

2023 CLEARED

RECRUITING GUIDE:

UNLOCKING DATA-DRIVEN INSIGHTS FOR SUCCESS



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The evolving world of national security presents unprecedented challenges for Intelligence Community (IC) and Defense leaders in recruiting and retaining top talent with necessary clearances. Cleared recruiting is now a paramount concern for government agencies and private contractors, with metrics playing a crucial role in tracking progress, identifying inefficiencies, and continuously improving hiring practices to ensure billets stay filled or get refilled quickly. Data and the right tools are the key to driving success in cleared recruiting. Respondents to the ClearanceJobs 2023 Recruiting Survey provided insights from this past year, building the metrics that support the cleared recruiting community.

RECRUITING TEAM STRUCTURE

Not everyone organizes their team the same. However, a significant majority (67%) of recruiters are designated to manage to fill specific roles or programs. This targeted approach allows recruiters to develop a deeper understanding of the unique requirements and skills needed for each position, potentially leading to more effective candidate matches.



However, the data also highlights challenges, as 55% of respondents reported experiencing overlap among recruiters when reaching out to the same candidates in the talent pool. This duplication of efforts leads to inefficiencies and is an opportunity for better coordination within recruiting teams. And the jury is still out on whether or not the recruiting team structure creates silos, with 40% saying yes, 44% saying no, and 16% being unsure. The structure may not need to change, but with over a third seeing silos, it's clear recruiting team communication could improve.

Do you have overlap among recruiters with reaching out to the same candidates in the talent pool?



Do you find that there are silos within your recruiting teams?



And 77% claim their team structure aids in candidate tracking and reduces hiring timelines, while 74% find it effective in managing burnout among recruiters. While there’s always room for improvement, the majority see the benefits in the team structures.

Does your team structure help you track candidates and reduce hiring timelines?



Is the team structure effective in managing burnout?



Do you use external sourcing services?



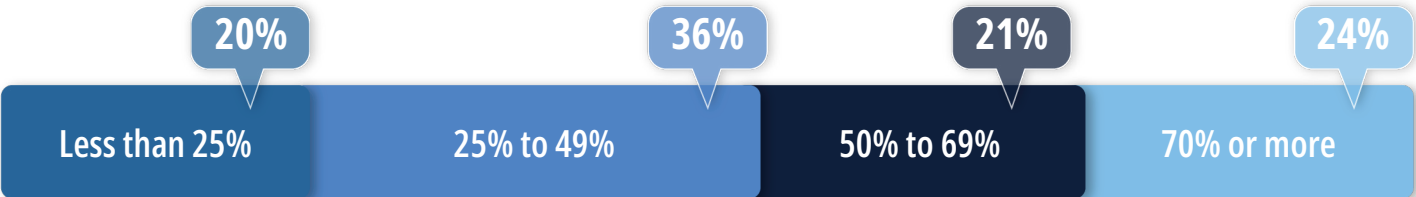
Over half of the respondents (57%) report using external sourcing services to augment their cleared recruiting efforts. External sourcing services can be a strategic advantage by saving time and resources. Many hands make light work, and outsourcing can give your organization the necessary hiring boost.

Are you able to automate any percentage of your recruiting process?



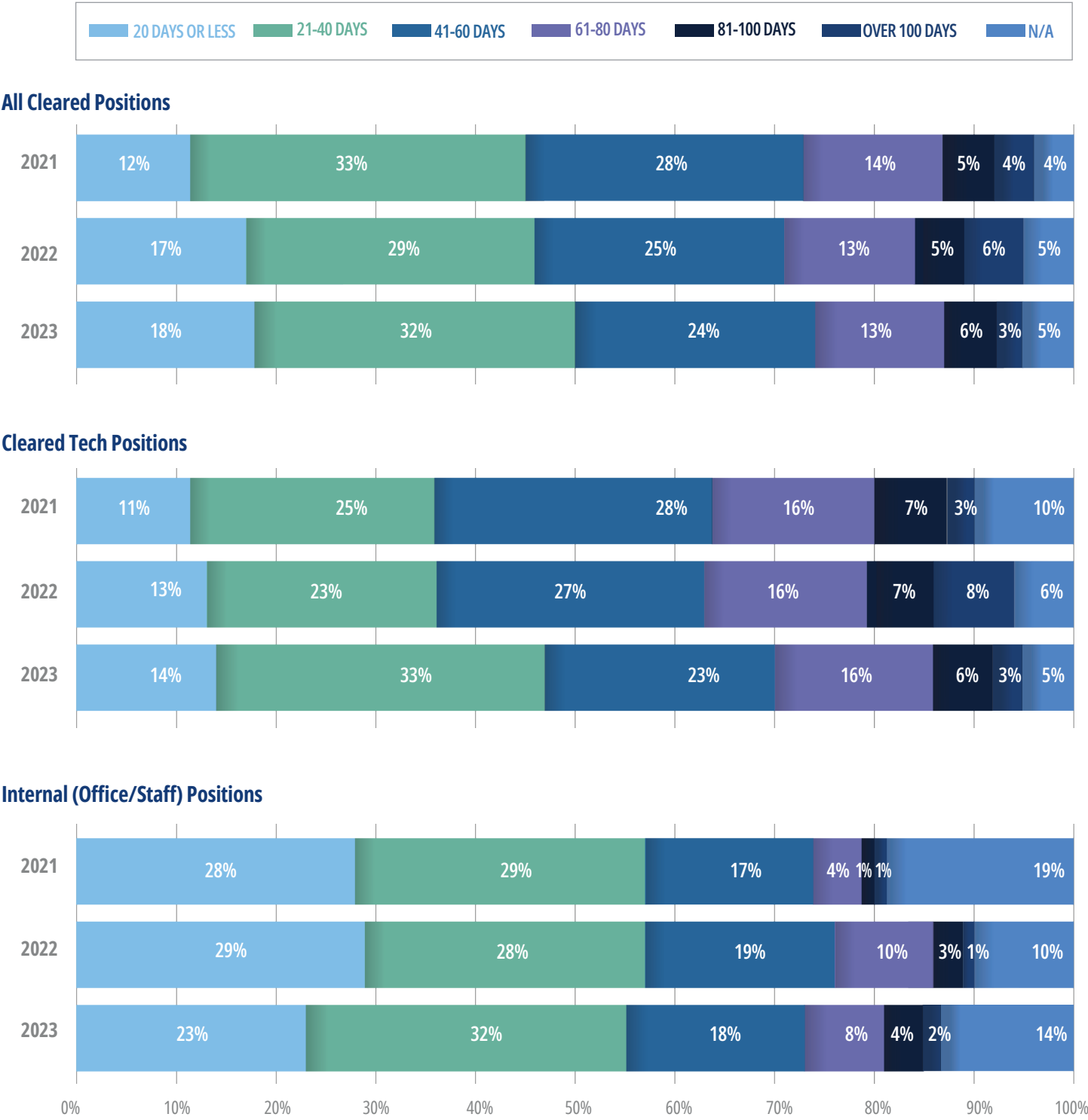
Interestingly, 61% of respondents have successfully automated aspects of their recruiting process, making strides toward a more efficient and tech-enabled approach. By incorporating automation tools and technologies, recruiters can streamline repetitive tasks, such as resume screening and interview scheduling, freeing up valuable time to focus on more strategic aspects of talent acquisition. However, there is still a portion (28%) of respondents who have not implemented any automation in their recruiting process, which suggests that there may be room for growth in this area. As technology continues to advance, more recruiting teams may leverage automation to enhance their efficiency and stay competitive in the ever-evolving landscape of talent acquisition.

What percentage of your recruiting process are you able to automate?



AVERAGE TIME TO FILL

Insights from the past three years showcase a notable trend in the average time to fill cleared positions, with a gradual increase in the percentage of roles filled within 20 days or less, indicating a growing efficiency in the hiring process.



Time to Hire Steps

The step that respondents spend the most time on in the hiring process is “Gathering qualified candidates in the pipeline,” with 35% of respondents stating that it occupies more than 25% of their time. Finding the elusive secret squirrel is a time-intensive phase in the recruitment process.

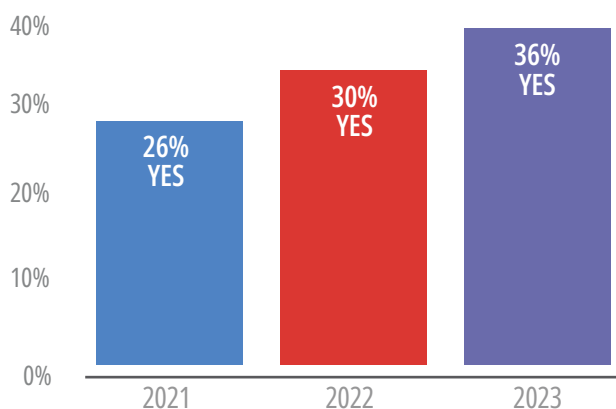
Average percentage of the total hiring process time for cleared positions that each step takes.

	5% or less	6% to 10%	11% to 15%	16% to 20%	21% to 25%	More than 25%
Getting requisition approved	48%	31%	10%	7%	2%	2%
Posting jobs	52%	30%	9%	5%	3%	2%
Gathering qualified candidates in the pipeline	9%	24%	11%	11%	9%	35%
Conducting interviews	21%	34%	17%	15%	7%	6%
Checking clearances	58%	27%	10%	5%	0%	1%
Selecting candidates to hire	35%	38%	15%	7%	2%	3%
Gaining hiring manager approval	44%	37%	9%	7%	3%	2%
Gaining government approval of candidate	39%	34%	11%	7%	4%	4%
Extending offer to candidate	53%	31%	8%	8%	1%	0%

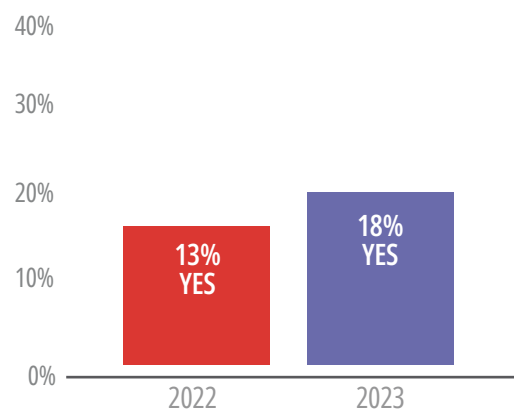
AVERAGE COST TO HIRE

In the past three years, there has been a noticeable increase in the percentage of companies that calculate their average cost to hire, rising from 26% in 2021 to 36% in 2023. Similarly, the proportion of companies calculating their average cost per application has risen from 13% in 2022 to 18% in 2023. These figures suggest a growing recognition among companies of the importance of tracking recruitment expenses and making informed decisions in talent acquisition.

Does your company calculate your average cost to hire?



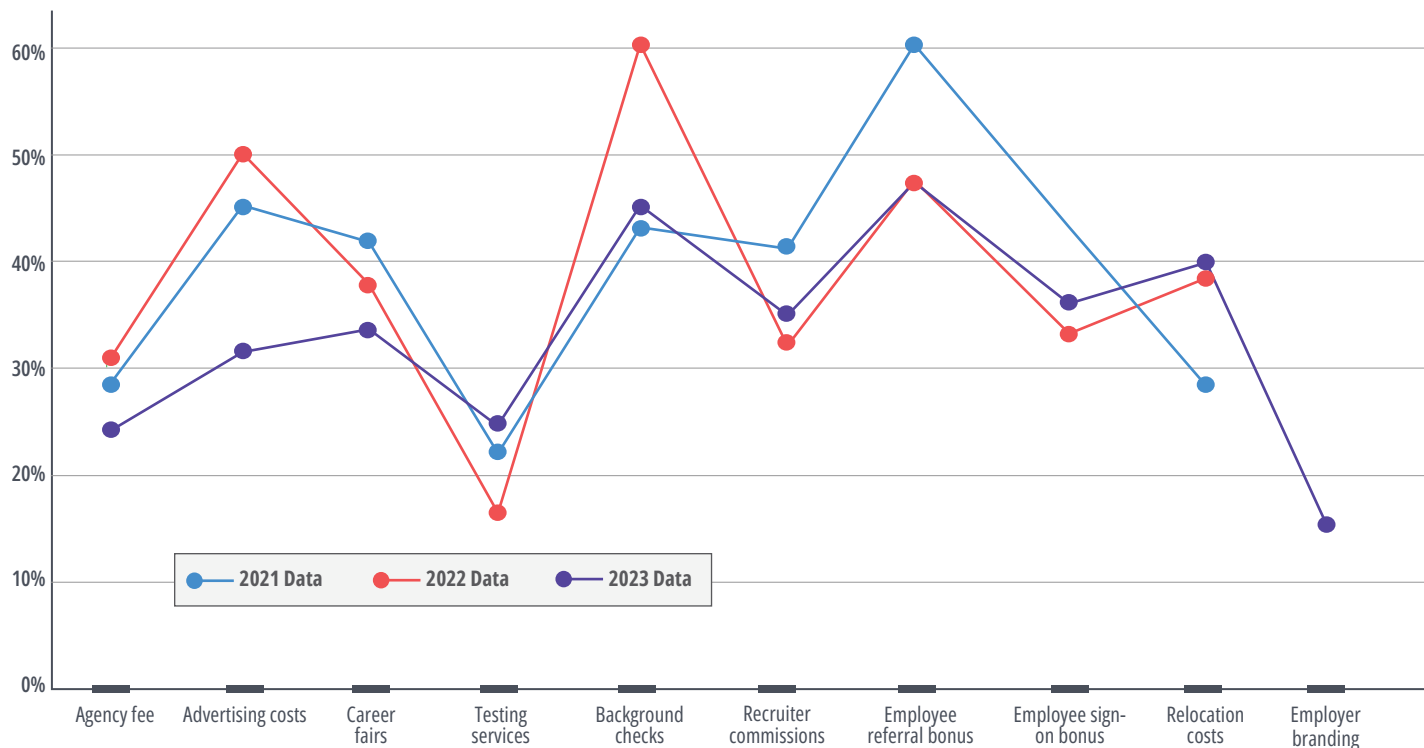
Does your company calculate your average cost per application?



What Goes into the Cost to Hire?

When examining the add-ons included in the cost to hire, advertising costs consistently ranked as the highest, with 50% of companies in 2021, 44% in 2022, and 31% in 2023 accounting for this expense. Background checks, another critical aspect of the recruitment process, were included by 60% of companies in 2021, 43% in 2022, and 45% in 2023. Employer branding emerged as a noteworthy component at 16% in 2023, signifying a growing focus on shaping and promoting the company's image to attract top talent. Employee referral bonuses remained prominent, with 46% of companies in 2021, 60% in 2022, and 46% in 2023 leveraging this approach to incentivize employee referrals and enhance their recruitment efforts.

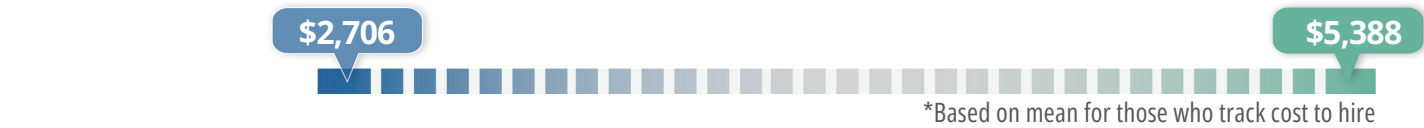
What add-ons do you include in your cost to hire?



The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) reports the national average cost to hire as \$4,683, and the median is only \$1,244. However, cleared recruiting respondents report the average minimum cost to hire as \$2,706 and the average maximum is \$5,388. Cost to hire continues to be calculated by the minority of companies, and with significant variance regarding what goes into the expense. The growth in stovepipes within cleared recruiting organizations may also be leading to confusion about what is included in cost to hire, along with what add-ons are a part of the hiring process, and what fall into other categories. Employer branding - critical to hiring passive cleared candidates - was included by just 16% of respondents.

Additionally, the cost per application ranges from an average minimum of \$996 to an average maximum of \$3,548. There are a lot of expenses associated with attracting potential candidates for a specific job opening.

What are the minimum and maximum amount of your company's cost to hire?



What are the minimum and maximum amount of your company's cost per application?



RECRUITING PAIN POINTS

Finding candidates with Top Secret/SCI clearances remain a top issue, with 17% in 2022 and 15% in 2023, highlighting the continuous struggle in sourcing highly skilled individuals with the necessary security clearances.

Backfilling positions before a contract is over was an area of concern in 2022 (19%) but showed a decline in 2023 (8%). However, verifying clearance levels and dealing with the small, cleared talent pool maintained similar levels of concern.

Biggest Hiring Pain Points 2022

Filling Senior Management positions	2022				27%
	2023	7%	8%	7%	22%
Finding TS/SCI candidates	2022				45%
	2023	15%	11%	9%	35%
Backfilling a position before a contract is over	2022				38%
	2023	4%	8%	8%	20%
Verifying clearance levels	2022				14%
	2023	5%	6%	5%	16%
Working through internal recruiting processes	2022				21%
	2023	10%	5%	10%	25%
Dealing with the small, cleared talent pool	2022				56%
	2023	19%	20%	16%	55%
Filling cleared roles that require a polygraph	2022				
	2023	13%	10%	10%	33%
Getting candidates to engage	2022				52%
	2023	14%	17%	20%	51%
Competing with talent being offered remote work	2023	14%	16%	16%	46%

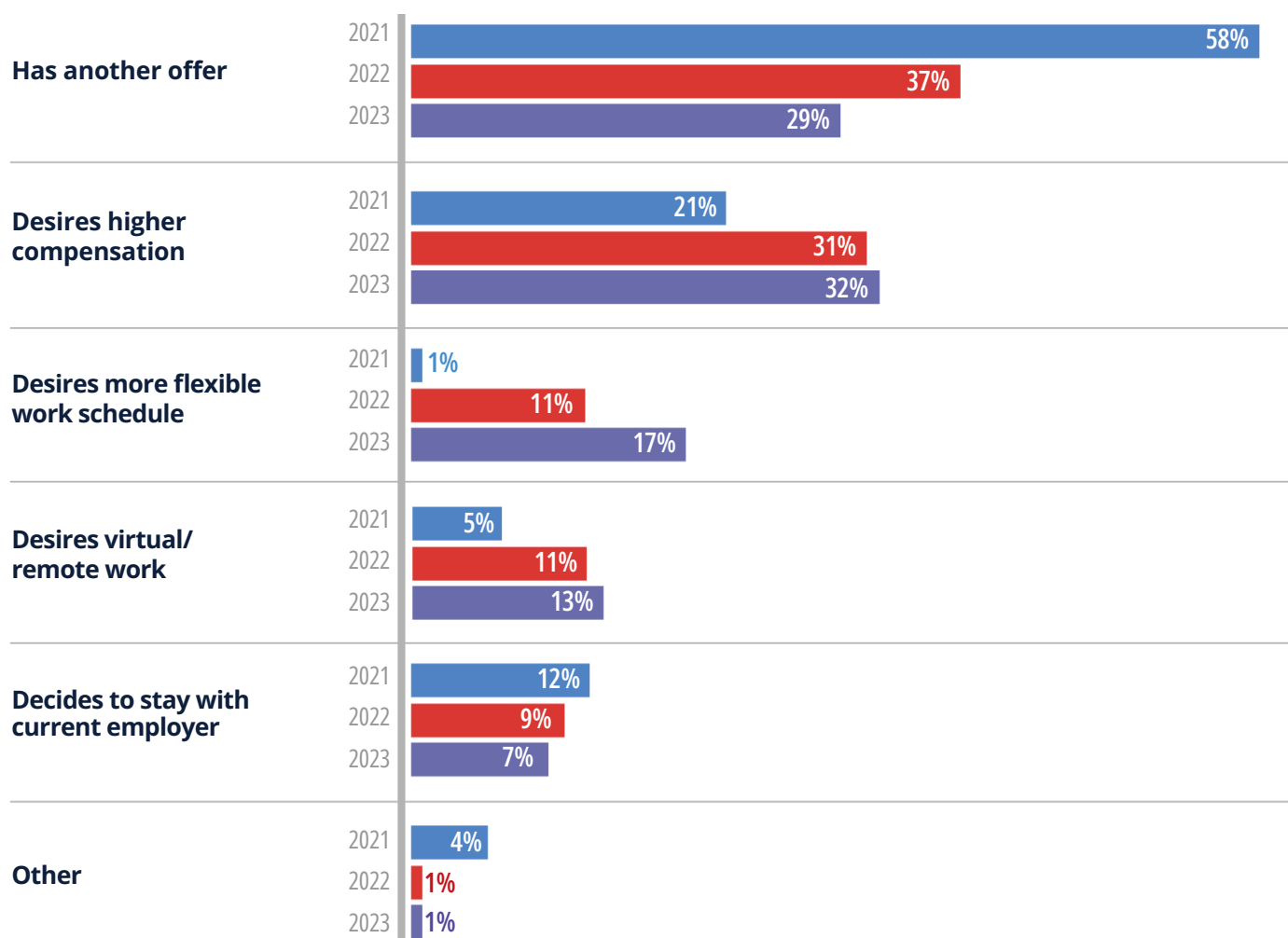
One interesting trend that emerged in 2023 is the increase in working through internal recruiting processes as a pain point, rising to 10% from 6% in 2022. Companies may be experiencing more bottlenecks or inefficiencies internally that need to be addressed.

In 2023, a new question was added to the survey, focusing on a significant concern for cleared recruiting professionals – competing with talent being offered remote work. The data shows that 14% of respondents ranked this issue as their top pain point, while 16% ranked it as the second and third-highest concern.

Reasons Offers Get Rejected

The desire for higher compensation shows an upward trend, increasing from 21% in 2021 to 31% in 2022 and to 32% in 2023. Candidates are placing increasing importance on competitive salary packages in their decision-making process. Additionally, the desire for a more flexible work schedule and remote work options has also seen significant growth, with both categories showing a steady increase over the years, indicating the rising importance of work-life balance and remote work opportunities as attractive factors for candidates.

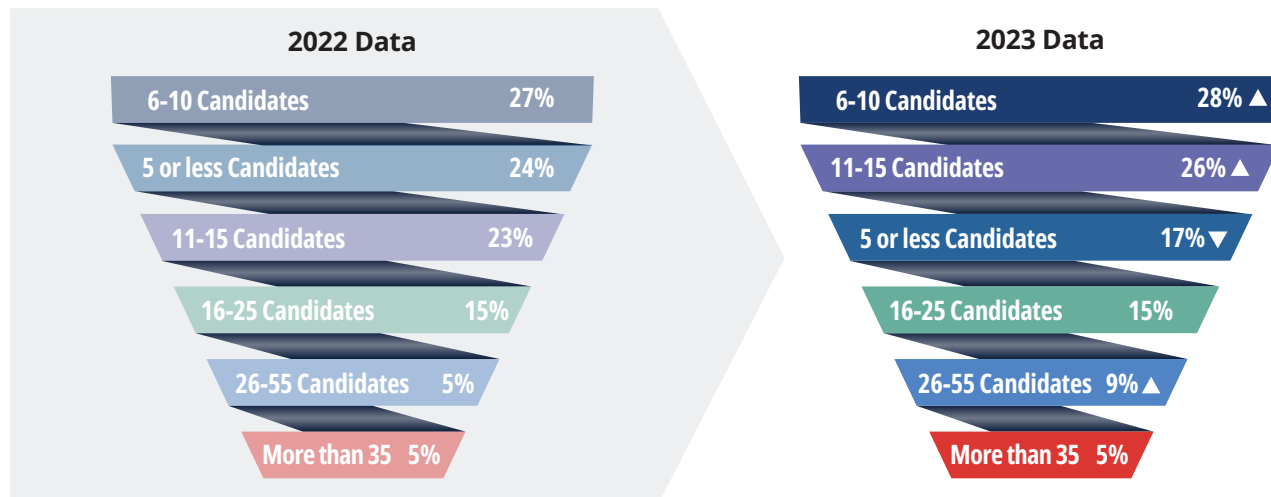
What is the TOP response given for candidates who complete the recruiting lifecycle and turn down a position?



THE RECRUITING FUNNEL

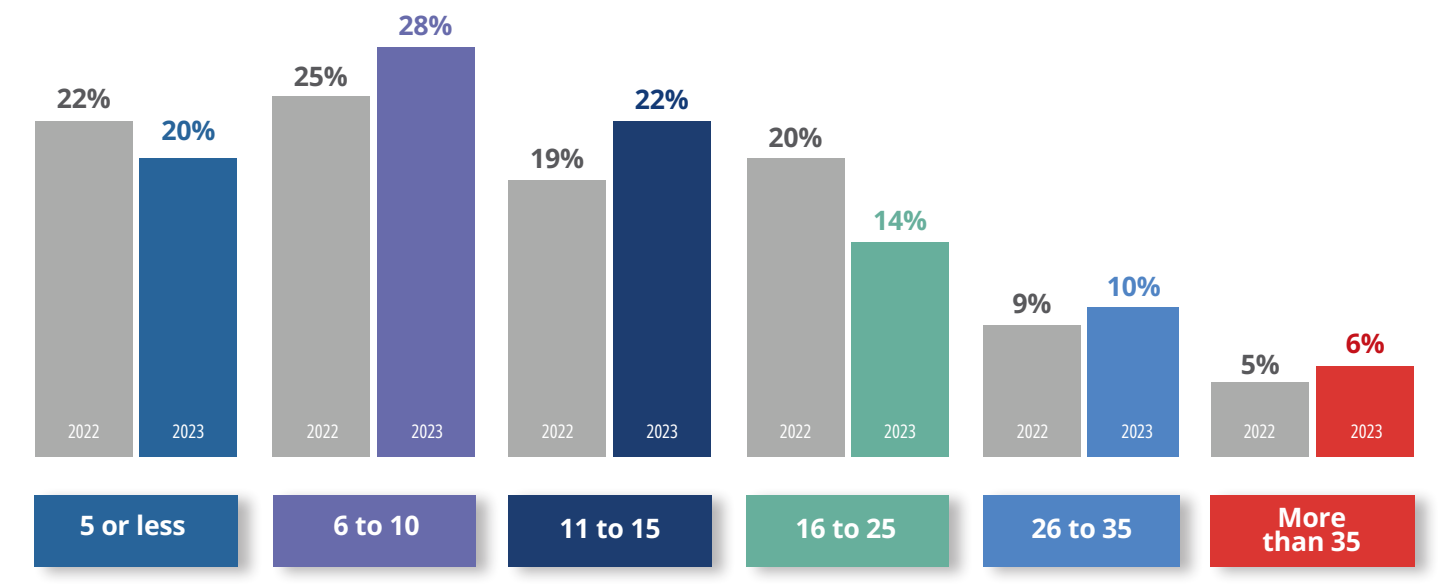
In 2022, the highest percentage of respondents (27%) indicated that they required 6 to 10 candidates in their funnel to make a hire, followed closely by 5 or fewer candidates (24%) and 11 to 15 candidates (23%). In 2023, these percentages shifted slightly, with 28% stating that they needed 6 to 10 candidates, 26% requiring 11 to 15 candidates, and 17% looking for 5 or fewer candidates to make a hire. There was a notable increase in respondents requiring 26 to 35 candidates, rising from 5% in 2022 to 9% in 2023.

How many candidates do you need in your recruiting funnel to make a hire?



In 2022, the highest proportion of respondents (25%) reported receiving 6 to 10 applications per requisition, followed closely by 5 or fewer applications (22%) and 11 to 15 applications (19%). In 2023, the distribution shifted slightly, with 28% indicating 6 to 10 applications, 22% reporting 11 to 15 applications, and 20% seeing 5 or fewer applications per requisition. The percentage of respondents receiving 16 to 25 applications decreased from 20% in 2022 to 14% in 2023, while the percentage receiving 26 to 35 applications saw a slight increase from 9% to 10%.

Average number of applications per requisition



Recruiting Conversion Rates

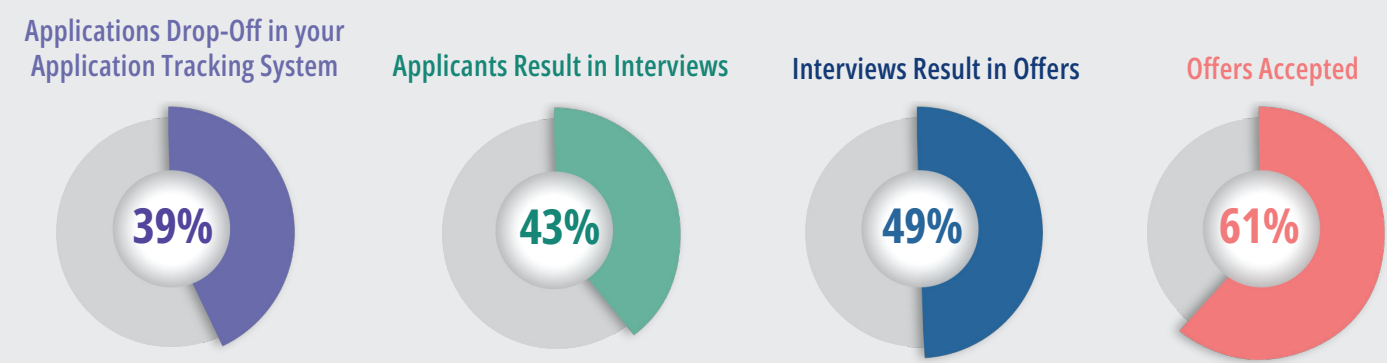
Given the sensitive nature of roles within the national security sector, it becomes even more crucial to attract and retain the right candidates with the necessary qualifications and security clearances.

On average, 39% of applications were reported to drop-off in the application tracking system, highlighting the challenge of effectively engaging and retaining potential candidates throughout the candidate attraction process. To address this, it's important to focus on streamlining the application process, providing clear communication, and offering support to candidates during this stage.

Respondents shared that 43% of applicants meet the minimum requirements on paper and that 49% of interviews result in offers.

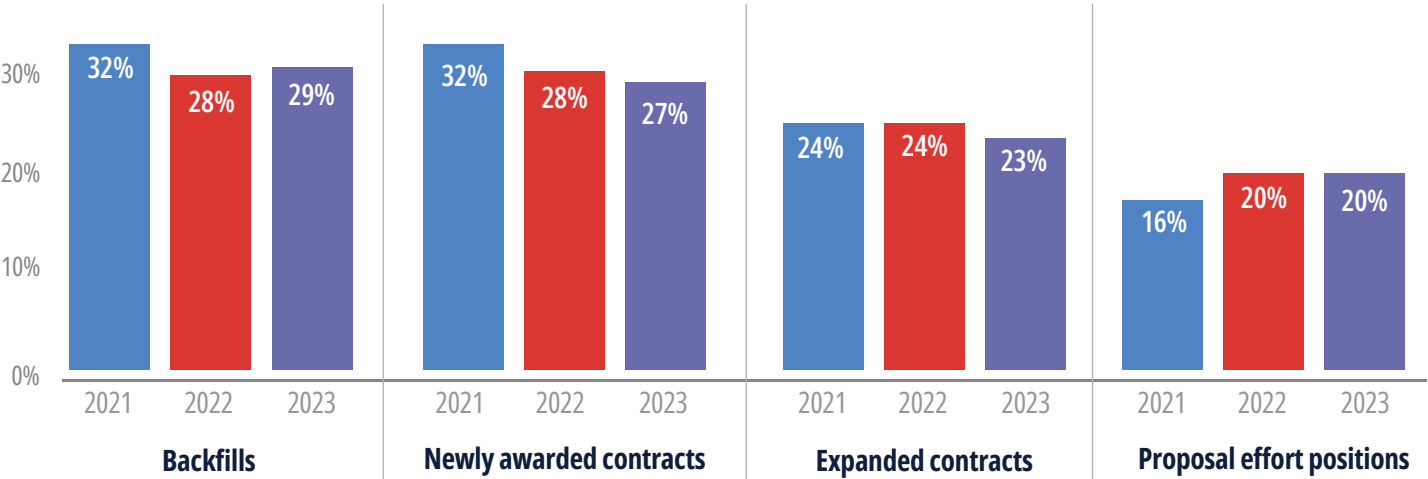
Finally, respondents reported that 61% of job offers in national security positions are accepted. It's important to keep presenting competitive offers that align with candidate expectations.

Connecting with a strong, cleared candidate pool is key to maintaining and improving these metrics.



Backfills and positions related to newly awarded contracts consistently represented the highest proportion, comprising around 28% to 32% of the total positions each year. Workforce continuity and swiftly onboarding new talent is of continued importance to meet the needs of newly secured contracts. Additionally, the focus on expanded contracts remains consistent, accounting for approximately 23% to 24% of positions each year. Proposal effort positions remained relatively steady at 20% across both 2022 and 2023.

Breakdown of backfills, new contracts, and proposal effort positions



TALENT ACQUISITION AND RETENTION STRATEGIES

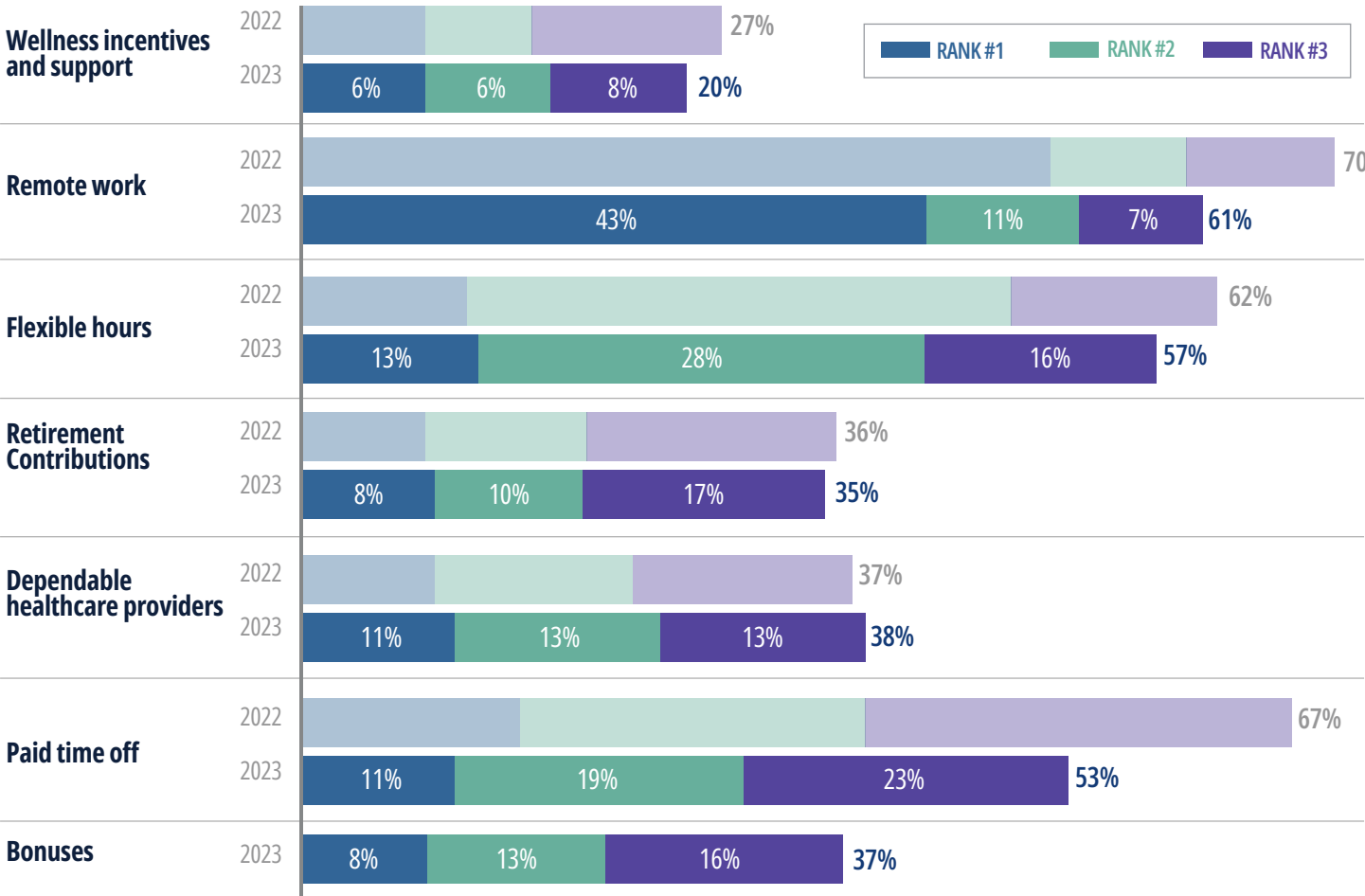
Talent acquisition and retention strategies in national security play a pivotal role in ensuring the continuous strength and effectiveness of security agencies. Given the specialized nature of these roles, attracting qualified candidates with the required clearances and skills is essential.

Benefits

Remote work, which held the dominant position in 2022 at 51%, remained at the top but saw a decrease to 43% in 2023. Conversely, flexible hours saw a bump, with 13% of respondents ranking it as their top choice in 2023, compared to 12% in the previous year. The continued emphasis on wellness incentives and support remained low but steady, showing that employees are still interested in different programs that promote overall well being.

With adding bonuses to the mix in 2023, 8% ranked it as their top choice, along with 13% placing it in the second position, and 16% in the third position.

What gets candidates in the door?

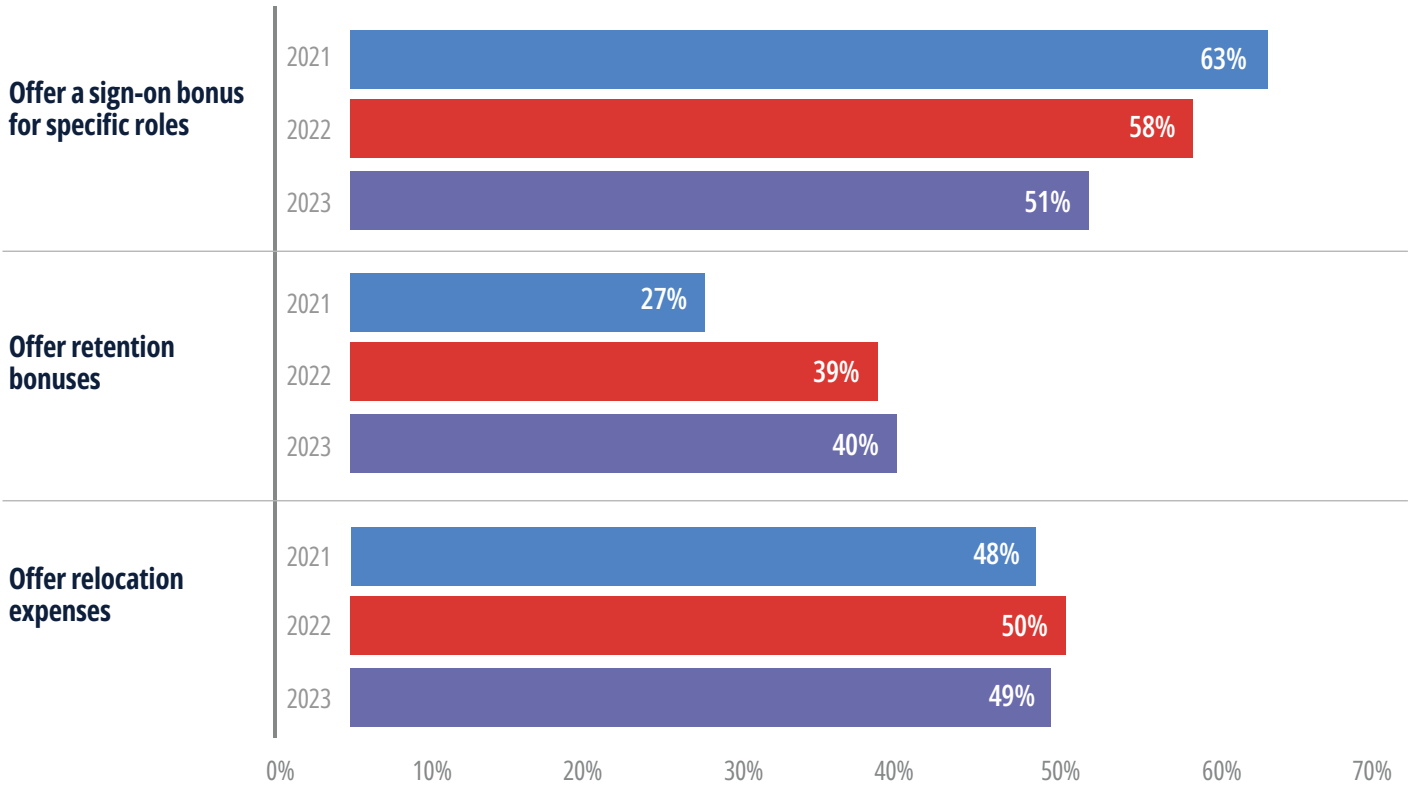


The workforce’s preferences are evolving. Work-life balance and financial incentives remain key.

Bonuses

Over the past three years, there has been a notable decline in the percentage of companies offering sign-on bonuses for specific roles, dropping from 63% in 2021 to 51% in 2023. However, there has been a steady increase in companies providing retention bonuses, rising from 27% in 2021 to 40% in 2023. Relocation expenses have remained relatively consistent, with 48% of companies offering them in 2021, 50% in 2022, and 49% in 2023.

Does your company...



For organizations offering sign-on bonuses, the average minimum amount is \$1,684, with the maximum amount averaging at \$9,777.

The minimum and maximum amount for companies offering a sign-on bonus



Similarly, for those providing retention bonuses, the average minimum amount stands at \$1,642, while the maximum amount averages at \$8,729.

The minimum and maximum amount for companies offering a retention bonus



Additionally, for companies offering relocation expenses, the average minimum amount is \$1,747, with the maximum amount averaging at \$7,990.

The minimum and maximum amount for companies offering relocation expenses



*Based on mean averages

These financial incentives are crucial in attracting and retaining top talent in the competitive field of national security, where skilled professionals with the necessary clearances are highly sought after.

Turnover

Similar to prior years, around 60% know their annual turnover rate.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS REPORT AN AVERAGE ANNUAL TURNOVER RATE OF 33%.

This turnover rate suggests a moderate level of employee churn within organizations, a little higher than the general rule of 10% or less.

Look for common patterns and issues to help management implement targeted strategies that enhance employee satisfaction and engagement.

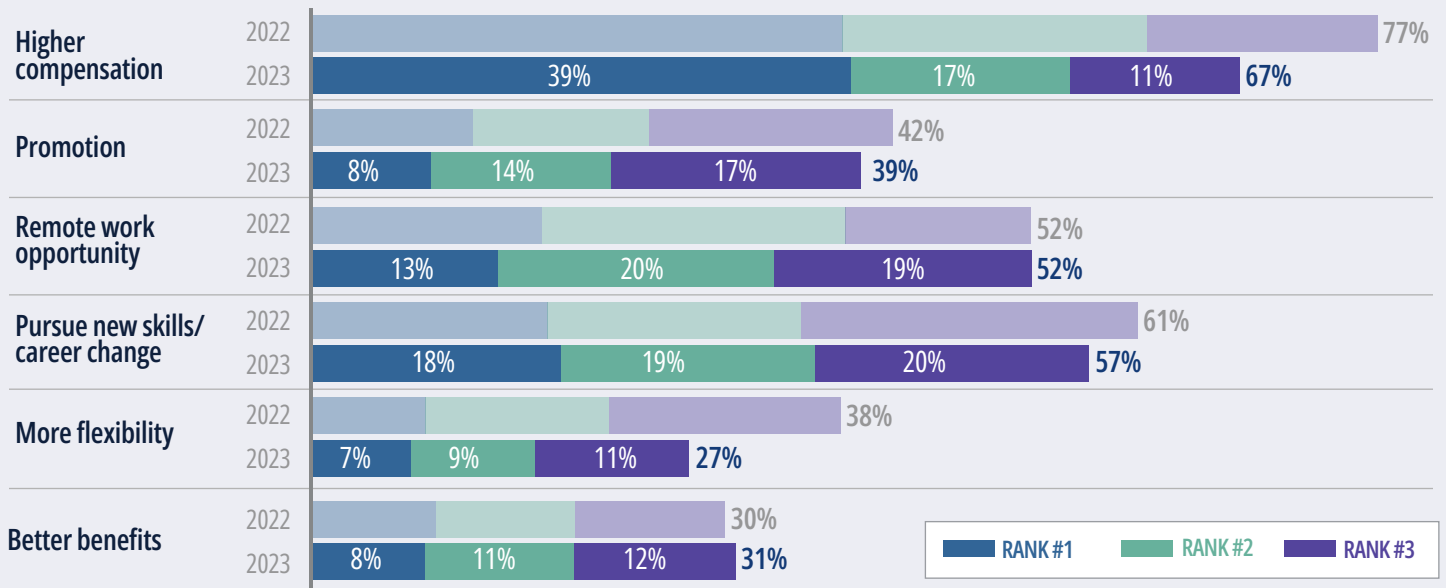
Retention

In both years, the top reason for employees leaving their jobs is higher compensation, remaining consistent at 39%. However, there is a notable decrease in the second and third rankings of higher compensation in 2023, with 17% and 11%, respectively, compared to 23% and 15% in 2022.

Regarding promotions, the data reveals a slight decrease (3%) in the importance of this factor as a reason for leaving. Instead, employees seem to place greater emphasis on opportunities to pursue new skills or make a career change, with 18% ranking it as the top reason in 2023.

Remote work opportunities remain significant, with 13% ranking it as the primary reason in 2023, showing a slight decrease from 16% in 2022. Similarly, more flexibility continues to be a notable factor for employee departures.

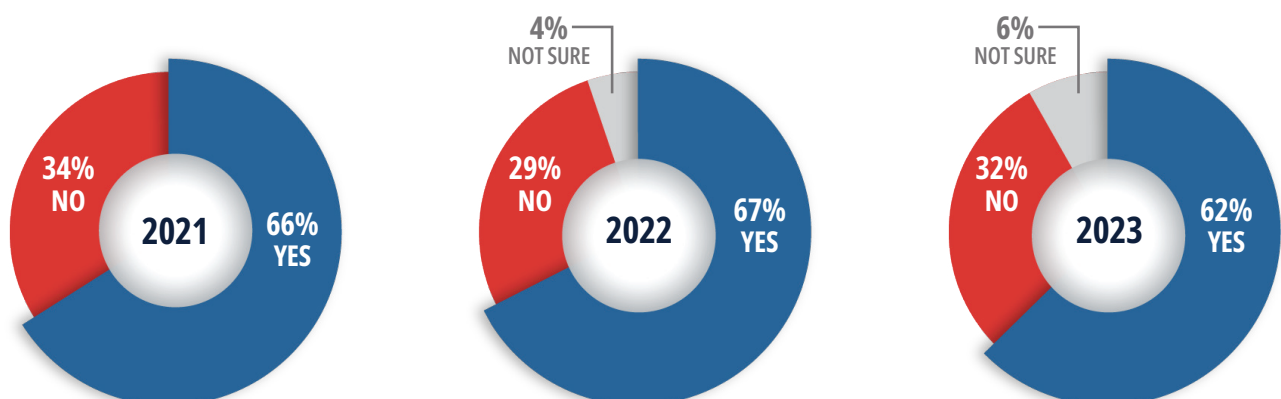
Factors for employee departures



Remote Work

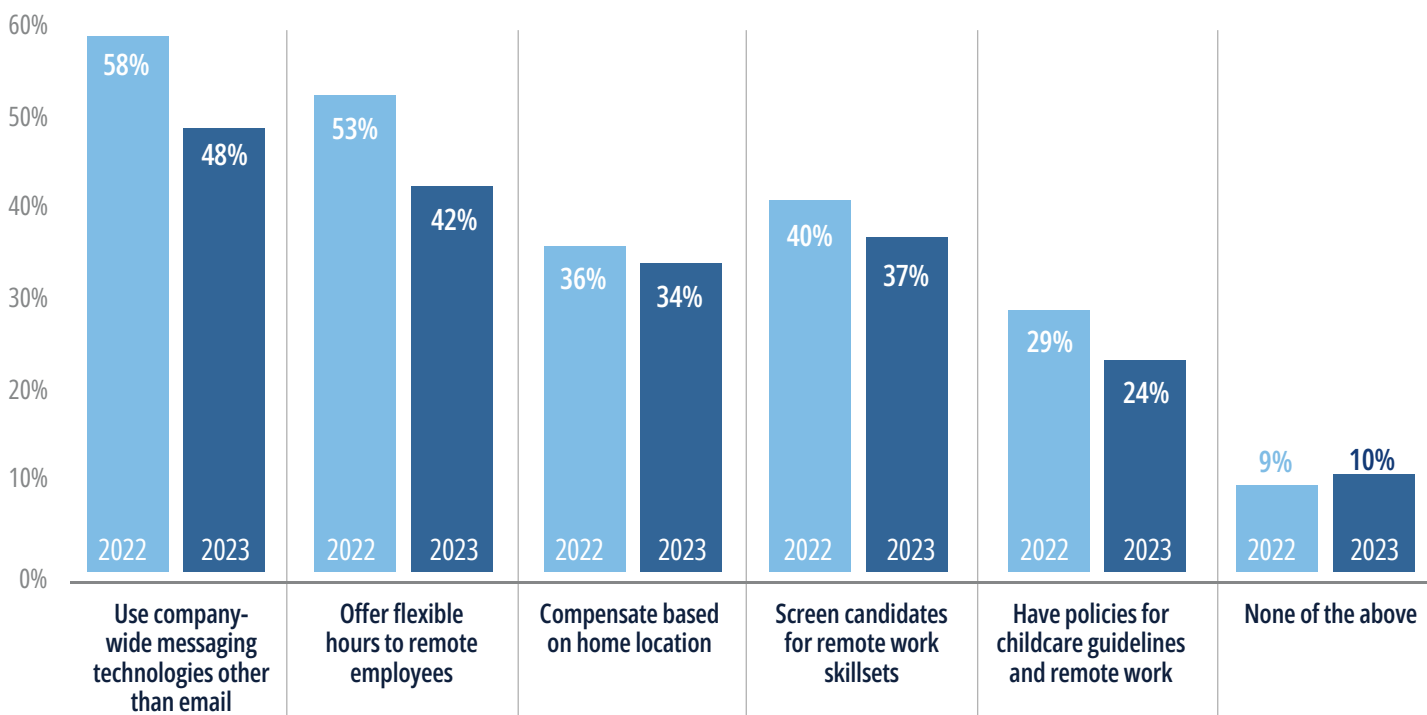
The percentage of companies offering remote work options (hybrid or full-time) remained relatively stable, with 66% in 2021, 67% in 2022, and 62% in 2023.

Does your company have remote work options (hybrid or full time) for your cleared workforce



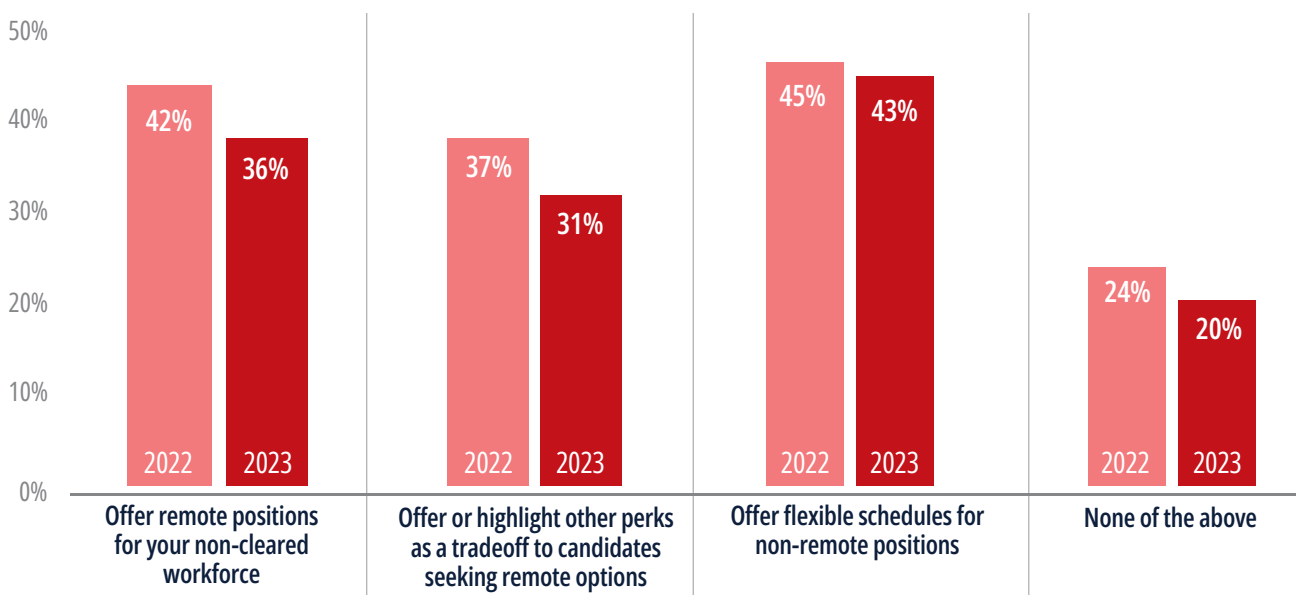
When it comes to remote work policies, there was a decrease in the use of company-wide messaging technologies other than email, with 58% in 2022 dropping to 48% in 2023. Additionally, offering flexible hours to remote employees also saw a decline from 53% in 2022 to 42% in 2023. These trends indicate a potential shift in remote work practices and technology preferences.

Since you DO offer remote work, do you...



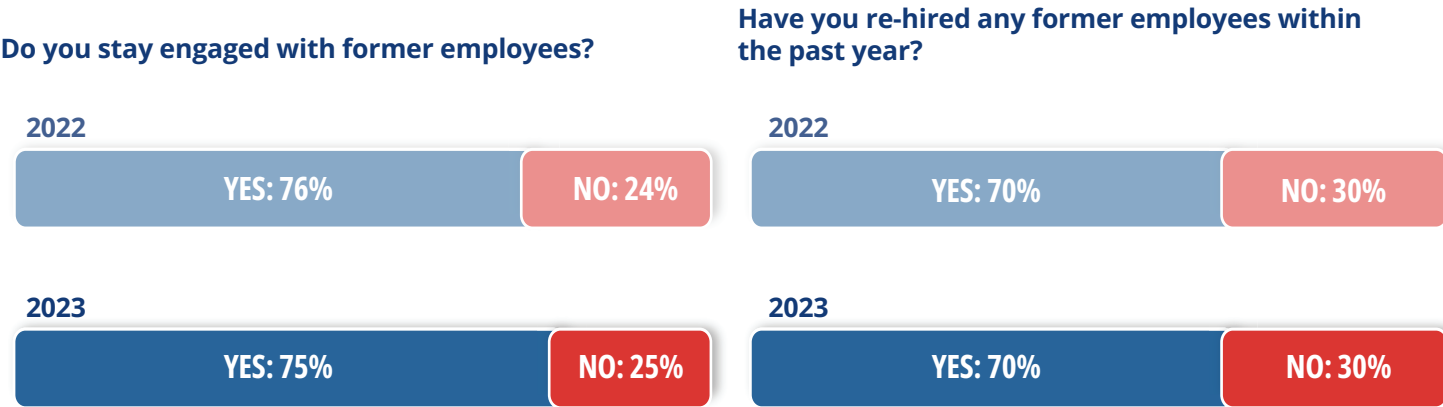
On the other hand, 34% of companies with remote work options in 2023 still compensate employees based on their home location. There's a continued effort to offer fair compensation for employees residing in more expensive areas. The data also shows that companies screen candidates for remote work skillsets, emphasizing the importance of assessing candidates' suitability for remote work to ensure successful work outcomes and team collaboration.

Since you DON'T offer remote work, do you...

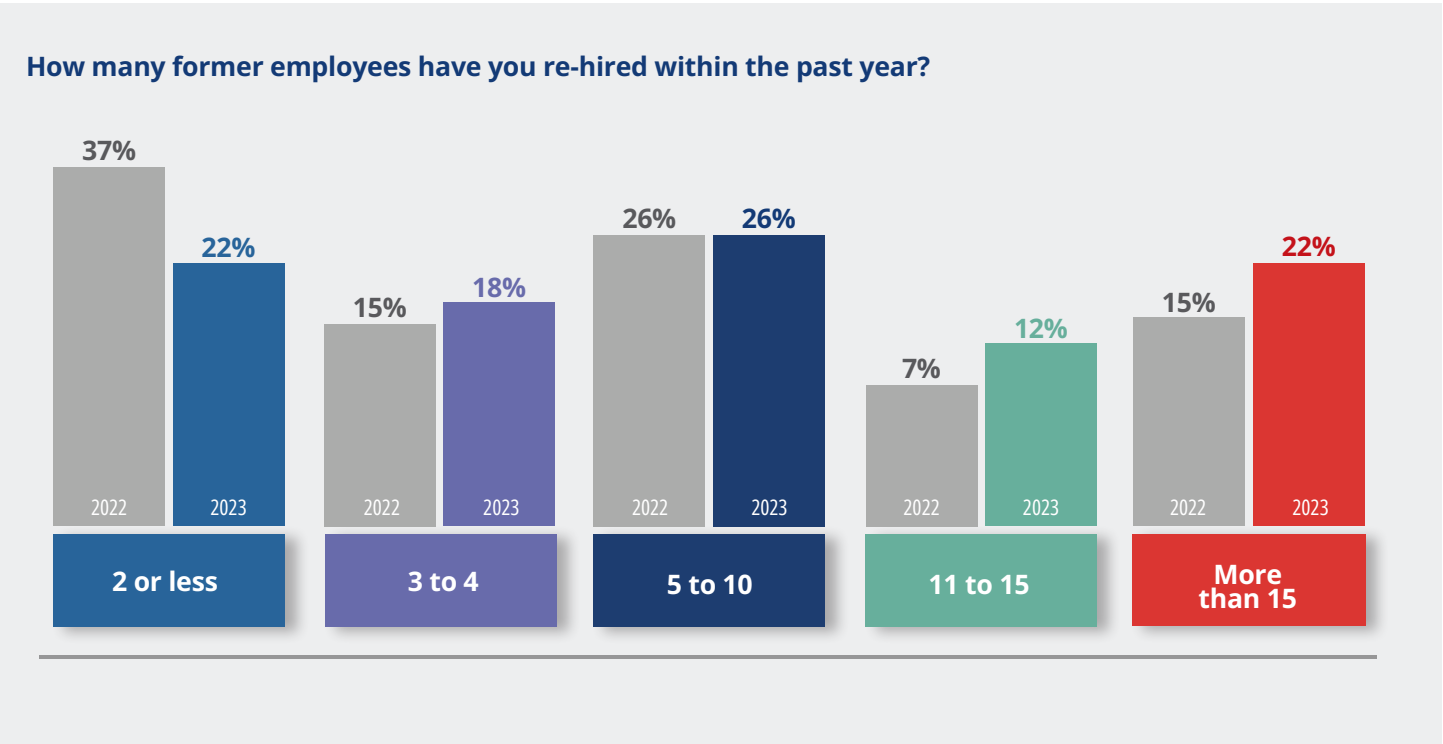


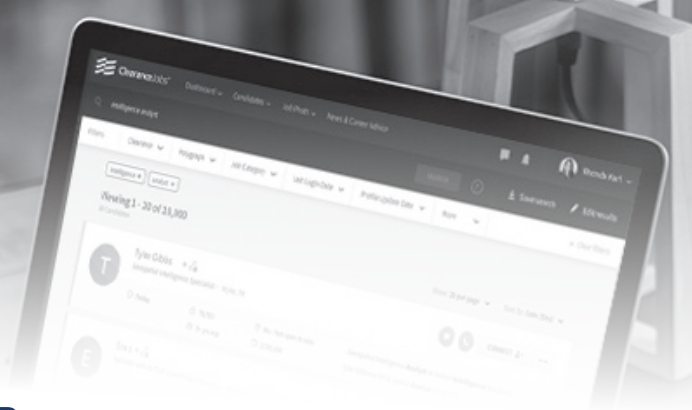
Boomerang Employees

The majority of organizations report engagement with former employees, with 76% in 2022 and 75% in 2023 stating that they maintain connections with their ex-staff. This high engagement shows the value of maintaining relationships with former employees, potentially fostering a positive impression of the company and encouraging potential future rehires. In the past two years, 70% of respondents reported rehiring former employees.



In 2022, 37% of organizations reported rehiring two or fewer former employees within the past year, while in 2023, this number decreased to 22%. However, the proportion of companies rehiring more than 15 boomerang employees increased from 15% in 2022 to 22% in 2023, highlighting an upward trend of boomerang employees. Returning employees offer valuable experience, institutional knowledge, and a proven track record.



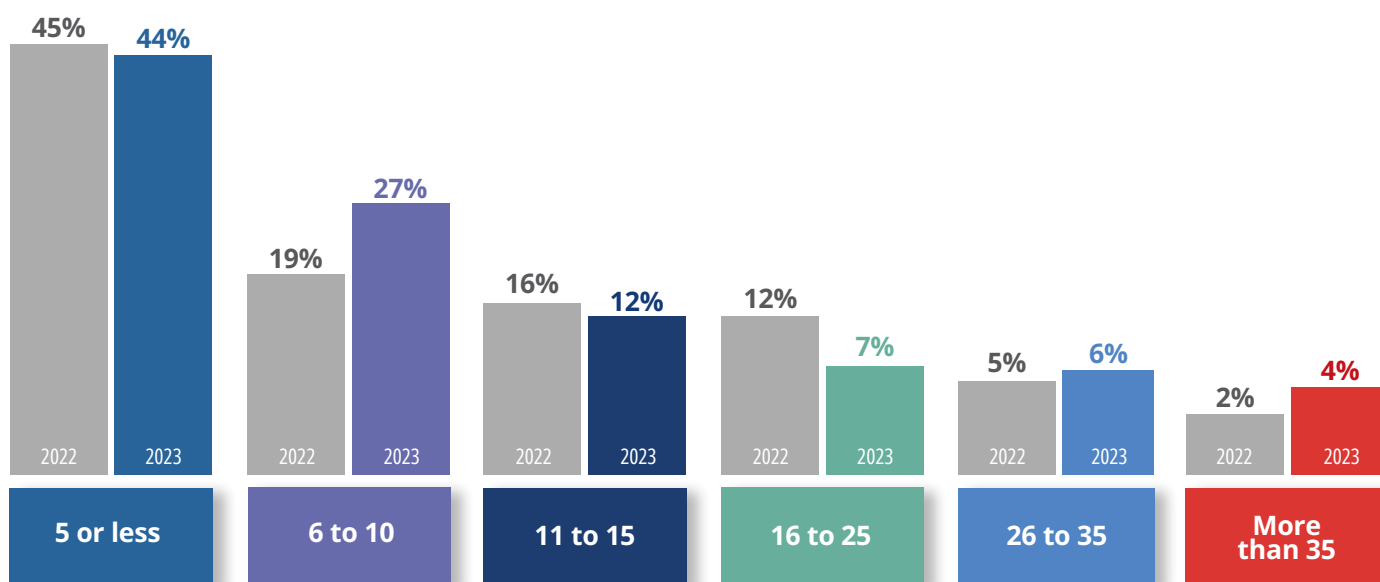


THE LIFE OF THE RECRUITER

Workload

While a significant proportion of recruiters consistently handled five or fewer requisitions per month (45% in 2022 and 44% in 2023), there was a notable increase in recruiters handling six to ten requisitions per month, rising from 19% in 2022 to 27% in 2023.

How many requisitions your average recruiter fills per month (only count fully funded open positions)



Burnout

Team structure plays a key role in managing burnout. In 2022, 68% of respondents believed that the team structure contributed to managing burnout, and this percentage increased to 74% in 2023. Overall, there's a positive trend in the team structure as less than 15% see team structure as a negative factor in personal burnout.

Is the team structure effective in managing burnout?

2022

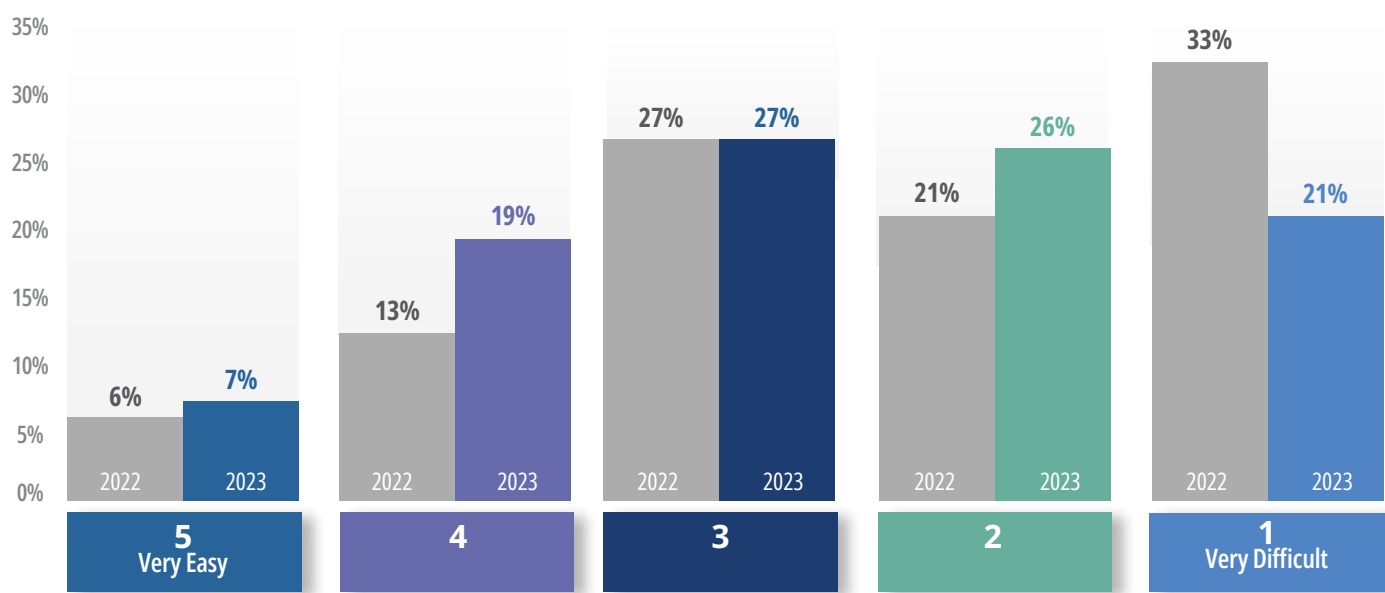


2023



The data from the past two years highlights the evolving recruiting landscape. In 2022, only 6% of respondents found recruiting in the cleared industry to be very easy, while a significant 33% rated it as very difficult. However, in 2023, the numbers shifted slightly, with 7% indicating it was very easy, and the proportion of those finding it very difficult decreased to 21%.

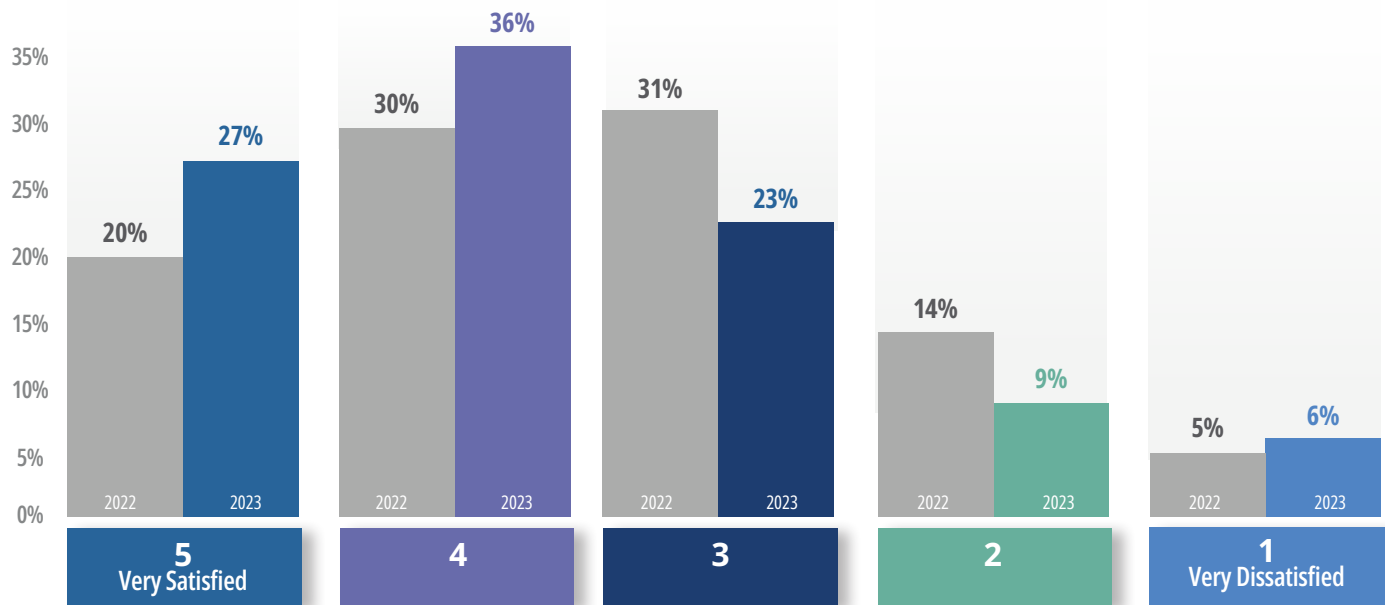
How would you rate the difficulty of recruiting in the cleared industry in the past year?



Satisfaction

In 2022, 20% of respondents reported feeling very satisfied with their jobs. On the other hand, 5% were very dissatisfied with their jobs. However, in 2023, there was a marked increase in job satisfaction, with 27% of respondents indicating they were very satisfied, and a smaller portion (23%) expressed being neutral (rating of 3). Dissatisfaction levels rose slightly by 1%.

How would you rate your job satisfaction in the past year?

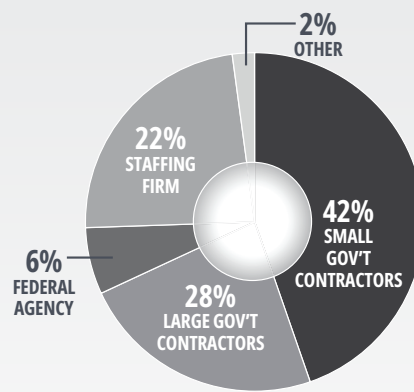
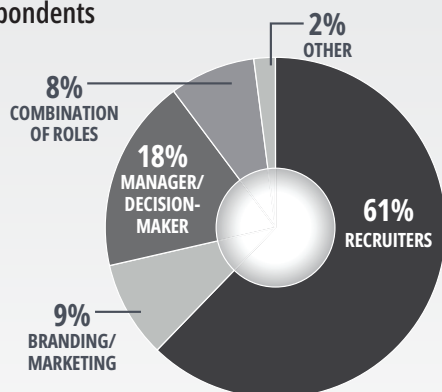


The Power of Cleared Recruiting Metrics

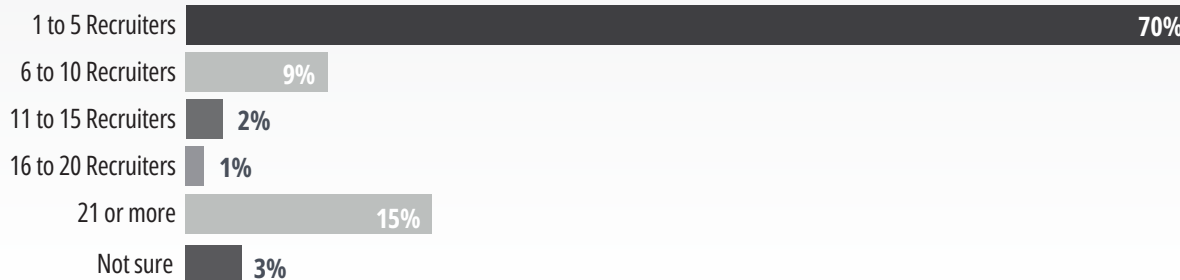
Leveraging data-driven insights, organizations can meet critical staffing demands in the cleared industry. As the need for cleared talent remains high and recruiters face ongoing challenges in finding the right skillset with the appropriate clearance level, understanding successful approaches from others can help evaluate recruiting efforts and identify areas for improvement.

Important information about our survey: The 2023 ClearanceJobs Cleared Recruiting Survey was administered and completed by 393 respondents in the recruiting field with cleared hiring needs in March 2023. Sourcers and resume reviewers were removed from the 2022 and 2023 data for this study, in order to maintain accuracy and continuity in the respondent pool.

About the Respondents



How many total recruiters do you have?



What's your next mission?

Veterans make up nearly 15% of our U.S. workforce and we know the transition to civilian life provides an opportunity to upskill and grow. Join us and work with advanced aerospace and defense technologies that help keep the world safe and bring our heroes home.

boeing.com/careers



A MODERN MARKETPLACE FOR CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN NATIONAL SECURITY

ClearanceJobs is your all-in-one recruiting solution. Much like a CRM, our unique system lets you target top candidate leads, converting cool passives to active candidates ready to make a move—to your company.

END-TO-END CLEARED **HIRING SOLUTIONS**



RECRUITMENT SOLUTION

- Search, directly engage, and easily work cleared candidates through a pipeline.
- Convert passives to active potential hires.



CAREER EVENTS

- Reduce your cost per hire with real-time conversations.
- Choose from in-person or virtual, public or private events.



SOURCING SERVICES

- Save time and free up bandwidth while we fill your pipeline.
- All that's left for you to do is interview and hire.



EMPLOYER BRANDING

- Increase brand awareness to gain cleared candidate trust.
- Amplify your hiring messages using targeted messaging, site advertising and sponsored content.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

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