

BOARD MEETING DATE: May 2, 2025

AGENDA NO. 28

PROPOSAL: Report on South Coast AQMD Vacancies, and Recruitment and Retention Efforts for 2024

SYNOPSIS: Assembly Bill 2561 (Gov. Code § 3502.3.), effective January 1, 2025, requires public agencies to hold a public hearing, at least once per fiscal year, to present information about agency vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts. This item is to hold a public hearing to present information on the status of South Coast AQMD's vacancies and recruitment and retention efforts for calendar year 2024.

COMMITTEE: Administrative, April 11, 2025; Recommended for Approval

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive and file the report on South Coast AQMD vacancies, and recruitment and retention efforts for 2024.

Wayne Nastri
Executive Officer

AJO:mm

Background

Assembly Bill (AB) 2561 requires public agencies, including South Coast AQMD, to hold at least one public hearing per fiscal year to discuss vacancies, and recruitment and retention efforts. As part of the public hearing presentation, AB 2561 requires the public agency to identify any potential obstacles in the hiring process, and to recommend changes to policies, procedures, and recruitment activities. The new law also provides an opportunity for agency-recognized unions to make a presentation at the hearing on vacancies, and recruitment and retention efforts.

Pursuant to AB 2561, the agency may also be required to provide additional information about the recruitment process and related factors, if a single bargaining unit meets or exceeds twenty percent (20%) of the total number of authorized positions. Specifically, at the request of the union, the agency would provide information about the total

number of vacancies, the number of applicants, the average time to fill positions, and opportunities to improve compensation and working conditions for employees in the bargaining unit. (Gov. Code section 3502.3(b)).

This report presents vacancy, recruitment, and retention information for calendar year 2024; specifically, the data presented is as of December 31, 2024.

Overall Workforce Data

South Coast AQMD has three represented bargaining units: Office of Clerical and Maintenance, Technical & Enforcement, and Professional Unit. Teamsters Local 911 represents the Office Clerical & Maintenance unit and the Technical & Enforcement unit. Office of Clerical and Maintenance has 36 classifications (including administrative assistants, fiscal assistants, maintenance workers), with 191 total budgeted positions. [For this report, the Career Development Intern classification is excluded from the Office of Clerical and Maintenance count because it is a specialized program to train current or former foster care youth.] Technical & Enforcement has 35 classifications (including inspectors, instrument specialists, information technology specialists), with 245 total budgeted positions.

The Professional Employee Association (SC-PEA) represents the Professional Unit. The Professional Unit has 398 budgeted positions. The Professional Unit has 20 classifications, including engineers, specialists, and chemists.

In addition, South Coast AQMD has several unrepresented groups – Confidential (82 positions), Management (70 positions), and Deputies including executive staff (26 positions), with a combined 48 classifications.

Vacancy, Recruitment, and Retention Information

At the end of 2024, South Coast AQMD’s overall vacancy rate was 12.97%. The 2024/25 budget sets forth a vacancy rate of 13%.

The vacancy rates, by bargaining unit, were below the 20% threshold set forth in AB 25611, and therefore, no additional information is required. The vacancy rates for each bargaining unit, as of December 31, 2024, were as follows:

	Vacancy Rate (%)
Professional Unit	9.55
Technical & Enforcement	15.51
Office of Clerical and Maintenance	19.37
Confidential	6.1
Management	10.0
Deputies	7.69

In 2024, South Coast AQMD's recruitment efforts resulted in 73 new hires and 76 promotions. Vacancies were also filled by transfers, reassignments, and other internal processes.

In terms of evaluating employee retention, 19 vacancies created in 2024 were due to voluntary separation. A similar number of vacancies in 2024 were due to retirements and involuntary separations. Accordingly, looking at the overall workforce and the reasons for vacancies, current recruitment and retention efforts seem to be keeping staff turnover to a manageable level.

Based on the information available on South Coast AQMD vacancies, recruitment and retention, staff did not identify any potential obstacles to continued progress in these matters. Therefore, there are no proposed changes to related policies or procedures.

Proposal

Staff recommends the Board receive and file the report on South Coast AQMD Vacancies, and Recruitment and Retention Efforts for 2024.

Attachments

Attachment I: South Coast AQMD Presentation

Attachment II: South Coast Professional Employee Association Presentation

Report of South Coast AQMD Vacancies, and Recruitment and Retention Efforts for Calendar Year 2024

Board Meeting

May 2, 2025

AB 2561 (McKinnor)

- Effective January 1, 2025, AB 2561* added new requirements to the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act, which governs public employee labor relations
- Addresses statewide interest in “ensuring that public agency operations are appropriately staffed and that high vacancy rates do not undermine public employee labor relations”
- Requires a Public Hearing once a fiscal year
 - Agency presents status of vacancies
 - Agency presents recruitment and retention efforts
 - Bargaining units can also present information
- Additional requirements are triggered if the vacancy rate for any bargaining unit exceeds 20%

* Government Code Section 3502

Vacancy Rate

As of December 31, 2024

Total FTEs	Vacant FTEs	Vacancy Rate
1018	132	12.97%

Bargaining Units and Non- Represented Employee Groups



Professional

- 20 classifications
- Includes engineers, specialists, and chemists

Professional
Employee
Association
(PEA)



Technical and Enforcement

- 35 Classifications
- Includes inspectors, instrument specialists, information technology specialists

Teamsters



Office Clerical and Maintenance

- 36 Classifications
- Includes administrative assistants, fiscal assistants, and maintenance workers

Non-
Represented



Confidential Management

Deputies (Executive staff)

Vacancy Information by Bargaining Unit

As of December 31, 2024

Bargaining Unit	Total FTE	Vacant FTE	Vacancy Rate
Professionals (PRO)	398	38	9.55%
Technical and Enforcement	245	38	15.51%
Office Clerical and Maintenance	191*	37	19.37%
Confidential	82	5	6.1%
Management	70	7	10%
Deputies	26	2	7.69%

* Excludes 6 Career Development Intern positions, a training program for current or former foster care youth

Recruitment Information 2024

New Hires	Promotions	Transfers
73	76	17

Retention Information 2024

Retirements	Voluntary Separations	Involuntary Separations
13	19	7

Summary

- As of December 31, 2024, agency was maintaining vacancies at the budgeted rate
- Recruitment efforts are keeping up with staffing needs
- Retention is within the normal course of workforce turnover
- No recommendations at this time to change any processes or policies



AB2561: Vacancies, Recruitment & Retention at South Coast AQMD

South Coast Professional
Employees Association

Evaluating the
state of Job
Vacancies at
South Coast
AQMD

Agency-wide vacancy rates reached an all time high in 2022-23 (20%).

In the April 2023 Budget Committee meeting, management expressed challenges in recruitment and retention:

Recruitment – job offers declined

Retention – rise in resignations & retirement in 2021/2022

The agency turned things around and lowered the vacancy rate through recruitments but needs to prioritize employee retention, so this progress is not lost.

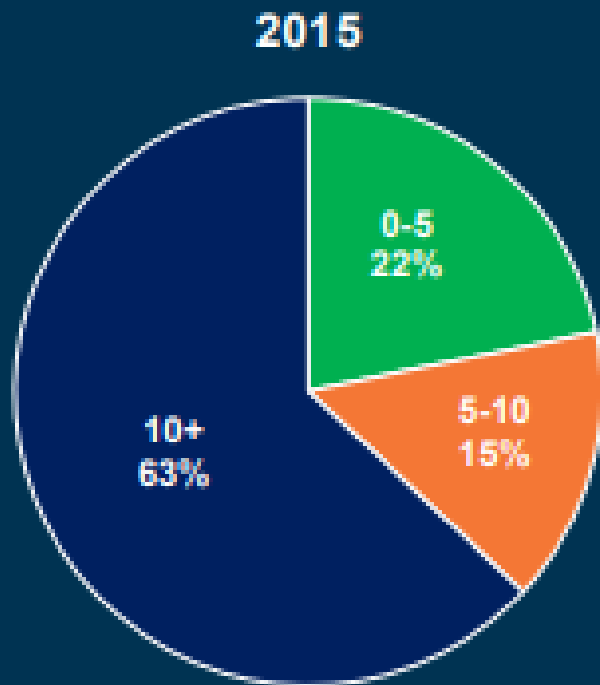
Employee Retention is Paramount to Agency Effectiveness and Efficiency

- Relying primarily on recruitments to maintain the vacancy rate is not enough and puts a strain on existing resources
 - Recruitment process diverts managers and other supervisory staff away from primary duties
 - Training new staff diverts staff away from primary duties
 - It takes time to get new staff up to speed and self sufficient
- Employee retention needs to be a priority
- Failure to focus on retention hinders the agency's ability to serve the public and costs the agency money

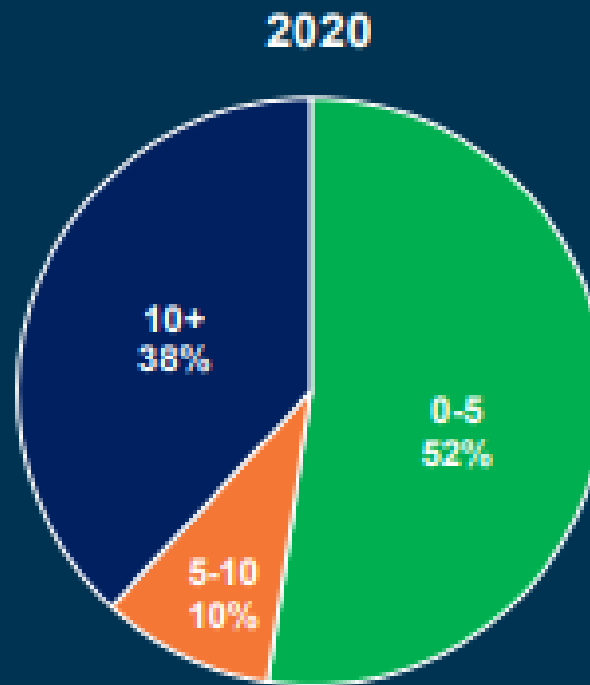


E&P Staffing Turnover and Attrition

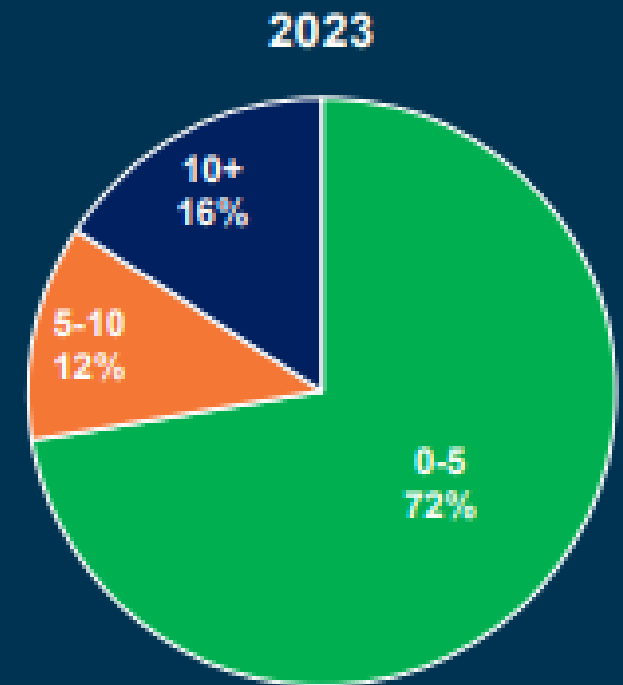
Years Experience in Role - Processing Engineers



- Mean ~ 13 yrs
- Median ~ 15 yrs



- Mean ~ 8 yrs
- Median ~ 2.5 yrs

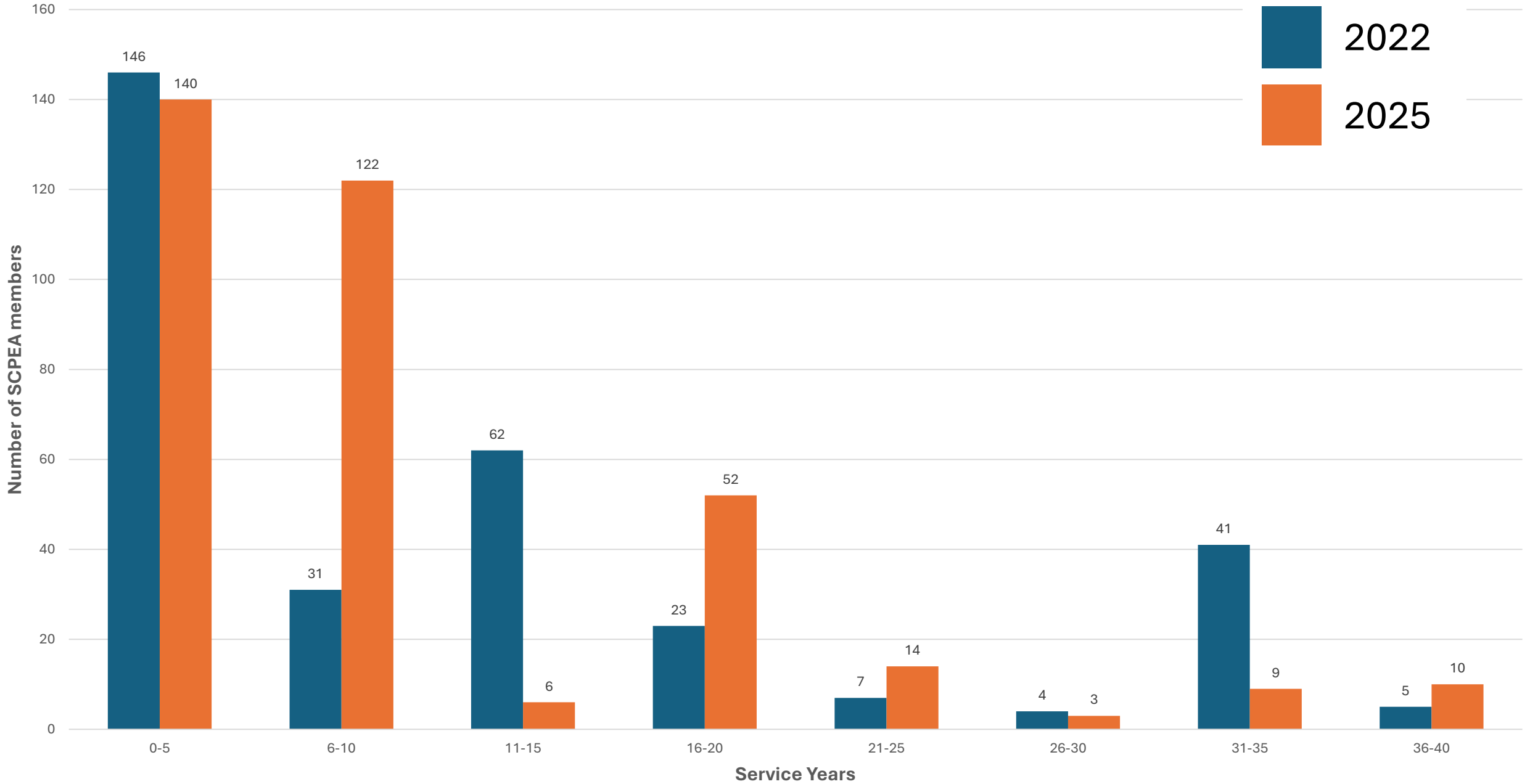


- Mean ~ 5 yrs
- Median < 2 yrs

Source: 6/15/23 Permit Streamlining Task Force Subcommittee Presentation

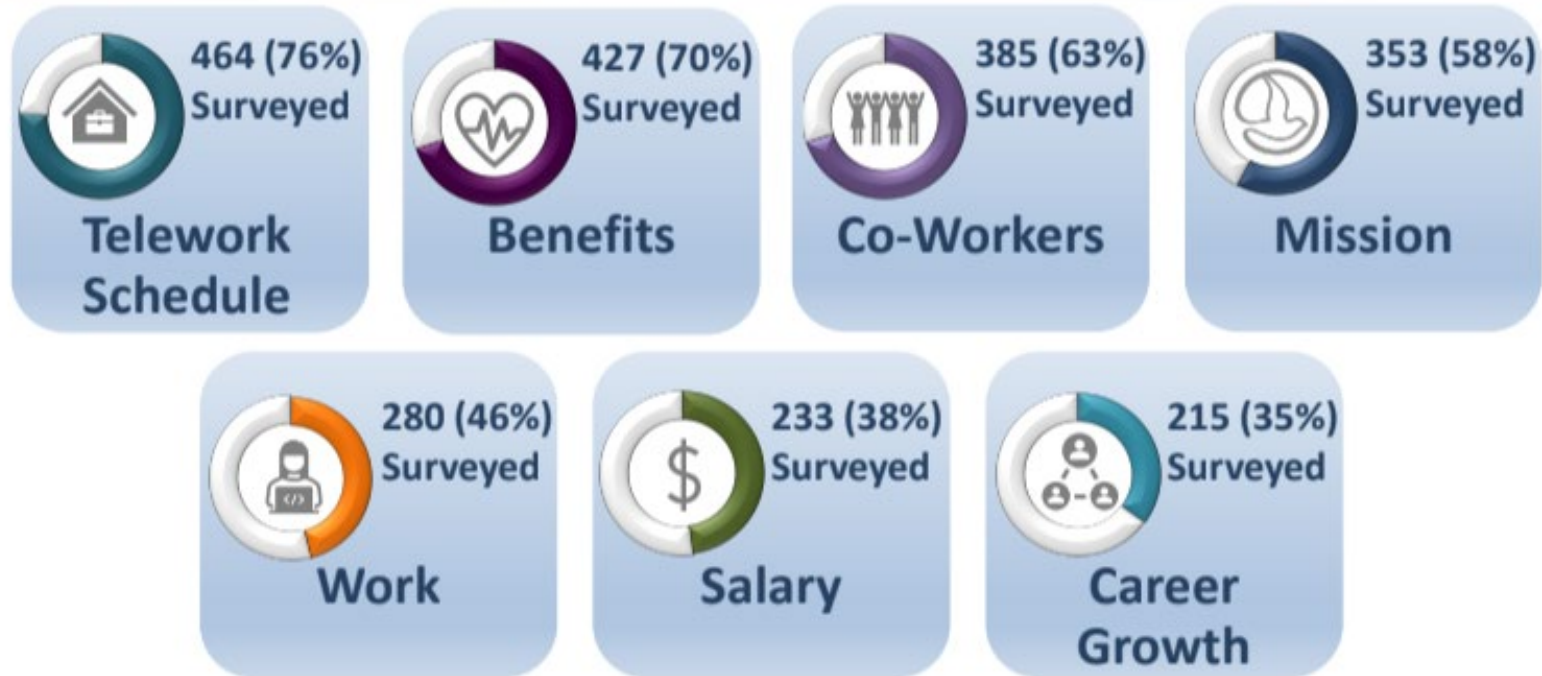
https://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/Agendas/pstf/pstf-presentation-june-2023-final.pdf?sfvrsn=cde9b761_4

SC-PEA Service Years (2022 vs 2025)



Factors Crucial to Retention

Question 25: What are the factors that contribute to you wanting to keep working at South Coast AQMD?



Source: 2023 Agency-wide Survey (608 respondents)

How can we improve?

- Focus on employee retention
 - Monitor metrics like turnover and retention
 - Prioritize staffing and training in groups falling behind
- Focus groups with management, GB, and bargaining units to respond to emerging problems proactively
 - Solicit employee feedback and implement changes based on it
 - Analyze exit interview responses
- Prioritize issues most meaningful to employees:
 - Salary
 - Benefits
 - Telework
 - Rideshare program
 - Overtime
 - Work/life balance

Data to track

1. Retention - *Percentage of employees who stay at company for a specific period of time*
2. Turnover - *employee loss over a specific period of time*
3. Overtime usage
4. Time spent on recruitment efforts
5. Time spent on onboarding staff and training
6. Employee surveys
7. Exit interviews
8. Union feedback

SC-PEA wants collaborative partnerships

- SC-PEA wants to build a collaborative partnership with all parties interested in employee issues
- SC-PEA invites regular communications with the Governing Board
- SC-PEA will continue to help solve issues relating to vacancy rate, recruitment, and retention

