

## Richland County Finance and Personnel Committee

### Agenda Item Cover

**Agenda Item Name:** Health and Human Services Staff Recruitment and Retention Report

<b>Department</b>	Health & Human Services	<b>Presented By:</b>	Tracy Thorsen
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>		<b>Action Needed:</b>	File Report
<b>Disclosure:</b>	Open Session	<b>Authority:</b>	
<b>Date submitted:</b>	May 19, 2021	<b>Referred by:</b>	HHS Board

**Recommendation and proposed action:** Accept and file report.

**Background:** The Health and Human Services Board moved to forward the attached HHS Staff Recruitment and Retention Report to the Finance and Personnel Committee. This report that was presented at the May 13<sup>th</sup> HHS Board meeting in order to outline some of the challenges faced by the department. The attached report that is presented to this committee was updated with suggestions recommended by the HHS Board.

Please note that the last page of the report provides information that may be particularly relevant to the Salary Plan Progression agenda item that the Finance and Personnel Committee will be considering as it provides some financial information on the impact of HHS funding on the two pay progression options that are to be considered.

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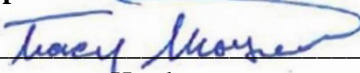
#### Attachments and References:

HHS Staff Recruitment & Retention Report Document	
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#### Financial Review:

	In adopted budget	Fund Number	
	Apportionment needed	Requested Fund Number	
X	No financial impact		

**Approval:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Head

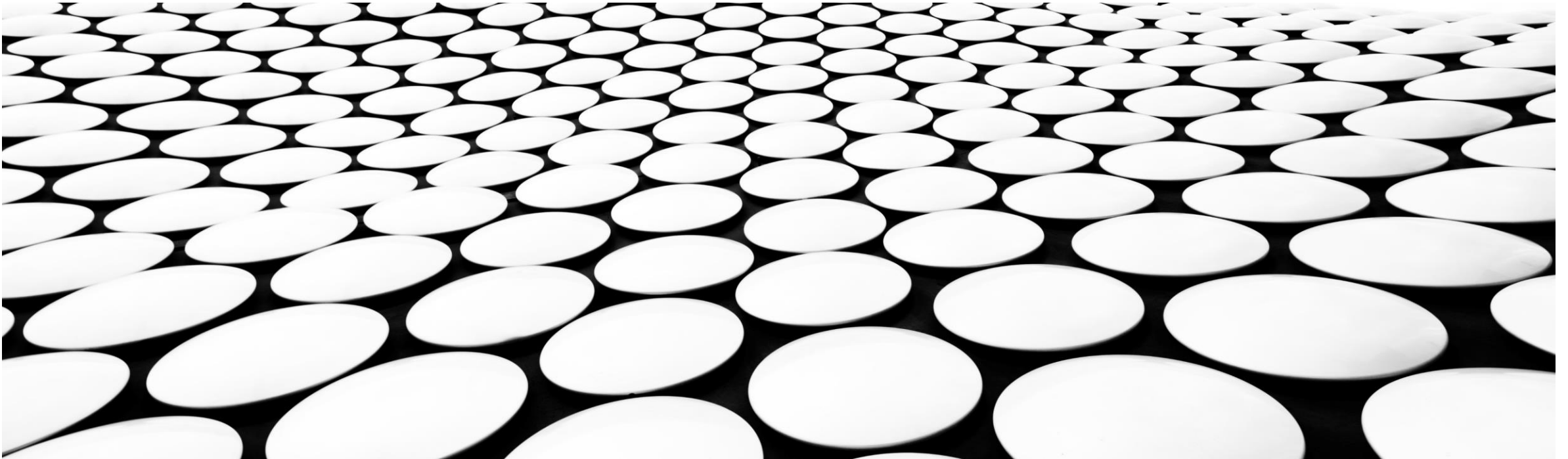
**Review:**

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Administrator, or Elected Office (if applicable)

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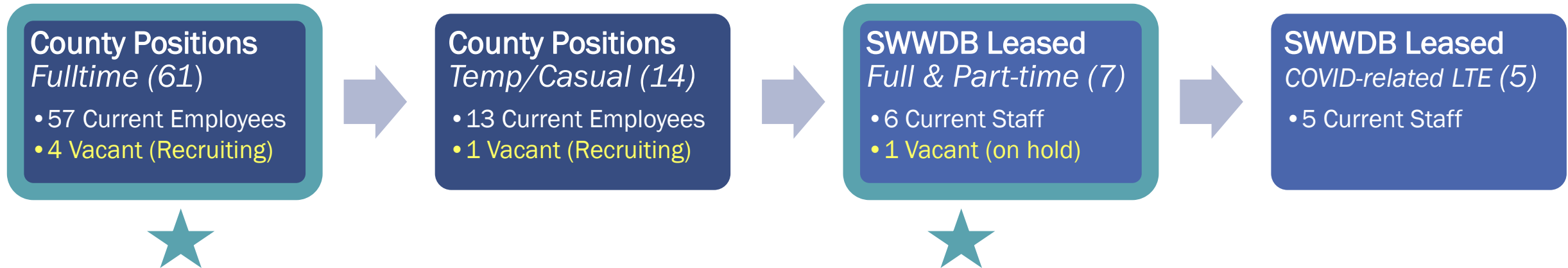
# **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES STAFF RECRUITMENT & RETENTION REPORT**

FORWARDED TO THE FINANCE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE FOR REVIEW BY THE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES BOARD  
MAY 13, 2021



# HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES STAFF

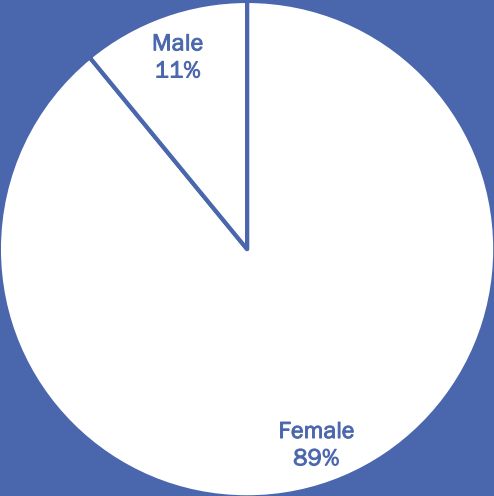
*There are four categories of staff at Health and Human Services: Fulltime County Employees, Temp/Casual County Employees, Regular Full and Part-time Leased Employees, and LTE Leased Employees.*



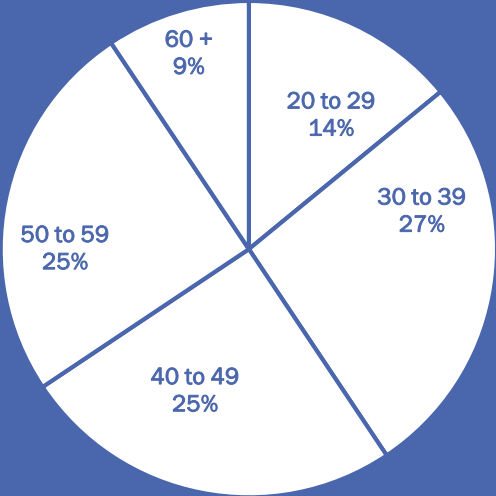
*This report will focus on our regular and fulltime staff*

# CURRENT REGULAR COUNTY (57) & LEASED EMPLOYEES (6)

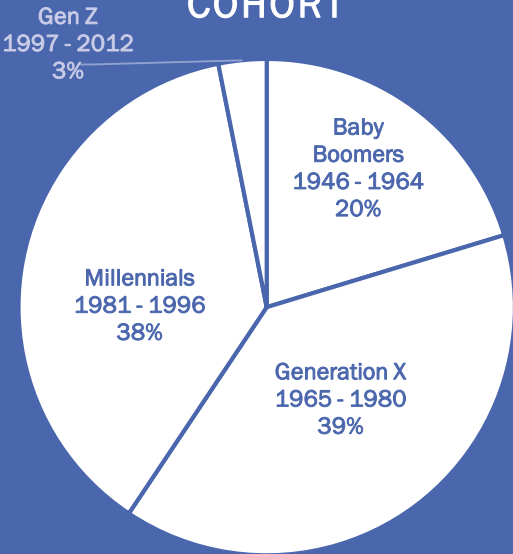
GENDER



AGE



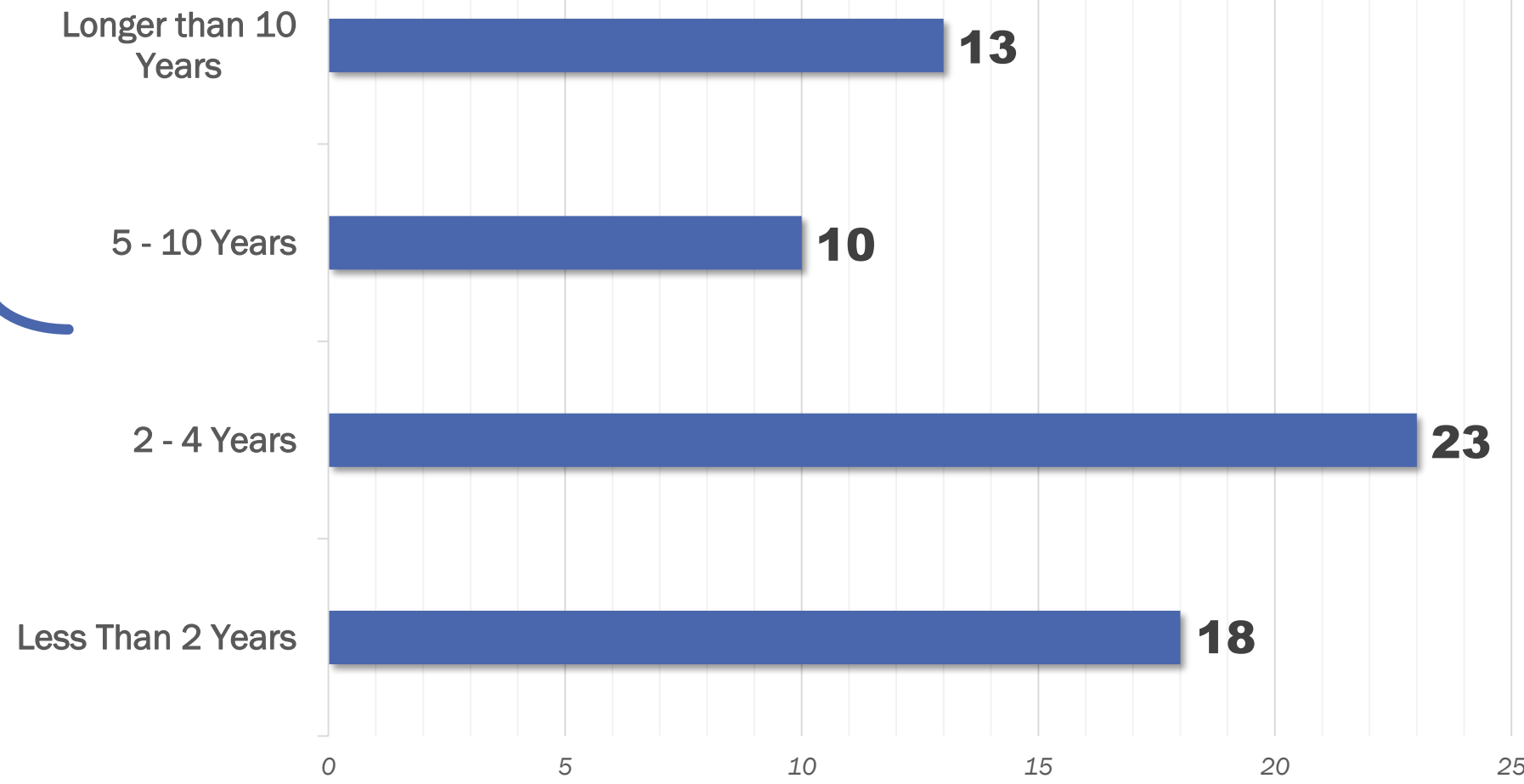
COHORT





# Longevity of Current Staff

*This is where we  
want to see the  
majority of our staff*



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## REASON FOR CONCERN

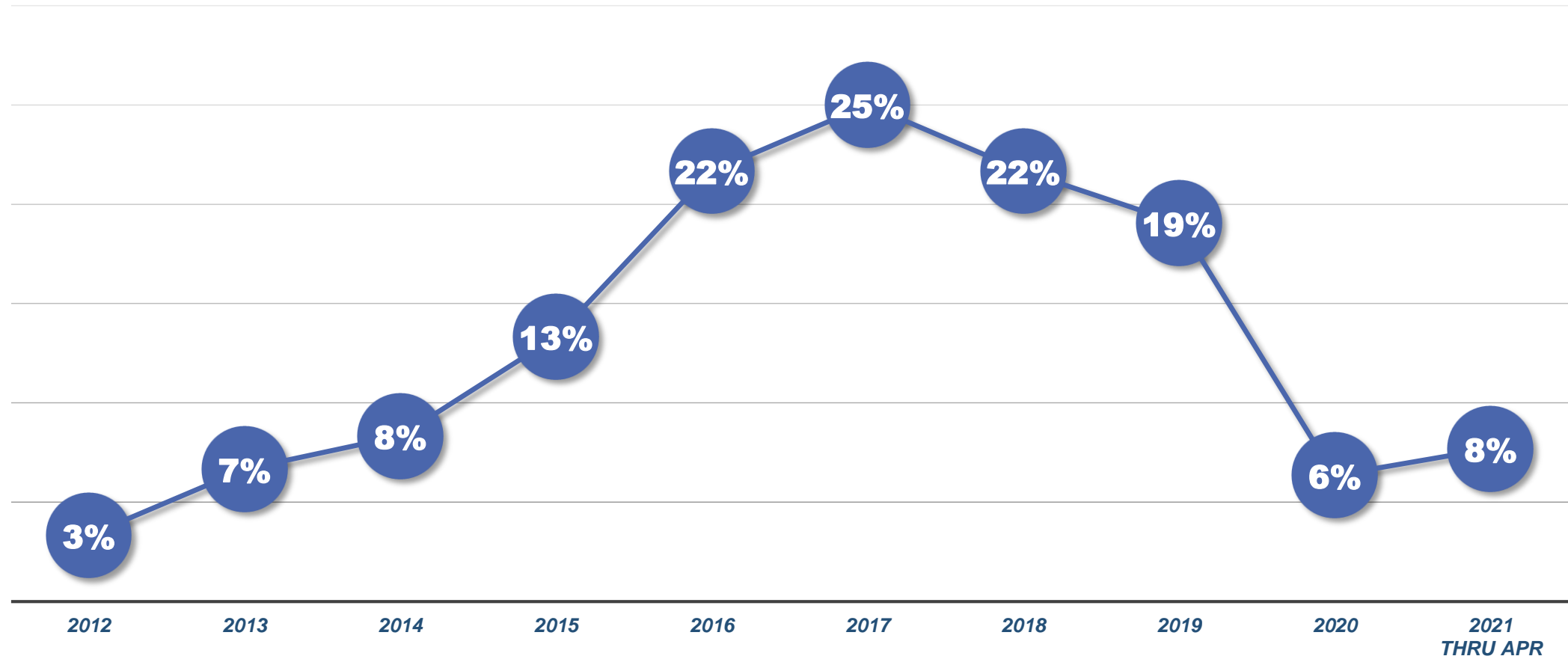
- Almost two thirds (64%) of our staff have been here less than 5 years
- There has been an uptick in resignations in the last seven months
- It has been more difficult to recruit qualified candidates for open positions

## WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

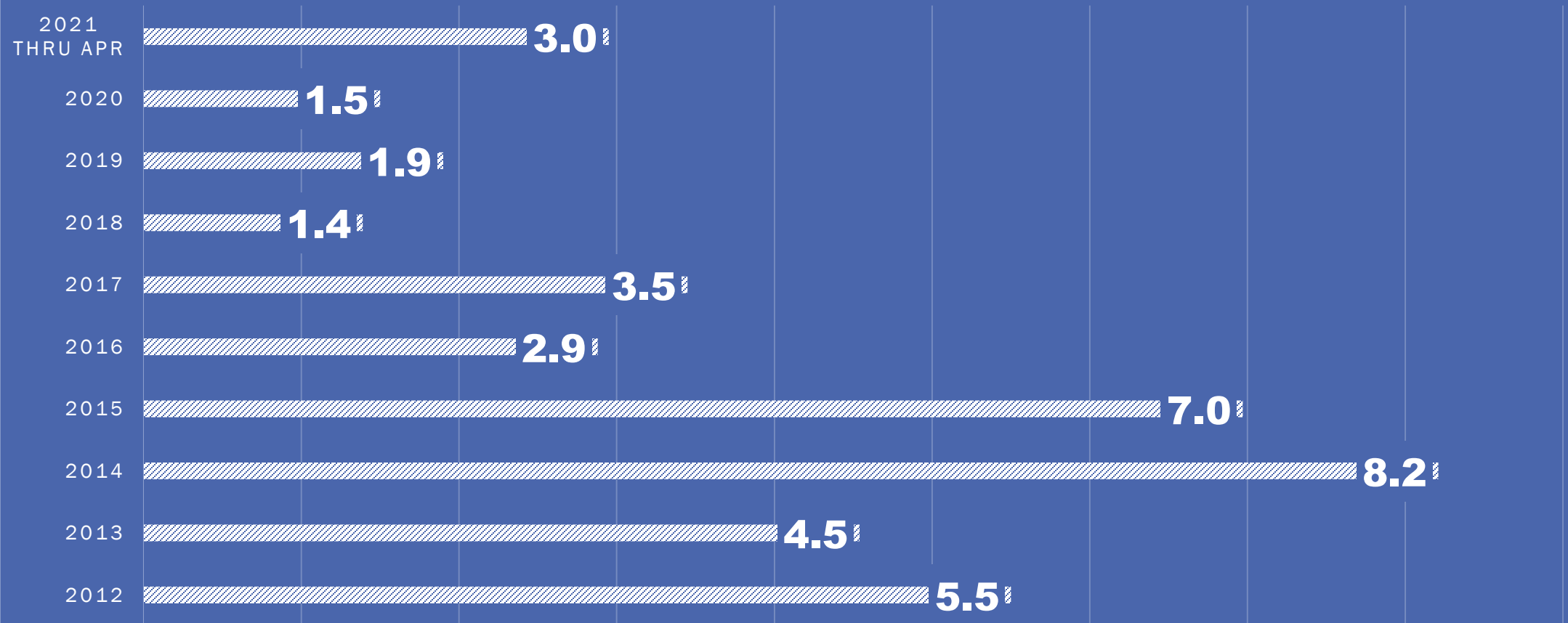
- Less experienced staff have a negative affect on our ability to provide effective services
- Effective interventions and service delivery by experienced, skilled professionals helps individuals to remain healthily, independent, and able to function and live in the community
- When individuals can not function and live in the community, there is disruption to their lives and to their families' lives.

*And... they are at greater risk of requiring more costly care (often in placements)*

## History of HHS Staff Attrition



## AVERAGE LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF WHO LEFT (YRS)





## RECENT RESIGNATIONS

- **Substance Abuse Counselor** resigned in October taking the same position at Crawford County earning approximately **\$7/hour more** than her Richland County wage.
- **ADRC Information & Assistance Specialist** resigned in November taking a comparable long-term care social work position earning approximately **\$3/hour more** than her Richland County wage.
- **Behavioral Health Mental Health Therapist** resigned in January taking a comparable position in a private clinic earning approximately **\$5/hour** more than her Richland County wage.
- **Economic Support Specialist** resigned in January to take the same position at Dane County earning approximately **\$7/hour** more than her Richland County wage.
- **ADRC Information & Assistance Specialist** resigned in January taking a comparable long-term care social work position earning approximately **\$3/hour** more than her Richland County wage.
- **Child & Youth Services Case Manager** resigned in May taking a similar position in Dunn County earning approximately **\$4/hour** more than her Richland County wage.

# MOST FREQUENT REASONS GIVEN FOR LEAVING

## 1. Low Wage and Rising Health Insurance Costs \*

*\*This reason is also given by current employees who state they are looking for other employment*

## 2. Vacation Benefit is not sufficient

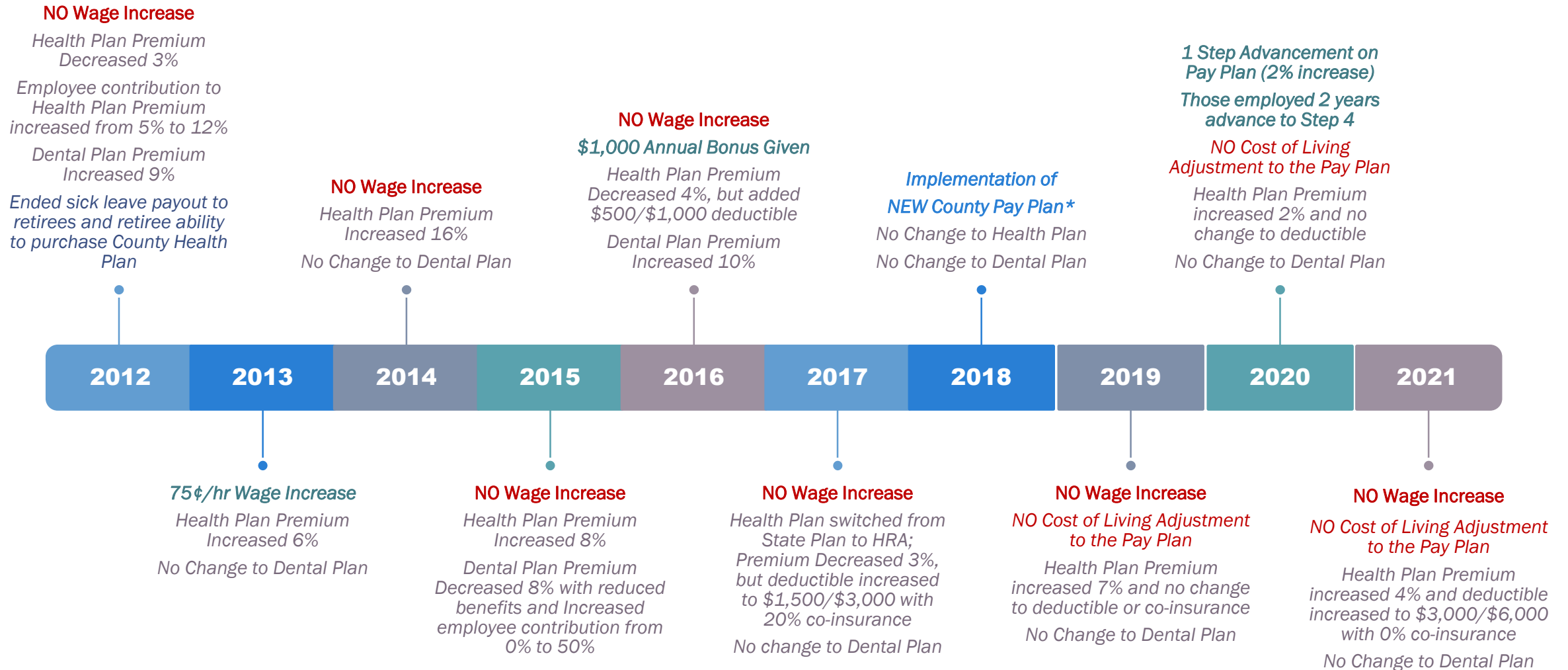
### ***Some comments from exit interviews...***

*An exit interview is conducted with every employee who leaves Health and Human Services*

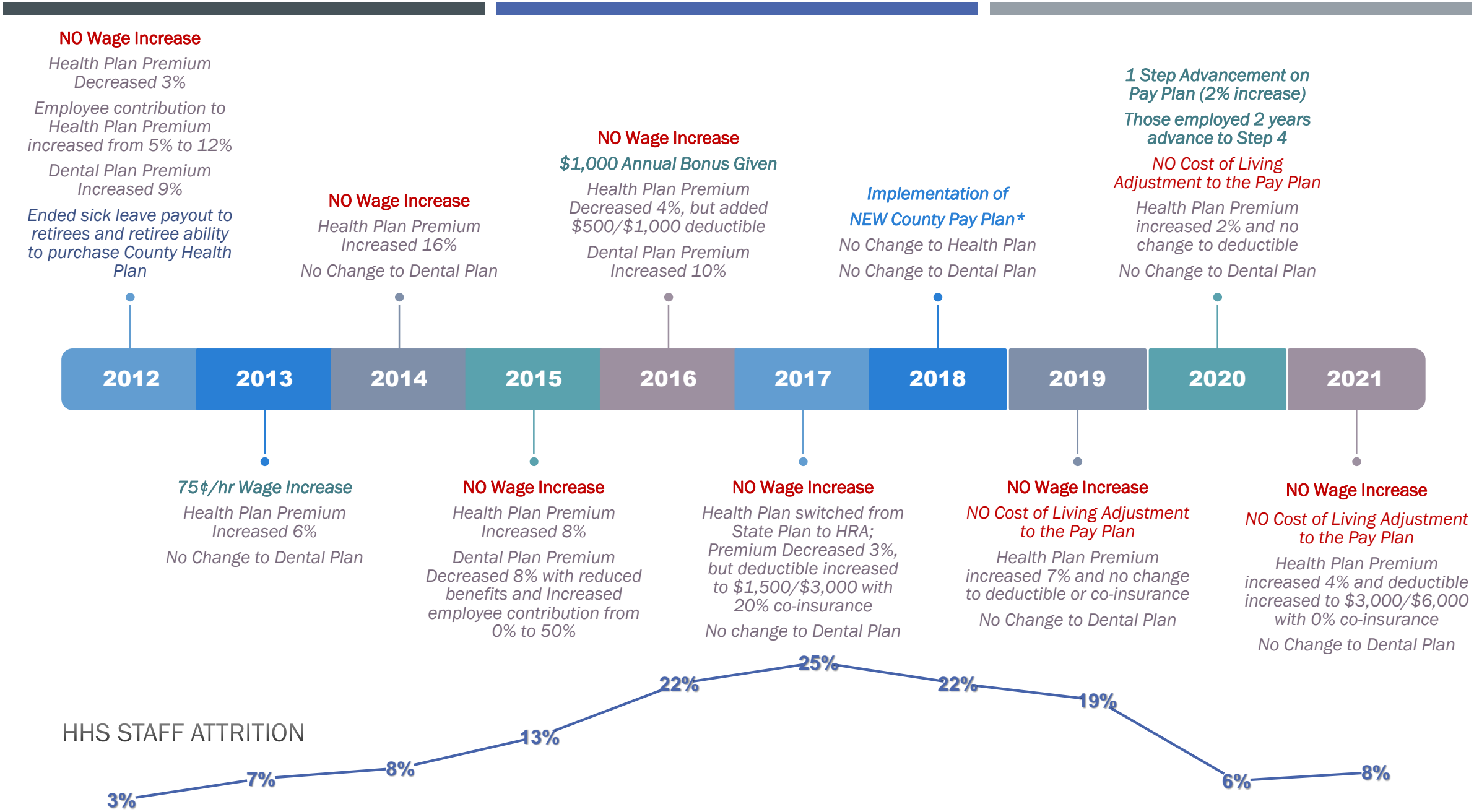
*“At many places you can see how your pay will go up the longer you are in your job, but here I can’t know from one year to the next if there will be even a cost of living increase. It’s hard to see my future here.”*

*“It feels like each year I go backwards because of increasing health insurance costs and wages not changing”*

# HISTORY OF COUNTY WAGE & BENEFIT CHANGES



\* Implementation of the New County Pay Plan caused wage increases for most staff in varying degrees (from 1% to 10%) depending where each position was placed on the plan. Some staff wages, however, were above the top step of the plan for their position grade. In those cases their wage was frozen until such time as the pay structure, through amendments, meet or exceed their rate of pay. Four HHS staff have had their wages frozen since 2018.



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## OTHER NONMONETARY STAFF RETENTION EFFORTS BY HHS

- A flexible work schedule is allowed as much as possible to employees in order to accommodate staff schedules for family and other personal activities
- Remote work options will continue beyond the public health emergency response for those employees whose duties can accommodate work away from the office.
- Staff Recognition Program: Staff who reach a longevity milestone (5 years, 10 years, 15 years, etc.) are given a framed certificate and pin indicating their years of service. The employee operated “Sunshine Committee” also gives the employee a gift card.
- Recently the County Board approved the ability for departments to promote staff internally. While HHS has not utilized this option yet, this will provide a path for employee advancement within the agency.

## RECRUITMENT DIFFICULTIES

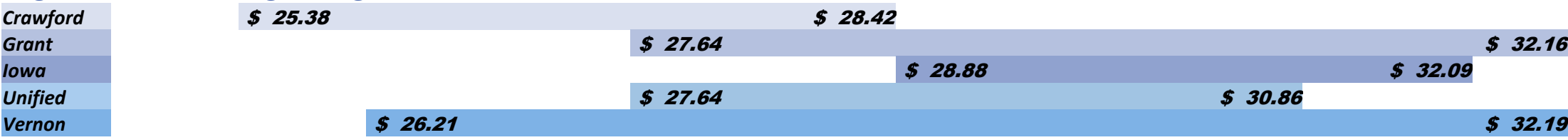
- In addition to the concern for losing staff, it has also been exceedingly difficult to recruit for positions, especially where the market is competitive and the pool of candidates is limited (*i.e. nurses & masters-level therapists*)

### Example:

- Health and Human Services has five mental health therapist positions and has continuously had one to two of these positions vacant since 2019.
- From 11/2019 – 5/2021 eight (8) masters-level candidates withdrew their applications or declined offers of employment stating that the primary factor was the low wage and poor vacation benefits.
- We have experienced similar issues with filling nursing and social worker positions.

# EXAMPLES OF WAGE CHALLENGES IN RECRUITMENT

## Registered Nurse Wage Ranges



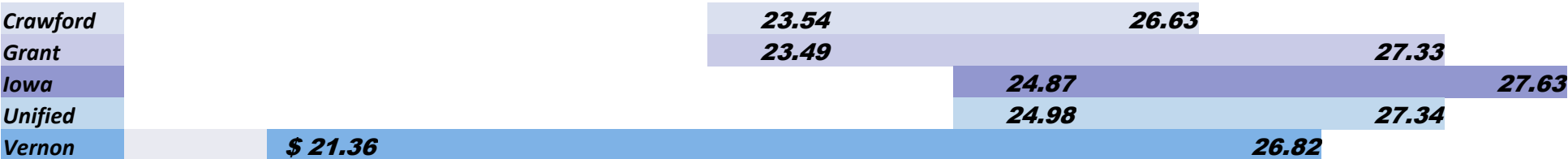
The County has not approved advancing employees to steps 5 – 8

## Mental Health Therapist Wage Ranges



The County has not approved advancing employees to steps 5 – 8

## Social Worker Wage Ranges



The County has not approved advancing employees to steps 5 – 8

Temporary Certified Social Workers  
Start at \$18.99

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## WHAT DO WE NEED IN ORDER TO ASSURE A MORE STABLE WORKFORCE?

- Staff need to see that they have a future at Richland County
- Compensation needs to be competitive and somewhat predictable
- We need to be family-friendly offering flexibility and reasonable time off
- Staff need to feel valued for their longevity
- We need to offer paths for professional development and advancement

*\*Many economic studies indicate that when compensation and benefits are fair and competitive, they are no longer strong deciding factors in leaving a job*



# HHS FUNDING IMPACT ON SALARY PROGRESSION

*Funding for some of Health and Human Services programs is received based upon actual expenses that HHS is able to claim. If expenses increase, HHS is eligible to claim more funding. If expenses decrease, the claimable funding also decreases. Below shows the impact of HHS funding on the proposed salary progression options.*

**Option #1** — Age the wage schedule. The wage schedule was adopted with wage data from 2018. This scenario would age our existing wage schedules with consumer price index (CPI) averages for each year to bring our wage schedules up to 2022 projections. This option addresses keeping our wage schedules up to date.

General: \$459,994.32  
Pine Valley: \$251,400.90  
Total: \$711,395.22

*deduct \$123,000 for increased HHS funding allocation*  
*Approximately \$200,000 of the General Pay Plan wage increase is for HHS staff. HHS increased funding to cover those expenses is estimated to be \$123,000.*



General: \$336,994.32  
Pine Valley: \$251,400.90  
Total: \$588,395.22

**Option #2** — Initiate a step increase. Our goals established through the adoption of the Carlson Study, Resolution 19-89 was to have eventual access for employees to reach step 8 on the schedules, which at the time correlated with the market value of the position. Market value meaning the average cost of a fully functional and experienced employee from our comparable market. This option addresses our goal in allow advanced progression towards reaching step 8 = market value of 2018.

General: \$147,046.64  
Pine Valley: \$ 70,516.81  
Total: \$217,563.45

*deduct \$36,900 for increased HHS funding allocation*  
*Approximately \$60,000 of the General Pay Plan wage increase is for HHS staff. HHS increased funding to cover those expenses is estimated to be \$36,900.*



General: \$110,146.64  
Pine Valley: \$ 70,516.81  
Total: \$180,663.45

Looking for possible commitment by the Finance and Personnel Committee to one of the increase options. A decision will help to set guidance for appropriation requests in the operations budgets, as well as put us back on course to help remedy identified compensation concerns.