

GEORGIA WORKFORCE STRATEGIES INITIATIVE



Georgia Department of Administrative Services

PROJECT UPDATE

APRIL 2023



Table of Contents

- Introduction 4
 - Workforce Strategies Initiative Steering Committee Members 4
 - Next Steps 5
- Step One: Review and Analyze Available Data 6
- Step Two: Select Priority Areas..... 10
 - Meeting One Participant Questionnaire 10
- Step Three: Review Regional Trends and Identify Focal Jobs 13
 - Priority Job family groups data packet Research 15
- Step Four: Select Priority Jobs 17
 - Education Partner Agency Case studies..... 18
 - Technical College System of Georgia 18
 - University System of Georgia 18
 - Georgia Department of Education..... 19
 - Meeting Two Participant Questionnaire..... 19
- Breakout Groups: Common Themes 20
 - Increased Information 21
 - Data Points 21
 - Barriers..... 21
 - Strategies 21
 - Who Needs to Be Included 21
- Priority Job Family Group Sessions..... 22
 - Procurement Breakout Themes..... 22
 - Customer Service Breakout Themes..... 23
 - Cybersecurity / IT Breakout Themes..... 24
 - Social/ Human Services Breakout Themes 25
 - Law Enforcement/ Public Safety Breakout Themes 26

Finance and Accounting Breakout Themes.....	27
Health Care Breakout Themes	28
Selecting Priority Jobs.....	28
Next Steps for the Workforce Strategies Initiative	29

List of Figures

Figure 1. National Labor Market, Total Number of Job Quits, 2016–2021.....	7
Figure 2. State Workforce Overall Turnover Rate, FY 2018 to FY 2021	8
Figure 3. State Workforce Hires and Separations, FY 2018 to FY 2021.....	9
Figure 4. State Workforce Separations by Job Family, FYs 2018–2021	9
Figure 5. Concentration of State Employees	14

List of Tables

Table 1. Top Three Priority Job Area Responses	12
Table 2. Concentration of State Employees by Region	15
Table 3. Job Families and Priority Jobs.....	16
Table 4. Breakout Group Participation	18
Table 5. Proposed Jobs by Job Family	20

Introduction

Between 2010 and 2020, Georgia’s population grew by 14.1%. During that same time period, the full-time state employee population dropped by 16.7%. In the last two fiscal years (FY 2019–FY 2021) alone, the employee population decreased by 8.7%. This marks the steepest decline since 2008–2010. Of that turnover, 68% was due to voluntary resignations. Additionally, one in four current employees will be eligible for regular or early retirement within the next three years.

To devise solutions to address these hiring and retention concerns, the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS) Human Resources Administration (HRA) established the Workforce Strategies Initiative in January 2022. This multi-agency partnership is spearheaded by a steering committee comprising representatives from DOAS HRA, the Office of Planning and Budget (OPB), the Georgia Department of Education (DOE), the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), and the University System of Georgia (USG), with facilitation, research, and documentation assistance from the University of Georgia’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government.

WORKFORCE STRATEGIES INITIATIVE STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- **Meaghan Carver**, Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget
- **Steven Ferguson**, Technical College System of Georgia
- **Chris Green**, University System of Georgia
- **Christine Greene**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Quint Hill**, University System of Georgia
- **Al Howell**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Matt Jones**, Georgia Department of Education
- **Bo McDaniel**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Patrick McKeon**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Ray Perren**, Technical College System of Georgia
- **Daniel Regenstein**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Arveeta Turner**, Georgia Department of Education

The goal of this project is to combat the challenges of recruiting and retaining people in state jobs by developing strategies to boost the workforce pipeline and promote retention. The Workforce Strategies Initiative used a four-step process to address these issues. This report details these four steps.

STEP ONE: REVIEW AND ANALYZE AVAILABLE DATA

The project began with a thorough review of available data by a research team composed of staff from DOAS HRA and the Institute of Government. The team reviewed state and national workforce trends as well as specific job families.

STEP TWO: SELECT PRIORITY AREAS

During the first Workforce Strategies Initiative meeting in January 2022, participants reviewed data on workforce trends and narrowed the priority for study to seven job families: procurement/ purchasing, social/human services, public safety/law, cybersecurity/IT, finance/accounting, health care, and customer service.

STEP THREE: REVIEW REGIONAL TRENDS AND IDENTIFY SPECIFIC FOCAL JOBS

The research team looked at regional concentrations of state government employees and specific jobs. Within each of the seven priority job families selected in Step Two, the research team identified specific state jobs that the Initiative might want to focus on, based on selected criteria.

STEP FOUR: SELECT PRIORITY JOBS

During the second Workforce Strategies Initiative meeting in March 2022, participants broke into small groups, each centered on one of the priority job families. Each small group selected one job as a potential focus area. The steering committee then voted to select five of the seven jobs put forward by the small groups. The following five jobs became the focus for the Initiative moving forward: law enforcement, accounting, social services program consultants, entry-level IT, and procurement.

NEXT STEPS

A four-month workforce pipeline study was conducted for each of the five identified jobs. The studies included needs assessments, strategy development and prioritization, and the creation of implementation plans. The Workgroups Report that follows this Project Report details these five pipeline studies.

Step One: Review and Analyze Available Data

The first step in the project was a thorough analysis of available national and state data conducted by a research team made up of staff from DOAS HRA and the Institute of Government. The research team used the FY 2021 Annual Workforce Report, a yearly report about the state's employees produced by DOAS, as a basis for the state analysis. This report only contains employee information pertaining to agencies within the TeamWorks HCM platform. Additionally, the research team focused only on full-time, benefits-eligible jobs.

The analysis revealed several national and state workforce trends. In recent years, the United States has been experiencing a phenomenon known as the Great Resignation.¹ The number of quits accelerated in 2021, with 4.5 million people quitting their jobs in November of 2021. The sectors most impacted are professional and business services, education and health services, and health care and social assistance.² Georgia is experiencing record low unemployment. As of January 2022, the US unemployment rate was 3.9%, compared to 2.8% in Georgia.³ In the last year, retirements have risen markedly across all sectors.⁴

Figure 1 shows that the national total number of people quitting their jobs has been rising steadily since 2016, with a steep drop around the COVID-19 public health emergency.

¹ US Bureau of Labor Statistics

² US Bureau of Labor Statistics

³ St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank, FRED Database

⁴ US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Figure 1. National Labor Market, Total Number of Job Quits, 2016–2021



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank, FRED database

Note: Data do not include farm. Shaded areas indicate US recessions.

Since 2010, Georgia’s population has increased by more than 1 million people. Georgia’s growth rate exceeds that of the nation, but it is slowing. The fastest-growing age group in the state is the over-60 population; by 2030, 25% of the state’s population is projected to be over 60, increasing to 30% by 2040.⁵ Due to declining birth rates, natural increase is slowing. Growth in the state is fueled by migration, specifically domestic migration. About 500,000 people who moved to Georgia in the past five years moved to counties within the Atlanta Regional Commission area.⁶ While the state as a whole has seen strong growth, not every county has been experiencing the same levels of migration to offset the low natural increase. Between the 2010 Census and the 2020 Census,⁷ 68 counties lost population. Between the 2000 Census and the 2020 Census,⁸ 43 counties lost population.

The analysis of the FY 2021 Workforce Report revealed several trends in the state employee workforce. The most populous job family is law enforcement, followed by social services, support services, education and training, and health care. Importantly, the data show that the most populous job families are also the ones that have the most hires and the most separations. The total number of full-time staff has fallen by 10% over the last four years. Hiring is decreasing at an increasing rate, and applicant pools are shrinking dramatically. Additionally,

⁵ 2021 Population Projections, Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget

⁶ Administrative data, Georgia Department of Driver Services

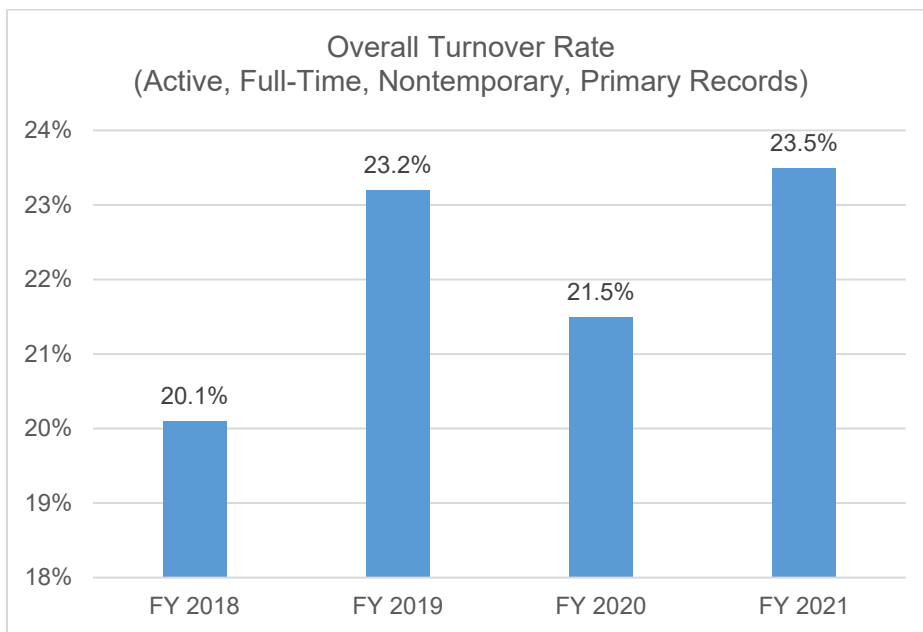
⁷ Decennial Census 2010 and 2020

⁸ Decennial Census 2000 and 2020

new hire salaries have been flat for three years. Over 8% of the state workforce is eligible to retire today, and that number is projected to grow to over 20% in the next four years. While retirements are increasing and are projected to increase even more over the next few years, the majority of new hires are Millennials and Gen Z workers. However, hiring is not keeping pace with turnover. The turnover rate in FY 2021 was 23.5%, with 19% of separations happening within the first 90 days of employment. In FY 2021, the Millennial voluntary turnover rate was 25.7%, and the Gen Z voluntary turnover rate was 76.4%. The job families with the highest turnover rates are food and farm (44.1%) and law enforcement (37.3%). Figures 2–4 illustrate these trends.

Figure 2 shows that annual turnover in Georgia’s state workforce topped 20% each year between FY 2018 and FY 2021, with a slight dip in FY 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

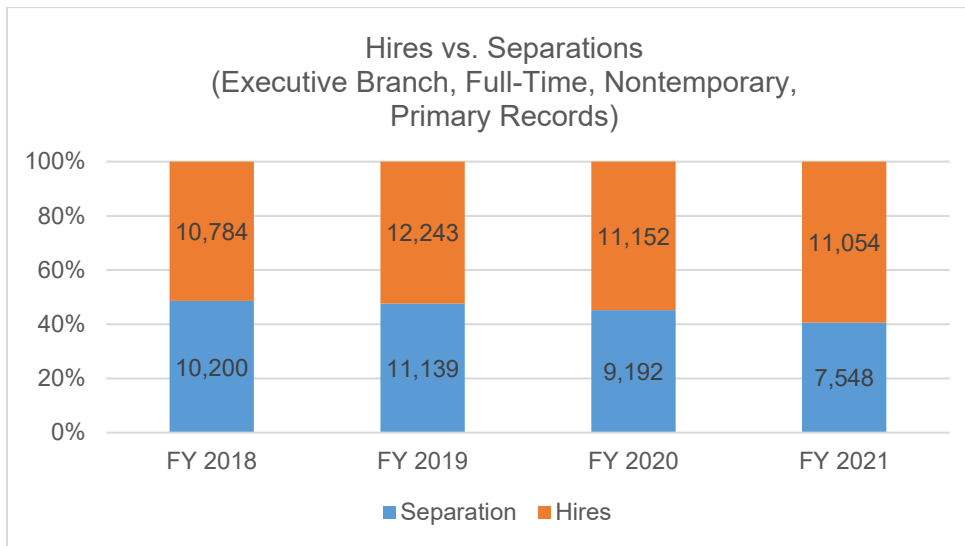
Figure 2. State Workforce Overall Turnover Rate, FY 2018 to FY 2021



Source: Department of Administrative Services, FY 2021 State Workforce Data

Figure 3 shows hires and separations for state workers in the Georgia workforce from FY 2018 to FY 2021. Hires exceeded separations in each of the four years.

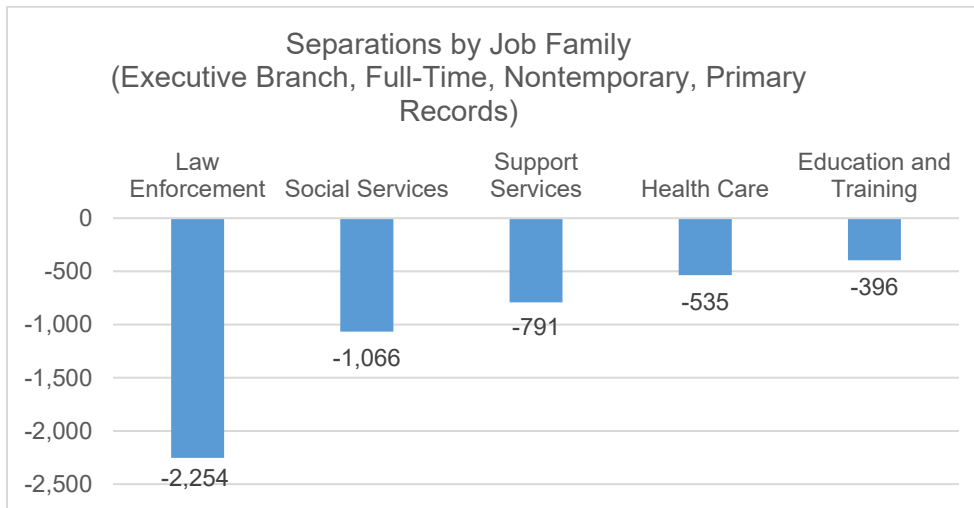
Figure 3. State Workforce Hires and Separations, FY 2018 to FY 2021



Source: Department of Administrative Services, FY 2021 state workforce data

Figure 4 shows separations for state workers in the Georgia workforce by job family from FY 2018 to FY 2021. Law enforcement saw the most separations, followed by social services and support services.

Figure 4. State Workforce Separations by Job Family, FYs 2018–2021



Source: Department of Administrative Services, FY 2021 state workforce data

Step Two: Select Priority Areas

The Workforce Strategies Initiative kicked off with a webinar on January 14, 2022, hosted on the online platform Zoom. The key goal of this meeting was to select priority areas on which the Initiative would focus. DOAS Commissioner Rebecca Sullivan welcomed everyone, followed by an address by Kelly Farr, the director of the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget. A total of 177 individuals registered for the meeting, and 141 actually attended. Participants represented 43 different agencies and encompassed a large mix of professional backgrounds, but the majority worked in human resources.

Members of the research team discussed national and state population and workforce trends. Demographer Taylor Hafley from the Institute of Government highlighted Georgia’s changing demographics. He noted two primary trends in Georgia: The state is growing, but not in every region, and the state population is aging. Institute of Government Associate Director David Tanner discussed national labor market trends, including the marked increase in retirements across all sectors in the last year.⁹ Bo McDaniel, enterprise talent management director at DOAS, then presented on trends and highlights from the FY 2021 Workforce Report. The researchers also presented Figures 1–4 and discussed their significance.

MEETING ONE PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

Following these presentations, participants were asked the following questions, which they answered using Slido, an anonymous web-based polling software.

What, if any, workforce development strategies or partnerships does your agency have in place currently? Most responses mentioned internship programs (17), apprenticeships (3), and high school partners (3).

Please share any other thoughts or suggestions with the project team. The 47 responses offered a broad range of creative suggestions, but several key ideas were common:

- Addressing compensation
- Creating career paths and training opportunities
- Management/leadership training
- Diversifying the state’s applicant pool
- Changing job descriptions and marketing
- Increased remote/teleworking opportunities

⁹ US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Responses about compensation focused on how low salaries are affecting the state’s ability to recruit and retain workers. Participants suggested more competitive salaries for new hires, bonuses for employees who go above and beyond or who work in hard-to-fill jobs, and more flexible and less expensive benefit plans. Many of the comments about bonuses noted that tying pay increases to performance could boost morale and incentivize hard work.

Responses that mentioned career pathways or more opportunities for growth highlighted more robust onboarding programs, skills training, employee recognition programs, and structured succession planning. These responses were geared toward encouraging and rewarding current state employees and increasing retention.

Increased leadership training; diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings; and agency culture changes also came up in several responses. One response noted, “People don’t leave jobs. People leave leadership.” Culture changes came up in comments that addressed the state’s issues with hiring and retaining Gen Z and Millennial employees.

Several comments addressed hiring by suggesting ways to diversify applicant pools. One response suggested emphasizing experiential requirements over educational requirements. Participants suggested tapping into second-chance employment, creating targeted campaigns to reach the military community, and hiring individuals with disabilities. Some responses suggested changing the state’s language and marketing in job postings to better capture the Gen Z and Millennial workforce.

Finally, responses suggested increased flexibility and teleworking opportunities to attract candidates from across the state.

What would you suggest be the top three priority job areas or career paths for this project to focus on? Priority areas for the Workforce Strategies Initiative to focus on were selected based on responses to this question. The 62 responses received are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Top Three Priority Job Area Responses

Top Priority	Number of Instances
Health care	21
Law enforcement	21
Education	12
IT/ cybersecurity	11
Customer service	11
Social services	8
Finance/ accounting	7
<i>Engineering</i>	4
<i>Manufacturing</i>	3
<i>Transportation</i>	3
<i>Call centers</i>	2
<i>Food service</i>	2
<i>Human resources</i>	2
<i>Welding</i>	1
<i>Management skills</i>	1
<i>Heavy equipment operators</i>	1
<i>Administrative support</i>	1
<i>Custodial services</i>	1
<i>Counseling</i>	1

Source: Slido response data, January 14, 2022 collection

The following are the final seven priority job family groups on which the Initiative focused moving forward¹⁰:

1. Procurement/ Purchasing
2. Social/ Human Services
3. Public Safety/ Law Enforcement
4. Cybersecurity/ IT
5. Finance/ Accounting
6. Health Care
7. Customer Service

¹⁰ Education was not included as most of their jobs are hired at the local level. Procurement/purchasing was identified as a priority by the sponsor agency, the Department of Administrative Services.

Step Three: Review Regional Trends and Identify Focal Jobs

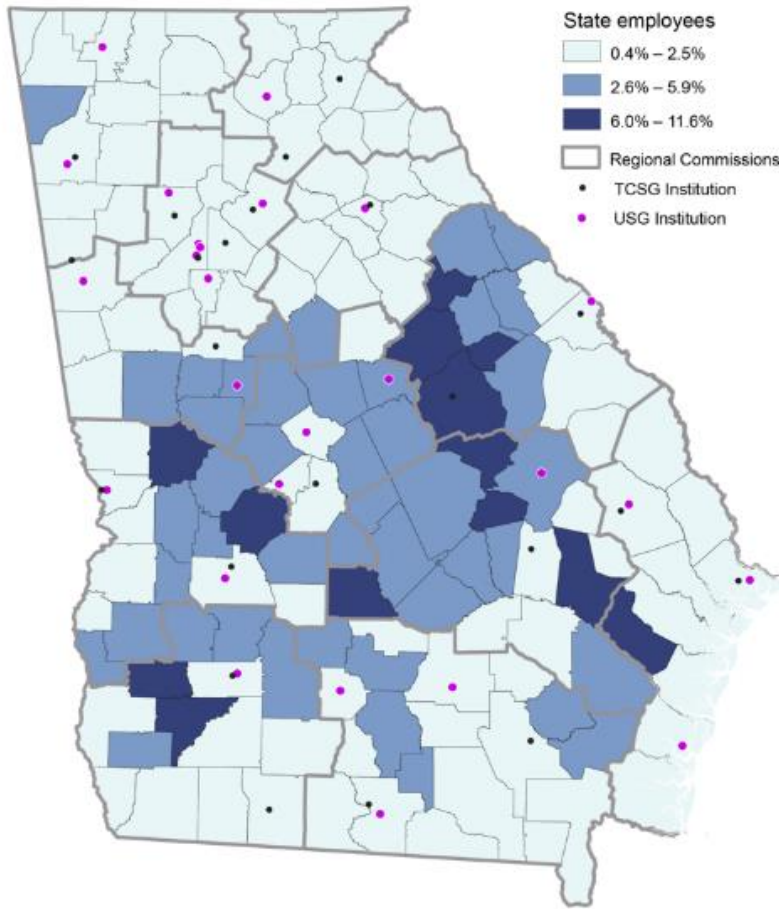
With the seven priority job family groups established, the next step was to identify specific jobs that would become the focus of the Workforce Strategies Initiative. A crucial step in this process was understanding regional state workforce trends.

To begin, the research team visualized the FY 2021 Annual Workforce Report geographically to look for regional trends and established three key questions to guide the initial analysis.

1. Where do state government employees live?
2. In which region does the state government workforce have the largest impact?
3. Which job families have the largest regional impacts?

Mapping the data confirmed that state government employment impacts every region, with state employees living in all 159 Georgia counties. Figure 5 shows the percentage of state employees to total employment, by county and region.

Figure 5. Estimated Percent of State Employees out of Total Employment



Source: Calculated from Department of Administrative Services and Georgia Department of Labor data

Note: State employment is defined here as, full-time, regular, active state employees.

The research team compared the FY 2021 state employee count¹¹ to the 2020 average monthly employment¹² by regional commission, per 1,000 employed. Table 2 presents the data for each of Georgia's 12 regional commissions. The table shows that the concentration of state employment varies by region.

¹¹ Department of Administrative Services, Human Resources Administration Division, FY 2021 internal data.

¹² Georgia Department of Labor, "Georgia Employment and Wages: 2020 Averages."

Table 2. Concentration of State Employees by Region

	FY21 State Employee Count	2020 Average Monthly Employment	State Employees per 1,000 Employed
Heart of Georgia Altamaha	2,840	84,720	33.5
Middle Georgia	3,393	191,181	17.7
Southwest Georgia	2,159	122,000	17.7
Central Southern River Area	2,865	176,133	16.3
Southern Georgia	2,270	139,642	16.3
River Valley	1,986	131,291	15.1
Three Rivers	2,159	165,761	13.0
Northwest Georgia	2,816	261,977	10.7
Northeast Georgia	2,097	206,552	10.2
Coastal	2,480	270,981	9.2
Atlanta Regional	16,097	2,184,910	7.4
Georgia Mountains	1,570	242,326	6.5

Source: Calculated from Department of Administrative Services and Georgia Department of Labor data

Because the concentration of jobs varied so much by region, the research team then looked at the job families into which each region’s jobs fall. The analysis showed that the following job families have the largest impact regionally: health care, law enforcement, social services, support services, and transportation.

Finally, the research team established three criteria for the project to guide the selection process for the jobs that would become the focus of workforce strategy workgroups.

1. The job has state reach, meaning it appears in both rural and urban areas of the state.
2. The job is found in three or more agencies.
3. The plan implementation is realistic within 18–36 months.

PRIORITY JOB FAMILY GROUPS DATA PACKET RESEARCH

The research team conducted more focused research and prepared data packets for the second Workforce Strategies Initiative meeting, held in March 2022. These data packets were used by meeting participants to select priority jobs.

Within each priority job family, the research team identified specific jobs based on four criteria:

1. More than 100 employees have the job title
2. The job exists in at least three agencies
3. There is an indication of trouble backfilling the position
4. The job has minimal entry requirements

As the research team conducted this analysis, it became clear that three of the priority job family groups (Procurement/ Purchasing, Cybersecurity/ IT, and Customer Service) identified during the first initiative meeting would be best looked at as a job progression. The other four groups did have jobs that fit the established criteria. Note that the research team also saw large hiring needs in specific agencies; however, those jobs were specific to single agencies. Such jobs are not included in the analysis because the initial phase of the project was focused on addressing jobs that exist in three or more agencies. The jobs identified by priority job family area are listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Job Families and Priority Jobs

Job Family	Priority Jobs
Procurement/ Purchasing	Job as a progressive track
Customer Service	Job as a progressive track
Cybersecurity/ IT	Job based on market needs
Social/ Human Services	Social services program consultant Economic support consultant
Public Safety/ Law Enforcement	Criminal investigators Compliance investigators P.O.S.T.-certified officers
Finance and Accounting	Auditors Accountants Financial operations generalist
Health Care	Social worker Behavioral health counselor

The research team prepared a packet of information for each priority job family group. For each job, or job progression, the groups were provided with the following:

- A regional map that showed the concentration of the job in each county
- A list of agencies that contain the job
- A list of data points by position
- The education level of employees in the role at the time of hire
- A short job description

The information packets are available on DOAS's Workforce Strategies Initiative webpage at doas.ga.gov/human-resources-administration/talent-acquisition/workforce-strategy-presentations.

Step Four: Select Priority Jobs

The second Workforce Strategies Initiative meeting, held on March 4, 2022, was also hosted via Zoom and was more interactive than the first meeting. The goal of this meeting was to select priority jobs on which the Initiative would concentrate moving forward. This meeting kicked off with a video from Governor Brian Kemp showing his support for the project, followed by opening remarks from DOAS Commissioner Rebecca Sullivan. Then, the research team gave a presentation on the analysis done to narrow the priority job families and to identify priority jobs. Representatives from the TCSG, the USG, and DOE presented case studies showing examples of currently existing innovative career pipelines.

The bulk of the meeting was spent in small groups, concentrated on each of the seven priority job families. Afterward, the facilitators from each group reported back the results from their respective conversations.

A total of 139 individuals registered for the second meeting, and 120 participated. They represented 42 different state entities, including 36 state agencies, various technical colleges, community service boards, and other interested parties.

When they registered for the meeting, participants had to select one of the seven priority job families for breakout sessions. Consequently, the number of participants in each breakout group varied. The Finance and Accounting group had the most participants, and the Procurement group had the least. Table 4 shows the breakdown of group participation.

Table 4. Breakout Group Participation

Group	Number of Participants	Number of Entities Represented
Procurement/ Purchasing	8	3
Customer Service	15	12
Cybersecurity/ IT	10	6
Social/ Human Services	21	11
Public Safety/ Law Enforcement	17	9
Finance and Accounting	35	23
Health Care	14	7

Note: These numbers do include Institute of Government facilitators and notetakers.

EDUCATION PARTNER AGENCY CASE STUDIES

Technical College System of Georgia

Dr. Ray Perren, TCSG deputy commissioner for technical education, presented on the partnership between the TCSG and the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT).

DOT recognized the need for an entry-level position requiring general civil engineering skills ranging from surveying to materials testing, a position that typically requires a bachelor’s degree. The TCSG was able to fill that need by creating the Civil Engineering Technology Degree at seven TCSG institutions across the state.

The Civil Engineering Technology Degree is an associate degree program originally offered only at Albany Technical College. The degree provides hands-on instruction in civil engineering with specialties in construction or surveying. The TCSG was able to match DOT office locations with technical colleges in their region that could offer the degree. This program allowed DOT to adjust minimum job requirements for its entry-level positions.

Dr. Perren highlighted the TCSG’s ability to be a key part of workforce development. With 22 institutions, 88 campuses, and online degrees, the TCSG is able to offer a wide range of degrees. The TCSG offers credit instruction and adult education, and it uses WorkSource Georgia.

University System of Georgia

Dr. Art Recesso, chief innovation officer with the University System of Georgia, presented on the USG’s partnership with the financial technology (FinTech) field.

Representatives from the USG met with employers in the FinTech industry to find out what skills and knowledge are needed to succeed in the field. With this information, the USG was

able to develop a curriculum that meets the needs of the FinTech industry. A consortium of USG institutions now teaches courses that prepare students to work in FinTech.

Georgia Department of Education

Sandra Martin, CTAE program specialist at the Georgia Department of Education, presented on the partnership between DOE's CTAE program and Phoebe Health Systems.

Georgia hospitals have been hit hard the past two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Phoebe Health leadership approached DOE to create a partnership to address this need. Together, they created the Phoebe Health Science Pathway Project.

They worked with the Commodore Conyers College and Career Academy to create a pipeline of workers. The Phoebe Health Science Pathway Project used a "grow-your-own" approach, creating curriculum options for students to work toward an associate degree in nursing while still in high school.

The goals of the pathway are to increase learning opportunities for secondary student engagement in health care, increase postsecondary experiences focused on health care careers, increase associate nursing degree completion rates, advance Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) degree attainment, and increase matriculation of ASN-graduates to employment with Phoebe Health.

MEETING TWO PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

During the second meeting, participants were asked three questions to better understand how DOAS, the Institute of Government, and the education partners could address current workforce issues and build future pipelines. Again, anonymous answers were recorded via Slido. The first question had 46 responses, the second had 39, and the third had 29. There were a wide range of creative responses, but several key themes appeared multiple times.

What other data would be helpful to you in understanding state workforce trends?

- More information around state salaries, especially how state salaries compare to market salaries and the breakdown of salaries across the regions of the state
- Turnover rates per job
- Why employees leave state government and where they are going

What other criteria would be helpful to consider in prioritizing jobs for workforce pipelines?

- Required certifications, trainings, and skill sets
- The number of applicants compared to the number of vacancies at each agency
- Turnover rate

What other ideas do you have for DOAS and partners to address your workforce needs? How can DOAS help you?

- Address compensation
 - Increase compensation
 - Conduct salary studies
 - State versus market salaries
 - New versus current employee salaries
- Reassess job marketing
- Tuition reimbursement or loan forgiveness

BREAKOUT GROUPS: COMMON THEMES

Participants at the second meeting then broke into seven small groups, each concentrated on a priority job family. Each group was tasked with reviewing the packet of information provided by the research team and then selecting one job for the project to focus on moving forward. The three groups that focused on priority job families with a progressive job track— Procurement/Purchasing, Customer Service, and Cybersecurity/IT—were asked to choose a specific entry-level job or set of skills on which the project should focus. Table 5 shows the specific jobs chosen by the seven breakout groups. More details are provided in the sections that follow.

Table 5. Proposed Jobs by Job Family

Job Family	Priority Job
Procurement/ Purchasing	Job as progressive track
Customer Service	Job as a progressive track
Cybersecurity/ IT	Job based on market needs
Social/ Human Services	Social services program consultant
Public Safety/ Law Enforcement	Law enforcement
Finance and Accounting	Accounting
Health Care	Social worker

Each of the priority job family breakout groups was asked five to seven questions. The responses from all seven groups were analyzed for common themes, with the results presented below.

Increased Information

- More information about the salary range for state jobs, what certifications and trainings opportunities are available, and skills required for employment

Data Points

- More data around why people take, stay in, and leave state jobs
- Exit interviews to assess the reasons people leave
- Average tenure
- Turnover rates

Barriers

- Education requirements
- Limited career pathways
- Low salaries compared to the private sector

Strategies

Respondents recommended several strategies to aid in pipeline development.

- Tuition reimbursement
- Analyzing current job descriptions and job posting language
- Remote/teleworking opportunities
- Partnerships with high schools, the TCSG, and the USG
- Marketing and branding the state government as an employer of choice

Who Needs to Be Included

The Cybersecurity/IT, Customer Service, and Procurement groups were asked about who needed to be included in this conversation going forward. They recommended bringing in the following:

- Current incumbents
- Division heads
- Supervisors

PRIORITY JOB FAMILY GROUP SESSIONS

Members of each of the seven priority job family groups were asked a series of questions. Their responses are compiled below across common themes.

Procurement Breakout Themes

The Procurement group was asked seven questions. The group did not answer the final question. Below are the key themes that arose from their responses.

Increased Information

Respondents asked for more information about certification and training requirements for procurement workers at every job level.

Data Points

In the Slido responses, participants mentioned wanting to see average tenure and a reconsideration of entry requirements for entry-level procurement jobs.

Entry-Level Skills

Project management skills came up as the entry-level skill the Workforce Strategies Initiative should focus on first.

Barriers

Agencies classify procurement jobs under many different names, which leads to a lack of consistency across agencies. Respondents believed that this lack of consistency posed as a major barrier to pipeline development.

Strategies

Respondents mentioned incentivizing bridge trainings between each advancement in the procurement field to keep current procurement agents interested in advancing along their career path and to attract applicants who want a clear career pathway.

Who Needs to Be Included

Respondents suggested that current chief financial officers with and without procurement experience, supervisors, current incumbents, and procurement officers with USG and TCSG schools should be included.

Customer Service Breakout Themes

The Customer Service group was asked seven questions. Below are the key themes that arose from their responses.

Increased Information

Respondents wanted to know more about career paths and job progression as well as how current state employees found the job and why they stay.

Data Points

Respondents wanted to know more about why employees stay in state jobs and why they leave. Some recommended surveying current workers to get this information. Average tenure was also mentioned.

Entry-Level Skills

Communication skills were the big takeaway from this question.

Barriers

Limited career growth and salaries that do not compete with the private sector are barriers to pipeline creation. Minimum education requirements also present barriers.

Strategies

Responses highlighted the need for continued training while on the job. Some suggested tuition reimbursement and training opportunities for current workers, as well as apprenticeships and internships to attract new workers. Cross training was also recommended to help customer service workers advance to other positions. Three responses mentioned rewording job descriptions and more creative marketing to sell the job.

Who Needs to Be Included

Current customer services representatives, supervisors, and division directors should be included in the conversation going forward.

Other Thoughts

Respondents mentioned offering better health insurance as an incentive for employment and conducting stay interviews with current staff.

Cybersecurity / IT Breakout Themes

The Cybersecurity/IT breakout group was asked seven questions. Several key themes arose from their responses.

Increased Information

Respondents wanted to know more about the salary range, retention by region, skills, experiences, and certifications required by the job.

Data Points

Respondents wanted more information on the required skills/credentials of IT professionals and career progression pathways.

Recommended Entry-Level Job

Programmer, cyber, systems administrator, technician, developer, and help desk were all mentioned.

Barriers

The branding and marketing of state IT jobs and the lack of a clear career path are barriers to pipeline development.

Strategies

Creating a clear job progression track and reassessing what requirements are essential could help create a career pipeline in this area.

Who Needs to Be Included

Respondents recommended including representatives from the Office of Planning and Budget, the Georgia Technology Authority, the Human Resources Administration, the Georgia Department of Education, the University System of Georgia, and the Technical College System of Georgia, and also including agency chief information officers.

Other Thoughts

Respondents mentioned partnering with current IT vendors for free trainings and certificates to attract more applicants to the IT field.

Social/ Human Services Breakout Themes

The Social/ Human Services group was asked five questions. Below are the key themes that arose.

Increased Information

Most respondents wanted to know more about salary expectations and how the state's salaries compare to the market rate. Two respondents wanted to know more about training requirements and opportunities.

Data Points

Respondents wanted to know more about essential experience, qualifications, and education.

Priority Job Selection

Social services program consultant

Barriers

This job has a reputation for being a lot of work and little praise, which creates a barrier for pipeline development. Many social services workers may also desire remote work opportunities.

Strategies

High school and college partnerships could be key strategies to pipeline building. One response mentioned partnerships with school districts with strong CTAE programs. The state also needs to address burnout.

Other Thoughts

Respondents mentioned addressing employee burnout, getting feedback from incumbents, offering bonus opportunities, and recruiting people who have received social and human services and would like to give back.

Law Enforcement/ Public Safety Breakout Themes

The Law Enforcement/Public Safety group was asked five questions. Below are the key themes that arose.

Increased Information

Respondents wanted more information about the reasons behind turnover and separation.

Data Points

Respondents asked for more data about career progression and advancement opportunities, as well as how long an employee stays at each occupation level.

Priority Job Selection

Entry- level law enforcement

Barriers

The current negative perception of law enforcement is making hiring difficult. Retention is also an issue, as the state is competing with private and local law enforcement agencies for employees.

Strategies

Most responses mentioned starting programs with local high schools to increase awareness about law enforcement jobs and to create internships or mentorship programs between high schoolers and state law enforcement officers.

Other Thoughts

Respondents offered similar responses to the question about pipeline barriers. Retention is a large issue for the job family, and competition between the state and other law enforcement entities makes hiring and retention difficult. Respondents also mentioned surveying incumbents to gain perspective and creating grow-your-own pathways in high schools.

Finance and Accounting Breakout Themes

The Finance and Accounting group was asked five questions. Below are the key themes that arose.

Increased Information

Respondents wanted to know more about exit interviews, the age and tenure of applicants, salary ranges, and the specific responsibilities of those working jobs in finance and accounting.

Data Points

Respondents reiterated the need for additional information about the specific duties, responsibilities, and assignments required of finance and accounting jobs.

Priority Job Selection

Accountant

Barriers

The salary structure compared to the private sector and the unique job responsibilities of financial professionals at each agency make it difficult to create a broad pipeline to address every need.

Strategies

Respondents indicated that paid internships and programs with DOE and with USG and TCSG institutions were a key piece of pipeline development. Tuition forgiveness was mentioned as a recruiting tool and as a tool for entry-level workers to advance their education and career. Respondents also emphasized the need for improved state government branding. Remote work and scheduling flexibility were also mentioned.

Other Thoughts

Respondents suggested creating certification programs in high school and offering training and certification courses to current employees to aid them in advancing in their career pathways. They mentioned state branding issues and compensation as barriers to pipeline creation.

Health Care Breakout Themes

The Health Care group was asked five questions. Below are the key themes that arose.

Increased Information

Respondents wanted to know more about entry-level licensure and education requirements, and who drives those requirements.

Data Points

Respondents asked where students are going once they have completed the degrees, trainings, and licensures. How can the state compete with other employers to keep licensed workers?

Priority Job Selection

Social worker

Barriers

Education requirements and all the time and money that come along with achieving them can be a huge barrier to increasing state health care jobs. A pipeline must define a clear pathway from high school to technical colleges or universities. State employers should allocate funds to help potential workers achieve these degrees.

Strategies

Several of the responses mentioned exploring ways to restructure jobs to allow for associate degrees at entry-level positions and have employees learn on the job while completing bachelor's or master's degrees.

Other Thoughts

Currently, health care workers are working a critical and difficult job. The state should speak more to their value and continue to lift them up.

SELECTING PRIORITY JOBS

The steering committee, composed of representatives from DOAS, USG, TCSG, DOE, and OPB, met after the conclusion of the second Workforce Strategies Initiative meeting and selected five priority jobs to be the focus of the remainder of this initiative: law enforcement, accounting, social services program consultants, entry-level IT, and procurement.

Next Steps for the Workforce Strategies Initiative

Five workforce pipeline studies were conducted over a four-month time frame. The workgroups ran 1-2 jobs at a time, with all work concluded by February 2023. The order of the workforce pipelines for each job is below.

1. Summer 2022
 - a. Law Enforcement
 - b. Accounting
2. Fall 2022
 - a. Social services program consultants
 - b. Entry-level IT
3. Winter 2023
 - a. Procurement

Each job had a design team comprised of interested partners and others identified through the first two Workforce Strategies Initiative meetings. The design teams met at least three times over the course of a four-month study. The design sessions encompassed:

1. **Needs assessment and identification of opportunities and barriers.** Trend data and information specific to the selected occupation were collected, analyzed, and shared with the design team. Based on that data, the design team underwent a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and barriers (SWOT) analysis to confront the challenges in standing up or enhancing educational or other programs to support the specific job need.
2. **Strategy development and prioritization.** The design team developed a series of strategies and priorities for the development of the workforce pipeline.
3. **Implementation plan.** The design team developed a road map for implementing the workforce pipeline, including identifying discrete projects, project milestones, project owners, and a defined timeline.

GEORGIA WORKFORCE STRATEGIES INITIATIVE



Georgia Department of Administrative Services **WORKGROUPS REPORT**



Table of Contents

- List of Tables 34
- List of Figures 35
- Acronyms and Abbreviations Used in This Report 37
- Introduction 39
 - Workforce Strategies Initiative Steering Committee Members 39
- Letter from the Law Enforcement Workgroup Co-Chairs 44
- Law Enforcement Workgroup Introduction 45
 - Law Enforcement Workgroup Members 45
- Needs Assessment and Identification of Opportunities and Barriers 46
 - Environmental Scan 52
 - Baseline Recruitment Questionnaire 53
 - Interviews with Current Employees 55
- Strategy Development and Prioritization 59
- Implementation Plan 59
 - Measures of Progress 62
 - Other Recommendations 63
- Conclusion 63
- Letter from the Accounting Workgroup Co-Chairs 66
- Accounting Workgroup Introduction 67
 - Accounting Workgroup Members 67
- Needs Assessment and Identification of Opportunities and Barriers 68
 - Environmental Scan 75
 - Baseline Recruitment Questionnaire 76
 - Interviews with Current State Accountants 78
- Strategy Development and Prioritization 80
- Implementation Plan 81

Measures of Progress.....	83
Other Recommendations	84
Conclusion	84
Letter from the IT Workgroup Co-Chairs	87
IT Workgroup Introduction.....	88
IT Workgroup Members	88
Needs Assessment and Identification of Opportunities and Barriers.....	89
Environmental Scan.....	101
Baseline Recruitment Questionnaire	102
Questionnaire with Current IT Employees	103
Strategy Development and Prioritization.....	105
Implementation Plan	106
Measures of Progress.....	109
Other Recommendations	109
Conclusion	109
Letter from the Social Services Workgroup Co-Chairs.....	112
Social Services Workgroup Introduction.....	113
Social Services Workgroup Members	113
Needs Assessment and Identification of Opportunities and Barriers.....	114
Environmental Scan.....	120
Baseline Recruitment Questionnaire	121
Interviews with current Social Services Program consultants	123
Strategy Development and Prioritization.....	124
Implementation Plan	125
Measures of Progress.....	127
Other Recommendations	128
Conclusion	128
Letter from the Procurement Workgroup Co-Chairs	131

Procurement Workgroup Introduction.....	132
Procurement Workgroup Members	132
Needs Assessment and Identification of Opportunities and Barriers	133
Environmental Scan.....	140
Baseline Recruitment Questionnaire	141
Interviews with Current Procurement Professionals.....	142
Strategy Development and Prioritization.....	145
Implementation Plan	146
Measures of Progress.....	148
Other Recommendations	149
Conclusion	149
Statewide Workforce Strategies	151
Conclusion and Next Steps.....	155
Appendix A. Disqualifiers from State Law Enforcement and Public Safety Jobs	157

List of Tables

- Table 1.1. Trends in Six Law Enforcement Entry-Level Positions, FY 2018 and FY 2021 47
- Table 1.2. Projected Georgia Law Enforcement Positions, FY 2018–FY 2028 48
- Table 1.3. Law Enforcement Workforce Plan..... 60
- Table 2.1. Trends in Accounting Positions at State Agencies, FY 2018 and FY 2021 68
- Table 2.2. Trends in State Agencies Employing the Most Accountants, FY 2018 and FY 2021 69
- Table 2.3. Projected Employment Trends for Accountants in Georgia, 2018–2028 71
- Table 2.4. Accounting Workforce Plan..... 82
- Table 3.1. Trends in Entry-Level IT Positions at State Agencies, 2018 and 2021..... 90
- Table 3.2. Trends in Agencies That Employ the Highest Number of Entry-Level IT Positions, 2018 and 2021 91
- Table 3.3. Top Reported Job Series in Temporary IT Staffing, Statewide Contract Spending, FY 2020 and FY 2021 94
- Table 3.4. Top Reported Job Titles in Temporary IT Staffing Statewide Contract Spend, FY 2020 and FY 2021 95
- Table 3.5. Projected Employment Trends for IT Jobs in Georgia, 2018 and 2028..... 97
- Table 3.6. IT Workforce Plan 107
- Table 4.1. Trends in Social Services Program Consultant Positions, 2018 to 2021 115
- Table 4.2. Trends in Agencies That Employ the Most Social Services Program Consultants, 2018 and 2021 115
- Table 4.3. Social Services Workforce Plan 126
- Table 5.1. Trends in Procurement Positions in Georgia State Agencies, 2018 and 2021 134
- Table 5.2. Trends in Agencies That Employ the Most Purchasing/Procurement Agents, 2018 and 2021 134
- Table 5.3. Interviewees Highest Current Education Level..... 143
- Table 5.4. Procurement Workforce Plan 147

List of Figures

Figure 1.1. Entry-Level Law Enforcement Positions, Education Level at Time of Hire, FY 2021. 49

Figure 1.2. Open Law Enforcement Positions by State Agency, June 2022 54

Figure 1.3. Reported Percentage of Qualified Applicants for Law Enforcement Positions by Agency, June 2022 55

Figure 2.1. Accountant Education Level at Time of Hire for State Agency Positions, FY 2021 70

Figure 2.2. Total Accounting Degree Completions, 2015–2020 by Academic Year in Georgia..... 71

Figure 2.3. Race/Ethnicity of Accounting Associate, Bachelor’s, and Master’s Program Graduates in Georgia, 2015–2020 72

Figure 2.4. Gender of Accounting Associate, Bachelor’s, and Master’s Program Graduates in Georgia, 2015–2020 73

Figure 2.5. Vacant Level 1 Accounting Positions by Agency, June 2022..... 77

Figure 2.6. Reported Percentage of Qualified Applicants for Entry-Level Accounting Positions, June 2022 78

Figure 3.1. Education Level at Time of Hire for New Entry-Level State Agency IT Employees, 2021 92

Figure 3.2. Temporary IT Staffing Statewide Contract Spending by State Agency (in \$millions), FYs 2020 and 2021 93

Figure 3.3. Reported Spending by Job Role Level, FY 2020 and FY 2021..... 96

Figure 3.4. Total IT/Cybersecurity Degree Completions, 2015–2020, by Academic Year in Georgia 98

Figure 3.5. Race/Ethnicity of IT/Cybersecurity Associate, Bachelor’s, and Master’s Program Graduates in Georgia, 2015–2020..... 98

Figure 3.6. Gender of IT/Cybersecurity Associate, Bachelor’s, and Master’s Program Graduates in Georgia, 2015–2020 99

Figure 3.7. Reported Percentage of Qualified Applicants for Entry-Level IT Positions at State Agencies 103

Figure 4.1. Social Services Program Consultant Education Level at Time of Hire, 2021 116

Figure 4.2. Total Social Services–Related Degree Completions, 2015–2020 in Georgia 117

Figure 4.3. Race/ Ethnicity of Social Services Associate, Bachelor’s, and Master’s Program Graduates in Georgia, 2015–2020..... 118

Figure 4.4. Gender of Social Services Associate, Bachelor’s, and Master’s Program Graduates in Georgia, 2015–2020	118
Figure 4.5. Reported Percentage of Hires Internal to the Agency, External to State Government, or from Another State Agency	122
Figure 5.1. Purchasing/Procurement Agent Education Level at Time of Hire, FY 2021	135
Figure 5.2. Georgia Institutions with the Most Logistics, Materials, and Supply Chain Management Degree Completions, 2015–2020	136
Figure 5.3. Total Logistics, Materials and Supply Chain Management Degree Completions, 2015–2020 by Academic Year in Georgia.....	137
Figure 5.4. Race of Logistics, Materials, and Supply Chain Management Program Graduates in Georgia, 2015–2020	137
Figure 5.5. Gender of Logistics, Materials, and Supply Chain Management Program Graduates in Georgia, 2015–2020	138
Figure 5.6. Reported Percentage of Applicants Who Were Qualified for Procurement Positions, FY 2022.....	142

Acronyms and Abbreviations Used in This Report

CGFM	Certified government financial manager
CPA	Certified public accountant
CTAE	Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education
DBHDD	Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
DCA	Georgia Department of Community Affairs
DCBOH	DeKalb County Board of Health
DCH	Georgia Department of Community Health
DCS	Georgia Department of Community Supervision
DECAL	Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
DFCS	Georgia Division of Family and Children Services
DHS	Georgia Department of Human Services
DJJ	Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice
DOAS	Georgia Department of Administrative Services
DOAS HRA	Georgia Department of Administrative Services, Human Resources Administration Division
DOE	Georgia Department of Education
DOL	Georgia Department of Labor
DOR	Georgia Department of Revenue
DOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
DNR	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
DPH	Georgia Department of Public Health
DPS	Georgia Department of Public Safety
FY	Fiscal year; state fiscal year runs July 1 to June 30
GBI	Georgia Bureau of Investigation
GDC	Georgia Department of Corrections

GDVS	Georgia Department of Veterans Service
GFC	Georgia Forestry Commission
GMC	Georgia Military College
GPSTC	Georgia Public Safety Training Center
GSP	Georgia State Patrol
GTA	Georgia Technology Authority
GVRA	Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
HR	Human resources
HS	High school
IPEDS	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System
IT	Information technology
KSAs	Knowledge, skills, and abilities
LMS	Learning management system
MCCD	Motor Carrier Compliance Division (part of the Georgia Department of Public Safety)
NICE	National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education
Pathways CSB	Pathways Center Community Service Board
P.O.S.T.	Police Officer Standards and Training
SAO	State Accounting Office for Georgia
SOC	Standard Occupational Classification System
SRTA	State Road and Tollway Authority
TCSG	Technical College System of Georgia
TRS	Teachers Retirement System of Georgia
USG	University System of Georgia
USG GT	Georgia Institute of Technology
USG Sys Off	USG System Office

Introduction

In January 2022, the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS) Human Resources Administration (HRA) established the Workforce Strategies Initiative to devise solutions to address these hiring and retention concerns. This multi-agency partnership is spearheaded by a steering committee comprising representatives from DOAS HRA, the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget, the Georgia Department of Education, the Technical College System of Georgia, and the University System of Georgia. These members are listed below. In addition, researchers from the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government attended all steering committee meetings and provided project facilitation, documentation, data analysis, and stakeholder engagement.

WORKFORCE STRATEGIES INITIATIVE STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- **Meaghan Carver**, Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget
- **Steven Ferguson**, Technical College System of Georgia
- **Chris Green**, University System of Georgia
- **Christine Greene**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Quint Hill**, University System of Georgia
- **Al Howell**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Matt Jones**, Georgia Department of Education
- **Bo McDaniel**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Patrick McKeon**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Ray Perren**, Technical College System of Georgia
- **Daniel Regenstein**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Arveeta Turner**, Georgia Department of Education

The goal of this project is to combat the challenges of recruiting and retaining people in state jobs by developing strategies to boost the workforce pipeline and promote retention. The Workforce Strategies Initiative used a four-step process to address these issues.

1. REVIEW AND ANALYZE AVAILABLE DATA

The project began with a thorough review of available data by a research team composed of staff from DOAS HRA and the Institute of Government. The team reviewed state and national workforce trends as well as specific job families.

2. SELECT PRIORITY AREAS

During the first Workforce Strategies Initiative meeting in January 2022, participants reviewed data on workforce trends and narrowed the priority for study to seven job families: procurement/ purchasing, social/human services, public safety/law, cybersecurity/IT, finance/accounting, health care, and customer service.

3. REVIEW REGIONAL TRENDS AND IDENTIFY SPECIFIC FOCAL JOBS

The research team looked at regional concentrations of state government employees and specific jobs. Within each of the seven priority job families selected in Step 2, the research team identified specific state jobs that could potentially be a focus of the Workforce Strategies Initiative.

4. SELECT PRIORITY JOBS

During the second Workforce Strategies Initiative meeting in March 2022, participants broke into small groups, each centered on one of the priority job families. Each small group selected one job as a potential focal area. The steering committee then voted to select five of the seven jobs put forward by the small groups. The following five jobs became the focus for the Workforce Strategies Initiative moving forward: procurement agents, accountants, law enforcement officers, social services program consultants, and entry-level IT/cybersecurity jobs. A four-month workforce pipeline study was conducted for each of the five identified jobs. The studies included needs assessments, strategy development and prioritization, and the creation of implementation plans. Chairs for each workgroup were selected to represent agencies with the largest share of employees in the job areas. Some workgroup members represented agencies with employees from the job family, and others represented education partners.

The Accounting Workgroup and Law Enforcement Workgroup met between May and August 2022; the IT and Social Services groups' meetings were held August–November 2022; and the Procurement Workgroup met in November 2022–January 2023. Throughout the workgroup meeting phase of this project, the steering committee met bi-weekly to discuss progress on the project. After the last Procurement Workgroup meeting, the steering committee reduced meetings to once a month.

During the second Workforce Strategies Initiative meeting, participants self-selected into one of the five workgroups. Then, the members of the steering committee recruited additional workgroup members who could provide insights and expertise. Through this process, the workgroup chairs and co-chairs were appointed.

These workgroups met three times to address workforce recruitment and retention challenges in their job area. During each workgroup's first meeting, the research team shared state workforce data for the particular job area. Each workgroup held two panel discussions with representatives from partner educational institutions and human resources professionals on supply and demand within the field. The workgroup members also brainstormed aspirations, challenges, and opportunities to address workforce challenges.

In between the first and second meeting, the research team sent out an agency questionnaire to workgroup members to get insights into the recruitment and retention of each job title. The research team also interviewed or sent a questionnaire to current employees in the priority job titles to better understand their conceptions of their job.

During the second round of workgroup meetings, the research team reported results from the questionnaire and interviews. The workgroup used this information to draft a workforce strategy plan with goals and action items specific to the priority job. Between meeting two and three, the steering committee narrowed the strategies identified during the second meeting to those within the scope of this project. During the round of workgroup meetings, workgroup members volunteered to lead each action item, and the groups decided whether each item could be completed in the short or long term.

This report lays out the data shared with the workgroups, their individual workforce strategy plans, and additional insights that were discovered during this process.

GEORGIA WORKFORCE STRATEGIES INITIATIVE



LAW ENFORCEMENT WORKGROUP



Table of Contents, Law Enforcement Workgroup

- Letter from the Law Enforcement Workgroup Co-Chairs 44
- Law Enforcement Workgroup Introduction 45
 - Law Enforcement Workgroup Members 45
- Needs Assessment and Identification of Opportunities and Barriers 46
 - Environmental Scan 52
 - Baseline Recruitment Questionnaire 53
 - Interviews with Current Employees 55
 - Descriptive Statistics 56
 - New Employee Themes 56
 - Experienced Employee Themes 57
 - Overall Themes 57
 - Implications of Interview Results 58
- Strategy Development and Prioritization 59
- Implementation Plan 59
 - Measures of Progress 62
 - Other Recommendations 63
- Conclusion 63

Letter from the Law Enforcement Workgroup Co-Chairs

Dear Law Enforcement Workgroup members, partners, and stakeholders,

We are excited to share the Law Enforcement Workgroup report with you. Workforce development is a top issue for our state, and a stable law enforcement and public safety workforce impacts every aspect of our communities, including workers, families, employers, and our economy. Over the past year, this Law Enforcement Workgroup has taken positive steps to better understand our state's workforce needs and develop a tangible plan. This work was led by a steering committee composed of a wide variety of agency leaders. The committee used data, stakeholder input, and a review of best practices to develop a plan that we can implement and that will quickly make an impact. We would also like to acknowledge our educational partners who helped make this work possible: the University System of Georgia, the Technical College System of Georgia, Georgia Military College, and the Georgia Department of Education.

The Law Enforcement Workgroup is composed of state agencies dedicated to the goal of public safety. As such, this plan will help us leverage our strong foundation and statewide assets to prepare ourselves for more positive outcomes for recruitment and retention. We cannot successfully implement this workforce development plan without your help. It will take all stakeholders getting involved and staying involved for us to create the most statewide benefit. This report includes recommended actions for state leaders on strategies that are outside the ability of the workgroup to implement. We appreciate the support of our state partners in moving these issues forward. We appreciate the work of the partners on the Law Enforcement Workgroup in developing this plan and for doing their part to implement our shared strategies.

Let's get to work Georgia!

Chris Wigginton, Executive Director, Georgia Public Safety Training Center

John Melvin, Assistant Director, Georgia Bureau of Investigation

Workgroup Chairs

Law Enforcement Workgroup Introduction

The Law Enforcement Workgroup, composed of representatives from interested state agencies, DOAS HRA, and the Institute of Government, was formed after the March 2022 Workforce Strategies Initiative steering committee meeting. The workgroup was led by Chris Wigginton, executive director of Georgia Public Safety Training Center, and John Melvin from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. Following the preliminary efforts of the Workforce Strategies Initiative in spring 2022, which are summarized in the first section of this report, the first workforce pipeline study began in May 2022 with law enforcement and public safety officers certified through Police Officer Standards and Training Council (P.O.S.T.).

The Law Enforcement Workgroup met three times during summer 2022 to conduct a workforce pipeline study of entry-level law enforcement positions and develop strategies to boost interest in law enforcement and increase employment. During the first meeting, the workgroup conducted a needs assessment and identified opportunities, barriers, and aspirations. During the second meeting, the workgroup established goal areas and brainstormed and prioritized strategies. In the final meeting, the workgroup finalized its implementation plan and identified the action items it would work on over the subsequent 12 months.

LAW ENFORCEMENT WORKGROUP MEMBERS

Chairs

- **Chris Wigginton**, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
- **John Melvin**, Georgia Bureau of Investigation

Members

- **Dave Ayers**, University of West Georgia
- **Tina Bufford**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Barbara Dunn**, Georgia Forestry Commission
- **Cheryl Greathouse**, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
- **Katrina Hall**, Georgia Department of Community Supervision
- **Lenora Harris**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Pamela Hill**, Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice
- **Bob Holley**, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
- **Shondrena Hudson-Huley**, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
- **Chris Hughes**, Georgia Piedmont Technical College
- **Susan Isaac**, Georgia Military College
- **Monique Jenkins**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Cindy Jones**, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
- **Josh Lamb**, Georgia State Patrol

LAW ENFORCEMENT WORKGROUP MEMBERS, CONTINUED

- **Matt Littleton**, Georgia Department of Revenue
- **Sandra Martin**, Georgia Department of Education
- **Jeff Miller**, Technical College System of Georgia
- **Michael Nail**, Georgia Department of Community Supervision
- **Andrea Pass**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Kate Pope**, Georgia Military College
- **Dan Roach**, Georgia Environmental Protection Division
- **Lorri Smith**, Georgia Department of Public Safety
- **Connie Spruill**, Georgia Forestry Commission
- **Betsy Thomas**, Georgia Department of Corrections
- **Alan Watson**, Georgia Department of Corrections
- **Philip Visha**, Georgia Department of Corrections
- **Jennifer Ziifle**, Technical College System of Georgia

Needs Assessment and Identification of Opportunities and Barriers

Table 1.1 depicts trends in 2018 and 2021 for six entry-level law enforcement positions. Overall, declines in employee counts and high turnover rates have demonstrated a need for increased recruitment and retention efforts. All positions except Public Safety Cadet 1 experienced a decrease in employee count from June 2018 to June 2021.

Table 1.1. Trends in Six Law Enforcement Entry-Level Positions, FY 2018 and FY 2021

Agency	Job	June 2018 Employee Count	June 2021 Employee Count	Percent Change	FY 2021 Turnover Rate	FY 2021 Hires/ Rehires	FY 2021 Separations
Georgia Department of Community Supervision	Community Supervision Officer 1	292	168	-42.5%	20.4%	72	32
Department of Juvenile Justice	Probation Officer 1	69	51	-26.1%	9.3%	1	5
Georgia Department of Public Safety (DPS)	Trooper Cadet	80	35	-56.3%	156.2%	73	38
DPS, Motor Carrier Compliance Division	Public Safety Cadet 1	14	28	100%	20.8%	18	4
Georgia Department of Natural Resources	Conservation Ranger 1	31	8	-74.2%	39.6%	10	3
Georgia Department of Corrections & Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice	Correctional Officer 1	872	504	-42.2%	159.2%	1,047	878

Source: Georgia Department of Administrative Services, Human Resources Administration Division, FY 2021 internal data

For each of the six positions, minimum qualifications such as education, age, and appearance (e.g., facial hair, visible tattoos, etc.) were assessed via information available on agency websites and presented to the group.

The workgroup also looked at labor market projections. The overall labor market data, shown in Table 1.2, demonstrates that demand for these positions is strong.

Table 1.2. Projected Georgia Law Enforcement Positions, FY 2018–FY 2028

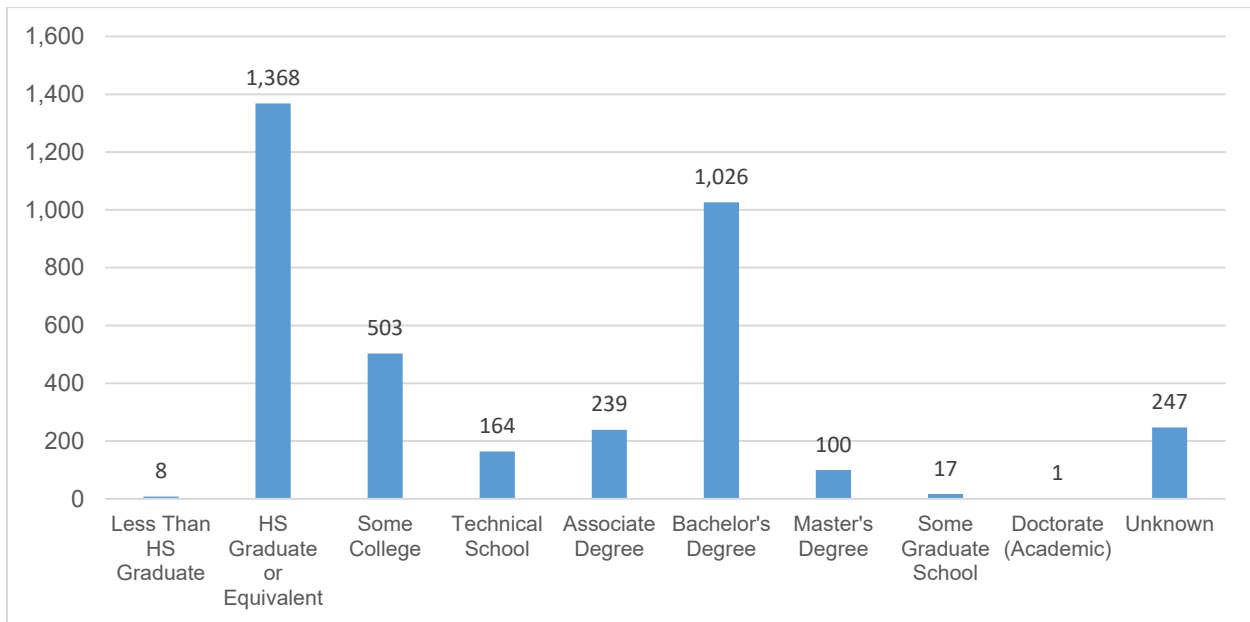
SOC	2018 Base Employment	2028 Projected Employment	Percent Change in Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Labor Force Exits	Occupational Transfers	Annual Occupational Openings
33-3051 Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officer	22,210	24,800	11.7%	1.1%	570	1,080	1,910
33-3031 Fish and Game Wardens	200	190	-5.4%	-0.6%	10	10	20
21-1092 Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment Specialists	2,860	2,940	3.0%	0.3%	60	180	250
33-3012 Correctional Officers and Jailers	15,280	14,960	-2.1%	-0.2%	580	760	1,310

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Georgia Labor Market Explorer Occupational Outlooks

Note: SOC = Standard Occupational Classification System code

Understanding educational requirements of entry-level positions was of particular interest to this workgroup for building a workforce pipeline with educational partners. Figure 1.1 depicts the education level of entry-level law enforcement positions at their time of hire. Most entry-level employees have a high school diploma, followed by a bachelor's degree.

Figure 1.1. Entry-Level Law Enforcement Positions, Education Level at Time of Hire, FY 2021



Source: Georgia Department of Administrative Services, Human Resources Administration Division, Team Georgia Careers

Note: Unknown = a hire who did not use Team Georgia Careers, the applicant tracking system for positions within Georgia state government

The challenge for the workgroup was creating a pipeline that targets high school graduates. This objective informed the workgroup's decision to create a disqualifiers document to hand out to career centers and high school counselors. See Appendix A for a copy of this document.

As part of the needs assessment, the workgroup heard from two panels of experts: one focused on employers and the other on education partners. The workgroup first met with a panel of representatives from state agencies to learn more about what is working in state efforts to recruit and retain law enforcement/public safety personnel. State presenters also shared perspectives on challenges, barriers, and potential opportunities.

EMPLOYER PANEL

PANEL MEMBERS

- **Barbara Dunn**, Human Resource Director, Georgia Forestry Commission
- **Cheryl Greathouse**, Deputy Director, Georgia Public Safety Training Center
- **Major Bob Holley**, Special Operations, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
- **Shondrena Hudson-Huley**, Human Resource Director, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
- **Major Josh Lamb**, Chief of Staff for the Commissioner's Office, Georgia Department of Public Safety
- **Betsy Thomas**, Human Resource Director, Georgia Department of Corrections
- **Phillip Visha**, Job Evaluation Unit Manager, Georgia Department of Corrections
- **Alan Watson**, Chief of Staff, Georgia Department of Corrections

WHAT IS WORKING

- Current employees are the best recruiters
- Social media

BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- Compensation
- Competition from local and federal governments
- Negative public perception

OPPORTUNITIES AND IDEAS

- Allow covered tattoos
- Assign officers closer to home
- Expand partnerships with the Technical College System of Georgia, the University System of Georgia, the Georgia Department of Education, and Georgia Military College for training and recruitment activities

Next, the workgroup heard from an Education Partners Panel representing the supply side. Panelists discussed existing programs, current services, and future opportunities for expanded programs and partnerships.

EDUCATION PARTNERS PANEL

PANEL MEMBERS

- **Dave Ayers**, Assistant Professor, Department of Civic Engagement and Public Service, University of West Georgia, representing the University System of Georgia
- **Chief Chris Hughes**, Georgia Piedmont Technical College Police Chief, Technical College System of Georgia
- **Dr. Susan Isaac**, Senior Vice President, Chief Academic Officer and Dean of Faculty, Georgia Military College
- **Sandra Martin**, Program Specialist, Georgia Department of Education; Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education
- **Chris Wigginton**, Executive Director, Georgia Public Safety Training Center

PROGRAMS IN PLACE

- **Technical College System of Georgia**
 - Law enforcement academies – five programs located in different regions of the state
 - New HOPE Career Grant for law enforcement
- **University System of Georgia**
 - Criminology students to go through Elite Program to complete Basic Mandate law enforcement training program during the summer at University of West Georgia. Students will then graduate with P.O.S.T. certification
 - A University of West Georgia program that combines a bachelor's education with law enforcement officer training
- **Georgia Department of Education**
 - Programs in middle and high school
 - Career pathways and career technical student organizations
 - Certifications
- **Georgia Military College**
 - Degree offerings for law enforcement, additional support for students in law enforcement programs (scholarships, discounts, grants)

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- **Technical College System of Georgia**
 - Credit hour transferability
- **University System of Georgia**
 - Professional doctoral program for those who go through command college
- **Georgia Department of Education**
 - Create new pathways
 - Use needs to inform school system pathways
- **Georgia Military College**
 - Criminal justice degree that is a bachelor's in applied science

- Public Safety Academy to get P.O.S.T. certification
- Hybrid models for earning degree and P.O.S.T. certification in the same time period
- Center for Leadership, a new facility to develop leaders for law enforcement
- Law enforcement officer transition program for veterans and those leaving the military

The workgroup discussed career pipeline gaps with respect to entry-level jobs for 18–20-year-olds in the law enforcement career pathway. The group brainstormed the following potential options for interested applicants in this age range:

- National Guard
- Security guards
- Administrative roles
- Dual enrollment
- Internships (paid)
- Evidence-receiving technicians at GBI
- Underage alcohol/tobacco sting
- Georgia Tech public safety officers (quasi-security roles)
- Dispatcher/EMT
- Working with children in the Department of Juvenile Justice (cadet, food service, administration, etc.)

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

The workgroup conducted an environmental scan to identify opportunities, barriers, and aspirations related to recruiting and retaining employees in law enforcement positions.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Combine recruitment efforts statewide.
- Establish recruitment days with all partners.
- Develop stronger partnerships as a state with the military.
- Reward employees when they reach educational milestones.
- Benchmark state benefits and compensation packages with other state and local agencies.

BARRIERS

- Pay and compensation
- Negative public perception
- Lack of step-raises in pay scale grades over time
- Prior life choices that disqualify candidates
- Candidates with different expectations

ASPIRATIONS

- Develop marketing tools as a state.
- Develop a pay scale and steps.
- Create a summit for middle and high school students to learn about law enforcement careers with the state.
- Create regional middle and high school career days.
- Have a tuition reimbursement program for professional development.

BASELINE RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

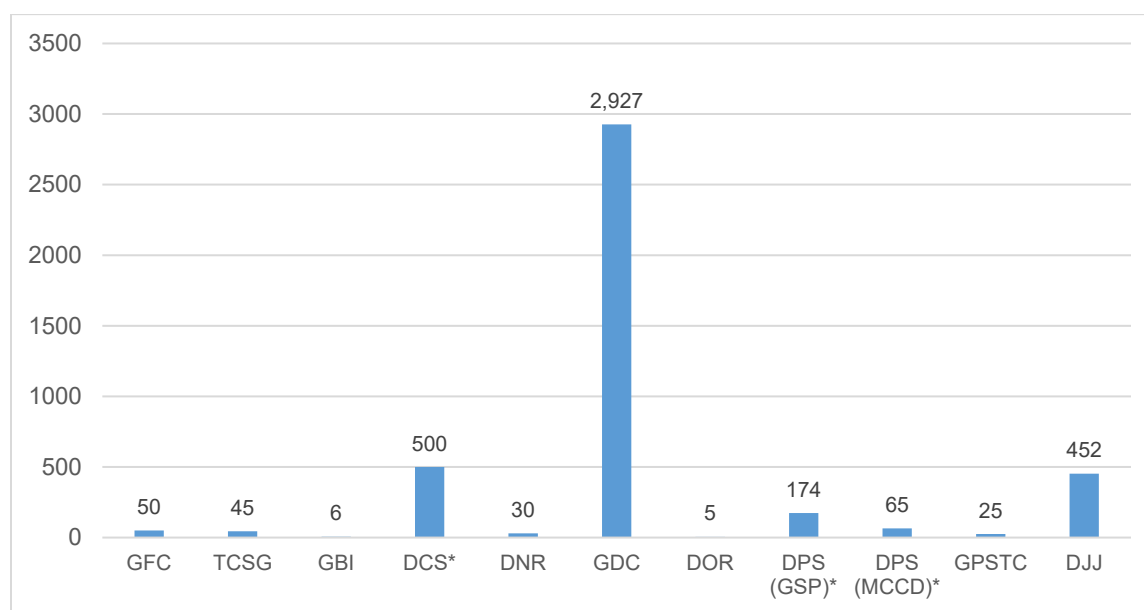
After the first workgroup meeting, a questionnaire was sent to all participating state agencies to gather more detailed baseline information and to ask follow-up questions from the first meeting. Eleven state agencies responded to the questionnaire: the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC); the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG); the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI); the Georgia Department of Community Supervision (DCS); the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR); the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC); the Georgia Department of Revenue (DOR), the Georgia Department of Public Safety (DPS), Georgia State Patrol (GSP); DPS, Motor Carrier Compliance Division (MCCD); the Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC); and the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).

The questionnaire first asked the agencies to identify their best recruitment strategy. The most commonly reported recruitment strategies were social media (e.g., Facebook referrals) and

digital platforms (e.g., online recruiting). Several agencies reported that employee referrals, word of mouth, and networking were useful for recruiting. Others reported school/college partnerships, internships, ride-alongs, and job fairs. One agency reported that it had recently developed a Recruitment Unit. Another agency had developed a human resources tracking tool that can be used to track recruitment sources.

The questionnaire also asked the agencies to estimate the number of open entry-level law enforcement positions they had as of June 1, 2022. Figure 1.2 shows the results. The GDC is the outlier of the sample, with far more open positions than any other participating agency.

Figure 1.2. Open Law Enforcement Positions by State Agency, June 2022

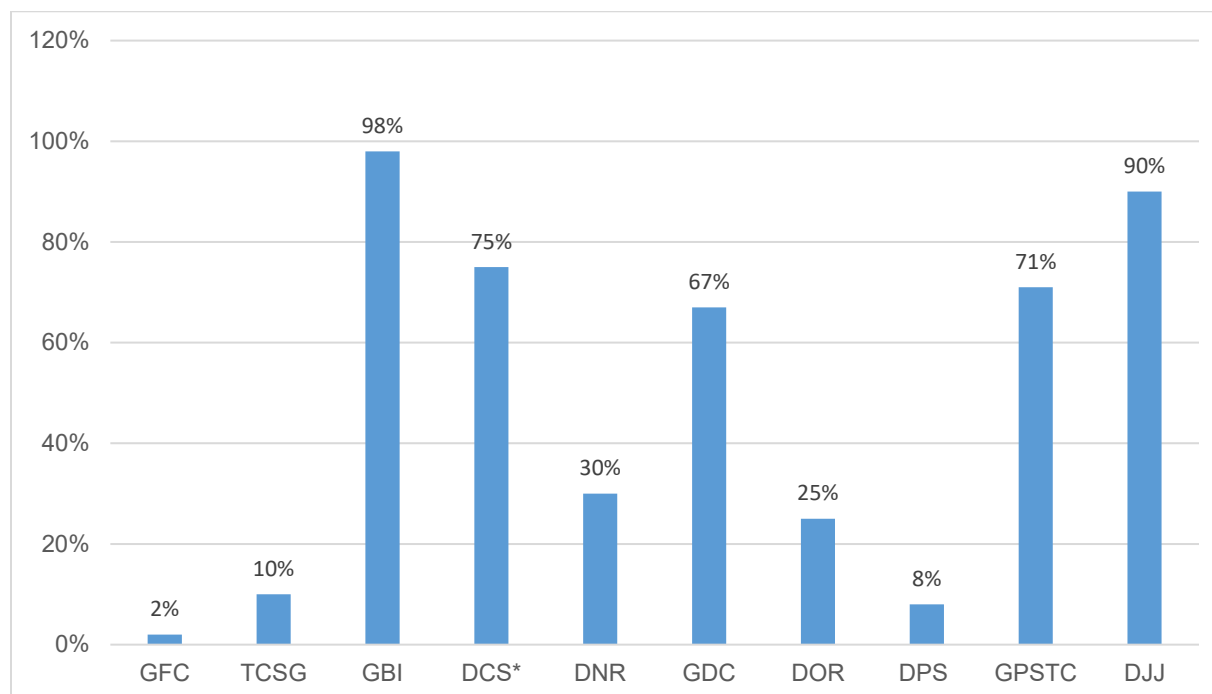


*Note: Of the 500 open positions at DCS, 250 are funded. DPS positions are based on appropriations. GFC = Georgia Forestry Commission; TCSG = Technical College System of Georgia; GBI = Georgia Bureau of Investigation; DCS = Georgia Department of Community Supervision; DNR = Georgia Department of Natural Resources; GDC = Georgia Department of Corrections; DOR = Georgia Department of Revenue; DPS = Georgia Department of Public Safety; GSP = Georgia State Patrol; MCCD = Motor Carrier Compliance Division; GPSTC = Georgia Public Safety Training Center; DJJ = Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice

The questionnaire also asked the law enforcement agencies to estimate the percentage of applicants they receive for entry-level positions who meet minimum qualifications for the position.

Figure 1.3 shows the reported percentage of qualified applicants for law enforcement positions at each agency. The responses ranged widely, but half of the participating agencies reported that most applicants were qualified for the positions for which they applied.

Figure 1.3. Reported Percentage of Qualified Applicants for Law Enforcement Positions by Agency, June 2022



*Note: Of the 500 open positions at DCS, 250 are funded. GFC = Georgia Forestry Commission; TCSG = Technical College System of Georgia; GBI = Georgia Bureau of Investigation; DCS = Georgia Department of Community Supervision; DNR = Georgia Department of Natural Resources; GDC = Georgia Department of Corrections; DOR = Georgia Department of Revenue; DPS = Georgia Department of Public Safety; GPSTC = Georgia Public Safety Training Center; DJJ = Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice

Finally, the questionnaire asked agencies a series of questions related to cataloguing disqualifiers from employment consideration. Using their answers and crosschecking with information on agency websites, the Law Enforcement Workgroup compiled an extensive table that includes disqualifiers for each agency. This list, provided in Appendix A, will be shared with high school students to inform them of activities that could disqualify them from a career in law enforcement.

INTERVIEWS WITH CURRENT EMPLOYEES

In addition to the agency questionnaire, researchers from the Institute of Government conducted qualitative interviews with current law enforcement officers to gain their perspectives and to complement the DOAS labor market data and information collected from employers. The Institute of Government’s research team interviewed 18 employees from seven different agencies between June 3 and June 10, 2021. The semi-structured interviews were conducted either in person or via Zoom.

The participating agencies and job titles of those interviewed are listed below:

- DCS: 2 Probation Officers
- GFC: 2 Ranger/Wildland Firefighters
- GBI: 2 Special Agents
- DNR: 2 Conservation Rangers
- DPS: 2 Troopers and 2 Officers with the Motor Carrier Compliance Division
- GDC: 3 Correctional Officers
- GPSTC: 3 Public Safety Trainers

For each represented agency, the research team spoke with at least one person who had one to two years of experience and one person who had five or more years of experience. The interviews focused on motivations for becoming a law enforcement officer and for staying in the law enforcement field, what the interviewees value about the position, and changes they would like to see to improve recruitment and retention.

Descriptive Statistics

The eight participants with one to two years of experience had a mean age of 33.6. Ten participants had four or more years of experience, with a mean age of 34.2, although one participant's age is unknown. Of the latter group, six participants had five years of experience, one had six years, and one had 12 years. Participants also gave their highest level of education. For eight of the participants, a bachelor's degree was their highest level of education, five of which were in criminal justice. Two had a master's degree, one in organizational development and one in criminal justice. Two participants had an associate degree, and a high school diploma was the highest level of education for six interviewees.

New Employee Themes

Of the eight interviewees with one to two years of experience, four reported having previously worked in law enforcement/public safety/the military. Two reported that their current position was their first career job. One participant had previously worked in the health care sector, and one had been an intern with the agency but had worked as a teacher for one year. Most reported doing their own online research about the positions, and three participants reported that the benefits package was a significant recruitment factor.

When asked where they saw themselves in the next five to 10 years, five participants stated they would like to stay with their current agency and climb the ranks (e.g., corporal, sergeant, chief ranger, lieutenant). Two participants stated they would like to be in specialized units within

their current agency. One participant indicated they would like to move to the federal level but would stay and climb the ranks otherwise.

Experienced Employee Themes

Of the 10 interviewees with four to 12 years of experience, five participants were previously in law enforcement, with one stating they had been a dispatcher before their current role. Two participants were in the military before joining their state agency. Two participants reported that their current position was their first career job, and one participant was in another occupation for many years before joining. Of the eight experienced employees, seven stated that the benefits package played a significant role in their decision to join. Three participants reported that they were contacted or recruited to join their current agency.

When asked where they saw themselves in five to 10 years, all 10 experienced employees indicated that they intend to stay at their current agency. Several stated that they plan to retire with their agency. Most indicated that they either plan to continue climbing the ranks (switching units if needed) or will transition into training.

Overall Themes

Many of the interviewees reported that they had always been interested in law enforcement/public safety. Similarly, 10 of the 18 reported that family members currently work or previously worked in law enforcement/public safety. Five participants reported that they had previously served in the military. Two participants reported not always being interested in the field but said it was a viable career option.

Below were the most commonly reported barriers to recruitment and retaining law enforcement employees:

- Lack of exposure (“people don’t know what we do”)
- Relocation (may have to move for a position, particularly for career advancement)
- Compensation and competition from other agencies
- Requirements for obtaining the job (i.e., physical fitness, education, polygraph, drug testing)
- Personal mindset and sacrifice (e.g., “putting lives on the line,” “may not see family as much”)
- Stigma and public perception of law enforcement and public safety
- Transparency in job expectations and duties (i.e., job is different than expected)

When asked about ways to improve recruitment, nearly every participant suggested “increasing exposure.” Strategies for exposure include better recruitment videos, getting to people at younger ages, day camps, shadowing programs, increasing awareness of ride-alongs, interactive events, job fairs, social media, community outreach, and “getting more creative.”

Interviewees suggested the following additional recruitment/retention strategies:

- Increase salaries and offer better retirement/pensions.
- Offer incentives for being on-call, extra off-duty details, and an incentive scale for additional credentials.
- Provide commensurate compensation for lateral transfers.
- Provide job trees for progression.
- Increase the availability of trainings.
- Change the facial hair policy.

Finally, participants overwhelmingly reported that they like helping others. Others reported that they enjoy “meeting different people” and “bonding” with them. Participants also said that they appreciate the variety in their roles, the “freedom” it offers, and “doing something different every day.”

Implications of Interview Results

The high number of current employees with prior military experience and/or family members in law enforcement or public safety suggests a potential need to increase recruitment efforts among those that do not fit into these groups. The interviews also revealed the need for increased exposure across all agencies, with opportunities to emphasize the diversity of roles within law enforcement and public safety. Additionally, highlighting career pathways for

adolescents and young adults before they turn 21 could help with recruitment. While these findings are not generalizable given the sample size, they offer unique insights from the perspective of those currently in these roles.

Strategy Development and Prioritization

The workgroup members used the data presented and needs assessment information collected to help them identify larger goal areas, develop strategies to accomplish these goals, and then prioritize the strategies. Four major goal themes were created through a facilitated process:

1. Marketing and Branding
2. State-Level Recruiting
3. Partnerships and Collaborations
4. Career Development

The workgroup then developed short- and long-term strategies for each goal. The strategies were reviewed by the steering committee before being finalized.

Implementation Plan

The workgroup then created an implementation plan with action items for each strategy and goal. Workgroup members went through a facilitated discussion to designate each item as either short or long term, where short term was defined as within the next 12 months. Each item was then assigned a project lead. The final Law Enforcement Workforce Plan is summarized in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3. Law Enforcement Workforce Plan

Goals	Strategies	Action Items	Timeline	
Marketing and Branding	1.1	Develop a law enforcement and public safety social media campaign.	1.1.1 Learn from GDC pilot project on how to use social media to target potential recruits.	Short
	1.2	Produce videos to promote jobs in law enforcement and public safety across state government.	1.2.1 DOAS will develop videos as part of its workforce development plan. 1.2.2 Create day-in-the-life videos featuring newer hires and agency head interviews.	Short and Long Short and Long
Enterprise Recruiting	2.1	Transfer records of potential applicants to agencies that best meet the applicants' qualifications.	2.1.1 Create a career workgroup to share with applicants.	Short
			2.1.2 Refine entry-level job qualifications.	Short and Long
			2.1.3 DOAS will highlight and promote sharing of applicants across agencies.	Short and Long
			2.1.4 Leverage state application tools.	Long
	2.2	Create workflow tools in NextGen human resources systems to have more centralized recruiting features and to share applicants.	2.2.1 DOAS will include specifications in the NextGen procurement process.	Long
2.3	Develop education programs to help middle and high school students understand actions that may disqualify them from law enforcement jobs.	2.3.1 Provide a list of disqualifiers to career centers and Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) programs.	Short	
		2.3.2 Discuss these programs in videos.	Short and Long	
		2.3.3 Make information available at job fairs and career days.	Short and Long	
2.4	Create and maintain state law enforcement partnerships.	2.4.1 DOAS will facilitate regular law enforcement meetings, track statistics, and check in quarterly.	Short	
Partnerships and Collaborations	3.1	Establish bi-annual multi-agency career fairs.	3.1.1 Partner with DOE CTAE for a high school career fair.	Short
			3.1.2 Create regional career fairs with Georgia Military College (GMC), the TCSG, and other education partners.	Short and Long
	3.2	Expand partnerships with US military branches and programs.	3.2.1 Expand the DNR partnership with the military to other law enforcement agencies.	Short
	3.3	Expand partnerships between high schools and postsecondary education.	3.3.1 Meet with university career centers.	Long
			3.3.2 Create opportunities for high school counselors to learn more about these jobs (such as through a Zoom panel).	Short
			3.3.3 Increase the number of CTAE articulation agreements with the TCSG, the USG, and GMC.	Long
3.3.4 Expand and market ride-alongs.			Short and Long	

Table 1.2. P.O.S.T.-Certified Officers Workforce Plan, Continued

Career Development	4.1	Provide and fund work-related professional development, including education, certifications, and degree programs.	4.1.1 Embed P.O.S.T. certification programs or public safety certificates into associate and bachelor’s degree programs (pilot at the University of West Georgia and Georgia Military College).	Short
			4.1.2 Market the new HOPE Career Grant for law enforcement.	Short
	4.2	Develop career pathways for law enforcement, including entry-level to career law enforcement officers.	4.2.1 Develop and market an entry-level law enforcement pathway for 18–21-year-olds.	Long
			4.2.2 Enhance recruitment messaging and onboarding programs (also relates to material and messaging that is shared with HS and college students; videos)..	Long

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

MARKETING AND BRANDING

- Learn from the Georgia Department of Corrections pilot about how to use social media to target potential recruits.
- Produce day-in-the-life videos with newer hires that include agency head interviews.

STATE-LEVEL RECRUITING

- Create a career workgroup to share applicants.
- Provide a list of disqualifications to high school and college career centers, academies, and CTAE programs.
- Make disqualifiers information available at job fairs and career days.
- DOAS will facilitate regular law enforcement workgroup meetings, track statistics, and check in quarterly.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

- Partner with the Georgia Department of Education’s CTAE division for a high school career fair or summit.
- Create a regional career fair with Georgia Military College, the TCSG, and other higher education partners.
- Create opportunities for CTAE teachers and school counselors to learn more about law enforcement job opportunities in state government.
- Expand the Department of Natural Resources partnership with the military to other law enforcement agencies.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- Embed law enforcement certification programs or public safety certification into associate and bachelor's degree programs (based on the pilot at the University of West Georgia and Georgia Military College).
- Market the new HOPE career grants for law enforcement.

MEASURES OF PROGRESS

The workgroup agreed to track its activities using the following measures of progress:

1. Number of qualified applicants for entry-level law enforcement jobs
2. Number of entry-level law enforcement hires staying in state government for more than 12 months after hire
3. Number of cross-agency career fairs and information sessions annually
4. Number of state agency partnerships with high schools
5. Number of state agency partnerships with higher education institutions
6. Number of referrals from social media and internet marketing efforts
7. Number of law enforcement agencies working with US military programs and partners (e.g., ArmyPays program)
8. Number of hires into state law enforcement from US military partnership programs
9. Number of articulation agreements between DOE CTAE and postsecondary institutions
10. Number of P.O.S.T. certification programs incorporated into associate and bachelor's degree programs
 - a. Basic Mandate course approved by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)
11. Number of internal hires from identified entry-level pathway jobs

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

During the planning process, several ideas and strategies were identified that were outside the scope of the workgroup's charge or would require other partners beyond those in the workgroup to be successful. The following are the workgroup's additional recommendations to DOAS and other state leaders.

1. Research compensation strategies that would help improve retention.
 - Research longevity raises and step increase options.
 - Research linking compensation step increases to the earnings of additional credentials.
 - Expand the 25-year retirement policy to more law enforcement agencies.
2. Research compensation strategies that would improve recruitment.
 - Research state policy related to recruitment incentives.
 - Conduct a total compensation benchmarking study.
3. Promote the federal government public-service student loan forgiveness program.

Conclusion

The Law Enforcement Workgroup agreed to continue to meet quarterly to make progress on the strategies identified in the plan. The co-chairs of the group, Chris Wigginton and John Melvin, agreed to continue to lead this group with the support of DOAS HRA.

GEORGIA WORKFORCE STRATEGIES INITIATIVE



ACCOUNTING WORKGROUP



Table of Contents, Accounting Workgroup

- Letter from the Accounting Workgroup Co-Chairs..... 66
- Accounting Workgroup Introduction..... 67
 - Accounting Workgroup Members..... 67
- Needs Assessment and Identification of Opportunities and Barriers..... 68
 - Environmental Scan..... 75
 - Baseline Recruitment Questionnaire 76
 - Interviews with Current State Accountants 78
 - Descriptive Statistics..... 79
 - Overall Themes 79
 - Implications of Interview Results 80
- Strategy Development and Prioritization..... 80
- Implementation Plan 81
 - Measures of Progress..... 83
 - Other Recommendations 84
- Conclusion 84

Letter from the Accounting Workgroup Co-Chairs

Dear Accounting Workgroup members, partners, and stakeholders,

Hiring and retaining qualified and enthusiastic individuals for state accounting positions has been challenging for many agencies in recent years. This workgroup provided agencies the opportunity to share those challenges, find common ground, and collaborate on recruitment strategies. After months of diligent research and collaboration, we are thrilled to share this accounting workforce strategies report.

This report lays out the goals and strategies we considered carefully over many months of meetings and deliberation. It reflects the research shared with the workgroup, the information collected from our state accounting workforce members, and the vast array of new knowledge that comes to light when everyone has a seat at the table.

This work was a group effort that included representatives from education partners and the state agencies that see these accounting workforce challenges firsthand. One of the most exciting things to come out of this workgroup was cross-agency collaboration. This effort forms a solid foundation for more positive recruitment and retention outcomes to come. To see this project come to fruition, all stakeholders must stay involved and committed. We look forward to the continuation of this workgroup and tackling state accounting workforce challenges. We invite everyone to continue coming to the table by attending our quarterly Accounting Workgroup meetings.

Kris Martins, Deputy State Accounting Officer for Financial Reporting, State Accounting Office of Georgia

Monique Simmons, Chief Financial Officer, State Road and Tollway Authority

Workgroup Chairs

Accounting Workgroup Introduction

The Accounting Workgroup, composed of representatives from interested state agencies, DOAS HRA, and the Institute of Government, was formed after the March 2022 Workforce Strategies Initiative steering committee meeting. The workgroup was led by Kris Martins, the deputy state accounting officer for financial reporting for the State Accounting Office of Georgia, and Monique Simmons, the chief financial officer for the State Road and Tollway Authority.

The Accounting Workgroup conducted a workforce pipeline study of entry-level accounting positions and developed strategies to boost interest in accounting and increase employment. To meet this goal, the workgroup met three times over the summer of 2022. During the first meeting, the workgroup conducted a needs assessment and identified opportunities, barriers, and aspirations. During the second meeting, the workgroup identified goal areas and brainstormed and prioritized strategies. In the final meeting, the workgroup finalized its implementation plan and identified the action items it would work on over the subsequent 12 months.

ACCOUNTING WORKGROUP MEMBERS

Chairs

- **Kris Martins**, State Accounting Office of Georgia
- **Monique Simmons**, State Road and Tollway Authority

Members

- **Danny Arflin**, Georgia Department of Defense
- **Connie Buck**, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
- **Bobbie Davis**, State Accounting Office of Georgia
- **William Dews**, Georgia Department of Community Affairs
- **Carla Gracen**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Stephanie Green**, Georgia Department of Community Affairs
- **Penni Haberly**, Technical College System of Georgia
- **Delda Hagin**, Georgia Department of Education
- **Gerlda Hines**, State Accounting Office of Georgia
- **John Hulsey**, Carl Vinson Institute of Government
- **Monique Jenkins**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Kelly Johnson**, Georgia Department of Community Health
- **Reza Khierandish**, Clayton State University
- **Dave Lakly**, Carl Vinson Institute of Government
- **Sonya McDaniel**, Gwinnett Technical College
- **Heather Pence**, Chattahoochee Technical College

ACCOUNTING WORKGROUP MEMBERS, CONTINUED

- **Paulette Petty**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Kirkley Renwick**, Georgia Department of Transportation
- **Robin Stevens**, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
- **Bill Zisek**, Georgia Department of Human Services

Needs Assessment and Identification of Opportunities and Barriers

Table 2.1 depicts employment trends in state government accounting positions for 2018 and 2021. Note that only Accountant to Accountant-4 job codes provided by DOAS are included in this analysis. Additional employees may do the work of an accountant but are classified under a different job code. This analysis does not capture such employees. The positions shown in Table 2.1 are not intended to provide an exhaustive list.

In total, this workgroup looked at data for 165 employees. Overall, declines in employee counts and high turnover rates demonstrate a need for increased recruitment and retention efforts. In FY 2021, the turnover rate for the Accountant 1 position was 23.5%. Across all accountant positions analyzed, the total number of accountants dropped by 18 between June 2018 and June 2021.

Table 2.1. Trends in Accounting Positions at State Agencies, FY 2018 and FY 2021

Job	June 2018 Employee Count	June 2021 Employee Count	Percent Change	FY 2021 Turnover Rate	FY 2021 Hires/ Rehires	FY 2021 Separations
Accountant	1	2	100.0%	0.0%	0	0
Accountant 1	32	24	-25.0%	23.5%	8	6
Accountant 2	40	34	-15.0%	6.1%	2	2
Accountant 3	83	76	-8.4%	9.3%	7	7
Accountant 4	27	29	7.4%	15.5%	2	4
Total	183	165	-9.8%	11.8%	19	19

Source: Georgia Department of Administrative Services, Human Resources Administration Division, FY 2021 internal data

Table 2.2 depicts employment trends in FY 2018 and FY 2021 at the five state agencies that employ the most accountants (job codes FIP020–023). Overall, employee counts have fallen, with some agencies seeing high turnover rates. The need for accountant positions is not decreasing, as demonstrated by FY 2021 hires/ rehires and FY 2021 separations being equal.

Table 2.2. Trends in State Agencies Employing the Most Accountants, FY 2018 and FY 2021

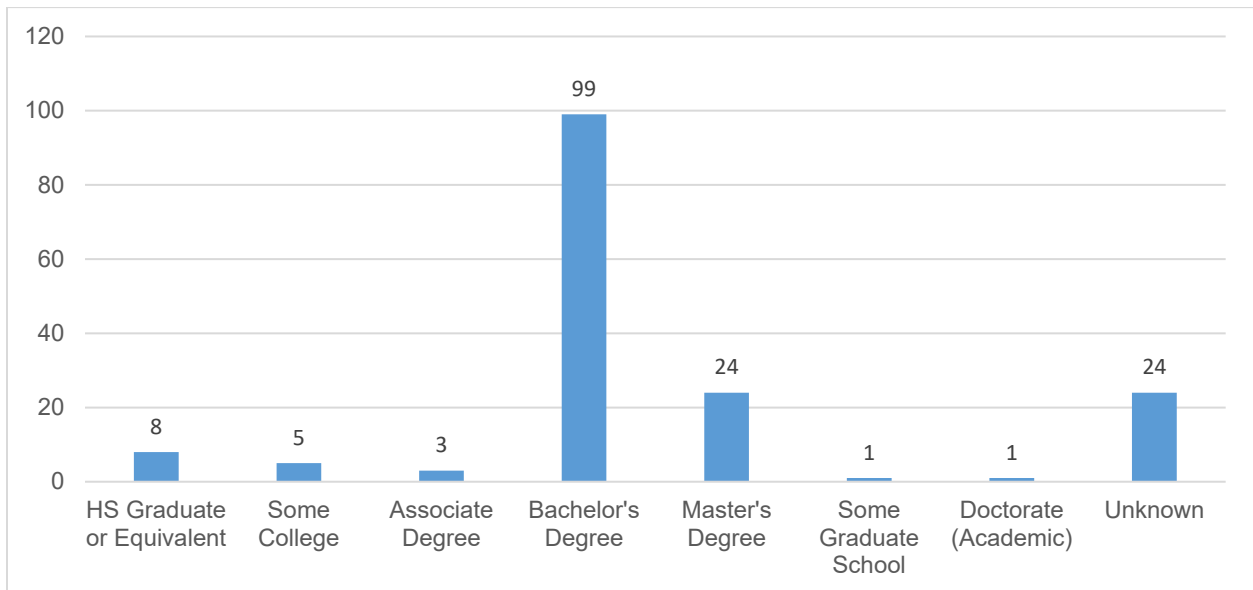
Job	June 2018 Employee Count	June 2021 Employee Count	Percent Change	FY 2021 Turnover Rate	FY 2021 Hires/Rehires	FY 2021 Separations
All-Agency Total (40)	183	165	-9.8%	11.8%	19	19
DOT	25	20	-20.0%	14.8%	2	3
DCH	17	17	0.0%	11.6%	4	2
DHS	33	14	-57.6%	30.3%	3	5
DCA	9	10	11.1%	0.0%	0	0
DOE	9	10	11.1%	0.0%	0	0
All Other Agencies	107	95	-11.2%	10.1%	10	9

Source: Georgia Department of Administrative Services, Human Resources Administration Division, FY 2021 internal data

Note: DOT = Georgia Department of Transportation; DCH = Georgia Department of Community Health; DHS = Georgia Department of Human Services; DCA = Georgia Department of Community Affairs; DOE = Georgia Department of Education

The workgroup was interested in developing a direct workforce pipeline into accounting positions. Figure 2.1 shows the highest level of education of new accountants at state agencies in FY 2021 at the time of hire. The data indicate that most entry-level hires have a bachelor’s degree.

Figure 2.1. Accountant Education Level at Time of Hire for State Agency Positions, FY 2021



Source: Georgia Department of Administrative Services, Human Resources Administration Division, Team Georgia Careers

Note: Unknown = a hire who did not use Team Georgia Careers, the applicant tracking system for positions within Georgia state government

The workgroup also examined how the accounting field is expected to change in the coming years. Table 2.3 shows projected employment trends for accounting positions in Georgia from 2018 to 2028. The overall labor market data show that demand for accountants will continue to grow.

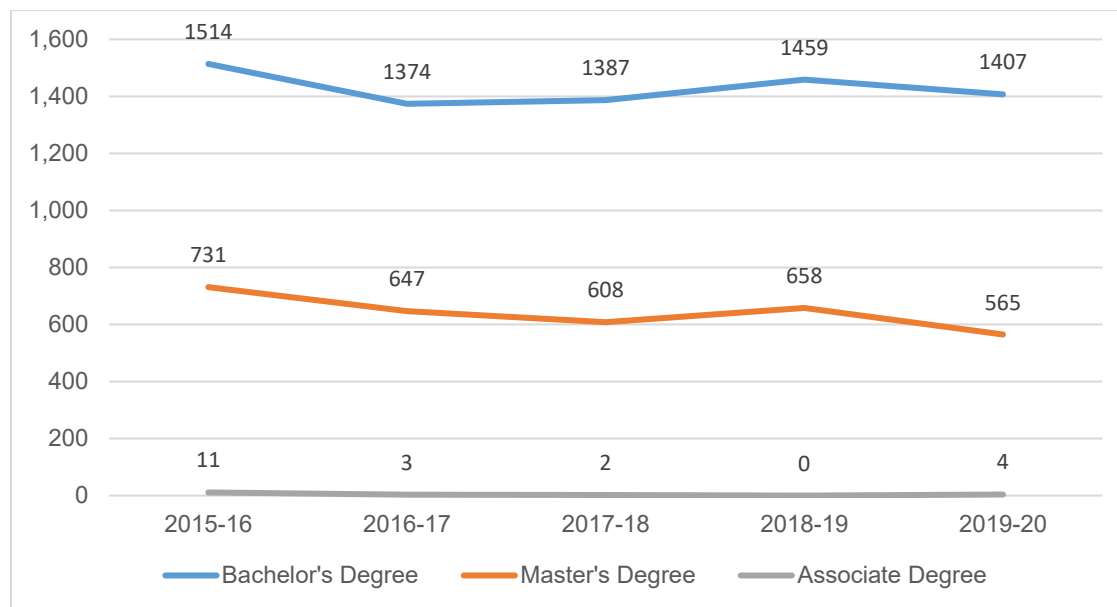
Table 2.3. Projected Employment Trends for Accountants in Georgia, 2018–2028

	2018 Base Employment	2028 Projected Employment	Percent Change in Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Labor Force Exits	Occupational Transfers	Annual Occupational Openings
Accountants and Auditors	39,410	47,670	21.0%	1.9%	1,230	2,830	4,890
Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks	39,170	40,990	4.7%	0.5%	2,440	2,230	4,850

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Georgia Labor Market Explorer Occupational Outlooks

Figure 2.2 shows the number of associate, bachelor’s, and master’s degrees in accounting awarded by Georgia institutions each school year from 2015 to 2020. Overall, degrees awarded over the five-year period declined slightly. A total of 2,256 degrees were produced in 2016, dropping to 1,976 in 2020. A total of 1,407 bachelor’s degrees in accounting were awarded in 2020, down from 1,514 in 2016. The number of master’s graduates in 2020 decreased to 565 from 731 in 2016. Only 20 accounting associate degrees were awarded from 2015 to 2020, with just three institutions awarding such degrees.

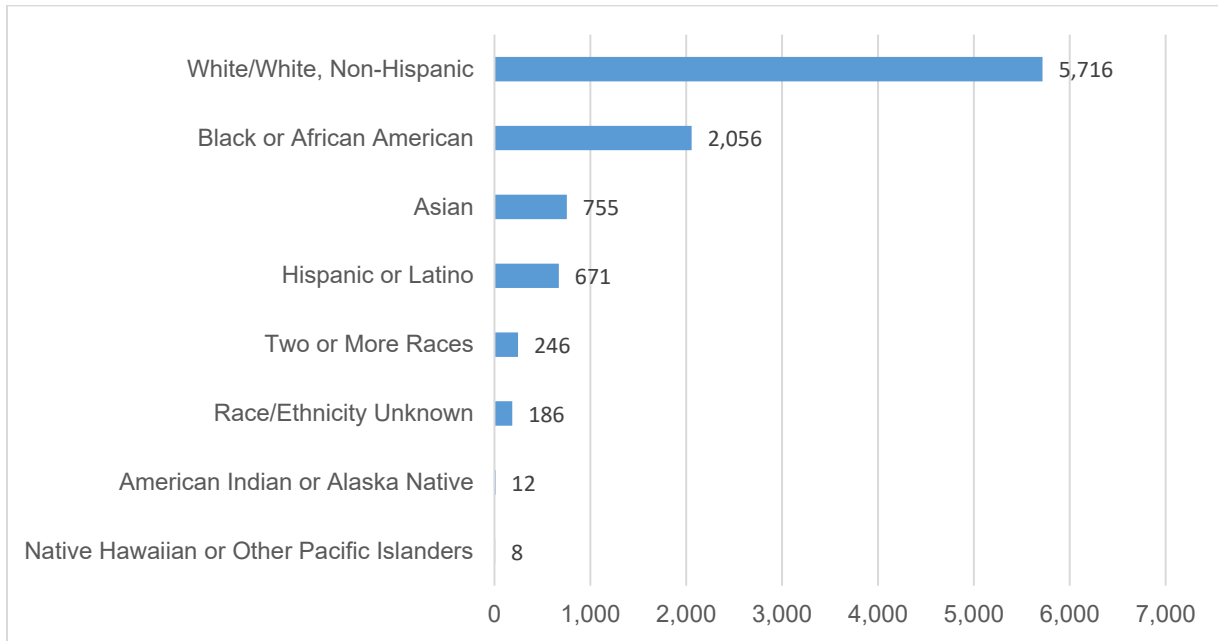
Figure 2.2. Total Accounting Degree Completions, 2015–2020 by Academic Year in Georgia



Source: IPEDS

Figures 2.3 and 2.4 show that across the five-year period studied, accounting graduates were slightly more likely to be female than male. In addition, three times as many non-Hispanic whites as Blacks or African Americans were awarded accounting degrees in Georgia.

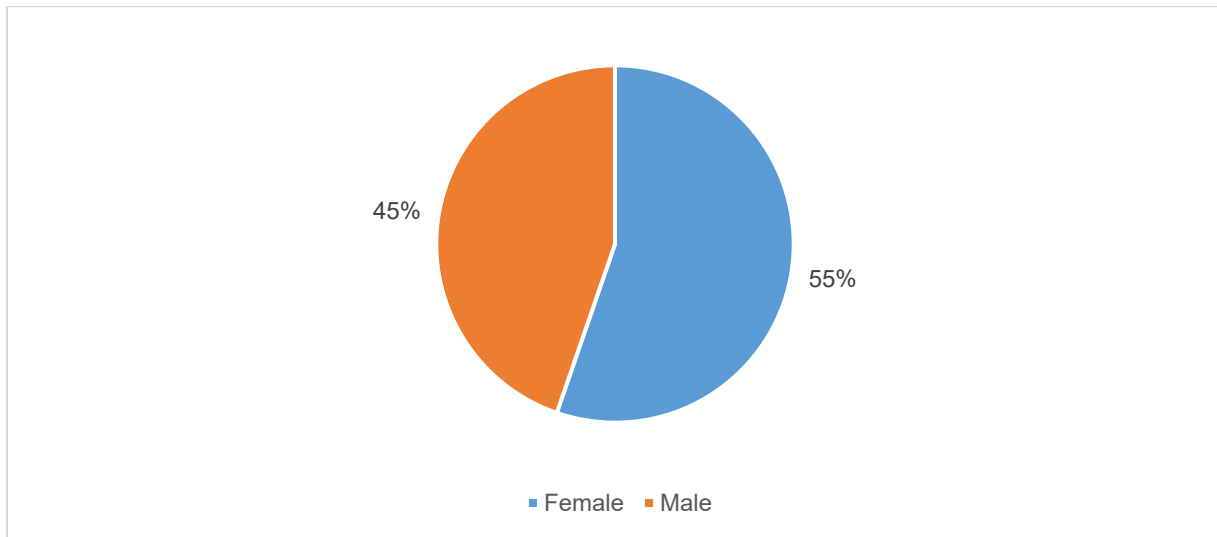
Figure 2.3. Race/Ethnicity of Accounting Associate, Bachelor’s, and Master’s Program Graduates in Georgia, 2015–2020



Source: IPEDS

Note: 720 graduates were classified only as “nonresident alien” in the IPEDS system.

Figure 2.4. Gender of Accounting Associate, Bachelor’s, and Master’s Program Graduates in Georgia, 2015–2020



Source: IPEDS

The data collected for this workgroup demonstrate that demand for accountants in the labor market exists and that Georgia colleges and universities are producing graduates with accounting degrees. The disparity between the number of degrees produced and state accounting employment suggests that individuals graduating from accounting programs may be unaware of state government employment opportunities. University System of Georgia (USG) data show that of USG graduates with bachelor’s or master’s degrees in accounting, only 3.4% work in the public sector one year after graduation.

As part of the needs assessment, the workgroup heard from two panels of experts: one focused on employers and the other on education partners. The workgroup first met with a panel of representatives from state agencies to learn more about what is working in state efforts to recruit and retain accountants. State presenters also shared perspectives on challenges, barriers, and potential opportunities.

EMPLOYER PANEL

PANEL MEMBERS

- **Connie Buck**, Chief Financial Officer, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
- **Bobbie Davis**, Director of Financial Reporting, State Accounting Office of Georgia
- **Kirkley Renwick**, Accounting Administrator, Georgia Department of Transportation
- **Robin Stevens**, Human Resources Director, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
- **Kelly Washington-Johnson**, Human Resources Director, Georgia Department of Community Health

WHAT IS WORKING

- Internships
- Working with temp agencies
- Remote work

BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- Limited training opportunities
- Salary
- Small, underqualified applicant pool

OPPORTUNITIES AND IDEAS

- Job fairs
- Developing programs that increase exposure
- More structured and statewide internship programs

Next, the workgroup heard from an Education Partners Panel representing the supply side. Panelists discussed existing programs, current services, and future opportunities for expanded programs and partnerships.

EDUCATION PARTNERS PANEL

PANEL MEMBERS

- **Penni Haberly**, Assistant Commissioner for Administrative Services; Technical College System of Georgia
- **Delda Hagin**, Program Specialist in Business Management and Administration, Finance, and IT; Georgia Department of Education
- **Reza Kherandish**, Professor and Chair; Department of Accounting, Economics, and Finance; Clayton State University
- **Dave Lakly**, Financial Management Program; Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia

PROGRAMS IN PLACE

- **Technical College System of Georgia**
 - Applied science accounting degree
 - Accounting diploma
 - Technical certificates
 - Courses offered online and dual enrollment available
- **University System of Georgia**
 - Bachelor's and master's in accounting
 - NEXUS degree in governmental accounting at Clayton State
 - Internships required for most programs
- **Georgia Department of Education**
 - Two accounting pathways currently in place: financial accounting in business and advanced accounting
 - Dual enrollment opportunities

Following the panel presentations, the workgroup examined pipeline gaps with respect to entry-level accounting positions. Discussion centered on entry-level qualifications and how they differ by agency for the same job and title. The group agreed that more work was needed to standardize job descriptions and qualifications.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

The workgroup conducted an environmental scan to identify the opportunities, barriers, and aspirations related to recruiting and retaining accountants.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Work with the Georgia Fiscal Management Council to advertise internships/entry-level positions at colleges and universities.
- Work with DOE at middle schools and high schools (e.g., career days and including generally accepted accounting principles and governmental accounting in CTAE pathways).
- The Georgia Fiscal Management Council could create a career development committee or expand it if one exists. The council could also create a strategic plan.
- Add accounting tracks to the Governor's Intern Program.
- Recruit statewide.

BARRIERS

- Salary and compensation
- Competition with other state agencies, nonprofits, and the federal government
- Reaching the right pool of candidates
- Lack of promotion opportunities within agencies
- Perception of government work
- Lack of effective marketing

ASPIRATIONS

- Develop branding for the accounting profession and state employment.
- Develop an internship program across state government.
- Provide a statewide succession training academy.
- Create a governmental accounting pathway for high school students.
- Conduct a massive marketing push about working for the state generally.

BASELINE RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

After the first workgroup meeting, a questionnaire was sent to all participating state agencies to gather more detailed baseline information and to ask follow-up questions from the first meeting. Six state agencies responded to the questionnaire: the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), the Georgia Department of Education (DOE), the Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH), the State Accounting Office of Georgia (SAO), the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS).

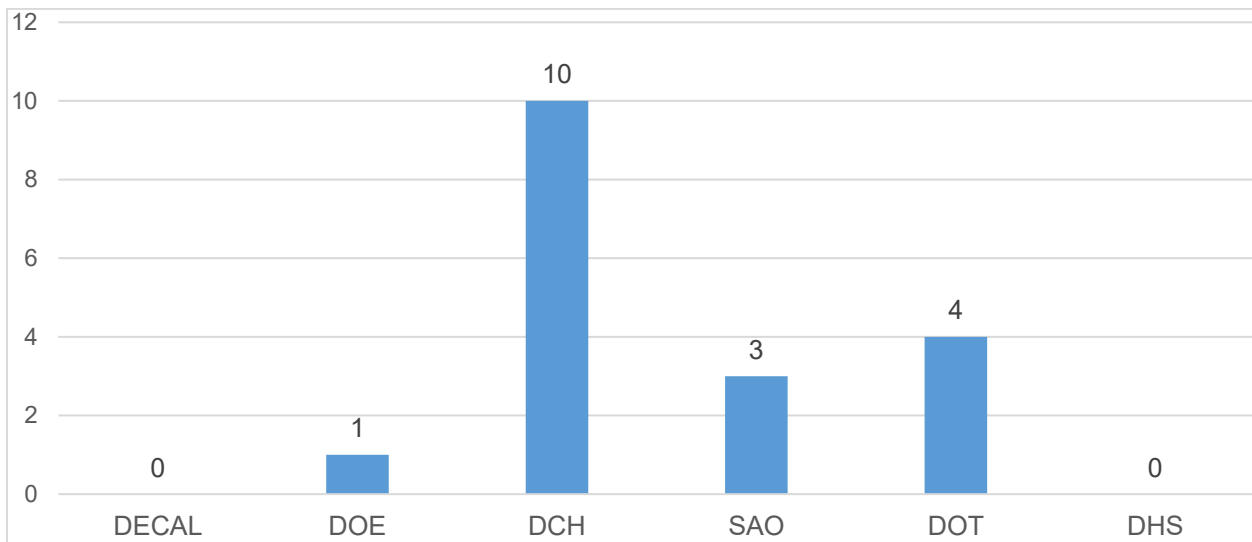
The questionnaire first asked the agencies to identify their best recruitment strategy. The most commonly reported recruitment strategy was digital platforms like Indeed, Taleo, and Team Georgia Careers, followed by social media, partnerships with colleges and universities, and

internships. Other strategies mentioned were working with the Georgia Fiscal Management Council or similar groups, holding information sessions, and agency website traffic.

The questionnaire then asked agencies to identify their most common referral source. Agencies reported that digital platforms like Indeed, Taleo, and Team Georgia Careers were their most common referral sources, followed by state employees and the Georgia Fiscal Management Council.

The questionnaire also asked the agencies how many vacant level 1 (entry-level) accounting positions they had as of June 1, 2022. Figure 2.5 shows the responses to this question. DCH had the most vacant positions, and DECAL and DHS both noted that they do not hire level 1 accountants.

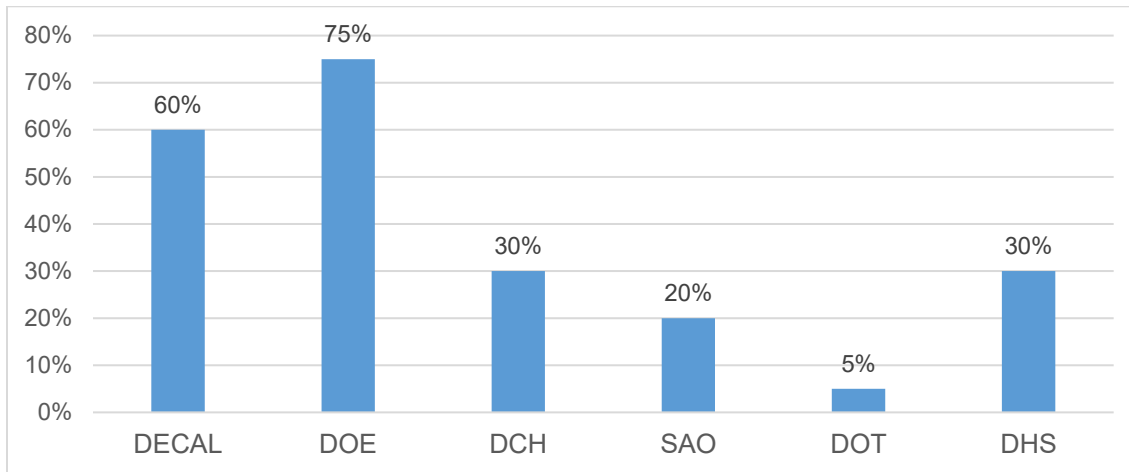
Figure 2.5. Vacant Level 1 Accounting Positions by Agency, June 2022



Note: Level 1 accountant is an entry-level position. DECAL and DHS do not hire level 1 accountants. DECAL = Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning; DOE = Georgia Department of Education; DCH = Georgia Department of Community Health; SAO = State Accounting Office of Georgia; DOT = Georgia Department of Transportation; DHS = Georgia Department of Human Services

Another question asked the agencies to estimate the percentage of applicants they receive for entry-level jobs who are qualified for the position. Figure 2.6 reflects the varied responses to this question. Four of the six participating agencies reported that the percentage of qualified applicants they received was under 50%.

Figure 2.6. Reported Percentage of Qualified Applicants for Entry-Level Accounting Positions, June 2022



Note: DECAL = Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning; DOE = Georgia Department of Education; DCH = Georgia Department of Community Health; SAO = State Accounting Office of Georgia; DOT = Georgia Department of Transportation; DHS = Georgia Department of Human Services

Finally, the questionnaire asked agencies about alternative work arrangements. Three of the six responding agencies allowed for alternative work arrangements, such as hybrid or remote work. Three of the six responding agencies did not use temp agencies.

INTERVIEWS WITH CURRENT STATE ACCOUNTANTS

In addition to the agency questionnaire, Institute of Government researchers interviewed current accountants to gain their perspectives and to complement the DOAS labor market data and information collected from employers. Between June 21 and June 27, 2022, the Institute research team conducted 10 face-to-face semi-structured interviews with employees from five state agencies via Zoom.

The participating agencies and job titles of those interviewed are listed below:

- DOT: Accountant 2 and Accountant 4
- DOE: Two Accounting Managers
- DHS: Cost Allocation Accountant and Accounts Payable Manager
- Georgia Department of Community Supervision (DCS): Accounting Manager 2 and Senior Manager 2
- Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI): Budget Analyst and Accounts Payable Supervisor

The interviews focused on motivations for becoming an accountant and for staying in this field, things they value about their positions, and changes they would like to see to improve recruitment and retention. These findings are not generalizable given the sample size, but they offer unique insights from people in state accounting roles.

Descriptive Statistics

The interviewees had worked in state accounting positions for anywhere from 1.5 years to 20 years. The time in their current position ranged from two months to five years, and the accountants' ages ranged from 27 to 61. Of the 10 interviewees, all had bachelor's degrees and four additionally had a master's degree. All degrees were either in accounting, finance, or business administration. Most of the participants became interested in accounting in college or high school. Half of the participants were recruited by another state employee, while others found jobs through Team Georgia Careers, Indeed, and job fairs. Most participants were teleworking full time. Other participants came to the office one day a week or worked from home one day a week. Seven of the interviewees said that benefits influenced their employment decision.

Overall Themes

Many of the interviewees reported always having been interested in volunteering, organization, and stewardship. All participants mentioned they knew that taking a state job may mean lower pay than the private sector, but they said it provided them with a good work-life balance, job security, and flexibility. Half of the participants reported that their original career goal was not in accounting. One participant mentioned that they were specifically interested in the job because they did not need to be a certified public accountant (CPA).

The following were the most commonly reported barriers to working in state government as an accountant:

- Lack of exposure
- Lack of promotion opportunities within agencies
- Compensation and competition with the private sector
- Long, difficult interview process
- Stigma and public perception of government

The interviewees suggested the following strategies to improve recruitment:

- Speak at nonprofit and governmental accounting college elective classes.
- Advertise in public places, specifically targeting college graduates.
- Speak to students about the impact state accounting jobs have on their fellow Georgians.
- Make the autonomy granted to state accountants a selling point.

The interviewees suggested the following strategies to improve retention:

- Increase compensation and benefits.
- Continue to allow teleworking.
- Continue to provide educational development opportunities.
- Increase ways to make employees feel valued through get-togethers, meetings, awards, and holiday parties.
- Increase IT support.

Implications of Interview Results

Many of the employees interviewed developed an interest in accounting in high school or college. These anecdotal experiences demonstrate the importance of recruitment efforts on college and high school campuses. Increased outreach to potential accountants of all ages is crucial. Recent college graduates and individuals leaving larger national accounting firms need to know that state government accounting is an option for them.

Several interviewees mentioned that state accounting jobs do not require a CPA license, which influenced their decision to join state government. Individuals who are interested in accounting but do not want to take the CPA exams or who have performed poorly on the exams could be a group ripe for recruitment.

Finally, the interviewees reported feeling a sense of accomplishment from helping their fellow Georgians. A marketing campaign, informed by these interview results, could highlight how the work state accountants do affects every Georgian and emphasize the public service aspect unique to state government jobs. While these findings are not generalizable given the sample size, they offer unique insights from the perspectives of those currently in these roles.

Strategy Development and Prioritization

The second Accounting Workgroup meeting was held in person at DOAS in Atlanta on June 28, 2022. The second meeting began with a recap of the first meeting and presentations of the data collected from the agency questionnaire and qualitative employee interviews. Next, the group

examined different entry-level qualifications among agencies that hire accountants. Many of the larger agencies noted they could hire candidates with lower qualifications and train them, but smaller agencies could not do so. Many agencies were open to expanding and creating internship and apprenticeship programs to grow their applicant pool.

The rest of the second meeting focused on identifying larger goal areas and developing and prioritizing strategies to accomplish these goals. To do this, small groups were formed to devise lists and use sticky notes to group together similar ideas into larger goals. Four major goal themes emerged from this process:

1. Academic Partnerships
2. Enterprise Careers and Progression
3. Marketing
4. Training and Professional Development

Once the goal areas were agreed upon, the workgroup once again broke into smaller groups to develop short- and long-term strategies for each goal. Each group had a poster board on which to write potential strategies for their goal. After the groups listed strategies, each member was given a fixed number of colored dots with which to prioritize the strategies. The strategies that received the most dots were added to the implementation plan.

Implementation Plan

The Accounting Workgroup met for the third and final time via Zoom on July 28, 2022. This meeting began with a recap of the first two meetings, including a presentation of the preliminary data that informed the process, the needs assessment and breakout activity in Meeting 1, goals and strategies from Meeting 2, and main takeaways from the agency questionnaire and entry-level employee interviews. The majority of the meeting focused on creating a draft Accounting Workforce Plan detailing the identified strategies and tasks within the larger goal areas.

Through a facilitated discussion, the workgroup designated each action item as either short or long term (with short term being defined as within the next 12 months) and assigned a project lead for each item. Table 2.4 shows the final Accounting Workforce Plan.

Table 2.4. Accounting Workforce Plan

Goals	Strategies	Action Items	Timeline	
Academic Partnerships	1.1	Develop partnerships with high schools and postsecondary institutions.	1.1.1 Establish a state speakers' bureau for education partners.	Short
			1.1.2 Participate in high school and college career fairs.	Short and Long
	1.2	Expand internship programs for accounting across state agencies.	1.2.1 Establish a process through DOAS to connect with university and college career centers for internship opportunities.	Short and Long
			1.2.2 Create internship slots at agencies.	Short and Long
			1.2.3 DOAS will promote newly created internships.	Short and Long
	1.3	Create career pathway programs and curriculum with high schools and other education providers.	1.3.1 Create governmental/nonprofit accounting pathways in high schools.	Short and Long
			1.3.2 Partner with colleges to create governmental accounting certificate programs.	Short and Long
			1.3.3 Partner with the Institute of Government to create on-demand training videos for entry-level governmental accounting.	Short
	Enterprise Careers and Progression	2.1	Research compensation strategies that would help improve retention.	2.1.1 Allow for tuition reimbursement.
2.1.2 Research longevity raises and step increase options.				Short and Long
2.2		Sustain the Accounting Workgroup.	2.2.1 Form a standing accounting workgroup to coordinate enterprise accounting training and workforce needs (opportunity to collaborate with the Georgia Fiscal Management Council).	Short
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold knowledge-transfer sessions and trainings. • Create cross-agency peer groups by function. 	
Marketing	3.1	Develop a statewide marketing plan for jobs in accounting.	3.1.1 Conduct market research and identify marketing channels for target audiences.	Short and Long
			3.1.2 Develop videos to explain state jobs in accounting.	Short and Long
			3.1.3 Develop a social media strategy to target the college-age audience.	Short and Long
			3.1.4 Develop a recruitment strategy for private-sector exiters and non-CPAs.	Long
Training and Professional Development	4.1	Provide and fund work-related professional development, including education, certifications, and degree programs.	4.1.1 Explore opportunities for reimbursement for work-related programs.	Short and Long
			4.1.2 Conduct a study on additional training with pay increases.	Long
			4.1.3 Partner with active certified government financial managers (CGFMs) in state government to create a focus group to increase/encourage CGFM certification.	Short

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

- Establish a state speakers' bureau for education partners.
- Participate in high school and college career fairs.
- Create a governmental/nonprofit accounting pathway for high school students.
- Partner with colleges to create governmental accounting certificate programs.
- Partner with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government to create on-demand training videos on entry-level governmental accounting.
- Establish a process through DOAS to connect with university and college career centers for internship opportunities.

ENTERPRISE CAREERS AND PROGRESSION

- Form a standing workgroup to coordinate statewide accounting training and workforce needs.

MARKETING

- Develop videos that explain state jobs in accounting.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Partner with active certified government financial managers in state government to create a focus group to increase and encourage certification.

MEASURES OF PROGRESS

The workgroup agreed to track its activities using the following measures of progress:

1. Number of qualified applicants for entry-level accounting jobs
2. Number of entry-level accounting hires staying in state government for more than 12 months after hire
3. Number of cross-agency career fairs and information sessions annually
 - High school partnerships
 - Higher education partnerships
4. Number of applicants from social channels (based on the question, "How did you hear about us?")

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

During the planning process, several ideas and strategies were identified that were outside the scope of the workgroup's charge or would require other partners beyond those in the workgroup to be successful. The following are the workgroup's additional recommendations to DOAS and other state leaders.

1. Standardize classification and application of job responsibilities.
 - Review and standardize job descriptions and compensation.
 - Apply these standards across state agencies.
 - Label positions "Accountant 1" rather than "staff accountant."
 - Review minimum entry-level qualifications for accounting and bookkeeping-related jobs.
 - Research compensation bands.
 - Facilitate more mobility in the accounting workforce and clarity of KSAs (knowledge, skills, and abilities) of employees.
2. Develop succession planning.
3. Develop a career progression map.
4. Create foundational training materials for entry-level roles (videos, desk aids).
 - Implement these materials at the agency level.
5. Create recognition programs like statewide accounting distinctions and agency-specific awards.
 - Identify what distinctions to allow for the program.
6. Ensure appropriate training for NextGen systems.
 - Create a more long-term strategy related to NextGen (SAO/DOAS).
7. Encourage participation in SAO's shared accounting and payroll service across state agencies. Greater participation leads to more opportunities for advancement due to a larger group doing these activities for many agencies.

Conclusion

The Accounting Workgroup agreed to continue to meet quarterly to make progress on the strategies identified in the plan. The co-chairs of the group, Kris Martins and Monique Simmons, agreed to continue to lead this group with the support of DOAS HRA.

GEORGIA WORKFORCE STRATEGIES INITIATIVE



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY WORKGROUP



Table of Contents, IT Workgroup

- Letter from the IT Workgroup Co-Chairs 87
- IT Workgroup Introduction..... 88
 - IT Workgroup Members 88
- Needs Assessment and Identification of Opportunities and Barriers 89
 - Environmental Scan..... 101
 - Baseline Recruitment Questionnaire 102
 - Questionnaire with Current IT Employees 103
 - Descriptive Statistics..... 104
 - Overall Themes 104
 - Implications of Questionnaire 105
- Strategy Development and Prioritization..... 105
- Implementation Plan 106
 - Measures of Progress..... 109
 - Other Recommendations 109
- Conclusion 109

Letter from the IT Workgroup Co-Chairs

Dear IT Workgroup members, partners, and stakeholders,

The IT sector is a dynamic, ever-changing field, making it all the more difficult to recruit and retain employees in IT positions in state government. This workgroup of IT, human resources, and education professionals collaborated over many months to better understand the unique IT challenges at each state agency and forge tailored solutions. We are excited to share the results of this collaboration.

This report includes data analysis, communication with current state IT employees, and input from key stakeholders. The workgroup focused on training and certification opportunities for current employees and partnerships with educational institutions and the military. We are excited to complete the goals of this project with help from every member of the workgroup. We are committed to continuing this workgroup to achieve the goals laid out in this report.

Ananias Williams, Chief Information Officer, Georgia Department of Revenue

Mike Davis, Deputy State Chief Information Security Officer, Georgia Technology Authority

Workgroup Chairs

IT Workgroup Introduction

The IT Workgroup, composed of representatives from interested state agencies, DOAS HRA, and the Institute of Government, was formed after the March 2022 Workforce Strategies Initiative steering committee meeting. The workgroup was led by Ananias Williams, the chief information officer for the Georgia Department of Revenue, and Mike Davis, the deputy state chief information security officer for the Georgia Technology Authority.

The IT Workgroup conducted a workforce pipeline study of entry-level IT and cybersecurity positions and developed strategies to boost interest in these fields and increase employment. This work was done over three sessions held in the fall of 2022. During the first meeting, the workgroup conducted a needs assessment and identified opportunities, barriers, and aspirations. During the second meeting, the workgroup identified goal areas and brainstormed and prioritized strategies. In the final meeting, the workgroup finalized its implementation plan and identified the action items it would work on over the subsequent 12 months.

IT WORKGROUP MEMBERS

Chairs

- **Ananias Williams**, Georgia Department of Revenue
- **Mike Davis**, Georgia Technology Authority

Members

- **David Allen**, Georgia Technology Authority
- **Garfield Anderson**, Gwinnett Technical College
- **Chris Apsey**, Georgia Department of Human Services
- **John Barmann**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Scott Benham**, University System of Georgia
- **Tina Bufford**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Bryan Cox**, Georgia Department of Education
- **Sonal Dekhane**, Georgia Gwinnett College
- **Oscar Galindo**, Department of Human Services
- **Delda Hagin**, Georgia Department of Education; Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education
- **Monique Jenkins**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Tom McMurry**, Teachers Retirement System of Georgia
- **Tamara Mosley**, Georgia Technology Authority
- **Oenia Odums**, Technical College System of Georgia
- **Keith Osburn**, Georgia Department of Education
- **Veronica Peeples**, Georgia Department of Revenue

IT WORKGROUP MEMBERS, CONTINUED

- **Julie Post**, West Georgia Technical College
- **Art Recesso**, University System of Georgia
- **Jessica Simmons**, Georgia Technology Authority
- **Mohandas Sundareswaran**, Georgia Department of Human Services
- **Eric Toler**, Georgia Cyber Innovation & Training Center
- **Sreeji Vijayan**, Georgia Department of Human Services
- **Barbara Wall**, Georgia Department of Education
- **Todd Watson**, University System of Georgia
- **Sonja Willis**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services

Needs Assessment and Identification of Opportunities and Barriers

Table 3.1 depicts employment trends in 2018 and 2021 for 28 entry-level IT and cybersecurity positions across state government. Note that only entry-level IT job codes provided by DOAS are included in this analysis. Employees doing entry-level IT work may exist under different job codes and would not be captured in these data. The positions shown in Table 3.1 are not intended to provide an exhaustive list.

In total, this workgroup looked at data for 177 employees. Overall, increasing employee counts demonstrate high interest in IT jobs. In FY 2021, the turnover rate for entry-level IT employees was 6.9%. Compared to other sectors, turnover in IT/cybersecurity is lower in both state government and the overall economy.

Table 3.1. Trends in Entry-Level IT Positions at State Agencies, 2018 and 2021

Job	June 2018 Employee Count	June 2021 Employee Count	Percent Change	FY 2021 Turnover Rate	FY 2021 Hires/ Rehires	FY 2021 Separations
Total	157	177	12.7%	6.9%	29	13
Communications Hardware Spec 1	0	1	–	0.0%	1	0
Computer Operator 1	0	0	–	0.0%	0	0
Criminal Justice IS Analyst 1	2	3	50.0%	0.0%	2	0
Criminal Justice IS Spec 1	5	3	–40.0%	0.0%	3	0
Cybersecurity Analyst 1	0	2	–	0.0%	1	0
Cybersecurity Analyst 2	0	2	–	0.0%	0	0
Cybersecurity Specialist 1	0	2	–	0.0%	1	0
Cybersecurity Specialist 2	0	3	–	0.0%	0	0
Cybersecurity Tech 1	0	2	–	0.0%	0	0
Cybersecurity Tech 1	0	2	–	0.0%	0	0
Database Administrator 1	1	5	400.0%	27.9%	1	1
Developer 1	22	15	–31.8%	0.0%	1	0
Digital Forensic Investigator 1	2	6	200.0%	0.0%	2	0
Help Desk Analyst 1	20	19	–5.0%	10.3%	2	2
Help Desk Support Spec 1	1	1	0.0%	0.0%	1	0
Information Security Analyst 1	4	4	0.0%	0.0%	0	0
IT Business Analyst 1	19	18	–5.3%	16.8%	2	4
IT Enterprise Business Analyst 1	1	3	200.0%	0.0%	1	0
IT Support Specialist 1	3	14	366.7%	0.0%	2	0
Network Administrator 1	8	4	–50.0%	0.0%	0	0
Network Engineer 1	3	5	66.7%	0.0%	0	0
Network Technician 2	1	1	0.0%	0.0%	0	0
Programmer Analyst 1	6	3	–50.0%	0.0%	0	0
Project Coordinator 1	2	3	50.0%	42.9%	1	1
Systems Administrator 1	30	28	–6.7%	3.4%	1	1
Systems Analyst 1	20	13	–35.0%	13.6%	1	2
Systems Support Tech 1	2	3	50.0%	0.0%	0	0
Telecommunications Spec 1	0	7	–	39.3%	5	2
Telecommunications Tech 1	0	1	–	0.0%	0	0
Web Designer 1	2	0	–100.0%	0.0%	0	0
Webmaster 1	3	4	33.3%	0.0%	1	0

Source: Georgia Department of Administrative Services, Human Resources Administration Division, FY 2021 internal data

Table 3.2 depicts employment trends in 2018 and 2021 at the five state agencies that have the highest number of entry-level IT jobs. Overall, entry-level jobs in state government have increased, but the trend differs by agency. Some agencies have higher turnover than others. Because of the specialized nature of IT work, turnover in this sector can significantly impact agency operations.

Table 3.2. Trends in Agencies That Employ the Highest Number of Entry-Level IT Positions, 2018 and 2021

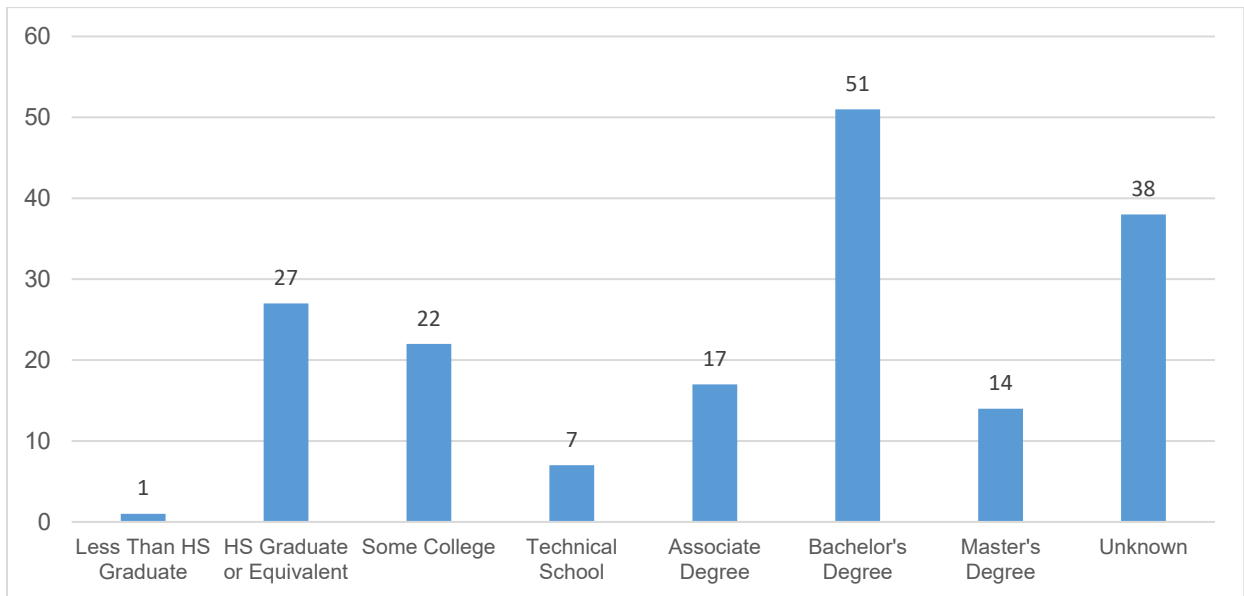
Job	June 2018 Employee Count	June 2021 Employee Count	Percent Change	FY 2021 Turnover Rate	FY 2021 Hires/ Rehires	FY 2021 Separations
Total (34)	157	177	12.7%	6.9%	29	13
DOR	31	20	-35.5%	10.7%	1	3
GBI	14	19	35.7%	5.4%	9	1
DOL	18	13	-27.8%	0.0%	2	0
DOT	15	13	-13.3%	7.0%	0	1
GDC	0	13	-	0.0%	2	0
All Other Agencies	79	99	25.3%	7.8%	15	8

Source: Georgia Department of Administrative Services, Human Resources Administration Division, FY 2021 internal data

Note: DOR = Georgia Department of Revenue; GBI = Georgia Bureau of Investigation; DOL = Georgia Department of Labor; DOT = Georgia Department of Transportation; GDC = Georgia Department of Corrections

The workgroup was interested in developing a pipeline into state IT careers. Figure 3.1 indicates that most entry-level hires have a bachelor’s degree. The diversity of education at the time of hire indicates an opportunity to formalize career pathways in IT.

Figure 3.1. Education Level at Time of Hire for New Entry-Level State Agency IT Employees, 2021



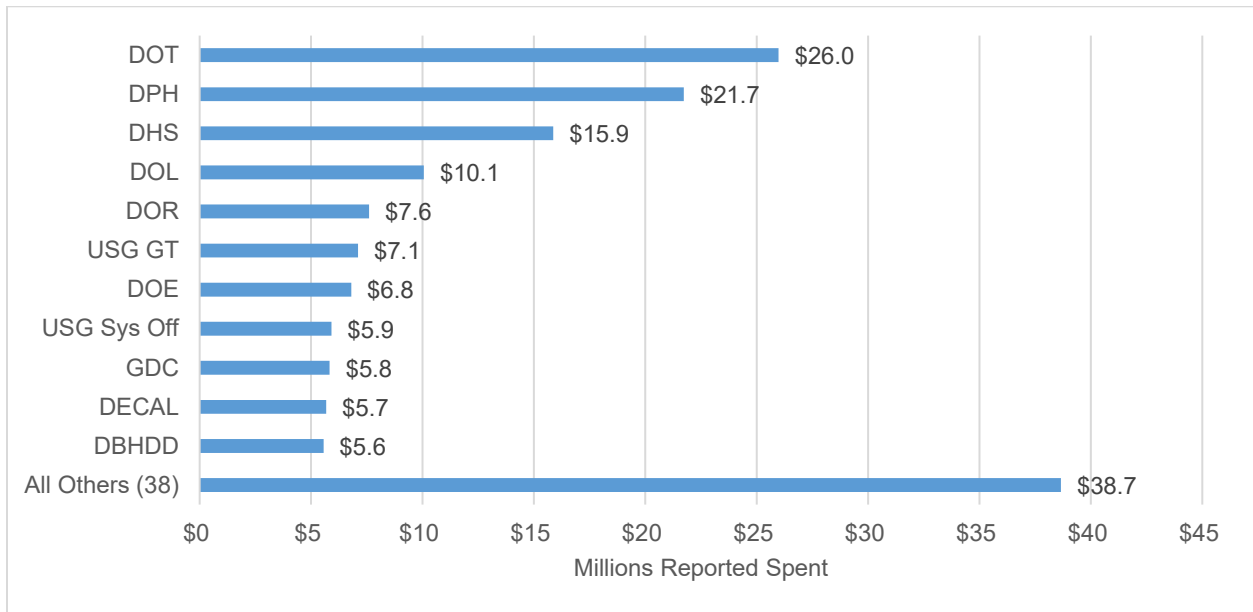
Source: Georgia Department of Administrative Services, Human Resources Administration Division, Team Georgia Careers

Note: Unknown = a hire who did not use Team Georgia Careers, the applicant tracking system for positions within Georgia state government

In this sector, many state agencies use temporary IT contractors to fill IT roles. The statewide contract supplier, Computer Aid, Inc., submits sales reports each quarter as part of its contract requirements. These reports provide data on how many contractors are used and at what agencies across the state government.

Across all agencies, the state spent \$156.8 million on IT staffing contracts with Computer Aid, Inc. in FY 2021. In FY 2020, the total was \$40.6 million, though due to the transition period of implementing the new statewide contract, not all transactions for the year are included in that total. Figure 3.2 shows a breakdown of this contract spending by state agency.

Figure 3.2. Temporary IT Staffing Statewide Contract Spending by State Agency (in \$millions), FYs 2020 and 2021



Source: Computer Aid, Inc. quarterly sales reports

Note: DOT = Georgia Department of Transportation; DPH = Georgia Department of Public Health; DHS = Georgia Department of Human Services; DOL = Georgia Department of Labor; DOR = Georgia Department of Revenue; USG GT = Georgia Institute of Technology; DOE = Georgia Department of Education; USG Sys Off = USG System Office; GDC = Georgia Department of Corrections; DECAL = Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning; DBHDD = Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

Tables 3.3 and 3.4 show further details about contract spending, specifically the job series and job titles with the most contract spending.

Table 3.3. Top Reported Job Series in Temporary IT Staffing, Statewide Contract Spending, FY 2020 and FY 2021

Top Reported Job Series	Reported Spending
Developer	\$31.4 M
Programmer	\$13.2 M
IT Business Analyst	\$11.0 M
Programmer Analyst	\$7.3 M
Database Administrator	\$7.3 M
Systems Administrator	\$5.7 M
IT Support Specialist	\$5.3 M
Project Manager	\$4.7 M
Network Engineer	\$2.7 M
IT Architect	\$2.6 M
Systems Support Tech	\$1.8 M
IT Business Solutions Architect	\$1.4 M
Help Desk Analyst	\$1.4 M
Database Analyst	\$1.2 M

Source: Computer Aid, Inc. quarterly sales reports

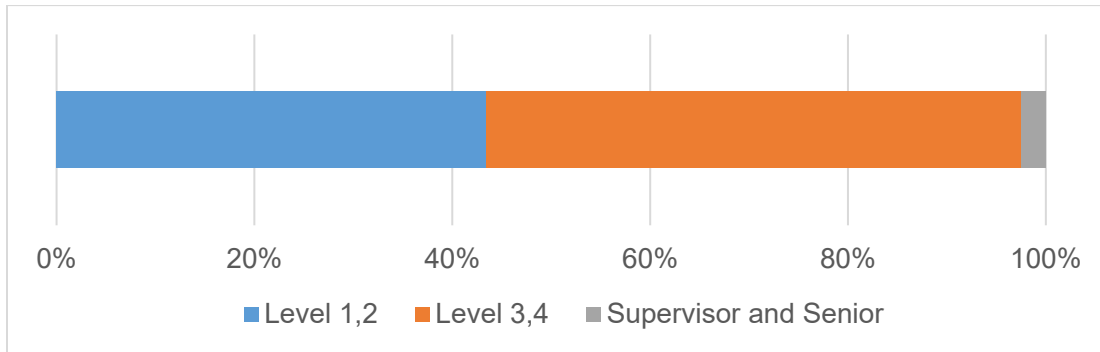
Table 3.4. Top Reported Job Titles in Temporary IT Staffing Statewide Contract Spend, FY 2020 and FY 2021

Top Reported Job Series	Reported Spending
Developer 3	\$18.6 M
Programmer 3	\$12.2 M
Developer 1	\$10.5 M
IT Business Analyst 4	\$6.1 M
IT Business Analyst 1	\$3.6 M
Programmer Analyst 3	\$3.4 M
Systems Administrator 4	\$3.3 M
Database Administrator 1	\$3.1 M
IT Support Specialist 1	\$2.9 M
Database Administrator 4	\$2.5 M
Programmer Analyst 1	\$2.4 M
Project Manager 3	\$2.4 M
Project Manager 1	\$1.9 M
Developer 2	\$1.9 M
IT Support Specialist 3	\$1.9 M
IT Architect 1	\$1.8 M
Programmer Analyst 2	\$1.5 M
IT Business Solutions Architect 1	\$1.4 M
Database Administrator 3	\$1.4 M
Network Engineer 1	\$1.2 M

Source: Computer Aid, Inc. quarterly sales reports

Entry-level positions are not the only roles being filled by contractors in this sector. Figure 3.3 shows that a significant amount of spending was for temporary workers in level 1,2 roles (lower salary, entry-level positions) but even more spending was for level 3,4 roles (higher salary jobs further along the career path). These results suggest an opportunity to fulfill advanced skills through a temp-to-hire approach.

Figure 3.3. Reported Spending by Job Role Level, FY 2020 and FY 2021



Source: Computer Aid, Inc. quarterly sales reports

Note: Level 1,2 are lower salary, entry-level jobs, while level 3,4 are higher salary jobs further along the career path.

The workgroup was also interested in general projected employment trends for the IT field in Georgia. The overall labor market data, presented in Table 3.5, show that demand for IT roles will continue to be strong, with thousands of openings annually. This trend indicates continued strong competition for talent in this sector.

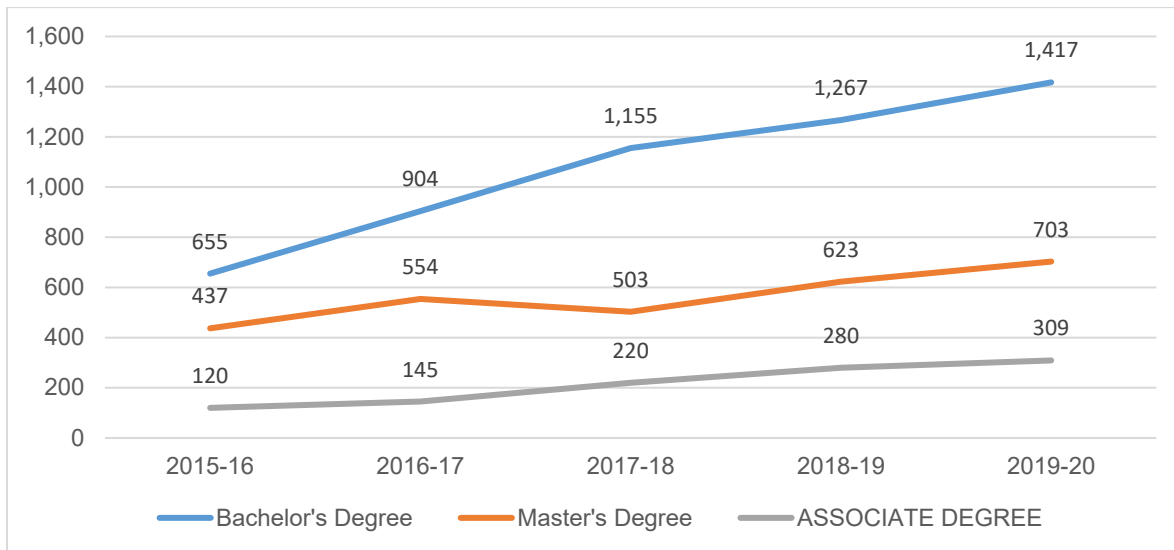
Table 3.5. Projected Employment Trends for IT Jobs in Georgia, 2018 and 2028

	2018 Base Employment	2028 Projected Employment	Percent Change in Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Labor Force Exits	Occupational Transfers	Annual Occupational Openings
Computer Systems Analysts	18,160	20,070	10.5%	1.0%	360	1,020	1,570
Information Security Analysts	2,730	3,720	36.1%	3.1%	50	180	330
Computer Programmers	5,280	35,550	-8.4%	-0.9%	80	270	310
Software Developers, Applications	28,170	13,480	26.2%	2.4%	440	1,800	2,980
Software Developers, Systems Software	12,210	13,480	10.4%	1.0%	180	730	1,040
Web Developers	3,670	4,100	11.6%	1.1%	70	230	340
Database Administrators	4,170	4,740	13.8%	1.3%	90	230	380
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	9,630	10,360	7.7%	0.7%	170	530	770
Computer Network Architects	5,120	5,500	7.5%	0.7%	70	300	410
Computer User Support Specialists	21,130	24,400	15.5%	1.5%	420	1,450	2,200
Computer Network Support Specialists	6,370	7,170	12.5%	1.2%	120	430	630
Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers	9,390	11,110	18.4%	1.7%	290	840	1,300

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Georgia Labor Market Explorer Occupational Outlooks

Figure 3.4 shows the number of Georgia graduates with an associate, bachelor’s, or master’s degree in IT/cybersecurity-related programs from 2015 to 2020. Overall, the number of degrees awarded has been increasing, growing from 1,212 degrees produced in 2016 to 2,429 in 2020. A total of 1,417 bachelor’s degrees in IT/cybersecurity were awarded in 2020, up from 655 in 2016. The number of IT-related master’s graduates in 2020 reached 703, up from 437 in 2016. These data trends indicate an increasing supply of graduates with IT-related education.

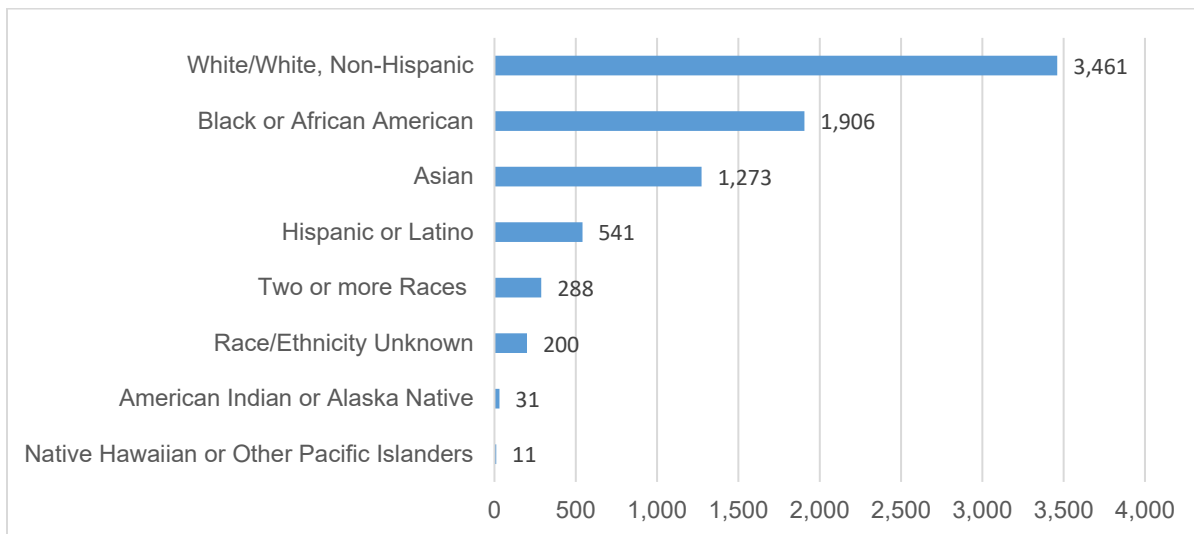
Figure 3.4. Total IT/Cybersecurity Degree Completions, 2015–2020, by Academic Year in Georgia



Source: IPEDS

Figures 3.5 and 3.6 show demographics of IT/cybersecurity graduates in Georgia. More of these graduates are male than female, and most are non-Hispanic White.

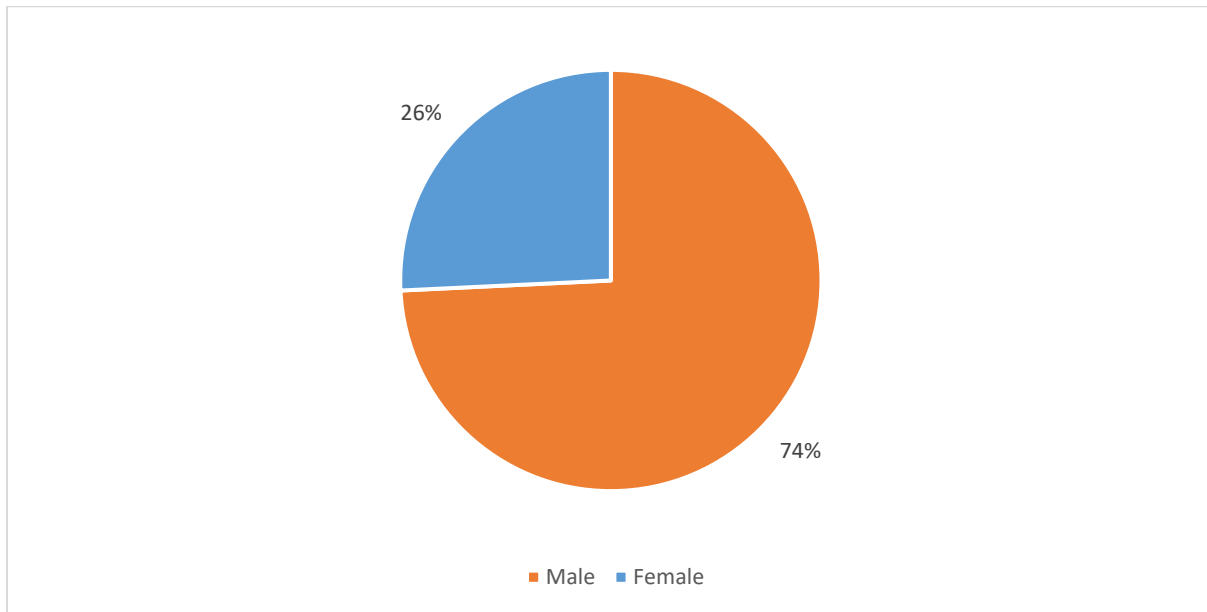
Figure 3.5. Race/Ethnicity of IT/Cybersecurity Associate, Bachelor's, and Master's Program Graduates in Georgia, 2015–2020



Source: IPEDS

Note: 1,917 graduates were classified only as “nonresident alien” in IPEDS. These graduates are not included in the figure.

Figure 3.6. Gender of IT/Cybersecurity Associate, Bachelor’s, and Master’s Program Graduates in Georgia, 2015–2020



Source: IPEDS

The data collected for this workgroup demonstrate that demand for IT jobs in the labor market exists and that Georgia colleges and universities are producing graduates with IT/cybersecurity degrees. One challenge is that few recent graduates are likely to be aware of the employment opportunities in state government. University System of Georgia (USG) data show that of USG graduates with bachelor’s or master’s degrees in computer and information sciences, only 1.8% are working in the public sector one year after graduation.

As part of the needs assessment, the workgroup heard from a panel of human resources professionals at state agencies to learn more about what is working in state efforts to recruit and retain IT professionals. State presenters also shared perspectives on challenges, barriers, and potential opportunities.

EMPLOYER PANEL

PANEL MEMBERS

- **Veronica Peebles**, Assistant Director of Human Resources, Georgia Department of Revenue
- **Tamara Mosley**, Director of Human Resources, Georgia Technology Authority

BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- Compensation not comparable to private sector
- Disconnect between entry-level qualifications and entry-level jobs

OPPORTUNITIES AND IDEAS

- Advertise the opportunity to obtain certifications during the first year of work
- Work with career services at colleges

Next, the workgroup heard from an Education Partners Panel representing the supply side of IT workers. Panelists discussed existing programs, current services, and future opportunities for expanded programs and partnerships.

EDUCATION PARTNERS PANEL

PANEL MEMBERS

- **Delda Hagin**, Program Specialist, Georgia Department of Education; Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education
- **Oenia Odums**, Curriculum Program Specialist, Technical College System of Georgia
- **Art Recesso**, Vice Chancellor for Academic Innovation, University System of Georgia

PROGRAMS IN PLACE

- **Technical College System of Georgia**
 - Credit and noncredit certifications in AWS, Google, IOS app development
 - Micro-credentialing opportunities
- **University System of Georgia**
 - Collaborations with IBM
 - Multi-institution team examining how students can tap into learning opportunities in new and different ways
- **Georgia Department of Education**
 - IT pathways in cybersecurity, computer science, financial technology, game design, information support and services, internet of things, networking, programming, web and digital design, web development, artificial intelligence, cloud computing

Following the panel presentations, the workgroup examined pipeline gaps with respect to entry-level jobs in IT. Discussion centered on entry-level qualifications and how they differ by agency for the same job and title. The group agreed that more work was needed to standardize job descriptions and qualifications.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

The workgroup conducted an environmental scan to identify opportunities, barriers, and aspirations related to recruiting and retaining IT professionals.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Create apprenticeship programs and work with existing employees to provide additional training.
- Create and expand pipelines with education partners.
- Create and expand internship programs.
- Repackage job postings and messaging to connect with applicants.
- Create mentorship programs.

BARRIERS

- Pay and compensation
- Need for more cross-agency internship programs
- Difficulties with remote work and out-of-state remote workers
- Ambiguous job postings and titles
- Need a smoother conversion process for contractors to permanent employees

ASPIRATIONS

- Improve salaries.
- Work collaboratively with education partners to provide skill sets needed by agencies.
- Create a state tuition assistance program to hire students coming out of high school and provide training to improve retention.
- Work at the speed of industry and not the speed of state government.
- Re-adjust entry-level requirements.

BASELINE RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

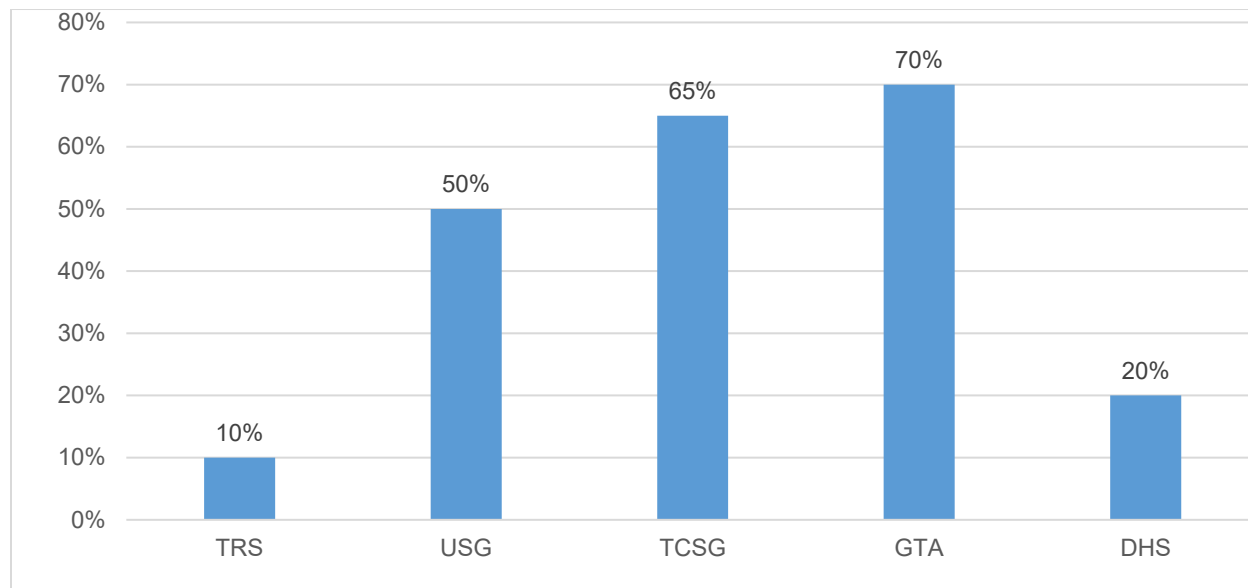
Following the first workgroup meeting, a questionnaire was sent to all participating state agencies to gather more detailed baseline information and to ask follow-up questions based on the first meeting. Five state agencies responded to the questionnaire: the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRS), the University System of Georgia (USG), the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA), and the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS).

The questionnaire first asked the agencies to identify their best recruitment strategy. The most commonly reported recruitment strategy was digital platforms like Indeed, Taleo, and Team Georgia Careers. Also common were social media, partnerships with colleges and universities, and internships. Other strategies mentioned were Computer Aid, Inc. state contractors, holding information sessions, and a partnership with YearUp.

Agencies were then asked to identify their most common referral source. Most commonly reported were education partners, followed by word of mouth via current state employees.

The questionnaire also asked the agencies to estimate the percentage of the applicants they receive for entry-level IT jobs who are qualified for the position. Figure 3.7 shows the responses to this question. Only two of the five participating agencies reported that more than 50% of their applicants are qualified.

Figure 3.7. Reported Percentage of Qualified Applicants for Entry-Level IT Positions at State Agencies



Note: TRS = Teachers Retirement System of Georgia; USG = University System of Georgia; TCSG = Technical College System of Georgia; GTA = Georgia Technology Authority; DHS = Georgia Department of Human Services

Finally, the questionnaire asked agencies about alternative work arrangements and their estimated percentage of entry-level jobs filled by contractors. Four of the five responding agencies allowed alternative work arrangements, such as hybrid or remote work. DHS reported that it filled 100% of its entry-level jobs with contractors, GTA reported 40%, the TCSG reported 10%, and the USG and TRS responded with 0%.

QUESTIONNAIRE WITH CURRENT IT EMPLOYEES

In addition to the agency questionnaire, researchers from the Institute of Government sent a separate questionnaire to current IT employees to gain their perspectives and complement the DOAS labor market data and information collected from employers. A total of 30 employees from the following six agencies responded to the questionnaire: DOAS, the USG, Georgia Gwinnett College, DHS, GTA, and TRS.

The questionnaire asked about motivations for entering and staying in the IT field, what the workers value about their positions, and changes they would like to see to improve recruitment and retention. These findings are not generalizable given the sample size; however, they offer unique insights from people holding state IT roles.

Descriptive Statistics

The number of years respondents had worked in the IT field ranged from one to more than 10. Most of the respondents were over 50 years old. The highest level of education for the majority of respondents was a bachelor's degree, followed by a master's degree. The time in their current position ranged from less than a year to over 10 years. Nine respondents reported that they were recruited to their current job by word of mouth and contacts with staff. Six reported they found the job on Indeed or LinkedIn, three from Team Georgia Careers, three from a job board, three saw an advertisement, and one was previously a contractor.

Overall Themes

Many participants reported that they had an interest in technology and creative problem solving from a young age. Word of mouth and previous connections in state IT roles proved to be key recruitment methods. The respondents felt that the state offers many opportunities for growth and development but that career pathways and opportunities for upward mobility should be made clearer.

The following were the most commonly reported barriers:

- Pay not competitive with the private sector
- Lack of upward mobility
- Job descriptions that are outdated and intimidating
- Not being fully remote in the IT field can hinder potential recruiting opportunities
- Lack of experience
- State cannot take chances on underqualified employees because of already lean teams
- Agency-centric recruitment efforts rather than state-centric

The respondents suggested the following strategies for improved recruitment:

- Increase compensation.
- Create an effective career ladder.
- Create statewide training opportunities to learn new and emerging technologies.
- Expand teleworking opportunities.
- Create better pipelines for talent.
- Showcase the talents and service of current employees.

Implications of Questionnaire

Questionnaire respondents noted that they were interested in technology from a young age, suggesting the need for increased outreach to students interested in computer science, IT, and cybersecurity. Letting students know early on that jobs in state government are an option for them could help improve recruitment efforts.

Strategy Development and Prioritization

The second IT Workgroup meeting was held in person at DOAS in Atlanta on October 18, 2022. The second meeting began with a recap of the first meeting as well as presentations of the data collected from the agency and employee questionnaires. Next, the group examined career pipeline gaps with respect to entry-level jobs in IT. Discussion centered on what “entry-level qualifications” means at different agencies. Many agencies were open to expanding and creating internship and apprenticeship programs to grow their applicant pools.

The rest of the second meeting focused on identifying larger goal areas and developing and prioritizing strategies to accomplish these goals. To do this, small groups were formed to devise lists and use sticky notes to group together similar ideas into larger goals. Four major goal themes emerged from this process:

1. Marketing and Outreach
2. Job Qualifications and Certifications
3. Internships and Apprenticeships
4. Recruitment

Once the goal areas were agreed upon, the workgroup once again broke into smaller groups to develop short- and long-term strategies for each goal. Each group had a poster board on which to write potential strategies for their goal. After the groups listed strategies, each member was given a fixed number of colored dots with which to prioritize the strategies. The strategies that received the most dots were added to the implementation plan.

Implementation Plan

The third and final IT Workgroup meeting was held virtually via Zoom on November 8, 2022. This meeting began with a recap of the first two meetings, including a presentation of the preliminary data that informed the process, needs assessment and breakout activity in Meeting 1, goals and strategies from Meeting 2, and main takeaways from the agency and employee questionnaires. The majority of the meeting focused on drafting an IT Workforce Plan that detailed the identified strategies and tasks within the four goal areas.

Through a facilitated discussion, the workgroup designated each action item as either short or long term (with short term being defined as within the next 12 months) and assigned a project lead for each item. Table 3.6 shows the final IT Workforce Plan.

Table 3.6. IT Workforce Plan

Goals	Strategies	Action Items	Timeline		
Marketing and Outreach	1.1 Inform students about state IT opportunities.	1.1.1 Create a speakers' bureau to visit classrooms (virtually or in person) and speak to students.	Short		
		1.1.1.a Send a survey to find out who is interested in being a speaker. Start with workgroup; then each agency can forward the survey to its employees (Computer Science Advisory committee; women in IT).	Short		
		1.1.1.b Create a common message and presentation and who to contact.	Short		
		1.1.1.c Create a website speakers can access to get content for speaking; could include videos, types of jobs available, stats, etc.	Short		
		1.1.2 Conduct a road show with education partners where agency representatives visit high schools and colleges and speak to students (Zoom call – meet teachers first – Technology Student Association teachers; Future Business Leaders of America teachers).	Short		
		1.1.3 Develop a comprehensive website for students and parents to help students see a career for themselves in the state.	Long		
		1.1.4 Create a day-in-the-life video library for high school teachers.	Long		
		Job Qualifications and Certifications	2.1 Review current job descriptions and qualifications.	2.1.1 Evaluate the use of the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) Workforce Framework for Cybersecurity to update job descriptions.	Short
				2.1.1.a DOAS HRA classification team will meet with Eric Toler and Todd Watson to walk through the NICE Framework.	Short
				2.1.2 Periodically review job descriptions with DOAS and the IT community to ensure they are up to date.	Long
2.2 Identify appropriate training and education, and how to fund these opportunities.	2.2.1 Define what courses, work-role-specific certifications and trainings can be paid for at each agency.			Short	
	2.2.1.a Define what classes and certifications are required at each agency.			Short	
	2.2.1.b Determine a funding source for each identified class certification			Short	
2.2.2 Map IT and cyber training requirements to TCSG and USG credit and noncredit programs.		Long			
	Internships and Apprenticeships	3.1 Establish a statewide internship program.	3.1.1 Promote Team Georgia Careers as the central repository for internship postings.	Short	

Recruitment	4.1 Leverage HR departments' agency-level knowledge to increase recruitment and improve communication between agencies and educational partners.	4.1.1 Convert full-time employees to HR recruiters.	Long
		4.1.2 Determine what pipelines already exist.	Long
		4.1.3 Partner with military programs to identify recruits who are transitioning out of the military.	Long Term
		4.1.3.a Provide information that can be shared about state IT jobs.	Short Term

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

MARKETING AND OUTREACH

- Create a speakers' bureau to arrange in-person and virtual classroom visits to speak to students.
 - Send a survey to find out who is interested in being a speaker, starting with the workgroup first and then each agency.
 - Create a common message and presentation for speakers.
 - Develop a website where speakers can access content for speaking engagements.
- Conduct a road show with education partners where agency representatives visit high schools and speak to students in person or virtually.

JOB QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS

- Evaluate the use of the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) Workforce Framework for Cybersecurity to update job descriptions.
 - The DOAS HRA classification team will meet with members of the workgroup who have experience with the NICE framework to learn more.
- Define what courses, certifications, and trainings can be paid for at each agency.
 - Define what classes and certifications are required at each agency.
 - Determine a funding source for each identified class or certification.

INTERNSHIPS AND APPRENTICESHIPS

- Promote Team Georgia Careers as the central repository for internship postings.

RECRUITMENT

- Partner with military programs to identify recruits transitioning out of the military.
 - Provide information about state IT jobs to share with members of the military.

MEASURES OF PROGRESS

The workgroup agreed to use the following measures of progress to track its activities.

1. Number of *qualified* applicants for entry-level IT jobs (qualified = meets minimum qualifications)
2. Number of new IT hires annually at state agencies
3. Number of entry-level IT hires staying in state government for more than 12 months after hire
4. Number of cross-agency career fairs and information sessions held annually (workgroup collected)
 - a. High school partnerships
 - b. Higher education partnerships
5. Number of existing employees gaining new IT certifications in the last 12 months
6. Potential Measure: Number of applicants from military partners and programs (Note that this count would rely on Taleo data only.)

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

During the planning process, several ideas and strategies were identified that were outside the scope of the workgroup's charge or would require other partners beyond those in the workgroup to be successful. The following are the workgroup's additional recommendations to DOAS and other state leaders.

1. Bring salary compensation up to industry standards.
2. Budget internally for trainings and certifications for existing employees.
3. Develop a statewide approach to creating internship and mentorship opportunities.
4. Address reducing time to hire by studying the following:
 - The workflow from posting to hire
 - The time between hiring manager review and posting
 - Background checks, which can be a hurdle
 - Hiring manager availability; possibly teach how hiring panels can be consistent

Conclusion

The IT Workgroup agreed to continue to meet quarterly to work on the strategies identified in the plan. The co-chairs of the group, Ananias Williams and Mike Davis, agreed to continue to lead this group with the support of DOAS HRA.

GEORGIA WORKFORCE STRATEGIES INITIATIVE



SOCIAL SERVICES WORKGROUP



Table of Contents, Social Services Work Group

Letter from the Social Services Workgroup Co-Chairs.....	112
Social Services Workgroup Introduction.....	113
Social Services Workgroup Members	113
Needs Assessment and Identification of Opportunities and Barriers.....	114
Environmental Scan.....	120
Baseline Recruitment Questionnaire	121
Interviews with current Social Services Program consultants	123
Descriptive Statistics.....	123
Overall Themes	123
Implications of Interview Results	124
Strategy Development and Prioritization.....	124
Implementation Plan	125
Measures of Progress.....	127
Other Recommendations	128
Conclusion	128

Letter from the Social Services Workgroup Co-Chairs

Dear Social Services Workgroup members, partners, and stakeholders,

The social services sector attracts people with servant hearts who every day assist the citizens of Georgia in accessing the services they need. State social services jobs are experiencing high turnover and low retention. As a result, DOAS and other stakeholders formed this workgroup to address the workforce needs in this area. The workgroup collaborated over three months to better understand and find solutions for the recruitment and retention issues in this field.

This workgroup report shares the research and collaboration that went into defining goals and strategies for this sector. We hope to better market state opportunities, create a culture of collaboration across state agencies, partner with educational institutions, and develop new internship and mentorship opportunities. As a workgroup, we are committed to meeting quarterly to fulfill the goals and strategies for this sector.

Melody DeBussey, Deputy Commissioner for Family Independence; Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services

Nelsondria Brown, Nurse Manager, West Central Georgia Regional Hospital, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

Workgroup Chairs

Social Services Workgroup Introduction

The Social Services Workgroup, composed of representatives from interested state agencies, DOAS HRA, and the Institute of Government, was formed after the March 2022 Workforce Strategies Initiative steering committee meeting. The workgroup was led by Melody DeBussey, the deputy commissioner for family independence at the Georgia Department of Human Services, and Nelsondria Brown, nurse manager at West Central Georgia Regional Hospital at the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities.

The Social Services Workgroup met three times during fall 2022 to conduct a workforce pipeline study of the Social Services Program Consultant position. The workgroup developed strategies to boost interest in social services and increase employment. During the first meeting, the workgroup conducted a needs assessment and identified opportunities, barriers, and aspirations. During the second meeting, the workgroup established goal areas and brainstormed and prioritized strategies. In the final meeting, the workgroup finalized its implementation plan and identified the action items it would work on over the subsequent 12 months.

SOCIAL SERVICES WORKGROUP MEMBERS

Chairs

- **Melody DeBussey**, Georgia Department of Human Services
- **Nelsondria Brown**, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

Members

- **Joanne Ardovini**, Gordon State College
- **Steven Carter-Williams**, Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice
- **Yvette Daniels**, Georgia Department of Public Health
- **Arnita Dent**, Georgia Department of Human Services
- **Kerry Dyer**, Georgia Department of Veterans Service
- **Stephanie Ellis**, Pathways Center
- **Mark Green**, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
- **Kathryn Hornsby**, Technical College System of Georgia
- **Christopher Lampley**, Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice
- **Sandra Martin**, Georgia Department of Education
- **Ashley Parham**, Georgia Division of Family and Children Services
- **Katrina Patterson**, Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice
- **Patricia Ross**, Georgia Department of Veterans Service
- **Vickie Rundbaken**, Georgia Department of Education

SOCIAL SERVICES WORKGROUP MEMBERS, CONTINUED

- **Cynthia Searcy**, Georgia State University
- **Sheryl Wilhite**, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning
- **Maureen Williams**, Georgia Department of Human Services
- **Rebecca Williamson**, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

Needs Assessment and Identification of Opportunities and Barriers

During its March 2022 meeting, the Workforce Strategies Initiative steering committee selected the Social Services Program Consultant position as the social services job of interest. This role is present across multiple agencies and touches many aspects of the social services field. Though turnover for this midlevel role is limited, entry-level positions in the field tend to have higher turnover rates that disrupt the pathway to this role. For example, the turnover rates for Social Services Specialist and Economic Support Specialist are 32.0% and 16.8%, respectively. The workgroup focused on the Social Services Program Consultant position to better understand this pathway.

Table 4.1 shows employment trends in 2018 and 2021 for Social Services Program Consultant job codes. Note that only Social Services Program Consultant job codes provided by DOAS are included in this analysis. Employees doing equivalent work may exist in other job codes and would not be captured in these data. The positions shown in Table 4.1 are not intended to be an exhaustive list.

In total, this workgroup looked at data for 418 employees. Overall, decreasing employee counts demonstrate a need for enhanced recruitment and retention efforts. In FY 2021, the turnover rate for all Social Services Program Consultants was 7.9%. The job title is not entry level and requires a bachelor's or master's degree. The entry-level roles that feed into this position, such as Social Services Specialist and Economic Support Specialist, have higher turnover rates, impeding the pathway to this role.

Table 4.1. Trends in Social Services Program Consultant Positions, 2018 to 2021

Job	June 2018 Employee Count	June 2021 Employee Count	Percent Change	FY 2021 Turnover Rate	FY 2021 Hires/ Rehires	FY 2021 Separations
Total	424	418	-1.4%	7.9%	12	33
Social Services Program Consultant 1	12	19	58.3%	20.1%	2	3
Social Services Program Consultant 2	67	87	29.9%	5.8%	4	5
Social Services Program Consultant 3	345	312	-9.6%	7.9%	6	25

Source: Georgia Department of Administrative Services, Human Resources Administration Division, FY 2021 internal data

Table 4.2 depicts employment trends in 2018 and 2021 at the five state agencies that employ the highest number of Social Services Program Consultants. The data show that this job is relatively stable, but increased attention to the feeder positions mentioned above can develop more interest in this role.

Table 4.2. Trends in Agencies That Employ the Most Social Services Program Consultants, 2018 and 2021

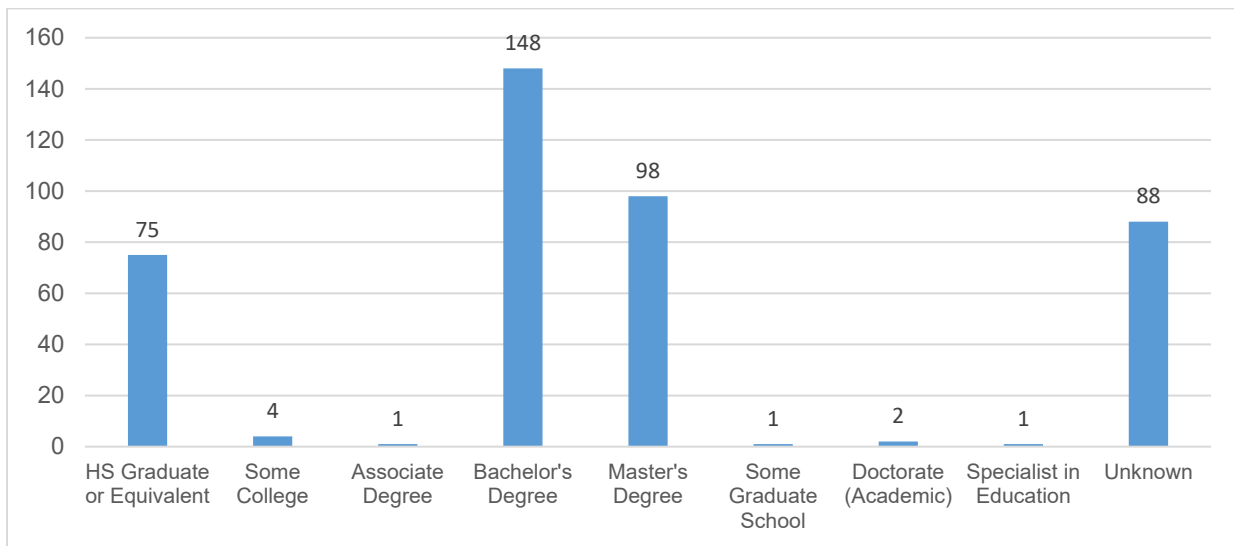
Job	June 2018 Employee Count	June 2021 Employee Count	Percent Change	FY 2021 Turnover Rate	FY 2021 Hires/ Rehires	FY 2021 Separations
Total (11)	424	418	-1.4%	7.9%	12	33
DHS	224	223	-0.4%	7.3%	2	17
DJJ	48	53	10.4%	0.0%	1	0
DOL	40	41	2.5%	10.1%	2	4
DBHDD	44	40	-9.1%	21.9%	3	9
GDC	30	20	-33.3%	0.0%	0	0
All Other Agencies	38	41	7.9%	9.2%	4	3

Source: Georgia Department of Administrative Services, Human Resources Administration Division, FY 2021 internal data

Note: DHS = Georgia Department of Human Services; DJJ = Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice; DOL = Georgia Department of Labor; DBHDD = Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities; GDC = Georgia Department of Corrections

The workgroup was interested in developing workforce pipelines into state Social Services Program Consultant jobs. Figure 4.1 shows the highest education level at the time of hire for Social Services Program Consultants hired in 2021. The majority have bachelor’s degrees, followed by master’s degrees, highlighting the need to develop pipelines with institutions of higher education.

Figure 4.1. Social Services Program Consultant Education Level at Time of Hire, 2021

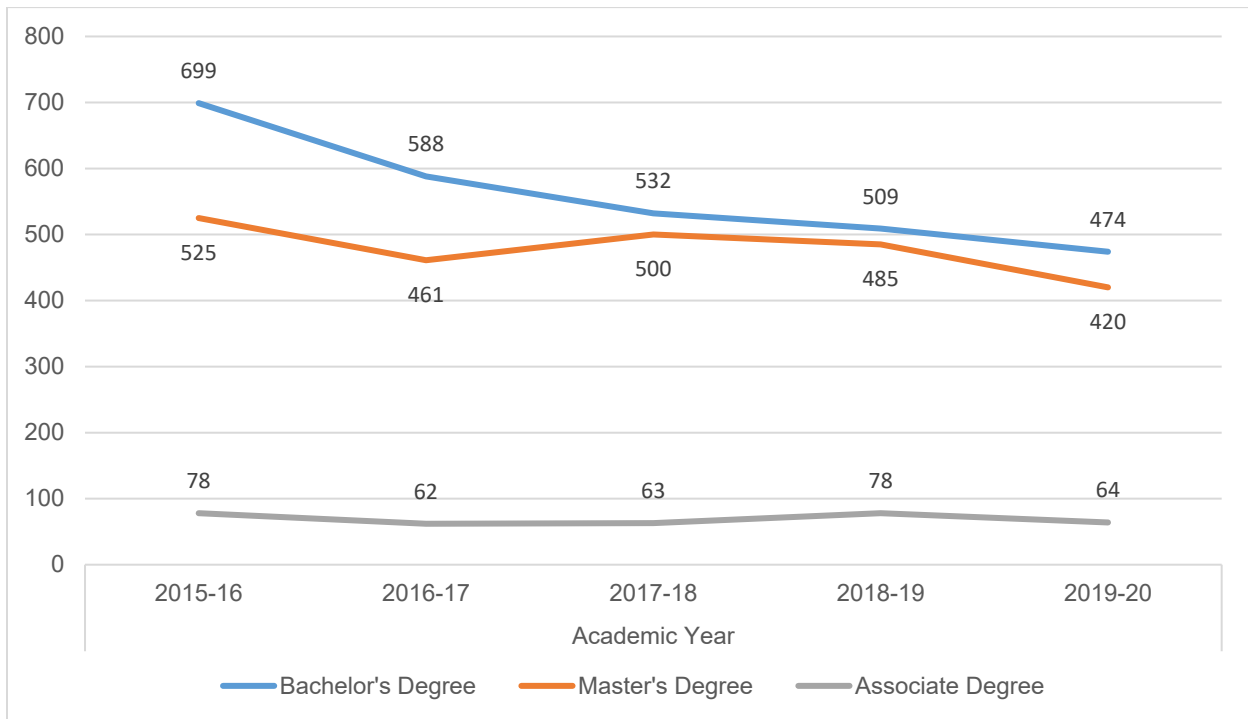


Source: Georgia Department of Administrative Services, Human Resources Administration Division, Team Georgia Careers

Note: Unknown = a hire who did not use Team Georgia Careers, the applicant tracking system for positions within Georgia state government

Figure 4.2 shows the number of associate, bachelor’s, and master’s degrees in human/social services awarded by Georgia institutions each year from 2015 to 2020. Overall, degrees awarded over the five-year period showed a decreasing trend, from 1,302 degrees in 2016 to 958 in 2020. In 2020, 474 people received a social services–related bachelor’s degree in Georgia, down from 699 in 2016. The number of master’s graduates dropped from 525 in 2016 to 420 in 2020.

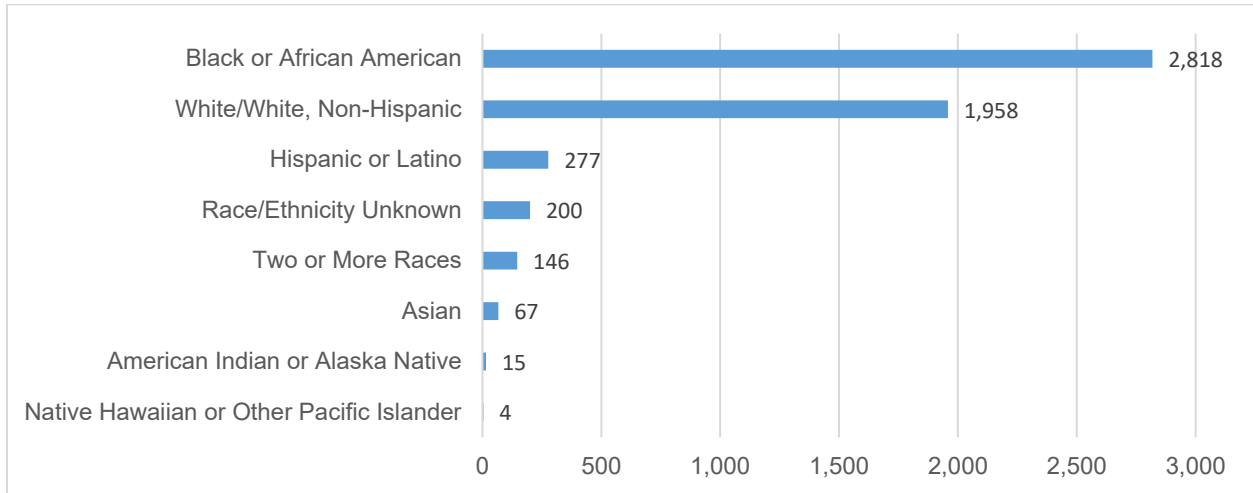
Figure 4.2. Total Social Services–Related Degree Completions, 2015–2020 in Georgia



Source: IPEDS

Figures 4.3 and 4.4 show that across the five-year period studied, social services graduates were more likely to be female than male and that the majority were Black or African American.

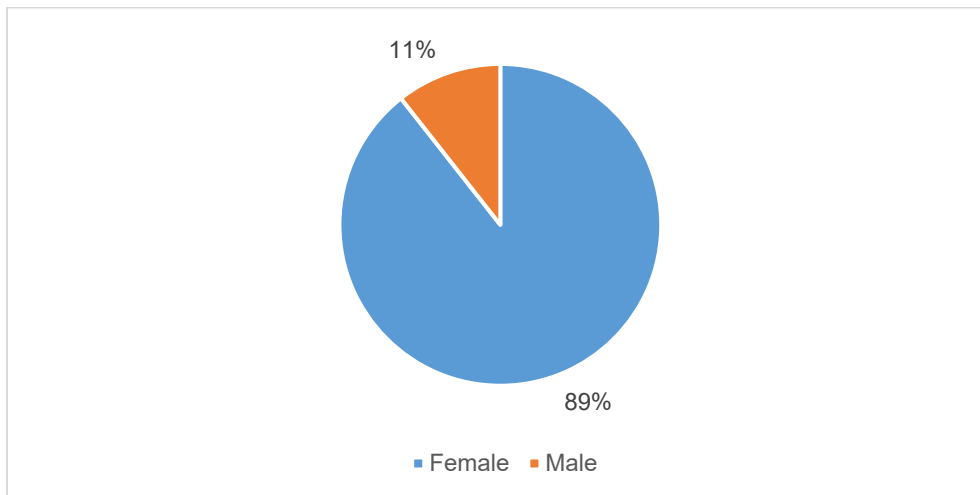
Figure 4.3. Race/ Ethnicity of Social Services Associate, Bachelor’s, and Master’s Program Graduates in Georgia, 2015–2020



Source: IPEDS

Note: 53 graduates were classified only as “nonresident alien” in IPEDS.

Figure 4.4. Gender of Social Services Associate, Bachelor’s, and Master’s Program Graduates in Georgia, 2015–2020



Source: IPEDS

The data collected for this workgroup demonstrate that demand for Social Services Program Consultants in the labor market exists and that Georgia colleges and universities are producing graduates with human/social services degrees. University System of Georgia (USG) data show

that of USG graduates with bachelor's or master's degrees in human/social services, 6.6% are working in the public sector one year after graduation.

As part of the needs assessment, the workgroup heard from two panels of experts: one focused on employers and the other on education partners. The workgroup first met with a panel of representatives from state agencies to learn more about what is working in state efforts to recruit and retain Social Services Program Consultants. State presenters also shared perspectives on challenges, barriers, and potential opportunities.

EMPLOYER PANEL

PANEL MEMBERS

- **Mark Green**, Director, Office of Human Resources and Learning, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
- **Ashley Parham**, North District Director, Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services
- **Katrina Patterson**, Director of Human Resources, Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice

BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- Increased demand for social workers in other fields creates competition
- Applicants unclear about what entry-level jobs in this field require
- Salaries not competitive for the degrees required
- Limited staff resources and time

OPPORTUNITIES AND IDEAS

- Present a clear and consistent message about the mission and values of each agency
- Recruit from across all regions of the state
- Participate in job fairs

Next, the workgroup heard from an Education Partners Panel representing the supply side. Panelists discussed existing programs, current services, and future opportunities for expanded programs and partnerships.

EDUCATION PARTNERS PANEL

PANEL MEMBERS

- **Joan Ardivini**, Provost, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, Gordon State College, University System of Georgia
- **Kathryn Hornsby**, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Technical Education, Technical College System of Georgia
- **Vickie Rundbaken**, Georgia Department of Education; Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education

PROGRAMS IN PLACE

- Technical College System of Georgia
 - Associate degrees in social work and social work assistant, a diploma program, and technical certificates of credit
- University System of Georgia
 - Human services programs
- Georgia Department of Education
 - Interested in developing a social services pathway for elementary, middle, and high school students

Following the panel presentations, the workgroup examined pipeline gaps with respect to entry-level jobs in the social services field. Discussion centered on entry-level qualifications and how they differ by agency for the same job and title. The workgroup agreed that more work was needed to standardize job descriptions and qualifications.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

The workgroup conducted an environmental scan to identify opportunities, barriers, and aspirations related to recruiting and retaining Social Services Program Consultants.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Improve state marketing and branding.
- Partner with colleges and universities.
- Develop internship programs.
- Create opportunities for midcareer progression.
- Show current employees that they are valued and appreciated.

BARRIERS

- Pay and compensation
- Lack of clear professional development opportunities
- Need to be creative about showing gratitude and appreciation to current state employees
- Competition in hiring from the private sector
- Review of minimum and required qualifications

ASPIRATIONS

- Ensure social services job descriptions reflect the actual job duties .
- Create a curriculum with education partners that maps skills to specific agencies.
- Create a plan to cultivate younger team members' continuing education.
- Create day-in-the-life videos.
- Develop succession planning.

BASELINE RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

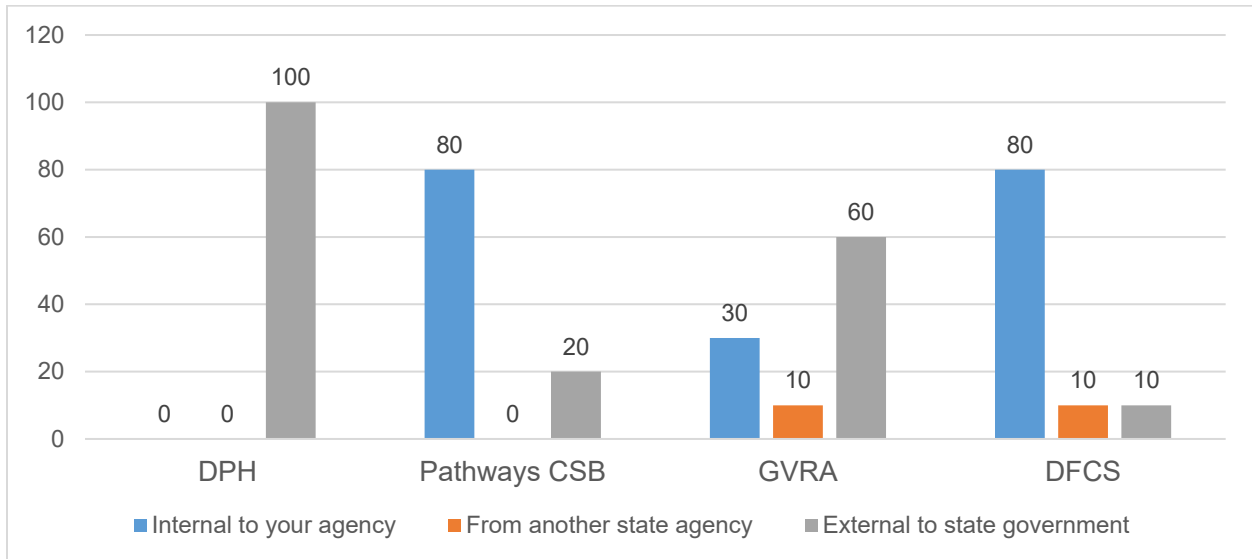
After the first workgroup meeting, a questionnaire was sent to all participating state agencies to gather more detailed baseline information and to ask follow-up questions based on the first meeting. Four state agencies responded to the questionnaire: the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), Pathways Center Community Service Board (Pathways CSB), the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA), and the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS).

The questionnaire first asked the agencies to identify their best recruitment strategy. The most commonly reported recruitment strategy was partnerships with colleges and universities, followed by internships, social media, and digital platforms. Other strategies mentioned were flyers and billboards, career fairs, informational sessions, targeted recruitment emails to qualified candidates, radio, and partnerships with high schools.

The questionnaire also asked the agencies to estimate the percentages of hires who were internal to their agency, from another state agency, and external to state government. Figure 4.5

shows the responses to this question. The four agencies that completed the questionnaire differ in their main source of hires.

Figure 4.5. Reported Percentage of Hires Internal to the Agency, External to State Government, or from Another State Agency



Note: DPH = Georgia Department of Public Health; Pathways CSB = Pathways Center Community Service Board; GVRA = Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency; DFCS = Georgia Division of Family and Children Services

Finally, the questionnaire asked agencies about alternative work arrangements. Three of the four responding agencies had alternative work arrangements, such as compressed work weeks or hybrid work.

The responding agencies also recommended the following strategies for attracting applicants:

- Increase entry-level salaries.
- Participate in job fairs and attend college career days.
- Communicate a clear mission and vision of your agency.
- Reduce minimum qualifications.
- Post ads on social media.
- Encourage master’s-level students to fulfill clinical internship requirements at state agencies.
- Provide free clinical supervision toward full licensure while tying in a retention plan.
- Offer temporary salary supplements.

INTERVIEWS WITH CURRENT SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAM CONSULTANTS

In addition to the agency questionnaire, researchers from the Institute of Government interviewed current Social Services Program Consultants or equivalent positions over Zoom to gain their perspectives and to complement the DOAS labor market data and information collected from employers. The Institute of Government's research team interviewed 12 employees from five different agencies.

The participating agencies and job titles are listed below:

- Pathways CSB: Clinical Director, Licensed Clinical Manager
- GVRA: Certified Rehabilitation Counselor I, Certified Rehabilitation Counselor II
- Georgia Department of Veterans Services (GDVS): Suicide Prevention and Outreach Coordinator, Women and Minority Veterans Coordinator
- DBHDD: Utilization Manager, Intake Coordinator, Social Services Program Consultant, Case Expeditor
- DHS DFCS: Lead Field Program Specialist, Field Program Specialist

The interviews focused on motivations for entering and staying in the social services field, what the interviewees value about their position, and changes they would like to see to improve recruitment and retention. These findings are not generalizable given the sample size, but they offer unique insights from people in state social services roles.

Descriptive Statistics

Most of the interviewees had worked in the field for 10+ years or for one to five years. Most of the interviewees were between 45 and 50 years old. The majority of interviewees' highest level of education was a master's degree in clinical rehabilitation counseling or social work. Of the 12 respondents, 10 had a master's degree and the other two had a bachelor's as their highest level of education. Three of the interviewees were in the process of completing their PhDs. The time in their current position ranged from less than a year to over 10 years. Four respondents reported that they were recruited to this job by word of mouth and contacts with staff; three learned about the job from Team Georgia Careers or another government job site; two had a boss or manager directly tell them about the role; one found the job through an online search; one had an internship with their current agency; and one interviewee could not remember how they were recruited to their current role.

Overall Themes

People in these roles care about the community they serve and making a difference in people's lives. Interviewees said that the high stress of the job due to high turnover rates and

understaffing can be addressed with support systems. The respondents also suggested a need to change public perceptions of social services jobs and to better show the public the support people in social services provide.

The following were the most commonly reported barriers to becoming a Social Services Program Consultant:

- Salaries not comparable to private-sector or federal government jobs
- Master's degree requirement
- High stress of the job due to high turnover rates, understaffing, high demand for resources, and challenges with clients
- Need a more diverse social services/counseling workforce to match the diverse population of the state
- Hard to know how to move up in an agency

The respondents suggested the following strategies to improve recruitment:

- Better advertise the services state agencies provide for the community.
- Improve salaries.
- Train managers to be more supportive, and give mental health time to prevent burnout.
- Offer remote work for one or two days a week.
- Provide assistants for counselors to help with the case load.
- Speak to psychology and social work classes at universities.
- Partner with local hospitals and community members to bring awareness of the jobs available at state agencies.
- Advertise the benefits of working in state government.
- Better align the job postings to actual job requirements.

Implications of Interview Results

Many interviewees mentioned that their interest in the social services field first developed during their undergraduate studies. Thus, increased outreach to students in undergraduate psychology, social work, or health care programs could be an effective way to attract entry-level workers to state government.

Strategy Development and Prioritization

The second Social Services Workgroup meeting was held in person at DOAS in Atlanta on October 26, 2022. The second meeting began with a recap of the first meeting as well as

presentations of the data collected from the agency questionnaire and qualitative employee interviews. Next, the group examined different entry-level qualifications among agencies that hire social services workers. Many agencies were open to expanding and creating internship and apprenticeship programs to grow their applicant pools. The workgroup also discussed traditional and nontraditional career pathways to social services roles and how to attract people in both pathways.

The rest of the second meeting focused on identifying larger goal areas and developing and prioritizing strategies to accomplish these goals. To do this, small groups were formed to devise lists and use sticky notes to group together similar ideas into larger goals. Four major goal themes emerged from this process:

1. Marketing
2. Partnerships and Collaborations
3. Mentorships and Internships
4. Professional Development

Once the goal areas were agreed upon, the workgroup once again broke into smaller groups to develop short- and long-term strategies for each goal. Each group had a poster board on which to write potential strategies for their goal. After the groups listed strategies, each member was given a fixed number of colored dots with which to prioritize the strategies. The strategies that received the most dots were added to the implementation plan.

Implementation Plan

The third and final Social Services Workgroup meeting was held virtually via Zoom on November 10, 2022. This meeting began with a recap of the first two meetings, including a presentation of the preliminary data that informed the process, needs assessment and breakout activity in Meeting 1, goals and strategies from Meeting 2, and main takeaways from the agency questionnaire and employee interviews. The majority of the meeting focused on drafting a Social Services Workforce Plan that detailed the identified strategies and tasks within the four goal areas.

Through a facilitated discussion, the workgroup designated each action item as either short or long term (with short term being defined as within the next 12 months) and assigned a project lead for each item. Table 4.3 shows the final Social Services Workforce Plan and is followed by recommendations and measures of progress.

Table 4.3. Social Services Workforce Plan

Goals	Strategies	Action Items	Timeline
Marketing	1.1 Develop a marketing plan for jobs in social services.	1.1.1 Meet quarterly as a workgroup to brainstorm and share ideas and information around marketing and recruiting.	Short and Long
		1.1.2 Identify agency brand ambassadors.	Short
		1.1.3 Create central marketing standards and trainings for agencies.	Long
		1.1.4 Produce day-in-the-life videos to better inform the public about social services jobs.	Long
		1.1.5 Use QR codes and SMS for job applications.	Short
Partnerships and Collaborations	2.1 Create a culture of collaboration across state agencies.	2.1.1 Provide updates of upcoming community and education partner events at quarterly workgroup meetings.	Short and Long
		2.1.2 Hold a "State of Georgia" social services employer fair (in person and/or virtually) to highlight full-time, part-time, and internship positions.	Long
		2.1.3 Connect hiring managers across agencies and departments to develop relationships and a résumé-sharing process for candidate transfer between agencies.	Short
	2.2 Partner with high schools and postsecondary institutions.	2.2.1 Attend regional career days and career fairs at high schools and TCSG and USG institutions.	Short
		2.2.2 Identify collaborations (such as cost-sharing) with higher education institutions to create paid internship/ fellowship opportunities.	Short
Mentorships and Internships	3.1 Develop a statewide approach to creating internship and mentorship opportunities.	3.1.1 Promote Team Georgia Careers as the central repository for internship postings.	Short and Long
		3.1.2 Identify key contacts at educational institutions.	Short
		3.1.3 Develop SkillBridge and Army Career Skills Program agreements with US military partners.	Short
		3.1.4 Develop internship programs in key career areas for high school and college students.	Long
		3.1.5 Develop an internship and mentorship toolkit for agencies, including rules and best practices.	Long
		3.1.6 Catalog existing internship and mentorship programs (paid and nonpaid) at each state agency.	Short
Professional Development	4.1 Offer a Social Services Georgia certification for a supplement or pay increase.	4.1.1 Develop partnerships and create a Georgia Social Services certificate (credit and noncredit certification) for social services jobs.	Long
	4.2 Develop an action plan for statewide goal setting and performance management.	4.1.2 Establish statewide goals and an action plan that goes beyond core competencies.	Long

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

MARKETING

- Meet quarterly as a workgroup to brainstorm and share ideas and information around marketing and recruiting.
- Identify agency brand ambassadors.
- Use QR codes and SMS for job applications.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

- Provide updates of upcoming community and education partner events at quarterly workgroup meetings.
- Connect hiring managers across agencies and departments to develop relationships and a résumé-sharing process for candidate transfer between agencies.
- Attend regional career days and career fairs at high schools and TCSG and USG institutions.
- Identify collaborations (such as cost-sharing) with higher education institutions to create paid internship/ fellowship opportunities.

MENTORSHIPS AND INTERNSHIPS

- Promote Team Georgia Careers as the central repository for internship postings.
- Identify key contacts at educational institutions.
- Develop SkillBridge and Army Career Skills Program agreements with US military partners.
- Catalog existing paid and nonpaid internship and mentorship programs at each state agency.
- Develop an internship and mentorship toolkit for agencies, including rules and best practices

MEASURES OF PROGRESS

The workgroup agreed to track its activities using the following measures of progress:

1. Number of qualified applicants (who meet minimum qualifications) for social services jobs per posted job
2. Number of new entry-level social services employees staying in state government for more than 12 months after hire
3. Number of multi-agency career fairs and information sessions held each year
 - High school partnerships
 - Higher education partnerships

4. Number of applicants from social media channels (based on the question, “How did you hear about us?”)
5. Number of social media hits (aggregate across all agencies)

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

During the planning process, several ideas and strategies were identified that were outside the scope of the workgroup’s charge or would require other partners beyond those in the workgroup to be successful. The following are the workgroup’s additional recommendations to DOAS and other state leaders.

1. Review current job descriptions and qualifications.
2. Set a standard that employee appreciation is expected of each agency.
3. Encourage agencies to find new ways to provide paid internship opportunities for students.

Conclusion

The Social Services Workgroup agreed to continue to meet quarterly to make progress on the strategies identified in the plan. The co-chairs of the group, Melody DeBussey and Nelsondria Brown, agreed to continue to lead this group with the support of DOAS HRA.

GEORGIA WORKFORCE STRATEGIES INITIATIVE



PROCUREMENT WORKGROUP



Table of Contents, Procurement Workgroup

- Letter from the Procurement Workgroup Co-Chairs 131
- Procurement Workgroup Introduction..... 132
 - Procurement Workgroup Members 132
- Needs Assessment and Identification of Opportunities and Barriers..... 133
 - Environmental Scan..... 140
 - Baseline Recruitment Questionnaire 141
 - Interviews with Current Procurement Professionals..... 142
 - Descriptive Statistics..... 143
 - Overall Themes 143
 - New Employee Themes 144
 - Experienced Employee Themes 145
 - Implications of Interview Results 145
- Strategy Development and Prioritization..... 145
- Implementation Plan 146
 - Measures of Progress..... 148
 - Other Recommendations 149
- Conclusion 149

Letter from the Procurement Workgroup Co-Chairs

Dear Procurement Workgroup members, partners, and stakeholders,

The procurement field touches every aspect of state government, which is why it is so crucial to increase recruitment and retention in this area. Procurement is a dynamic and satisfying career because of the many avenues within the profession, from Acquisitions, Contracting, Contract Administration, and Compliance/Process Improvements. Procurement is responsible for both optimizing costs and reporting on any savings achieved and delivering more tangible benefits to government. Procurement is a lesser known field, with many people going into procurement roles without any prior knowledge or interest in the area. Within several state agencies and the University System of Georgia, a shortage or modestly prepared staff of our current internal resources leaves new hires under-managed, inadequately challenged and without experienced staff professionals to guide and develop this new and raw talent. The goals and strategies laid out in this report emphasize the need to educate the public on the procurement field and attract individuals who are in high school, technical or traditional college, or in transitional periods in their careers. Procurement represents a fantastic choice for graduates looking for a varied and exciting role with great career prospects. This is one of the few sectors where new employees are given the opportunity to prove their worth and take charge of their own projects, from start to finish. The current economic climate has seen an increasing number of agencies and universities turn to their procurement professionals to deliver growth and improve the performance of their organization.

This report reflects months of research and collaboration from key stakeholders in the procurement, human resources, and education fields. We are excited to put the ideas and strategies discussed at every meeting into action, tackling state procurement workforce challenges head on. These efforts will involve continued collaboration, as many of these challenges are statewide and require complex solutions from many members of the workgroup. We hope to use our quarterly Procurement Workgroup meetings as opportunities to regroup, share successes, and continue to inspire new innovative solutions to workforce challenges.

Jim Barnaby, Deputy Commissioner of State Purchasing, State Purchasing Division, Georgia Department of Administrative Services

Mary Zirock, Assistant Chief Procurement Officer, Georgia Department of Transportation

Workgroup Chairs

Procurement Workgroup Introduction

The Procurement Workgroup, composed of representatives from interested state agencies, DOAS HRA, and the Institute of Government, was formed after the March 2022 Workforce Strategies Initiative steering committee meeting. The workgroup was led by Jim Barnaby, deputy commissioner of state purchasing at the Georgia Department of Administrative Services, and Mary Zirock, assistant state procurement administrator at the Georgia Department of Transportation.

The Procurement Workgroup met three times between November 2022 and January 2023 to conduct a workforce pipeline study of the procurement profession. The workgroup developed strategies to boost interest in procurement and increase employment. During the first meeting the workgroup conducted a needs assessment and identified opportunities, barriers, and aspirations. During the second meeting, the workgroup established goal areas and brainstormed and prioritized strategies. In the final meeting, the workgroup finalized its implementation plan and identified the action items it would work on over the subsequent 12 months.

Through the duration of workgroup process, it became that there was not a consistent definition of procurement in the government sector. The following is the definition of procurement used for this workgroup.

Procurement is the sourcing and selection of goods and services following a process and obligation to adhere to rules and regulations. It is a method of discovering and agreeing to terms and purchasing goods/services or other works, from an external source through the use of a competitive bidding process. Procurement is responsible for both optimizing costs and reporting on any savings achieved and delivering more tangible benefits to government.

PROCUREMENT WORKGROUP MEMBERS

Chairs

- **Jim Barnaby**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Mary Zirock**, Georgia Department of Transportation

Members

- **Sharon Carter**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Mary Chapman**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Joni Cochran**, Georgia Department of Education
- **Gary Craft**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Jimmy DeSantis**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services

- **McCall Ginsburg**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Mary Hankinson**, Southern Crescent Technical College
- **Toyia Hunter**, Technical College System of Georgia
- **Monique Jenkins**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Lisa Elliott Little**, University System of Georgia
- **Vincent Mangum**, Atlanta Metropolitan State College
- **Mac McConnell**, University of North Georgia
- **Dianne McWethy**, DeKalb County Board of Health
- **Mark Meeks**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Lisa Mehalko**, Georgia Technology Authority

PROCUREMENT WORKGROUP MEMBERS, CONTINUED

- **Conrad Norman**, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Ajay Patel**, Georgia Institute of Technology
- **Arveeta Turner**, Georgia Department of Education
- **Phillip Visha**, Georgia Department of Corrections

Needs Assessment and Identification of Opportunities and Barriers

Table 5.1 shows employment trends in 2018 and 2021 for purchasing/procurement roles in state government. Note that only purchasing/procurement agent job codes provided by DOAS are included in this analysis. Employees doing procurement work may exist in different job codes and would not be captured in these data. The positions shown in Table 5.1 are not intended to be an exhaustive list.

In total, this workgroup looked at data for 103 employees. Overall, decreasing employee counts demonstrate a need for enhanced recruitment and retention efforts. In FY 2021, the turnover rate for all purchasing/procurement agent positions was 8.8%.

Table 5.1. Trends in Procurement Positions in Georgia State Agencies, 2018 and 2021

Job	June 2018 Employee Count	June 2021 Employee Count	Percent Change	FY 2021 Turnover Rate	FY 2021 Hires/Rehires	FY 2021 Separations
Total	107	103	-3.7%	8.8%	9	9
Purchasing/Procurement Agent 1	36	35	-2.8%	11.6%	2	4
Purchasing/Procurement Agent 2	45	40	-11.1%	10.3%	5	4
Purchasing/Procurement Agent 3	26	28	7.7%	3.4%	2	1

Source: Georgia Department of Administrative Services, Human Resources Administration Division, FY 2021 internal data

Note: The total number of purchasing/procurement employees is difficult to calculate due to nonstandard job classification.

Table 5.2 depicts employment trends in 2018 and 2021 at the five state agencies that employ the most purchasing/procurement agents. The data show that the number of procurement positions has decreased at most of these agencies.

Table 5.2. Trends in Agencies That Employ the Most Purchasing/Procurement Agents, 2018 and 2021

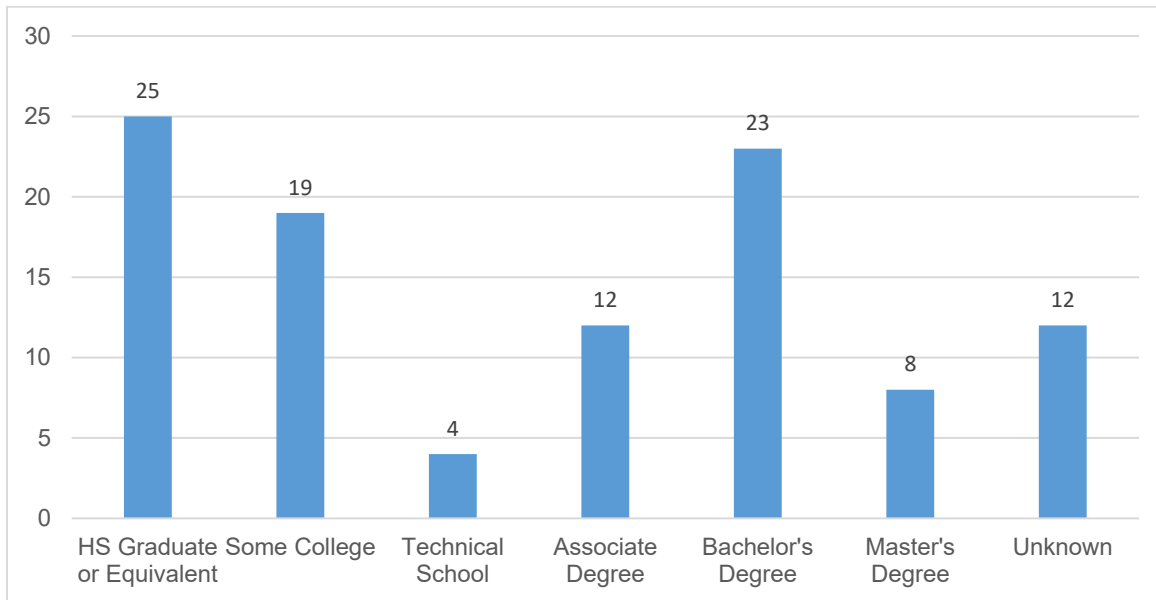
Job	June 2018 Employee Count	June 2021 Employee Count	Percent Change	FY 2021 Turnover Rate	FY 2021 Hires/Rehires	FY 2021 Separations
Total (31)	107	103	-3.7%	8.8%	9	9
DOT	35	33	-5.7%	10.2%	2	3
GDC	10	12	20.0%	9.5%	1	1
DBHDD	7	6	-14.3%	0.0%	0	0
DJJ	7	5	-28.6%	25.5%	0	1
DOL	5	5	0.0%	0.0%	0	0
All Other Agencies	43	42	-2.3%	8.4%	6	4

Source: Georgia Department of Administrative Services, Human Resources Administration Division, FY 2021 internal data

Note: The total number of purchasing/procurement employees is difficult to calculate due to nonstandard job classification. DOT = Georgia Department of Transportation; GDC = Georgia Department of Corrections; DBHDD = Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities; DJJ = Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice; DOL = Georgia Department of Labor

The workgroup was interested in developing workforce pipelines into the purchasing/procurement agent role. Figure 5.1 shows the highest education level at the time of hire for purchasing/procurement agents hired in FY 2021 across state agencies. The data indicate that these agents have a diverse range of education levels, showcasing the lack of a clear pathway into procurement roles. This diversity also highlights the existence of multiple ramps into the occupation.

Figure 5.1. Purchasing/Procurement Agent Education Level at Time of Hire, FY 2021

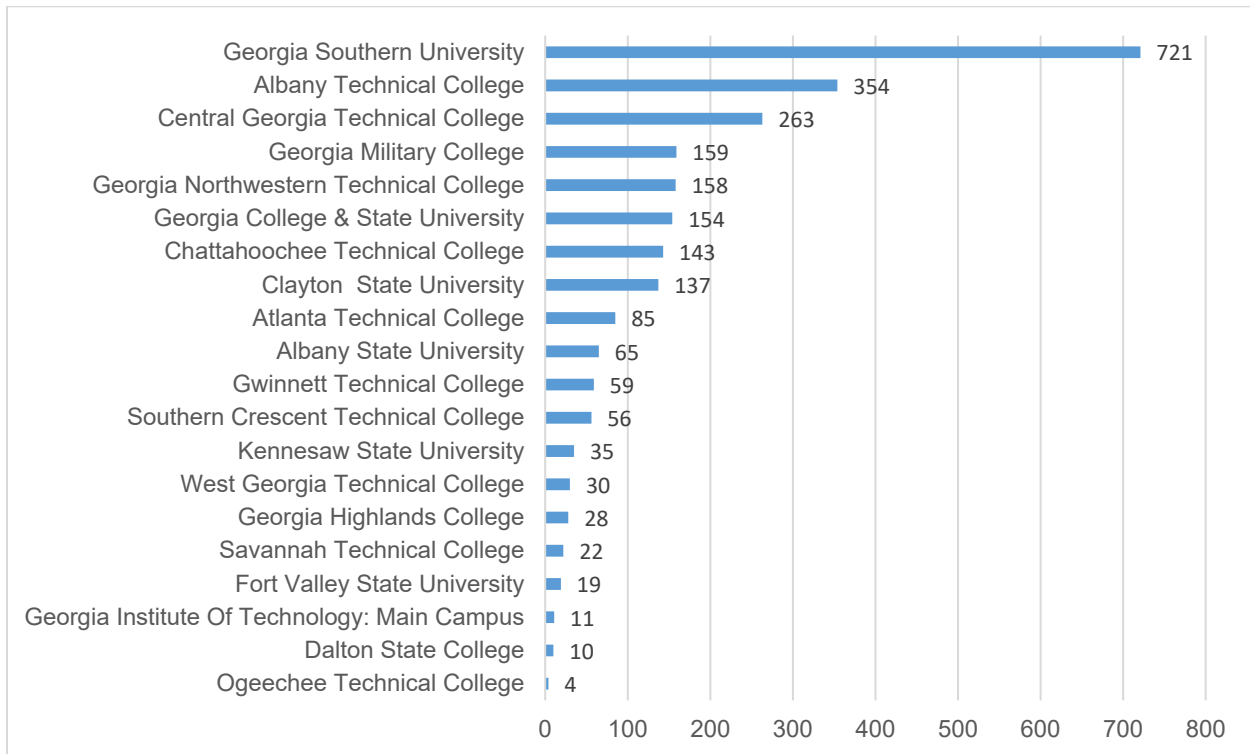


Source: Georgia Department of Administrative Services, Human Resources Administration Division, Team Georgia Careers

Note: Unknown = a hire who did not use Team Georgia Careers, the applicant tracking system for positions within Georgia state government

There is no clear education pathway to enter procurement; however, a variety of Georgia institutions offer logistics and supply chain programs that teach students some of the skills related to working in procurement. This degree area does not meet all the main job functions of procurement. Many other degree programs such as business, law, and economics teach other skills integral to a career in procurement. Figure 5.2 shows the Georgia institutions that awarded the most logistics, materials, and supply chain management degrees between 2015 and 2020. Georgia Southern University is producing the most graduates in that area by far, with over 700 degrees awarded.

Figure 5.2. Georgia Institutions with the Most Logistics, Materials, and Supply Chain Management Degree Completions, 2015–2020

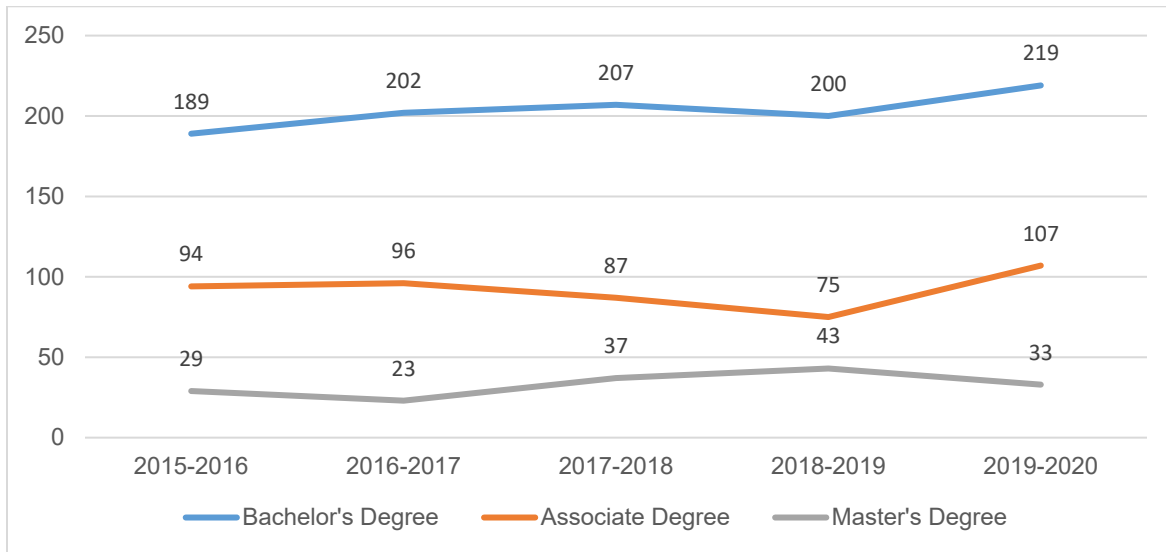


Source: IPEDS

Note: Includes all degree completions (associate, bachelor's, master's) and certificates

Figure 5.3 shows the number of associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees in logistics, materials, and supply chain management awarded by Georgia institutions each year from 2015 to 2020. Overall, degrees awarded grew slightly over the five-year period, increasing from 312 degrees in 2016 to 359 degrees produced in 2020. In 2020, 219 people received a logistics, materials, and supply chain management bachelor's degree, up from 189 in 2016. The number of master's graduates increased from 29 in 2016 to 33 in 2020.

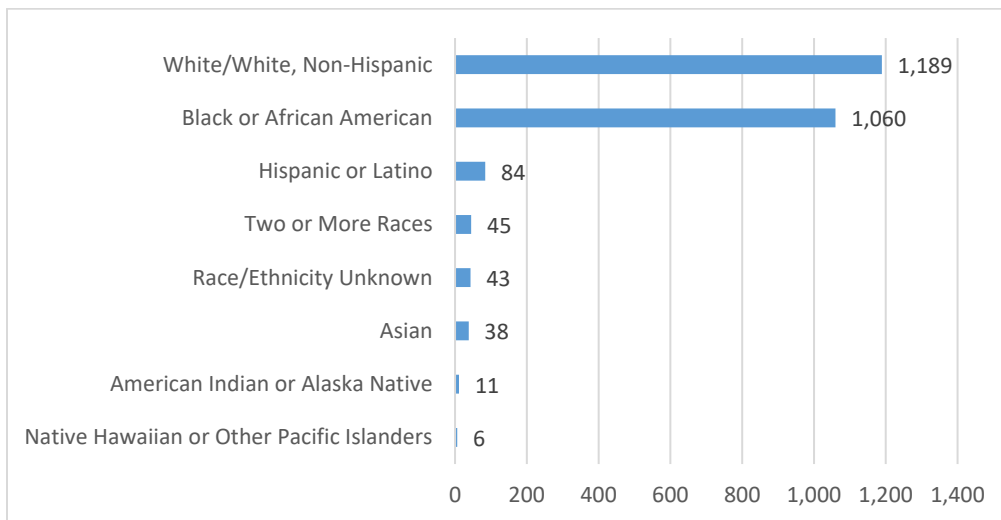
Figure 5.3. Total Logistics, Materials and Supply Chain Management Degree Completions, 2015–2020 by Academic Year in Georgia



Source: IPEDS

Figures 5.4 and 5.5 show that across the five-year period studied, logistics, materials, and supply chain management graduates in Georgia were more likely to be male than female and that the most were White.

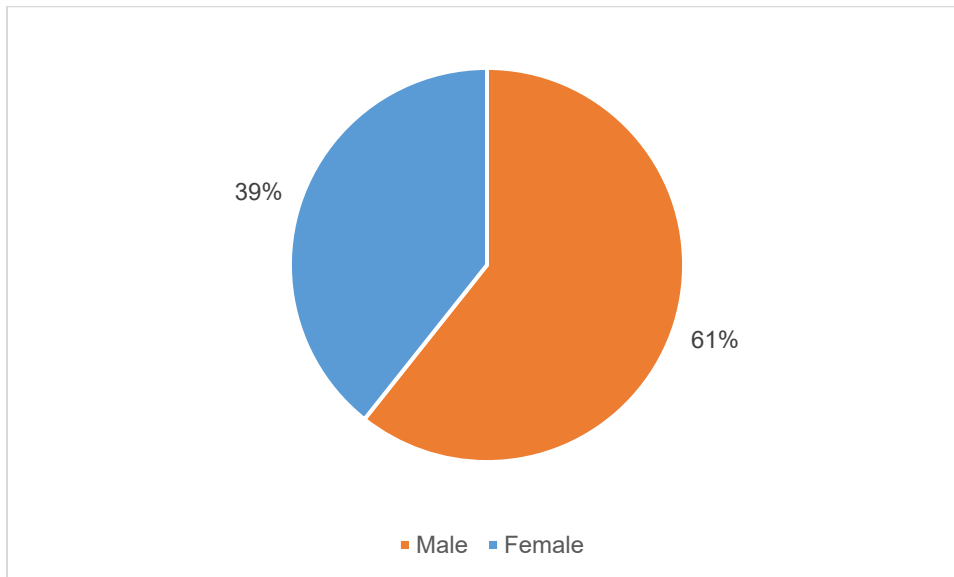
Figure 5.4. Race of Logistics, Materials, and Supply Chain Management Program Graduates in Georgia, 2015–2020



Source: IPEDS

Notes: 37 graduates were classified only as “nonresident alien” in IPEDS. All degree levels including certificates and doctoral degrees are included in the figure.

Figure 5.5. Gender of Logistics, Materials, and Supply Chain Management Program Graduates in Georgia, 2015–2020



Source: IPEDS

Note: All degree levels including certificates and doctoral degrees are included in the figure.

The data collected for this workgroup demonstrate that demand for procurement roles in the labor market exists and that Georgia colleges and universities are producing graduates with logistics, materials, and supply chain management degrees that would have some of the relevant skills to succeed in the procurement field. University System of Georgia (USG) data show that of USG graduates with bachelor’s or master’s degrees in logistics, materials, and supply chain management, 1.5% are working in the public sector one year after graduation. This represents only one of the degree types that could lead to a career in procurement.

Supply chain management is oversight and control of all the activities required for a company to convert raw materials into finished products that are then sold to end-users. Supply chain management is the handling of the entire production flow of a good or service — starting from the raw components all the way to delivering the final product to the consumer.

A supply chain is a network of businesses and activities that takes a product from raw material suppliers to end consumers. By definition, logistics refers to the processes of acquiring, transporting, and storing resources along the supply chain and logistics.

As part of the needs assessment, the workgroup heard from two panels of experts: one focused on employers and the other on education partners. The workgroup first met with a panel of

representatives from state agencies to learn more about what is working in state efforts to recruit and retain procurement agents. State presenters also shared perspectives on challenges, barriers, and potential opportunities for enhanced recruitment and retention of procurement agents.

EMPLOYER PANEL

PANEL MEMBERS

- **Jimmy DeSantis**, Senior Human Resources Manager, Georgia Department of Administrative Services
- **Phillip Visha**, Job Evaluation Unit Manager, Georgia Department of Corrections

BARRIERS TO RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- Applicants do not have a true understanding of the procurement field.
- Salaries are not competitive with the private sector.

OPPORTUNITIES AND IDEAS

- Lower minimum requirements.
- Create a pipeline with education partners and other agencies.
- Attend job fairs.

Next, the workgroup heard from an Education Partners Panel representing the supply side. Panelists discussed existing programs, current services, and future opportunities for expanded programs and partnerships.

EDUCATION PARTNERS PANEL

PANEL MEMBERS

- **Joni Cochran**, Program Specialist, Georgia Department of Education; Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE)
- **Mary Hankinson**, Director of Accounting, Southern Crescent Technical College, Technical College System of Georgia
- **Dr. Vincent Mangum**, Dean, School of Business and Technology, Atlanta Metropolitan State College, University System of Georgia

PROGRAMS IN PLACE

- Technical College System of Georgia
 - Offers several associate degrees in logistics, accounting, and supply chain management offered
- University System of Georgia
 - Nine USG institutions offer degrees in supply chain or logistics management
 - Business administration programs that teach competencies relevant to procurement
 - Certificates and associate degrees in customer relations and cybersecurity relevant to this field
- Georgia Department of Education
 - Currently, no procurement CTAE pathway, but procurement could be added into accounting and logistics courses as a part of existing pathways

Following the panel presentations, the workgroup members discussed how they entered the procurement field, highlighting the many paths to procurement.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

The workgroup conducted an environmental scan to identify the opportunities, barriers, and aspirations related to recruiting and retaining procurement agents.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Speak at high schools, technical colleges, and universities to inform students about procurement.
- Standardize job codes, pay scales, position responsibilities, and job titles across agencies.
- Define the state procurement career path.
- Target people transitioning out of the military for procurement jobs.
- Create an internship/fellowship program that exposes students to the variety in the role.

BARRIERS

- The benefits and pay are not competitive with private industry.
- The public does not know what procurement means or what a job in procurement entails.
- There is no clear pathway to procurement.
- More pay levels are needed in the procurement field.
- It is currently unclear what courses and certificates can best map to the needs of agencies.

ASPIRATIONS

- Provide career ladders and pathways with specific steps for entry-level employees.
- Create an education pathway geared toward procurement and purchasing.
- Speak at high school and college classes about procurement.
- Attend job fairs at high schools, technical colleges, and universities.
- Better educate agency leadership about procurement.

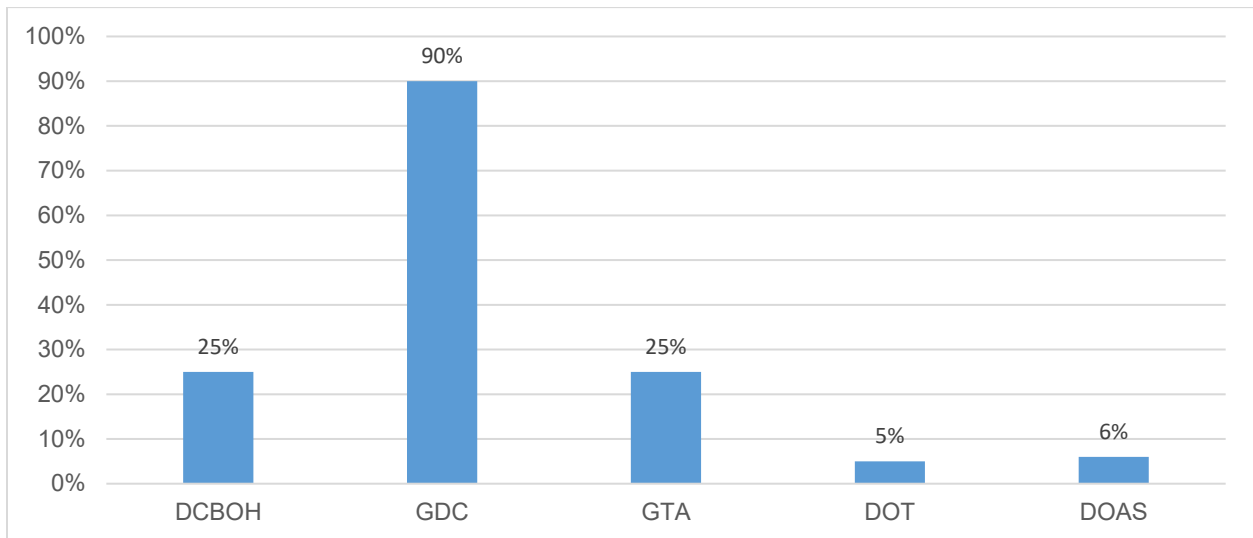
BASELINE RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

After the first workgroup meeting, a questionnaire was sent to all participating state agencies to gather more detailed baseline information and to ask follow-up questions based on the first meeting. Six agencies responded to the questionnaire: the DeKalb County Board of Health (DCBOH), the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC), the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA), the Georgia Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Georgia Department of Administrative Services (DOAS).

The questionnaire first asked the agencies to identify their best recruitment strategy for procurement positions. The most commonly reported recruitment strategy was digital platforms, followed by social media and the Team Georgia Careers website. Other strategies mentioned included internships and job boards. The next question asked agencies about their most common referral sources. Responses included referrals from other state agencies, current employees, and the Team Georgia Careers website.

The questionnaire also asked the agencies to estimate the percentage of applicants for open procurement positions who were qualified for the jobs. Figure 6 shows the responses to this question. The six agencies that completed the questionnaire differed in applicant quality, but most viewed their candidates as underqualified.

Figure 5.6. Reported Percentage of Applicants Who Were Qualified for Procurement Positions, FY 2022



Note: DCBOH = DeKalb County Board of Health; GDC = Georgia Department of Corrections; GTA = Georgia Technology Authority; DOT = Georgia Department of Transportation; DOAS = Georgia Department of Administrative Services

Finally, the questionnaire asked agencies about alternative work arrangements and the use of contractors. All agencies that responded stated they offer alternative work arrangements. Only one responding agency reported using contractors in procurement roles.

The responding agencies also recommended the following strategies for attracting applicants:

- Use contractors with the option to hire, pending applying for open positions.
- Encourage current employees to refer applicants for jobs.
- Find current employees who are interested in purchasing/procurement, and consider them for vacancies.
- Allow work-from-home 75% of the time and have flexible hours.
- Post on professional websites like the Georgia National Institute of Governmental Purchasing and the Governmental Procurement Association of Georgia.
- Create and advertise internships targeting business and public administration majors.

INTERVIEWS WITH CURRENT PROCUREMENT PROFESSIONALS

In addition to the agency questionnaire, researchers from the Institute of Government interviewed current procurement professionals over Zoom to gain their perspectives and to complement the DOAS labor market data and information collected from employers. The Institute of Government's research team interviewed 13 employees from five different agencies.

The participating agencies and job titles are listed below:

- DCBOH: Procurement Officer 2, Procurement and Contracts Supervisor
- DOAS: 2 Category Managers, Manager for Statewide IT Sourcing Team, Auditor 2, Category Manager in IT and Professional Services
- GDC: Procurement Officer 1, Procurement Officer 2
- DOT: Contracts Specialist 2, Contracts Manager of Operational Procurement
- University of North Georgia: Procurement Director, P-Card Administrator

The interviews focused on motivations for entering and staying in the procurement field, what the interviewees value about the position, and changes they would like to see to improve recruitment and retention. These findings are not generalizable given the sample size, but they offer unique insights from people in state procurement roles.

Descriptive Statistics

Of the 13 interviewees, eight had been in their role for less than five years, ranging in age from 25 to 54. Five of the eight had previous state experience. Five of the interviewees had been in their role for more than five years, and they ranged in age from 50 to 61 years of old. Four of the five had prior state experience. The education level of the 13 interviewees ranged from a high school diploma to a doctorate degree, as shown in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3. Interviewees Highest Current Education Level

	High School	Associate	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate
Number	2	1	6	3	1

Overall Themes

People in state procurement positions most often fall into the role or develop an interest in procurement in a previous job that interacted with the procurement process, highlighting the lack of a defined pipeline and insufficient public knowledge of procurement. To capture additional workers beyond those that come into the profession by chance, recruitment should target individuals transitioning into second careers. The procurement field also needs to be better advertised and explained to the public. Additionally, interviewees consistently mentioned the need for expanded training for leadership and higher-level procurement roles to enhance procurement knowledge and help management better equip their employees for procurement roles.

The following were the most commonly reported barriers to attracting workers to state procurement roles:

- Minimum experience requirements too high for entry-level roles
- Compensation
- Steep learning curve at the beginning: come to procurement from different sectors and need to learn new skills quickly
- Lack of communication and customer service skills when first starting out
- No clear path to procurement roles
- A lot of work to do and not many people to do it
- State procurement process moves slower than the private sector

The respondents suggested the following strategies to improve recruitment:

- Increase compensation.
- Expand training to include leadership and higher-level procurement roles.
- Split out the procurement track so there are more levels for people to grow.
- Widen the candidate pool. Seek out people in transition. Hire people with the promise to train them.
- Expand outreach to colleges.
- Create and advertise internship programs.

UNIQUE PATHS TO PROCUREMENT

Workgroup participants had their own distinct paths to their procurement roles.

- One workgroup participant got a degree in psychology, interned in human resources for a local government, then became a buyer there, before moving into higher procurement roles at other state agencies.
- Another workgroup participant got a degree in art history, then became an assistant director of contracts at a university, and finally the director of procurement at a state agency.

New Employee Themes

Among the eight interviewees who had been in their current procurement role for less than five years, several themes emerged. The range of ages for the new hires suggests that this is a career

area suited to second-career or midcareer employees. Five participants reported that they had a prior role in state government, and only one indicated that this was their first career job.

Most participants reported that they heard about their current role through word of mouth. Three said that the benefits package was a significant factor when deciding to join the state.

Interviewees were also asked where they saw themselves in the next five to 10 years. Five of the less-experienced participants indicated they would like to stay with the state, with one saying they would like to retire with the state. One said they did not see themselves staying with the state, and one was unsure what their next five years would look like.

Experienced Employee Themes

Among the five interviewees who had been in their current procurement role for more than five years, several themes emerged. Three had had a prior job with the state. Most of the five had found their current job online. Three indicated that the benefits package was a significant factor when deciding to join the state.

These interviewees were also asked where they saw themselves in the next five to 10 years. Three said they expected to retire with the state, and two planned to stay with the state over the next five to 10 years.

Implications of Interview Results

There is no defined pipeline into the procurement field. None of the people interviewed went to school for procurement or knew about the profession before entering the working world. Based on the information collected in the interviews, recruitment should target individuals transitioning into second careers, providing them with necessary training once on the job. The procurement field also needs to be better advertised and explained to the public.

Strategy Development and Prioritization

The second Procurement Workgroup meeting was held in person at DOAS in Atlanta on January 11, 2023. The second meeting began with a recap of the first meeting as well as presentations of the data collected from the agency questionnaire and qualitative employee interviews. Next, the group examined different entry-level qualifications among agencies that hire procurement agents. Many agencies would like to create a procurement job family that could centralize and standardize how procurement positions are explained and advertised to the public. The workgroup also discussed the nontraditional career pathways to procurement roles and how to attract people by providing on-the-job training. The group discussed the

challenges of how to talk about the work of procurement. The group noted that terms like “purchasing,” “contracting,” and “procurement” are used interchangeably. However, the private sector and college degree programs tend to use the terms “supply chain management” or “logistics.”

The rest of the second meeting focused on identifying larger goal areas and developing and prioritizing strategies to accomplish these goals. To do this, small groups were formed to devise lists and use sticky notes to group together similar ideas into larger goals. Four major goal themes emerged from this process:

1. Marketing
2. Create a Procurement Job Family
3. Education Partnerships and Pathways
4. Employee Development

Once the goal areas were agreed upon, the workgroup once again broke into smaller groups to develop short- and long-term strategies for each goal. Each group had a poster board on which to write potential strategies for their goal. After the groups listed strategies, each member was given a fixed number of colored dots with which to prioritize the strategies. The strategies that received the most dots were added to the implementation plan.

Implementation Plan

The third and final Procurement Workgroup meeting was held virtually via Zoom on January, 25, 2023. This meeting focused on drafting a Procurement Workforce Plan that detailed the identified strategies and tasks within the four goal areas.

Through a facilitated discussion, the workgroup designated each action item as either short or long term (with short term being defined as within the next 12 months) and assigned a project lead for each item. Table 5.4 shows the final Procurement Workforce Plan.

Table 5.4. Procurement Workforce Plan

Goals	Strategies	Action Items	Timeline
Marketing	1.1 Create a procurement brand strategy.	1.1.1 Create a consistent language for the procurement brand strategy.	Short
	1.2 Market internships and apprenticeships.	1.2.1 Inventory internships and apprenticeships.	Short
	1.3 Take a statewide approach to the marketing strategy.	1.3.1 Participate in statewide marketing strategies, including social media.	Short
Create a Procurement Job Family	2.1 Create a procurement job family.	2.1.1 Review entry-level requirements to ensure they are not a barrier to entry.	Short
		2.1.2 Identify all procurement job titles and determine which can be standardized.	Short
	2.2 Investigate and implement putting job postings for the whole state in one place.		Short
	2.3 Create and advertise career ladders for entry-level employees to move to advanced/midlevel roles through certificates.		Long
Education Partnerships and Pathways	2.4 Host procurement outreach events with state agencies.	2.4.1 Develop content and plan for outreach events with state agencies to educate about procurement.	Short
	3.1 Collaborate with education partners to create a procurement certificate or degree program.		Long
	3.2 Create a Georgia Procurement Academy.	3.2.1 Create a training portal to introduce non-state employees to procurement.	Long
	3.3 Have procurement employees attend job fairs with agency HR teams.	3.3.1 Identify job fairs that procurement employees can attend with agency HR teams.	Short
	3.4 Develop procurement-related activities and content for relevant CTAE programs.	3.4.1 Consider what procurement skills a high school student would want to know and how to best present the field to them.	Short
Employee Development	3.5 Partner with the military to promote state opportunities.	3.5.1 Identify military partnership programs related to procurement.	Short
	4.1 Create a mentorship program for new employees.		Long
	4.2 Continue the Procurement Workgroup.		Long

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

MARKETING

- Create a consistent language for the procurement brand strategy.
- Inventory internships and apprenticeships.
- Participate in statewide marketing strategies, including social media.

CREATE A PROCUREMENT JOB FAMILY

- Review entry-level requirements to ensure they are not a barrier to entry.
- Identify all procurement job titles and determine which can be standardized.
- Develop content and plan for outreach events with state agencies to educate about procurement.

EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS AND PATHWAYS

- Identify job fairs that procurement employees can attend with agency human resources teams.
- Develop activities related to relevant CTAE programs.
- Identify military partnership programs related to procurement.
- Create a training portal to introduce non-state employees to procurement

MEASURES OF PROGRESS

The workgroup agreed to the following measures of progress to track its activities.

1. Number of qualified applicants for procurement jobs per posted job (meeting minimum qualifications)
 - To get started and establish a baseline, use existing job codes to capture applicants in this area
2. Number of new entry-level procurement employees staying in state government for more than 12 months after hire
 - Proxy might be new hires that show up in learning management system (LMS) for training
 - Requester
 - P-card holders
3. Number of multi-agency career fairs and information sessions attended annually
 - High school partnerships
 - Higher education partnerships
 - Military partnerships
4. Number of applicants from social media channels (based on the question, “How did you hear about us?”)

5. Number of social media hits (aggregate across all agencies)
6. Procurement Job Family creation
7. Number of partners engaged in the procurement pipeline
8. Number of people trained by external-facing portal who are getting certified or viewing content (long-term)

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

During the planning process, several ideas and strategies were identified that were outside the scope of the workgroup's charge or would require other partners beyond those in the workgroup to be successful. The following are the workgroup's additional recommendations to DOAS and other state leaders.

1. Conduct exit and stay interviews at the state level to learn how to retain and attract people.
2. Create a standard state script and one-pager, and enhance the DOAS consumer-facing website to explain benefits to potential recruits.
3. Follow HRA guidance and contact managers at other agencies to make sure reference checks indicate work experience claimed and to flag unsatisfactory performers to prevent them from transitioning to other agencies/entities.

Conclusion

The Procurement Workgroup agreed to continue to meet quarterly to work on the strategies identified in the plan. Co-chairs Jim Barnaby and Mary Zirock agreed to continue to lead this group with the support of DOAS HRA.

GEORGIA WORKFORCE STRATEGIES INITIATIVE



STATEWIDE WORKFORCE STRATEGIES AND NEXT STEPS



Statewide Workforce Strategies

Several common themes emerged across the five workgroups. The following topics are best addressed at the statewide level to ensure continuity across agencies, be efficient, and allow for a greater reach to all state jobs, beyond the Workforce Strategies Initiative's five focal areas.

CREATE A STATE BRAND IDENTITY

Each agency has a distinct identity. Currently, each agency is responsible for recruiting and marketing its own jobs. Research conducted for each workgroup revealed that employees identified more as agency employees rather than state employees; thus, all workgroups identified central branding as integral. A unified State of Georgia brand identity would allow the state to better advertise as an employer of choice and would send a message of unity and the opportunity for job mobility across agencies. This effort could be led by the Georgia Department of Administrative Services (DOAS) and then shared across all agencies to ensure brand consistency.

Day-in-the-Life Videos

The workgroups noted that the public is generally unaware of what state employees do and what makes state jobs so exciting and fulfilling. To address this issue, all workgroups recommended filming "day-in-the-life" videos to better explain the ins and outs of being a state employee. These videos would feature testimonials from state employees about how they got interested in their role and demonstrate a typical day on the job. The videos would feature a variety of jobs across the state and showcase the important work state employees do. These videos would be part of a statewide marketing campaign to highlight state jobs and educate the public on opportunities to work for the state. This marketing campaign could be cohesive and consistent across all state agencies to brand the state as a singular entity. Videos could then be used in high schools, technical colleges, and universities to advertise state jobs.

RESEARCH JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Every workgroup, but especially IT, Social Services, and Accounting, discussed a mismatch between how jobs are described in job postings versus what the jobs actually require. DOAS, along with the co-chairs from each workgroup, will research how to change minimum qualifications, job descriptions, and compensation strategies to better match each job. This research will help with retaining talented individuals in state jobs and will serve as the foundation for future work on career paths.

Other states like Utah and Maryland have removed minimum qualifications, such as a bachelor's degree, from state job descriptions. Utah passed a bill in 2021 that bars minimum

educational requirements for many government jobs, except in roles that legally require them.¹³ In 2022, the governor of Maryland announced an initiative to formally eliminate four-year college degree requirements from many state jobs.¹⁴ During the 2023 legislative session, the Georgia General Assembly passed Senate Bill 3, which directs DOAS to assess each job code and determine whether minimum qualifications can be reduced.¹⁵

SHARED RECRUITING TOOLS

Cross-agency conversations enabled by the Workforce Strategies Initiative process highlighted the opportunity for more collaboration. Multiple workgroups expressed an interest in shared recruiting tools for each sector and across state government. For example, the Law Enforcement Workgroup requested a shared application that can be sent to all agencies in the law enforcement and public safety sector. That way, an applicant who may not be the best fit for one agency would not have to reapply to another agency if they did not meet some of the qualifications. Currently, the technology for this process is not available; however, a network of hiring managers at each agency can share résumés if they think an applicant will be a better fit at another agency. In the future, the NextGen system developed by DOAS and the State Accounting Office of Georgia may have the capabilities to share résumés online.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Each workgroup included representatives from the University System of Georgia (USG), the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), and the Georgia Department of Education (DOE) Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE). Their participation is essential to building pipelines to state jobs. Workgroup members noted the importance of tailoring courses and curricula to state job opportunities so applicants are better qualified for state roles. Current opportunities for state and educational institution partnerships include the implementation of micro-credentialing at TCSG institutions so students can receive credit-based certificates for

¹³ Williams, Carter. 2022, December 14. "Why Utah Is Looking to Remove as Many 4-Year Degree Requirements as Possible." *Deseret News*. Retrieved from www.deseret.com/utah/2022/12/13/23508509/is-degree-required-to-work-for-utah-government

¹⁴ Oshin, Olafimihan. 2022, March 16. "Maryland to Drop College Degree Requirement for More State Jobs." *The Hill*. Retrieved from thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/598494-maryland-to-drop-college-degree-requirement-for-more-state-jobs/

¹⁵ Reducing Barriers to State Employment Act of 2023, S.B. 3, 157th Georgia General Assembly (2023-2024): March 14, 2023, <https://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/63492>

completing skill-based programs in high-demand career fields. The TCSG also has many apprenticeship programs at its institutions that state agencies can plug into.¹⁶

In addition, CTAE has a pathway in computer science that directly tracks to IT jobs and is developing a pathway for governmental accounting. These efforts to connect educational institutions to state jobs can aid in pipeline creation.

All the workgroups underscored the importance of speaking in person or virtually at high schools and institutions of higher education to inform students about state employment opportunities. Several workgroup members mentioned having spoken at high schools and in college classes in the past and expressed an interest in creating a more formal speakers' bureau that connects speakers to educational institutions and provides them with presentation resources or videos to share. The hope is that students will be better able to picture themselves in state roles if they hear from current state employees.

CAREER FAIRS

All the workgroups highlighted career fairs as an important venue for attracting students and people transitioning to second careers. Right now, agency representatives attend career fairs, but the state does not have a unified brand or approach. Career fairs can be held in partnership with educational institutions, and State of Georgia career fairs could be used to attract applicants. One workgroup recommended holding regional career fairs at TCSG or USG institutions to attract a wider candidate pool. Career fairs are an opportunity for the state to highlight the multitude of career opportunities in state government and brand the state as a unified employer.

INTERNSHIPS

Every workgroup emphasized the importance of reaching out to students at a young age and developing internships to attract students to jobs with the state. Through early exposure and experiential learning opportunities, students can gain a true understanding of state jobs and what a career in their selected area would be like. Workgroup members suggested developing internship programs at both individual agencies and the state level to expose students to how the same position might vary at different agencies. Many agencies already have internship

¹⁶ Rasmussen, Patty. 2023. "Where Education and Employment Intersect." Georgia Trend Magazine. March 29, 2023. <https://www.georgiatrend.com/2023/03/29/where-education-and-employment-intersect/>.

programs in place, but this statewide approach would establish a consistent experience across agencies. To aid in internship development and improve existing programs, DOAS will create an internship toolkit for state agencies that will include state internship rules and policies as well as best practices.

Members of the workgroups also recommend that agency human resources teams foster relationships with career center contacts at TCSG and USG institutions and CTAE representatives to keep all parties up to date on potential internship and speaking engagement opportunities. Also, the state should highlight Team Georgia Careers (careers.georgia.gov) as the central repository for internship postings and the internship toolkit for the entire state.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Increasing and standardizing professional development opportunities across the state was a key theme across each workgroup. Professional development opportunities, such as mentorship programs or career paths for new hires, can increase retention by showing new employees that the state will invest in them. Many potential professional development workforce strategies will require research from DOAS. The workgroups asked DOAS to research tuition reimbursement opportunities, longevity raises, and whether the earning of additional credentials can be linked to compensation step increases. These opportunities would provide employees with tangible benefits for completing additional training. One workgroup asked that DOAS develop an action plan for statewide goal setting and performance management to guide agencies in their efforts to provide professional development.

One way to offer professional development opportunities is partnering with educational institutions. The TCSG recently began a microcredit-based professional development pilot program with the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) and Amazon Web Services to teach students networking and cloud solutions. The TCSG plans to expand that program to other fields. The first cohort of this program began on March 6, 2023.

Successful students will be issued a micro-credential from Gwinnett Technical College and will also sit for a certification exam. Funding is being provided by GTA for all students who qualify, even if they do not receive financial aid. This training is specific to current state employees. All fees are waived, and there is no application fee. The only cost is the \$100 per credit hour tuition. This pilot could be a model for future state professional development.

STANDARDIZED EXIT FORM

Currently, the state has no standardized exit interview or form that agencies must complete when an employee leaves an agency. A standardized exit form and data-capturing system with

distinct reasons-for-separation categories would help agencies better understand why people leave. These data could, in turn, inform future recruiting and retention efforts. Hopefully, the new NextGen system will aid in the data collection process. Results from a standardized exit form could be included in the annual DOAS Georgia State Government Workforce Report.

RECRUIT FROM THE MILITARY

The State of Georgia does not have an official partnership or pipeline with the US military. Georgia has 14 military bases, and the many service members leaving the military could be a key recruiting pool for state jobs. Every workgroup highlighted the unique skillsets that members of the military could bring to their respective job families. Workgroup members mentioned attending transition briefings and developing SkillBridge and Army Career Skills Program agreements with US military partners.

CONTINUE THE WORKGROUPS

All five workgroups want to continue their work with support from DOAS to ensure the goals and strategies that came out of each meeting are completed.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Recruiting and retaining people in state jobs is an active process that involves many stakeholders statewide. This project brought together human resources professionals, educators, and agency leadership to find solutions tailored to five state job families: law enforcement, accounting, IT, social services, and procurement. These roles are present across multiple state agencies and can be entry points into long careers in public service.

Many recurring themes emerged across the five workgroups. Rebranding state jobs, partnering with educational institutions, reviewing job descriptions, and creating robust internship opportunities are just the start of addressing the workforce challenges the state faces. The continued efforts of interested stakeholders will be key to shepherding these initiatives to fruition.

The workgroups formed as part of the Workforce Strategies Initiative will continue meeting quarterly to work through their workforce plans. DOAS will also hold a Workforce Strategies Initiative Summit on June 29, 2023, to celebrate the work done to address recruitment and retention of the state workforce.

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Appendix A. Disqualifiers from State Law Enforcement and Public Safety Jobs

DISQUALIFIERS FROM STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY JOBS



Agency	Position	Minimum Education/ Training	Require Bachelor's	Age Requirement	Prior LE/PS Experience	Polygraph	Psych Eval	Allow Facial Hair	Allow Visible Tattoos?	Drug Use Policy?	Physical Fitness Req*	Other Disqualifiers*
Department of Public Safety (DPS) - Georgia State Patrol (GSP)	Trooper Cadet	High School/GED	X	21	X	✓	✓	X	Able to be covered by long sleeves	✓	✓	✓
DPS - Motor Carrier Compliance (MCCD)	MCCD Cadet	High School/GED	X	21	X	✓	✓	X	Able to be covered by long sleeves	✓	✓	✓
DPS - Capitol Police	Capitol Police Officer-Cadet	High school/GED	X	18	X	✓	✓	X	Able to be covered by long sleeves	✓	✓	✓
Department of Community Supervision (DCS) and Probation Officer	Community Supervision Officer (CSO) and Probation Officer	Bachelor's	✓	21	X	✓	✓	✓	Not on face/neck; Able to be covered	✓	✓	✓
Department of Corrections (DOC)	Correctional Officer	High school/GED	X	18	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Department of Natural Resources (DNR)	Game Warden/Conservation Ranger	Associates or completion of equivalent coursework or Veteran with 4 years' service	X	21	X	✓	✓	X (beards)	Able to be covered by long sleeves	✓	✓	X
Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI)	Special Agent	Bachelor's	✓	21* (they report no)	X	✓	✓	✓	Able to be covered by long sleeves	✓	X	✓
Georgia Forestry Commission	Wildland Firefighter/Ranger	No diploma/degrees required; Need CLP prior to hire and CDL within 12 weeks	X	18	X	X	X	✓	Able to be covered by long sleeves	✓	✓	✓
Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)	Juvenile Correction Officer	High school/GED	X	18	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC)	Public Safety Trainer	High school/GED	X	21 (minimum of 3 years after certification)	✓ (minimum of 3-5 years)	X	X	✓	Any visible must be in keeping with a professional and non-offensive appearance	✓	✓	✓
Technical College System of Georgia Department of Public Safety (TCSS)		High school/GED	X	21	X	X	X	✓	Must be neat, well-maintained and free of employee at safety/risk	✓	X	
Georgia Department of Revenue		High school/GED	X	21	✓	✓	✓	✓	Able to be covered by long sleeves	✓	X	X

* See chart on following page

SEPTEMBER 2022

Continued on following page

Appendix A. Disqualifiers from State Law Enforcement and Public Safety Jobs (continued)

DISQUALIFIERS FROM STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY JOBS		
<p>DRUG USE POLICY</p> <p>Department of Public Safety (DPS) - Georgia State Patrol (GSP) Cannabis (2 years), other drugs (5 years)</p> <p>DPS - Motor Carrier Compliance (MCCD) Cannabis (2 years), other drugs (5 years)</p> <p>DPS - Capitol Police Cannabis (2 years), other drugs (5 years)</p> <p>Department of Community Supervision (DCS) Illegal drugs (past 12 months), "any pattern of marijuana use that suggests unrehabilitated substance abuse," use of unprescribed pills, DUI within past 3 years</p> <p>Department of Corrections (DOC) Department tests applicants for drugs prior to hire. If results are positive, employee is not hired.</p> <p>Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Cannabis (3 years), other drugs (10 years, or >5 times)</p> <p>Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) Cannabis or anabolic steroids (1 year), other drugs (10 years). If it's excessive use or usage of lots of drugs on the list that may be a disqualifier as well. Those are a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Georgia Forestry Commission Cannot have conviction for drug possession within past 4 years; must be able to obtain a Commercial Driver's License, which limits DUIs within 3 years. Cannot have failed a random drug test for the state in the last 2 years.</p> <p>Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) None</p> <p>Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC) On-duty duty for 3 months from the date of first conviction and 5 years from the most recent date of conviction if there have been multiple illegal drug convictions since July 1, 1990. Selected candidates testing positive or refusing to complete a pre-employment substance abuse test are disqualified.</p> <p>Technical College System of Georgia Department of Public Safety (TCSG) Yes (unspecified)</p> <p>Georgia Department of Revenue None within past year</p>	<p>PHYSICAL FITNESS REQUIREMENT</p> <p>Department of Public Safety (DPS) - Georgia State Patrol (GSP) Push-ups (21 in 1min), sit-ups (30 in 1min), 1.5-mile run (15:34) or 2,000m rowing</p> <p>DPS - Motor Carrier Compliance (MCCD) Push-ups (21 in 1min), sit-ups (30 in 1min), 1.5-mile run (15:34) or 2,000m rowing</p> <p>DPS - Capitol Police Push-ups (21 in 1min), sit-ups (30 in 1min), 1.5-mile run (15:34) or 2,000m rowing</p> <p>Department of Community Supervision (DCS) Clearance from physician stating applicant is fit for duty (general health, hearing, vision)</p> <p>Department of Corrections (DOC) Female (4 push-ups in 1min; 8 sit-ups in 1min; 1 mile (<16:00)); Male (6 push-ups in 1min; 12 sit-ups 1min; 1 mile (<16:00))</p> <p>Department of Natural Resources (DNR) POST agility course (2:07), 1.5 mile (<16:00), 25m clothed swim</p> <p>Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) No</p> <p>Georgia Forestry Commission Must pass state's MAFEP for law enforcement and a new hire and subsequent annual physical abilities test. This can either by the Work Capacity test as approved by the USFS or the GFC in-house job-related test.</p> <p>Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Minimum vision of 20/40 in each eye, hearing less no greater than 20dB (deafness), and have a signed physician's affidavit from a licensed physician</p> <p>Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC) Applicants selected for interview who have not obtained the Defensive Tactics Instructor Certification or who were certified prior to 2019 will be required to complete 4 PT assessments on day of interview: 25 push-ups (full body) in 1min; 30 sit-ups in 1min; bench press (<54 seconds) - 1 rep; 1.5-mile run (16:00) OR a 300m sprint (<54 seconds)</p> <p>Technical College System of Georgia Department of Public Safety (TCSG) No</p> <p>Georgia Department of Revenue No</p>	<p>OTHER DISQUALIFIERS</p> <p>Department of Public Safety (DPS) - Georgia State Patrol (GSP) Falsifying information, poor management of personal finances, unpaid taxes or delinquent student/government loans, felony convictions, DUI within 3 years, etc.</p> <p>DPS - Motor Carrier Compliance (MCCD) Falsifying information, poor management of personal finances, unpaid taxes or delinquent student/government loans, felony convictions, DUI within 3 years, etc.</p> <p>DPS - Capitol Police Falsifying information, poor management of personal finances, unpaid taxes or delinquent student/government loans, felony convictions, DUI within 3 years, etc.</p> <p>Department of Community Supervision (DCS) Falsifying information, poor management of personal finances, unpaid taxes or delinquent student/government loans</p> <p>Department of Corrections (DOC) Must meet POST certification standards for peace officers. The primary one that catches most applicants is the criminal background check (no felonies, not too many misdemeanors).</p> <p>Department of Natural Resources (DNR) None listed</p> <p>Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) Credit could be a disqualifier, a pattern of unsatisfactory job performance or workplace discipline, not filing/paying taxes, a pattern of disregard for the law, active probation, or past decisions that are not in accordance with the GBI's ethical standards</p> <p>Georgia Forestry Commission Hair length (cannot be past collar and ears for men, must be able to be pulled up and fit under a hard hat for women). Cannot have any serious crimes on record that are related to the job (arson, timber theft, registered sex offender). Must be able to obtain a commercial driver's license, so multiple serious traffic offenses are a disqualifier.</p> <p>Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Law enforcement positions: applicants must possess a high school diploma/GED, pass a written test, pass a background check, pass a driver's license, pass a recruiter assessment, and pass a physical.</p> <p>Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC) Must be in good standing with Georgia Peace Officer Standards & Training Council. Inactive certifications and/or sanctions are reviewed. Must receive criminal records background clearance and hold a valid driver's license.</p> <p>Technical College System of Georgia Department of Public Safety (TCSG) None listed</p> <p>Georgia Department of Revenue None listed</p>

