Current State Assessment Report

Homeless Sector Workforce Analysis | KPMG & United Way of Greater Los Angeles

August 26, 2022

Contents

Objectives of the Study

KPMG is conducting an analysis for United Way of Greater Los Angeles on the attraction, development, and retention of LA's homelessness services workforce to help identify investment strategies and build capacity for the sector. The output of the analysis will provide insights across the following areas:

Situational Assessment

- Understand the scale, demographics, and composition of the homeless services workforce by analyzing internal and external workforce data
- Collect key workforce data insights from a representative sample of organizations within the sector to glean insights related to attraction, retention, and development of the workforce

Workforce Culture & Marketing

- Understand what entices and motivates candidates to work in the sector
- Analyze the external perception of the sector to identify opportunities to improve the homeless services sector brand
- Gain insight into how to strategically receive funding for workforce development programs

Talent Pipeline / Growth

- Identify untapped talent pools to target recruiting efforts
- Determine new ways to draw in new employee types based on their desired Employee Value Proposition
- Analyze what is working well and the pain points of the recruiting experience and why employees stay in the sector

Training & Professional Support

- Gather common employee sentiments to determine additional support needed
- Identify current training available to employees in the sector
- Create personas to understand the unique wants and needs of select employee profiles

Key Assumptions of the Study

We utilized key assumptions identified below across workforce and demographics data to pull in insights to inform the current state assessment.

Workforce

LA Homelessness Sector: Los Angeles Continuum of Care homeless services system includes over ~8,000 positions

Provider of Homelessness Services: assists unhoused clients in accessing housing services (e.g., application of benefits, connecting to funding for housing process, supplemental security income, Medicaid, My Health LA). Healthcare is not a provider.

Affiliate of Homelessness Services: orgs that focus on sanitation, public safety, public health, health care delivery (i.e., hospitals, community clinics), or other non-homeless health and human services (e.g., Department of Public Social Services, LA Unified School District)

Role: Client-facing vs. Administrative:
- Client-facing: Case managers, matchers, housing coordinators, program managers, janitors, site security, etc.
- Administrative: Finance, HR, IT, etc.

Demographics

Organization Size:
- Large orgs: >100 employees
- Small orgs: <= 100 employees and Measure H Funding <= $5M

Organization type: Non-profit; Government

Entry-level: 0-2 years experience
Sector Experience: 2+ years experience

PWLE: Person with lived experience of homelessness or housing instability

Generation:
- Boomer: born 1946-1964
- Gen X: 1965-1980
- Millennial: 1981-1996
- Gen Z: 1997-2012

Data Collection Summary

Below is a mapping of organizations that participated in the various data collection methods.

Total of 52 Unique Organizations	
Provider of Homelessness Services	40
Colleges	5
Affiliate of Homelessness Services (notated *)	5
Philanthropic Organizations	2

Quantitative

Workforce Data Collection Request

1. Brilliant Corners
2. Center for Living and Learning
3. Chrysalis
4. Covenant House California
5. Homeless Health Care LA
6. Housing Works
7. LA Family Housing
8. LAHSA
9. Midnight Mission
10. PATH
11. Safe Place for Youth
12. Skid Row Housing Trust
13. SRO Housing Corporation
14. St. Joseph Center
15. Sycamores
16. The People Concern
17. The Salvation Army
18. The Whole Child Mental Health & Housing
19. Venice Community Housing Corp.

Employee Survey

199 Total Survey Respondents
164 Completed Surveys
82 used the QR code & 117 used the link

1. Center for Living and Learning
2. Chrysalis
3. Covenant House California
4. Department of Mental Health
5. Downtown Women's Center
6. Exodus Recovery
7. First to Serve
8. Hillsides, Youth Moving On
9. Holliday's Helping Hands
10. Homeless Health Care LA
11. Hope of the Valley
12. HOPICS
13. Housing Auth. Of City of LA
14. Housing Works
15. Integrated Recovery Network
16. LA Family Housing
17. Los Angeles County MTA*
18. Maxim Healthcare Services*
19. National Health Foundation
20. New Direction Comm. Prog.
21. PATH
22. Proyecto Pastoral
23. RICMS
24. Safe Place for Youth
25. Skid Row Housing Trust
26. SRO Housing Corporation
27. St. John's Well Child & Family
28. St. Joseph Center
29. Sycamores
30. Tarzana Treatment Center
31. Thai CDC*
32. The Center in Hollywood
33. The People Concern
34. The Whole Child
35. Tom Red Gate Mem. Recovery*
36. UCLA
37. UCSF Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative*
38. Union Station Homeless Servi.
39. Valley Oasis
40. Venice Comm. Housing Corp.
41. Volunteers of America
42. World Famous Skid Row Community Clean Up Tours

Qualitative

Focus Groups

1. Chrysalis
2. Covenant House California
3. PATH
4. Skid Row Housing Trust
5. St. John's Community Health
6. St. Joseph Center
7. Sycamores
8. The People Concern
9. Venice Community Housing Corporation

Interviews

Workforce View:
1. HOPICS
2. LA Family Housing
3. PATH
4. St. Joseph Center
5. The People Concern
6. The Salvation Army

Attraction View:
1. Careers for A Cause
2. LA City College
3. Santa Monica College
4. USC

Sponsor View:
1. Hilton Foundation
2. Weingart

Executive Summary

Below reflects the key workforce challenges that are hindering LA Homelessness Services Sector's ability to attract, retain, and develop talent.

Getting into the Sector

The **first impression** of homeless services and the **ability to attract candidates** to the workforce

Succeeding in Sector

The ability to **effectively train and support** employees to deliver services and **ultimately retain** the workforce

Leading in Sector

The **proficiency** of the **employee's skills and abilities** that enables them to feel confident in **developing others** to grow the workforce

Key Talent Themes Driving LA's Homeless Services Workforce Challenges

Unique to homelessness services

- Lack of employee support due to back office constraints
- Negative external perception of the sector
- Inconsistent knowledge management procedures and resources
- Trial by fire sector culture
- Mental and emotional health needs for all employees
- Agency hop
- Untailored benefits for key demographics
- Lack of security when engaging with clients
- Lack of infrastructure to support PWLE in the workforce

Common in other sectors

- Increased job demands creating retention risk
- Inconsistent learning opportunities
- Vague competencies for critical roles
- Lack of diverse representation in executive leadership
- Over indexing on compensation as talent driver
- Undefined career paths

Voice of the Sector Employee Findings

Below articulates key insights we heard from employees within the sector through focus groups. We identified **common ways employees can be retained** and unique experiences that **are causing challenges** for specific employee groups.

Common Retention Levers

- **Increased Collaboration**: Connection, awareness, and collaboration with other roles within their agency as well as other agencies
- **Training**: Role-specific training as well as generalized training that prepares employees for their role as well as upskills them through their career
- **Mental Health Services & Coping Skills**: Availability and ease of access to mental health services as well as sector-wide training on mental health coping skills

BIPOC Leader | Site Leader | Back Office Professional | Gen Z Candidate | Mental Health Specialist | PWLE Employee | Program Manager | Case Manager | Outreach Coordinator

Unique Priority Pain Points

Understanding of Sector Progress: Access into recent trends within the sector such as progress of ending homelessness and updates on critical housing legislation changes

Confidential Workspace: There can be limited availability of confidential spaces to provide mental health services in the agency and the homeless shelter

Physical Safety: The need to feel safe while engaging with clients, especially when offsite from the agency location

The Time to Prioritize Your Workforce is Now

We see **significant workforce hiring needs in the near and intermediate future**. Using the historical attrition rate and forecasted future workforce needs, the sector will need to increase their **growth rate by 20% from 2022 to 2023** in order to achieve the optimal workforce and meet the needs of the homeless services sector.

+ 11% growth occurred from the workforce last year to the current workforce

Hiring rate is **barely able to compensate for attrition.** This results in recruiting to **back-fill, not to expand.**

+ 20% growth rate gap

+ 31% growth from the current workforce is needed to achieve the optimal workforce in the future

7118

3271

8000

1349

2216

11565

-2389

33% of the **prior workforce exited. 47%** of employees who left last year had only **0 – 2 years tenure.** This is a **concerning attrition rate** which highlights the imperative to **retain employees.**

~3,565 new positions needed over the next year. There are currently 1,349 open positions, but an additional 2,216 positions will need to be filled in order to meet the optimal workforce of 11,545.

Workforce Prior | Exited 2022 | Hired 2022 | Workforce Now | Open Positions 2022 | Needed 2023 | Optimal Workforce

Past | Present | Future

Getting into the Sector

Getting into the Sector: Analysis Findings

While the **hiring rate is scarcely addressing the workforce gaps caused by attrition,** there are opportunities to **attract more talent** through untapped talent pools, **especially for roles that don't require a bachelor's degree**.

LA County Findings

30% of the sector left their organization **just last year**

57% of workforce stakeholder interviews mentioned that a **bachelor's degree isn't required for all positions**

9% of the workforce is **Gen Z**
19% of the workforce is **PWLE**

43% of survey respondents were **indifferent or disagreed** that **recruitment** in the homeless services sector is an **efficient and transparent process**

57% of focus group participants **shared negative views** of the perception of the sector

External Market Insight

- Leading practice suggests 30% attrition is abnormal as **healthy attrition** tends to be **10% or less**
- **Hiring rate** should **increase to more than 41%** to not only account for attrition but **future growth needs**

- **High competition for talent** across industries is creating an urgency to hire non-traditional talent or **untapped talent pools**
- **Robust learning programs** must be in place for success

- Gen Z makes up **~12% - 15% in any given industry**
- With proper infrastructure, a **healthy representation of PWLE** in the workforce would be **~33%**

- To provide **more transparency on what roles are available** and to create a one-stop-shop of opportunities, the sector can benefit from a **centralized job board**

- **Emphasizes LA County's strengths** and emphasize how **potential candidates can advance the mission** of the sector through a **rebrand** to better attract talent
  - Gen Z in particular

Where is Talent Coming From and Who Do You Need?

Top Industry Feeders to LA Homelessness Services Sector

Average Inflow to the sector from 2008 to 2022: Majority of your talent is coming from the homelessness services sector which can be attributed to "agency hop."

43% → Homelessness Sector

10% → Marketing, Financial, or People Services

10% → Government

SECTOR

LA homelessness services is 6:1
Leading practice suggests a ~3:1 - 4:1 ratio
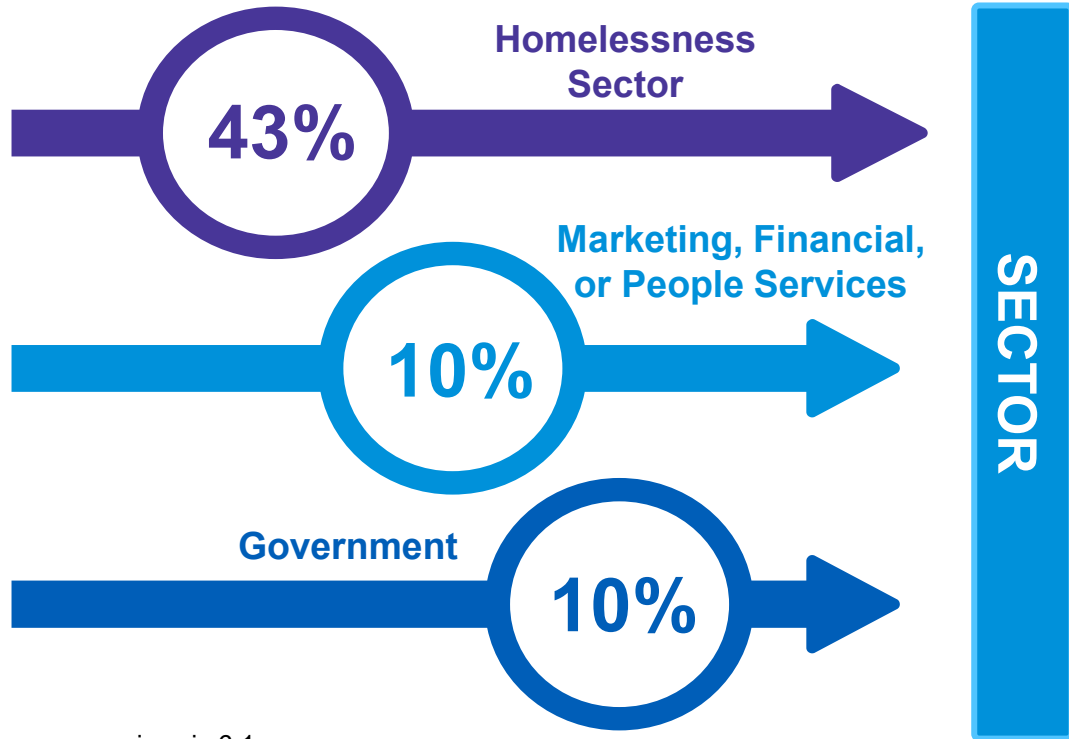
Top 3 Roles Anticipated for Hire in Next Calendar Year

The **critical roles for hire** identified by organizations in the sector reflect **client-facing roles**. Back office constraints* are a challenge across the sector, however, **back office / administrative roles are not prioritized for recruitment.**

Case Managers

Outreach Specialists

Program Managers

Case Managers were identified as the greatest hiring need by **69% of organizations.**

Outreach Specialists (i.e., peer advocates, navigators) were identified as the greatest hiring need by **33% of organizations.**

Program Managers were identified as the **third most anticipated role.**

Entry Level

Sector Experience

Branding Sector Perception for a Lasting First Impression

In order to effectively attract more talent to the sector, **there is a need for a rebrand**. A rebrand highlights the strengths of the sector but remains transparent about the shortfalls of the sector. Once a brand campaign is launched, the sector will have more opportunities to **recruit talent through the different channels** below.

What is your brand?

57% of focus group participants **shared negative views** of the perception of the sector due to being **underpaid for challenging work** and due to the sector **failing to mitigate homelessness in LA County**.

Why is brand important?

Although the sector is known for its societal impact, negative perceptions of work, benefits, and **lack of access to current trends as BIPOC leaders mentioned** led to fewer applicants. To attract new talent pools, **the sector needs to "re-brand" itself to address this negative external perception**.

How do you take your brand to market?

The channels and relationships you leverage to attract new talent will be critical to drive attraction and build your workforce. **Each channel and candidate profile will require unique, tailored attraction tactics.**

RECRUITING CHANNELS

Entry Level
(0-2 YOE)

- College & University Recruiting
- Social Media (i.e., TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat)

- LinkedIn
- Organization's Website
- Job Boards (i.e., Indeed, Glassdoor)*

Sector Experience
(2+ YOE)

- Referrals and Relationships
- Professional and Diversity Organizations
- Nonprofit Recruiting Agencies (i.e., Scion Nonprofit)

*Leading practice: Centralized LA County Homelessness Services specific job board

Key Recruitment Insights for Untapped Talent Pools

From a demographic perspective, **Gen Z and PWLE** are **large untapped talent pools**, especially for **entry-level roles**.

Gen Z

Gen Z is a **motivated talent pool** that aims to make a positive impact on society. Gen Z talent **wants to feel valued** and given a clear career map.

Challenges

- LA County homelessness crisis is only increasing
- Career paths are not well defined
- Outdated technology within the sector
- Reverse mentorship is not common

Key Attraction Levers

- Develop a marketing campaign detailing a new hire's **scope of influence**, opportunities to make social change, and rotational opportunities for skills development

9% of the current workforce is Gen Z

PWLE

PWLE are a **directly invested** talent pool that helps those in need by their past experiences. PWLE has **valuable experience crucial** to the industry.

Challenges

- Onboarding has a "trial by fire" mentality that makes new hire success difficult
- Limited on-demand mental health clinicians on site despite triggering situations
- Limited ability to track PWLE demographics due to back office constraints

Key Attraction Levers

- Communicate **mental health resources** during the recruiting process
- Allow PWLE to explore different roles through a **rotational program**
- Provide access to benefits specialists to **mitigate the "benefits cliff"**

19% *of the current workforce is PWLE

*53% of agencies that participated in the workforce data collection do not formally track PWLE

Talent Attraction Considerations and Next Steps

Development & Improvement Considerations for LA County

Improve Clarity on Roles

- Job descriptions must align directly to role competencies
- Hiring Managers and Recruiters should be able to articulate potential 2 - 3 year career opportunities especially for critical roles
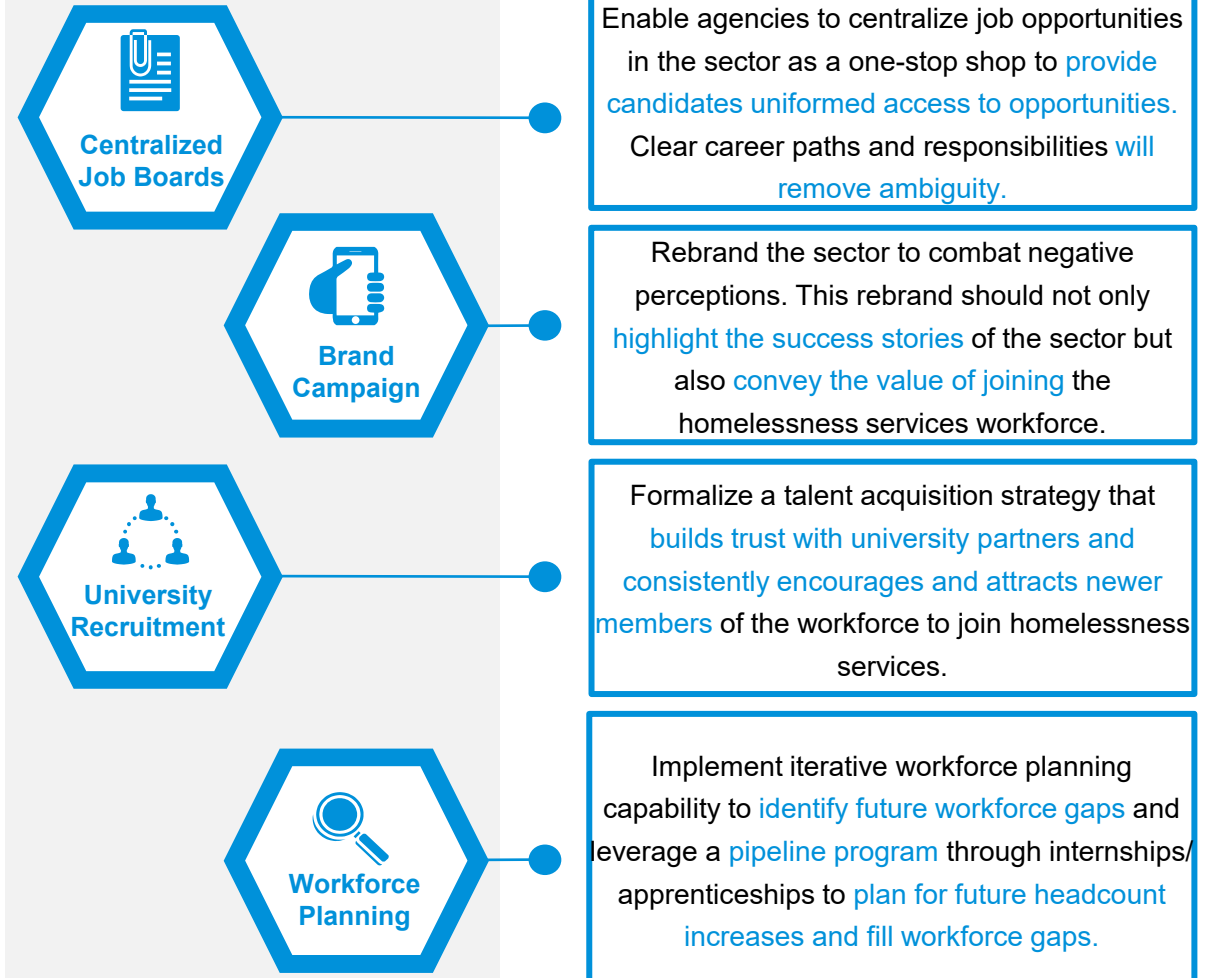
Enhance Brand Perception

- Marketing campaigns should articulate clear mission alignment and career paths within the workforce
- Jobs postings have to foster brand awareness by keeping up with the demand for new talent

Prioritize Workforce Planning

- Develop your workforce planning capability to forecast and predict the required workforce needs and determine the skills and capabilities needed for the future workforce
- Establish and leverage pipeline programs to help attract, develop, and forecast the future workforce (e.g., Careers for A Cause) through formalized internships, rotation programs, etc.

Directional Next Steps

Centralized Job Boards
Enable agencies to centralize job opportunities in the sector as a one-stop shop to provide candidates uniformed access to opportunities. Clear career paths and responsibilities will remove ambiguity.

Brand Campaign
Rebrand the sector to combat negative perceptions. This rebrand should not only highlight the success stories of the sector but also convey the value of joining the homelessness services workforce.

University Recruitment
Formalize a talent acquisition strategy that builds trust with university partners and consistently encourages and attracts newer members of the workforce to join homelessness services.

Workforce Planning
Implement iterative workforce planning capability to identify future workforce gaps and leverage a pipeline program through internships/apprenticeships to plan for future headcount increases and fill workforce gaps.

Succeeding in Sector

Succeeding in the Sector: Analysis Findings

> **Increased training opportunities, enhanced onboarding, customized benefits for key demographics, and resources to feel safe** while working would **enhance the employee experience** and enable sector employees to be more **successful in their role**.

LA County Findings

- **60%** of Case Managers in focus groups called out "**lack of training**" as the **biggest challenge**

- **34%** of survey participants selected **"good and/or competitive benefits package" as a top reason to continue working** in the homeless services sector

- **63%** of employees in homelessness services sector of LA **identify as female**

- **50%** of survey respondents feel the sector keeps them **safe from hazardous situations** and **working conditions** which leads to burnout and decreased employee morale

External Market Insight

- Leading practice suggests **targeted learning** based on skills required by roles **promotes career advancement and helps influence retention**

- ***What's important to workers when looking for a new job?**
  - **96%** Financial Compensation
  - **91%** Personal time off/sick leave
  - **88%** Health benefits

- Leading organizations **understand their demographics** and provide **customized policies and benefits** options to meet their needs (e.g., flexible work arrangements) to **enhance retention**

- Workers who do not feel safe on the job are **a major talent risk** and are more **likely to be actively seeking safer opportunities**

Cultivating a Career in the Sector

An organization's **skills framework** serves as the **foundation** for your **training strategy** and ultimately **career advancement**. Defining and utilizing these three talent development components will enable LA to have role clarity, role-specific training opportunities, and clear paths to career advancement.

Skills Framework

Training Strategy

Career Advancement

Skills Framework

- The sector does not have an understanding of the critical skills and capabilities needed for their workforce. A defined skills framework and evaluation process would increase role clarity and serve as a framework for the training strategy.
- Key skills for critical roles need to be identified and built into the skills framework. Critical roles:
  - Case Manager
  - Outreach Specialist
  - Program Managers
  - Back office

Training Strategy

- Due to unidentified critical skills, training curriculums are not aligned to meet the needs of the future workforce
- Curriculums to further develop:
  - De-Escalation
  - Mental Health Awareness
  - Self-Care Coping Mechanisms
  - Empathy
  - Job-Specific Training
- New Hire Training Needs:
  - Overview of the sector, policies, and clients it serves
- Seasoned Employee Training Needs:
  - Ongoing training on updates to housing crisis and housing laws
- Prioritize time and resources to develop, deliver, and participate in trainings through back office support

Career Advancement

- Lack of career advancement is a main contributor to attrition
- Employees don't have a clear understanding of the other roles and programs within their agency or the sector leading to unawareness of other available career opportunities
- Perception of a glass ceiling within the sector leaves minority employees discouraged about their career path
- Career mobility can be limited due to new roles only becoming available due to promotion or turnover

The Case Manager Career Challenge

Case Managers are the most critical role within the sector because according to the sector workforce data, **69% of respondents said that it is the most common role to hire for in the future and 56% said that Case Managers were the most common role that exited their job**. This shows that while Case Managers are the most critical role, they face a variety of challenges when cultivating their career:

Pain Points from the Case Manager Focus Group:

1. **25%** stated that there **wasn't a detailed enough description of what their role** would entail during the recruitment process

2. **60%** participants called out **lack of training as their biggest challenge**

3. **41%** said that they **needed more career support** from management

4. **44%** mentioned they **did not know of any career advancement opportunities**

Career Lifecycle

2 Onboarding

2 Ongoing Training

1 Recruitment

3 Professional Development

4 Career Advancement

Required Resources to Thrive

KPMG recommends the following **four areas of improvement** for LA county Homeless Services to help Coordinators, Outreach Specialists, and other client-facing roles **succeed in their jobs.**

People Resources

- Employees feel like their **supervisors are not readily available** to support their **development** or coach them through **challenges**
- **Lack of understanding** of **what other roles do** causing confusion around who to go to for help on issues
- **Inconsistent practices** and **policies** results in managers not knowing how to answer their direct reports' questions

Informational Resources

- **Unclear knowledge management system** resulting in employees not knowing where to go for specific resources (i.e. adult vs. youth housing information)
- **Lack of resources** related to **housing laws**, information on the housing crisis, eviction legislation, and other relevant housing laws

Technology

- Lack of prioritizing funding for **new technology** to enhance the **efficiency and effectiveness** of the sector, especially for the **back office function**
- **Insufficient resources** from the **IT department** to support organizational needs
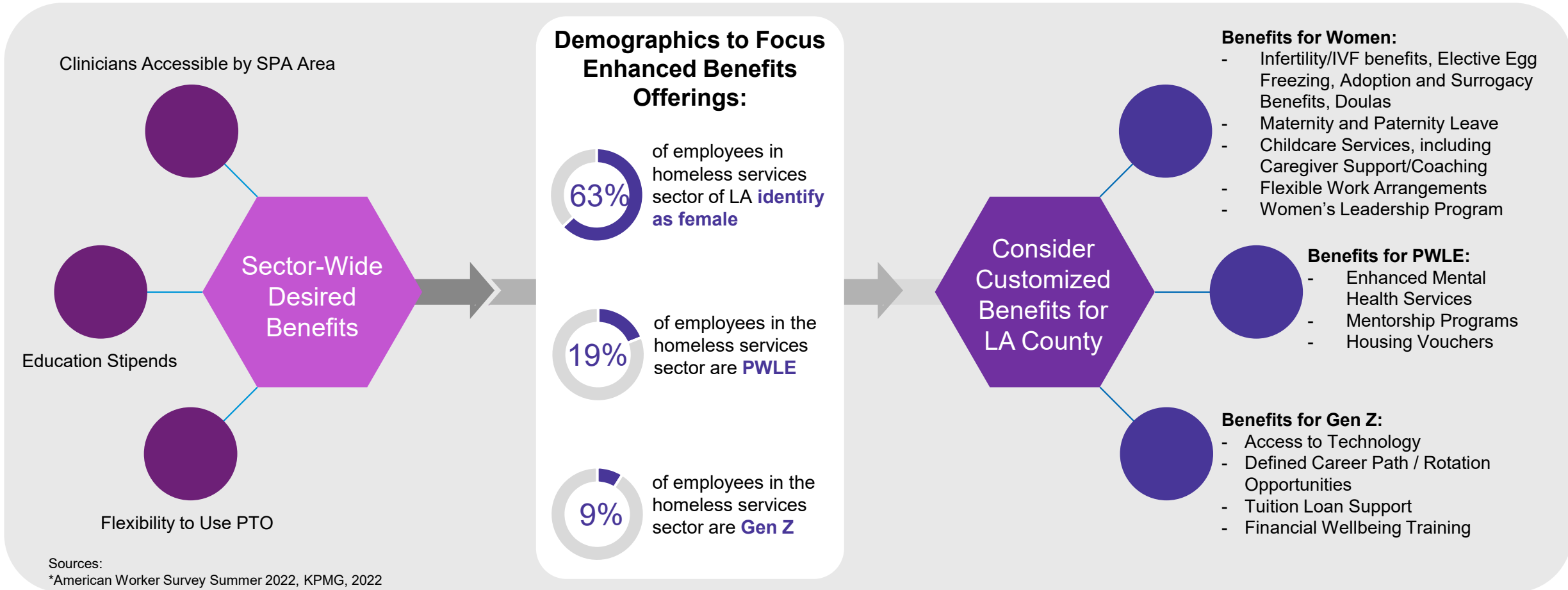
Physical Safety Resources

- Frontline employees stated that they do **not feel physically safe** when going offsite **by themselves** to perform work duties
- Employees may **observe traumatic events** so feeling **physically safe** is important during those times

Benefits to Back You Up

52% of workers **will continue at their organization** if they have a good or **competitive benefits package**.* Based on focus groups and interviews, there were a variety of sector-wide benefits that current employees **would like to have** in order to **stay in the sector**. Based on key demographics, there is an opportunity to **tailor benefits to key personas** to enhance their experience and **provide the support needed to succeed in their work**.

Clinicians Accessible by SPA Area

Education Stipends

Flexibility to Use PTO

Sector-Wide Desired Benefits

Demographics to Focus Enhanced Benefits Offerings:

63% of employees in homeless services sector of LA **identify as female**

19% of employees in the homeless services sector are **PWLE**

9% of employees in the homeless services sector are **Gen Z**

Consider Customized Benefits for LA County

Benefits for Women:
- Infertility/IVF benefits, Elective Egg Freezing, Adoption and Surrogacy Benefits, Doulas
- Maternity and Paternity Leave
- Childcare Services, including Caregiver Support/Coaching
- Flexible Work Arrangements
- Women's Leadership Program

Benefits for PWLE:
- Enhanced Mental Health Services
- Mentorship Programs
- Housing Vouchers

Benefits for Gen Z:
- Access to Technology
- Defined Career Path / Rotation Opportunities
- Tuition Loan Support
- Financial Wellbeing Training

Sources:
*American Worker Survey Summer 2022, KPMG, 2022

Talent Retention Considerations and Next Steps

Development & Improvement Considerations for LA County

Workforce Development

- Organizations should focus on learning by persona and role to directly link it to retention and a more impactful work experience.
- Ongoing training and application of skills must be implemented to build key skills needed to grow the sector. To help retention and apply learning on the job, skills should be connected to employee career advancement.

Employee Benefits

- Employers need to offer appealing and relevant benefits to the key demographics within the sector in order to recruit, retain, and engage their workforce.
- When it comes to benefits, workers will continue at their organization if they have a competitive benefits package including health benefits, personal time off, flexibility, and parental leave.

Directional Next Steps

Training
Robust training curriculums and learning paths need to be developed across all roles and levels within the sector that includes key training topics needed to prepare the workforce for their duties.

Career Pathing
Employees need to have a clear view of their career path in critical roles. This includes creating a sector-wide governance framework and tying that to lateral and horizontal career opportunities.

Benefits
Outside of compensation, there are unique benefits that can retain employees. Some of these benefits are on-demand mental health benefits, education stipends, telehealth, and more prioritized PTO.

Knowledge Management
Employees feel that the resources they need are either not available or easy to find. A centralized knowledge management framework would solve this issue.

Skills Framework
A skills framework needs to be developed as a baseline for your learning and career path strategies. It should include key behavior statements tied to core job responsibilities.
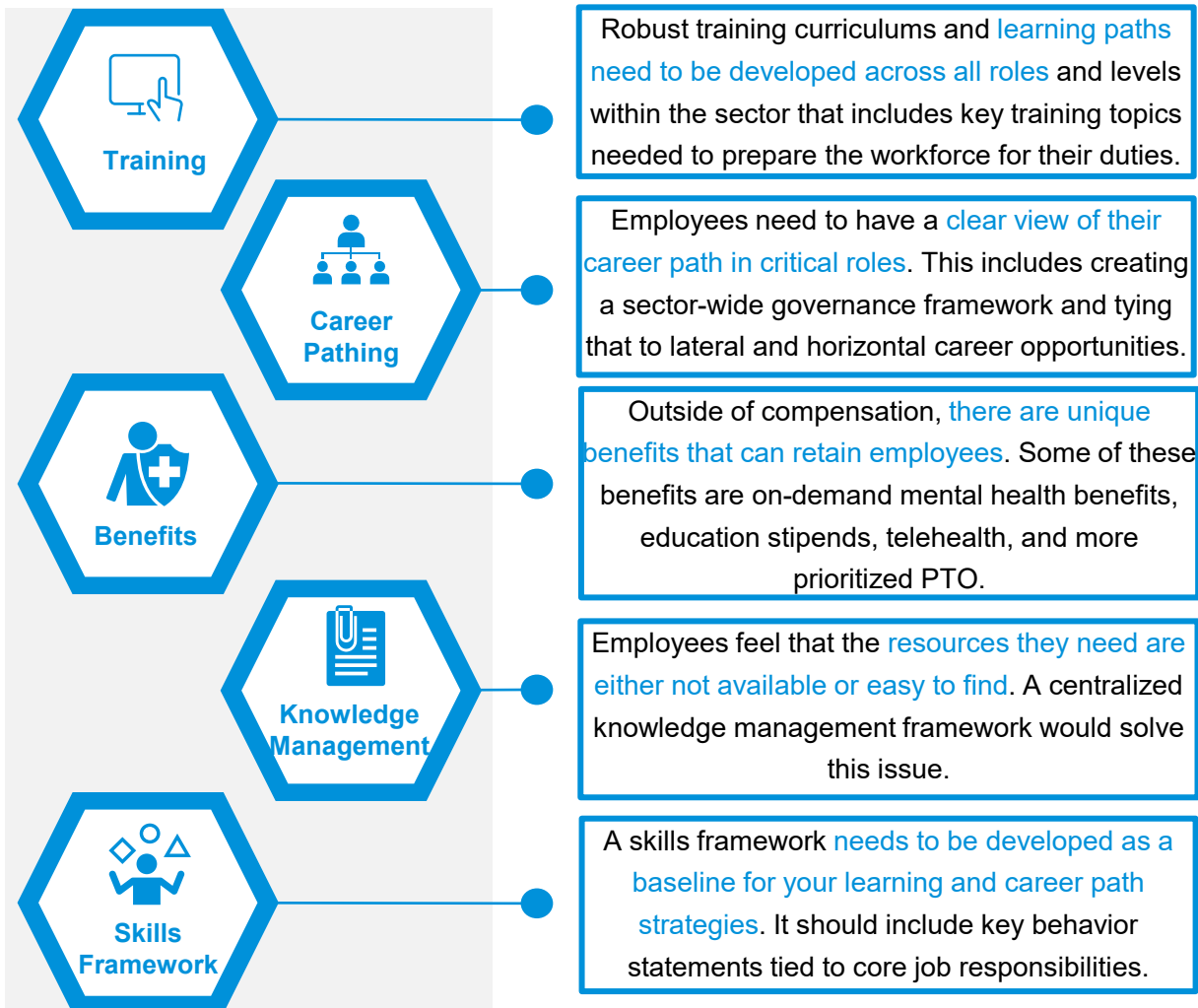
Leading in Sector

Leading in the Sector: Analysis Findings

The data below leads us to believe a reason **sector employees leave** is because they **don't have control** over their own **career progression**. While this influences retention, this also impacts development as there is **not enough employees secure in their role to effectively develop** others in the workforce.

LA County Findings	External Market Insights

LA County Findings

25% of survey respondents **indicate opportunity** to gain skills/ advance their career as a **top 3 reason for working** in sector, while

18% of respondents **mention no longer** gaining skills / no opportunities to advance as a **top 3 reason to leave**

53% of employees have **less than 2 years of tenure** at their current agency

47% of all employees who left their agency last year **left within 0 – 2 year** tenure range

External Market Insights

- Only *58% of workers** across industries say they have open **access to learning paths** within their organization
- Homeless services sector can take this **opportunity to engage their employees** given it is a **top reason they join**

- With **over 1/2** of the current workforce with **less than 2 years tenure** employees are learning from other employees that haven't mastered their current position **leading to "Trial by Fire"** sector culture

- Average **tenure across industries ~4 years+** vs. **~3-4 years in homeless sector** nationally
- Leading practice suggests **peer development as a retention and development tool to mitigate** the amount of **employees leaving** the sector in this tenure range

Tenure of Homeless Services Employees Nationally

It is likely that cities with a **higher average of tenured employees** are **more effectively developing their workforce**. The data below reflects **Houston** is not only a leader in tenure, but we can assume they have **invested in the retention** of employees as the average **tenure has increased by 100% from 2020 – 2022**.

Average Tenure (Years)

Average Tenure

Calendar Year
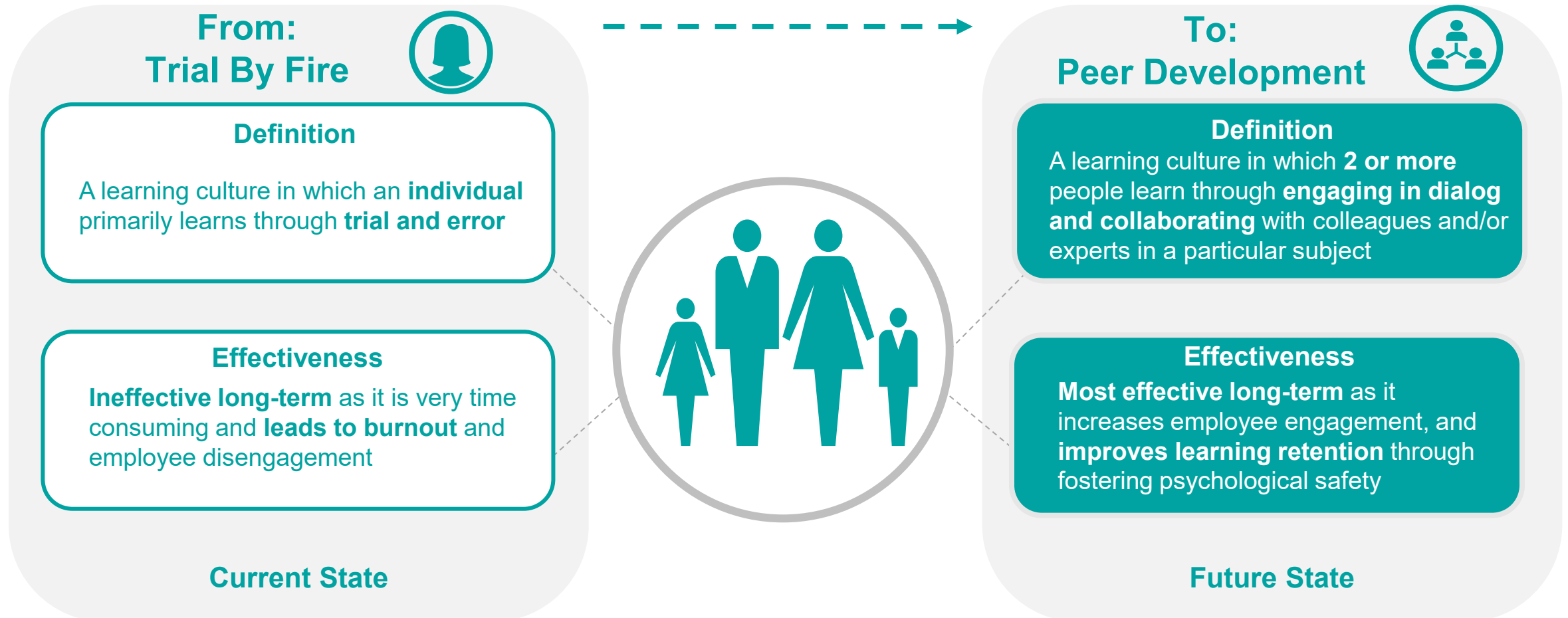
Houston
Boston
Los Angeles
San Francisco

Key Observations

- **Houston is leading** overall at ~4 years of tenure per employee
  - Since 2020, Houston has been able to **increase their average tenure from 3 years to 4 years**

- **Western region cities are trending lower** in overall tenure
  - Los Angeles & San Francisco tenure is **~ 3 years**

- Los Angeles has **great opportunity** to develop more employees to **become more proficient in their role** to nurture and develop others

Curating a Culture of Peer Development

Every organization has a learning ecosystem that is **established deliberately or not**, similar to how an organization's **culture manifests with or without the desired intention**. LA's homelessness services workforce has an opportunity to **shift its "trial by fire" culture to a peer-focused** environment.

From: Trial By Fire

Definition

A learning culture in which an **individual** primarily learns through **trial and error**

Effectiveness

Ineffective long-term as it is very time consuming and **leads to burnout** and employee disengagement

Current State

To: Peer Development

Definition

A learning culture in which **2 or more** people learn through **engaging in dialog and collaborating** with colleagues and/or experts in a particular subject

Effectiveness

Most effective long-term as it increases employee engagement, and **improves learning retention** through fostering psychological safety

Future State

The Culture Homeless Sector Employees Value

"Only 25% of job success is based upon IQ. 75% is about how your brain believes your behavior matters, **connects to other people,** and manages stress." - Shawn Achor, author of *The Happiness Advantage**

When asked: What are some practices or policies that you would like to see changed and or implemented to improve the experience of employees within the LA homeless services sector?

Management must be supportive of the employees' aspirations and goals related to this sector, and a healthy working environment to all employees.

Practices: making work more community-based, **people not being siloed into their specific roles and being encouraged/engaged to share** resources and experiences.

I need support like being on site, suggesting solutions efficiently and fast enough when an issue arises. **Sometimes I feel on my own when I don't even know what I'm doing.**

I think [representation] is definitely improving but like always I think more could be done. Smaller teams/ individual offices do much better but **upper management still seems disconnected at times despite consistent feedback.**

Administration is all about numbers and documentation. Which I understand is important but safety and care is more important. **I have dealt with many mental health crisis and administration asks "did you document this,"** meanwhile not supporting me with how this affects me.

I think **my supervisor is required to meet one on one** with me an hour a week. But that **doesn't feel like enough.**

I feel that we all have the same goal but **it is split up to feel like we are combatting one another.**

Less red tape to support people. More connections and community building within the sector.

Sources:
8 Stats to Persuade Your Team that Employee Experience Matters, Sapling, 2022

Talent Development Considerations and Next Steps

Development & Improvement Considerations for LA County

Peer to Peer Training

- Organizations need to transition from hierarchical management structures to support peer-to-peer training and flat leadership models.

Learning Journey's Connected to Culture

- 35% of employees are expected to need to be reskilled or upskilled.
- The mission of organization has already shifted.
  - Organizations should move away from simply developing and delivering training to being an active participant in the design of an environment and culture of learning throughout the organization.

Sources:
The Future of HR in the new reality, KPMG, 2020
Future of Learning, KPMG, 2020

Directional Next Steps

Change Learning Culture

Though programs and initiatives influence culture, changing culture requires changing the experience and behavior of sector employees through a change management strategy that can drive the adoption of a new learning culture.

Formalized Two-Way Mentorship

There is a need to formalize reverse mentorship across the sector to ensure younger talent are trained properly while also providing a opportunity for more tenured talent to be inspired by the energy of newer employees.

Develop Tenured Workforce

While there is an emphasis to attract junior talent into the workforce it is mutually imperative to retain and develop tenured employees that can become more capable and confident in their roles to effectively develop others.

Appendix

Appendix Contents

1   **Personas**

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What is a persona?

A persona is a tool to capture the voice of the employee.

Representative
a semi-fictional archetype of a group of people; a representative sample of the workforce

Commonalities
shared lived experiences based on similar identification, behavioral attributes, or community affiliation

Narratives
human-like stories segmented into relevant and meaningful narratives that describe the journey

Non-exhaustive
an indicative view of a predetermined subset of a broader, intersectional population of individuals

Patterns
illustrates the red thread of need across defined groups to identify the structural patterns that help or hurt

Snapshots
reflect a point in time influenced by the current environment and existing programs and support systems

Things to Keep in Mind When Using Personas

Benefits

1
help organizations avoid the "peanut butter spread" approach

2
help challenge assumptions made about people by providing a deeper understanding

3
help target support efforts at a specific somebody, rather than a generic nobody

4
help tune into the factors that can get in the way of knowing what's important

5
help prioritize the order and level of investments needed

Risks

Don't Isolate

isolate one person to just one persona and not a combination of identities or facets

Don't Assume

make assumptions about who an individual is based on their association with a given persona

Don't Assign

put employees in a category simply if they identify with some aspects of a persona's journey

Don't Apply

apply oversimplified negative attributes to characterize a person or group (stereotype)

Don't Discount

discard as overly exaggerated depictions that aren't linked to lived experiences

Meet Daren

BIPOC Leader

" Social justice and equity are most important to me. I love to vicariously influence other people to do what I love to do, but a lot of my staff are one to two missed paychecks from being homeless themselves. "

Daren is committed to the mission of the sector as he has grown to leadership. He's **compelled to motivate his staff** to have the same passion but tends to be **conflicted** because of **how close to homelessness his teams are**.
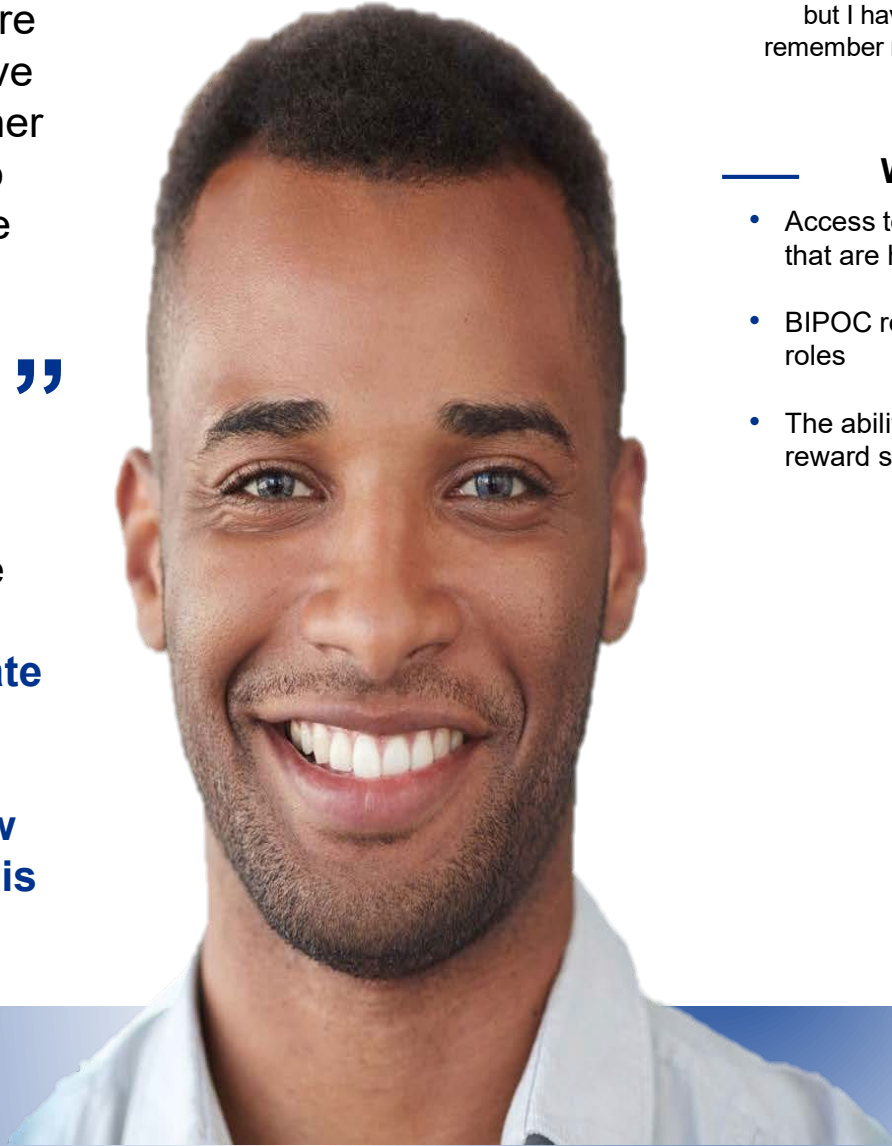
thinks
Homelessness success stories are few and far between, but I have to remember my why.

feels
I feel like at times my race is tokenized. While staff overall is diverse, senior staff is still majority White.

says
The sector should be leading in ways to change institutionalized discrimination and its effects on homelessness.

does
Tries to find ways to make work fun for staff because of how hard it is to keep up morale.

What I Need

- Access to the most recent trends that are happening in LA's sector

- BIPOC representation in executive roles

- The ability to give back and reward staff more

Blockers of My Needs

- Lack of transparency in the latest sector goals and metrics

- Executive representation tends to be homogenously White

- Little to no funding for staff appreciation

Impactful Insight

When Asked: Has your race and/or ethnicity ever impacted your career progression or opportunities within the homeless services sector, positively or negatively? If so, how?

Illustrative Response: "It's known that being Black or Latino or Indigenous or Gay or a Women attached to a corporation or business plays a role in progression but I don't let microaggressions hold me back from achieving my goals."

Meet Capri

Site Senior Leader

"It [Homelessness Services] is a great place to work if you are concerned about the intersections of social problems, but from an external view, the work is difficult and complicated. "

Capri is **motivated to come into work** every day as it shapes her humble perspective on life but the **challenges** of limited funds and the sector's perception makes **work also feel like a tug of war**.

thinks
Budget administration training should be prioritized during onboarding for entry level roles.

feels
I ask for support but never get it until the situation is terrible and then I'm asked what do I need.

says
There isn't enough protected time. I need more time to plan with the current staff.

does
I bring change through leading innovative groups and activities despite C-Suite approval causing limitations.

What I Need

- More robust trainings for staff and myself

- Protected time to innovate

- Standardization of case manager role across the sector

- Clearer marketing of the diversity of homeless services, their varying strengths and challenges

Blockers of My Needs

- Learning is either generalized or on the job

- Limited alternative work arrangements

- No sector-wide job leveling for critical roles

- External perception that homeless services is a blanket solution that can do it all

Impactful Insight

When Asked: Do you ever feel like the goals of your organization are misaligned with the goals of the homeless services sector?

Illustrative Response: "I don't think there is misalignment in [the] bigger picture, but how we get there and solve it is where folks may clash."

Meet Chloe
Back Office Professional

" I wish I knew more about the number of clients we serve and was given a background on the homeless services sector. "

I'm a part of the sector because of my **passion for helping those in need**. I understand my role is critical to the operation but my **access to helpful technology** and **communication with staff** in the field make it harder to do my job effectively.

thinks

Unless you're passionate about the cause than this wouldn't necessarily be a "good place to work."

feels

It is difficult to compete with our funders who do similar work. We can't always compensate staff the same way they are able to.

says

I wish I had prior experience related to the homeless sector.

does

I build rapport with and support client-facing professionals to try to enable quality services to clients.

What I Need

- More information on the clients we serve and background on the sector
- Detailed instructions during onboarding about my role and key responsibilities
- Career advancement opportunities in the back office function
- Access to better technology and data systems
- Ease of communication with client facing staff

Blockers of My Needs

- Lack of agency-wide knowledge management system for all resources related to the sector
- Insufficient job-specific training during onboarding for the back office function
- Limited upward mobility (e.g., can't progress until boss leaves)
- Funding for new technology is lower priority than programs related to direct client services
- Staff in the field don't have capacity to connect with back office professionals

Impactful Insight

When Asked: What reasons would make you leave the sector?

Illustrative Response: "I would leave to go to other agencies that would provide career advancement and higher pay."

Meet Alicia
Gen Z Candidate

thinks

I'm going to change the world, I just don't know how yet.

feels

My job and my purpose have to align for me to feel fulfilled in life.

says

Just keep it real with me, just because I'm young doesn't mean I can't handle the complexities of what we're up against.

does

I volunteer in my spare time to help people experiencing homeless, even though I don't view it as a long-term career.

" I love helping other people, but [the sector] is not marketed as "a good place" to work. "

Alicia is attracted to the sector because of her **passion to create real social impact**, but negative perceptions of the sector's effectiveness lead her to believe she won't **have the impact she wants** to make in the world.

What I Need

- I need to feel like I can really make a change by working in the sector

- A clear visual that outlines my potential career opportunities in the sector

- Access to the latest technology to effectively do my job

- To feel valued and empowered at work by my colleagues but most importantly my leaders

Blockers of My Needs

- Current perception that LA County is not effectively addressing the homelessness crisis

- No clearly defined career paths for the sector's most critical roles

- Keeping up with new technology is a "nice to have" not "must have" in the sector today

- Lack of reverse mentorship that allows executive leaders to stay connected with entry level employees

*Impactful Insight

"People born in Generation Z – i.e., in the late 1990's – have seen seemingly "too large to fail" institutions do exactly that. They were born into technology, with smart phones in their hands several years before they were teenagers. **They've grown up in a very public social media spotlight.** And because their formative years were in such a disrupted world, **they're attracted to environments in which they can experiment.**"

Meet Gary
Mental Health Specialist

thinks
There needs to be more mental health training for all roles in the agency.

feels
Client interventions should not be a one-size-fits-all approach.

says
Sometimes it can be difficult to find a confidential place to meet with my clients.

does
I advocate for and support clients with mental health issues.

"I love helping my clients but sometimes it feels like there are too many barriers to get them the right support."

Gary feels that the **lack of overall mental health training** and **empathy** towards clients with mental health issues within his agency impacts the organization's ability to **best serve and understand his clients**.

What I Need

- Colleagues that understand mental health issues and have empathy towards clients

- Confidential locations to meet with my clients

- Clear understanding of the housing resources that are available to clients

Blockers of My Needs

- There is not enough agency-wide onboarding and ongoing training around mental health and empathy

- Agencies and housing shelters do not always have capacity for confidential conversations

- Lack of centralized, agency-wide knowledge management system for all resources

Impactful Insight

When Asked: How likely are you to pursue a mental health specialist role outside the sector?

Illustrative Response: "Somewhat likely. The lack of housing resources makes me feel helpless and causes burnout."

Meet Johnny

PWLE Employee

thinks
It would be helpful to have training around shared trauma and empathy.

feels
I feel overwhelmed by my new responsibilities and it brings up my previous trauma.

says
It is difficult to understand what it's really like to work in the sector before beginning my role.

does
Leverage my experience with homelessness to help others experiencing similar issues.

"
I need to be able to feel secure with my housing and mental health to be able to effectively do my job. "

Johnny wants to use his lived experience to help those that are currently experiencing homelessness. After being out of the workforce for awhile, he **feels a step behind** and his job brings up his **previous trauma** which causes **stress**.

What I Need

- An understanding of what it is like to work in the homeless services sector before joining the workforce

- Training on the skills needed to prepare me for the workforce (e.g., digital literacy, written communication)

- Access to more mental health services from my employer

Blockers of My Needs

- Lack of opportunities to be exposed to jobs within the sector before entering the workforce

- Onboarding does not fully cover these skills and the sector has a "trial by fire" learning culture

- There is limited on-demand mental health services for employees in the sector

Impactful Insight

When Asked: What career progression opportunities do you have?

Illustrative Response: "I feel comfortable in my current entry level position and worry that if I progress my career the additional stress would cause me to relapse."

Meet Raven
Program Manager

" Most days it feels rewarding but on days where it is so difficult, I think to myself is it worth it? "

Raven is passionate about serving, but is experiencing burnout and **constantly evaluates how sustainable her work is**. She refuses to let her clients or case managers down, but **feels she has minimal impact on ending homelessness**.

thinks
De-escalation techniques should be taught during onboarding. Learning is always trial by fire.

feels
My career has plateaued as I can't advance past Program Manager unless a Director leaves.

says
LAHSA Centralized Academy is for the general population, we need specific training for each provider.

does
Stays on call as needed and consistently works weekends to keep up with job demands.

What I Need

- Career opportunities after my current role

- Relevant trainings in safe spaces to learn

- Ability to make retention decisions for my team

- People outside the sector to respect my service driven career

- Access to real time staff mental health support from licensed professionals

Blockers of My Needs

- Next opportunities are detached from client work

- Learning is ether generalized or on the job

- Unable to influence the retention of my team

- My friends don't know why someone would put themselves through such stressful work

- Currently there is only a employee helpline and monthly DHS consultations

Impactful Insight

When Asked: How likely are you to pursue a program management role outside the sector?

Illustrative Response: "Very likely. I'd finally be able to use my business management degree."

Meet Vivian
Case Manager

thinks
There is lack of clarity on the expectations for the case manager role and not enough training.

feels
Senior leadership only wants to know if you finished your work; they don't support.

says
There needs to be more units available to house the homeless.

does
I ask questions but when I don't get the answers, I do what I think is best for clients.

> I think my supervisor is required to meet one-on-one with me an hour a week, but that doesn't feel like enough.

Vivian entered the field because the sector is a good place to work, and she loves to help people. However, without proper guidance from leadership, she **feels like she is on an island.**

What I Need

- Support and invitation from leadership to make suggestions for improving quality of services
- Hands-on training with program manager and more frequent check-ins with supervisor
- Culture of candor and emotional support when it comes to documenting a safety issue or mental health crisis
- Quicker administration email responses

Blockers of My Needs

- Lack of connectivity from executive leadership to front-line employees
- Program managers don't see my day-to-day work and there isn't enough time to build a mentor relationship
- Administration and management is focused on metrics and documentation over safety and care
- Manager deflects questions to another colleague

Impactful Insight

When Asked: How likely are you to pursue a case management role outside the sector?

Illustrative Response: "Honestly, I would leave for better pay or easier clients. It can take a toll on you to work with difficult clients."

Meet Nita

Outreach Coordinator / Specialist

thinks
Receiving training on the evolving housing market crisis and housing rights would be helpful.

feels
My faith, personal morality clause, and drive to end homelessness keep me in the sector.

says
My gender has negatively effected my opportunities.

does
Creates trust with potential housing landlords despite their distrust in the sector.

"The resources I need to do my job are not readily available and there is not one source of truth."

Nita continues to work in the sector to help others, but feels like the **demands of the job** weren't accurately communicated during the recruitment process and the amount of people experiencing homeless greatly outweighs the resources available making her **feel helpless**.

What I Need

- Ability to collaborate with other roles within my agency or other agencies

- More access to my supervisor through job shadowing and increased communication

- Ease of access to all the resources I need to do my job (e.g., adult vs. youth housing information, policies related to housing, clinical jargon dictionary)

Blockers of My Needs

- Unaware of the different roles within my agency and other agencies work in a silo

- Supervisors lack consistent training and aren't easily accessible

- There is no single source of truth/system (e.g. Coordinated Entry System) when it comes to accessing resources

Impactful Insight

When Asked: What reasons would make you leave the sector?

Illustrative Response: "I would leave for other opportunities such as higher education and higher pay."

Master Report Assumptions

Demographics & Analytics

1	Organization Size: Large organizations (>100 employees), Small organizations (<= 100 employees and Measure H Funding <= $5M)
2	Organization type: Non-profit; Government
3	PWLE: Person with lived experience of homelessness or housing instability
4	Tenure buckets: Entry-level: (0-2 years experience); Experienced Hire: (2+ years experience) includes these ranges: 2-5 years, 5-10 years, 10-20 years, 20+ years
5	Generation (baby boomer is born 1946-1964, gen X is born 1965-1980, gen Z is born 1997 - 2012, millennial is born 1981-1996)
6	Ethnicity (American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American or African Diaspora, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, White, do not track)
7	Gender: (women, man, non-binary, transgender, prefer not to answer, do not track)
8	Time frame of data collection (last year, year prior, year in future)
9	Exit reasons: (COVID-19 vaccination requirement, inability to maintain work-life balance, lack of career advancement, need to become full-time caregiver, no longer gaining skills, manager, better benefits, overall compensation, new job career change, inflexible work hours, training, onboarding, mentorship)
10	Caseload size definition by years of experience/direct reports/programs managed (entry level is 0-2 years, experienced specialist is 2+ years, people leader has one or more direct reports, senior leader is responsible for a site or lead multiple programs)
11	Nature of work: remote, hybrid, on-field
12	Education and experience level buckets (some HS, HS/GED, Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's, PhD, certification or trade), PWLE
13	Job opportunity marketing platforms: (Organization website, LinkedIn, Referrals, college and university recruiting, job boards, other)
14	Survey questions based on five-point scale of employee sentiment (strongly disagree, somewhat disagree, neither agree not disagree, somewhat agree, strongly agree)
15	Salary percentage increase ranges: (0%, 1-5%, 6-10%, 11-15%, 16-20%, 21-25%, 26% or more)

Workforce

1	LA Homelessness Sector: Los Angeles Continuum of Care homeless services system includes over 8,000 positions
2	Provider of Homelessness Services: assists unhoused clients in accessing housing process services (e.g., application of benefits, connecting to funding for housing process, supplemental security income, Medicaid, My Health LA)
3	Affiliate of Homelessness Services: organizations that focus on sanitation, public safety, public health, health care delivery (i.e., hospitals, community clinics), or other health and human services (e.g., Department of Public Social Services, LA Unified School District)
4	Role: Client-facing vs. Administrative: • Client-facing: Case managers, matchers, housing coordinators, program managers, janitors, site security, etc. • Administrative: Finance, HR, IT, etc.

Future

1	~3,565 open positions needed over the next year to reach optimal workforce
2	Within five years we assume a healthy workforce that includes untapped talent for LA County would reflect • Gen Z 12-15% • PWLE 33% representation

Demographics – Workforce Data

Below are the demographic insights from the workforce data collection.

Race & Ethnicity

Black, African Ancestry, or African Diaspora	30.03%
Asian	5.13%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x*	41.67%
Native American or Alaska Native	0.33%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.52%
Two or More Races	3.12%
White	19.19%

Education Level

Some High School	2.09%
High School Graduate/GED	56.79%
Associate's Degree	2.87%
Bachelor's Degree	26.37%
Master's Degree	10.05%
Ph.D. or Higher	0.39%
Certification, Trade, Technical, Vocational School	1.44%

Tenure

Less than 2 years tenure	53.50%
Greater than 2 years but less than 5 years tenure	29.28%
Greater than 5 years but less than 10 years tenure	11.28%
Greater than 10 years tenure but less than 20 years tenure	5.20%
20 or more years of tenure	0.74%

Bi-Lingual Status

Yes, multi-lingual	30.77%
No, I am not fluent/proficient in a language in addition to English	69.23%

Generation

Baby Boomer	13.91%
Generation X	23.72%
Millennial	53.52%
Gen Z	8.85%

LA County Residency

Yes, I am a LA County Resident	85.54%
No, I am not a LA County Resident	14.46%

Disability Status

Yes, I have a disability	6.96%
No, I do not have a disability	93.04%

Gender

Woman	63.66%
Man	34.71%
Transgender	0.02%
Non-Binary	0.31%
Prefer Not to Answer	1.31%

PWLE

Yes, I am a PWLE	19.17%
No, I am not a PWLE	80.83%

Demographics – Focus Group Data

Below are the demographic insights from all the participants in the focus group sessions.

Race & Ethnicity

Black, African Ancestry, or African Diaspora	28.21%
Asian	10.26%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x*	35.90%
Native American or Alaska Native	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%
Two or More Races	12.82%
White	12.82%
Prefer Not to Answer	0%

Education Level

Some High School	0%
High School Graduate/GED	17.95%
Associate's Degree	2.56%
Bachelor's Degree	38.46%
Master's Degree	41.03%
Ph.D. or Higher	0%
Certification, Trade, Technical, Vocational School	0%

Tenure

Less than 2 years tenure	28.21%
Greater than 2 years but less than 5 years tenure	28.21%
Greater than 5 years but less than 10 years tenure	30.77%
Greater than 10 years tenure but less than 20 years tenure	7.69%
20 or more years of tenure	5.13%

Bi-Lingual Status

Yes, Spanish	41.03%
No, I am not fluent/proficient in a language in addition to English	51.28%
Yes, Other	7.69%

Generation

Baby Boomer	5.13%
Generation X	20.51%
Millennial	69.23%
Gen Z	5.13%

LA County Residency

Yes, I am a LA County Resident	90%
No, I am not a LA County Resident	10%

Disability Status

Yes, I have a disability	10.26%
No, I do not have a disability	87.18%
Prefer Not to Answer	2.56%

Gender

Woman	66.67%
Man	28.21%
Transgender	2.56%
Non-Binary	2.56%
Prefer Not to Answer	0%

PWLE

Yes, I am a PWLE	16.67%
No, I am not a PWLE	80.56%
Prefer Not to Answer	2.78%

First Generation College Student

Yes, First Generation College Student	53.85%
No, First Generation College Student	46.15%

Demographics – Employee Survey Data

Below are the demographic insights from the employee survey data.

Race & Ethnicity*

Black, African Ancestry, or African Diaspora	26.59%
Asian	9.83%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x*	42.30%
Native American or Alaska Native	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.58%
Two or More Races	5.78%
White	19.65%
Prefer Not to Answer	2.89%

Education Level

Some High School	1.72%
High School Graduate/GED	18.97%
Associate's Degree	13.22%
Bachelor's Degree	39.08%
Master's Degree	20.11%
Ph.D. or Higher	1.72%
Certification, Trade, Technical, Vocational School	5.17%

Tenure

Less than 2 years tenure	25.29%
Greater than 2 years but less than 5 years tenure	24.14%
Greater than 5 years but less than 10 years tenure	26.44%
Greater than 10 years tenure but less than 20 years tenure	19.54%
20 or more years of tenure	4.60%

Bi-Lingual Status

Yes, Spanish	39.66%
No, I am not fluent/proficient in a language in addition to English	52.30%
Yes, Other	8.05%

Generation

Baby Boomer	9.20%
Generation X	25.29%
Millennial	57.47%
Gen Z	8.05%

LA County Residency

Yes, I am a LA County Resident	94.83%
No, I am not a LA County Resident	5.17%

Disability Status

Yes, I have a disability	13.29%
No, I do not have a disability	76.30%
Prefer Not to Answer	10.40%

Gender

Woman	62.57%
Man	34.50%
Non-Binary	0.58%
Prefer Not to Answer	2.34%

PWLE

Yes, I am a PWLE	29.89%
No, I am not a PWLE	63.22%
Prefer Not to Answer	6.90%

First Generation College Student

Yes, First Generation College Student	61.85%
No, First Generation College Student	38.15%

*When survey participants answered this question, they selected all races that applied resulting in the percentages to equal over 100%