



## House Special Legislative Commission – Merit System

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Rhode Island Department of Human Services

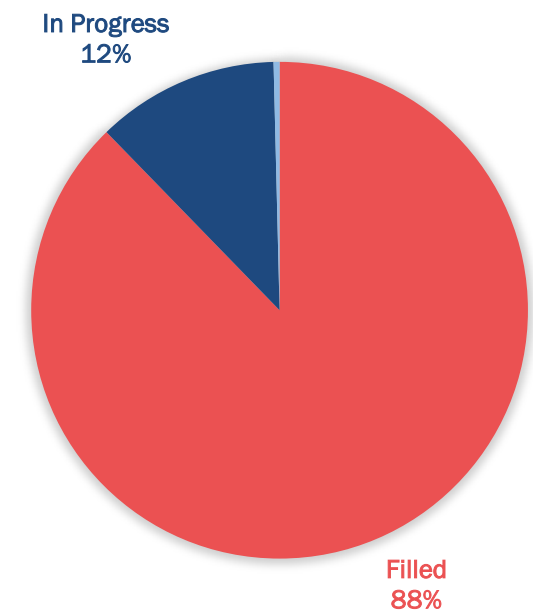
October 24, 2023

# DHS Staffing: High Level Facts & Figures

DHS has a total of 770 FTEs, including Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) and the Office of Child Support Services (OCSS)

	Total	Filled	In Progress	Vacant
DHS Total	770	679	92	3
ORS	143	130	13	1
OCSS	61	60	1	0
DHS Central	566	485	79	2

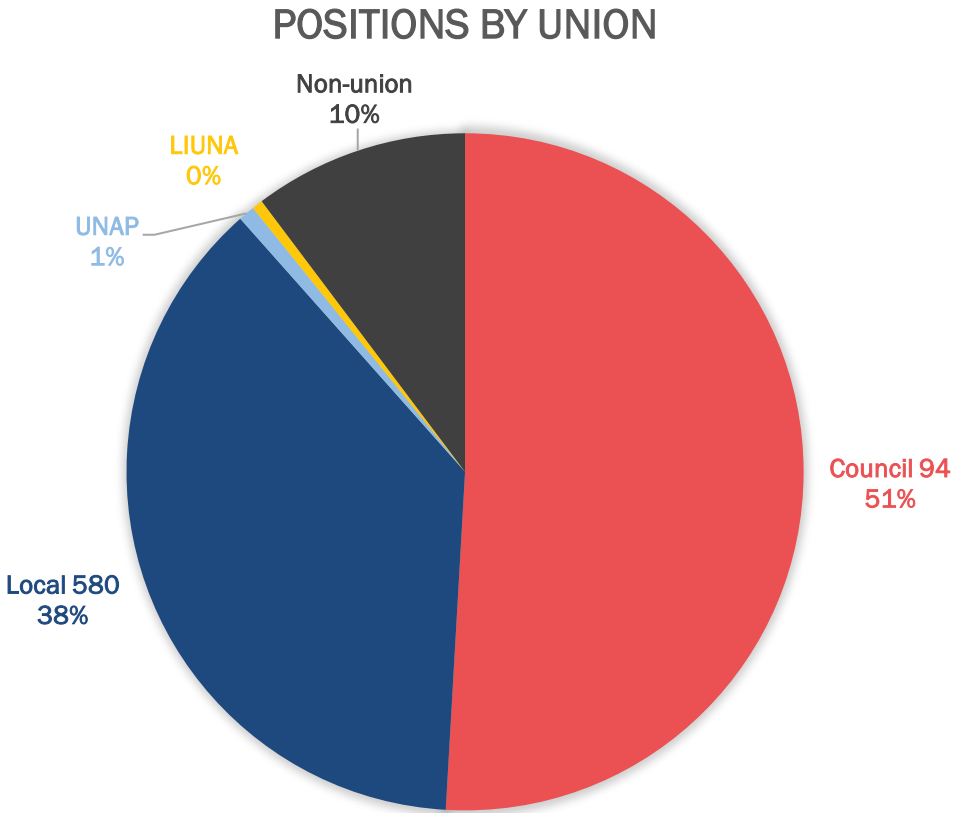
FILLED/IN PROGRESS/VACANT



NOTE: This data does not include DHS divisions OHA and Vets

# DHS Staffing: High Level Facts & Figures

Status	Council 94	Local 580	UNAP	LIUNA	Non-union	Total
Filled	332	262	6	4	71	675
In Progress	60	26	0	0	6	92
Vacant	0	1	0	0	2	3
Total	392	289	6	4	79	770



# DHS Staffing: Staff on Leave

This provides a snapshot of current staff on leave that is approved through DOA’s Disability Management Unit (DMU), which was reported in the most current 60-day Staffing and Operations report to the General Assembly

Staff on Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA/PIL Leave)	14
Staff on Intermittent FMLA Leave	17
Staff on Maternity/Paternity Leave	5
Staff on Worker’s Compensation Leave	2
Staff on Military Leave	0
Light Duty	1
Pending Cases/Under Review*	6
Total	45

In partnership with DOA’s Disability Management Unit, DHS is in final stages of developing a pilot program for a temporary light duty assignment for the DHS Call Center. Anticipate that the pilot will be ready within the month.

The pilot program is designed to offer eligible employees on approved leave an opportunity to join the Call Center.

*\*Cases pending or under review refers to staff whose cases and related medical documentation are under review by DOA’s Disability Management Unit.*

*Note: Data reported in DHS' 60-Day Staffing and Operations Report, 9/25/2023*

# Agency Role in the Hiring Process

**RHODE  
ISLAND**

# Hiring Activities: High Level Agency Role

In partnership with DOA HR, and as shared in the previous commission meeting, agencies have certain recruitment responsibilities. DHS' internal team dedicated to this work liaises with various DOA HR units (i.e., Talent Management Unit, Human Capital Management, Payroll)

- ❑ Log and track PARs. Including, submission for approvals (from within DHS to EOHHS, HR, OMB)
- ❑ Civil Service List Recruitment: Request Civil Service Exams, Receive Names, Track Candidate Response
- ❑ Establish start/transfer dates for all positions
- ❑ Work within NeoGov. Receive candidates from DOA, DHS recommends candidates once interview process is complete
- ❑ Answer candidate questions to assist during onboarding process

# Hiring Activities: Agency Role

All Positions	Step	Average Time Per Position
	Schedule and conduct interviews	2 weeks
	Review interviews notes and candidate qualifications to determine recommendations.	1 to 2 weeks
	Offer to Candidates	1 week to 2 weeks
	Start Date Email	Weekly as dates received
	First Date Report Email	Emailed week before start
	Contact lateral candidates (as determined by HR) to offer position (s).	1 to 2 weeks
	Maintain internal reporting structures for tracking positions as the make their way through the hiring process.	Daily
Civil Service List	Request to post positions for internal bids. If there are no internal applicants, request addition to the list for recruitment.	1 to 2 weeks
	Receive names (per RIGL § 36-4-26). We receive 6 names at the beginning of list certification, and 1 additional name per position on the list.	Weekly while list is open
	Call the candidates to offer an opportunity to interview.	1 week
	Communicate declines, accepts, start dates, etc. to DOA HR for processing. Declines will result in a replacement name.	2 days
	Recommend candidates for hire (via referral to DOA HR in shared excel document).	2 days
Non Civil Service	Screen/review applications.	5 days
	Make candidate recommendation in NeoGov for HR.	1 day

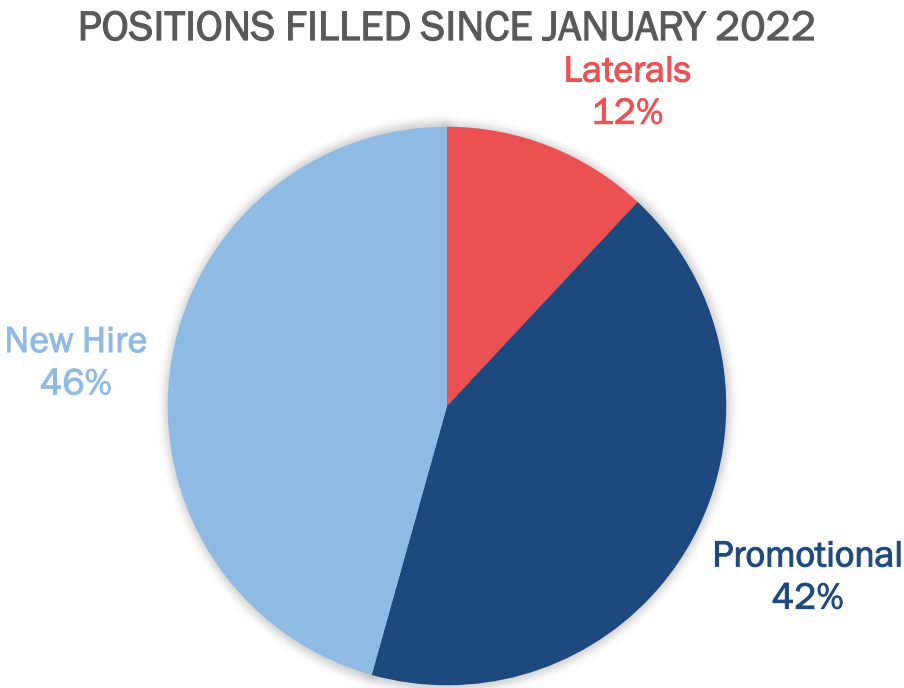
# Agency Hiring Data

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# DHS Positions Filled to Date

Since January 2022, the agency has filled 366 positions through a combination of promotional opportunities, lateral transfers, and new hires.



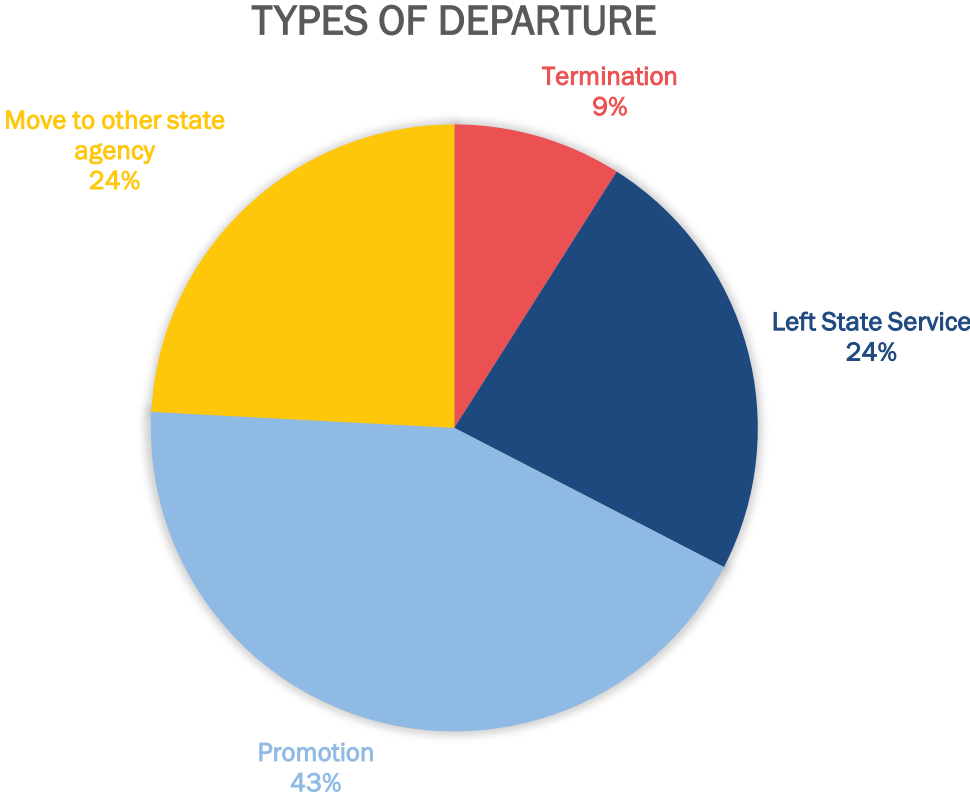
Of the 366 hiring activities:

- Laterals: 44
- Promotional: 156
- New Hire: 168

# Departure Data: All Positions

175 employees have left their roles since June 2022.

- 74 Promotional Opportunity
- 43 Left State Service
- 43 Transfer to another State agency
- 15 Termination



*Note: Data from DHS internal record keeping, June 2022 to October 2023*

# DHS Civil Service Positions

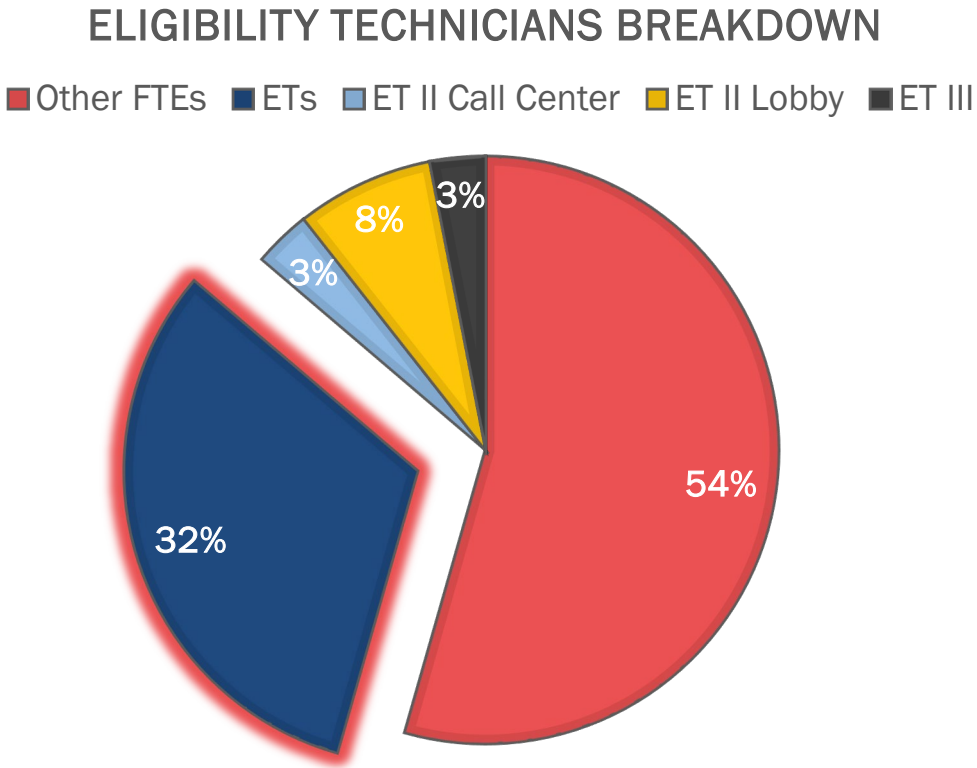
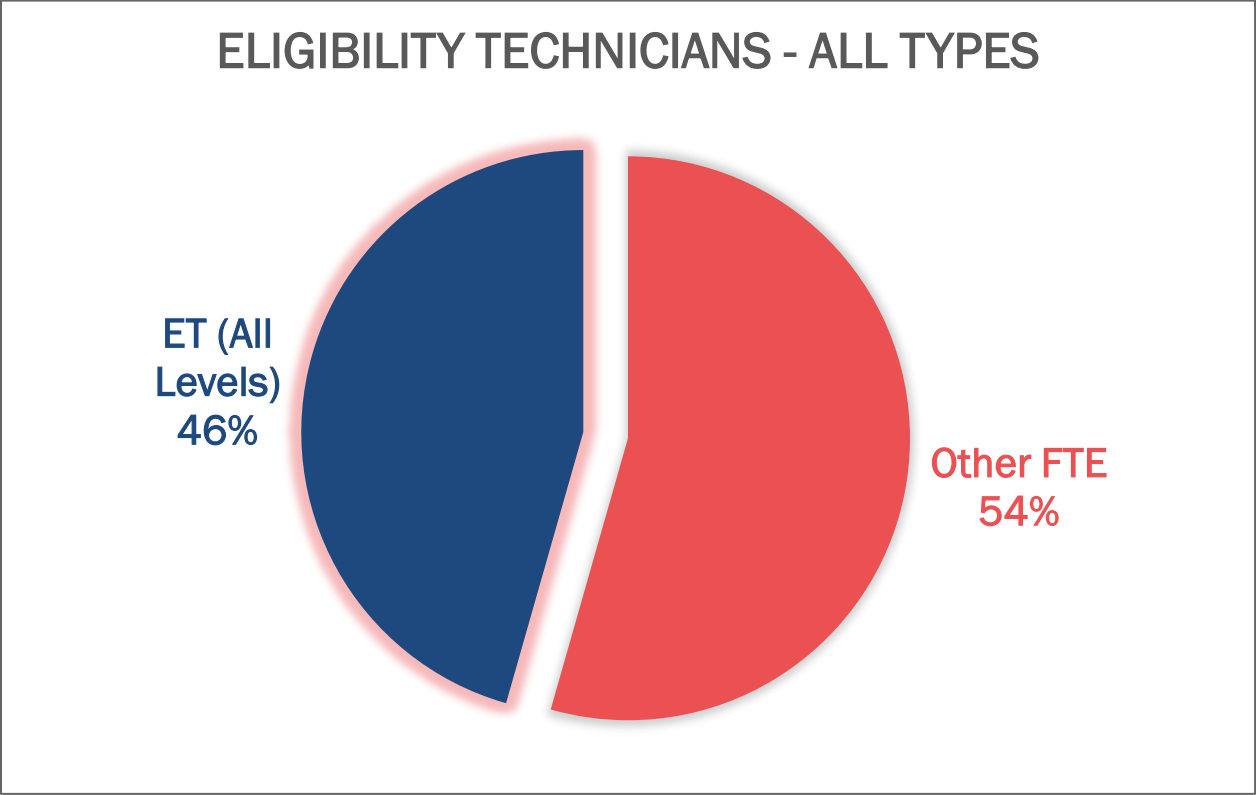


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Eligibility Technician I and Social  
Caseworker data

# Eligibility Technician Positions: Overview

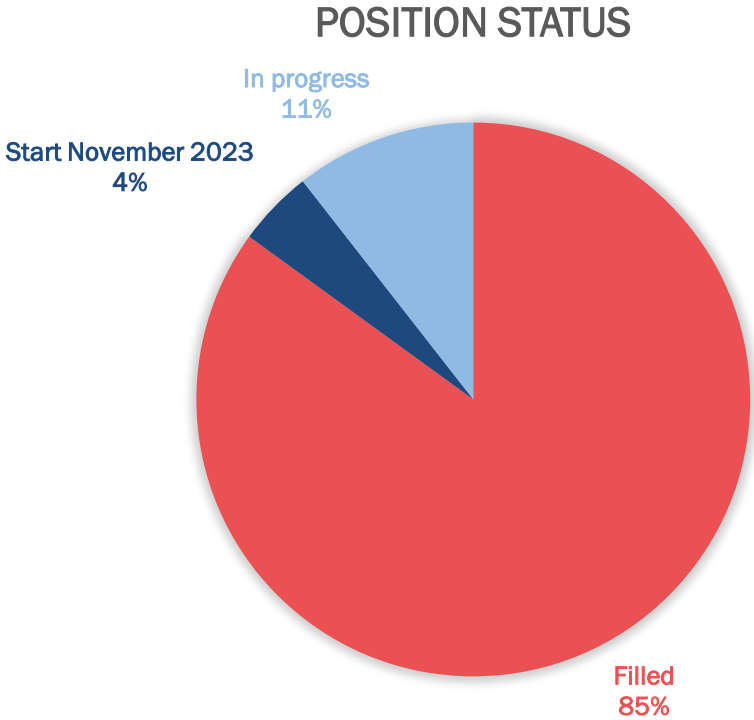
Of DHS' 770 FTEs, this data reflects the total composition of Eligibility Technician positions across the agency:  
ETIs, ETII Call Center, ETII Lobby, ETIIIs



# ETI Hiring Overview

DHS is on track for 90% of Eligibility Technician positions being filled in November 2023.

- 180 total positions
  - 153 filled
  - 8 start in November 2023
  - 19 in progress



# Eligibility Technician Probation Data

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Per the Council 94 CBA, Eligibility Technicians are hired under probationary status for their first 130 working days. During this time, ETs have reviews with their supervisors noting their progress, at months 2, 4, and 6. Supervisors are also required to approve final eligibility decisions on all cases in RI Bridges while ETs are in their first 130 working days, referred to as ETSA status (Eligibility Tech needing Supervisor Approval)

## Between June 2022 to October 2023:

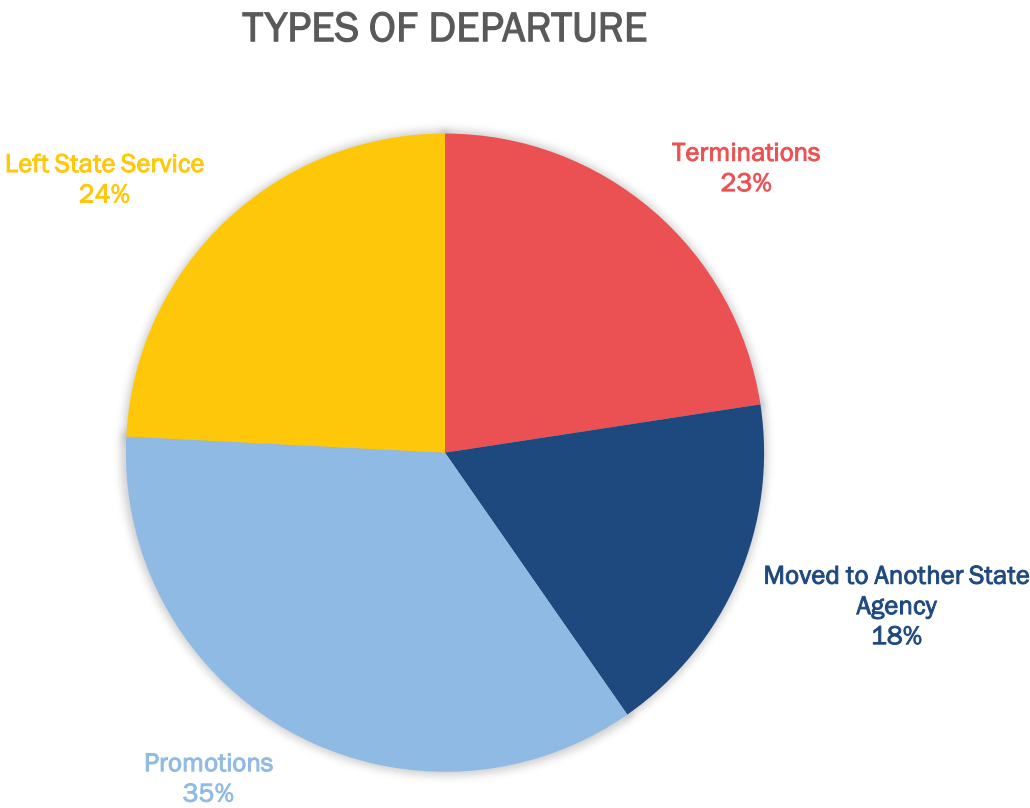
- ❑ 24 Eligibility Technicians did not pass probation
- ❑ 29 Eligibility Technicians are currently in their probationary period
- ❑ 20 Eligibility Technicians will start in the coming weeks and will be on probation for 130 working days.

*Note: Probationary data is tracked and provided by DOA HR.*

# Eligibility Technician Departure Data

62 Eligibility Technicians have left their roles since June 2022.

- 15 Left State Service
- 11 Transfer to another State agency
- 22 Promotional Opportunity
- 14 Terminations



*Note: Data from DHS internal record keeping, June 2022 to October 2023*

# August 2023 Eligibility Technician Exam Update

DOA HR administered an Eligibility Technician I Exam on August 25, 2023. Certified names began to be referred to DHS as of Wednesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> and interviews started Tuesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>.

- ❑ 6 positions were filled with lateral candidates, and therefore did not go to list.
- ❑ 20 positions have been filled through the Civil Service List process to date.
- ❑ DHS received 33 names for limited certification. There are no more certified names for the limited positions.
  - All candidates have been offered an opportunity to interview. 26 interviews have been completed. The remaining candidate interviews are in progress.
- ❑ DHS received 16 names from the Certified List for permanent ET positions. All permanent ET I positions are filled. Once there is another permanent ET position to fill, HR will refer additional names per merit system laws.

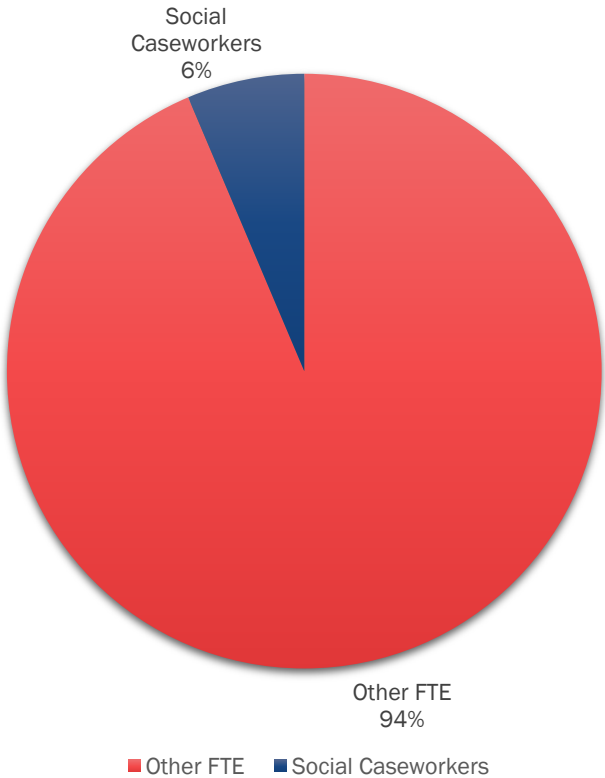


# Social Caseworker Positions: Overview

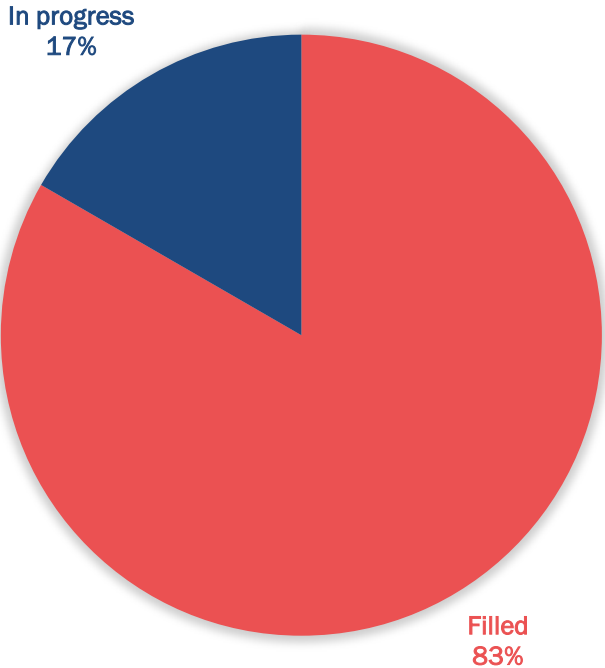


Of DHS’ 770 FTEs, this data reflects the total composition of Social Caseworkers

- 36 total positions
- 30 filled
- 6 in progress



POSITION STATUS

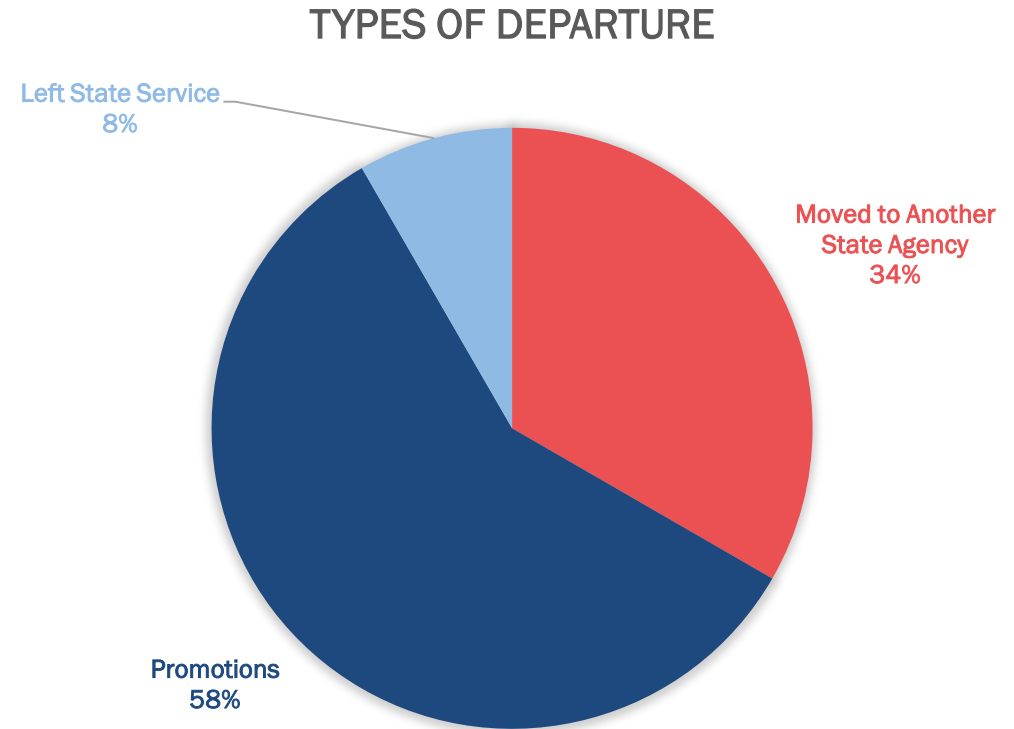


Note: Data from DHS internal record keeping, June 2022 to October 2023

# Social Caseworker Departure Data

24 Social Caseworkers have left their roles since June 2022.

- 2 Left State Service
- 8 Transfer to another state agency
- 14 Received promotions

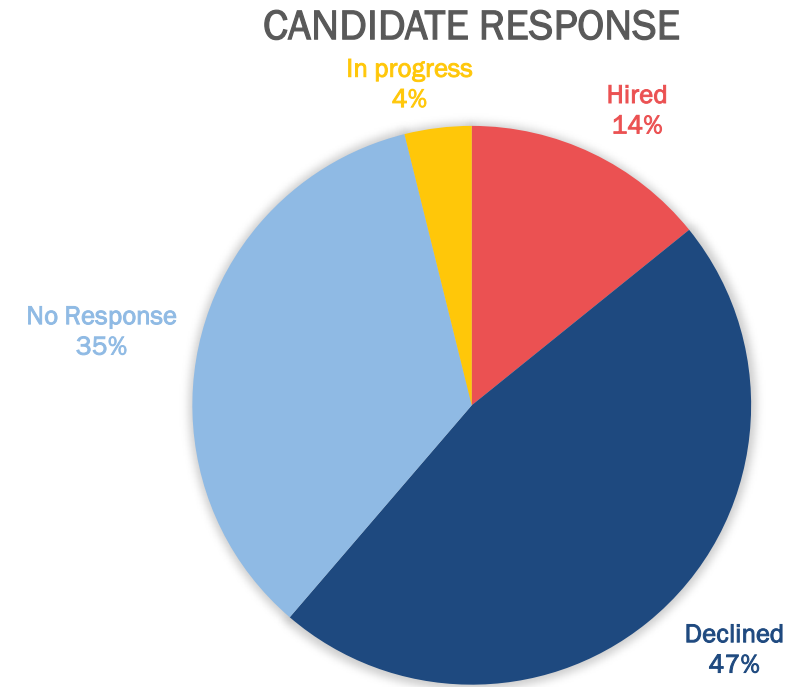


*Note: Data from DHS internal record keeping, June 2022 to October 2023*

# Social Caseworker Exam Update

Since June 2022, DHS has received 155 names from DOA HR, all candidates have been offered an opportunity to interview.

- ❑ 0 positions were filled with lateral candidates, and therefore went to list after the 10-day\* internal posting.
- ❑ 22 positions have been filled through the Civil Service List process since June 2022.
- ❑ Of the 133 names not hired, the status is as follow:
  - 73 declines
  - 54 no response
  - 6 in progress



\*Per 8/2/23 SPA, internal posting period shortened to 5 days.

# Time to Fill Analysis



## **Social Caseworker analysis on positions since March 2023 from certified list of names**

From internal analysis and tracking, on average it takes approximately **100 days** to fill a SCW position from posting to actual start date.

## **ETI analysis on recently positions from August Civil Service exam and certified list of names**

From internal analysis and tracking, on average it takes approximately **60 days** to fill an ETI position from posting to actual start date.

## **Overall Hiring Steps include**

- Internal posting and addition to the certification
- Addition to the certification and positive interview response from candidate
- Outreach to candidate and schedule of interview date
- Interview date and candidate acceptance of offer
- Candidate acceptance of job offer and determining start date

# Action Steps and Proposed Solutions

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# Actions Taken: Strategic Hiring Plan

**In partnership with DOA HR, DHS developed a strategic hiring plan in response to Social Caseworker Hiring Crisis, effective 6/30/2023. Many of these steps have been implemented for C94 hiring of critical positions (ETI, CSA)**

- Steps taken include the shortening timeframe for internal hiring steps:
  - Extending offers to candidates on same day of interview, whenever possible
  - Pre-screen DCYF candidates to clarify paygrades to minimize candidates declining offers
  - Position to post upon DHS approval for customer facing positions to streamline PAR approval process
  - Signed SPA with L580 for expedited posting from 10 to 5 days (signed 8/3/2023)
  - Signed SPA with C94 for expedited posting period from 10 to 7 days (signed 10/12/2023)
- Additionally, DHS has undertaken the following recruitment and retention action steps:
  - Attended the C94 “Staffing the Frontlines” recruitment event on 8/30
  - Working collaboratively with C94 and L580 on a slate of DHS job classifications for public hearing
  - Developing a pilot with CCRI for pre/post-employment support services to promote state service
  - Held a joint brainstorming session with C94 and L580 on recruitment and retention on 9/22, action steps identified
  - Post opportunities to DHS social media channels
  - Partner with DOA Communications to advertise ETI opportunities through social media, local radio (Poder, WKKB, WPRO)

# Challenges & Potential Solutions

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## Identified challenges include:

- Significant movement or “churn” within the agency
- Limited incentive opportunities

## Potential Solutions include:

- Explore modifying merit system law pending commission’s recommendations
- In partnership with Labor and DOA HR, DHS proposes to explore strategies to reduce the churn in critical positions (noting this may require formal contract negotiations)
- Continue to explore development of PAR Speedpass with DOA HR to mitigate churn within agency
- Learn from DCYF pilot program findings
- Review the state’s current policy/procedure A-36 and seek an ethics review for the interpretation of use of funds.

# Additional Information

## Is there a budget for recruiting staff at DHS?

Funds are requested for recruitment activities or events, such as registration fees and collateral material.

## How are the questions determined on the merit exam?

Questions are developed in partnership with DOA HR. DHS met with DOA HR to review and revise questions and anticipate continuing that practice for future exams.



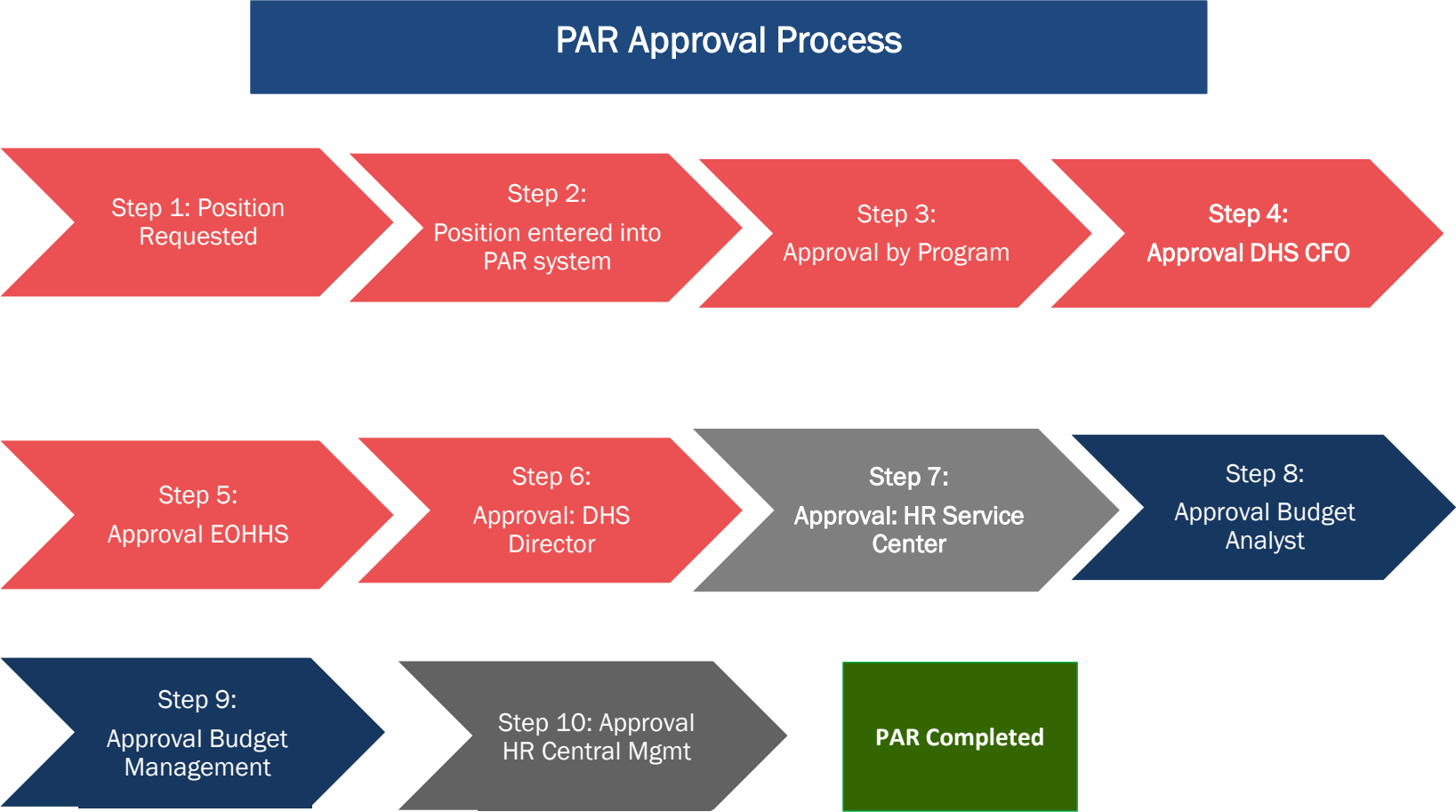
*Example of ETI Civil Service Exam Announcement. DHS partnered with DOA to showcase current ET staff pictured.*



# APPENDIX



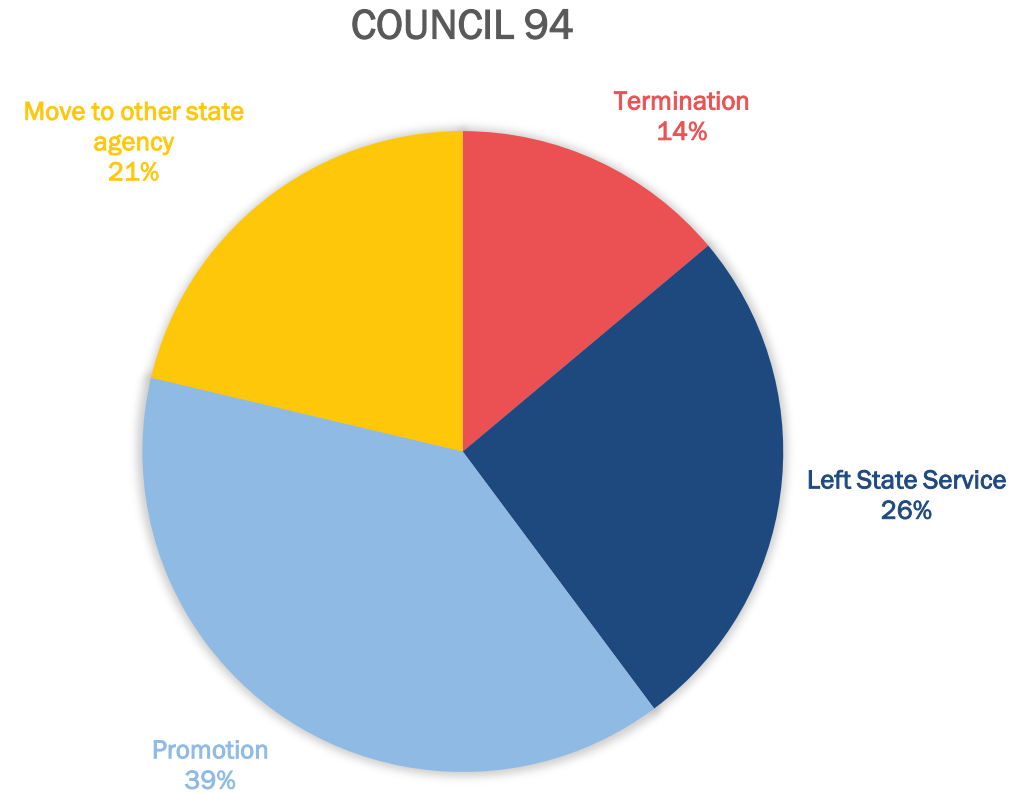
# PAR Approval Process



# Departure Data: Council 94

A total of 108 Council 94 employees have left their roles since June 2022. This is reflective of all classifications

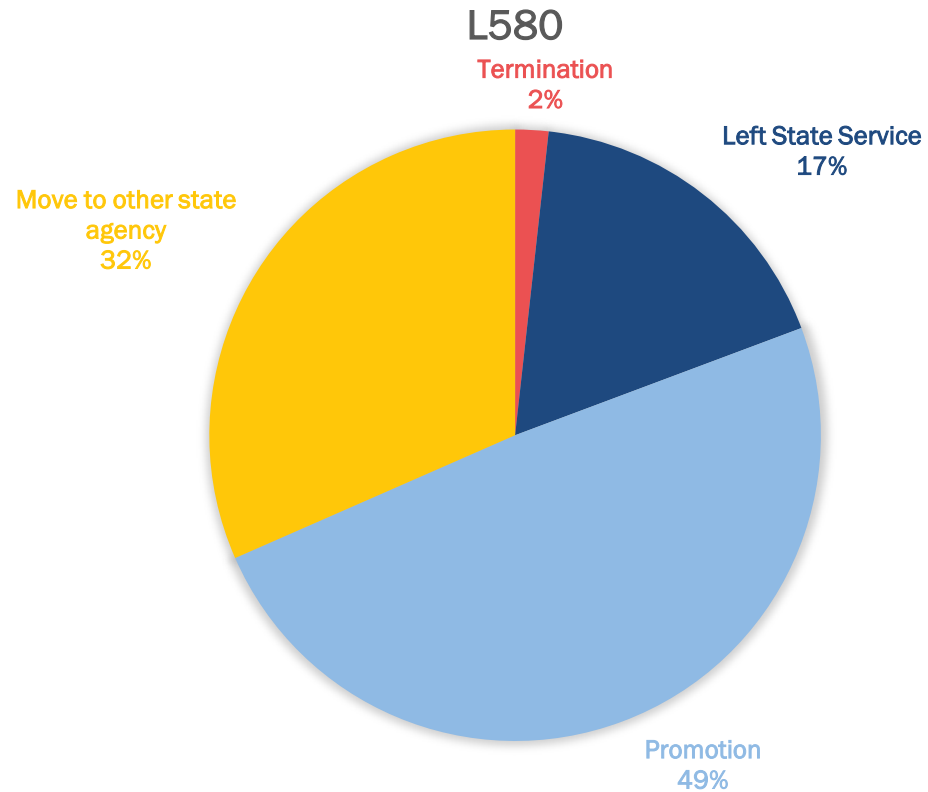
- 42 Promotional Opportunity
- 28 Left State Service
- 23 Transfer to another State agency
- 15 Termination



# Departure Data: Local 580

A total of 57 Local 580 employees have left their roles since June 2022. This is reflective of all classifications

- 28 Promotional Opportunity
- 10 Left State Service
- 18 Transfer to another State agency
- 1 Termination



# Departure Data: Non-Union

A total of 10 Non-Union employees have left their roles since June 2022. This is reflective of all classifications.

- 4 Promotional Opportunity
- 4 Left State Service
- 2 Transfer to another State agency
- 0 Termination

