

NEOGOV

TOP 10

PUBLIC SECTOR HR TRENDS **FOR 2022**

MUCH LIKE 2020 BEFORE IT, 2021 HAS BEEN A WAKE UP CALL FOR HR LEADERS AT PUBLIC SECTOR AGENCIES

From the continued impact of COVID-19 and calls for social justice, as well as a new job market that favors job seekers looking for career change and more flexibility, **government HR must evolve with the times to ensure that agencies that serve the people continue to be able to serve them despite rapidly changing times.**

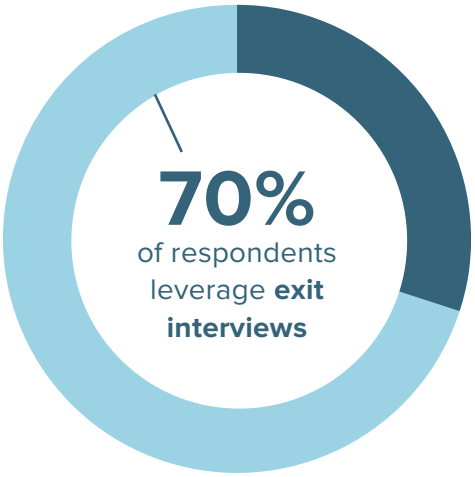
To identify the biggest trends influencing government HR professionals in 2022 and beyond, NEOGOV surveyed over 800 HR professionals in the public sector to get a feel for what's top of mind for them. **Here are the top 10 takeaways:**

1 BRACING FOR THE FALLOUT OF THE GREAT RESIGNATION

The so-called "Great Resignation" has sent shockwaves through the entire U.S. workforce, and the public sector is no different. In an industry that already suffers from a workforce that is disproportionately older, the Great Resignation presents potentially dire circumstances. Between retirements (both planned and early) and employees seeking a change after the impacts of COVID-19, vacancies are increasing rapidly.

Taking proactive steps to determine the primary reasons causing employees to vacate positions and addressing them will be critical in 2022 and beyond.

*86% of government HR professionals reported a **moderate or significant increase in vacant roles** compared to last year.*



2 FEWER APPLICANTS PER JOB

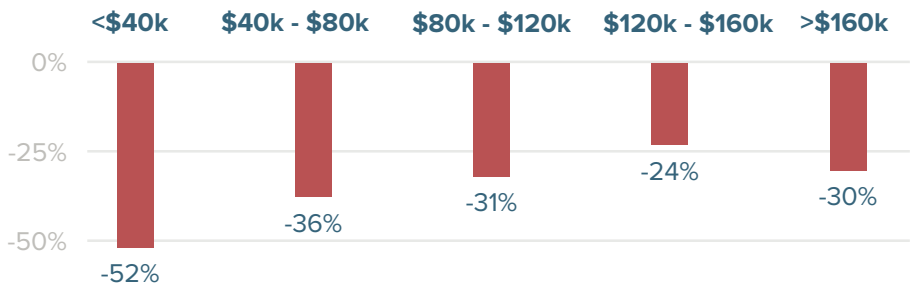
In addition to the loss of existing talent, government agencies are also noticing an alarming drop in applicants per job.

> *The number of applications per job* ***has dropped 21%*** *between 2015 and 2021.*
>
> Source: NEOGOV 2021 Job Seeker Report

As the gap between job openings and job applications continues to grow, government HR must consider how this could affect the overall quality of the services their agencies provide to citizens and communities.

Figure 1

Difference in % Applications per Job by Salary Range, 2015 vs 2021



The above data taken from NEOGOV's 2021 Job Seeker Report shows that the decline in job applications per job over the last six years is being felt across all job types and salary levels. The hardest hit are jobs that pay below $40,000/year, which are frequently the jobs that interface with the public and community members the most. This may unfortunately lead to a decrease in the quality of services that agencies are able to provide due to being short staffed.

Taking a crucial look at things like how to better write the job requisitions and otherwise improve the attractiveness of jobs within the public sector will be important to try to close this gap. In addition, actively trying to reduce the already long public sector time-to-hire will be a priority in order to better compete with other government agencies, not to mention the private sector (where the average time-to-hire is just over a month, compared to 121 days in the public sector).



3 EXPANDING ACCESS TO REMOTE WORK & FLEXIBILITY

One way public sector agencies are attempting to stop the bleeding from the Great Resignation and increase interest in vacancies is through becoming more flexible around remote and hybrid work.

***45% of government agencies** will offer some employees the opportunity to work remotely permanently.*

Additionally, 29% are considering enabling remote employment. Only about a quarter (26%) are unwilling to offer any remote employment moving forward.

61% of those surveyed said they felt that offering flexibility and remote work improved their candidate pool for open roles.

4 VIDEO INTERVIEWING IS HERE TO STAY

Interacting with employees and candidates via video conference became a necessity in 2020, but many agencies have discovered that leveraging video interviewing in recruiting has benefits that will lead to its continued use in the future.

Some logistical concerns that video interviewing can solve for agencies and candidates alike include eliminating scheduling conflicts by using one-way interviews with preset questions that a candidate can answer at their convenience, and a more consistent interview process across the board to ensure equitable hiring practices.



During the recruitment phase 72% use video interviews, while only 11% definitively stated that they would no longer continue to do so post-pandemic.

5 ANALYZING DATA
TO INFORM & GUIDE DECISIONS

Leaning on data to make more informed decisions is a key focus for the public sector.

TIME-TO-HIRE

68% of agencies surveyed are tracking time to hire, and 55% of them believe they should be doing a better job of keeping an eye on it. 14% plan to start tracking it, leaving less than 20% that are not concerned with monitoring how long it takes candidates to go from being applicants to hires.

EQUITABLE RECRUITING

60% are tracking how diverse candidates progress through each phase of the recruitment process, and 19% plan to start monitoring it to help ensure equitable practices are being followed. Only 21% have not identified it as a need in their organizations.

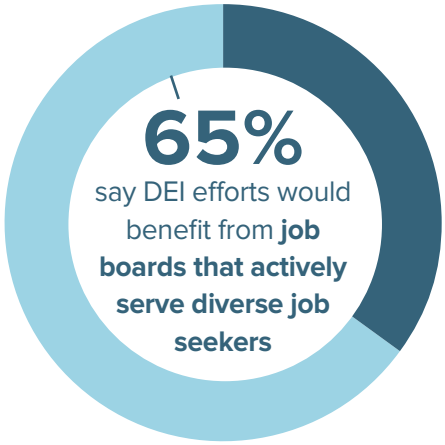
BENCHMARKING

35% of agencies are consistently comparing themselves to other public sector organizations to see how they're doing. 25% plan to start benchmarking in the near future.

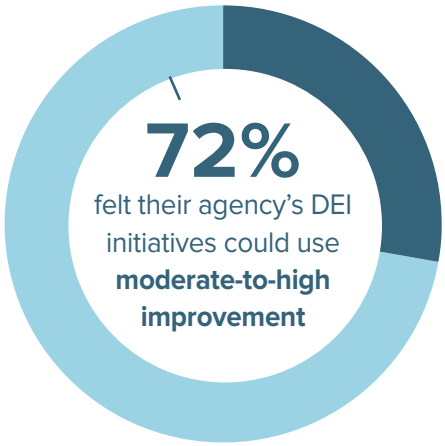


6 DRIVING DEI INITIATIVES

2020 and 2021 provided swift momentum for emphasizing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts within the public sector, and that will continue into the future, according to survey respondents. **32% said that actively monitoring candidate pools for adequate diversity was a top priority.**



Additionally, **over two thirds of respondents stated that their organization is offering DEI training** on topics like unconscious bias to managers in hopes that it will improve diversity.



In addition to targeting diversity job boards, **establishing or refining the DEI section of the careers site** and **highlighting current diverse talent's stories** more prominently were cited as key concepts for DEI improvement by 50% and 54%, respectively.



7 INVESTING IN EXISTING TALENT

Providing existing employees with the ability to learn and upskill on the job is a priority for 2022 that will benefit employees and agencies alike.

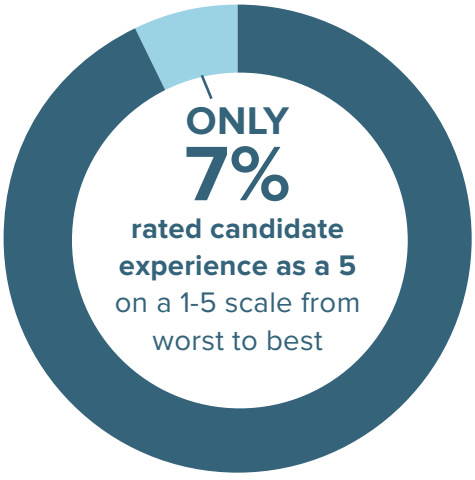
61% use learning management systems to assign and track training, while 59% leverage performance management software to provide coaching and evaluation to improve career growth and increases retention.

These efforts serve a dual purpose -- providing employees with valuable career expansion and development, while also benefiting the agency with more talented and engaged employees who are less likely to leave for greener pastures.



8 REVAMPING THE CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE

Improving the experience a candidate has when exploring job opportunities with an agency is another trend for the new year. While 63% of those surveyed said that HR has efficiently mapped out what the candidate experience is like – from visibility of the careers site to ease of applying to jobs – **less than 1 in 10 rated their candidate experience as exceptional.**



Respondents agreed that two things in particular could elevate the candidate experience: improving communication throughout each stage of the recruitment funnel (53%) and making careers sites and job listings more mobile friendly (52%). Additionally, improving job descriptions with better and more concise copy as well as multimedia like photos and videos were cited as ways to better entice quality applicants.

***47% of respondents agreed that the application process is too long** and may be hindering recruitment efforts.*



9 BUILDING A CANDIDATE POOL FOR FUTURE ROLES

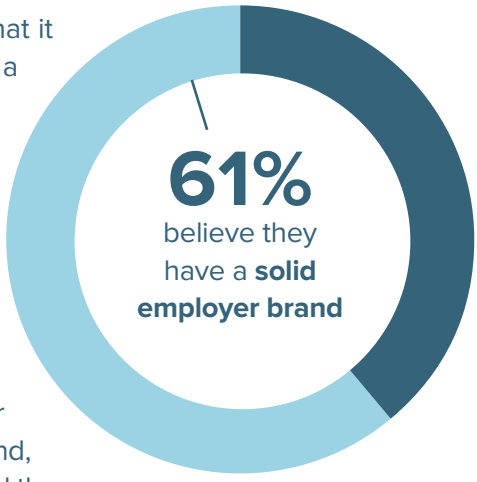
While not every applicant for a given job is a good fit, the candidate may still be a great match for the agency in other roles or for future recruitment.

Although agencies clearly recognize the value of keeping in touch with candidates, **only 17% currently have a candidate relationship management system**.

Building up a pool of qualified candidates for future roles can eliminate many of the roadblocks that recruiters experience in trying to fill vacancies, and agencies are likely.

10 GREATER FOCUS ON DEFINING THE EMPLOYER BRAND

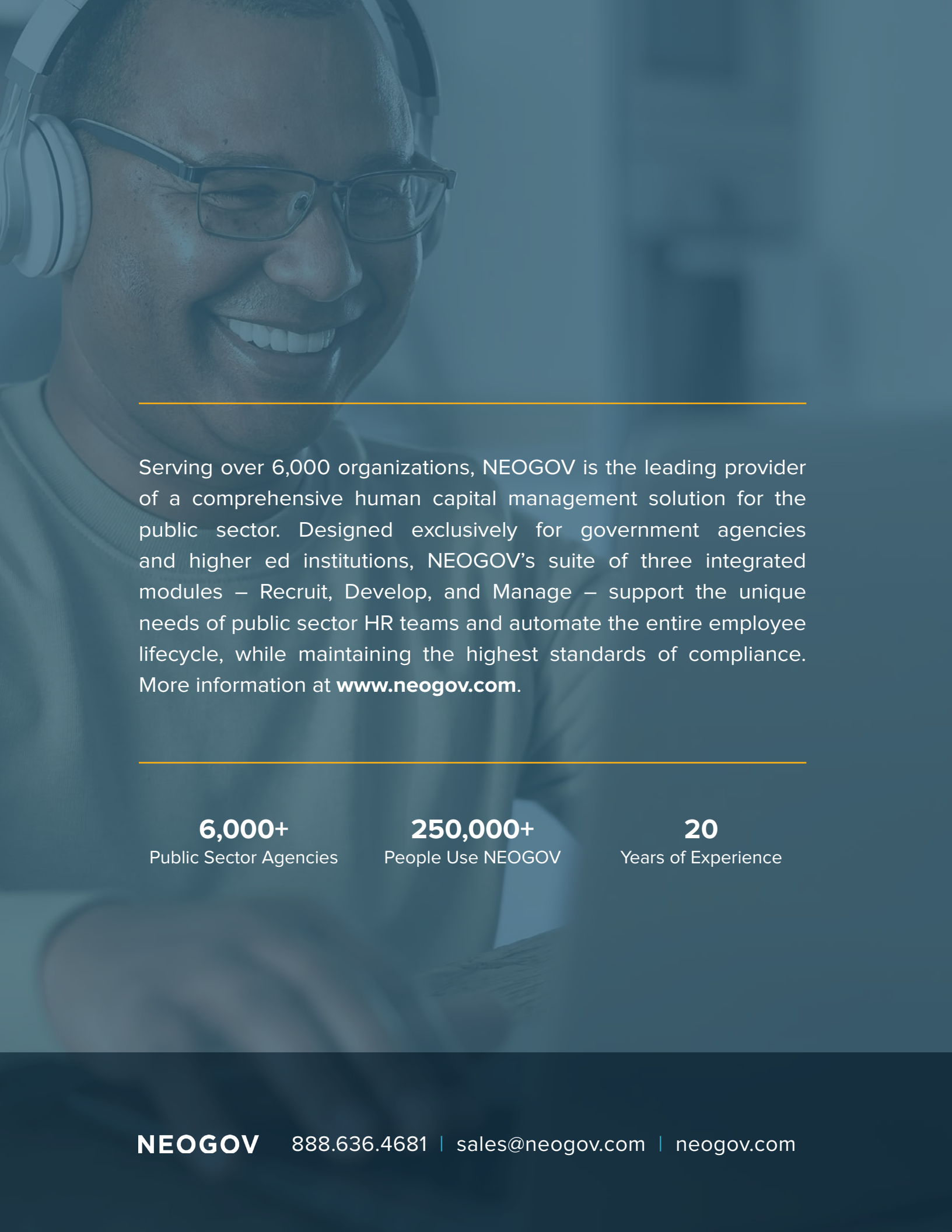
An agency's employer brand – or what it means to work at their agency from a cultural perspective – is a crucial part of not only recruitment, but also defining the agency's overall goals and values.



30% of agencies believe they need to develop or refine their employer brand.

While more than half (61%) said their agency had a solid employer brand, over half of them (57%) acknowledged they could do a better job of advertising the brand. Only 9% said their agency had not put any thought into it.

In a job seekers' market, it is imperative that employers make abundantly clear the pros of working for an organization. HR leaders in the public sector will be spending time collecting information about what makes their agency an employer of choice to improve recruitment, hiring, and retention efforts.



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