

# REPORT TO THE VERMONT LEGISLATURE

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## ASSESSMENT OF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION INITIATIVES

In accordance with Act 183 of 2022: An act relating to economic and workforce development.

**Submitted to:** House and Senate Committees on Appropriations

**Submitted by:** Jenney Samuelson, Secretary  
Agency of Human Services

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**Report Date:** January 21, 2023

## **LEGISLATIVE REQUEST**

Section 9 of Act 183 of 2022 calls on the Secretary of Human Services, in consultation with the Commissioner of Human Resources, to report on recruitment and retention initiatives to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While state government staff decreased 4.5% from fiscal year 2018 to 2022, the drops at Department of Corrections, Department of Mental Health, and the Vermont Veterans' Home were several times as large. Vermont's designated and specialized service agencies, along with other critical providers, also experienced high turnover and vacancy rates.

The implications of staffing shortages varied across the entities covered in this report. Corrections increasingly relied on staff overtime while mental health facilities and Vermont Veterans' Home – like much of the health care sector - turned to expensive traveler agencies for contract workers. Populations served by designated and specialized service agencies suffered from long wait times, with those in some regions waiting much longer than others.

The last budget appropriated tens of millions of dollars to shore up these vital sectors. State government successfully distributed funding on an ambitious timeline as authorized. The state entities issued various packages of premium pay and bonuses to their new and existing workers. The Agency of Human Services also launched its Premium Pay for Workforce Recruitment and Retention Program in spring 2022. The program then issued \$33.2 million in grants to 140 providers across the state, including \$14.1 million to Vermont's 18 designated and specialized service agencies.

Results were mixed. Two of the three departments covered in this report saw a large increase in job applications in FY23, reversing steep drops in previous years. One of the two, Corrections, graduated one of the largest classes on record and achieved a net growth in filled positions. But all three continued to struggle to retain workers, and the mental health facilities and Vermont Veterans' Home are more reliant on travelers than ever before. Data on the change in vacancy rates for designated and specialized service agencies, as well as nine other provider types that received premium pay grants, are forthcoming and will be produced from mid-grant year (January) evaluation reporting.

This report focuses on two core recommendations, both of which are also included in Budget Adjustment Act requests. The Agency of Human Services recognizes that incentivizing workers to apply for jobs with bonuses is a stop gap measure that could have an unintended side effect of encouraging turnover in search of additional bonuses. The Agency's recommendations focus on the retention side of the equation and on expanding the pool of skilled workers in Vermont.

The recommendations are:

1. Build upon the Department of Corrections' recruitment success by investing in stability and sustainability incentives and shift increased differentials.
2. Support health care employers to help expand and upskill Vermont's nursing workforce.

Finally, the report includes a robust set of appendices with data on recruitment and retention results and plans.

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## INTRODUCTION

Coming out of the pandemic, workforce shortages plagued virtually every sector of the economy across the country. But not every region nor every sector has been impacted the same.

In northern New England, the challenge has been compounded by demographics. Our region has the greatest proportion of baby boomers in the nation and is thus in the midst of losing our largest generation of workers to retirement. At the same time, a tight housing market, childcare challenges, and other factors are constraining the number of younger people in the job market.

As the *State of Vermont Workforce Report Fiscal Year 2022* notes, “unprecedented labor market conditions combined with a historic high turnover rate led to the highest number of job openings recruited and lowest number of applicants per job opening resulting in both increased time to recruit and time to hire.”<sup>1</sup> From FY18 to FY22, the average number of applications per state job opening fell by more than half.<sup>2</sup> The number of full-time equivalents working in government dropped by 4.5% over the same period (Appendix A).

Within the workforce, essential roles in health care and corrections are challenging work environments and have been difficult to staff nationally. Combining an overall tight labor market with a particularly tight region and particularly tight sector is a recipe for intense pressure. In Vermont’s health care and correctional facilities, high turnover and increased time to find qualified new staff contributed to shrinkages in staff that far outpaced state government as a whole. Notably, compared to the decrease in state workers overall, the drops in full-time equivalents working in the Department of Corrections, Department of Mental Health, and Vermont Veterans’ Home from FY18 to FY22 were nearly four times, five times, and six times as large, respectively (see Appendix A). Vermont’s designated and specialized service agencies, along with other critical providers, have likewise experienced high turnover and vacancy rates.

The implications of staffing shortages varied across entities covered in this report. Corrections increasingly relied on staff overtime while mental health facilities and Vermont Veterans’ Home – like much of the health care sector - turned to expensive traveler agencies for contract workers. Populations served by designated and specialized service agencies suffered from long wait times, with those in some parts of the state waiting much longer than others.

The Administration requested, and the Vermont General Assembly appropriated, millions of dollars to shore up these vital sectors. State government successfully distributed the funding on an ambitious timeline as authorized. This report offers an update on the relevant recruitment and retention efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> From 25.0 to 12.3, per Table 19 of *State of Vermont Workforce Report Fiscal Year 2022*, Department of Human Resources.

<sup>2</sup> The *State of Vermont Workforce Report Fiscal Year 2022* can be found at <https://humanresources.vermont.gov/data/workforce-reporting>

## **USE OF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION FUNDS**

### **Department of Corrections**

The Department of Corrections (DOC) was appropriated \$4,934,590 from the State Fiscal Recovery (SFR) Fund appropriation of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). DOC used those and other funds (see Appendix B) to provide hourly premium pay to qualifying essential staff in security positions and to those who perform hospital or transport coverage. DOC also provided lump sum premium pay to employees who successfully completed probation, attended the Vermont Correctional Academy, and reached other durational milestones, as outlined in an August 2021 agreement between DOC and the Vermont State Employees' Association.

### **Department of Mental Health**

The Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital, managed by the Department of Mental Health (DMH), is Vermont's only state-run psychiatric inpatient facility. DMH offered a bonus to prospective employees as an incentive to join and complete a minimum service period. Registered Nurses qualified for \$5,000 bonuses, while Mental Health Specialists received \$1,000 bonuses. DMH's secure residential recovery facility, the Middlesex Therapeutic Community Residential Facility, also offered bonuses. Funds allocated to bonuses have been fully utilized. Beyond bonuses, DMH utilized an array of strategies to recruit and retain facility staff (Appendix C).

### **Vermont Veterans' Home**

Vermont Veterans' Home (VVH) paid bonuses to staff using the \$373,680 appropriated in Section 68 of Act 83 of 2022. VVH offered a bonus of \$1,000 to \$2,500 to new hires, depending on position and period of time worked. VVH also paid retention bonuses of \$2,500 to clinical staff (RNs, LPNs, LNAs) and \$1000 to non-clinical staff. Shift differentials were increased through July 2, 2022 for custodial, food service and nursing employees. Beyond bonuses, VVH established a recruitment work group and pursued strategies related to community engagement, advertising and social media, nursing programs, and competitive pay (Appendix D).

### **Designated and Specialized Service Agencies**

The Agency of Human Services (AHS) began issuing grants for the Premium Pay for Workforce Recruitment and Retention Program in June 2022. In total, \$33,166,000 was awarded to 140 eligible employer applicants. Designated and specialized service agencies (DA/SSAs), including shared living providers, were one of the ten eligible employer types, per Act 83, Section 72. All 18 DA/SSAs applied, receiving a total of \$14,116,000. Grant award amounts were based on \$2,000 per full-time equivalent, counting both employees and vacant budgeted positions.

Grant applicants had the option to receive either a single lump sum payment to be disbursed within 90 days or quarterly payments to be disbursed over 12 months. The nine DA/SSAs that opted for a single lump sum payment spent over 93% of their \$5,522,000 awards. As of the end of the 1st quarter (September 30, 2022), the nine that selected quarterly payments had disbursed \$1,803,422 to eligible employees. This spending accounted for 21% of total quarterly DA/SSA awards but was concentrated among four of the nine agencies. The other five organizations had not disbursed funds by the end of the first quarter. Second quarter reporting and mid-program evaluation reporting is due in mid-January 2023.

## MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS AND TAKING ADDITIONAL STEPS

### Overview

There are multiple ways to assess the status of recruitment and retention efforts. One consists of evaluating data across state government departments and longitudinally from pre-pandemic through the current fiscal year. The second consists of staff surveys and other qualitative assessments within the workforce.

### Department of Human Resources Data

On January 13, 2023, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) published the *State of Vermont Workforce Report Fiscal Year 2022*, which communicates data for classified employees showing five-year trends in areas such as employment, turnover, age, length of service, retirement eligibility, compensation, diversity, and leave.<sup>3</sup> DHR also provided AHS with data related to the first half of FY23.

The *Workforce Report* shows staffing shortages continued to be more severe at the organizations covered in this report than in state government generally. While the State ended FY22 with a 13% vacancy rate, DOC had a 20% vacancy rate while DMH and VVH each had 32% vacancy. Likewise, while the State's turnover rate increased to 15% in FY22, these three departments all had substantially higher rates (25%, 21%, and 34%, per Appendix A).

Frontline workers in facilities had even higher turnover rates than their broader departments, with DOC's Correctional Officer I's shooting beyond 50% turnover – more than triple the State's overall rate – and VVH's Licensed Nursing Assistants surpassing 40% (Appendix A).

DHR's FY23 data point to some positive signs in the aftermath of the recruitment and retention investments but also some lack of movement that – when considered alongside the massive investments in recruitment and retention payments – underscore both the gravity of the situation and the need for more targeted solutions. Additional information is covered in the subsequent subsections below.

### Department of Corrections

DOC reports that workforce investments have proven critical in stabilizing DOC's facility staffing crisis, particularly in the face of challenges following the pandemic and the increasingly older and more medically complex population it serves. DOC's facility staff vacancy rate has fallen from a high of 30% in July 2022 to 25% and is projected to continue to decline (Appendix B). In addition, the rates of mandatory double shifts have decreased.

DOC focused resources on recruiting as part of its 2022 Stability and Sustainability Plan, which resulted in record numbers of new staff entering the correctional system (Appendix A). Recruiting is higher than any time in recent memory, with the last Vermont Correctional

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<sup>3</sup> The *State of Vermont Workforce Report Fiscal Year 2022* can be found at <https://humanresources.vermont.gov/data/workforce-reporting>

Academy having graduated one of the largest classes (51 graduates) on record, and the current class is now training 27 more recruits set to graduate next month. Surveyed recruits specifically described DOC's new scheduling system as a key attraction.

This new scheduling design included facility-specific 12-hour, 50/50 schedules that are more predictable and stable. As part of this schedule change, staff work seven days in a 14-day pay period. This allows staff time to rest, recuperate, and spend time with family. Currently, four of DOC's six facilities are utilizing this system. The others are slated to join in the first half of 2023.

While DOC has made recent strides related to recruitment, retention is an area in which the Department continues to struggle. Its facilities started FY23 with 214 Correctional Officer I's and added 139 more over the following six months; it also lost 83, mostly to voluntary terminations (Appendix A). DOC has set a goal to recover over 100 vacancies in the next two years and has laid out specific staff-focused reforms to invest in health and wellness, professional development, and scheduling design updates to drive employee retention.

### **Department of Mental Health**

Unlike DOC facilities and VVH, the DMH facilities have seen an acceleration in staffing losses in FY23. The rate of staffing loss for the Department as a whole, as well as for Mental Health Specialists, both worsened in the first half of FY23, mainly due to a decrease in new hires relative to FY22. In addition to broader challenges to staffing in the health care arena, DMH sees the pending move of the secure residential recovery facility as contributing to turnover among staff looking for a shorter commute.

The staffing losses mean the DMH facilities will continue to depend on traveler agencies to fill gaps. DMH has also adopted a comprehensive set of recruitment strategies (Appendix C).

### **Vermont Veterans' Home**

While not making gains, VVH appeared to "stop the bleeding" in the first half of FY23. Its Licensed Nursing Assistant and Registered Nurse position postings saw double-digit growth in applications from FY22 to FY23 after dropping from FY21 to FY22. VVH hired as many people as it lost during the first six months of FY23, giving its staff 0% shrinkage in FY23 after contracting 15% in FY22.

However, the inability to make up for years of staffing losses means VVH will continue to depend on traveler agencies to fill the staffing gap. VVH's spending on these agencies increased more than six-fold from FY18 to FY22 and, judging from expenditures over the last six months, is on track to increase by an additional 65% in FY23 (Appendix D).

### **Designated Agencies**

AHS is assessing the effectiveness of the premium pay grant program by collecting data mid-program and at the end of the program in January 2023 and July 2023, respectively. Data collected from evaluation reporting, as well as the initial grant application, will allow AHS to understand how the program impacted vacancy and turnover rates by employer type, organization, geographic area, wages, and employee type (e.g. administrative staff, 24/7 residential direct service staff, RNs). AHS will share these data in a forthcoming report.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

This report focuses on two core recommendations, both of which are also included in Budget Adjustment Act (BAA) requests. AHS recognizes that incentivizing workers to apply for jobs with bonuses is a short-term stop gap that could have an unintended side effect of encouraging turnover in search of additional bonuses. The Agency's recommendations focus on the retention side of the equation and on expanding the pool of skilled workers in Vermont.

### **1) Build upon DOC's recruitment success by investing in stability and sustainability incentives and shift increased differentials.**

DOC's 2023 legislative priorities and BAA request include a package of provisions to stabilize and sustain Vermont's correctional facilities and field operations. DOC understands it cannot provide the highest level of care and rehabilitative programming to those in its custody without recruiting, retaining, and investing in its staff across the Department. DOC's BAA request of \$2,701,927 will be combined with anticipated unbudgeted vacancy savings of \$3,781,771 and \$360,900 in anticipated overtime savings to fund this \$6.8 million package (Appendix B).

### **2) Support health care employers to help expand and upskill Vermont's nursing workforce.**

After expanding the Premium Pay for Workforce Recruitment and Retention grant program to additional health care providers employers, AHS has requested in BAA to use remaining Premium Pay funding for grant programming that will allow designated and specialized service agencies and other health care employers to upskill existing nursing staff by covering tuition and fees and living costs. The grants expand partnerships with Vermont nursing schools to train members of the health care employers' existing staff, including personal care attendants, licensed nursing assistants, and licensed practical nurses, to become higher-level nursing professionals. The request also supports incentive grants to nurses employed by health care employers in Vermont for serving as preceptors for nursing students enrolled in Vermont nursing schools.

## APPENDIX A - COMPARATIVE DATA

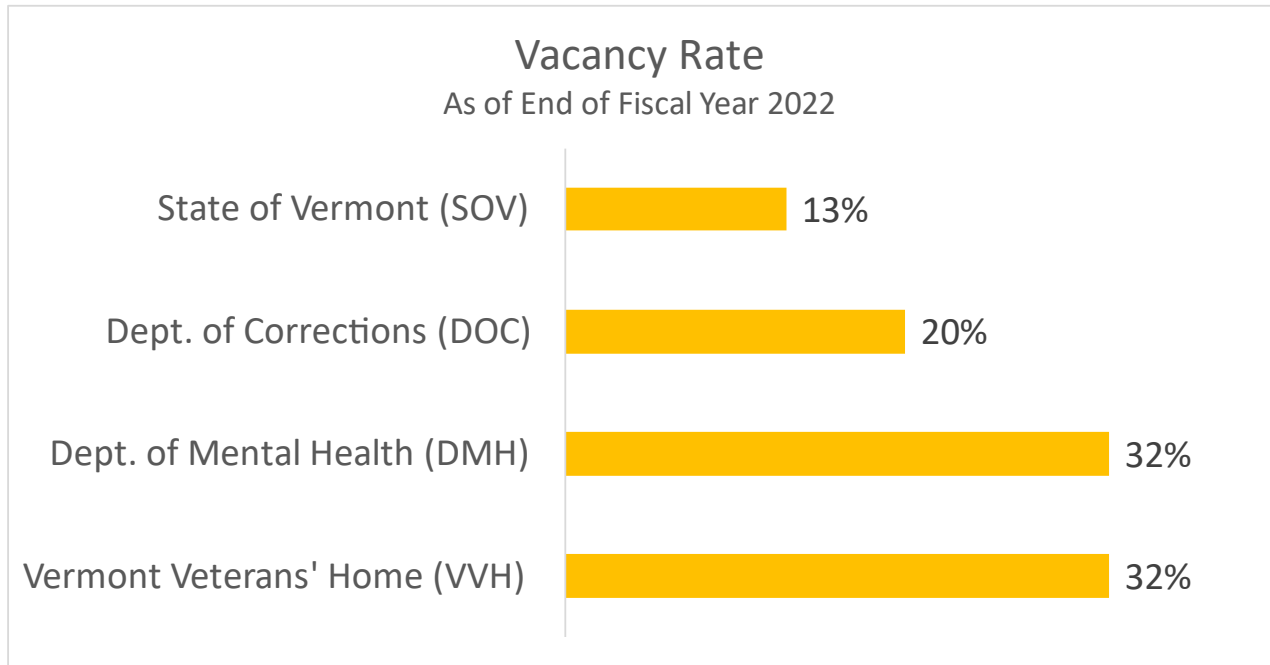


Figure 1. Data from Table 3 of State of Vermont Workforce Report Fiscal Year 2022, Department of Human Resources.

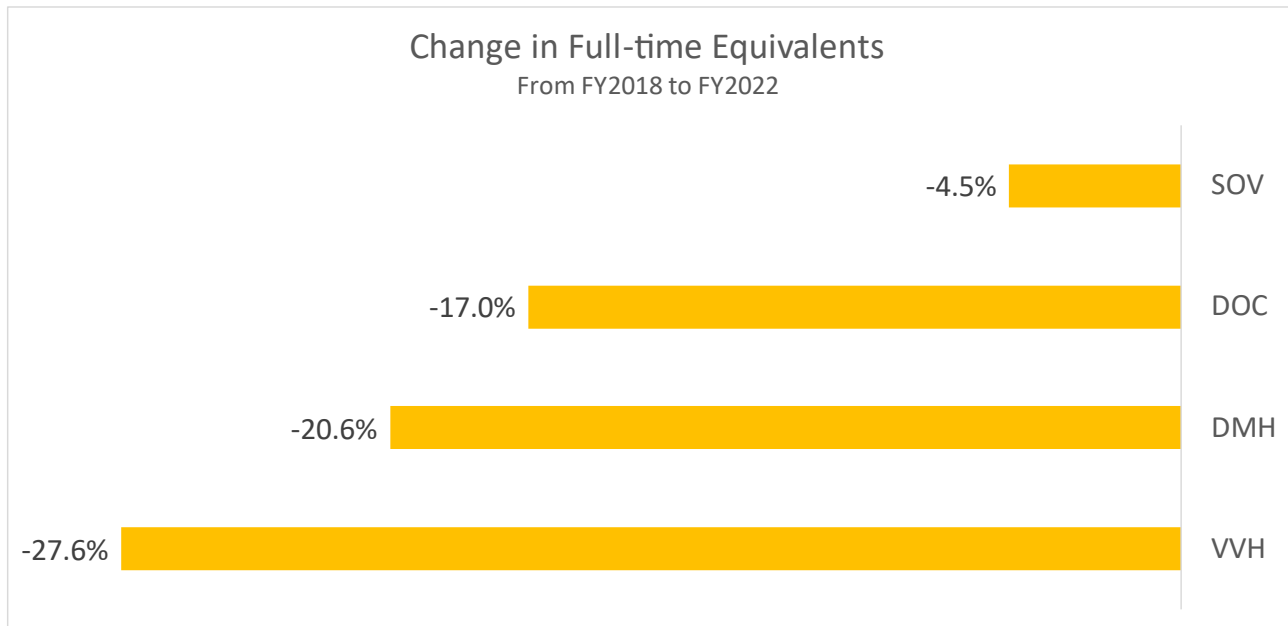


Figure 2. Data from Table 11 of State of Vermont Workforce Report Fiscal Year 2022, Department of Human Resources.

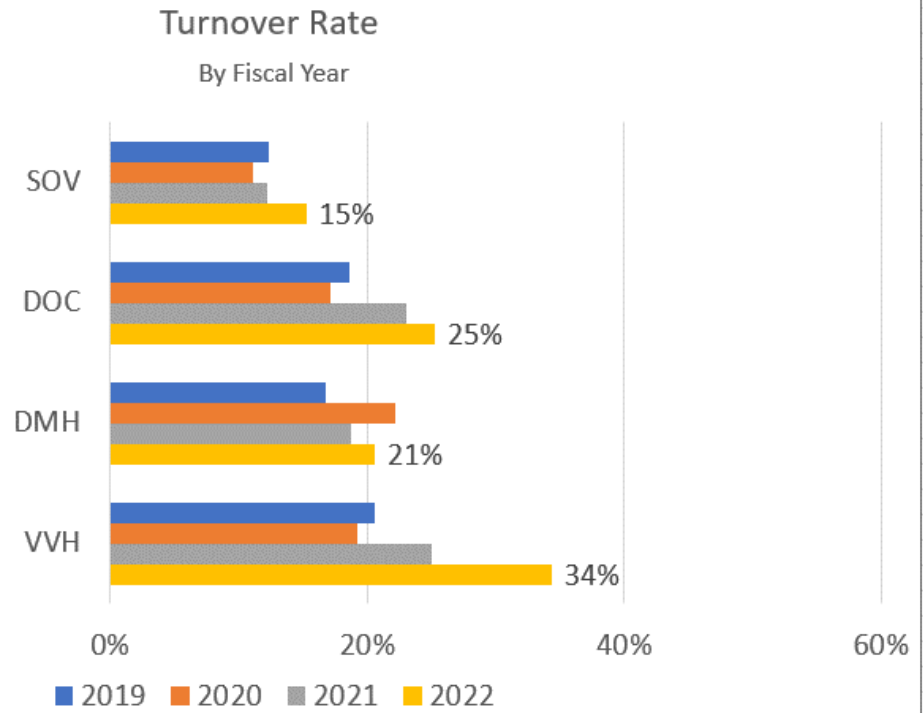


Figure 3. Data from Department of Human Resources.

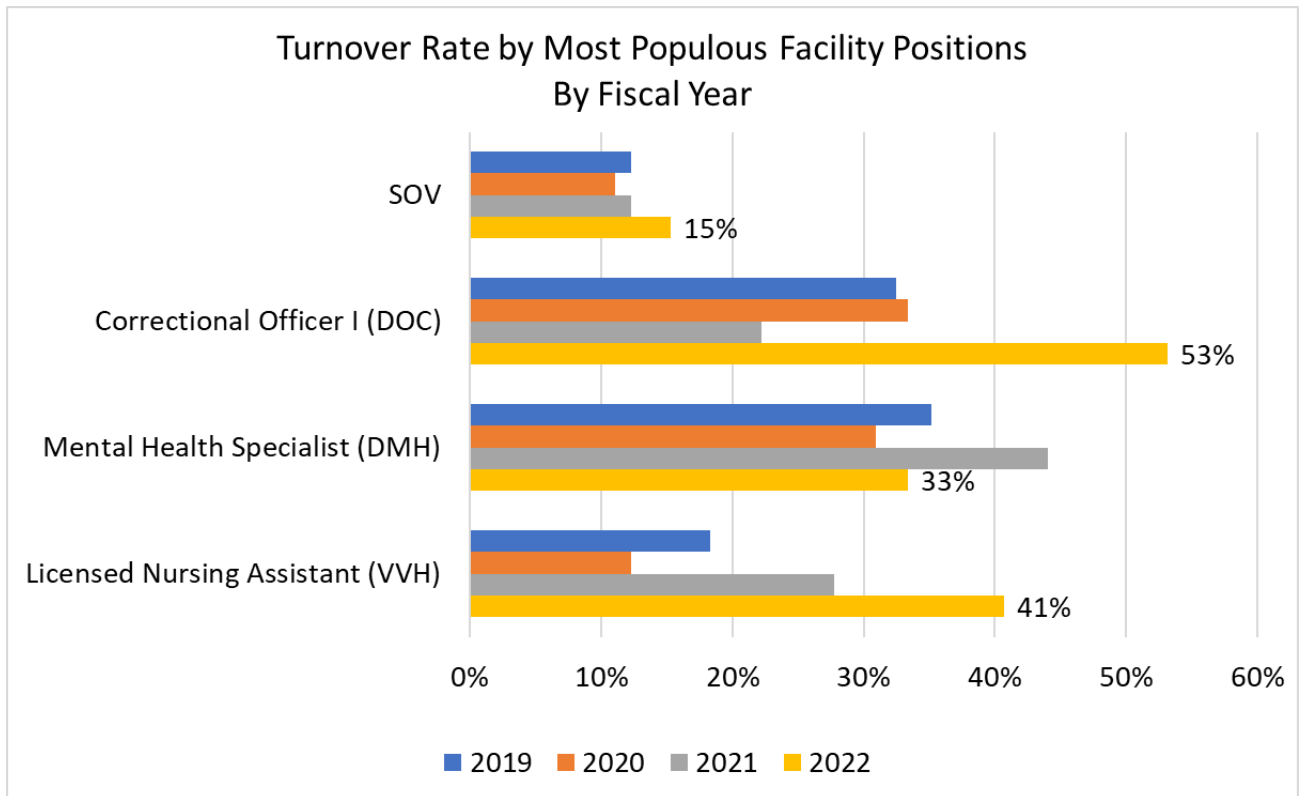


Figure 4. Data from Department of Human Resources.

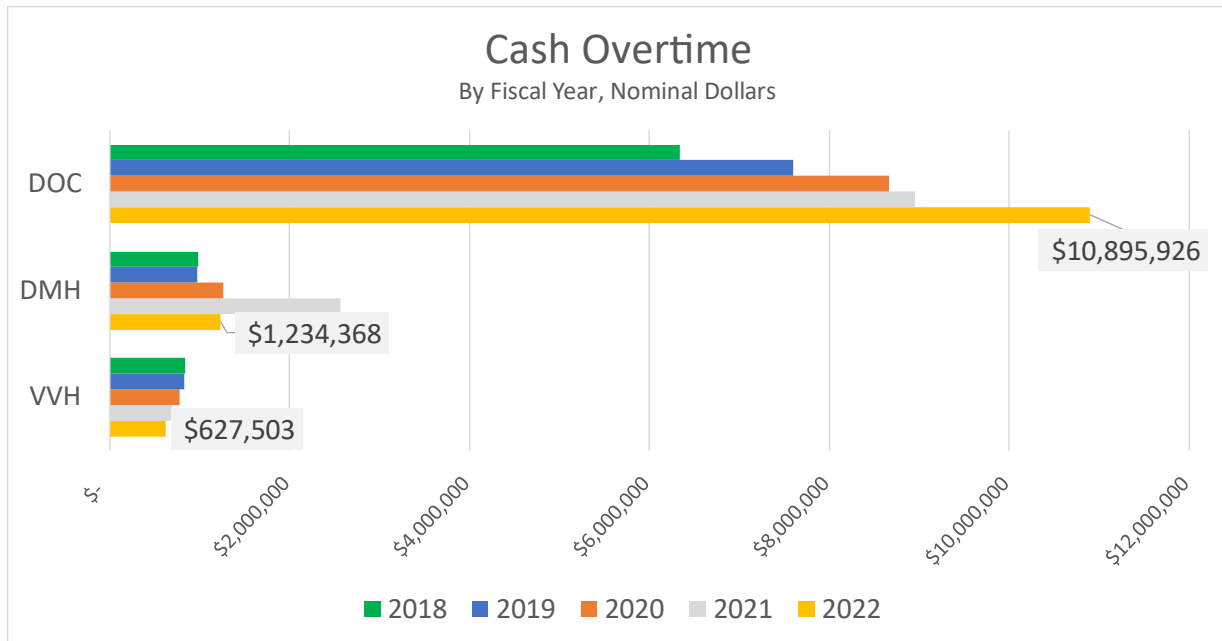


Figure 5. Data from Table 51 of State of Vermont Workforce Report Fiscal Year 2022, Department of Human Resources.

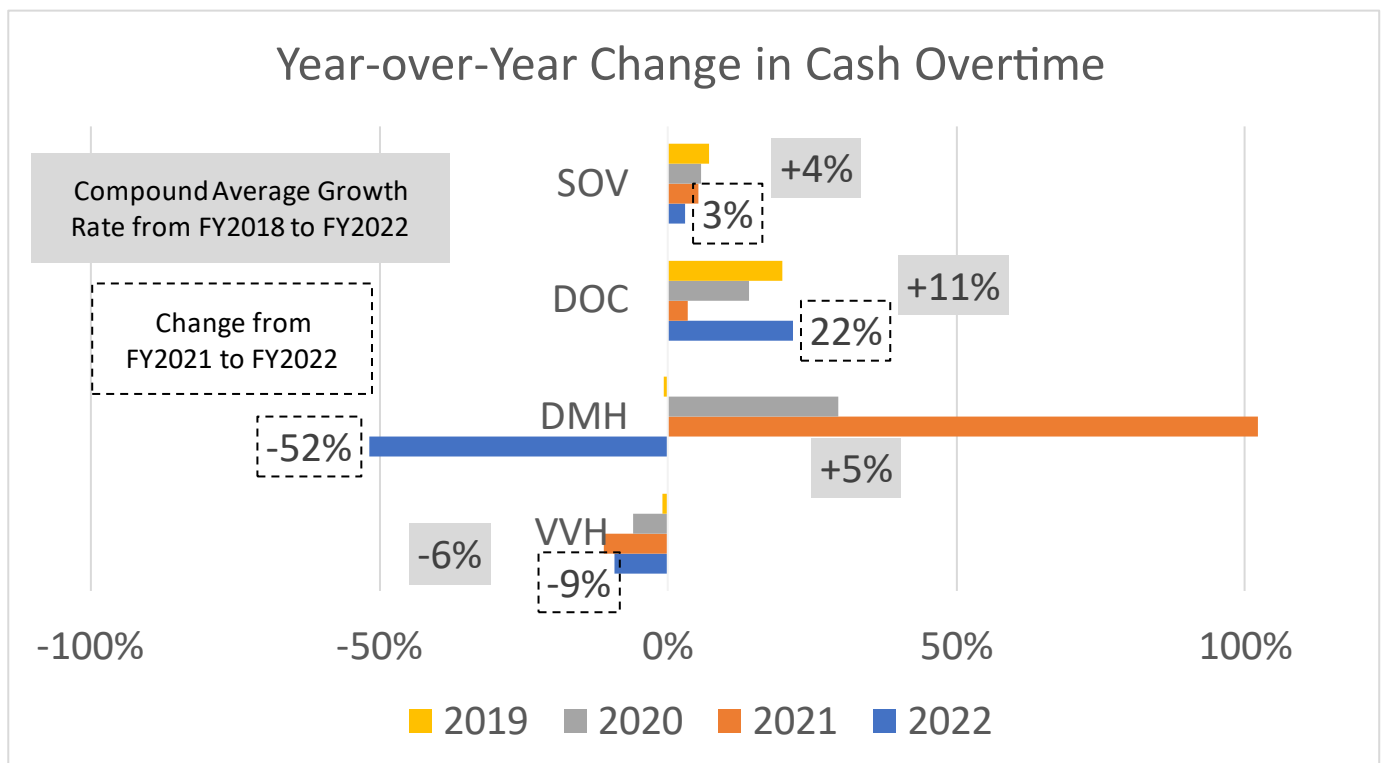


Figure 6. Analysis of data from Table 51 of State of Vermont Workforce Report Fiscal Year 2022, Department of Human Resources.

Applications Submitted by FY	2019	2020	2021	2022	First Half 2023	First Half 2023 (Annualized)	Change from 2019 to 2023*	Change from 2021 to 2022	Change from 2022 to 2023
Correctional Officer I (DOC)	1422	1508	932	754	525	1050	-26%	-19%	39%
Correctional Officer II (DOC)	158	214	215	137	52	104	-34%	-36%	-24%
Mental Health Specialist (DMH)	260	357	252	111	23	46	-82%	-56%	-59%
Registered Nurse (DMH - various levels)	39	62	42	35	14	28	-28%	-17%	-20%
Licensed Nursing Assistant (VVH)	160	169	69	47	39	78	-51%	-32%	66%
Registered Nurse (VVH - various levels)	47	59	20	19	13	26	-45%	-5%	37%

Figure 7. Applications submitted by fiscal year for select facility positions. Analysis of data from Department of Human Resources.

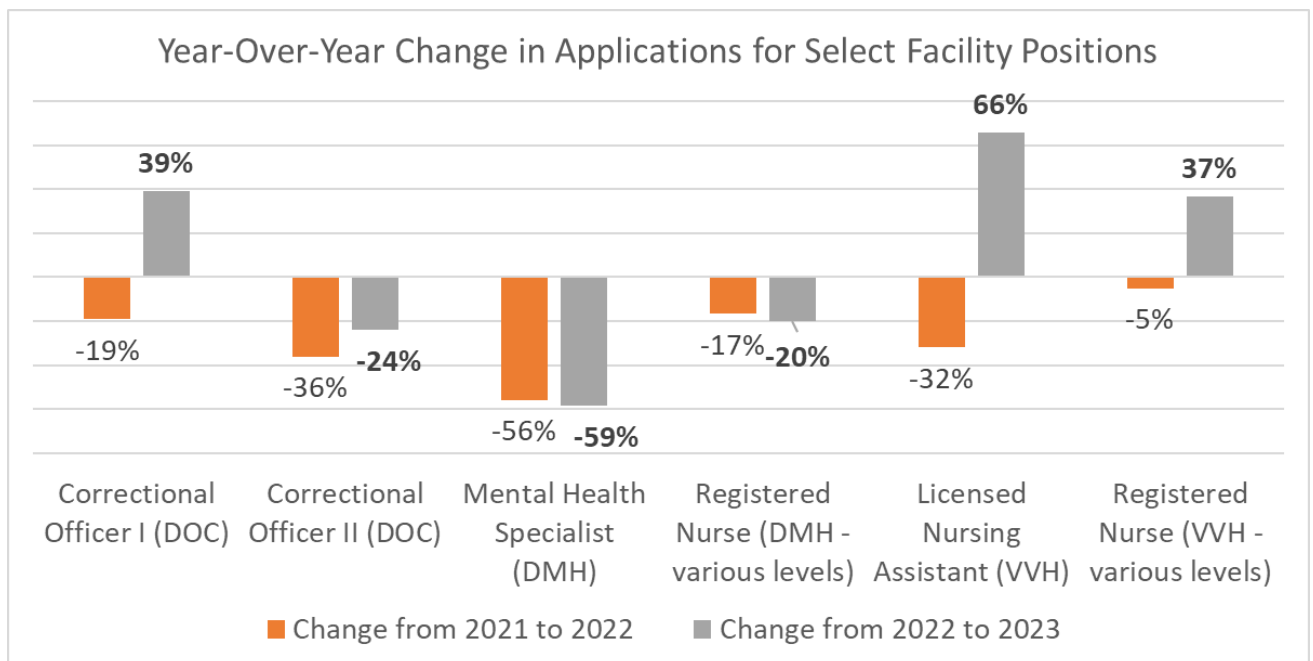


Figure 8. Year-over-year change in applications for select facility positions. Analysis of data from Department of Human Resources.

	Actual			Annualized			
	Staff Count at Start of FY	Hires	Terminations	Hires	Terminations	Net Change	Net Change as % of Starting Staff Count
SOV Total - 2023*	7408	655	-534	1310	-1068	242	3%
SOV Total - 2022	7359	1188	-1131	1188	-1131	57	1%
DOC Total - 2023*	818	147	-115	294	-230	64	8%
DOC Total - 2022	881	170	-217	170	-217	-47	-5%
DMH Total - 2023*	185	10	-22	20	-44	-24	-13%
DMH Total - 2022	212	25	-42	25	-42	-17	-8%
VVH Total - 2023*	128	14	-14	28	-28	0	0%
VVH Total - 2022	151	25	-48	25	-48	-23	-15%

Figure 9. Change in staff count by department. Analysis of data from Department of Human Resources.

\*2023 Actual is through December 2022. Annualized is 2023 Actual multiplied by 2.

	Actual			Annualized			
	Staff Count at Start of FY	Hires	Terminations	Hires	Terminations	Net Change	Net Change as % of Starting Staff Count
Licensed Nursing Assistant (VVH)-2023*	48	6	-9	12	-18	-6	-13%
Licensed Nursing Assistant (VVH)-2022	64	8	-23	8	-23	-15	-23%
Mental Health Specialist (DMH) - 2023*	39	2	-10	4	-20	-16	-41%
Mental Health Specialist (DMH) -2022	52	8	-16	8	-16	-8	-15%
Correctional Officer I (DOC) - 2023*	214	139	-83	278	-166	112	52%
Correctional Officer I (DOC) - 2022	282	141	-148	141	-148	-7	-2%

Figure 10. Change in staff count for select facility positions. Analysis of data from Department of Human Resources.

\*2023 Actual is through December 2022. Annualized is 2023 Actual multiplied by 2.

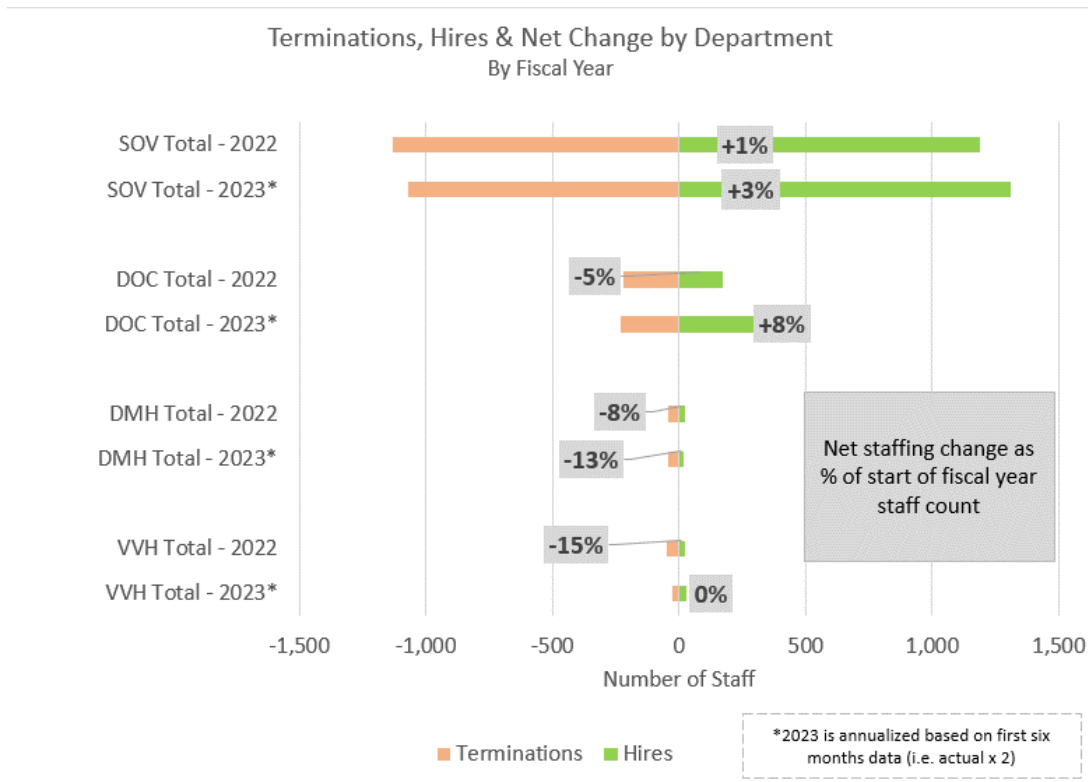


Figure 11. Analysis of data from Department of Human Resources.

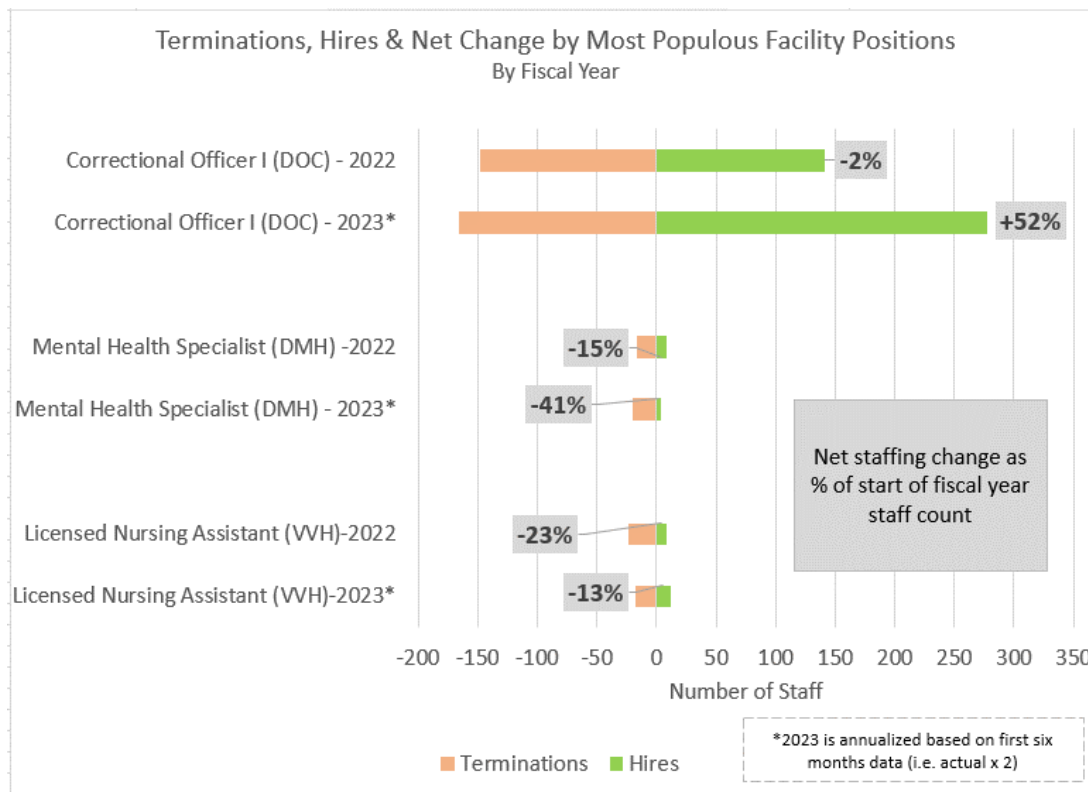


Figure 12. Analysis of data from Department of Human Resources.

## APPENDIX B - ADDITIONAL DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS DATA

<b>Fund #</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
22047	ARPA State Fiscal Recovery Fund	\$4,934,590.00
10000	General Fund	\$114,239.66
20205	Education Fund	\$1,000.00
21190	Correctional Rec Fund	\$1,900.00
59100	Correctional Industries Fund	\$15,750.00
		<b>\$5,067,479.66</b>

Figure 13. Fund sources for 2022 DOC retention and bonus payments. Data from Department of Corrections

### Staff Vacancy by Location Over the Past 12 Months

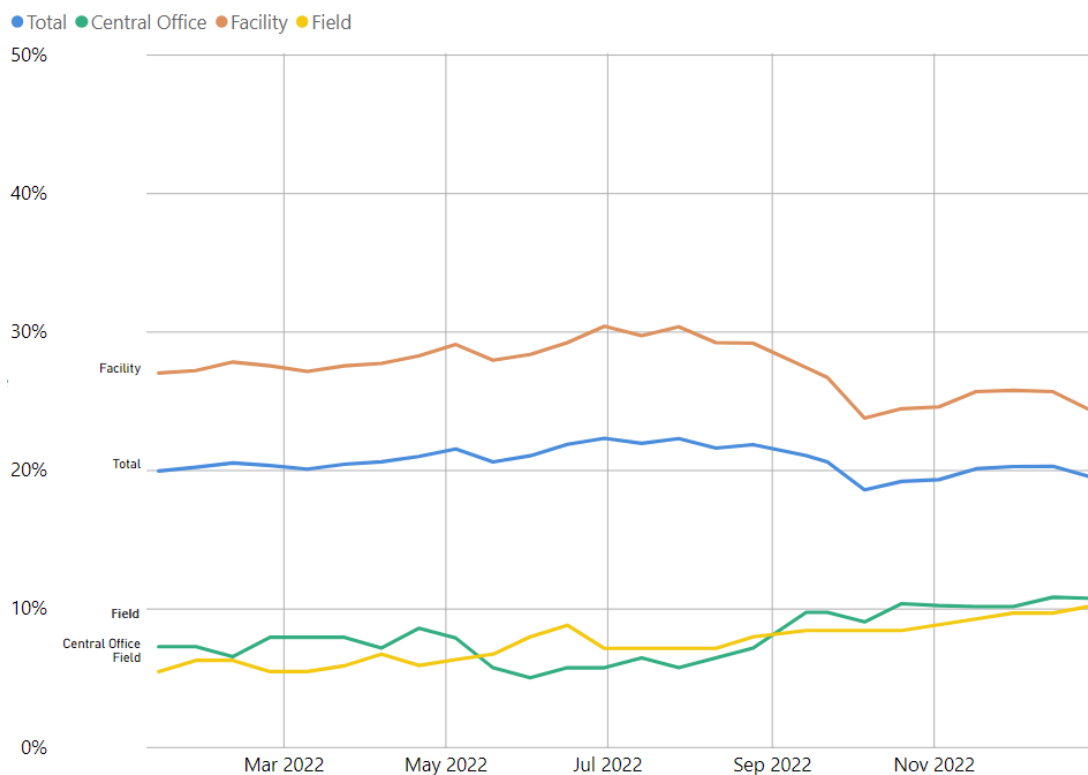


Figure 14. DOC staff vacancy rates by location over the past 12 months. Data from Department of Corrections.



## **Details of DOC's Proposed Stability and Sustainability Incentives & Shift Increased Differentials**

- Retention Bonus (2 payments each - \$1,000 to all DOC Classified Staff, October 2022 and April 2023) - \$1,738,000
- New Hire and Academy Progression Bonuses (\$1,000 at hire, \$500 at Academy completion, \$750 at end of original 6-month probation, and \$1,000 after 1 year of service) - \$241,830
- Recruitment Referral Bonuses (\$100 at Academy completion, \$150 at end of original 6-month probation, \$250 after 1-year of DOC service) - \$10,748
- Shift Bonus (\$3/hour for facility shifts worked) - \$4,453,283.33
- Standby Bonus (\$1.50/hour for facility transport and hospital standby) - \$150,256
- Training Hour Credit (80 hours for Corrections Bargaining Unit employees), this results in eligibility for accelerated step program - \$38,168.70
- Premium OT for straight time OT earners working in facility security positions (calculated based on current employee rate of pay) - \$127,814
- New bargained shift differential increases (\$2.00 second shift, \$2.5 third shift) - \$1,112,176

## APPENDIX C – ADDITIONAL RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES FROM DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

### Secure Residential Recovery Facility

Middlesex Therapeutic Community Residential Facility (MTCR) is a seven-bed secure residential facility designed to provide a community-based aftercare option for people ready to discharge from a psychiatric hospital but still require considerable support in their recovery process. In the Spring of 2023, MTCR will be closing and transitioning the current residents and retained staff to a new sixteen-bed secure residential facility, River Valley Therapeutic Residence. This update addresses employee retention and recruitment across both secure residential recovery facilities from funds appropriated pursuant to 2022 Acts and Resolves, No. 83.

DMH has deployed various strategies to recruit and retain facility staff, including:

1. **Advertising and social media postings.** Every posting goes to LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Indeed, Glassdoor, and other sites. Job postings also go to diversityjobs.com, which connects with several different sites that are aimed at increasing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) hiring. Facility leadership also created a social media campaign for hiring specific roles within MTCR, including developing great overviews to entice candidates to apply. Facility leadership uses Indeed technical assistance and website functionality to set search engine parameters for job seekers that proactively invite candidates to apply if the individual has the relevant experience and meets the minimum qualifications of facility job postings. The active use of Indeed, a national platform, sought to recruit staff beyond the state and local candidate pools. Key facility leadership positions were posted in local newspapers, including the Burlington Free Press and the Seven Days.
2. **Eliminating barriers to hiring.** Facility leadership reviewed all minimum qualifications and job training requirements for positions to ensure they were fair and accurate and reflected the job duties and patient needs. For example, before the review, Nursing positions were required to have completed specific job trainings. Facility leadership identified that this requirement often created an unnecessary barrier to an applicant who was not already employed at the facility and had access to the specific trainings. Following the review, Facility leadership determined that relevant work experience could be accepted in lieu of the trainings and an exemption that allowed those staff to complete the specific trainings after hire.
3. **Encouraging MTCR staff to apply for new positions.** Facility leadership held two separate open-door meetings with MTCR staff. The meetings were designed to ensure that staff understood the process to re-apply (due to the State of Vermont's fair hiring requirements). Staff were encouraged to apply at either State of Vermont facilities, River Valley Therapeutic Residence or Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital. All MTCR leadership positions have indicated an intent to remain with the state. However, numerous staff have indicated an inability to apply due to inflationary costs (such as the high cost of housing in Chittenden County and the burden of a long commute on quality of life and increased cost of gas).

4. **Exploring hybrid work schedules.** Facility leadership is exploring the capability of allowing certain positions to maintain a hybrid work schedule in order to recruit and retain highly qualified staff that may require additional job flexibilities.

### **Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital**

The Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital (VPCH) is a state-of-the-art facility designed to promote and enhance patient recovery, the 25-bed, acute care hospital offers patient areas designed for comfort and safety. VPCH is Vermont's only state-run psychiatric inpatient facility.

DMH has deployed several efforts to recruit and retain facility staff, notably:

1. **Launching a Recruitment and Retention Taskforce.** Facility leadership began a recruitment and retention workforce effort. The facility leadership dedicated time to reflect on realistic options for maintaining clinical staff when the Department cannot compete with the market rate for healthcare wages. The effort convened key stakeholders from the facility and the Department to analyze data on staffing trends, allowing for a more strategic and practical approach toward the recruitment and retention of critical positions strategically and effectively. The taskforce is responsible for some of the strategies listed below.
2. **Completing a market-factor analysis to maintain competitive wages.** Facility leadership engaged in significant activities to review salaries:
  - A class action review for Mental Health Specialists resulted in a pay grade increase for all Mental Health Specialists and Associate Mental Health Specialist positions.
  - Three Request for Reviews, thus far, for key positions. All resulted in increased pay.
  - Vermont State Employee Association Union bargaining resulted in an increase in shift differentials for night, evening, and weekend hours.
  - A market-factor analysis resulted in an increase in wages for the facility's Registered Nurses (Registered Nurse I, Registered Nurse II, Registered Nurse III, and Registered Nurse Supervisor).
3. **Advertising and social media postings.** Facility leadership engaged in a very targeted advertisement approach. DMH uses Indeed technical assistance and website functionality to set search engine parameters for job seekers that proactively invite candidates to apply if the individual has the relevant experience and meets the minimum qualifications of facility job postings. The active use of Indeed, a national platform, sought to recruit staff beyond the state and local candidate pools. Facility leadership is also active on national nursing job platforms, such as Triad, which can target searches for mental health professionals. Currently, facility leadership is considering next steps for advertising and if advertising funds would be better spent in marketing or in developing compensation bonuses, such as tuition reimbursement.
4. **Reengaging local nursing schools and national nursing forums.** Facility leadership has been able to reengage with local nursing schools back to pre-pandemic practices. Engagement allows for individuals in local nursing programs to visit on site to spend time at the facility and with staff. The reengagement has already produced two applicants and one hire. Facility leadership has also increased presence on local nursing forums, such as Vermont Nurse Connection, as well as national forums and newsletters.

## APPENDIX D - ADDITIONAL RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES AND DATA FROM VERMONT VETERANS' HOME

In addition to the recruitment and retention bonuses discussed on page 2, VVH implemented the following strategies:

1. **Recruitment Work Group and Community Engagement.** This group met bi-weekly to discuss recruitment efforts and brainstorm ideas as well as review successful and unsuccessful recruitment efforts. The group worked with the Vermont Department of Labor to partner with any available programs, such as HireAbility, targeted online job fairs, and in-person job fairs. VVH staff attended events at local high schools, vocational programs, and other locations to promote open positions and career opportunities.
2. **Advertising and Social Media.** VVH worked with State of Vermont recruitment specialists to make job postings appealing to applicants. All open positions have been active on Indeed and other job platforms. VVH's Director of Marketing designed and posted targeted Facebook ads for open positions, then used its social media platforms to share these postings. VVH posted ads, both paid and unpaid, on national websites targeting nurses and social workers.
3. **Nursing Schools and Programs.** During the pandemic, VVH limited outside partners from the facility to ensure the health and well-being of the Veterans and members. As we emerge from the pandemic, VVH has reengaged with nursing programs. VVH hosted Vermont Tech nursing students in fall 2022 and is continuing to build upon that partnership. VVH also accepted several students from the local high school for work experience programs. VVH also offered to host the local technical school's LNA program as a clinical site. Concurrently, VVH is reimagining its own LNA program in hopes of offering night and weekend classes as well as a weekday program.
4. **Competitive Pay.** VVH participated in the market factor-analysis efforts for increasing wages for nurses in facilities. This resulted in an increase in base pay for Registered Nurses, Nursing Supervisors and Nurse Case Managers/Utilization Review Nurses. VVH management submitted a request for reclassification for LNA staff. Remaining competitive in terms of wages with private organizations hiring nurses continues to be a significant barrier to recruitment.

Fiscal Year	Staff Regular Spend	Staff OT Spend	Traveler Agency Spend	Year-over-Year Staff Regular	Year-over-Year Staff OT	Year-over-Year Traveler Agency
2018	\$9,960,403	\$834,373	\$653,327	N/A	N/A	N/A
2019	9,731,998	812,545	1,092,795	-2%	-3%	67%
2020	10,030,803	794,035	1,803,621	3%	-2%	65%
2021	9,718,175	682,685	2,968,484	-3%	-14%	65%
2022	9,913,076	614,098	4,359,952	2%	-10%	47%
2023 thru Nov 2022	3,548,357	219,157	2,991,844	N/A	N/A	N/A
Annualized 2023	8,516,057	525,977	7,180,426	-14%	-14%	65%

Figure 15. VVH staff costs by fiscal year. Annualized is year-to-date through November 2022 multiplied by 12/5. Staffing costs exclude any benefit dollars for health insurance, retirement, dental, EAP, etc.

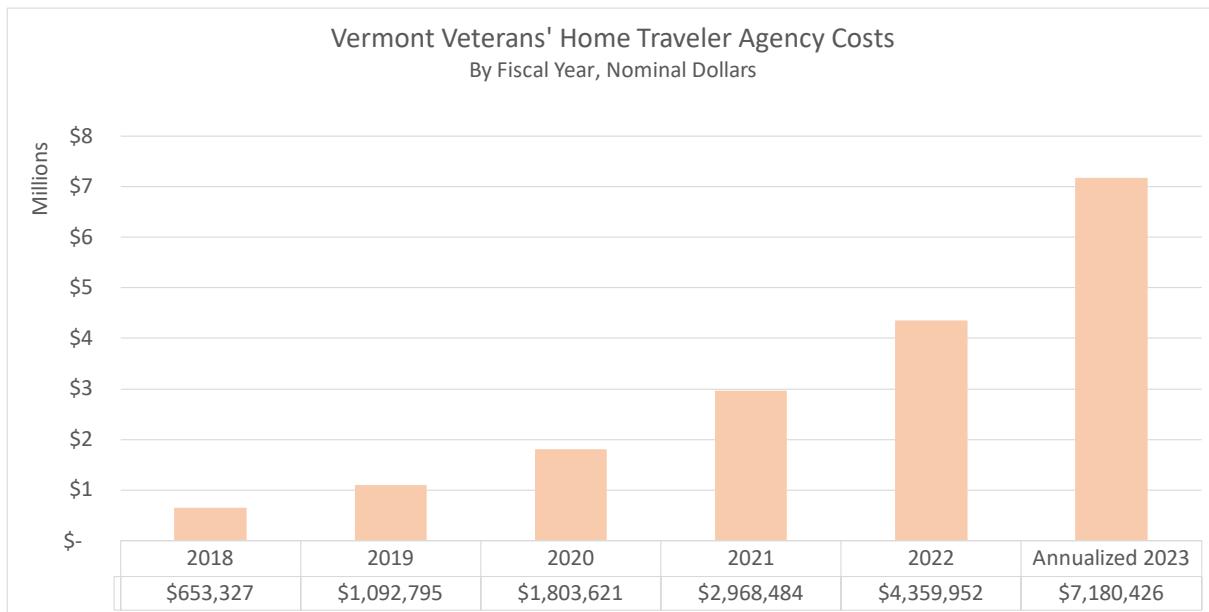


Figure 16. Data from Vermont Veterans' Home. Annualized is year-to-date through November 2022 multiplied by 12/5.

### Vermont Veterans' Home Staffing Costs By Fiscal Year, Nominal Dollars

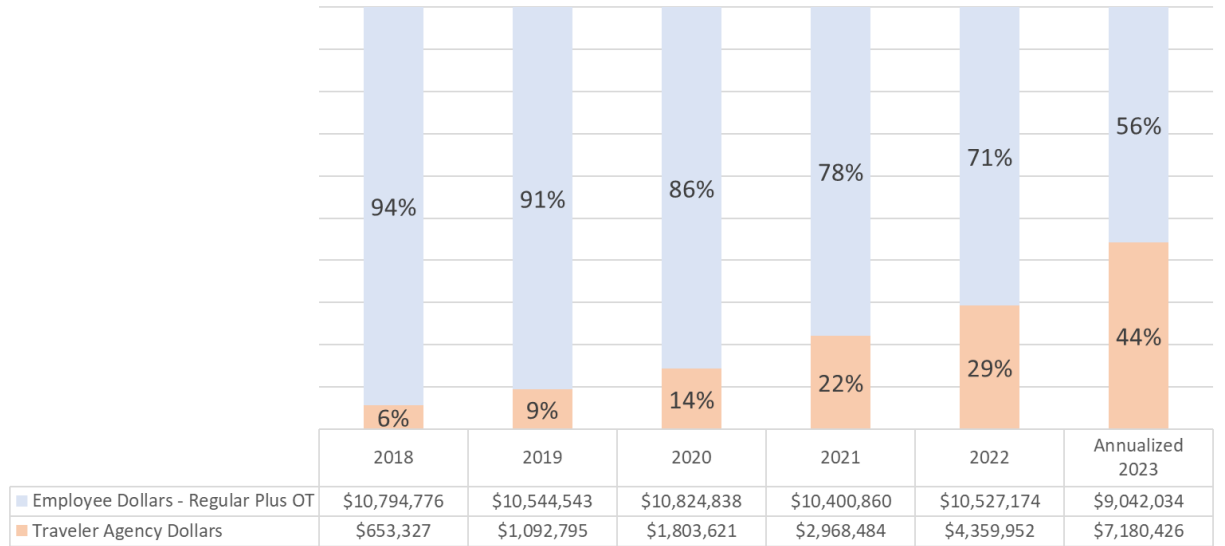


Figure 17. Data from Vermont Veterans' Home. Annualized is year-to-date through November 2022 multiplied by 5/12. Staffing costs exclude any benefit dollars for health insurance, retirement, dental, EAP, etc.