

## AGENCY OVERVIEW

In 2024, the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) entered its 115th year protecting the health and safety of Texans. Established in 1909 as the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the agency initially focused on labor law enforcement, factory inspections, and data compilation. Over time, its role expanded to safeguarding the health and safety of workers, employers, and the public. This evolution led to its renaming in 1973 as the Texas Department of Labor and Standards. In 1989, it became the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, with the establishment of the Commission of Licensing and Regulation as its governing body. Today, TDLR serves Texans by providing low-cost licensing services and innovative regulatory solutions that ensure the public receives services from qualified professionals in safe facilities with reliable equipment.

TDLR's regulatory responsibilities have steadily grown over time, an expansion driven by legislative action and population growth, resulting in a 41% increase in licensee population since 2015. TDLR has risen to this challenge by utilizing a functionally aligned organizational structure, a framework that pursues uniformity in processes across all agency functions. This includes license application development, facility inspections, complaint investigations, violation prosecutions, curriculum reviews, and examination development. TDLR now serves as the state's premier licensing and regulatory agency, regulating a diverse array of professions, occupations, businesses, facilities, and equipment and issuing more than 200 license types across 38 programs.

TDLR is committed to efficiently serving its growing licensee population through strategic resource allocation and advancing innovative solutions that elevate service delivery to licensees and the public. The upcoming integration of a centralized licensing system, consolidating various complex legacy systems, serves as a testament to this commitment. Through this initiative and ongoing efforts to streamline and optimize all services and processes, TDLR continues to pioneer inventive solutions to present and future challenges while ensuring the health and safety of Texans.

## AGENCY MISSION, VISION, AND PHILOSOPHY

Our mission, vision, and philosophy embody our dedication to serving our licensees and the public with excellence. While currently unchanged, we anticipate an evolution of these guiding principles as the agency responds to emerging challenges and embraces further innovation, including the integration of new technologies under new agency leadership.

### TDLR'S MISSION

To earn the trust of Texans every day by providing innovative regulatory solutions for our licensees and those they serve.

### TDLR'S VISION

To be the best at creating 'next' practices that deliver low-cost licensing and regulatory services and an exceptional customer experience.

### TDLR'S PHILOSOPHY

To achieve smaller, smarter government, we:

- Honor the public by being fair, transparent, and efficient
- Value our customers and coworkers by seeking and using their input
- Foster innovation and change by challenging the status quo
- Recruit, empower, and reward high-performing employees
- Transform programs and improve services for customers

## TDLR's CORE VALUES

TDLR's Core Values reflect what is truly important to us as an organization. These values remain constant, unaffected by time, circumstances, or individual differences; they are the foundation of the agency culture and guide our employees in the fulfillment of the agency's mission, vision, and philosophy.

- **Accountable** to Texans
- Create an exceptional **customer service** experience
- **Integrity** in all we do
- Lead through **innovation**
- **Open and free communication**
- **Respect** for all
- **Teamwork** built on individual strengths and ingenuity

## STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**Goal: Procure and successfully implement the Legacy Systems Replacement Project to replace TDLR's legacy systems.**

**Objective:** Making it easier for qualified individuals to get licensed and providing a better user experience to licensees and TDLR staff.

**Goal: Expand training and licensing opportunities for career and technical education (CTE) in high schools and community colleges.**

**Objective:** Ensuring Texas industries have qualified, competent employees entering their fields to provide quality services to Texas consumers.

**Goal: Finalize implementation of the Sunset objectives in House Bill 1560, 87th Legislature.**

**Objective:** Improving services for Texans by streamlining licensing programs, developing data driven processes and eliminating inefficient or redundant regulations and processes.

**Goal: Continue to effectively assist the Texas Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (TBVME).**

**Objective:** Assisting TBVME to be more responsive to the needs of licensees, people, and animals of Texas.

**Goal: Explore the use of generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) and large language models to provide automated on-demand customer service and enhance accuracy, security, training and user experience.**

**Objective:** Using GenAI in appropriate places to deliver consistent services and information will help us provide the best possible customer experience.

**Goal: Successfully implement a regulatory environment for Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) across the state of Texas to standardize and ensure public safety for this emerging technology.**

**Objective:** Establishing essential guidelines and standards for the installation, repair, and disabling of damaged EVSE chargers will help us safeguard public health and safety

**Goal: Continue to build capacity and strengthen the effectiveness of TDLR's Anti-Trafficking Efforts.**

**Objective:** Helping to eradicate human trafficking in Texas through education, outreach, and cooperation with state, local, and NGO partners.

## CORE BUSINESS FUNCTIONS

The agency is aligned into the following key functions: Licensing Services, Regulatory Services and Administrative Services.

### Licensing Services includes:

- Licensing – reviews and processes applications to issue and renew licenses and certificates of operation
- Customer Service – responds to public and licensee inquiries through phone, email, and social media
- Education and Examination – reviews and approves license applications for continuing education providers, and courses; manages the development and delivery of licensing examinations through a third-party vendor; performs audits on regulated schools; and provides training and outreach

### Regulatory Services includes:

- Compliance – provides valuable subject matter knowledge for TDLR programs and anti-trafficking efforts while assisting with technical and clinical matters that require an industry or professional perspective, and answering complex questions about state regulations, code requirements, and health care professional standards
- Field Inspections – performs risk-based inspections on-site and periodic inspections on-site and virtually throughout the state at business facilities and schools, identifies possible indicators of human trafficking, and engages in industry outreach to ensure public safety and consumer protection
- Enforcement – evaluates the criminal history of applicants to determine whether licensure is appropriate, investigates and resolves complaints against licensees, identifies possible indicators of human trafficking, prosecutes violations, and increases consumer protection by working with local, state, and federal agencies

### Administrative Services includes:

- Executive management, legal counsel, human resources, information technology and security, financial services, and commission and advisory board support
- Coordination and oversight of legislative outreach, media relations, and internal communication
- Process improvement, change management, and project management
- Asset, contract, and fleet management, facilities operations, and response to critical events

### Specialized Functions:

- Texas Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (TBVME) Legislative Attachment – In the 88th Legislative Session, the legislature entrusted TDLR with the responsibility of optimizing administrative operations at the TBVME through a four-year administrative attachment. This legislation enables TDLR to partner with and provide TBVME policymaking and administrative oversight, guidance, and support to ensure the efficiency of its operations while daily licensing and regulatory functions remain with TBVME.
- Financial Crimes Intelligence Center (FCIC) – TDLR dedicates efforts to ensure public safety and consumer protection from payment card skimmers through the FCIC, a statewide fusion center that coordinates law enforcement investigations of various types of financial crimes with a focus on organized crime, payment card skimming and shimming. The Smith County District Attorney's Office oversees the FCIC through a contractual partnership with TDLR.

## CURRENT WORKFORCE PROFILE

### CRITICAL WORKFORCE SKILLS

TDLR maintains a workforce with skills and competencies essential to executing the agency's mission, goals, and objectives with excellence. To successfully perform the agency's core functions, employees in mission-centric roles maintain the following critical skills:

- Expert knowledge of program laws, rules, regulations, and policies
- Detailed license application review
- Comprehensive assessment of educational course content
- Skillful inspection and investigative techniques
- Public safety and consumer protection-based resolution of cases
- Data-driven decision-making and analysis
- Research and information analysis

In addition, all employees perform mission-critical work utilizing skills in the following areas:

#### Customer Service

- Resolution-based and next-issue avoidance customer service
- Internal and external teamwork and collaboration
- Legislative and stakeholder outreach

#### Communication

- Plain language and multilingual skills
- Cultural competency and awareness
- Public speaking and presentation
- Clear and concise writing
- Media relations and outreach

### Technical Knowledge

- Database development, management, and integration
- Fluency with information technology, software applications, and equipment
- Tactical legal skills including analysis, advisement, research, writing, rulemaking, negotiation, settlement, and litigation
- Knowledge of relevant local, state, and federal laws, rules, regulations, and policies
- Policy analysis and development
- Process and project management expertise
- Quality analysis and process improvement
- Smart fiscal management including procurement and contract management

### Leadership and Management

- Coaching, mentoring, and motivating
- Performance management and staff development
- Relationship building
- Change management
- Visionary and strategic thinking and planning

### Organizational Excellence

- Innovative critical thinking and problem-solving
- Effective organizational and time management skills
- Adaptability

## DIVERSE WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS

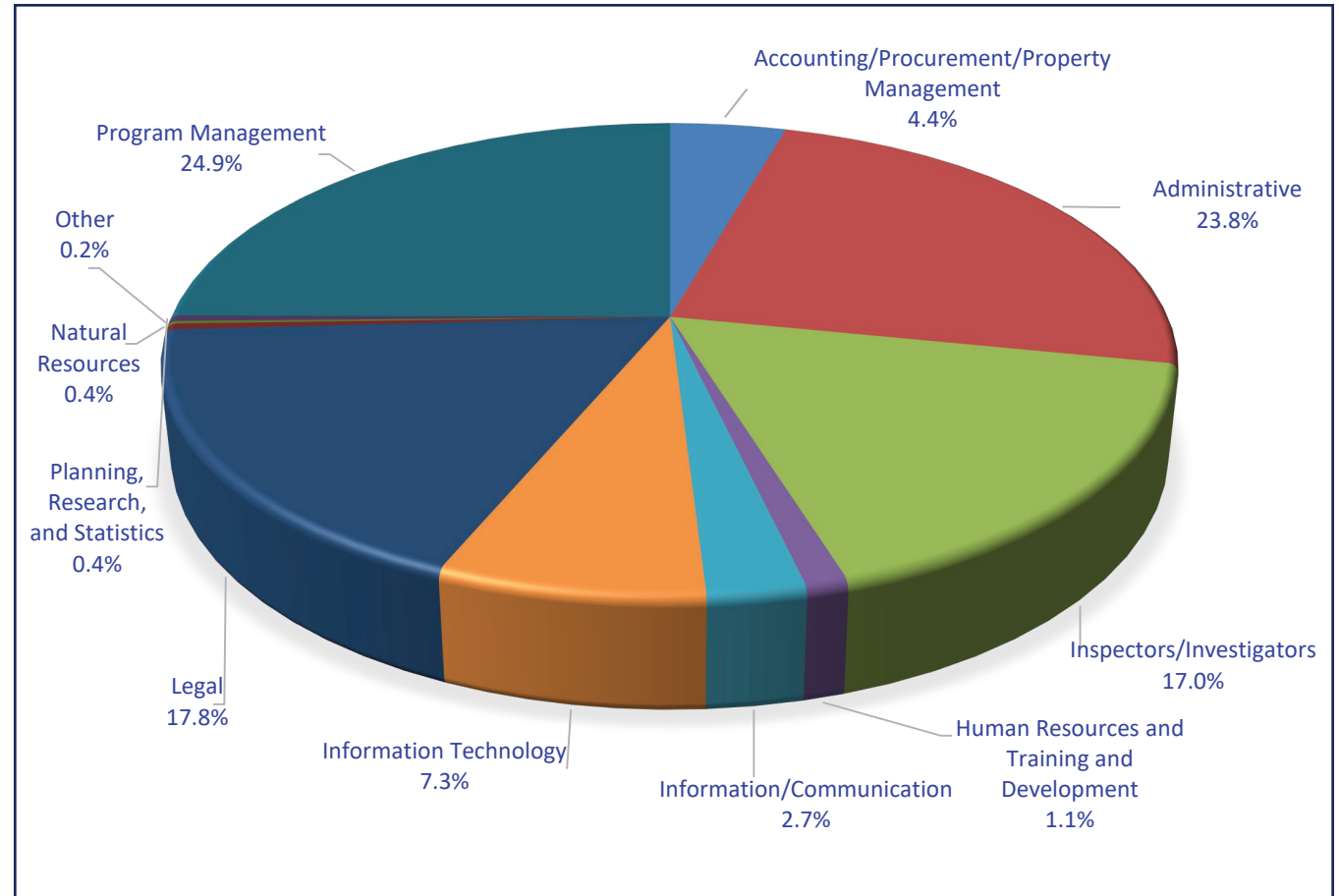
TDLR's authorized workforce for Fiscal Year 2024 is 586.2 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, increasing to 590.7 FTEs for FY 2025. Currently, 83% work in TDLR's Austin offices, while 17% work in locations throughout the state. TDLR is committed to employing military veterans and has been a proud member of the We Hire Vets employer recognition program since 2018. Military veterans currently comprise 10.5% of the agency's workforce.

### COMMITMENT TO A QUALIFIED AND DIVERSE WORKFORCE

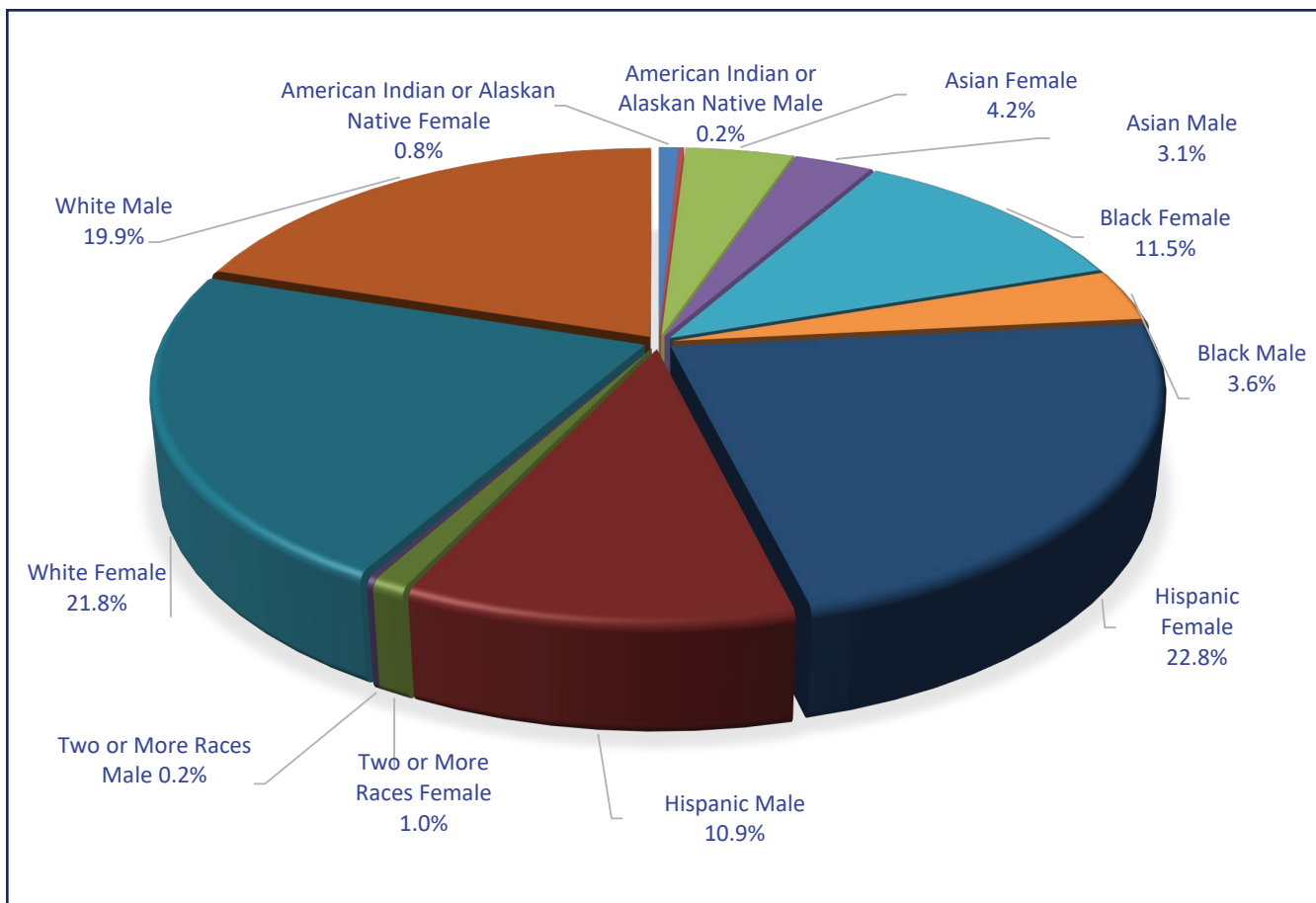
TDLR maintains a culture of inclusion and belonging that values all employees and aims to harness the unique perspectives and talents of our workforce. This culture is reflected in our commitment to providing equal employment opportunities to all, resulting in a talented and diverse workforce dedicated to fulfilling the agency's mission and goals.

TDLR's workforce is 34% Hispanic, over 5% higher than the overall state agency workforce composition, and 7% Asian, over 4% higher than the overall state agency workforce composition. The overall state agency workforce composition was 24% Black, over 9% higher than the agency's workforce composition.

**FISCAL YEAR 2024 WORKFORCE BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY (1st Quarter)**



### FISCAL YEAR 2024 ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE (1st Quarter)

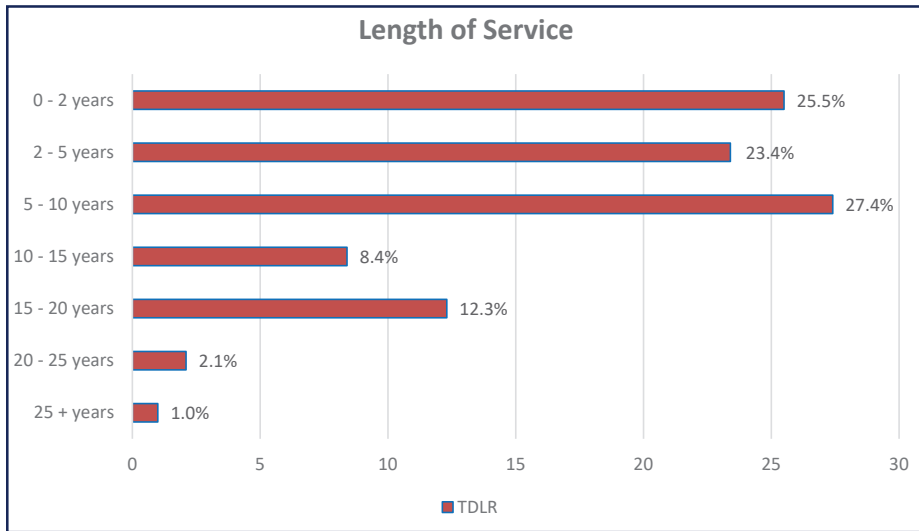


At the time of this writing, 80% of TDLR employees are over the age of 40, while the overall state agency workforce is comprised of almost 62% percent of employees in that same demographic. Thirty percent of TDLR employees are eligible for retirement in the next five years. Nearly 5% of agency employees are return-to-work retirees.

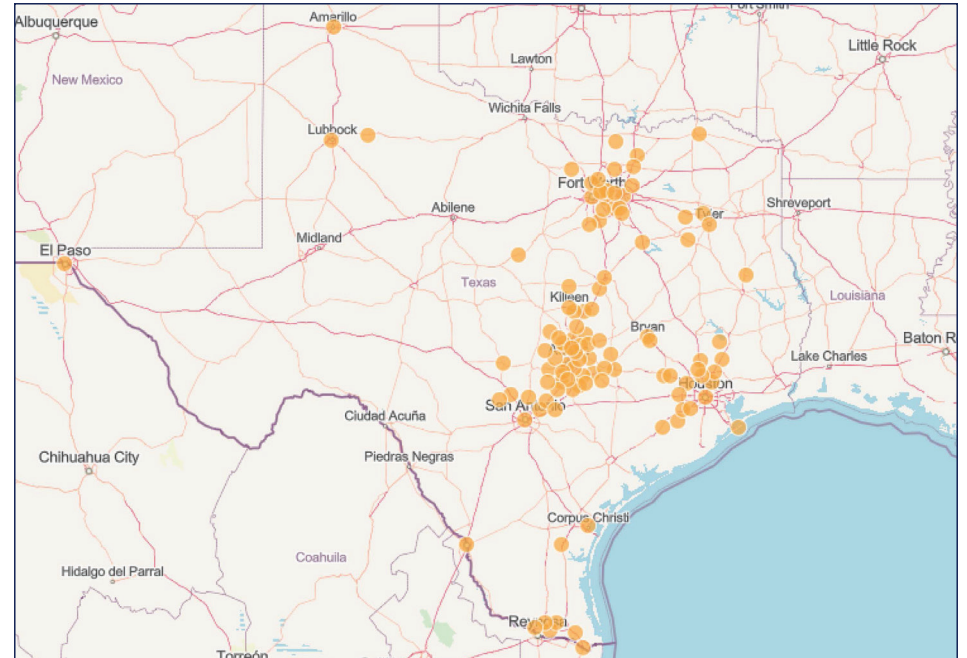
Employment of individuals under the age of 30 is approximately 10% lower than the state agency workforce composition, and employment of individuals under the age of 40 is nearly 17% lower than state agency workforce composition. Although TDLR maintains a diverse workforce, efforts must continue to attract and recruit employees in underrepresented demographics.

Age	Percent of Workforce
Under the age of 30	5.4%
30 to 39 years of age	14.0
40 to 49	27.6
50 to 59	36.0
Above 60 years of age	17.0

Due to increased turnover, nearly 50% of employees have worked for the agency for less than five years. These employees are steadily gaining experience in programs regulated by TDLR through the critical knowledge transferred to them by more tenured staff.



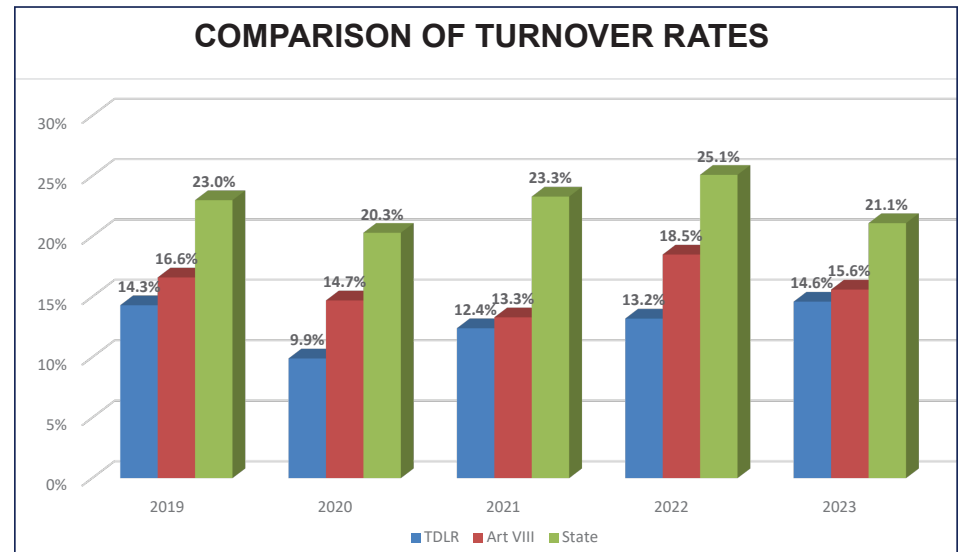
## LOCATIONS OF TDLR STAFF ACROSS TEXAS



## EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

TDLR's turnover rate has consistently remained lower than the state and other Article VIII agency averages. However, an increasing number of departing employees have transferred to another state agency, and more employees have indicated they are leaving state employment altogether. In 2023, 28% of employees transferred from TDLR to another state agency, and 39% left state employment. In addition, retirements accounted for 22% of agency separations. Of the employees completing the exit survey, 67% stated they would want to work for TDLR again in the future.

## COMPARISON OF TURNOVER RATES



## SELECTED POSITIONS AND TURNOVER

In Fiscal Year 2023, employees in the license and permit specialist, investigator, inspector, and attorney classifications comprised 30% of TDLR’s employees but accounted for nearly 45% of the agency’s turnover. Retirements accounted for 24.2% of separations in these four classifications.

Recruiting and retaining employees in these mission-centric positions has proven challenging. We have also been challenged in recruiting administrative assistants who perform critical support functions across multiple divisions. TDLR has struggled to competitively compensate these employee demographics because other state agencies and the private sector offer significantly higher pay for comparable work. Increased appropriations will be vital to ensuring all staff can be adequately compensated for the work performed. Two-thirds of departing employees indicated in exit surveys they left for higher paying positions.

Another area of significant concern is the turnover of employees in leadership roles within the agency. During a twelve-month period, from December 2022 through December 2023, TDLR experienced 100% turnover in its executive office leadership. In addition, in 2023, nearly 17.6% of directors left the agency; of those, 67% were retirements.

Classification	Percent of Agency Turnover	Percent of Total FTEs
Investigator/Inspector	21.6%	13.2%
License and Permit Specialist	17.6	10.1
Attorney	6.7	4.2

## GENDER AND TURNOVER

In Fiscal Year 2023, TDLR’s workforce was composed of 62% female and 38% male. Turnover in the male demographic was slightly higher than the agency composition for that demographic.

Gender	Headcount	Separations	Separation Rate
Female	314	43	13.7%
Male	191	31	16.2

## ETHNICITY AND TURNOVER

In Fiscal Year 2023, separations were proportionate in relation to the agency composition for each ethnicity.

Ethnicity	Headcount	Separations	Separation Rate
Asian/Pacific Islander	36	4	11.3%
Black	83	19	22.8
Hispanic	174	24	13.8
White	203	26	12.8
Two or More Races	5	1	22.2
American Indian or Alaskan Native	5	0	0.0

## PROJECTED TURNOVER

We project our turnover rate for the next five fiscal years will be higher than normal because of the competitive job market, increasing salaries at other state agencies and in the private sector, and a growing demand for fully remote work opportunities. In response, we continue to maintain our commitment to a supportive work culture which promotes flexibility, self-care, employee recognition, career progression and growth, and engagement programs and activities – factors that contribute to continued employee retention and job satisfaction.



## EMPLOYEE RETENTION

TDLR retains diverse and highly qualified employees by cultivating an organizational culture that inspires engagement and commitment from employees. We prioritize transparency in organizational communication, work-life balance and personal well-being, professional growth and advancement, and organizational cohesion. Through strategic employee development and engagement initiatives, we provide employees ongoing technical and interpersonal skills training along with agency-wide programming designed to foster connection and unity among employees. The result is a skilled workforce committed to fulfilling our mission, vision, and goals. We attribute our success to our core value-centered culture where we respect and appreciate employees and their distinct contributions while actively fostering the development and growth of employees and camaraderie among staff.

We approach recruitment strategically with a focus on retention from day one. Our comprehensive new employee orientation program, complemented by extended onboarding via TDLR University (TDLR-U), places new hires in cohorts for quarterly sessions during their first year. These sessions facilitate peer interaction and agency familiarity early-on while also promoting professional and personal development.

As a result of our active recruitment and retention of veterans, we earned the We Hire Vets designation from the Texas Workforce Commission for the seventh consecutive year, recognizing that at least 10% of our workforce are veterans. TDLR has also earned the distinction of Best Place for Working Parents awarded through BestPlaceforKids.com by providing employee benefits and policies that support family-friendly practices.

Members of the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation are dedicated in their support of the agency's recruitment efforts, providing advice on how to reach additional communities for excellent employees.

### **Employee Support and Flexibility:**

- Work-life balance with flexible and compressed work schedules
- Business casual environment
- Equipping employees for remote and hybrid work environments and opportunities
- Access to a robust Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which provides counseling, training, and a variety of additional support services
- Physical and mental well-being encouragement through agency-promoted health and wellness activities, including initiatives incentivized through an agency wellness store and a health assessment to reward participating employees
- New employee and Human Resources follow-up support meeting strategically planned for optimum support

### **Employee Engagement Programs and Initiatives:**

- Town Halls led by executive leadership to provide employees with up-to-date information on agency news and initiatives
- Biennial picnic and regular activities hosted by Employee Recognition Team
- Employee Resource Groups tailored to employee interests that allow staff to foster relationships while enhancing agency culture
- Fun-Filled Fridays with interactive participation and teambuilding activities
- TDLR Veterans Association that provides resources and support for agency veterans and their families
- Annual Veterans Day luncheon and recognition program
- State Employee Charitable Campaign Committee promotes activities to raise funds for Texas charities

### **Employee Recognition:**

- Employee recognition notices in weekly agency newsletter
- HR announcements for interagency promotions and transfers
- Total state and agency length of service acknowledgements
- Recognition from leadership for exceptional work performance
- Merit-salary increases
- Retention and recruitment contracts

### **Professional Development and Career Progression:**

- Comprehensive and individualized training to employees on core functions, operations, and processes of agency divisions
- Leadership mentoring and cross-training opportunities to advance skills and knowledge
- Career progression opportunities without tenure-based limitations
- Trainings provided by Human Resources staff on application process and interviewing skills
- Internal-only job postings
- Personal and professional development platform through LinkedIn Learning
- TDLR Chapter of Toastmasters International, teaching public speaking and leadership skills, held virtually and on-site at no cost to employees for membership

## **TDLR'S FUTURE WORKFORCE PROFILE**

We maintain a highly skilled and mission-oriented workforce, engaged in complex and diverse responsibilities across a variety of program and technical areas. As we look to the future, our workforce must remain intelligent, innovative, adaptable, multi-talented, culturally sensitive, customer-focused, and solution-centered. Amid unprecedented change and evolving organizational dynamics marked by the embrace of new leadership

and technologies, our workforce's adaptability and resilience are paramount. These essential skills will be fostered through strategic change management initiatives and training, guided by exemplary leadership within our ranks.

Increased technological proficiency will be imperative for all employees as we anticipate the evolution of our operations through deploying a centralized licensing system and leveraging of other technologies to optimize our services. In addition to prioritizing ongoing professional development to ensure we employ a well-qualified workforce, we remain committed to providing high-quality training and professional development opportunities tailored both to agency-wide and division-specific critical skills and technical requirements.

Our regulatory landscape has undergone significant transformation in recent years, changes propelled by legislative action and population growth. However, as our responsibilities have steadily expanded, staff allocation has not aligned with the pace of this growth and attracting qualified candidates has proven challenging. Consequently, employees are experiencing heightened workloads as our responsibilities evolve and grow, increasing our need for a multi-functional workforce capable of seamlessly sharing responsibilities across divisions.

TDLR has intensified its focus on engaging employees and fostering a culture of employee appreciation and development in light of current challenges. Despite our concerted efforts to motivate employee performance and enhance morale, turnover has increased. Aligning our compensation structures to be competitive and implementing effective recruitment and retention strategies remains essential to positioning TDLR as an employer of choice in today's competitive job market. This endeavor is crucial to achieving our vision of providing low-cost licensing and regulatory services and exceptional customer service.

### **FUTURE WORKFORCE SKILL NEEDS**

Over the next five years, we anticipate a shortage of critical workforce skills due to persistent recruitment challenges across multiple positions.

These challenges stem from an increasingly tight labor market and lack of competitive compensation due to our salary packages falling below the median offered by other state agencies for several classifications, and significantly trailing behind private sector offerings.

Analysis of TDLR salaries shows that roughly two-thirds of our agency's classifications are compensated at a lower wage compared to overall state agency average salary for these same classifications. While recent legislative salary adjustments have provided some relief, they have not addressed this disparity, particularly considering the expanding responsibilities and skills sets required of our employees. Notably, in Fiscal Year 2023, 20% of departing staff cited they were transferring to another state agency in exit surveys. This figure has risen to 25% thus far in Fiscal Year 2024, indicating a potential further increase in turnover. These difficulties indicate a potential shortage of vital skills in the foreseeable future.

Additionally, we anticipate a potential gap in institutional and program knowledge as well as technical experience due to growing workloads; the alignment and expansion of current programs; and retirements. Organizational development efforts to train and mentor our current workforce must be implemented. Moreover, recruitment and retention initiatives alongside strategic and comprehensive succession planning will enable us to facilitate the transfer of knowledge as we attract and maintain a diverse and highly skilled workforce.

## **TDLR WILL REQUIRE**

- License and Permit Specialists with technological proficiency to seamlessly transition to automated processes under a centralized licensing system, and analytical skills to process and review license applications
- Attorneys with tactical legal skills, particularly adept in rulemaking and regulatory compliance
- Investigators and legal assistants qualified to quickly resolve a high

volume and variety of complaints

- Inspectors with strong communication, technological, bilingual, and critical thinking skills to meet the complexity of inspections and educate licensees from multiple industries
- Finance professionals with expertise and experience in procurement and contract review and management
- Administrative assistants with organizational skills and proficiency in office software and hardware to support cross-functional teams
- Customer service staff with strong written and oral communication, bilingual, and problem-solving abilities to match the volume and complexity of inquiries
- Information Technology professionals with knowledge in information security, technology support, web development, accessibility, and software applications
- Subject matter experts whose unique professional skills and industry knowledge ensure an understanding of state regulatory requirements
- Employees with technological proficiency across multiple software programs that can increase productivity through efficient use of technological resources
- Employees with bilingual and multilingual skills to engage our increasingly diverse licensee population

## **EXPECTED WORKFORCE CHANGES**

### **TECHNOLOGY**

Advanced technological skills will be required for all employees in our future workforce as technology continues to impact every aspect of agency operations. Our employees must demonstrate technological competence to skillfully navigate databases, software applications and technical hardware. With an increasing volume of business conducted online, including interactions with government

agencies, excellent customer service in this landscape demands a well-equipped and adaptable workforce capable of excelling at their job duties with equal proficiency virtually as well as face-to-face. Moreover, the implementation of a new licensing system will significantly shift our operational landscape and the responsibilities of many frontline employees, while also requiring IT professionals to manage and oversee an entirely new system.

### **ADJUSTING TO EXPANDING RESPONSIBILITIES**

We anticipate further increases in the agency's workload due to population growth and emerging trends in regulated industries, as well as advancements in technologies aligned with current programs. While the legislature has historically transferred programs to us from other agencies, it is evident that evolving and emerging issues within our current programs continually expand our responsibilities. This is exemplified by the increased need for streamlined efforts in regulated industries susceptible to human trafficking, which has resulted in additional staffing resources and broadened the responsibilities of employees to include human trafficking education and awareness initiatives.

Moreover, evolving technologies such as electric vehicle charging stations have prompted the expansion of our regulatory functions. It is imperative that our staff possess the ability to identify, quickly learn, and adapt to emerging trends while maintaining their existing knowledge base. In addition, the administrative attachment of the Texas Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (TBVME) due to legislation will continue to result in an increased workload as we meet the challenge of optimizing administrative operations at another agency. Recognizing the existing demands on staff and recruiting individuals who are forward-thinking and flexible is crucial as we anticipate changes will coincide with increased responsibilities from population growth.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES**

In Fiscal Year 2024, TDLR experienced significant changes in

its executive leadership with all members of our executive office departing due to retirements and transitions. With newly appointed executive leaders assuming their roles within the past year, we anticipate a period of adjustment as we welcome and acclimate to new leadership. This adjustment may prompt reorganizations that necessitate diverse and enhanced skills from staff, potentially leading to turnover as individuals respond to change.

Additionally, as of this fiscal year, nearly one-third of employees will be eligible for retirement within the next five years. The potential loss of these employees who hold vital institutional and technical knowledge demands continued careful succession planning. Mentoring, job shadowing, and cross-training will continue to be essential to maintaining institutional knowledge and technical expertise as well as to developing and enhancing critical workforce skills.

### **ANTICIPATED SHORTAGE IN KEY STAFF**

We have identified the following gaps between anticipated needs and our current workforce:

- Loss of critical skills and core competencies stemming from turnover amid leadership departures and ongoing challenges in staff recruitment and retention, compounded by shifts in the workforce landscape
- Loss of institutional knowledge and expertise due to turnover among key staff resulting from separations and retirements. Approximately 30% of our workforce is eligible for retirement within the next five years, including nearly 53% of our agency's directors
- Challenges posed by an aging workforce, necessitating robust succession planning efforts
- Demand for technologically adept individuals to adapt to ongoing advancements

## ANTICIPATED SHORTAGE OF SKILLS

We are committed to cultivating a diverse and skilled workforce. Despite our efforts to recruit, develop, and retain talented employees, we continue to face challenges maintaining subject matter experts in mission-critical positions due to turnover. Additionally, as we progress towards optimizing technology and implementing a centralized licensing system, there is an anticipated shortage of individuals possessing advanced technological skills as we require employees who can quickly adapt to and fully leverage new and existing technology and information systems. Moreover, our recruitment efforts have been impacted by competition from both state agencies and the private sector, especially for positions in frontline and professional roles critical to the fulfillment of our mission.

## STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

The following sections outline how we will address our anticipated workforce gaps.

**Issue:** **Attracting and retaining employees in frontline, technical and professional positions central to the fulfillment of our mission.**

**Goal:** Implement initiatives that increase hiring and retention of employees in frontline, technical and professional mission-centric roles.

**Rationale:** Competition from other state agencies and the private sector has resulted in the loss of employees in many frontline, technical and professional positions such as license and permit specialists, investigators, inspectors, and attorneys. In addition, it has been challenging to recruit qualified candidates to these roles and to fill vacancies in certain technical roles in regulatory divisions.

**Action:** Provide competitive compensation packages, comprehensive benefits, recruitment contracts, and retention bonuses. Promote awareness of our flexible work arrangements, remote work options, employee engagement programs, professional development opportunities, employee recognition initiatives, and wellness programs to attract top-tier candidates. Formalize pathways for novices in professional and highly technical regulated industries to join our workforce, facilitating on-the-job training that fosters early commitment and cultivates the requisite proficiencies essential for success within their positions at the agency.

**Issue:** **Retirements and separations create a significant loss of valuable experience and knowledge.**

**Goal:** Continue developing critical skills in current staff to maintain successful administration of programs.

**Rationale:** Leadership and staff throughout the agency with indispensable knowledge are eligible for retirement.

**Action:** A formal mentorship program has emerged as the prominent strategy to ensure knowledge transfer, particularly amid the transitions in leadership that we have recently undergone. Recognizing the effectiveness of relationship-building in knowledge transfer, our mentorship initiative will provide both management and peer-to-peer mentorship to specific staff members, promoting strategic knowledge transfer, cross-training, and skill development. In addition, all staff members will have the opportunity to participate in mentorship voluntarily. Moreover, the mentorship program will offer executive and divisional leadership opportunities for peer-to-peer mentorship.

Beyond mentorship efforts, we will further formalize the documentation of core processes and procedures, producing guidance documents to record decision-making protocols. We will also continue assigning backups to positions with identified gaps, as well as promoting cross-training and job shadowing to facilitate collaboration within programs and across divisions, enabling subject matter experts to develop and refine specific skills.

While our existing training program is robust, we aim to enhance it further to standardize technical training and clarify standard operating procedures. However, the mentorship program will serve as a cornerstone in ensuring the effectiveness of tools such as training programs and detailed documents in transferring knowledge, as the interactive nature of mentorship not only facilitates effective assessment of performance and progress but also fosters a culture of continuous improvement, where mentors and mentees collaboratively refine their skills and knowledge.

**Issue:** **Attracting and retaining workers within a growing generational demographic.**

**Goal:** Increase hiring and retention of employees who recently entered the workforce to ensure the transfer of institutional knowledge and maintain diversity.

**Rationale:** We endeavor to employ a qualified and diverse workforce. Less than 5% of our employees are under the age of 30.

**Action:** We are committed to persisting in our recruitment efforts to identify capable individuals who are either preparing to enter or have recently entered the

workforce, bringing with them valuable knowledge and skills. This year, we forged a partnership with another state agency to establish a paid internship program that also provides robust professional development opportunities. This initiative not only allows us to be reimbursed for hiring undergraduate interns but also provides aspiring professionals with invaluable experience at our agency, thereby fostering a direct pathway to employment.

Moving forward, we will formalize pathways for recent graduates of higher education institutions and technical trade programs to seamlessly transition into entry-level positions within our agency. These structured programs will afford them the opportunity to embark on their career journeys with our agency while receiving on-the-job training that complements their academic backgrounds. By providing a comprehensive program that facilitates targeted skill progression, we will enable candidates to assume roles within our workforce without the extensive experience typically required for specific classifications while ensuring they gain the experience necessary to meet the qualifications required for their desired job classification.

Additionally, we continue to significantly increase our presence at job fairs, strategically reaching prospective candidates. In our ongoing efforts to streamline the hiring process and remove barriers to joining our workforce, we are assessing measures such as enabling applicants to complete applications directly at job fairs. These initiatives reflect our unwavering dedication to attracting top talent and fostering a diverse and dynamic workforce.

## GAP ANALYSIS

**Issue:** Ongoing development of critical and future workforce skills to meet the agency's growing technological demands.

**Goal:** Provide comprehensive and uniform training that enhances employee skills and empowers staff to effectively contribute to our vision, mission, and objectives.

**Rationale:** The agency's evolving and expanding responsibilities require employees to further their knowledge of regulatory programs, use multiple systems, and develop advanced technological competencies to create proficiencies and maximize productivity.

**Action:** We will enhance and further standardize operational policies and procedures to carefully curate training that meets division-specific technological needs, program requirements, and fills knowledge gaps.