

Staff Report

Report To: Corporate Services Committee
Report From: Bethany Chandler, HR Specialist
Meeting Date: October 9, 2025
Report Code: CR-25-130
Subject: Human Resources Metrics Analysis

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CR-25-130 respecting Human Resources Metrics Analysis, the Corporate Services Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes.

Highlights:

- An increase in retirements in 2024 highlights the importance of having a robust succession management plan.
- Applications increased by 186 per cent from 2019 to 2024, but the number of declined offers rose, indicating a misalignment with candidate expectations.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

This report supports the delivery of Core Service.

Climate and Environmental Implications:

There are no anticipated climate or environmental impacts.

Previous Report/Authority:

[Human Resources Metrics - Recruitment and Retention - CR-24-095.docx](#)

Background:

Human Resources has historically tracked statistics in relation to recruitment and retention efforts at the City. With the implementation of the HR strategy and subsequent service review projects, providing insight into key performance indicators and trends is crucial for maintaining a healthy workforce development and employee engagement. This report highlights data from 2024 and provides a comparison to previous years where possible. This report focuses on metrics from various areas of Human Resources, including recruitment, turnover, absenteeism, and other relevant key performance indicators. Understanding these benchmarks enables the human resources team to assess organizational performance, pinpoint areas for improvement, and align strategies with broader municipal objectives.

Human Resources metrics are more than just numbers—they are strategic tools that provide insight into how well our workforce initiatives align with the broader goals of the City. By tracking key indicators such as recruitment efficiency, employee retention, workforce diversity, and compensation equity, we can ensure that HR practices are not only operationally effective but also strategically aligned with the City's values and long-term objectives.

Key Benefits of HR Metrics:

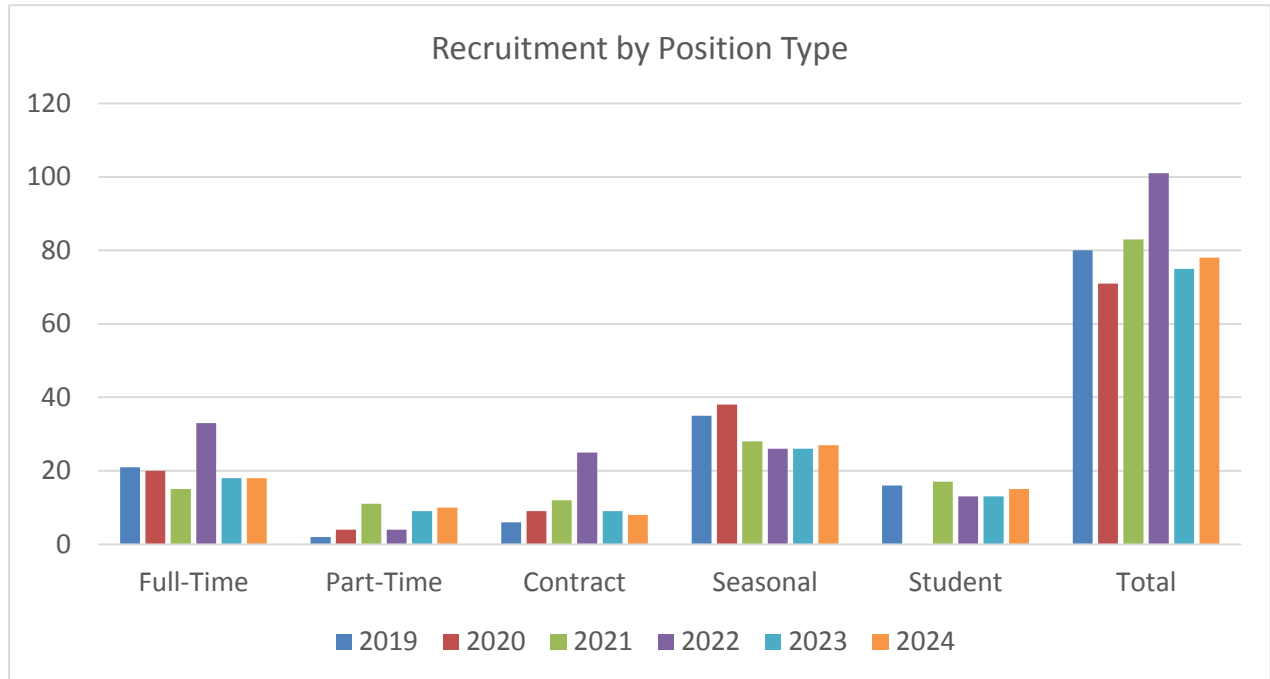
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Metrics provide evidence-based insights that support informed decisions around staffing, budgeting, and policy development.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** Regular reporting on HR performance fosters accountability and demonstrates our commitment to continuous improvement and responsible governance.
- **Workforce Planning:** Metrics help anticipate future workforce needs, ensuring we have the right talent in place to deliver essential services to the community.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Tracking diversity and pay equity metrics supports our commitment to a fair and inclusive workplace.
- **Retention and Engagement:** Understanding turnover trends and employee satisfaction helps us create a more resilient and engaged workforce.

By aligning HR metrics with municipal goals, we reinforce the role of Human Resources as a strategic partner in building a responsive, inclusive, and high-performing team.

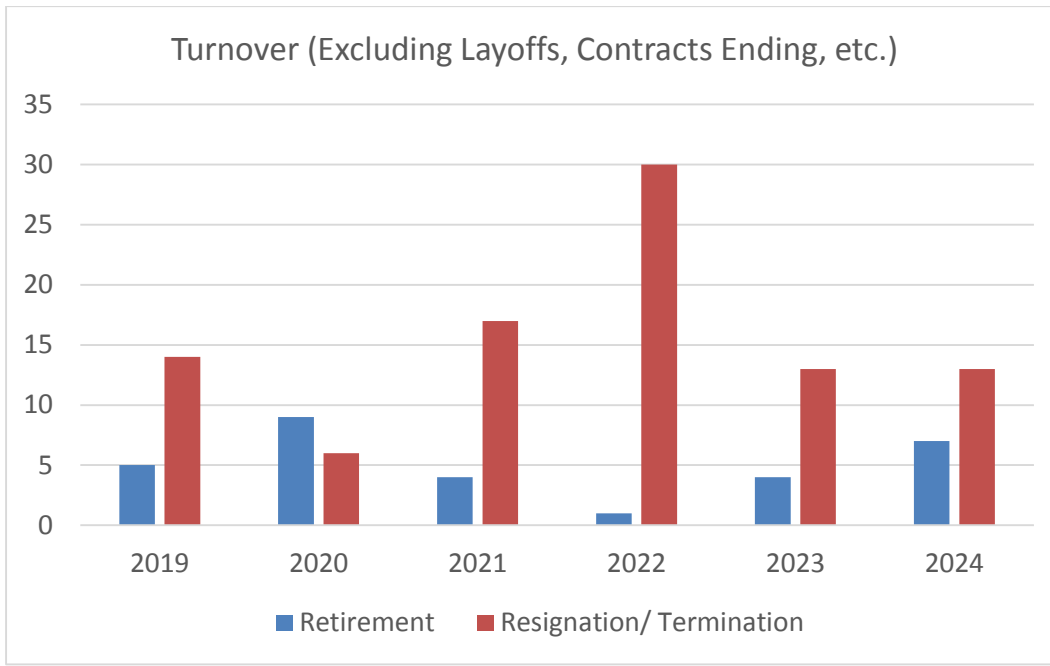
Analysis:

The labour market has shifted significantly in the last few years, and understanding the needs of both our employees and job seekers is imperative to attracting and retaining top talent for our organization.

Key HR Metrics



The spike in contract hires in 2022 reflects temporary staffing needs related to service review projects. Overall, the average number of positions recruited for has remained relatively consistent over the last six years. There has been a noticeable decrease in the number of seasonal positions recruited for since 2020, which can be attributed to the living wage increase in seasonal compensation, allowing us to attract and retain seasonal employees for longer. We have observed an increase in declined offers during the recruitment process, but also a decrease in the number of seasonal employees who begin their employment and resign shortly afterwards.



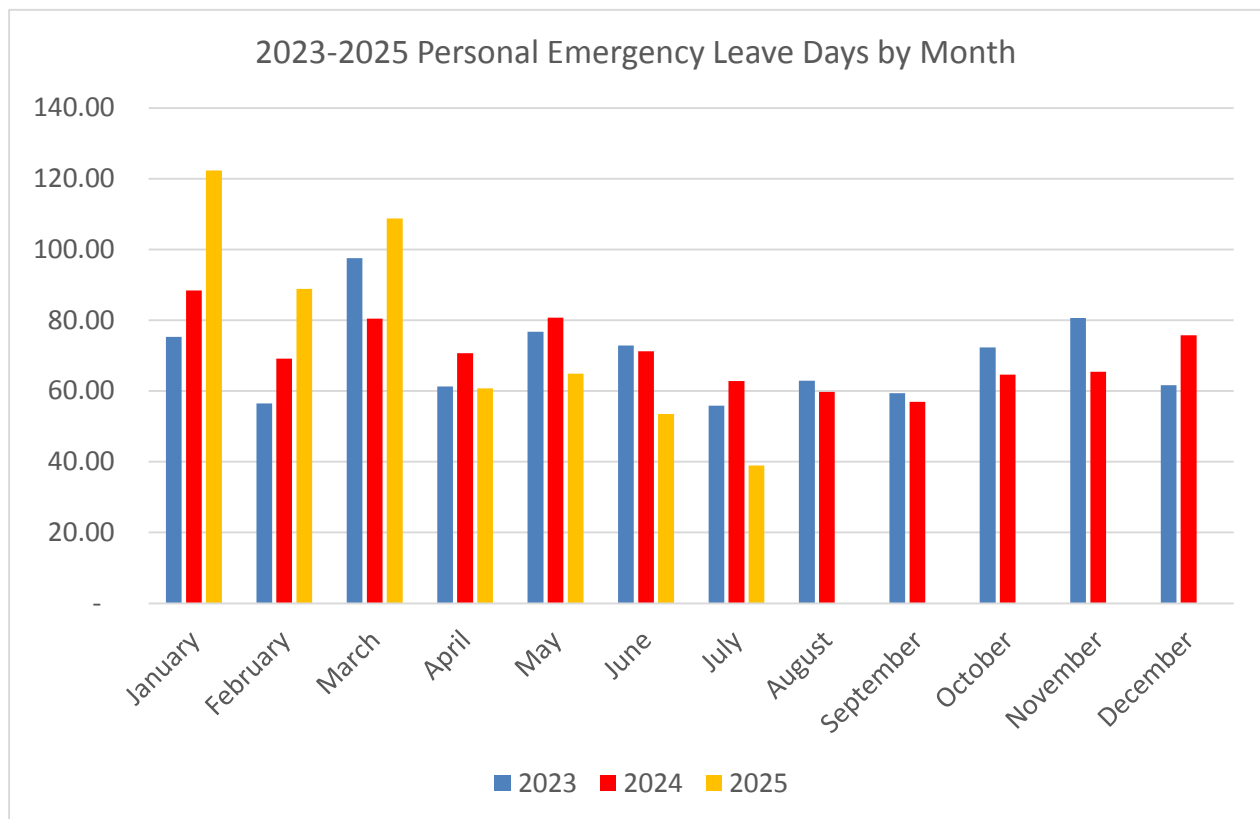
Turnover trends indicate a need for improved retention strategies, particularly in high-demand roles. The reason the turnover breakdown does not match the total recruitment numbers is due to layoffs of seasonal and part-time staff, as well as the expiration of contracts.

An increase in retirements indicates an aging workforce population and the need for a more robust succession management plan, including knowledge transfer, to develop the skills, knowledge, and experience of current staff to be ready to fill these future vacancies. As indicated in the employee engagement sessions, opportunities for advancement have been highlighted as an area for improvement. Through the Service Review Project 1C1, this will be addressed. HR metrics surrounding workforce demographics, learning and development opportunities will be examined.

Recruitment Process Breakdown

Year	Number of Applications Received	Number of Interviews Conducted	The number of offers declined.	Total time invested to offer (in hours)
2019	574	129		225
2020	625	117		221
2021	607	107		208
2022	1558	183		443
2023	1587	131	11	396
2024	1641	156	22	430

The number of applications received has continued to increase year over year, resulting in a corresponding increase in the total time spent by HR and hiring managers on recruitment efforts. However, the introduction of Picsume in the first quarter of 2025 has decreased the administrative burden of the recruitment process and reduced the time to fill roles. There will be more data surrounding this, as well as its impacts, in next year's update. The significant increase in the number of offers declined adds additional time to the recruitment process and highlights the need for a review of our total compensation package, as well as an understanding of what job seekers are looking for in the current labour market. HR will continue to track these statistics to identify potential solutions for reducing the number of declined offers in the future. In speaking with applicants who have declined offers, most cited challenges with attaining housing in the area, compensation, and accepting another opportunity as reasons for not accepting.



When reviewing Personal Emergency Leave (PEL) usage rates over the past three years, there was a significant increase in the number of PEL days used in the first quarter of the year. One possible reason for this is the increase in weather-related school or bus cancellations in the 2024-2025 school year. Unofficial data shows that in Grey Bruce, there were fifteen (15) full school closures and twenty-nine (29) full bus cancellations last winter. Some local

schools and rural bus routes were cancelled in excess of the numbers reported above. As PEL banks were used during the winter months, we should see a decrease in the number of days used for the second half of 2025, but this will be reported in next year's metrics report, given there is a cap on the number that each employee can take.

Strategic Initiatives

While HR metrics provide valuable insights, they also highlight several ongoing challenges that must be addressed to ensure alignment with municipal goals and service delivery expectations. These challenges are complex and often interconnected, requiring strategic attention and cross-departmental collaboration to address effectively. To ensure continued alignment with municipal goals and to proactively address the challenges identified through HR metrics, the following strategic initiatives are currently in progress or planned:

1. Strengthening Talent Attraction and Retention

The City faces increasing competition for skilled talent, particularly in specialized and hard-to-fill roles. Limited geographic mobility, compensation constraints, and evolving candidate expectations around flexibility and work-life balance make it challenging to attract and retain top talent.

With the implementation of Picsume, the Onboarding program, and the HR Strategy, we are continuing to enhance our talent attraction and retention capabilities. As we have seen an increase in declined offers over the past two years, a regular review of our total rewards strategy will be necessary to remain competitive. This includes exploring flexible work arrangements and professional development pathways to attract and retain high-quality candidates. Utilization of Picsume will enable us to track relevant recruitment metrics through the platform and provide a better understanding of the time to fill positions and the decrease in this time since the implementation of the Onboarding program and Picsume. The onboarding program ensures that, once we have made an offer to a candidate, there is ongoing regular interaction to ensure the person is fully engaged with the City prior to their start date.

2. Advancing Workforce Planning and Succession Management

An aging workforce and anticipated retirements pose a significant risk to knowledge continuity and the delivery of services. Proactive succession planning and knowledge transfer strategies are crucial for mitigating this risk and maintaining operational stability.

Through the Service Review Project 1c1 Succession Management Plan, a comprehensive workforce planning framework is being developed to identify critical roles, assess future staffing needs, and implement succession strategies. This will include mentorship programs and knowledge transfer initiatives designed to preserve institutional knowledge.

3. Enhancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

While progress has been made, and the Inclusion Strategy has been implemented, there is still work to be done to ensure that the City's workplaces are inclusive, representative, and equitable. Measuring and addressing gaps in representation, equitable compensation, and inclusive practices remains a priority.

We will continue to embed DEI principles into all HR practices through the four pillars of inclusion as outlined in the City's Inclusion Strategy. These include Education and Training, Inclusive Communication, Inclusive Workforce and Committees, and Policies that support Diversity and address discrimination. Through our Citation Canada platform, new hires and current employees are required to complete DEI and anti-racism training. We continually evaluate training opportunities to promote DEI as part of the City's Inclusion Strategy.

4. Promoting Employee Well-being and Engagement

Sustaining employee morale and engagement in the post-pandemic environment remains a challenge. Burnout, workload pressures, and mental health concerns require ongoing investment in wellness programs and supportive leadership practices.

We have expanded our wellness programming, improved access to mental health resources by switching to the EAP provider, Dialogue, added a Benefits Portal for employees, and implemented regular employee engagement surveys to better understand and respond to employee needs. Leadership development sessions are also being prioritized to foster a supportive and inclusive workplace culture.

5. Adapting to Evolving Workforce Expectations

Employees are increasingly expecting flexible work arrangements, meaningful work, and growth opportunities. Adapting policies and culture to meet these expectations—while maintaining service standards—requires thoughtful change management.

We regularly review and update our HR policies to reflect the evolving expectations of our employees, including hybrid work models, flexible scheduling, and career development opportunities. These changes are implemented with a focus on maintaining service excellence while maximizing engagement.

6. Investing in HR Technology and Analytics

Accessing timely, accurate, and integrated HR data remains a challenge at the City, particularly in the absence of a comprehensive HRIS System. Enhancing data systems and analytical capacity is crucial for supporting evidence-based decision-making and strategic workforce planning.

To improve data-driven decision-making, we have invested in HR systems that enhance reporting capabilities, streamline processes, and support real-time workforce analytics. As we continue to work with Citation Canada and Picsume, we will improve our reporting capabilities, enabling more agile and strategic responses to emerging workforce trends.

Conclusions

The analysis of recruitment and retention metrics from 2019 to 2024 reveals several key trends and challenges:

- **Recruitment volumes** have remained relatively stable, but the time and effort required to fill positions has increased, indicating a more competitive labour market.
- **Turnover rates**, particularly voluntary resignations, peaked in 2022 and remain a concern, emphasizing the need for stronger retention strategies.
- **Application volumes** have grown significantly, yet the number of declined offers has also increased, suggesting a mismatch between candidate expectations and organizational offerings.
- **Workforce demographics** point to an aging employee base, reinforcing the urgency of succession planning.
- **Employee engagement and well-being** remain critical areas for investment, especially evolving workforce expectations.

These findings underscore the importance of aligning HR strategies with the City's goals and values to ensure a resilient, inclusive, and high-performing workforce.

Next Steps

To address the identified challenges and support strategic workforce development, HR will continue to expand the list of tracked metrics, enabling us to proactively implement frameworks and initiatives that address trends both internally and within the broader labour market.

Through the HR Strategy, four priority areas were identified that outline ways the City can address the challenges and opportunities that exist today, including Talent Management, Employee Development, Employee Experience, and Human Resources Excellence and Compliance. These strategic initiatives will be reviewed and updated based on data collected and emerging trends.

These initiatives will position Human Resources as a strategic partner in achieving organizational objectives and delivering high-quality public services to members of the community.

Financial Implications:

The Human Resources department has an annual budget that supports many existing programs, albeit at a lower per-employee cost due to inflation. We continue to review the offerings and look for ways to adjust what and how things are offered to ensure that we maximize positive outcomes for staff within the dollars being spent.

Communication Strategy:

Communication through the Corporate Service Committee, and continued HR communication with staff and senior leadership.

Consultation:

Janet Ashfield, Manager of Human Resources

Student Transportation Service Consortium of Grey Bruce

Attachments:

None.

Recommended by:

Kate Allan, Director of Corporate Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Bethany Chandler, HR Specialist at bchandler@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 x1248.