

CFSD Employee Wellness Program Summary

2024

Introduction

In 2022 the Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) administration created the agency's Wellness Program with the intent of addressing retention of high-quality employees. CFSD employees, division leaders, and department heads collaborated with Alvarez and Marshal (A&M) to lay the groundwork for the program design.

Elements incorporated into the design include conducting wellness surveys, training specific to available resources, and reducing the barriers employees experience when trying to access such services. CFSD saw the need to identify and track measurable progress on these goals as critical for the success of ongoing wellness initiatives. The study monitored and assessed metrics of resilience, longevity, and feelings of support as measures to gauge the program's impact and the agency's overall progress on the outlined goals.

The Wellness Program's goals and interventions are communicated to employees in an ongoing manner as a critical component of facilitating buy-in. The Wellness Coordinator carries out this task by visiting all major CFSD offices throughout the state, holding monthly Wellness Collaboration meetings online, facilitating peer share groups, and utilizing other CFSD program opportunities, such as weekly wellness e-mails, quarterly newsletters, and program gatherings.

By engaging employees, offering responsive programming, and tracking the results of wellbeing measures, CFSD aims to create an environment where employees can excel while also elevating their resilience, longevity, and feelings of support.

Strengthening employees' wellness, resilience, and longevity positively impacts CFSD's mission to keep children safe and families strong. A more experienced employee is a better trained employee, who also has increased awareness of the many legal, ethical, and practicalities behind policy and procedure.

Employees with more experience have encountered a more diverse set of challenges, are aware of more resources, and are better able to collaborate creatively with families to address safety issues proactively and potentially without needing to remove children from the home.

Employees who have been supported and provided with assistance in addressing the workplace hazard of secondary trauma are less likely to over- or under-react to challenges facing the families CFSD serves.

These elements all support CFSD's mission of "Keeping Children Safe and Families Strong."

Purposeful Connection with Employees

The Wellness Coordinator visited all six regions on multiple occasions during 2024. These visits encouraged employees to explore the multiple services offered and available to Child and Family Services employees.

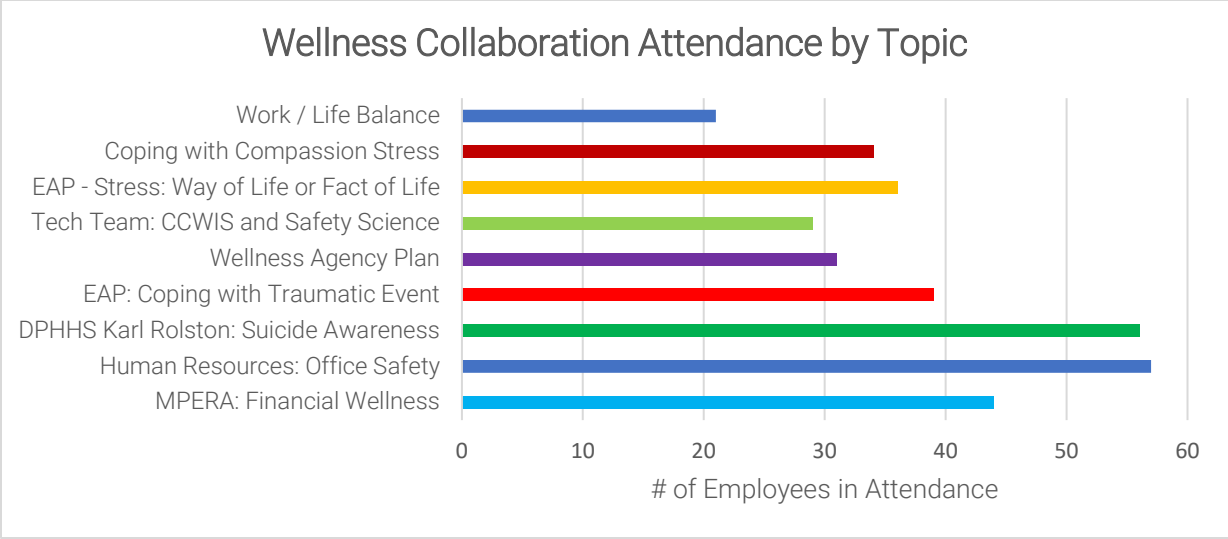
The resources discussed included:

- Financial Wellness information: as offered through PERS and MPERA
- Physical wellness resources: available through Premise state health clinics
- Well-being programs: offered through the Health and Benefits Division.
- Employee Assistance Program: through Human Resources Office of Workforce Wellness.
- Additionally, offices in the region were encouraged to work with the Human Resources Safety Officers to develop or update their Emergency Action Plans, and work with their Employee Safety Group appointees to identify needed and desired safety trainings including De-escalation and Narcan training.

The Wellness Coordinator urged employees to share their visions for where the Wellness Program could grow. These ideas have been noted for current and future program development.

Maintaining consistent communication with employees and encouraging participation in wellness activities are critical components to the program, both as trauma informed practices and as the most important means by which employees can contribute to building a healthy and supportive Wellness Program.

The Wellness Program facilitates ongoing monthly Wellness collaboration meetings that align with timely and relevant training topic requests from employees. Utilizing presenters from multiple resources available to CFSD employees – including other state programs, Human Resources, and the Employee Assistance Program – not only allows CFSD employees to learn more about topics, but also facilitates connections to resources that employees can utilize for their own individual or office needs moving forward.



Employee Safety Group

The Wellness Coordinator works with the Office of Workforce Safety to facilitate the CFSD Employee Safety Group. This group has helped facilitate the creation and maintenance of Emergency Action Plans across the majority of CFSD offices in the state, as well as facilitating additional trainings for over 100 CFSD employees through HR Safety program such as De-escalation, Naloxone training, Drug identification, First Aid, and Active Shooter training in multiple regions.

The first step to an employee being able to assess safety is for him/herself to feel safe in the workspace. The Employee Safety Group has worked with the Human Resources Safety officers to improve office safety through installing cameras, door locks, rearranging office structure, employing safety buttons, or working with landlords to improve lighting, maintenance, or install additional safety measures in a building.

The Employee Safety Group will continue to meet quarterly to address emerging safety issues, training needs, as well as to address the causes of workman’s compensation claims which impact CFSD’s workforce readiness to respond to the needs of the state.

Trauma Informed Training

Trauma Informed Practices in 2024 focused on the importance of maintaining a healthy peer support program at CFSD. This included facilitating conversations around Low Impact Debriefing as a technique to reduce the amount of trauma shared between CFSD employees, as well as providing some guidelines for the peers in how to Look, Listen, and Link their colleagues to appropriate resources that are available through our division, department, and our communities.

Implementing these changes through the empowering of the workforce at both the individual and peer level rather than from a top-down approach will support the buy-in and longevity of these changes at CFSD.

- CFSD Wellness Program facilitated Low Impact Debriefing training in all six CFSD Regions
- CFSD Wellness Coordinator discussed Peer Support and utilizing Department and local resources for highly impactful events in the office.

“Staff seem to really like being able to debrief the trauma of work in the work environment with people who understand the job and can relate. Staff seeing the impacts of on secondhand trauma and learning ways to set their own boundaries was in my opinion the most helpful part of the training.”

Safety Science

Despite the extensive support and safety practices currently in place, incidents that significantly impact the wellness of employees and/or the clients CFSD serves can and do occur. CFSD is committed to learning as much from these situations as possible to understand and improve systematic issues in a blame-free environment.

CFSD will continue to utilize Safety Science, conducting consultation workshops for supervisors, and providing ongoing training for all direct and support staff to foster this learning philosophy across the agency over the coming year.

Moving forward, the Wellness Program will continue to facilitate the employee’s ability to handle overwhelming or traumatizing situations by facilitating him/her in building their own resiliency plan as part of the onboarding curriculum.

Exit and Stay Interviews

Turnover is a natural and healthy part of any organization, even with the best support. The Wellness Program looks forward to actively recruiting, developing, and integrating incoming CFSD employees.

To learn more about the factors which influence employee’s decision to stay or leave Child and Family Services, exit interviews are being facilitated with all employees who

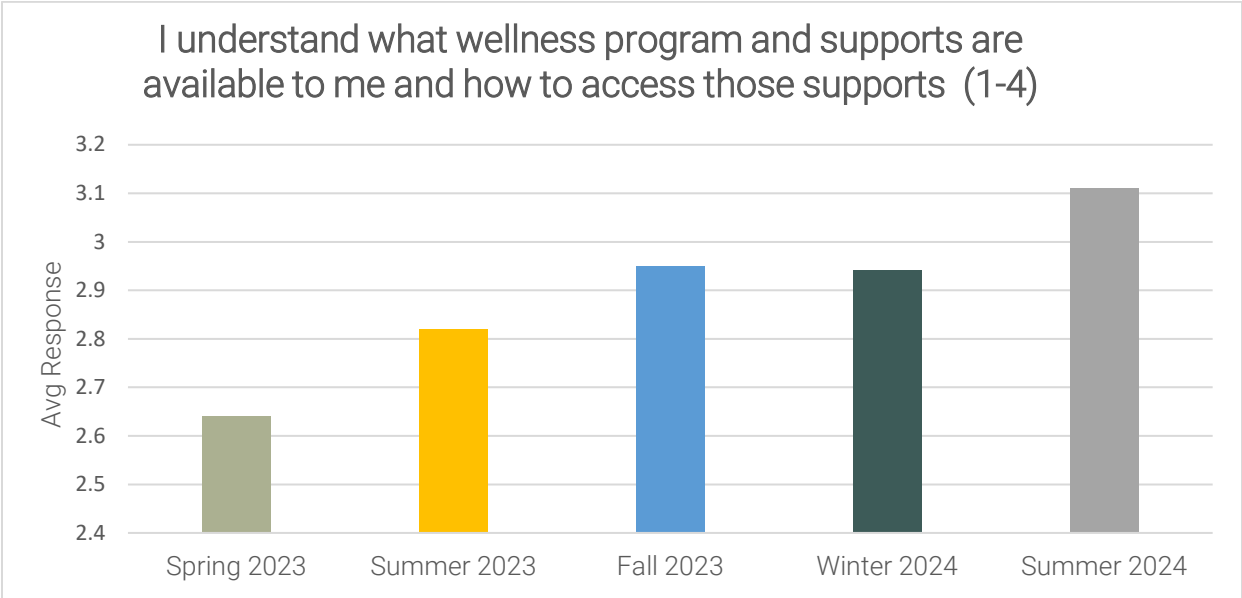
leave the agency, and stay interviews are provided to all CFSD employees when they reach 2 years and 5 years of longevity.

The results of these surveys will further inform recruitment and retention efforts as we continue to partner with the statewide university system, increase use of IV-E stipends to support student practicums and internships, and to collaborate with Human Resources to ensure a capable and stable workforce for the important work CFSD does for Montana children and families.

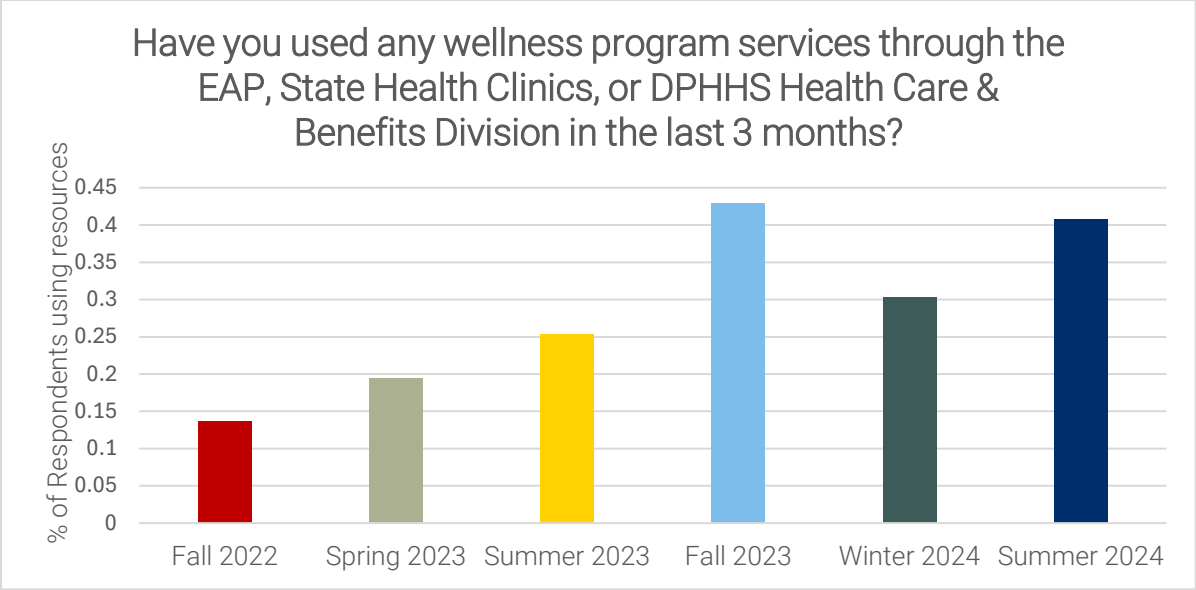
Wellness Surveys

The Wellness Program has continued employee wellness surveys multiple times a year based on questions suggested in the A&M resiliency review, as well as by gauging employee awareness and engagement on several metrics.

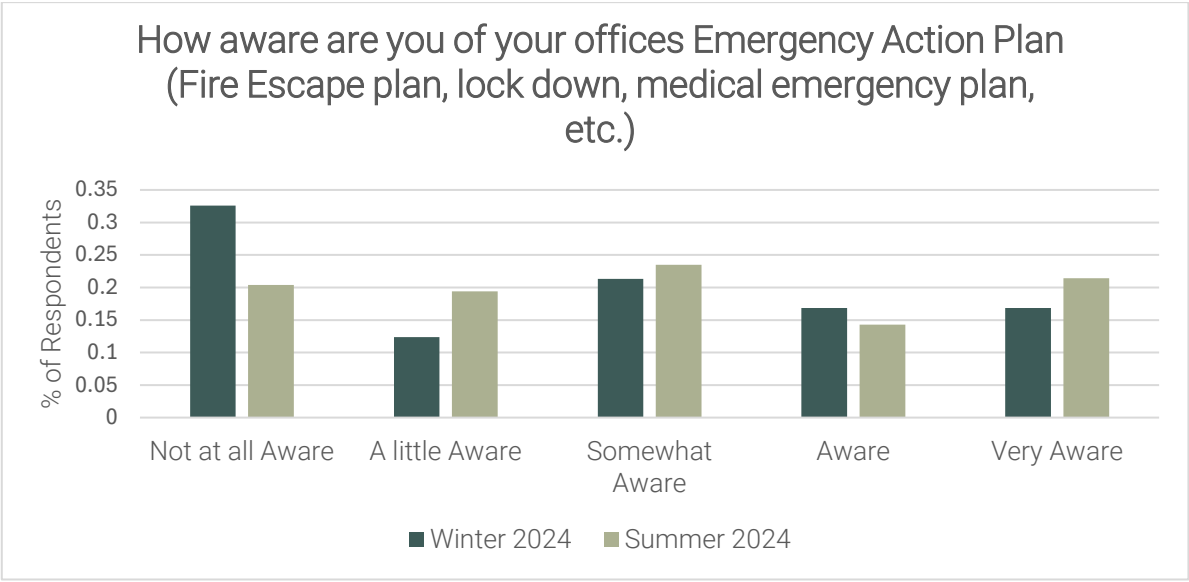
These surveys provide additional opportunities for anonymous employee feedback on Wellness program actions and offerings, enabling CFSD to continuously enhance and customize the wellness initiatives to better cater to staff needs. This past year we have added more timely questions to the survey, focusing on ongoing safety, technology, policy, and engagement efforts happening in the division.



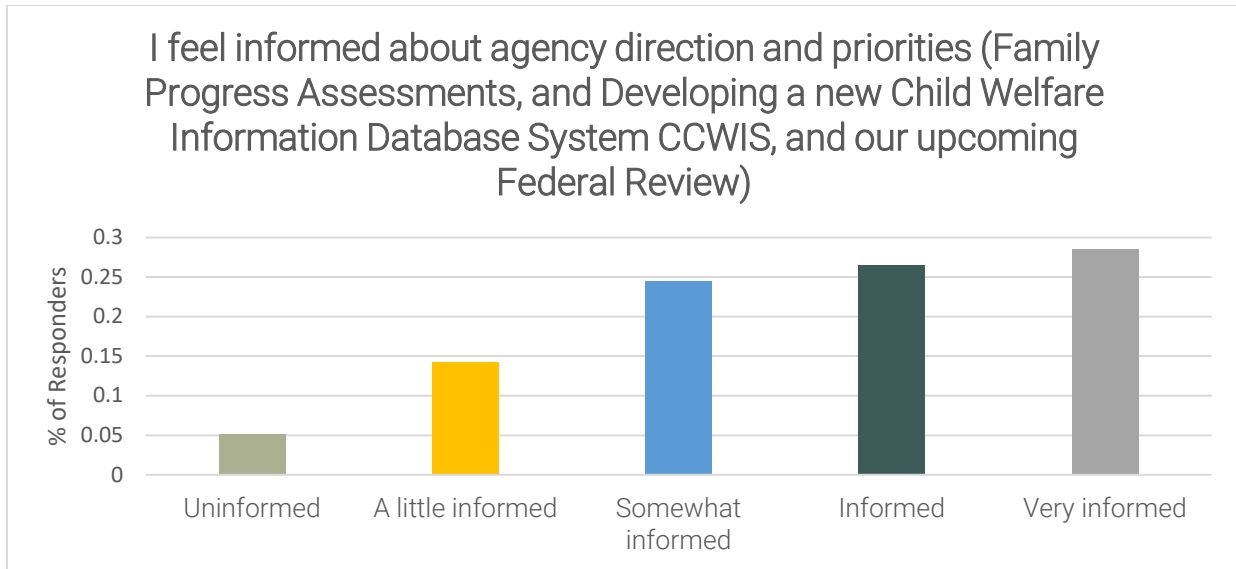
This Chart shows an increasing awareness among employees of the wellness supports available to them.



This chart shows a generally increasing trend in workers using wellness program supports.



This chart shows an increasing awareness among workers of their office Emergency Action Plans, a priority of the Employee Safety Group for 2024.



This chart provided affirmation that the majority of CFSD employees are informed of the major direction and priorities of CFSD in the upcoming year.

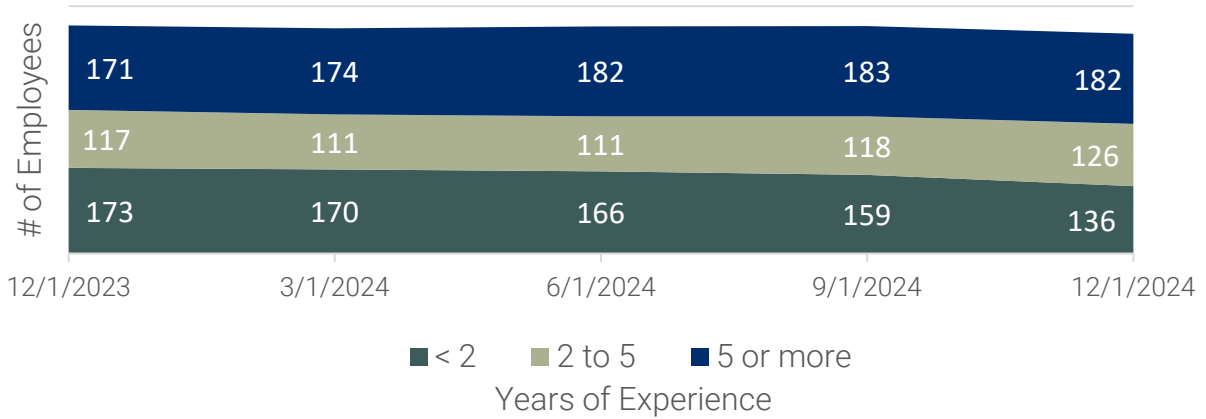
CFSD employees' ability to provide feedback for the Wellness program will be increased moving forward. By integrating evidence-based wellness questions into the surveys, the agency will improve the accuracy and understanding of the challenges CFSD employees face, their use of current resources, and what further supports could be implemented to improve employee support in a trauma informed environment.

Wellness Program Impact

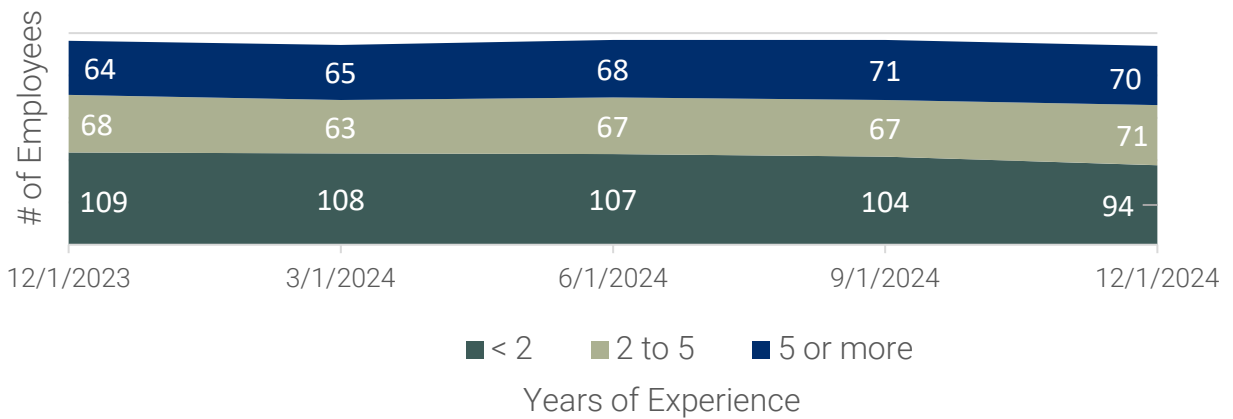
The Wellness Program will continue to work with Human Resources to provide ongoing timely measures of hiring, retaining, and departure of agency employees to measure improvements over time. The following four graphs regarding employment longevity depict a positive trend, but there is more work to be done to see true long-term improvements.

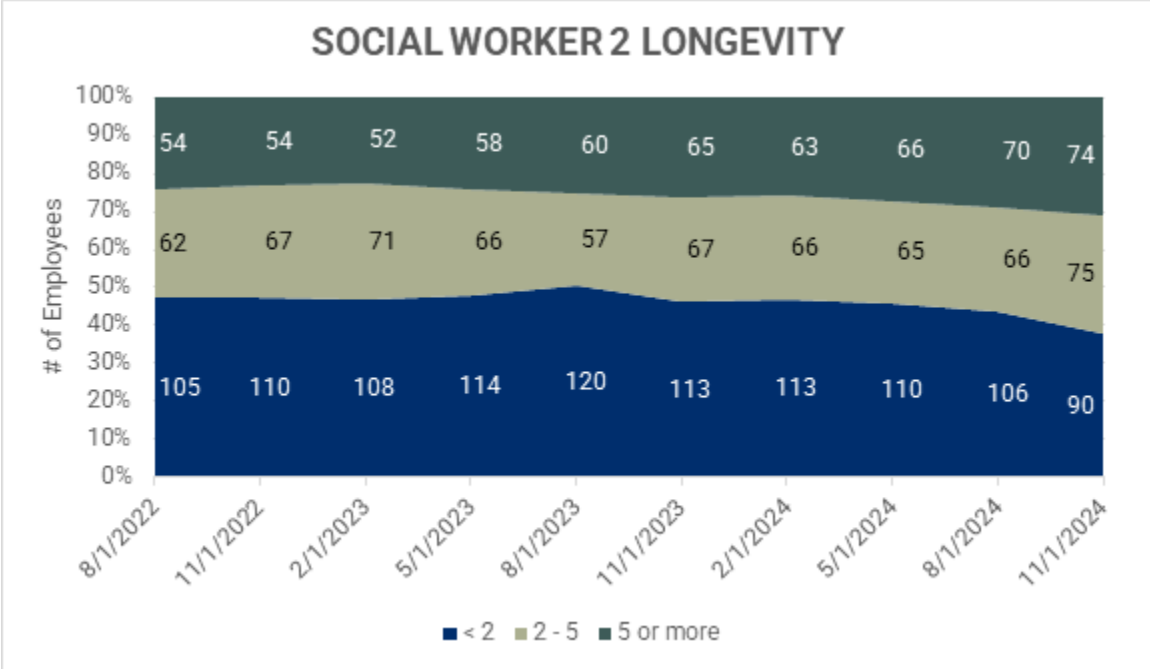
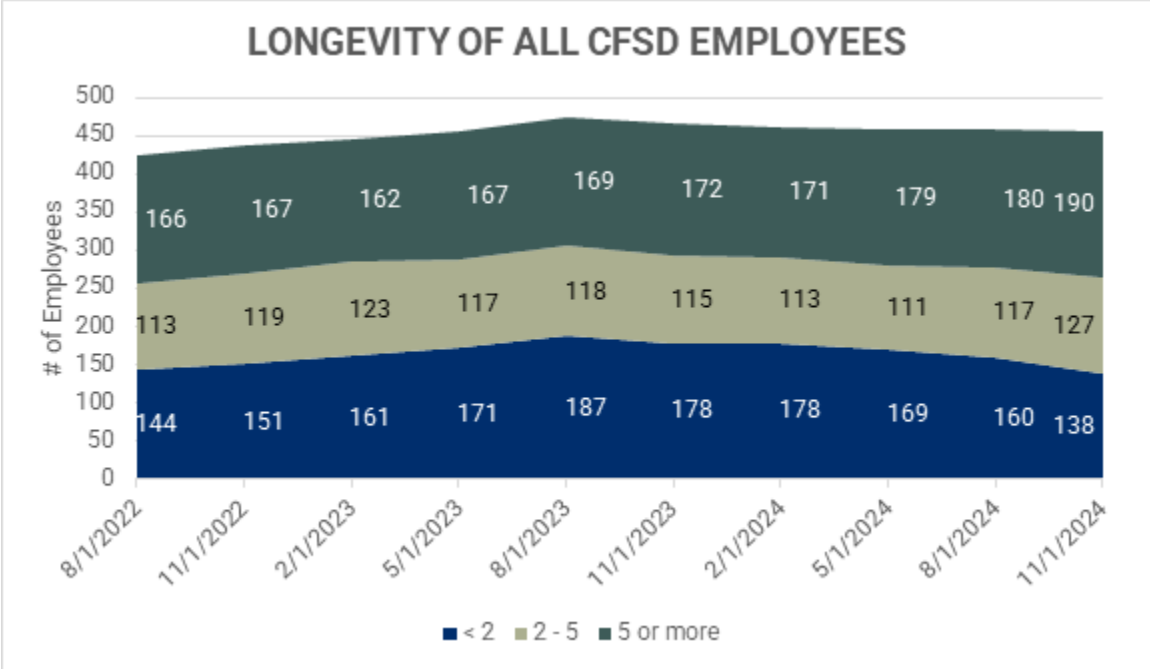
"Coming together as an office to debrief difficult cases, and letting workers know they are appreciated for the work they do. This is a tough job sometimes and the work life balance is really important."

2024 Child and Family Services All Employee Longevity



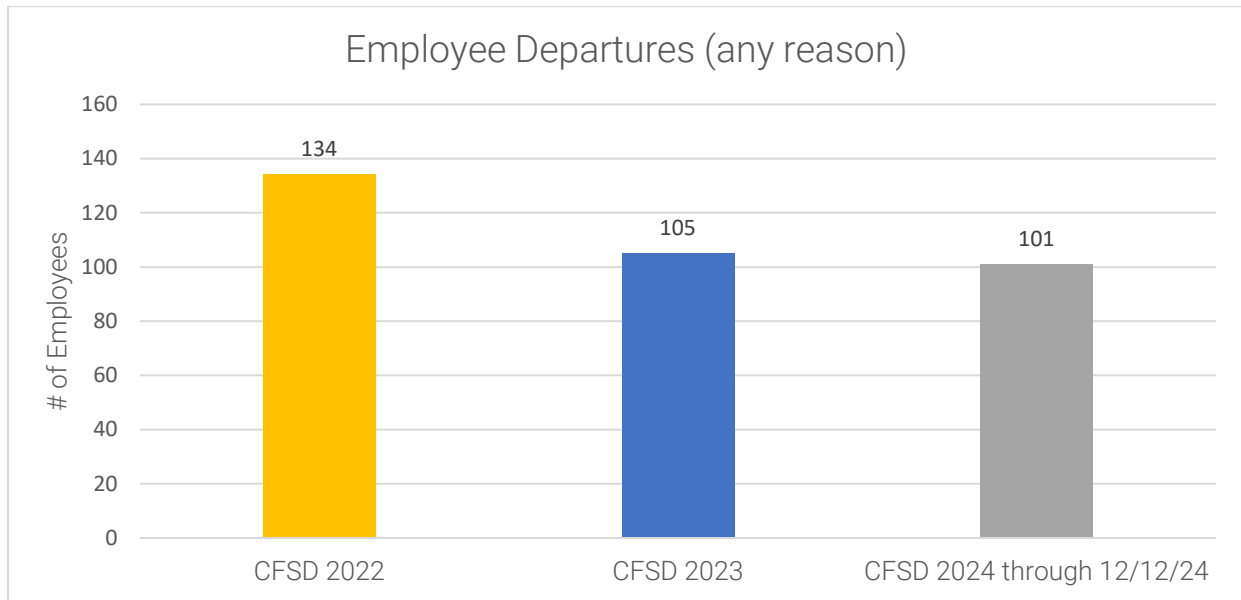
2024 Front Line CFSD Employee Longevity





For both front line CFSD position types and all employees the trend of increasing the number of experienced and decreasing the number of less experienced employees continues. The last Biennium has resulted in a 30% increase in the number of experienced front-line employees, and 13% fewer employees with less than 2 years of experience. This trend is noted in improvements in all CFSD employee longevity as well.

Increasing retention rates would reflect in this graph through an increase in the numbers of employees with five or more years of longevity.



The number of CFSD Employees departing in 2024 for any reason was on par with the significant drop of over 20% made in 2023.



The time to fill CFSD positions has decreased over 43% since 2020 and this year is lower than the DPHHS average.

Moving Forward

Developing CFSD's Wellness Program is an ongoing process. CFSD is integrating additional wellness support into various aspects of the agency, starting from employee orientation and extending through stay and exit interviews, to gain a deeper understanding about employees' ongoing challenges. This will in turn allow for CFSD to recruit the employee who best support the mission of keeping kids safe and families strong.

The Wellness Program aims to incorporate the multitude of resources already available to state employees through the Employee Assistance Program, the Health and Benefits Division, and the Human Resources Division.

Collaborating and forming community partnerships will be pivotal for CFSD to continually enhance, diversify, and refine these wellness offerings. Input from all CFSD employees will play a crucial role in this ongoing effort.