



Attracting and Keeping the Right Staff

Follow up to Staff Recruitment and Retention, 2022
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Recruiting new staff to work for juvenile justice agencies has become a bit easier over the past year, according to about 70 professionals who gathered recently for the Performance-based Standards (PbS) Learning Institute's 2023 Agency Coordinators Training. But attracting the right staff and keeping them remains a challenge.

Following up from a discussion one year earlier that resulted in a list of recruitment strategies from across the country, the group reported several approaches that were effective in recruiting new staff:

- 1- More money. Increase in salaries, incentives, joining bonuses, extra pay on weekends, retention bonuses, seasonal workers;
- 2- Targeted Advertising. Use of headhunters, social media and geo-fencing for location-based advertising near colleges and universities; and
- 3- Video. A recording of the facility/ location, the job description and as training tools.

But they didn't always get the right staff or staff who stayed longer than training, the bonus or a couple of months. Some attributed the cause to the Generation Z mindset, low pay and the sometimes-negative reputation of juvenile justice work.

Reflecting on what drew them to working with justice-involved young people and keeps them doing the work, they agreed it

was their shared passion for the young people, their desire to help and the belief that they can make a difference. They need training and skills, yes, but what keeps them working overtime, double shifts and managing more challenging young people are positive work cultures that are welcoming, supportive and they are proud to be a part of – a place that they would invite their friends to work.

Agencies' efforts to improve staff retention have showed in the 3,240 responses to the PbS Staff Climate Survey in April 2023. The vast majority (89%) of the respondents had worked a full six months and reported favorably about their training, job satisfaction and ability to impact young lives. One-third of respondents said they agreed very strongly with the statement they are making a positive impact on young peoples' lives and an additional 52% agreed with the statement. Despite shortages and stressors, the majority (81%) said they were satisfied with their jobs and almost two-thirds (64%) said they received the training they needed.

For more information, please see the PbS Website or contact the PbS Help Desk.

