strategic plan, if applicable

Discuss hiring incentives, if applicable (sign-on bonus, referral bonus, etc.)

## **ONGOING / RECURRING DUTIES**

Maintain updated job titles and descriptions

Provide training and professional growth opportunities

Conduct and promote classification and compensation studies

Promote the Court's mission and strategic plan, if applicable

Collect and analyze recruitment data

# Retention Checklist

## ONBOARDING PREPARATION (BEFORE NEW EMPLOYEE'S FIRST DAY)

Confirm start date/time and reporting location with new employee

Send welcome email with any necessary instructions (parking, dress code, security protocols, etc.)

Prepare workspace and/or equipment

Ensure workspace is ready for first day (desk, phone, computer, supplies, etc.)

Set up email and network access

Create credentials for any software programs applicable to the job (case management, etc.)

Schedule onboarding appointment to review and complete employment forms with Human Resources and security, if applicable

Prepare welcome guide

Assign mentor or onboarding buddy

Schedule first week required meetings and/or training sessions

## ONBOARDING PHASE I: FIRST DAY

Welcome and Onboarding appointment

Greet and welcome employee

Review first day agenda and expectations

Review and complete employment forms

Provide login credentials

Provide security access badge(s), if applicable

**Introductions to supervisor, team members, and key personnel**

**Review job duties, responsibilities, and expectations**

**Office and/or Courthouse tour**

**Emphasize mission and strategic plan, if applicable**

Connect role to mission

## **ONBOARDING PHASE II: FIRST WEEK**

### **Training and Integration**

Schedule job specific trainings

Ensure new employee has necessary tools and access

Ensure engagement with mentor/buddy

Review key procedures and workflows applicable to the role

### **Engagement and Support**

Ensure daily check-ins are scheduled with supervisor

Confirm understanding of policies

Encourage questions and feedback

### **Mission and Alignment**

Discuss mission and strategic priorities, if applicable

Reinforce how role contributes to the mission and purpose of courts

### **End of first week review**

Confirm all first week tasks are completed

Address outstanding questions or concerns

Gather feedback on experience thus far

## **ONBOARDING PHASE III: 30-90 DAYS (NEW EMPLOYEE)**

- Gain proficiency in court systems and processes applicable to role**
- Understand reporting structure and workplace culture**
- Build relationships with team members and key departments or personnel**
- Understand mission and how role contributes to it**
- Identify challenges and/or training gaps**

## **ONGOING / RECURRING DUTIES**

- Promote respect, professionalism, and inclusivity**
  - Demonstrate a psychologically safe culture**
- Reinforce a culture of public service and accountability**
- Offer training and professional development opportunities**
- Develop and apply coaching and mentoring skills**
- Periodically review flexibility needs in work schedules and remote/hybrid arrangements**
- Conduct employee engagement surveys**
- Track hiring and retention trends**
- Incorporate the mission and strategic priorities, if applicable, into regular conversations**
- Provide regular feedback and recognition to employees**
- Offer comprehensive wellness programs and resources**
- Monitor workload and staffing levels**
- Conduct and promote classification and compensation studies**
- Collect and analyze retention data**
- Advocate for resources and competitive compensation**

# NCSC

---

[ncsc.org](https://www.ncsc.org)