



Office of the Town Manager
Frank Cassidy

Warrenton Town Council

Carter Nevill, Mayor
Roy Francis, Ward 1
William Semple, Ward 2
Larry Kovalik, Ward 3
Michele O'Halloran, Ward 4
Eric Gagnon, Ward 5
Paul Mooney, At Large
David McGuire, At Large

STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date:	November 12, 2025
Agenda Title:	Culture Concerns: Employee Feedback on Town Council
Requested Action:	Information Only
Department / Agency Lead:	Human Capital & Risk
Staff Lead:	Kasey Braun, Director of Human Capital & Risk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This staff report focuses on the concerns regarding low employee morale and employee feedback due to the actions/decisions made, words spoken on the dais, and the behavior exhibited from some Town Council members since January 2025.

BACKGROUND

Human Capital has communicated to Town Council—through work sessions, one-on-ones, and informal discussions—that past leadership, including prior Councils, has struggled to show consistent and genuine appreciation for staff. Employees are acutely aware of this history.

Since January 2025, remarks from the dais—such as arbitrary staff reductions, questioning the value of positions, labeling personnel costs as excessive, or minimizing employee needs—have only intensified employees concerns. Then, in the May 2025 work session, the Town Council's comments regarding staffing and budget only further reinforced the perception that staff are undervalued by Council.

Now, fast forward to today, and the recent and significant decline in employee morale was catalyzed by the abrupt termination of Town Manager Frank Cassidy during the October 2025 work session. This unexpected action created fear among staff and raises concerns about the Town Council's ability to commit to established processes, procedures, and - most importantly - principles of fairness. I have been actively engaging with leadership and employees to support a safe, respectful workplace and to reinforce the importance of maintaining clear professional boundaries. Regardless of the Town Council's individual interpretations of the Code of Ethics, upholding these boundaries is essential, and non-negotiable, to protecting staff and preserving the integrity of the organization.

While the termination of Mr. Cassidy falls within Council authority, the issue is how it was carried out. There was no evidence of unethical, immoral, or illegal behavior, nor performance deficiencies from a staff perspective - which is an allowable observation and lived experience. Under his leadership, the Town has flourished, empowering staff to perform at their best and advance the Town's mission and vision. And, our staff does understand chain of command and are committed to the Town's objectives. At the same time, the public clearly recognizes and appreciates the results of their dedication. Citizens and visitors alike have praised the Town for its vibrancy, professionalism, and the exceptional work of our employees.

This staff report provides direct employee summarized feedback and written statements that clearly demonstrate the impact of Town Council's such actions, words, and behaviors have had on employee morale.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is genuinely requested that Town Council see that without this staff, many or all, of Council objectives cannot be met. Without this staff, critical functions such as CIP/CARP executions, regulatory compliance, and essential operations cannot succeed. Simply put, without this staff, the Town cannot function at the level that our citizens and the public deserve. Ultimately, in the end, transparency fosters trust.

Service Level/Collaborative Impact

If morale is not improved, the Town will continue to lose employees—resulting in diminished capacity and a direct, negative impact on the services provided to our residents.

Policy Direction/Warrenton Plan 2040

Ability to meet the plan directives due to lack of staffing.

Fiscal Impact

1. **Retention.** High turnover due to toxic environment causes significant fiscal implications. Should staff choose to leave because of toxic environment/Town Council's behavior, the Town would have high costs related to out-processing, recruiting, hiring, onboarding, training, and cultural acclimation. Beyond the financial burden, the loss of experienced talent also disrupts critical operations—including service delivery, project execution, public safety, and other essential functions.
2. **Town Manager Transition & Hiring Costs.** Severance package for Frank Cassidy as well as the headhunter fees that are associated with searching for an interim and permanent Town Manager.
3. **Town Attorney Transition & Hiring Costs.** Costs for interim legal coverage during transition as well as the headhunter fees that are associated with searching for a permanent Town Attorney.

Legal Impact

Unknown, but specifically not having a Town Attorney, the Town may be exposed to, but not limited to:

- > Legal noncompliance and litigation exposure
- > Slower and less informed decision-making
- > Weakened governance and policy integrity
- > Higher financial and reputational costs

ATTACHMENTS

1. Employee Feedback – Presented by Human Capital Director.
Note: Employee identities will remain confidential. All feedback was provided voluntarily and at the employees' sole discretion.
2. As a reminder, attached is also the submitted May 29, 2025, *Human Capital Employee Retention Concern Memo*



TOWN OF WARRENTON

HUMAN CAPITAL & RISK DEPARTMENT



ATTACHMENT 1

EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK – PRESENTED BY DIRECTOR OF HUMAN CAPITAL

SUMMARY

In addition to the background and staff recommendation information listed within the November 12, 2025 Human Capital Staff Report, the purpose of this document is to inform the Town Council how their actions, behaviors, and decisions impact employee morale.

BACKGROUND

After the October 14, 2025 Town Council meeting, employee morale declined significantly. The manner in which the Town Manager was terminated was perceived by staff as abrupt, disrespectful, and inconsistent with the culture of *Excellence in Action* that the Town has been working hard to establish. To be clear, employees fully understand that Town Council possesses the legal authority to terminate the Town Manager's contract without cause. But, I want to be clear: this concern is not about the decision itself—it is about how the decision was executed.

The abruptness of the action, along with the fact that it blindsided employees, citizens, and even some members of Town Council, created unnecessary shock and confusion. Actions carried out in this manner understandably instill fear, erode trust, and disrupt performance, which can ultimately impact essential services and delivery for the Town.

Recognizing the effect this would have on staff both personally and professionally, I engaged employees immediately following Frank's termination. Between October 14 and November 12, I visited each facility, met with employees individually, and made myself available off-site to ensure that staff had a place to process the event and voice their concerns. The primary goals of these conversations were to:

- **Employee Well-Being:** My first priority was ensuring employees felt supported, safe, and heard. I made it clear that their emotional and mental well-being matters and that they should continue focusing on the high-quality work they consistently deliver.
- **Operational Stability:** Stephanie Miller and I met with staff across all facilities to reinforce that core operations remain stable. Stephanie is addressing any operational gaps created by the transition and is responsible for managing Council expectations. We remain accessible for any concerns.
- **Leadership Continuity:** We reaffirmed that leadership is still firmly in place, aligned, and committed to guiding staff through this period without disruption.
- **Job Security:** We clearly stated—multiple times—that Town Council may only terminate two roles: the Town Manager and Town Attorney. Employees' positions are not at risk.
- **Future Leadership:** We emphasized that the hiring process for the next Town Manager will be thorough, intentional, and focused on stability and competence.
- **Clarifying the Termination:** We communicated Council's description of the termination as a one-off decision tied to expectations that had not been shared with Frank, staff, or the public. Regardless, we encouraged staff to stay focused and maintain the strong momentum they have built.
- **Professional Boundaries:** I was direct in stating that the manner of the termination was not professionally appropriate. Stephanie and I will continue to address with Town Council how their actions affect staff morale, organizational culture, and public trust.

Note: Employee identities will remain confidential. All feedback was provided voluntarily and at the employees' sole discretion.



TOWN OF WARRENTON

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Obviously, as things were brought forth, I addressed them the best I could. But, throughout these discussions, it became evident that employees were experiencing widespread fear, anger, sadness, and uncertainty. This was especially difficult to witness given the substantial cultural progress made over the past three years—breaking down silos, building trust, increasing engagement, and strengthening employee–Council relationships.

- Common themes raised by employees included concerns such as:
- “Am I going to be fired next?”
- “How will I support my family if this happens to me?”
- “Will the next Town Manager be a ‘yes person’?”
- “Will our leadership team be replaced?”
- “Why would this happen when projects were advancing, services were improving, budgets were more transparent, and staff felt supported?”

Given the timing of Human Capital’s scheduled departmental overview in November, I informed employees that I would be presenting to Council and invited them—voluntarily and at their sole discretion—to share feedback about Frank’s leadership, whether positive or negative. I made it absolutely clear that retaliation would not be tolerated in any form. Employees have a right to speak freely (1st Amendment), and it is my responsibility to ensure they can do so safely. I also shared that, given the environment, I would be consolidating and conveying their feedback – anonymously - on their behalf to protect them from any potential negative repercussions.

Ultimately, employees expressed a deep concern that the manner of the termination caused them to question their future with the Town. As a Human Capital professional, this is deeply concerning and disheartening. Employees are the heart of this organization—they are the reason the Town functions, the reason progress is made, and the reason our community receives high-quality service.

EMPLOYEES ARE THE TOWN’S GREATEST ASSET.

In May 2025, I cautioned that if behaviors of this nature continued, the Town would face significant challenges related to retention and personnel costs. That warning still remains valid. I believe, now more than ever, Town Council should take seriously what employees are expressing—and, maybe its not just only what employees are expressing at this time, but also what citizens and visitors are saying about the impact on our workforce. This was shown in the Citizens time in October after Franks termination – the great things citizens stated about our staff.

The Town of Warrenton is fortunate to have exceptionally loyal, resourceful, dedicated, and knowledgeable employees. They deserve to feel valued, respected, and supported. It is critical that Town Council’s actions demonstrate this commitment consistently.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of our staff. I take this responsibility seriously. Our employees deserve to be heard, protected, and respected, and I am honored to represent their voices.

The next few pages are employee’s feedback that was provided to me.

Please be aware that many employees chose not to submit written feedback out of fear of retaliation.

Note: Employee identities will remain confidential. All feedback was provided voluntarily and at the employees’ sole discretion.



TOWN OF WARRENTON

HUMAN CAPITAL & RISK DEPARTMENT



CULTURE CONCERNS: EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK ON TOWN COUNCIL

Dear Kasey,

I would like to share some thoughts with you about what has transpired with the Town Council. You may share these with anyone you would like to.

First, I would like to say how much job. I enjoy working for the Town and especially with all the employees. They are the greatest group of people I have ever had the pleasure of working with.

The hatred and discontent that McGuire has spewed from the Dias toward the Police Department, the Chief of Police, and the deputy Chief was totally unacceptable and unprofessional. The Chief has dedicated his entire career to serving the Town (over 30 years!) and has earned the respect of the citizens of this community. McGuire's comments were an embarrassment to the town and insult to the Police Department and the officers that serve tirelessly every day. The recent termination of the Town Manager only processes the lack of respect the Town Council has for the leaders of the Town of Warrenton. Because he wasn't willing to jeopardize his integrity, Frank Cassidy was removed from office so that they could further their own personal agenda. Now, they have created TOXIC environment, where employees are all wondering how many leaders are going to be eliminated to serve their purpose.

I have had co-workers approach me and ask me if I think that the Council will "go after" the Chief next. I certainly hope that Council members come to their senses before we lost a lot of excellent employees. Employee retention has been a challenge for the Town and the action of the Town Council are not helping.

Thank you, Kasey, for all that you do for us.

Note: Employee identities will remain confidential. All feedback was provided voluntarily and at the employees' sole discretion.



TOWN OF WARRENTON

HUMAN CAPITAL & RISK DEPARTMENT



CULTURE CONCERNS: EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK ON TOWN COUNCIL

Statement to the Town Council

As a dedicated employee of the Town, I appreciate the opportunity to share my perspective regarding recent actions and decisions made by the Town Council.

During my time on patrol, I responded to service calls from a particular Council member on two separate occasions. Unfortunately, during these interactions, I was spoken to in a manner that I found deeply unprofessional and disrespectful—ironically using language that the Council member himself later applied to describe the Police Department. This interaction reflects a broader pattern of this Council's willingness to publicly criticize and undermine the Police Department rather than support or engage with us constructively.

While the Town Council has often expressed verbal appreciation for the work of the Police Department, those sentiments have not been reflected in tangible support. On the contrary, budget cuts and a reluctance to explore or invest in modern technology have only hindered our ability to serve the community effectively. Innovation is not something to be feared—it is a tool that has advanced justice and improved public safety in countless jurisdictions. By disregarding research and avoiding discussions around proven technological solutions, we risk failing the very residents we are sworn to protect.

This disconnect between words and actions is also evident in the issue of compensation. While expressions of gratitude are appreciated, they do not substitute for fair and sustainable pay. This is not just a concern for the Police Department but one that affects employees across the Town. Without a viable retention plan or meaningful investment in those who are committed to serving our community, we risk losing dedicated professionals who, like myself, have families to support and futures to plan.

I urge the Council to consider not just what is said, but what is done. Support must go beyond words and be reflected in policy, resources, and long-term planning.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Note: Employee identities will remain confidential. All feedback was provided voluntarily and at the employees' sole discretion.



TOWN OF WARRENTON

HUMAN CAPITAL & RISK DEPARTMENT



CULTURE CONCERNS: EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK ON TOWN COUNCIL

Good evening members of council,

I am writing you this letter tonight as I had a pre-arranged vacation planned prior to tonight's meeting. I am writing this for you not just as a dedicated employee but someone who truly cares about the wellbeing of our town and its residents and the future of Warrenton.

I have been an employee here with the town for a few years now and it has become very clear that the decisions made by this recent town council have been misguiding the residents, discouraging the employees and reflected on your own personal agenda. These decisions have discouraged employees and weakened morale, leaving employees discouraged and their loyalty to the town questionable. It has also left our community questioning the judgment, transparency and questioning council and the overall direction of the town. The recent firing of our Town Manager, Frank Cassidy, is the latest example.

Frank Cassidy is a dedicated and respected leader. Frank always did the right thing even when no one is looking. Frank was fair and supported his employees. Frank saw the "big picture" and set a clear and motivating vision to the future of Warrenton.

The Town of Warrenton deserves a town council who values its employees, listens to its residents and makes decisions that reflect the best interest of the town. Again, not your personal interest or your political motivations. It is not too late to make this right. I urge you to take a hard look at the impact of your decision. Reconsider the firing of Frank Cassidy and the message you have sent to both the employees and the residents of the Town of Warrenton. Show that you value integrity, fairness, and good leadership. Show that you are willing to correct a mistake when one has been made.

Thank you.

Note: Employee identities will remain confidential. All feedback was provided voluntarily and at the employees' sole discretion.



TOWN OF WARRENTON

HUMAN CAPITAL & RISK DEPARTMENT



CULTURE CONCERNS: EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK ON TOWN COUNCIL

You advised we could send you an email with a list of concerns or questions to be brought up to Town Council for the next meeting. I would like to remain anonymous.

I have a few concerns,

1. Why are they stating they are trying to be “transparent” but here they just blindsided people with the vote to let the Town Manager go and still not saying much about it?
2. Why are most of the Town Council not wanting to come around to see what each department does? As another officer stated this speaks volumes without words. As Town Council it would be beneficial for them to see what each department does on a daily basis.
3. Why is it that people around the PD have a feeling that most of the Council does not support the department? Employees watch the meetings online.
4. The Town Council’s actions is causing low morale right now.
5. Why are we letting people that don’t live in Town speak at the meetings and listening to their input on what should be done in Town?
6. Why does the PD have to do special checks on the Town Council residents after some members of council bash the PD.

I am not expecting you to bring any of this up but if it does it would not bother me. I trust your judgment on what to bring up if anything. I would just ask that I remain anonymous. If this is a problem, then I’d prefer nothing to be brought up especially if they get their hands on this email.

Thanks!



TOWN OF WARRENTON

HUMAN CAPITAL & RISK DEPARTMENT



CULTURE CONCERNS: RECEIVED EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

I received the following message in my mailbox at Town Hall. This was inside an empty envelope which I am assuming was delivered by an employee. This seems to be an external visitor. However, I also wanted to share this since it was specifically delivered to me.

Attention Members of the Warrenton Town Council:

As a frequent visitor of Warrenton, I have been very supportive and proud of this town. However, I have been at a loss for words since the last Town council meeting on Tuesday, 10/14/25.

Unfortunately, I believe the town has made a tremendous mistake on the decision to terminate the Town Manager, Frank Cassidy.

It appears that the Town Council is pursuing matters more in their own personal interests and not on what is truly best for the town, the businesses, and the community. I implore you to stop with the nonsense and do the work this community elected you to do.

Note: Employee identities will remain confidential. All feedback was provided voluntarily and at the employees' sole discretion.



Human Capital Employee Retention Concern Memo

May 29, 2025

To: Town Council

From: Kasey Braun, Director of Human Capital

Subject: Preserving and Strengthening Our Culture: Excellence in Action



INTRODUCTION

As part of the May 13th Town Council work session, I spoke about the evolution of the modern workforce and what it means to be an employee in today's organizational context — especially within the Town. A significant portion of the conversation was centered around the importance of total compensation packages and the justification for organizational staffing levels.

Regrettably, a concerning perception emerged following the May 13th Town Council work session. This perception is that *employees may not be seen as worth the investment*. Whether this perception was intended or not, its impact has been real and measurable which has led some employees to question their worth within the organization. It stands in stark contrast to the values and culture the Town has worked diligently to cultivate over the past several years. Ultimately, when employees begin to question their worth to the organization, the impact goes far beyond morale—it affects productivity, service quality, and our ability to achieve strategic goals. Therefore, in order for us to sustain a culture of operational resiliency, we need to invest in our workforce.

This memo outlines the potential concerns the Town may face if the current perception among employees persists. It highlights the possible organizational impacts of diminished employee morale and engagement, while also presenting actionable solutions to help mitigate these risks. By addressing these concerns proactively, we can preserve the culture of **Excellence in Action** and continue to build a workplace where employees feel valued, empowered, and committed to the Town's ongoing success.

Question: What is the Town's most significant SINGLE POINT OF FAILURE?

Answer: STAFFING CAPACITY

The Town's ability to fulfill its operational responsibilities, meet Town Council objectives, and comply with state, federal, and local regulations is critically dependent on adequate staffing.

A shortage of qualified personnel, or the loss of key staff members, poses a substantial risk to service delivery and continuity.

Unlike technological systems, which may have redundancies or backups, many of the Town's processes rely on institutional knowledge and human capital that cannot be quickly or easily replaced. As such, staffing is the most significant single point of failure across all departments.



Human Capital Employee Retention Concern Memo

ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE = EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE

Question: **What is the Town's greatest asset?**

Answer: **Employees**

Their contributions are seen daily in the safety, cleanliness, and functionality of our community that make this Town a place to visit, live, and work.

Over the last three years, I have worked diligently alongside senior leadership, the Town Manager, and the Town Council to maintain and strengthen our culture of excellence. This collective effort led to a pivotal moment—the intentional naming and formalization of our culture as **Excellence in Action**. This culture is more than a slogan; it represents our commitment to service excellence, accountability, and continuous improvement. Our people are not only essential to the Town's daily operations—they are the **foundation** of our **Excellence in Action** culture. And, at its core lies **organizational resilience**, which depends on a valued and engaged workforce.

Fundamentally, employees are the backbone of any organization's success. Without them, the delivery of services simply isn't possible. This truth is especially evident in our Town, where our employees serve as the living foundation of our **Excellence in Action** culture. And through this culture initiative, we have made significant strides in breaking down internal silos across divisions, teams, and leadership through embracing a more collaborative and inclusive approach—empowering employees to contribute ideas and insights to improve operational efficiency.

A great organizational culture is absolutely a factor in the organization's success. To summarize Deloitte's *2024 Public Sector Human Capital Trends Report*, is that culture is not only critical—it is a **competitive advantage**. Furthermore, report emphasizes:

*"Leadership plays a unique role in driving this transformation toward a more human-centric way of working. Public sector leaders can support their organization's mission by adopting a mindset that **keeps people at the forefront of their decision-making**, fostering an inclusive, supported, and highly skilled workforce. Prioritizing the growth, satisfaction, and wellbeing of the workforce has a multiplying effect on the public sector's ability to deliver its mission."*

IMPLICATIONS & POTENTIAL OPERATIONAL IMPACTS TO A HIRING FREEZE & DENIAL OF COLA/MERIT

In light of recent discussions surrounding a **potential hiring freeze** and the **possible denial or reduction of Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA) and/or merit increases**, it is important to consider the potential negative implications that may occur. A hiring freeze and withholding COLA and/or merit increases may offer temporary fiscal relief; however, such measures can lead to serious long-term consequences for organizational health, employee morale, and community service delivery.

The following outlines **key concerns**, **associated risks**, and **potential impacts** such decisions may have on Town operations, employee morale, service delivery, and the long-term viability of our workforce strategy.



Human Capital Employee Retention Concern Memo

HIRING FREEZE

LOSS OF INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departures due to retirement or outside opportunities will result in significant knowledge gaps. These gaps hinder service delivery, reduce efficiency, and may disrupt continuity in operations and compliance.
EMPLOYEE BURNOUT	Remaining employees will face increased workloads, leading to higher stress and burnout, reduced morale, and diminished productivity.
FINANCIAL BURDEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overtime Costs: Increased reliance on overtime to maintain essential services. Legal & Compliance Risks: Insufficient staffing to meet federal, state, or local regulatory requirements. Lost Productivity: Staff pulled from core duties to cover gaps, leading to inefficiency. Replacement Costs: Replacing public sector employees can cost \$15,000–\$30,000 each, especially with higher turnover.
THREAT TO ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A decline in staff motivation can result in reduced innovation and engagement. Employees may be less inclined to go "above and beyond" when they feel undervalued or overworked.
COMPOUNDING FUTURE STAFFING SHORTAGES	Damaging employer reputation can make recruitment more difficult, labeling the Town as an undesirable workplace.
REDUCED ABILITY TO MEET COUNCIL AND CITIZEN EXPECTATIONS	<p>A hiring freeze can hinder the Town's ability to respond to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technological changes Community growth Crises (natural disasters, emergencies) Evolving service demands Limits ability to bring in new expertise, innovation, and energy critical to efficiency and modern operations.

Note: Review Questions & Answers with Director of Public Utilities in the **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** section below.

DENIAL OF COLA &/OR MERIT INCREASES

PERCEPTION OF DEVALUATION	Denying pay adjustments in the current economic climate is seen by many employees as a lack of appreciation and support.
INCREASED TURNOVER	Employees may leave for better compensation and perceived organizational support elsewhere.
DISENGAGEMENT & DECLINE IN PRODUCTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of morale and motivation. "Quiet quitting" becomes more common—employees do the bare minimum. Reduces initiative and innovation.
CULTURE DETERIOATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A growing divide between employees and leadership can weaken organizational cohesion. Public perception may falsely interpret staff concerns as unwillingness, further eroding trust.
PUBLIC SAFETY RISKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law enforcement and emergency responders may feel undervalued. Increased potential for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decline in morale Higher crime Reduced public trust and community safety Impact on events and community presence due to understaffed departments like Police.



Human Capital Employee Retention Concern Memo

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACTS

RISK OF EMPLOYEE STRIKE OR WORK STOPPAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Even though strikes are rare in the public sector, informal walkouts, coordinated absences, or “quiet quitting” are plausible responses. ▪ Such actions could disrupt key services and highlight staff dissatisfaction to the public, potentially drawing negative media attention and undermining public trust. ▪ Compliance-critical departments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Water Treatment / Wastewater Treatment ▪ Public Safety ▪ Finance – Payroll & Budget ▪ Human Capital (for required regulatory reporting) may be forced to operate at minimum capacity, risking legal non-compliance.
LOSS OF CULTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excellence in Action, the culture we cultivated, is at risk. ▪ Culture is fragile. What took years to build may be quickly devalued. ▪ Maintaining trust and alignment between Council and employees is essential to continued excellence.
MASS EXODUS OF TALENT MAY ENSUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employee dissatisfaction may trigger ▪ Sudden resignations across departments ▪ “Quiet quitting” may become a trend within our culture. ▪ Disengaged staff who no longer support the Town’s mission.
DELAYED OR LOSS OF SERVICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inability to meet growing community demands can erode public trust and satisfaction. ▪ Increase in employee burnout, attrition, or disengagement in mission-critical roles. ▪ Increased absenteeism and minimal discretionary effort from staff. ▪ Potential service impacts may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delays in permit approvals, zoning requests, and inspections ▪ Reduced frequency or responsiveness in landscaping, maintenance, and sanitation services ▪ Longer turnaround for customer service responses or citizen inquiries ▪ Compromised event safety or community engagement activities due to reduced police presence or logistical support
DEPARTMENTAL SHORTAGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Entire teams may lose multiple employees simultaneously ▪ Extended time to backfill vacancies due to hiring freezes or competitive disadvantages. ▪ Without sufficient staff, even critical services may be delayed for months until new hires are trained. ▪ Full productivity may take up to one (1) year post-hiring due to onboarding knowledge and transfer requirements

The Town’s ability to maintain service quality, meet strategic goals, and sustain a high-performing culture depends directly on our investment in our workforce. A hiring freeze and denial of compensation adjustments could trigger a **cascade of negative consequences**—from operational failures to reputational damage and cultural erosion.

In summary, if the above concerns are not addressed proactively, they could lead to the following:

- **Increased turnover and lower retention**, disrupting our ability to deliver consistent services.
- **Decline in employee engagement**, resulting in reduced productivity and innovation.
- **Damage to our organizational reputation**, making it more difficult to attract top talent.
- **Operational inefficiencies**, as disengaged employees may not perform at the levels needed to support community needs.



Human Capital Employee Retention Concern Memo

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION: *STRENGTHENING OUR FOUNDATION*

To protect and build upon the culture of **Excellence in Action**, it is essential that we reinforce our commitment to our **employees—the foundation of the Town’s operational success**. In light of ongoing economic and budgetary challenges, the following recommendations outline a strategic, employee-centric path forward that **balances fiscal responsibility** with **organizational resilience**.

1. APPROVE COLA & MERIT INCREASES

To preserve and strengthen the culture of **Excellence in Action**, the Town must remain committed to its employees through actions that demonstrate support, appreciation, and investment in long-term workforce sustainability.

Recognizing employees for their performance and providing cost-of-living adjustments sends a clear message: **we value and support our workforce**. This is a foundational step in retaining top talent and remaining competitive with other municipalities and offers a sustainable path forward to reaffirm that commitment while promoting **operational efficiency**, employee well-being, and community trust.

Question: Why do we need to do a COLA and/or Merit when our retention is average?

Answer: SUSTAINABILITY

COLA maintains equity, and merit drives performance. They’re not just about who stays—they’re about how people feel while they’re here, how hard they work, and whether they’ll stay tomorrow.

2. PRIORITIZE EMPLOYEE SUSTAINABILITY

As emphasized during the May 13th Town Council meeting, it is critically important that we resist the inclination to view employees merely as budget numbers. The Town’s workforce is neither a cost center nor a jobs program—it is the core of our service delivery model. We serve our residents through the talents, dedication, and capabilities of our people. Without a supported and valued workforce, our ability to meet community expectations will erode over time.

Question: What happens when an organization does not have sufficient staffing, or a mass exodus ensues?

Answer: Total disruption.

A disengaged or departing workforce can negatively impact operations, damage public perception, and create long-term instability.

Basic community functions (trash, water, permitting, etc.) can slow down or stop altogether. This can cause public frustration, safety concerns, and potential liability.

While budgetary constraints are a reality for the Town—as they are for all local governments—personnel costs should not be viewed solely as a liability. Reducing investment in our workforce may yield short-term savings, but it often leads to long-term inefficiencies, organizational disruption, and diminished service quality.

Although “doing more with less” may sound fiscally prudent in theory, in practice it places unsustainable strain on already lean teams. If the Town expects continued excellence from its employees, we must be willing to reciprocate that excellence with support and strategic investment.



Human Capital Employee Retention Concern Memo

Over the past few years, the Town has made progress by implementing a strategic workforce planning approach, resulting in the reduction of more than nine positions through careful alignment with short-term organizational priorities. This was a necessary and valuable first step. However, to maintain momentum and position the Town for long-term success, we must evolve. The labor market is dynamic, service demands are growing, and organizational agility is more important than ever. This calls for a transition from short-term, reactive planning to a long-term, strategic workforce model led by Human Capital.

While Human Capital leads the workforce planning program, its success hinges on strong cross-functional collaboration and external partnerships. Strategic workforce planning requires active engagement from leadership and departments to be truly effective. Implementing this refined workforce planning approach will take time and must be approached with thoughtful consideration. While there is an upfront investment involved, engaging a third-party partner can serve as a valuable foundation—providing expertise, structure, and data-driven insights as we work to build a robust, long-term workforce planning strategy internally.

Ultimately, the goal is not to outsource responsibility, but to accelerate learning, enhance internal capacity, and ensure the Town is positioned for long-term workforce sustainability and service excellence. Lastly, if significant financial limitations are imposed, we must navigate our fiscal responsibilities with care—strategically balancing budgetary needs without compromising the very **foundation of our success: our people.**

CONCLUSION

Excellence in Action represents more than just a phrase; it defines how we operate. Through this initiative, we have fostered a workplace where continuous improvement, employee development, and operational sustainability are not just goals—they are embedded in our daily practices.

We are proud to have a workforce defined by skill, dedication, integrity, and an unwavering work ethic. It is these qualities that embody the spirit of our **Excellence in Action** culture, and they are the foundation of everything we strive to achieve as an organization. Therefore, we want to continue to empower our employees by fostering ownership and accountability; support continuous learning and professional development across all roles; and strengthen fiscally responsible and efficient operational practices to ensure long-term sustainability.

In the end, maintaining our culture, retaining our workforce, and continuing our excellence should not be seen as optional—but as essential. Without them, organizational goals and objectives are no longer attainable—they become theoretical.



Human Capital Employee Retention Concern Memo

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & DATA

QUESTIONS FROM TOWN COUNCIL

1. How many employees have left so far in FY25 primarily due to compensation?

Out of the 6 employees who have left for *Better Employment/Opportunity/Compensation*, 4 were primarily due to compensation and 2 were for better opportunities.

Department Breakdown: 2 from Police Department, 1 from Public Works, 1 from Public Utilities.

2. Can we consider adding additional duties to positions rather than backfilling or adding new positions in the future?

Yes. We can consider this option. But, as noted above, reducing investment in our workforce may yield short-term savings, but it often leads to long-term inefficiencies, organizational disruption, and diminished service quality. However, if the goal is to continue to add additional duties to existing positions with the intent to decrease headcount, then it must be done strategically – knowing that it might not be feasible as well. Additionally, this should not be a rushed action, but rather a carefully executed and thought-out action. Therefore, the following are options to consider assessing positional excellence. *There are multiple aspects to conducting an assessment such as this, but the following are two options that can be done incrementally.*

1) Temporary Workload Increase: Evaluating Sustainability.

Temporary reassignment of duties can serve as a valuable tool to determine if our existing workforce can absorb additional responsibilities while maintaining current service levels. Examples of utilizing this approach include a major project implementation (e.g., Tyler system rollout) or staffing gaps due to hiring freezes or position vacancies (e.g., Police Department operations).

Temporary assigning workloads provide the opportunity to assess real-time capacity and operational obstacles the employee(s) may face. To determine effectiveness, we need to consider the following:

- a) Timeline. There needs to be a defined start and end date. Employees need to prepare for the impact to their current workload while assessing their ability to meet the goals and/or objectives set forth by leadership and Council in their current role while also managing their work/life balance needs. Sustainability is important as additional duties can lead to stress, morale decline, unintended attrition, and loss of institution knowledge if not managed properly.
- b) Fiscal Impact. Overtime hours can create budget pressure and workload bottlenecks in already lean departments. Additionally, overtime hours typically do not impact one employee, it impacts multiple. This could lead to a decline in morale which ultimately leads to position fatigue.



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- c) Value Perceived. If employees see the “light at the end of the tunnel” they may be more inclined to push through the temporary assessment. For this to be successful, there needs to be clear communication regarding the purpose, employee expectations, classification, and timeline of this assignment. In addition, set the parameters upfront regarding pay adjustments (permanent or temporary), overtime eligibility, and the evaluation criteria in determining the future of this position assessment.
- d) Evaluation. Assessment of this temporary assignment(s) should be evaluated mid-way and near the end of the assignment to determine the sustainability. This will assist in determining if this temporary assignment should become permanent or if there is another alternative to consider.

Temporary duty reassignments are intended to test operational sustainability—not to compromise service quality or employee well-being. If the assessment reveals that the position in question is essential to maintaining service levels, then the most responsible course of action is to backfill the position as soon as possible. This ensures the Town can continue delivering reliable services while protecting the health and capacity of its workforce.

2) Position Workload Analysis.

An assessment should be conducted to determine sustainability prior to assigning a temporary assignment, but it can be done concurrently.

Human capital should work closely with the Department Director(s) on identifying the following criteria:

- a) Job Alignment,
- b) Pay & Classification Impacts,
- c) Equity & Consistency,
- d) Workload Capacity, and
- e) Service Level Impacts

Assessing workload allowances is a continuous process to which adjustments can be made if the new assignments prove to be unsustainable or misaligned overtime.

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3. What are some similarities of our staffing to other jurisdictions?

The Town of Herndon and the Town of Vienna were selected as comparators as they are of similar square miles size and have similar scope of duties. Additionally, Davenport has selected them as comparators during their financial reviews/assessments of the Town versus other localities.

Employee FTE – FY24

Town of Warrenton, Town of Herndon, and Town of Vienna

The below data shows the similarities and differences between the three localities. It is important to note that while Town of Herndon and Town of Vienna may have a bigger population, they do have similar scope of responsibilities as the Town. The chart below is a high-level overview of the differences between the number of employees per department FY24 data. *This information was retrieved via the Town's ACFR and/or within the personnel breakdown charts within FY24 budget document. There may be some variances.*

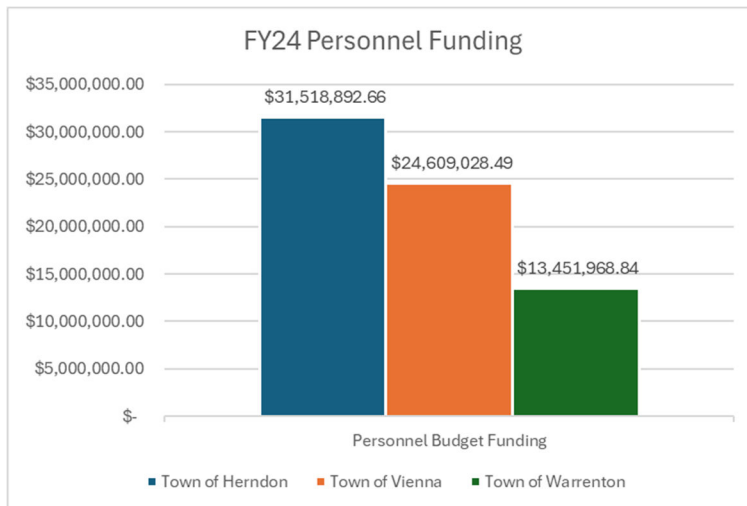
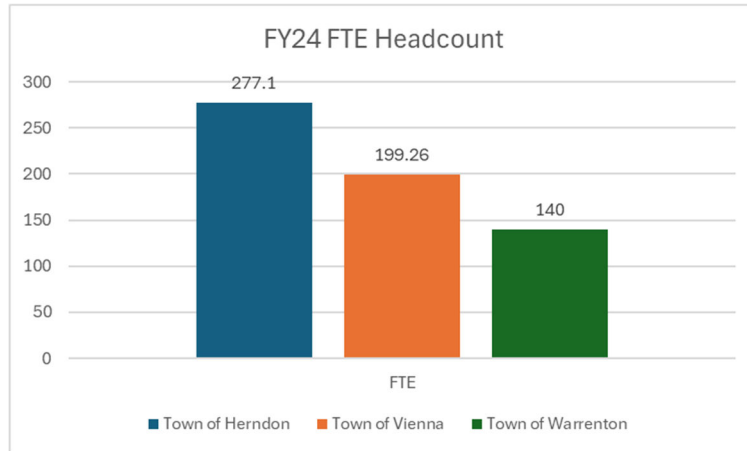
FY24	Town of Warrenton	Town of Vienna	Town of Herndon
LEGISLATIVE			3
TOWN MANAGER	1	2	2
TOWN CLERK	1	2	
COMMUNICATIONS	2	3	2.2
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	10	9	16.7
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	<i>included within community development & partnership with the County</i>	2	<i>included within Communications</i>
FINANCE & PROCUREMENT	11	13.26	12.7
HUMAN CAPITAL	2	3	4.8
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	5	4.5	6.2
PARKS & RECREATION	6	26 <i>includes community centers/teen centers</i>	37.3 <i>includes community centers</i>
PUBLIC SAFETY	28	41	73
PUBLIC WORKS <i>includes Fleet - General Maintenance</i>	31	59	75.5
PUBLIC UTILITIES	30	21.5	16.9
STORMWATER	3	2.5	
TOWN ATTORNEY	<i>OUTSOURCED</i>	0.5	4.6
OTHER			
Cemetery	Under Public Works - 2		4.8
Emergency Services	Own Department Included within F&F Managers position	Police Department works with County and Appropriate Town leadership	Police Department works with County and Appropriate Town leadership
Golf Course	N/A	N/A	13.8



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Operational Comparison – FY24

Town of Warrenton, Town of Herndon, and Town of Vienna



	Population	Square Miles
Town of Herndon	25,052.00	4.3
Town of Vienna	16,258.00	4.4
Town of Warrenton	10,264.00	4.5

	FTE	Personnel Budget Funding
Town of Herndon	277.1	\$ 31,518,892.66
Town of Vienna	199.26	\$ 24,609,028.49
Town of Warrenton	140	\$ 13,451,968.84

	Total # of FOIA Requests
Town of Herndon	200+
Town of Vienna	104
Town of Warrenton	437

	# of Parks	Total Park Acreage
Town of Herndon	11	137
Town of Vienna	12	156.62
Town of Warrenton	7	88.94

	Water Lines (miles)	Wastewater Sanitary Sewers (miles)
Town of Herndon	85	81.9
Town of Vienna	84	84
Town of Warrenton	89.88	69.36

	Streets: Primary (miles)
Town of Herndon	41.2
Town of Vienna	65
Town of Warrenton	91.87

	# of Vehicles
Town of Herndon	431
Town of Vienna	126
Town of Warrenton	112

	Total Building Permits
Town of Herndon	290
Town of Vienna	648
Town of Warrenton	456

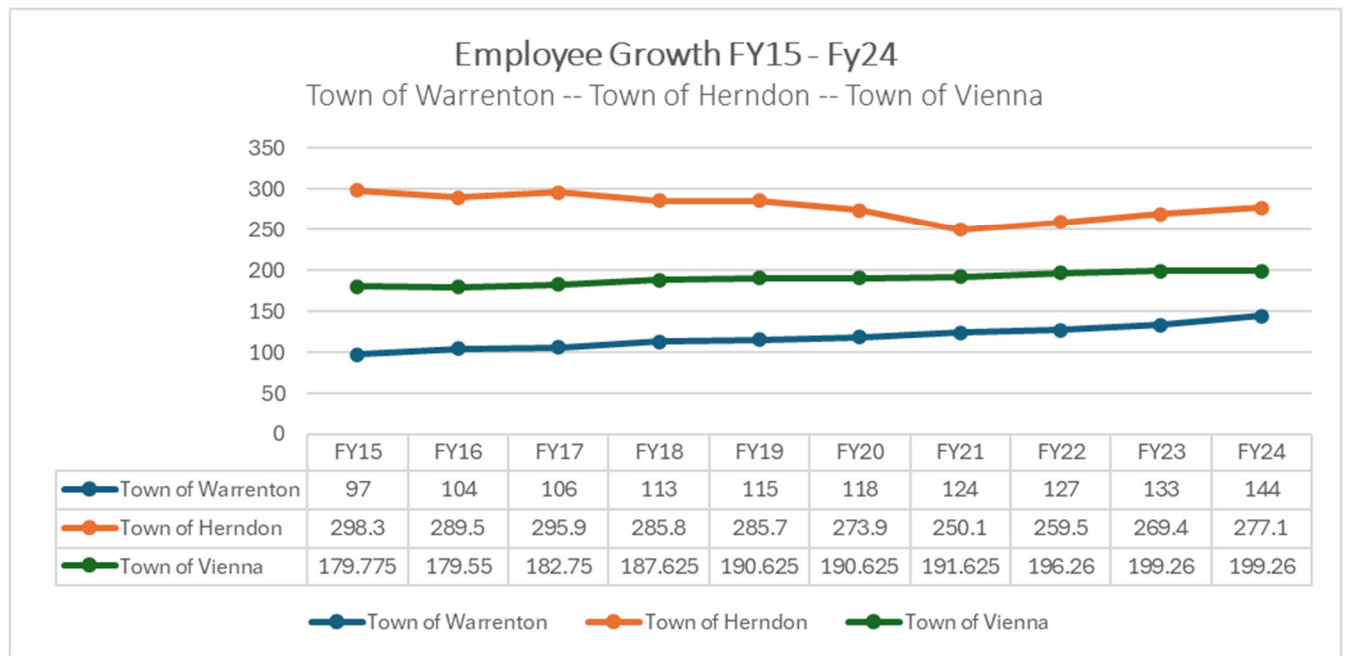
	Refuse Collection - Refuse Collected (tons)	Refuse Collection - Recycle Collected (tons)
Town of Herndon	5824	1332
Town of Vienna	4729	1319
Town of Warrenton	3602	257



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Employee Growth: FY15 to FY24

Town of Warrenton, Town of Herndon, and Town of Vienna



Police Department/Sheriff's Department Structure Comparison

As of 5/28/2025 – Multiple Jurisdictions

	Population Approx.	Square Miles	# of Sworn Officers/Sheriffs	PD Traffic Enforcement # of Designated Officers/Sheriffs	PD Motorcycle Division/Squad # of Designated Officers/Sheriffs	PD Community Policing Program
Town of Herndon	25K	4.3	72	4	3	Yes
Town of Vienna	16.3K	4.4	41	5	1	Yes
Town of Warrenton	10.2K	4.5	28	1	1	Yes
Fauquier County	73K	651	134	0	0	Yes
Town of Culpeper	20K	7.3	50	4	2	Yes
Culpeper County	52.5K	379	170	4	4	Yes

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS – Public Utilities, T&D Team

The impact the hiring freeze has on total operations is causing a disruption of services as well as a negative impact to the well-being and, potentially, safety of our employees. The T&D team within public utilities is an essential team that ensures all distributions systems operate as designed.

Below are the questions and answers that were asked of Mr. Friend, Director of Public Utilities and Seth Cannonier, Superintendent of Public Utilities.

1. What is the overall primary functions of the T&D team?

To maintain and inspect all lines, and associated equipment. Perform preventative maintenance and emergency repairs / replacements. In addition, the team routinely monitors and checks that all systems that deliver water and transport wastewater are operational. This ensures a healthy environment for all the Town's customers and visitors. A high-level breakdown of each position is below:

- **Superintendent.** Ensure all functions of the T&D department and duties are completed.
- **Logistics Coordinator.** Works directly under the supervision of the Superintendent and acts as second in charge. Ensures daily work is completed.
- **Meter Supervisor.** Collects all water meter readings monthly for billing, repairs broken meters and associated equipment, assists line locator, GIS mapping, maintenance on all meters and equipment, answers customer calls / complaints.
- **Utility Line Locator.** Responds to all Miss Utility (811) calls, locates all water, wastewater, and stormwater lines for dig tickets. Assists the Meter Supervisor and the Utility Maintenance Workers on jobs as needed.
- **Utility Maintenance Workers.** Work directly under the Logistics Coordinator and Superintendent to ensure all distributions systems operate as designed. Maintain and inspect all lines, and associated equipment. Perform preventative maintenance and emergency repairs / replacements.

2. What are the current positions within your team?

The department consist of 1 Superintendent, 1 Logistics Coordinator, 1 Meter Supervisor, 1 Utility Line Locator, 5 Utility Maintenance Workers.

3. Are there any required certifications for these positions?

All employees will be required to have their traffic safety courses along with various OSHA and FEMA training certifications. In addition, all positions (with the exception of the Superintendent, Meter Supervisor, and Utility Line locator) are to have at minimum a Class B CDL.



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4. Are there compliance factors at risk if these positions have a significant delay in being backfilled or are not backfilled?

Yes.

For the Water plant, without T&D all water main breaks would remain unrepaired which would lead to boil water notices, water storage tanks draining to the point the Town would experience a zero pressure event (we are required to provide a minimum PSI and water), in order to try and keep water in the system the water plant would have to run to the point it would surpass its permit withdrawal amounts.

For the Sewer, without T&D fixing broken or backed up sewer mains and laterals there would be illicit discharges and back up events into facilities, businesses and residents' homes., leading to DEQ violations.

5. Even when fully staffed, does your team experience performance gaps due to staffing limitations?

Yes, there are numerous times when there were multiple distribution system failures that happened at the same time. These incidents also take crews away from normal scheduled maintenance resulting in back logged work.

For example: One time we had a watermain break, a sewer backup, and a dirty water complaint, and multiple 811 calls at the same time, so the Utility Line Locator could not assist crews, and the Meter Supervisor was back and forth on water meter calls so they could not assist. This resulted in having to utilize some staff from the WTP and from the Director of Utilities to help. Even with the extra help it took crews 14 hours to fix everything.

6. Is it difficult to recruit and retain for these positions? If so, what are the challenges?

Yes, it is very physical work in all extreme weather conditions, potential for long hours, having to work with raw sewage, potential to get called in during the night, mixed with a low comparative wage to the surrounding area.

7. Is it difficult to recruit and retain for these positions? If so, what are the challenges?

Overall were okay, but we do have to utilize the Line Locator as one more Utility Maintenance Worker at lines, one more UMW would help ensure all functions get done a little faster and easier.

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ADDITIONAL ARTICLES & DATA POINTS

State & Local Workforce Survey: 2024 Survey Findings

<https://economicgraph.linkedin.com/workforce-data/us-workforce-confidence-index>

A workforce trends survey conducted between March 8 and April 25, 2024, gathered responses from 300 Human Resources Managers across state and local governments. The survey focused on key organizational priorities including recruitment, retention, compensation, and organizational culture. Some findings also incorporate comparative data from prior years, providing insight into evolving workforce strategies in the public sector.

Key Findings & Implications

The data clearly show that enhanced benefits and total compensation strategies are becoming the standard among peer agencies. These practices are also viewed as essential tools for cultivating a resilient and competitive workforce. These proposed enhancements is to ensure the Town's compensation package aligns with our local competitors.

- **Broad-Based Pay Increases**
53% of responding organizations reported offering broad-based pay increases, signaling a shift toward equitable and proactive compensation strategies.
- **Paid Family Leave**
48% offer paid family leave benefits, aligned with FMLA standards of up to 12 weeks. This reflects a growing commitment to work/life balance and employee well-being.
- **Top Organizational Priorities:**
 - 79% identified *competitive compensation* as a key organizational issue
 - 42% cited *pay equity* as a critical focus area
- **Staffing Changes:**
 - 21% of organizations reported staffing growth of 5% or more
 - Only 2% reported a staffing decrease of 5% or more
This suggests a strong trend toward expanding and investing in workforce capacity.
- **Hiring Incentives:**
 - 37% of respondents reported using targeted or non-targeted hiring bonuses
 - Of those, 13% required repayment of the bonus if the employee left before one year of service.

The survey results highlight the evolving expectations of public sector employees and the strategic responses being adopted by peer organizations. To remain competitive and attract high-quality talent, it is **imperative** that the Town continues to evaluate and evolve its total compensation strategy. Incorporating enhanced incentives such as pay equity adjustments, family leave, and hiring bonuses positions the Town as a forward-thinking employer aligned with public sector best practices.



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LinkedIn U.S. Workforce Confidence Index (WCI)

<https://economicgraph.linkedin.com/workforce-data/us-workforce-confidence-index>

The WCI serves as a strong indicator of shifting employee sentiment over the past year. It reflects a growing awareness among employees regarding their career trajectory and financial stability. One of the most significant insights is that many employees are re-evaluating their ability to support themselves and their families—placing greater emphasis on equitable and competitive compensation.

When employees perceive that they are not being compensated fairly relative to market standards or their peers, it can lead to dissatisfaction, disengagement, and ultimately, attrition. Financial stability is no longer just a personal goal—it is a fundamental component of how employees assess the value and viability of their employer. Ensuring that compensation structures align with employee expectations and market trends is essential to maintaining a motivated, loyal, and productive workforce.

Data Summary

The LinkedIn Market Research team surveys its members daily to understand how they're feeling about their careers, current company, and more. Every two weeks the team aggregates the survey data to analyze the latest in Workforce Confidence trends. In the WCI survey, LinkedIn market researchers ask LinkedIn members about their confidence to get/hold a job, improve their financial situation and progress in their career. That is used to calculate an index score from their opinions by assigning each respondent a score (-100, -50, 0, +50, +100), based on how much they agree or disagree with the three statements, and then create the composite average score across all statements.

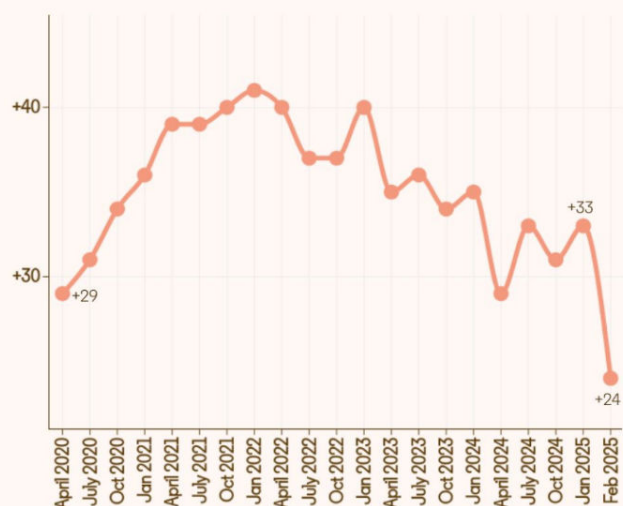
WCI Methodology: LinkedIn's Workforce

Confidence Index is based on a quantitative online survey from LinkedIn's market research team that is distributed to members via email every day and aggregated every two weeks. Between 2,000 to 3,000 U.S.-based members respond to each two-week wave of the survey. Members are randomly sampled and must be opted-in to research to participate. Students, stay-at-home partners, and retirees are excluded from analysis so that we're able to get an accurate representation of those currently active in the workforce. We analyze data in aggregate and will always respect member privacy. Data is weighted by engagement level to ensure fair representation of various activity levels on the platform. The results represent the world as seen through the lens of LinkedIn's membership; variances between LinkedIn's membership and the overall market population are not accounted for.

Workers' confidence has dropped to new low

Workers in the U.S. are now feeling worse about their finances, job prospects and career outlooks than they were during the early days of the pandemic.

U.S. average worker confidence score



SOURCE: LinkedIn Market Research
NOTE: 499,169 professionals in the U.S. were surveyed from April 1, 2020-March 7, 2025. Confidence is scored on a scale from -100 to +100.

LinkedIn News