



Making Public Works an Attractive Option in a Changing Workplace

Public Works Officers Institute

Universal City Hilton

March 9, 2023

Welcome

- Introductions
- Overview of session
 - Priming the pump – Background & context
 - Panel Presentations
 - Q&A – Panel Interaction



CAL POLY



Why is this Topic Important?



The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

is a **\$1.2 Trillion** Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill

and includes funding for our:



BRIDGES



ROADS



TRANSIT SYSTEMS



DAMS



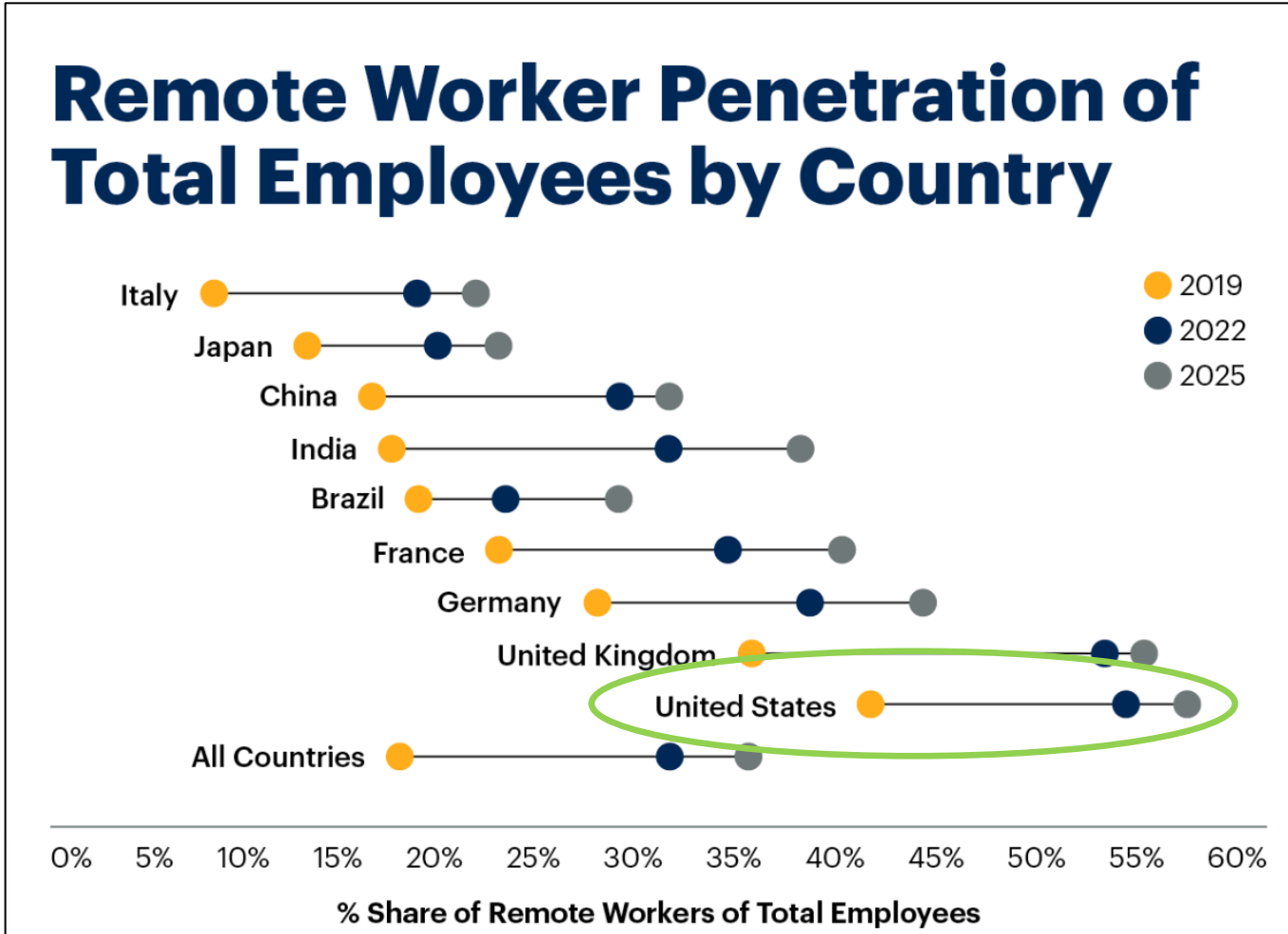
CAL POLY



one COUNTY
one FUTURE



Workplace looks different



<https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/hybrid-and-remote-workers-change-how-they-use-it-equipment>



CAL POLY

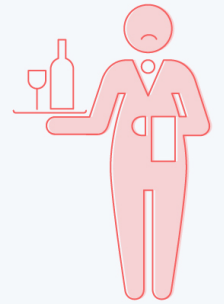
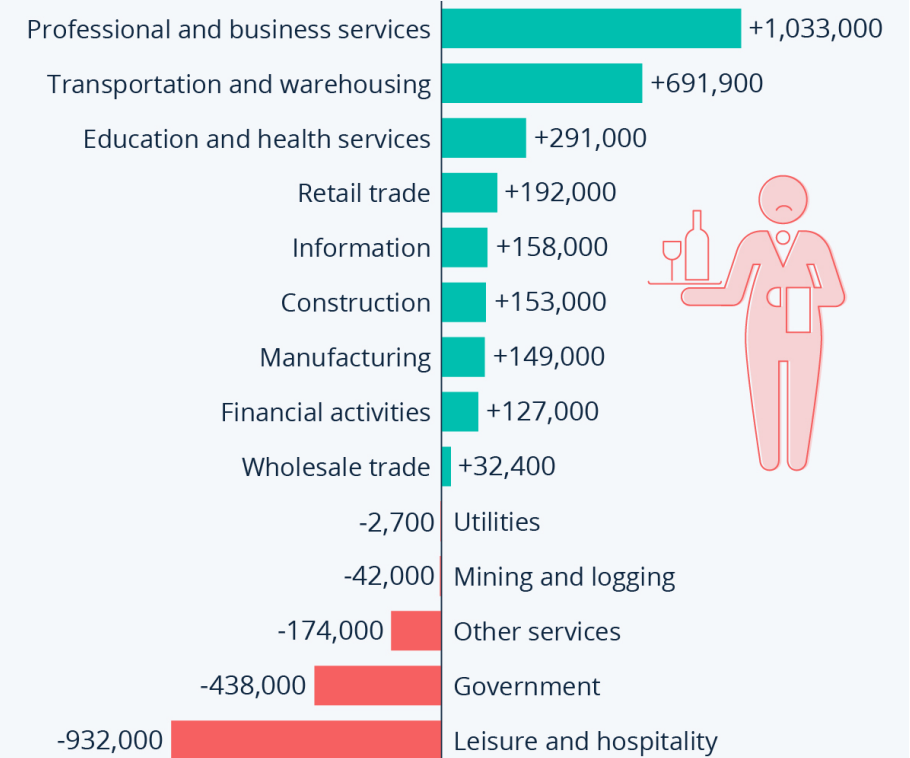


Labor Force has Changed

- Government and Utilities still below pre pandemic levels

How Employment Compares to Pre-Pandemic Times

Change in total nonfarm payroll employment in the U.S. between Feb. 2020 and Dec. 2022, by industry*



* seasonally adjusted

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics



statista



CAL POLY



Great Resignation Lingers

Quits

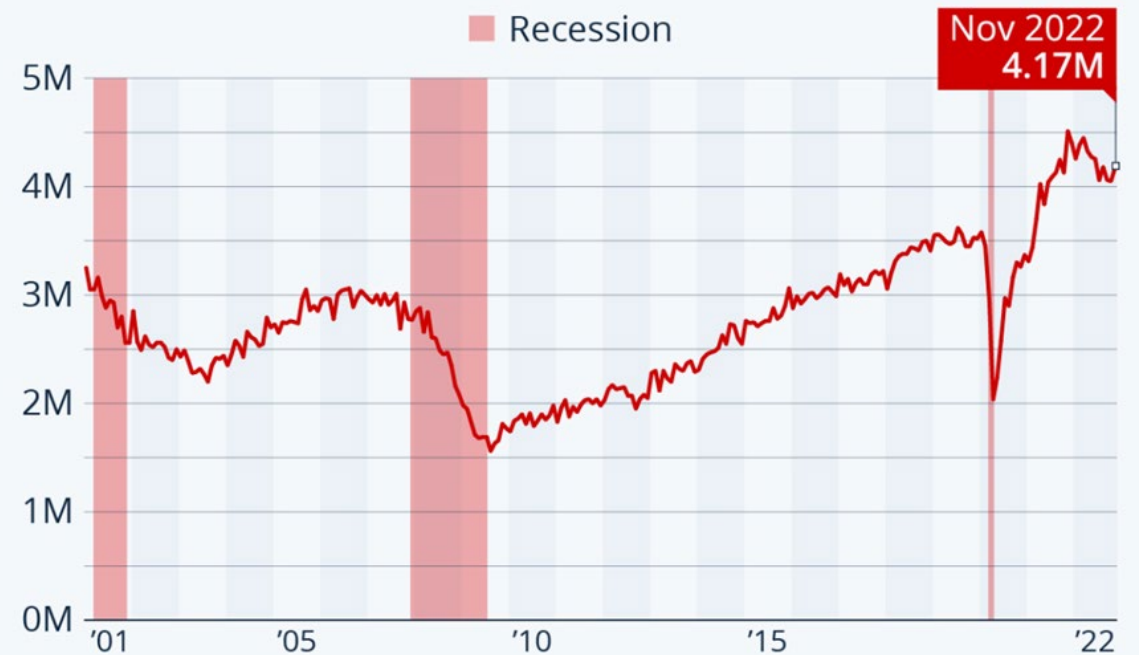
- Exceeded pre-pandemic
- 21 consecutive months

>4M American/month

- Voluntarily left job
- 18 straight months

The 'Great Resignation' Isn't Over Yet

Number of people quitting their jobs in the United States, seasonally adjusted



Job Market is Volatile

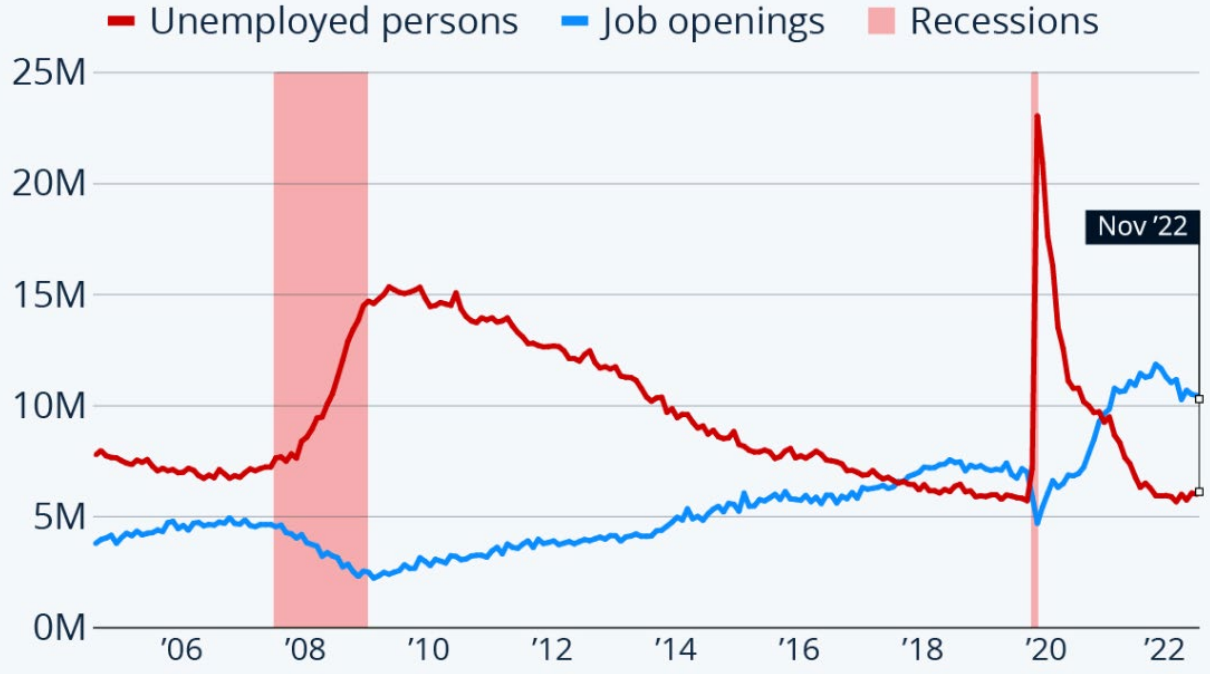
10.5M Job Openings

6.0M Unemployed

>1.7 position = 1 job seeker

U.S. Job Openings Edge Down, Still Outnumber Jobless By Far

Number of unemployed persons and job openings in the United States, seasonally adjusted



<https://www.statista.com/chart/28407/unemployed-persons-and-job-openings-in-the-united-states/>



CAL POLY



Struggle to Fill Public Works Jobs

If you were to leave your current role, what do you anticipate would be the primary reason?

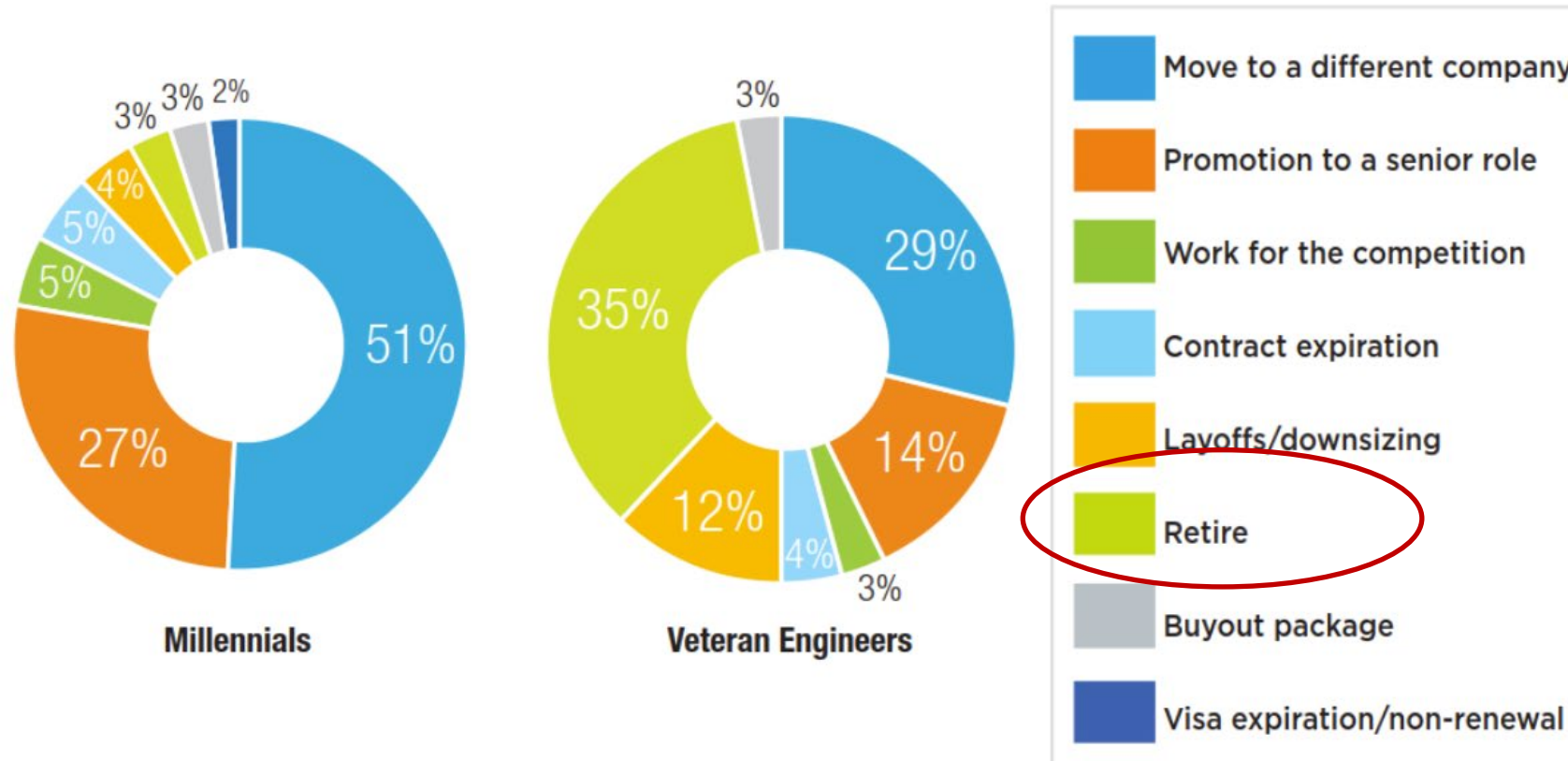


Fig. 6: Some 35% of veteran engineers expect to leave their jobs for retirement. Source: IEEE Globalspec.



CAL POLY



STEM Job Trends

**STEM Jobs
projected to
grow by 2X**

**Table 1.11 Employment in STEM occupations, 2021 and projected 2031
(Numbers in thousands)**

Occupation category	Employment, 2021	Employment, 2031	Employment change, 2021–31	Percent employment change, 2021–31	Median annual wage, 2021(1)
Total, all occupations	158,134.7	166,452.1	8,317.4	5.3	\$45,760
STEM occupations(2)	9,880.2	10,944.2	1,064.0	10.8	\$95,420
Non-STEM occupations	148,254.5	155,508.0	7,253.5	4.9	\$40,120

Footnotes:

(1) Data are from the Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics program, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Wage data cover non-farm wage and salary workers and do not cover the self-employed, owners and partners in unincorporated firms, or household workers.

(2) Science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) occupations include computer and mathematical, architecture and engineering, and life and physical science occupations, as well as managerial and postsecondary teaching occupations related to these functional areas and sales occupations requiring scientific or technical knowledge at the postsecondary level. For more information, see <https://www.bls.gov/oes/topics.htm#stem>.

Source: Employment Projections program, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Last Modified Date: September 8, 2022



CAL POLY



State of California IJA By the Numbers

JOBS CREATED

Jobs created are assessed based on 13,000 jobs per \$1B invested. For more information on the employment impacts of highway infrastructure, visit the [Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\) page](#) on this topic.

Number of Jobs Created

17,386

What do we do?



Retain talent



Recruit in competitive markets



Inspire the next generation



CAL POLY



More Competitive Compensation

Public Works

- Civil Engineer = \$95k
- Env Engineer = \$93k
- Urban Planner = \$75k
- Env Scientist = \$72k

Tech and Finance

- Software Eng/Architect = \$149
- Cyber Security = \$135k
- Computer Scientist = \$110k
- Financial Advisor = \$105k
- Investment Banker = \$110k

Recruiting – Be More Creative

ASSISTANT IN CIVIL ENGINEERING

This recruitment is eligible for two hiring Incentives

The \$6,000 recruitment incentive shall be paid in equal installments for the first twenty-six (26) consecutive biweekly pay periods in the position.

The \$6,000 relocation incentive (*if applicable*), shall be paid in equal installments for the first twenty-six (26) consecutive biweekly pay periods in the position.

Termination from employment will result in any remaining cash incentive payments being forfeited. Incentives are subject to El Dorado County personnel rules.

THE COUNTY OF EL DORADO

The County of El Dorado is committed to promoting the power of public service by fostering a diverse and collaborative workplace where employees are empowered, respected and valued. The dedicated efforts taken by the Board of Supervisors continues to promote El Dorado County as a competitive employer that is committed to recruiting and retaining qualified employees by advocating for competitive salaries and excellent benefits. The County of El Dorado is also supportive of providing telework opportunities for employees consistent with business needs and in accordance with Board of Supervisors Policy E-12 - Telecommuting.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

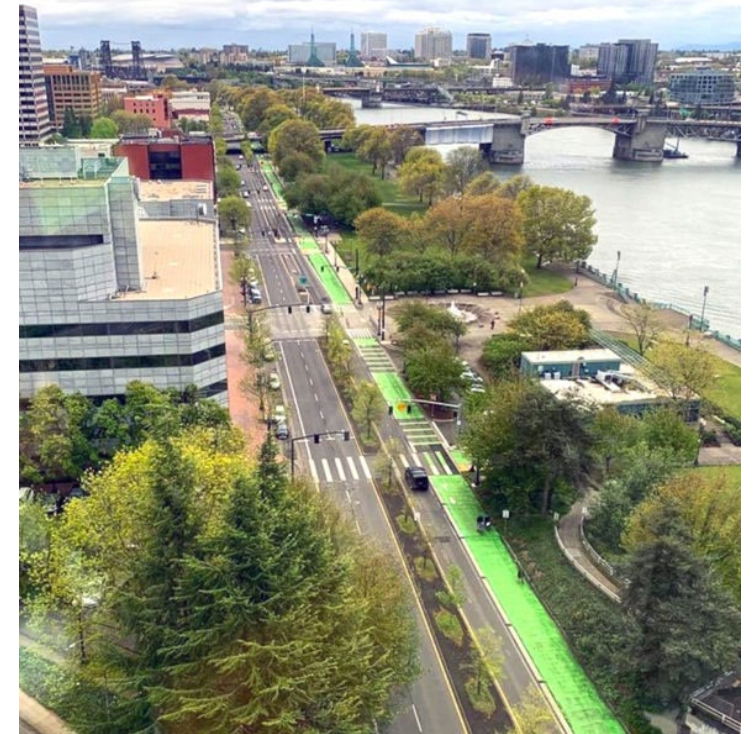
The County of El Dorado, Department of Transportation is responsible for funding, designing, building, operating, and maintaining the County Road System. El Dorado County's Road System currently consists of approximately 1083 centerline miles of paved roadway, 76 bridges, a multitude of storm drainage systems, and related transportation facilities.



CAL POLY



Inspiring the Next Generation



Oregon APWA



CAL POLY



Panel Presentations

Walter = Speed of hiring

Josh = Retaining talent

Paul = A student's perspective



CAL POLY



A long, straight road with a yellow double line down the center, stretching into the distance towards a range of mountains. The landscape is arid and desert-like. The text "Speed of Hiring" is overlaid in white, with a white underline.

Speed of Hiring

Speed of Hiring

- ❑ Communicate the importance of hiring quickly
 - ❑ Competition
 - ❑ Good candidates don't wait
 - ❑ High priority
- ❑ Avoid excuses and offer to take the lead
 - ❑ Public process/HR
 - ❑ Take the lead
- ❑ Set aggressive timelines
 - ❑ Draft bulletin – one business day
 - ❑ Eligibility review – one-two business days
 - ❑ Applications received from HR – review one-two business days
 - ❑ Screening calls – ASAP (one business day)
 - ❑ Virtual interviews – within 2-5 business days
 - ❑ 2nd interview – within 2-3 business days (virtual)
 - ❑ Meet and greet – within 5 business days (offer letter ready)
 - ❑ Total process after applications received – 10-15 business days



CAL POLY



Speed of Hiring

- ❑ Other tips
 - ❑ Don't forget to coordinate with IT early on
 - ❑ Panel selection is very important
 - ❑ Hire people not resumes



CAL POLY





Retaining Employees

Challenges with Employee Retention

- We are losing the battle for talent
- More important than ever to keep the employees we already have
- Current challenges we face in the public sector:
- Public employees are – on average – older than their private sector counterparts
- COVID has accelerated employees leaving the public sector
- Turnover can undermine service and increase workload and stress on the remaining workforce
- Are we doomed?????



CAL POLY



Factors Important to Employees to Stay

- Each organization is different – consider an employee survey
- A meta-analysis conducted by Route Fifty led to the following conclusions on public sector employers:
 - **Exhaustion is the largest factor impacting turnover**
 - Participation in decision-making, fair processes, and supervisor support play a medium role in turnover
 - Pay and rewards play a small role in turnover
- A recent article in PM Magazine suggests that most employees prioritize **“flexibility, well-being, and purpose-driven work”**
- This is great news and suggests a path to retain employees and attract new employees



CAL POLY



Potential Measures – Flexibility and Well-Being

- Support work schedules that promote work/life balance:
 - Flexible work schedules (9/80, 4/10, work hours, etc.)
 - Remote work opportunities
 - Alternative work arrangements (part-time, flexible day-to-day work, caregiving needs)
- Encourage the use of available leave balances
- Celebrate and recognize employee success
- Employee communication
- Support investments in technology and resources
- Encourage leadership to be accessible to your employees



CAL POLY



Potential Measures – Purpose-Driven Work

- Establish a department strategic plan to outline the greater mission and vision
- Consider adopting a workforce development and succession plan
- Invest in employee training and certification programs
- Encourage a performance evaluation process that focuses on employee development
- Fostering an inclusive workplace culture where employees are engaged and empowered



CAL POLY



A Student's Perspective



A Student's Perspective

civil engineer (noun): an engineer whose training or occupation is in the design and construction especially of public works (such as roads or harbors)

[merriam-webster.com/dictionary/civil%20engineer](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/civil%20engineer)



Many students have chosen the college major of civil engineering with an innate desire to have a positive effect on society.



Are there opportunities for public agencies to further shape their recruitments and messaging around the value of civil service and positive influence on their citizenry?



Are there opportunities for the private sector, where a significant portion of their client base are public agencies, to do the same in communicating how their companies provide a positive and worthwhile contribution?



Are there opportunities for the universities, perhaps even high schools, to highlight the many benefits of a career in public works?



Let's find sustainable and enduring ways in which public agencies, private firms, and universities can convey a positive and consistent message to the next generation of public works employees.



Questions & Discussion

Questions for Audience

- What is the greatest work force challenge you face today?
- What successes or failures have you experienced with:
 - Retaining Employees?
 - Hiring Process?
 - Engaging Students?
- How does Public Works “Start with Why”
- What themes or topics would you like to see PWOI address in the future?



CAL POLY

