

**The Relationship Between Retention and Training**

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Agency: South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles

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## **Problem Statement**

As the Employee Relations Manager for the Department of Motor Vehicles (SCDMV), a part of my role is to administer employee engagement surveys, exit surveys and monitor turnover trends. Through employee concerns and exit surveys I began wondering if there was an underlying factor that leads to employee turnover. I took a closer look at the exit surveys that employees completed and I started seeing similarities in the survey responses. I decided to take a closer look at the reason for employee turnover. In an effort to address turnover and reduce the turnover percentage it was imperative for me to determine the factors that were contributing to the turnover. As a member of the Human Resources field for approximately fifteen years, I have a general idea as to why employees leave positions and or companies. However, I wanted to know why employees were leaving the SCDMV and if there was a solution to the turnover rate. After determining that one of the contributing factors was a lack of soft skill training and developmental training, I asked myself how can our agency go about providing a training program that fits the needs of our employees and benefited the agency. A large part of my data collection centered around the reason for turnover entered in the South Carolina Enterprise Information System (SCEIS) and the responses from employees that

completed an exit survey upon their departure from the agency (Attachment 1 and 4).

Upon analysis of my data it was clear that while compensation was a reason that employees left the agency, the bigger reason revolved around factors that could be addressed through training. A review of our current training program revealed that the agency primarily focused on one entity in the agency, and did not address other factors that contribute to the day to day of an employee's overall work experience. Our Human Resources team brainstormed and provided various trainings that could be beneficial to an employee's work experience with the SCDMV. The training implemented has been delivered through the Microsoft Teams platform. This is a great start to reaching employees across the agency. This led me to several questions, how do we continue to reach employees outside of a Teams meeting, how can we ensure that employees are able to access training at their leisure, and can we offer virtual developmental training?

It became apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic that in person training and On the Job Training (OJT) was the main sources of training that employees received. OJT and technical skills that employees are taught in person are a great method of training to learn day to day job functions, however it does not

teach the soft skills needed to address the reason for turnover within the agency. More importantly, with OJT being reduced or removed altogether due to COVID-19, our agency found itself in a situation of how to train employees effectively.

The initial purpose of my project is to develop and implement an in house career path training program for all employees that will develop both technical and soft skills. In the wake of the pandemic and the data I collected, I saw a need to create a platform that would allow our training and human resources department to deploy training in a virtual manner, as well as provide a career succession training. The intent of the career succession training platform is to invest in the growth and future of our current employees thus increasing the retention rate within the agency.

Training is an essential component to an organization and should align with the goals of the organization. A high retention rate increases productivity and a higher rate of knowledge transfer. A study from Boston College, Harvard University, and University of Michigan found that soft skills training boosts productivity and retention by 12% and delivers a high return on investment (Bruce, 2017). While there is a cost associated with training there is also a cost associated with turnover. Investing in employees through training has the

ability to reduce turnover costs, increase productivity, and boost morale. The first thing an agency needs to determine when it comes to training its employees, is what method of training are they going to use. The five most popular ways to train employees are through classroom-based training, interactive training, OJT, social learning, online training (Andriotis, 2017). Currently our agency has a one-hour time slot set aside every Wednesday morning for training. This is training that is developed by the training team and sent out via email. The supervisor receives the PowerPoint presentation training and review the slides with the employees. This is a great start to reaching employees and ensuring that they are receiving some training throughout the course of their career with the agency.

### **Data Collection**

Three sources were used to acquire data and information for my research project. I collected data from the South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles (SCDMV) employee exit survey, the agency turnover report, and relevant articles. The employee exit survey information comes from employees that separated from the agency between the dates of July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020; 2020 fiscal year. A total of one hundred responses were recorded from full time equivalent (FTE) and temporary exiting employees. Questions for the survey consisted of multiple choice and

textbox responses (Attachment 7). In an effort to increase responses for exit surveys, former employees taking the survey are informed of the intent of the survey and can opt to remain anonymous. The results from the multiple choice portion of the survey were graphed to provide a visual assessment that will be further reviewed in the data analysis portion of the project (Attachment 4, 5 and 6).

When completing the exit survey respondents are able to select multiple reasons why they left. A large percentage indicated that pay was a reason for leaving, however a deeper look into the comments revealed that while pay was a part of the problem the bigger problems were areas that could be addressed with training.

I reviewed and analyzed the textbox responses to gain a better understanding of the exiting employee's perspective on the training and if why they left could be addressed with proper training. I was also able to determine the type of training the agency should invest in based on the respondent's answers as it related to agency culture, management style and technical/procedural knowledge. While pay and lack of training was listed as a reason that employees left the agency, a percentage of employees departed due to factors that could be corrected via training. Factors such as communication, employee

conflict, managerial style, and time management were referenced in the employee exit survey.

The collection and review of my data led me to look further into the importance of soft skill training and why relying solely on technical training could be harmful to an agency. Soft skills such as interpersonal skills, the ability to manage and control emotions, communication skills, leadership, adaptability, and problem solving are critical to employee and agency success (Bruce, 2017). I will further discuss in my data analysis how this played a part in employees leaving. Soft skills tend to be overlooked because, in my opinion are not seen a means to increase productivity or immediately quantifiable. In a customer/ numbers based agency it can be difficult to understand the need for developing soft skills.

### **Data Analysis**

My research revealed that we have a great agency with a lot of promise and opportunity for growth. It also revealed that there is a breakdown in the manner that employees are trained, the type of training that is offered and the training that employees would like to see. Most of the data collected came from employees that separated from the agency and a small portion came from direct feedback to me from current employees.

While the agency's overall FY20 turnover percentage is 24.91%, 19.63% of the turnover was due to people leaving for reasons that could be addressed by training. 19.63% of employees left the agency for either a different job within state government, employment outside of state government, personal reasons, or their temporary employment ending. Of the one-hundred employees that completed the survey seventy-nine of them had not worked for the agency for more than 5 years. Retirement and employees desiring a career change may not be impacted by training. However, based on the response to the questions about conflict in the workplace and leaving for a better opportunity could potentially be remedied by training. On the exit survey employees can indicate multiple reasons as to why they left. Based on the survey data there was a high indication that employees left due to conflict in the workplace and better opportunity. There were also twenty-six responses indicating that training needed to be improved. The most recurring comments in the textbox of the exit surveys centered around manager's method of communication, office conflict, conflict with managers, not feeling prepared to complete the job that was asked of them. Respect, treatment of all employees at all levels, compensation, trust between employees and senior management, job security and opportunities to use their skills



and abilities at work are the five reasons that equate to job satisfaction (SHRM, 2021).

Based on the exit surveys that were completed it was noted that there is a segment of the agency that does not receive any training outside of on the job training (OJT). The surveys also revealed that there is a desire for training to take place and that a certain percentage did not feel equipped to perform their duties due to limited amount of training they received, which resulted in a reason for their departure.

### **Implementation Plan**

As mentioned in my problem statement my goal was to identify areas that could be addressed through training to reduce turnover and create a platform that would allow our training and human resources department to deploy training in a virtual manner. My focus was not to create a robust training program for the agency, but instead provide a way for employees to receive both adequate technical and soft skill training that would allow them to be goal driven for the agency. Choosing the right training platform is just as important as the training itself. In order to choose the right training a company should identify the audience, demographics, nature of the job, level of seniority (Andriotis, 2018). Training departments have been faced with a difficult task of not only maintaining current

training methods, but reaching as many employees as possible. It is my thought that a training website that is accessible to employees at all times is a great way to reach a large number of employees and still ensure that the training is effective and thorough. Implementing this plan will require by in from the training department and directors. Currently the agency provides an hour training every Wednesday morning that is administered by the managers within the employee's department. The created website or one similar would allow employees to access training at will, review past trainings as a refresher, as well as allow them to review trainings for their own development.

While I think it is imperative that the agency creates and tailors training for the specific needs of its employees, I do not discount that there are trainers and program trainings that can be contracted for purchase that are just as equally beneficial. The difference between an agency created training and procuring training is the agency created training can be specific and geared to the actual needs of the agency, whereas a procured training is more likely to be general.

#### **Evaluation Method**

In the event that my plan is implemented and employees gain access to internal agency website that would provide technical and soft skills training specific to the agency, measuring its

success will be vital to it continuing. There are several methods that I feel will assist in monitoring its success. Continuing to monitor exit surveys and SCEIS turnover data will give me an idea if an increase in a variety of training and employees having access to training reduced the turnover rate. Creating a survey for current employees to take, instead of waiting on an employee to leave will be key in pulsing the agency climate surrounding training. A current survey will also give the Human Resources and Training Department the ability to create training specific on current employee feedback. Current employee feedback will allow the agency to be proactive instead of reactive, which will result in a slowdown of turnover as well.

### **Summary and Recommendations**

My project is just the start of addressing the various trainings that can be offered to employees and the potential benefits of a training website to reach employees at various levels. It does not address the exact training that needs to take place as this can change with the agency's goals, it is a summation of where we are as an agency and the direction that we need to move in. My recommendation is to poll employees and generate trainings that address their concerns as well as develop training programs that develop employees for potential

leadership position within the agency. It would also be beneficial to continue to enroll employees in trainings that are offered outside of the agency as well as bring in vendors where necessary. While not typically considered a part of training it is my belief that by providing mentors to employees that show an interest in leadership could prove to be beneficial.

Most agencies are working with a tight budget and formal training can be one of the first things that get cut. When the budget is tight instead of outsourcing an agency could find it beneficial to utilize the knowledge of current employees.

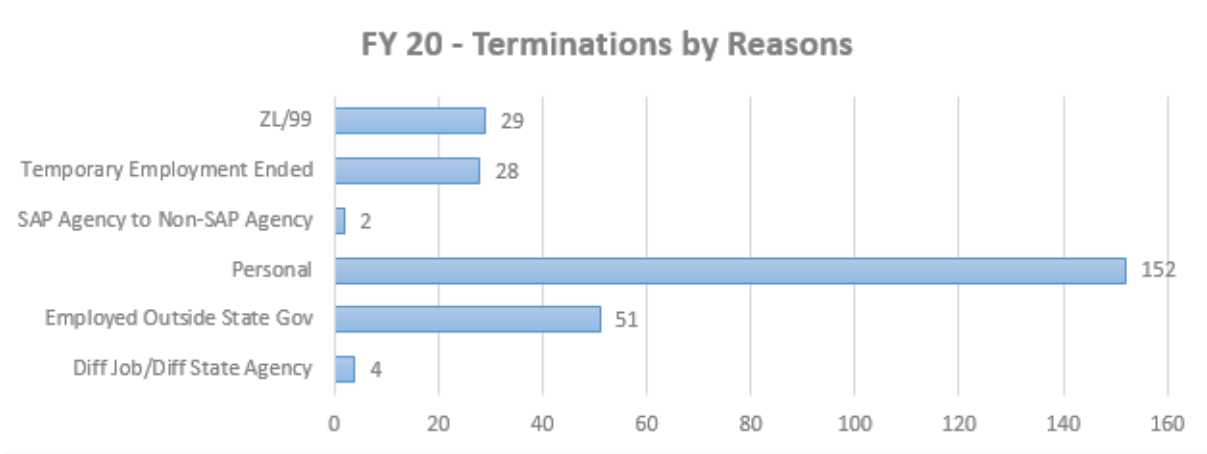
To survive and thrive an agency needs to continuously develop their employees' skills and encourage workplace learning.

## References

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## **Appendices**

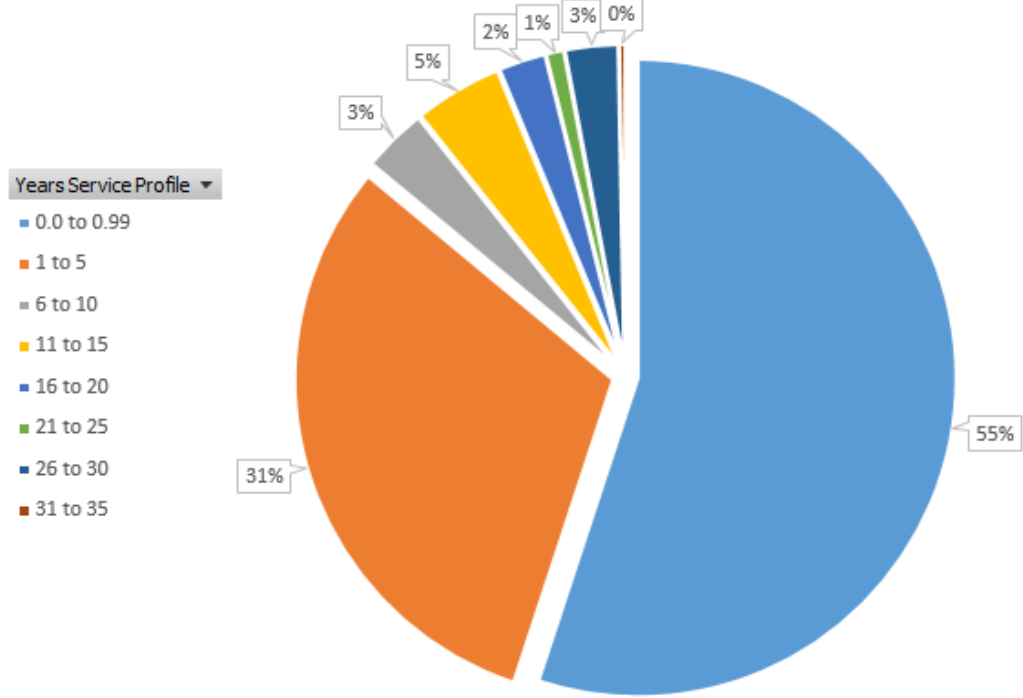
**Attachment 1**



Terminations by Reasons	
Fiscal Year	FY 20
Mini Code Description	(All)
Cal Month Name	(All)
Status	Term
#Terms	
Action Reason Text	Total
Diff Job/Diff State Agency	4
Employed Outside State Gov	51
Personal	152
SAP Agency to Non-SAP Agency	2
Temporary Employment Ended	28
ZL/99	29
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>266</b>

Attachment 2

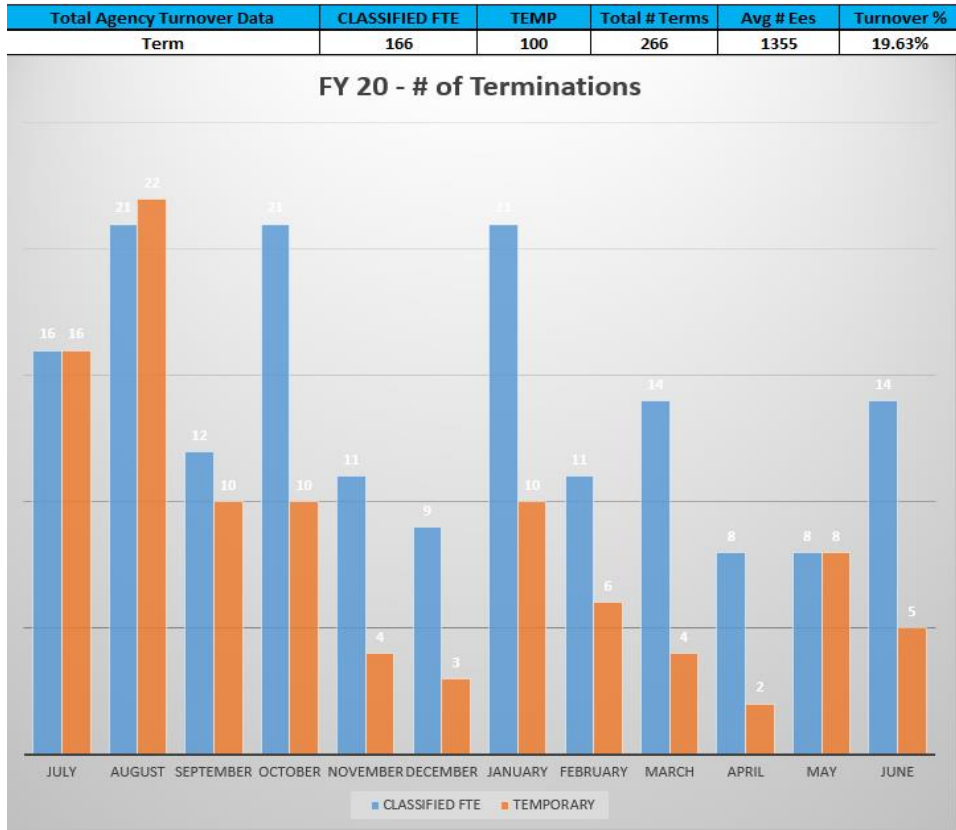
FY20 - Terminations by Years of Service



Terminations by Service Years	
Fiscal Year	FY 20
Mini Code Description	(All)
Cal Month Name	(All)
Status	Term
#Terms	
Years Service Profil	Total
0.0 to 0.99	185
1 to 5	104
6 to 10	11
11 to 15	15
16 to 20	8
21 to 25	3
26 to 30	9
31 to 35	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>336</b>



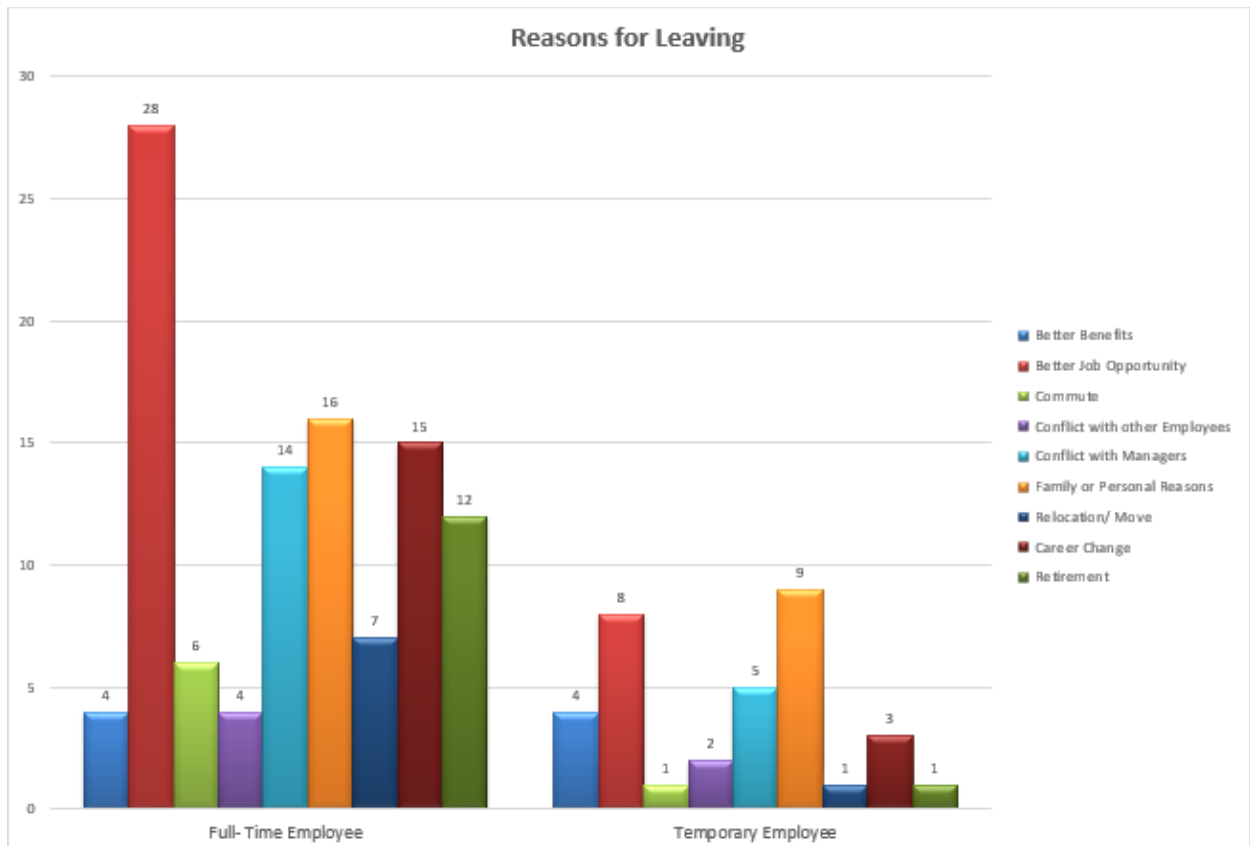
Attachment 3



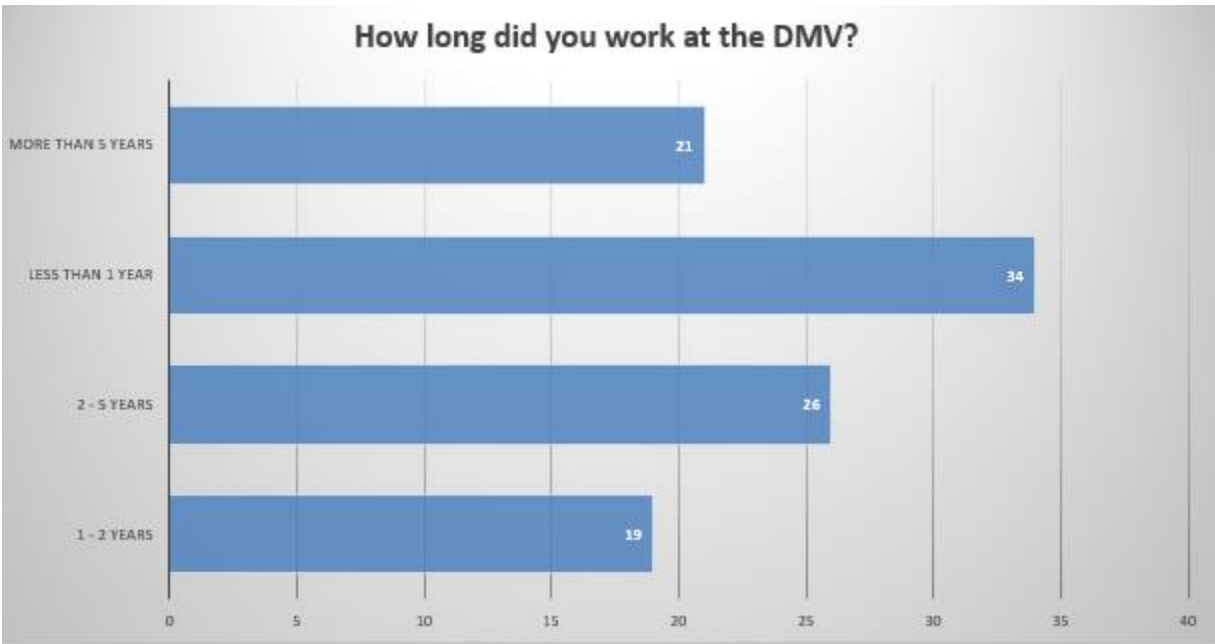
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	FY 20				
<b>Status</b>	Term				
<b>Action Reason Text</b>	(Multiple Items)				
<b>Count of Status</b>	Term Group				
	<b>CLASSIFIED FTE</b>	<b>TEMPORARY</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>Avg # Ees</b>	<b>Turnover%</b>
<b>Total</b>	166	100	266	1355	19.63%

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	FY 20				
<b>Status</b>	Term				
<b>Action Reason Text</b>	(Multiple Items)				
<b>Count of Status</b>	Term Group				
<b>Cal Month Nar</b>	<b>CLASSIFIED FTE</b>	<b>TEMPORARY</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>		
July	16	16	32		
August	21	22	43		
September	12	10	22		
October	21	10	31		
November	11	4	15		
December	9	3	12		
January	21	10	31		
February	11	6	17		
March	14	4	18		
April	8	2	10		
May	8	8	16		
June	14	5	19		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>266</b>		

## Attachment 4



**Attachment 5**



Attachment 6



**Attachment 7**



**\* 1. What type of employee were you?**

- Full- Time Employee
- Temporary Employee
- NPWE (Vet Success, VocRehab)

**\* 2. How long did you work at the DMV?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1 - 2 years
- 2 - 5 years
- More than 5 years

**\* 3. What area did you work in?**

- DMV Branch Office
- Vehicle Services
- Driver Services
- Office of Inspector General (OIG)
- Administration
- Chief of Staff
- Technology & Product Development
- General Counsel

What department or branch office were you located in?

\* 4. What are your primary reasons for leaving the DMV? (Select all that Apply)

- Higher Pay
- Better Benefits
- Better Job Opportunity
- Commute
- Conflict with other Employees
- Conflict with Managers
- Family or Personal Reasons
- Relocation/ Move
- Career Change
- Retirement

\* 5. Did you share your concerns with anyone in management prior to deciding to leave?

- Yes
- No

\* 6. Under what circumstances, if any, would you consider returning to the agency? (unlimited characters)

\* 7. What did you enjoy most about working at SCDMV? (unlimited characters)

\* 8. What did you least enjoy about working at the SCDMV? (unlimited characters)

\* 9. Did you feel you had the necessary training and resources to be successful in your position at the DMV?

Yes

No

If no, what do you recommend could have improved your experience?

\* 10. Did you receive clear and realistic expectations regarding your job duties?

Yes

No

\* 11. Did your manager provide the necessary support for you to be successful?

Yes

No

If no, what could have been done to better support you?

\* 12. In a typical week, how often did you feel stressed at work?

Extremely Often

Very Often

Moderately

Sometimes

Rarely

\* 13. How would you describe employee morale and motivation in the DMV?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Neutral
- Poor

\* 14. Did you experience any challenges utilizing your annual or sick leave?

- Yes
- No

15. Additional comments, concerns, or recommendations (Optional)

16. **Optional** Contact information

Name (optional)

Email Address (optional)

Phone Number (optional)