

# Municipal Workforce Survey Data Report

January 2022



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- + *In 2021, municipalities were significantly more likely to hire employees and increase pay than to cut either.*
- + *The positive employment trend is expected to continue in 2022.*
- + *Succession and workforce planning may need more attention.*
- + *Municipalities vary in their diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.*

# Overview

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01

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

While many municipal workforce issues vary depending on the size of the municipality and the particular job function, the survey identified several general key takeaways about the municipal workforce in Georgia.

- *Municipalities are having trouble recruiting applicants and are worried about skills shortages in the coming months, but most are still using traditional recruitment methods.*
- *On average, municipal government workers are slightly older than the US average (the size of municipality can make a big difference) but have lower turnover rates.*
- *Employees leave public-sector work for a variety of reasons; however, most municipalities are struggling to keep up with applicant demands and do not offer flexible work options. Municipalities do excel with benefits offerings.*
- *The municipal workforce has grown over the past year, and that growth is expected to continue. However, few municipalities are undertaking intentional planning around workforce, succession, or diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).*

# PROCESS

- Electronic survey sent to 528 human resources points-of-contact for Georgia municipalities on August 17 with two follow-up reminders
- 200 municipalities returned a survey for a response rate of 38%
- Survey responses covered 15,000 total employees (full-time, part-time, and seasonal)
- Response rate by Georgia Municipal Association districts varied from 28% to 61%
- Some results are analyzed by city size using the following categories:
  - *Large: population >10,000*
  - *Medium: population 1,000–9,999*
  - *Small: population <1,000*

# Recruitment

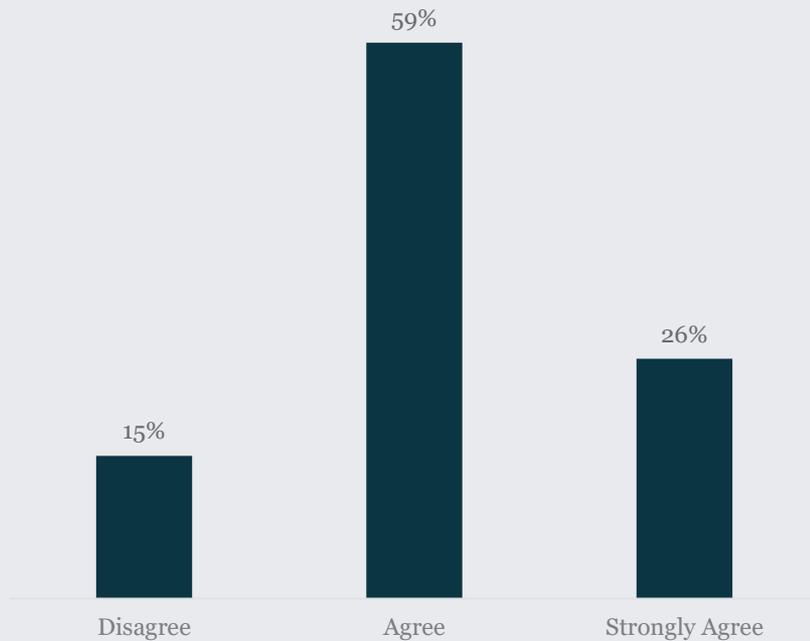


- 
- + *Over 85% of municipalities reported challenges attracting applications.*
  - + *Difficulty attracting applications varies by function.*
  - + *Traditional recruitment strategies still reign supreme in municipal government.*
  - + *About half of municipal governments currently have skill shortages or anticipate having them in the next 12–24 months.*

02

# OVER 85% OF MUNICIPALITIES REPORTED CHALLENGES ATTRACTING APPLICATIONS. THOSE WITH LARGER POPULATIONS WERE SLIGHTLY MORE LIKELY TO REPORT CHALLENGES.

It is difficult to attract applicants with the skills our municipal government needs



*Difficulty attracting applicants based on population size of municipality*

	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Large	12%	58%	30%

	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Medium	11%	60%	29%

	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Small	22%	59%	19%

# DIFFICULTY FILLING VACANCIES VARIES BY FUNCTION.

## *Easiest Functions to Fill*

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>% Not Challenging</b>	<b># of Total Respondents</b>
Human Resources	74%	86
Administration	64%	113
Animal Control	63%	27
Finance	62%	98
Telecomm (internet, cable, phone)	62%	26

## *Hardest Functions to Fill*

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>% Very Challenging</b>	<b># of Total Respondents</b>
Electricity	42%	24
Police	38%	121
Sanitation/ Landfill	30%	60
Water/ Wastewater	28%	112
Natural Gas	21%	29

*Note: Not all municipalities offer all functions. For example, only 24 of responding cities reported offering electricity.*

# BROKEN DOWN BY MUNICIPALITY SIZE, THE MOST CHALLENGING FUNCTIONS TO FILL VARIED.

Top 5 Most Challenging Functions to Fill by Municipality Size

	Large	Medium	Small
1	Police	Electricity	Electricity
2	Electricity	Police	Animal Control
3	Finance	Sanitation/Landfill	Transportation Planning
4	Sanitation/Landfill	Water/Wastewater	Natural Gas
5	Water/Wastewater	Natural Gas	Sanitation/Landfill

*Note: Not all municipalities offer all functions. For example, only 24 of responding cities reported offering electricity.*



**Electricity and sanitation/landfill positions were hard for cities of all sizes to fill.**

# TRADITIONAL RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES STILL REIGN SUPREME IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.

*31% of cities reported not using any common recruitment strategies.*

## *Top 3 most common strategies*



*Social media  
(47.7%)*



*Online advertising  
(45.4%)*



*Employee referrals  
(43.7%)*

## *Top 3 least common strategies*



*Building a  
communications  
campaign around  
public service  
(10.9%)*



*Postsecondary  
education outreach  
(10.9%)*



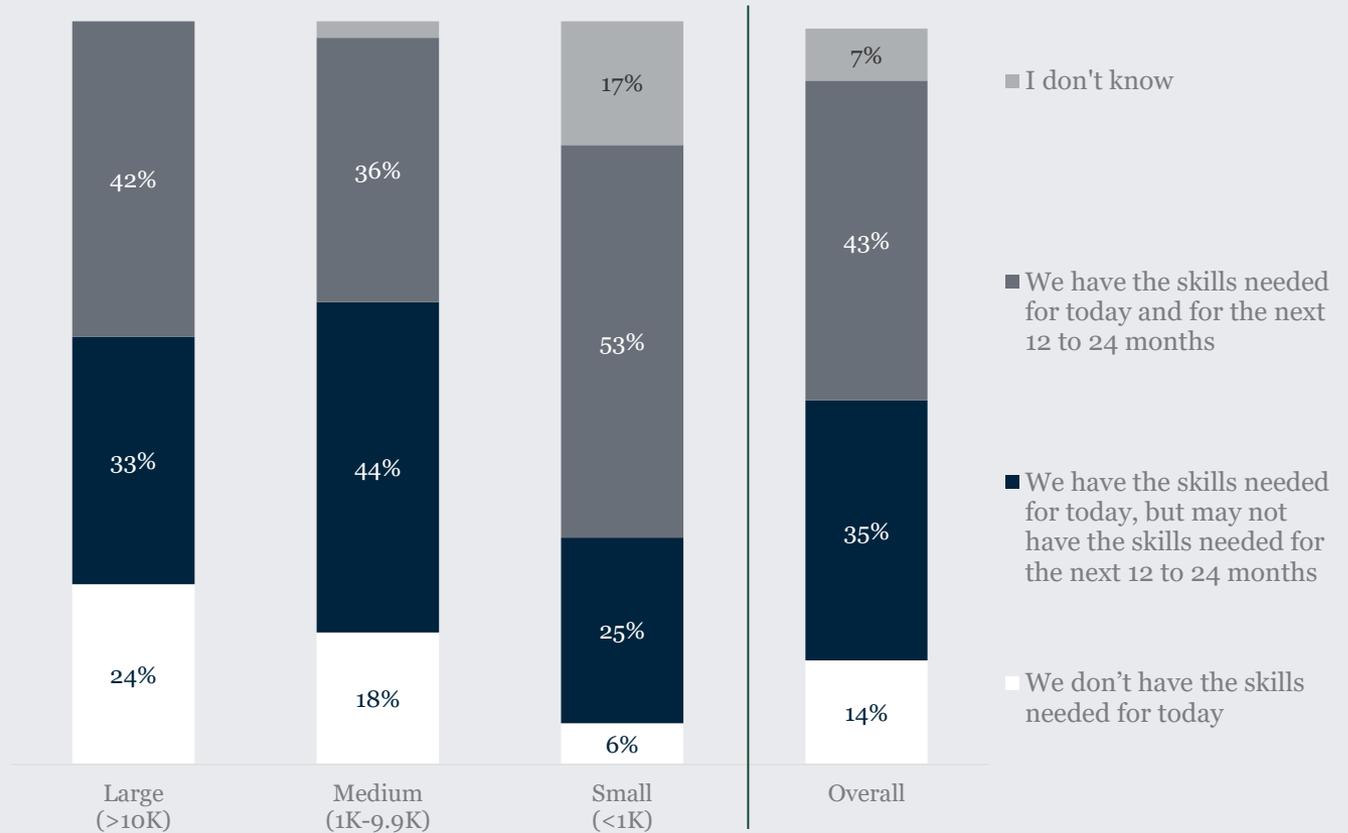
*K-12 outreach/  
civics curriculum  
(5.2%)*

# ABOUT HALF OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS CURRENTLY HAVE SKILL SHORTAGES OR ANTICIPATE HAVING THEM IN THE NEXT 12-24 MONTHS.

Of the following statements, which best describes the overall availability of skills of new hires in your municipal government?



*Large and medium cities are more pessimistic about having the skilled talent they need over the next two years.*



# Retention



- 
- + Municipal government workers are slightly older than the US average but have a lower turnover rate.*
  - + Smaller cities reported the fewest challenges retaining employees.*
  - + Employees reported leaving municipal service for a variety of reasons.*
  - + Employee retention and development programs are hit and miss.*

03

# MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT WORKERS ARE SLIGHTLY OLDER THAN THE US AVERAGE, BUT AVERAGE WORKER AGE VARIES SIGNIFICANTLY BY MUNICIPALITY SIZE.

US workforce  
average age\*: **42.8**

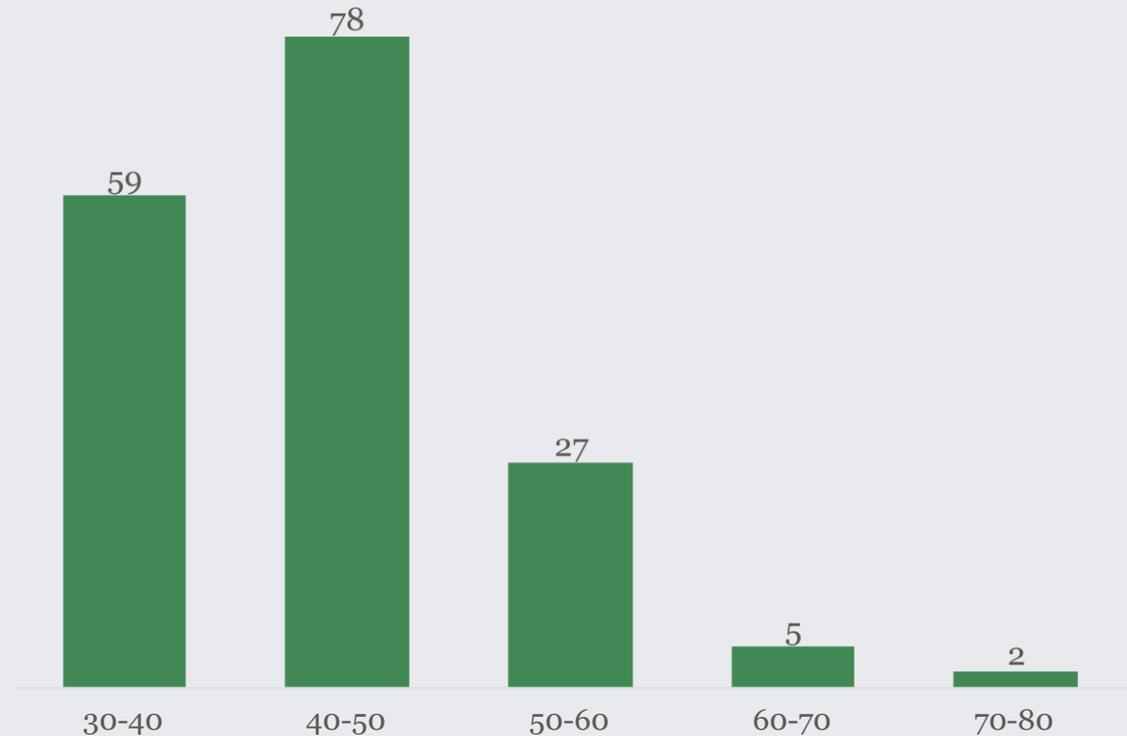
Georgia municipal  
government worker  
average age: **45.2**

Average age by city size:

- Large: **41.6**
- Medium: **43.4**
- Small: **49.0**

**On average, 12% of  
municipal workers  
are eligible to retire.**

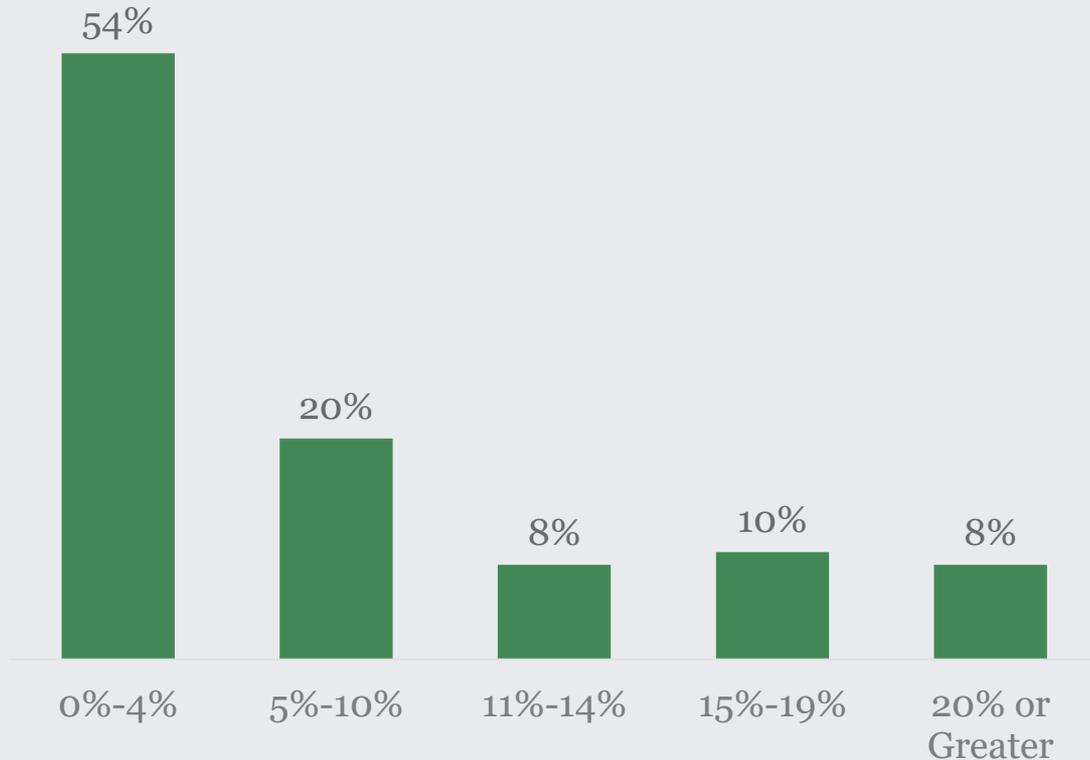
What is your average employee age?



\*Estimated using a midpoint method

# MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT WORKERS HAVE A LOWER TURNOVER RATE.

What was your employee turnover rate in 2020?



Estimated\* Georgia municipal government 2020 turnover rate: 7.3%

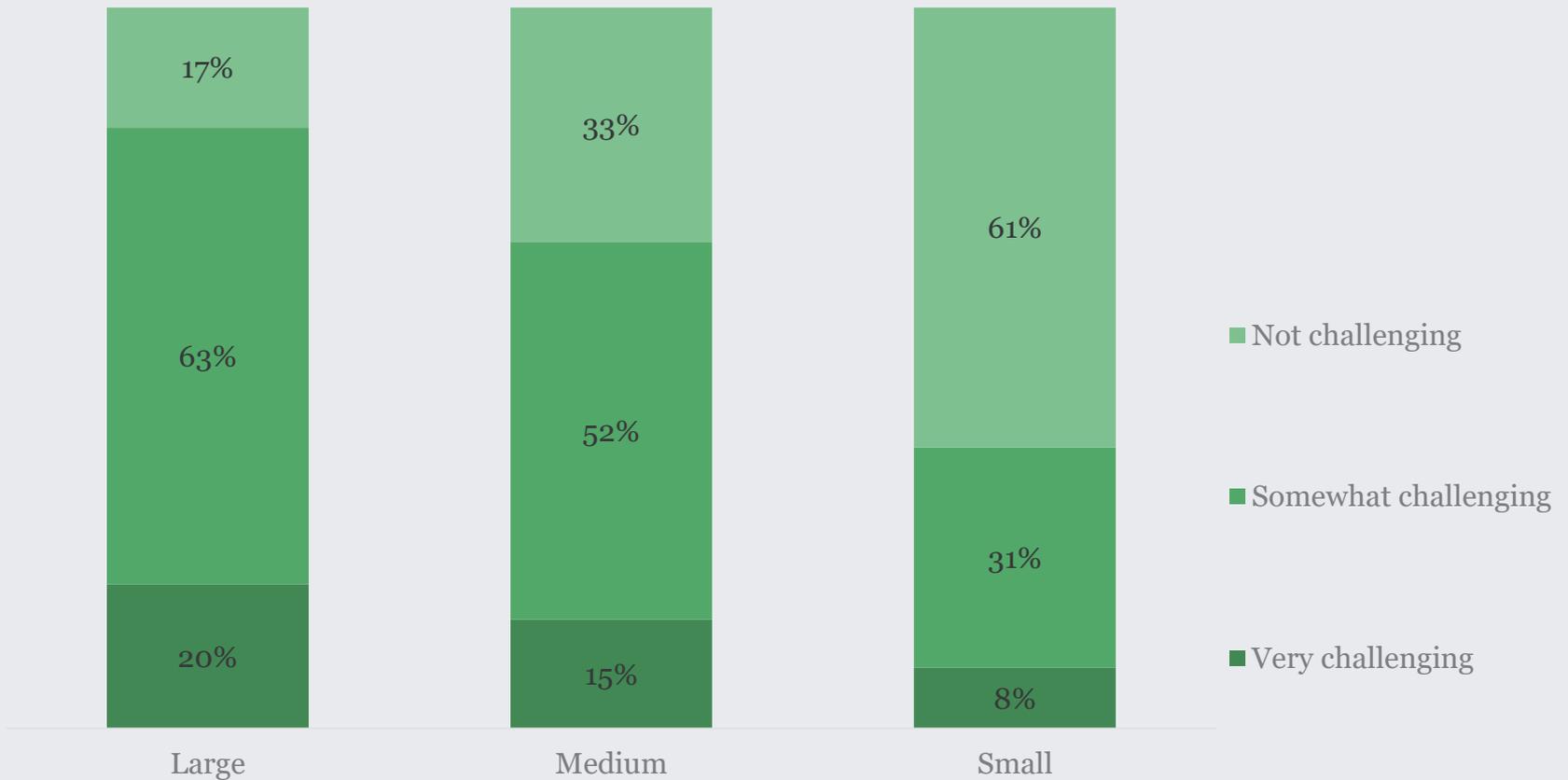
Estimated US economy turnover rate\*\*: 57.3%

\*Estimated using a midpoint method

\*\*US Bureau of Labor Statistics, JOLTS

# SMALLER CITIES REPORTED THE FEWEST CHALLENGES RETAINING EMPLOYEES. MOST LARGE AND MEDIUM CITIES FELT THAT RETAINING EMPLOYEES WAS SOMEWHAT CHALLENGING.

How challenging is it to retain employees?



# EMPLOYEES REPORTED LEAVING MUNICIPAL SERVICE FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS.

## *Top reasons for leaving municipal government*



*Career change  
(25%)*



*Compensation  
(24%)*



*Opportunity  
with another  
public employer  
(21%)*



*Retirement  
(21%)*



*Opportunity  
with a private  
employer  
(19%)*

# MOST GOVERNMENTS DO NOT OFFER ANY COMMONLY USED RETENTION PROGRAMS.

Which of the following programs does your organization currently use to encourage employee retention?

Top 5 <u>Most</u> Common Practices	% Yes
Leave benefits: consolidated annual/personal/sick leave	41.3%
Merit-based salary increases	34.3%
Leave benefits: sick leave banking/donations	34.3%
Bonuses	32.0%
Employee assistance programs (EAPs)/mental health support	25.6%
Top 5 <u>Least</u> Common Practices	% Yes
Community engagement (support for volunteer involvement, matching donations)	4.7%
Data-driven decision-making on retention efforts (i.e., using data to identify and address positions with high turnover)	4.1%
Stay interviews	2.9%
Transit benefits (e.g., free transit, discounted transit benefits)	1.7%
Employee affinity/resource groups (e.g., for underrepresented demographics)	0.0%

*71.5% of municipalities reported not using any of the listed retention strategies.*

# INFORMAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ARE NOT COMMON. MUNICIPALITIES TEND TO INVEST IN EMPLOYEES THROUGH FORMAL TRAINING (IN-HOUSE OR CROSS TRAINING AND TUITION ASSISTANCE).

Which of the following programs does your organization currently use to encourage employee development?

Employee Development Programs	% Yes
In-house training	57.3%
Cross training	56.1%
Funds/reimbursements for training/tuition	51.5%
Leadership development	19.3%
Mentoring	18.1%
Workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion training	17.0%
Career paths/career ladders	12.9%
Internships/apprenticeships	11.1%
Financial literacy/financial wellness training	8.2%
Job rotations	3.5%

***18.7% of municipalities use none of the above employee development programs.***

# Pay & Benefits

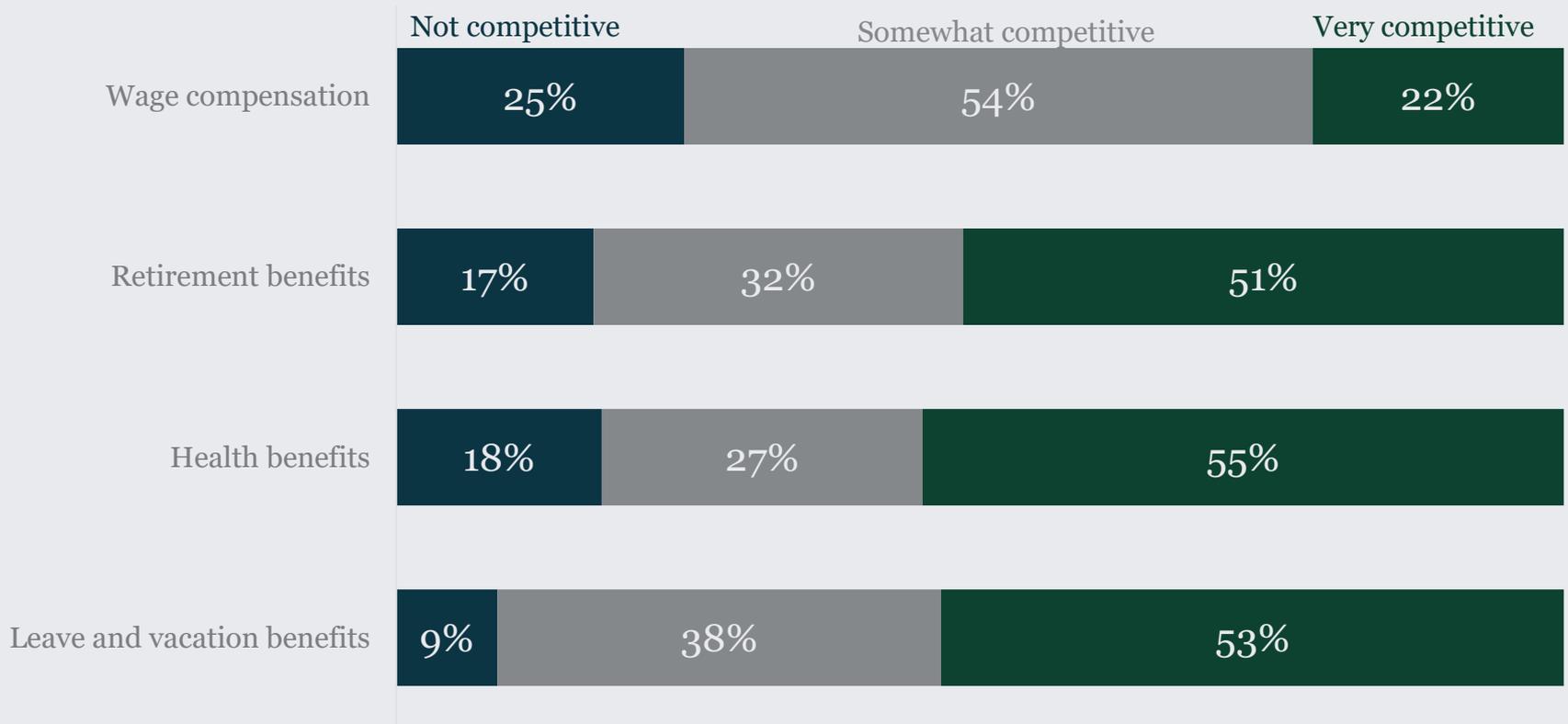


- 
- + Pay is the least competitive part of the total reward package in municipal government.*
  - + Regardless of municipality size, most respondents shared that they cannot pay what applicants demand.*
  - + Flexible work options are not common in Georgia municipalities.*

04

# PAY IS THE LEAST COMPETITIVE PART OF THE TOTAL REWARD PACKAGE IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT. OTHER MUNICIPAL BENEFITS ARE TYPICALLY MORE COMPETITIVE.

To what extent do you believe the total rewards you offer your employees are competitive with the labor market?



# REGARDLESS OF MUNICIPALITY SIZE, MOST RESPONDENTS SHARED THAT THEY CANNOT PAY WHAT APPLICANTS DEMAND.

*Level of agreement or disagreement for the following statement: We can pay what applicants demand.*

	Large	Medium	Small
Disagree	58%	69%	72%
Agree	42%	31%	28%

Larger municipalities were more likely to be able to be able to meet applicant pay demands.

*Average starting and maximum wage for all full-time employees, according to the 2020 Georgia Department of Community Affairs Local Government Wage and Salary Survey:*

Large Municipalities

- Avg starting: \$49,921
- Avg maximum: \$74,395

Medium Municipalities

- Avg starting: \$37,569
- Avg maximum: \$51,907

Small Municipalities

- Avg starting: \$27,484
- Avg maximum: \$37,012

# FLEXIBLE WORK OPTIONS ARE NOT COMMON IN GEORGIA MUNICIPALITIES.

What flexible work practices does your organization offer?



# Planning



- 
- + In 2021, municipalities were significantly more likely to hire employees and increase pay than to cut either.*
  - + The positive employment trend is expected to continue.*
  - + Succession and workforce planning may need more attention.*
  - + Municipalities vary in their diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.*

05

# IN 2021, MUNICIPALITIES WERE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY TO HIRE EMPLOYEES AND INCREASE PAY THAN TO CUT EITHER.

## **Most Common Changes**

- *Hired employees (47%)*
- *Position-specific pay increases (38%)*
- *Broad-based pay increases (30%)*
- *Hired temporary or contract employees (23%)*

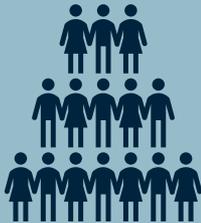
## **Least Common Changes**

- *Pay cuts (0%)*
- *Hire permanent staff to telework exclusively (1%)*
- *Furloughs (1%)*
- *Permanent/ long-term telework options (1%)*

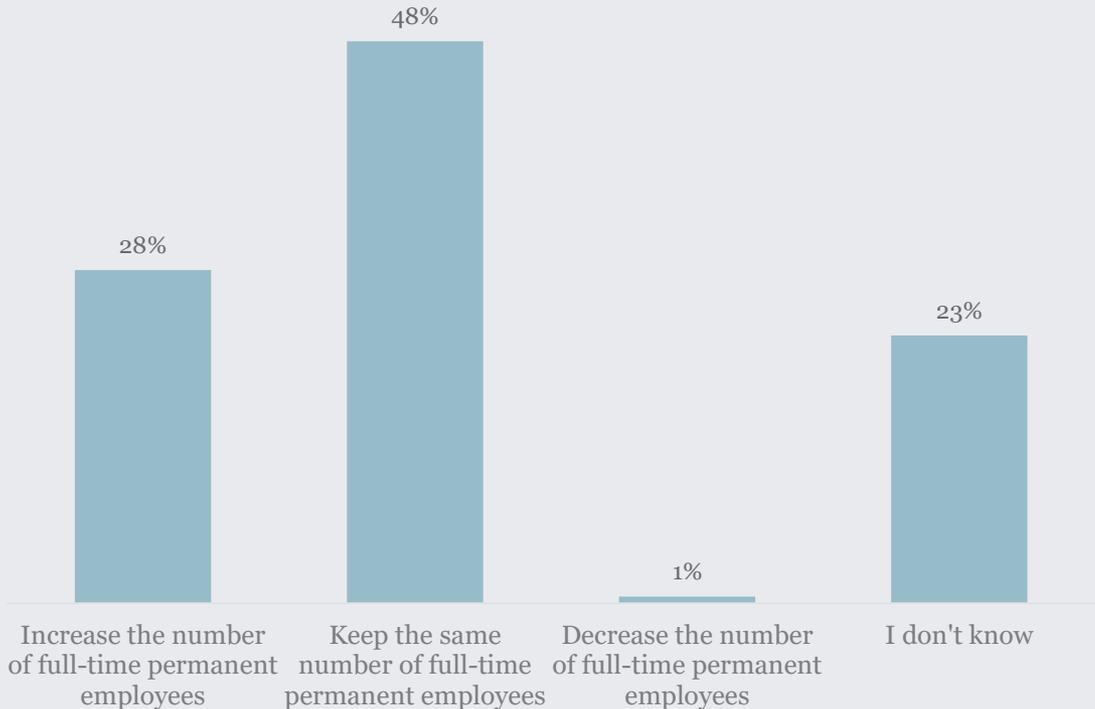
# THE POSITIVE EMPLOYMENT TREND IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE IN 2022.

*Responding municipalities ranged in size from 2,500 to zero full-time employees.*

*On average, a municipality had **69 full-time employees, 10 part-time employees, and 7 seasonal employees.***

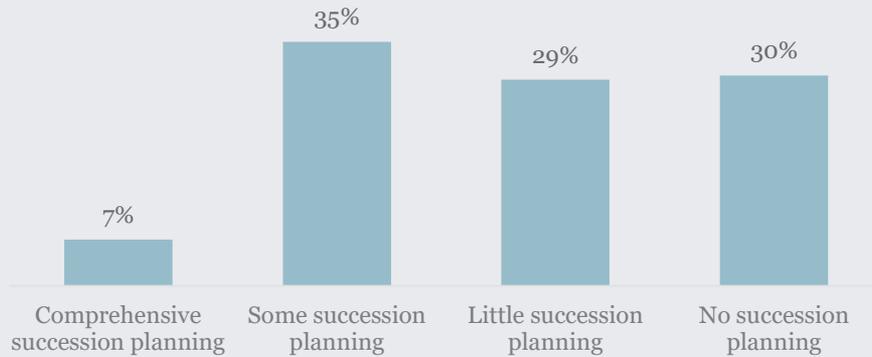


How does your municipal government plan to change its number of full-time permanent employees for all of 2022 compared to 2021?



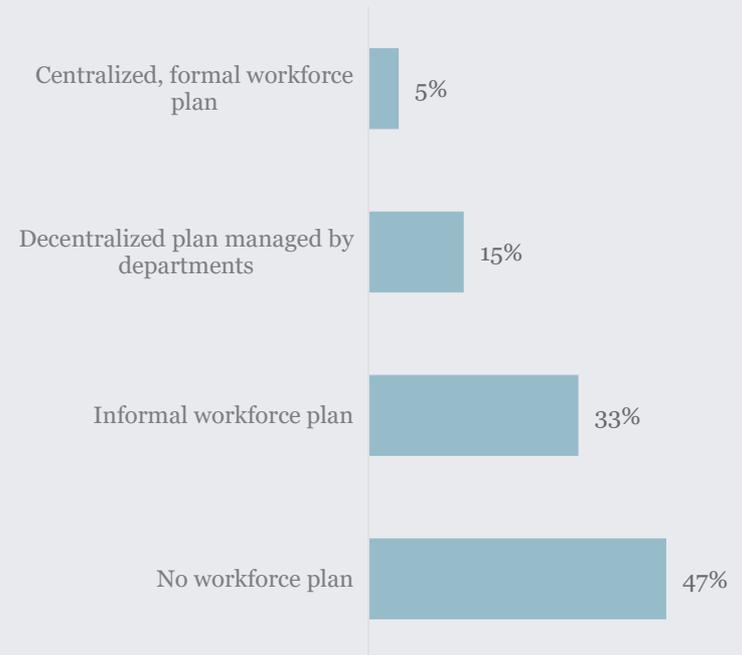
# SUCCESSION AND WORKFORCE PLANNING MAY NEED MORE ATTENTION.

Which of the following best describes your municipal government's succession planning process?



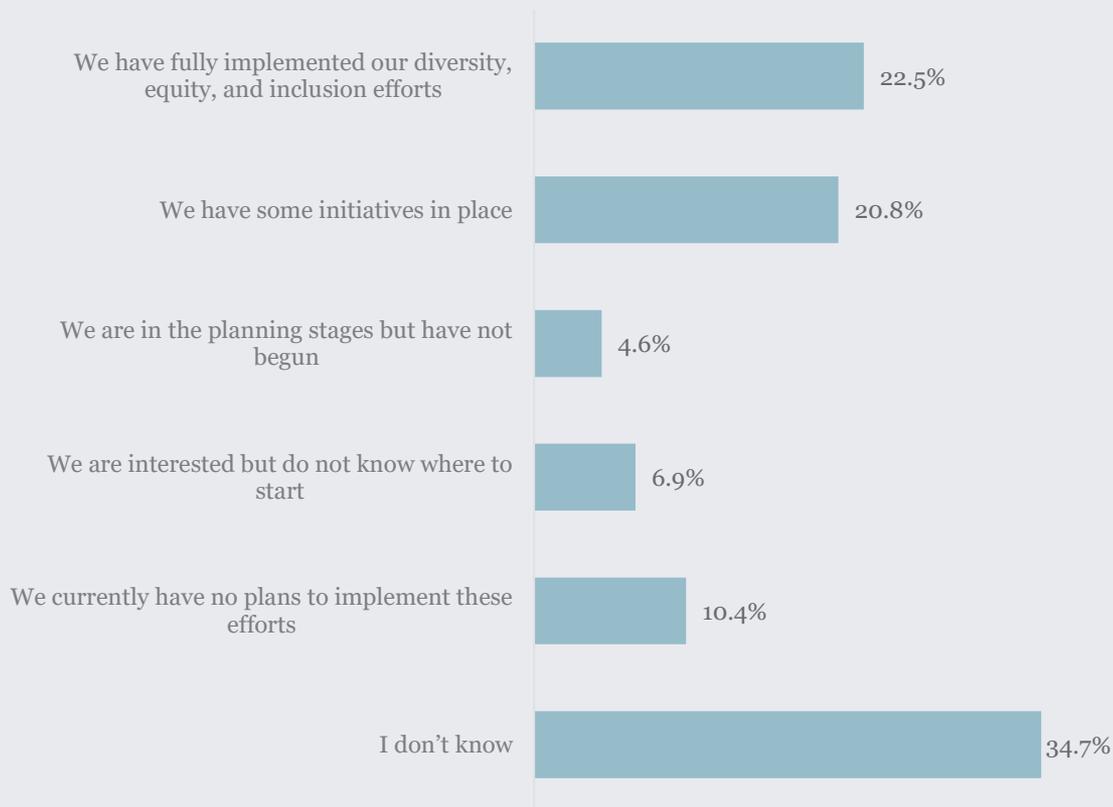
Succession Planning	Large	Medium	Small
Very challenging	23%	22%	15%
Somewhat challenging	60%	53%	42%
Not challenging	17%	24%	42%

What type of workforce plan, if any, does your municipal government have?



# MUNICIPALITIES VARY IN THEIR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION EFFORTS.

What is the current status of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts in your municipal government?



**43%** of municipalities reported having some DEI efforts in place or fully implemented.

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**11.5%** of municipalities are interested or are planning but could use additional support around DEI.

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The rest do not have plans or are not sure about their DEI plans.

# Municipal Workforce Survey Data Report

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