See the final section of this paper, Methodology, for a description of terminology found in this paper including race and ethnicity, discussion of how data was analyzed, and the difference between the turnover rate and the departure rate.

DCDHS Turnovers & Departures

The Dane County Department of Human Services (DCDHS) calculates two rates – turnover rate and departure rate. The *turnover rate* includes individuals who transferred[1] or promoted[2] to a different position in the year, but stayed with DCDHS. The *departure rate* includes individuals who left DCDHS entirely. This analysis includes all position types, regular positions, project positions, and LTE positions. See Methodology section for more information.

Both rates are important because internal transfers and promotions do result in a vacant position and often that work is covered by other DCDHS staff, just as it is when an employee leaves the Department. Transfers and Departures may be based in similar job satisfaction issues. Turnover and departures are one of many indicators of job satisfaction. Other factors that contribute to departures can include factors entirely out of the control of DCDHS such as the birth of a child, a family relocation, a change in a family caregiver role, or a change in the employee's own health status, to name a few.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes monthly turnover data that is shown alongside DCDHS data. The U.S. Bureau of Labor defines "separations" as "Total separations include quits, layoffs and discharges, and other separations. Quits are generally voluntary separations initiated by the employee. The quits rate can serve as a measure of workers' willingness or ability to leave jobs. Layoffs and discharges are involuntary separations initiated by the employer. Other separations include separations due to retirement, death, disability, and transfers to other locations of the same firm."[3]

This national data is a poor comparison tool; it is useful simply as a directional change of larger socioeconomic and labor market patterns. DCDHS is not attempting to achieve the national metric. A more accurate measure of how DCDHS's turnover compares to other similar type organizations should

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[1] See definition on page 9 in the "methodology" section
[2] See definition on page 9 in the "methodology" section
[3] "Job Openings and Labor Turnover Summary." U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 7, 2025. https://www.bls.gov/news.release/jolts.nr0.htm.

be done at a more division-specific level and compared to similar type organizations. See Methodology section for further discussion of comparability to other data.

Figure 1: DCDHS Turnover & Departure Rates And National Averages
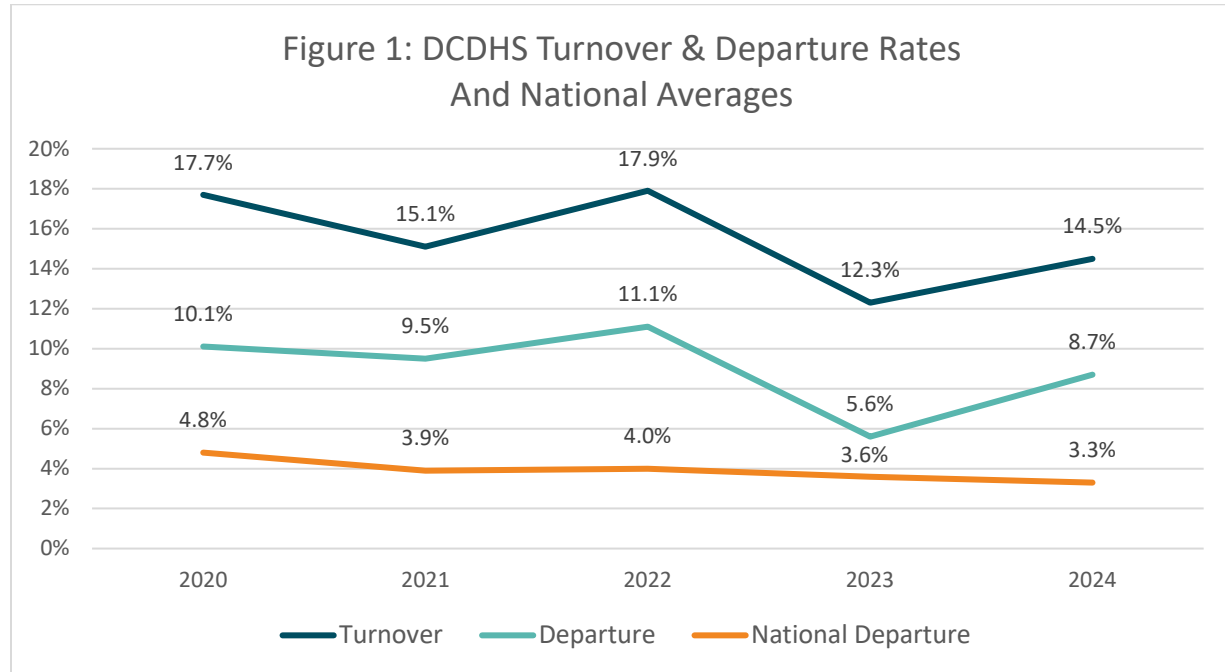
Turnover and Departure, by DCDHS Division

Table 1, below, shows the number of individuals who left a position, by division, and the reason for their departure. See the Methodology section for definitions of turnover rate and departure rate.

Table 1: 2024 Turnover & Departure, by Division
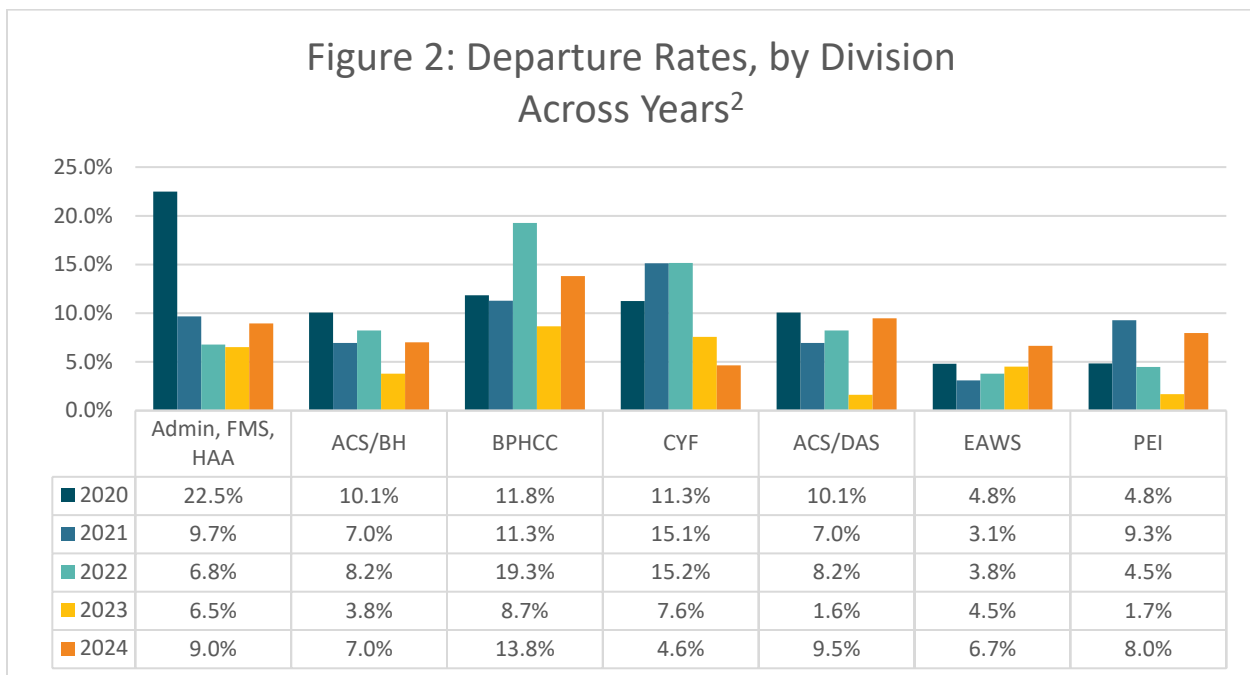
	Admin, FMS, HAA	BH	BPHCC	CYF	DAS	EAWS	PEI	Grand Total
Promotion	1	2	3	3	4	5	5	23
Transfer	1	5	0	10	9	1	1	27
Departure	6	6	27	8	13	9	5	74
Grand Total	**8**	**13**	**30**	**21**	**26**	**15**	**11**	**124**
2024 Turnover	**11.9%**	**15.2%**	**15.4%**	**12.2%**	**18.9%**	**11.1%**	**17.5%**	**14.5%**
2024 Departure	**9.0%**	**7.0%**	**13.8%**	**4.6%**	**9.5%**	**6.7%**	**8.0%**	**8.7%**

○ The turnover rate is higher than the departure rate because it includes the departures as a result of promotions and transfers. It is the impact our DCDHS staff feel in "people movement".

- Of the 124 individuals who left a DCDHS position in 2024, 40.3.% (50) remained employed by DCDHS. This results in departure rate of 8.7% (74 departures) for the year.
- Of those individuals that left DCDHS, voluntary turnover was the most common reason (66.2% - 49).
- Of the approximately 40% of staff that stayed with the Department, but moved position due to a transfer or promotion, 46% (23 of 50 people) of the movement was due to promotions and the balance was due to transfers.

The following differences were statistically significant ($p<.05$):

- The departure rate for 2023 (5.6%) is significantly lower than the 2022 departure rate (11.1%)
- The departure rate for 2024 (8.7%) is significantly higher than the 2023 departure rate (5.6%). This significance is driven by a higher number of retirements in 2024 (18) as compared to 2023 (8).
- There were no statistically significant differences between the turnover for divisions, as compared to the balance of the department.

Figure 2: Departure Rates, by Division Across Years[2]

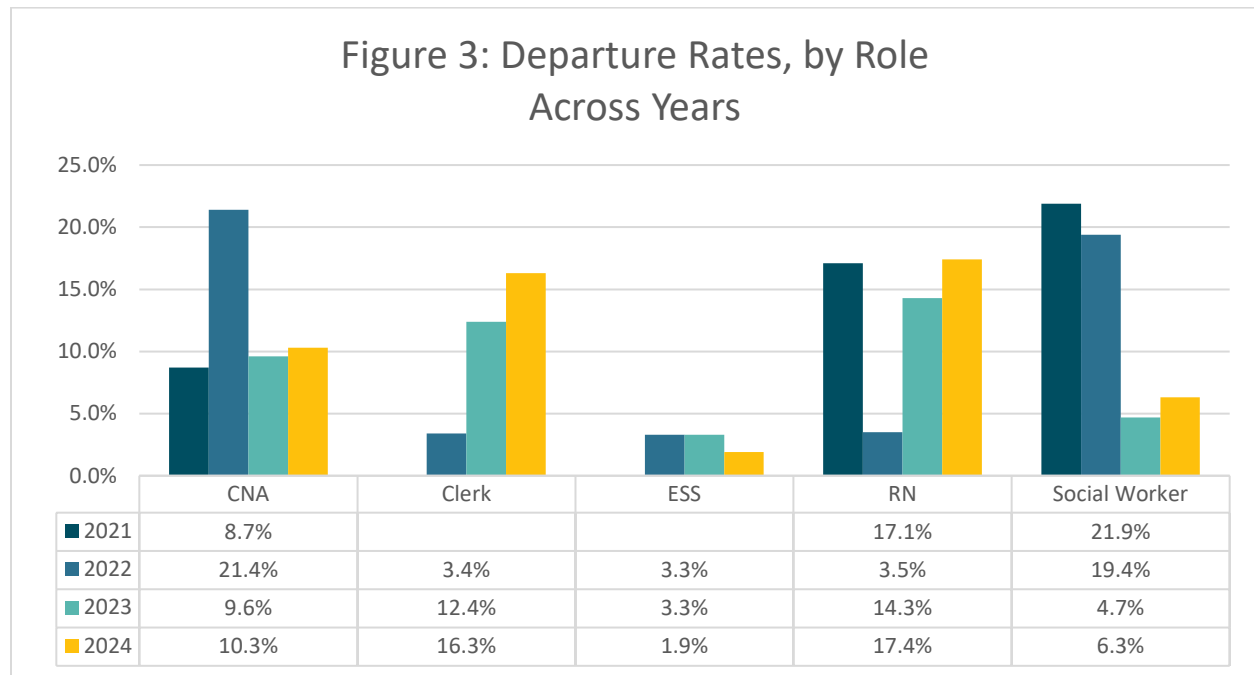|	Admin, FMS, HAA	ACS/BH	BPHCC	CYF	ACS/DAS	EAWS	PEI
2020	22.5%	10.1%	11.8%	11.3%	10.1%	4.8%	4.8%
2021	9.7%	7.0%	11.3%	15.1%	7.0%	3.1%	9.3%
2022	6.8%	8.2%	19.3%	15.2%	8.2%	3.8%	4.5%
2023	6.5%	3.8%	8.7%	7.6%	1.6%	4.5%	1.7%
2024	9.0%	7.0%	13.8%	4.6%	9.5%	6.7%	8.0%

4

Turnover and Departure, by Assignment Title

There are 165 unique and distinct assignment titles throughout DCDHS. Five of these summary titles account for about 59.8% of DCDHS staff assignment titles (see methodology for more information): certified nursing assistant (n=117), Clerk (n=68), Economic Support Specialist (n = 106), Registered Nurse

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[4] The Adult and Community Services (ACS) Division was divided into the Behavioral Health (BH) and the Disability and Aging Services (DAS) divisions effective at the start of 2023. Therefore, the chart above shows historical ACS data for 2020, 2021, 2022 when comparing the DAS and BH data in 2023.

(n=29), and Social Worker (n=192). Turnover from positions with these summary titles account for 62% (82 of 124) of the total Department 2024 turnover and 57% (44 of 74) of the total departures from DCDHS in 2024.

The turnover and departure rates for these summary titles are very similar to what they were in 2023.

Figure 3: Departure Rates, by Role Across Years

	CNA	Clerk	ESS	RN	Social Worker
2021	8.7%			17.1%	21.9%
2022	21.4%	3.4%	3.3%	3.5%	19.4%
2023	9.6%	12.4%	3.3%	14.3%	4.7%
2024	10.3%	16.3%	1.9%	17.4%	6.3%

Turnover and Departure, by Race and Ethnicity

Historically, turnover and departure rates are generally not analyzed by employee race and ethnicity. DCDHS has chosen to do this in alignment with its first strategic priority, to advance racial justice.

Table 2: 2024 Turnover & Departure, by Race and Ethnicity

	White (n=86)	BIPOC (n=38)	Grand Total
Promotion (n=23)	16.3%	23.7%	18.9%
Transfer (n=27)	26.7%	10.5%	22.1%
Departure (n=72)	54.7%	65.8%	59.0%
2024 Turnover Rate	15.4%	13.8%	14.3%
2024 Departure Rate	8.8%	9.1%	8.4%

○ There is no statistically significant difference between the turnover rate for White staff and Black, Indigenous, (and) People of Color (BIPOC) staff.

- There is no statistically significant difference between the departure rate for White staff and BIPOC staff.
- BIPOC staff were significantly less likely to transfer positions than White staff. This was true in 2023 as well as 2024 and may be partially attributable to tenure transfer rules as white staff have an average tenure of 11.1 years and BIPOC staff have an average tenure of 8.0 years (as of August 2024).

Turnover and Departure, by Tenure

The turnover and departure rates for employees with 0-3 years of service (23.6% and 17.6%) are higher than the turnover and departure rates for all other employees (10.4% and 4.6%). These differences are statistically significant. This has been a trend for the past several years at DCDHS and is a trend in the labor market generally. 63.5% of employees (47 of 74) who left DCDHS had less than 4 years of service with the Department. The voluntary departure rate among employees with 0-3 years of service was 15.7% (42 of 268 people), as compared to 1.2% (7 of 588) for employees with 4 years or more of service. This difference is statistically significant. Of the 42 staff that resigned with 0-3 years of service, the average tenure was about 0.57 years (just over 6 months), and is about 3 months shorter than in 2023.

Table 3: 2024 Turnover & Departures, by Tenure

	0-3 Years	4-9 Years	10-15 Years	15-19 Years	20+ Years	Grand Total
Promotion	11	4	3	5		23
Transfer	5	7	3	5	7	27
Death/Illness	2					2
Retirement		1	4	3	10	18
Involuntary	3		1		1	5
Voluntary	42	5	2			49
Total	**63**	**17**	**13**	**13**	**18**	**124**
2024 Turnover	**23.6%**	**7.7%**	**9.0%**	**18.2%**	**11.8%**	**14.5%**
2024 Departure	**17.6%**	**2.7%**	**4.8%**	**4.2%**	**7.2%**	**8.7%**

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Methodology

Turnover and Departure Rates

Turnover rate is the number of separations divided by the average number of employees, multiplied by 100, for a given period.[5]

This analysis defined DCDHS **turnover rate** as all employees who left an assignment title/department code for any reason, divided by the average number of employees. This means our Department and division turnover rates include those individuals who left their position but remained with DCDHS (i.e., Transfers and Promotions).

This analysis defined DCDHS **departure rate** as all employees who left DCDHS for any reason, divided by the average number of employees. This means our Department and division departure rates do NOT include individuals who left their assignment title/department code but remained with DCDHS (i.e., Transfers and Promotions). Because Transfers and Promotions are not included in the departure rate, it will always be lower than the turnover rate.

This analysis uses the averages from quarterly data throughout 2024 as the denominator. The tables (4-7) below show the number of employees in various groups. These numbers are used as the denominators to calculate turnover and departure rates for groups.

Table 4: Number of Employees per Division and Total, Average 2024

Admin, FMS, HAA	BH	BPHCC	CYF	DAS	EAWS	PEI	Grand Total
67.0	85.5	195.3	172.5	137.3	135.0	62.8	855.3

Table 5: Number of Employees per Race/Ethnicity Group and Total, Average 2024

BIPOC	White	Not Specified	Grand Total
276.5	559.0	19.8	855.3

Table 6: Number of Employees per Title, Average 2024[6]

Certified Nursing Assistant	Clerk	Economic Support Specialist	Registered Nurse	Social Worker
116.75	67.5	106.25	28.75	192.0

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[5] "How to Determine Turnover Rate." Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). (n.d.) https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/how-to-guides/pages/determineturnoverrate.aspx
[6] See "Assignment Title" section in methodology

Table 7: Number of Employees per Tenure Bucket, Average 2024

0-3 Yrs	4-9 Yrs	10-15 Yrs	15-19 Yrs	20+ Yrs
267.5	220.0	144.5	71.3	152.0

Inclusion of LTE and Project Positions

Limited-Term Employees (LTE) is a position which is limited to no more than 1,200 hours in a calendar year. These types of positions are often used for short-duration projects, to fill a critical vacancy while a full-time staff is on extended leave, positions which by nature have turnover like interns, or in situations where the on-going work need is only part-time and the Department has yet to get authorization for a part-time regular budget position. By nature of these types of positions one should expect a high rate of departure.

Individuals in these types of positions are included in the analysis because of the significant number of them that are hired for FTE positions within DCDHS eventually.

In 2024 there were an average of 40.0[7] LTE's. Many of these individuals are in clerk and certified nursing assistant roles. Removing the LTE individuals from the turnover and departure analysis would decrease the overall departure rate by 2.0%, from 8.7% to 6.7%.

Bureau Labor Statistics (BLS) Comparisons

For the 2020 and 2021 DCDHS Turnover analysis, turnover and departure rates were compared to national statistics released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Specifically, the "annual total separations rates by industry and region, not seasonally adjusted", Table 16. In April of 2022 that table showed separation rates ranging from a low of 43.3% in 2017 to a peak of 56.8% in 2020, as shown below.

Table 8: Figure 3: BLS data per "WayBack Machine"

Industry and Region	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total	43.3	44.5	45.1	56.8	47.2

Effective with the release of national data on March 8, 2023, JOLTS (Job Openings and Labor Turnover Summary) modified its method for calculating annual estimates for hires and separation rates, stating, "Annual rates will be computed as annual averages, instead of annual totals, to make the estimates more helpful for data users and to be consistent with other BLS programs."[8]

As a result in this change in methodology, DCDHS' departure rate closely aligns with how the BLS calculates the annual separation rate. The national numbers in this report were pulled on January 23,

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[7] Q1 = 40, Q2 = 40, Q3 = 43, Q4 = 37
[8] "Upcoming Changes to Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey Annual Estimates for States." U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d. https://www.bls.gov/jlt/notices/2023/jolts-state-2023-annual-estimates-changes.htm

2025. *DCDHS Turnover reports from 2020 and 2021[9] utilize the old BLS numbers and methodology and should therefore be considered incorrect and non-comparable*.

The BLS data includes all industries, in all regions of the country, and both private and public sector employees. The BLS data is a decent barometer for underlying economic and workforce conditions which will drive some turnover and departures. The direction and magnitude of changes (increases or decreases) in DCDHS departure rates should align with this national metric. DCDHS is not attempting to achieve this departure rate.

Comparisons to Other Data

A more accurate comparison measure would be to look at industry-specific turnover rates and compare those to similar DCDHS Divisions. These rates would better reflect the demands of the specific work that may also drive departures due to burnout, wages, work-life balance, and other factors. Unfortunately, this more nuanced data is not widely available and is generally less reliable than data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The table below attempts to provide some point-in-time comparisons, with citations, without examining the underlying data methodology.

Table 9: Other Comparable Departure Rates

Industry	Timeframe	Departure Rate
State of Wisconsin, without UW System[10]	June 2022	17.8%
Wisconsin Child Welfare[11]	2015	13%
Illinois Human Services organizations[12]	2018	37%
National Nursing Homes[13]	2016	94%-128%

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[9] 2022 Turnover & Departure report did not contain a comparison with BLS data.

[10] "State Government Workforce Churn Reaches Historic Heights." Wisconsin Policy Forum, June 2023. https://wispolicyforum.org/research/state-government-workforce-churn-reaches-historic-heights/

[11] "Worker Turnover is a Persistent Child Welfare Challenge – So is Measuring It.", Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development, January 24, 2022. https://www.qic-wd.org/qic-take/worker-turnover-persistent-child-welfare-challenge#:~:text=The%20median%20annual%20turnover%20(defined,in%20both%202007%20and%202015)

[12] "The Relationship Between Low Wages, Employee Turnover and Community Well-Being." Illinois Partners for Human Service, 2020. https://illinoispartners.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/The-Relationship-Between-Low-Wages-Employee-Turnover-and-Community-Well-BeingFullReport.pdf

[13] "High Nursing Staff Turnover in Nursing Homes Offers Important Quality Information." Ashvin Gandhi, Huizi Yu, and David C. Grabowski, Health Affairs, Vol. 40, No. 3., March 2021. https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00957?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori%3Arid%3Acrossref.org&rfr_dat=cr_pub++0pubmed

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Departure Reasons

The raw data set had a code "Transfer/Promotion" for all employees who changed assignment title or department number at any point in the year as well as for those individuals who were no longer with DCDHS but remained in County employment. There were 133 records (some individuals were included twice, therefore fewer unique individuals) with this termination reason code. Each record was examined and was reclassified as: Transfer, Promotion, or Voluntary.

> Voluntary – These individuals transferred or promoted to a different position within Dane County, but are no longer with DCDHS. These individuals were identified because they did not appear in the data set a second time with a "current position" code. Two (2) individuals left their DCDHS position for a position with a different county department.

> Transfers –This report uses the term "transfer" more broadly than Employee Benefit Handbooks define transfers to generally refer to lateral job moves. These individuals left one assignment title/department code within DCDHS and are now working in a different assignment title/department code. Changes in department code without corresponding changes to assignment title or increased pay were categorized as "transfers". Likewise, moves that may have resulted in a decrease in pay/assignment title were also included as "transfers". Examples of transfers include: Lead Social Worker to Senior Social Worker, Economic Support Specialist to Account Clerk, Disability Benefits Specialist to Mobility Program Specialist, etc. There were 27 transfers in 2024.

> Promotions – These individuals left one assignment title/department code within DCDHS and are now working in a second assignment title/department code. It is important to note that "promotion" opportunities don't exist within civil service like they do the nonprofit or for-profit sector; instead, generally these positions are posted for either internal only candidates or for external candidates and DCDHS staff are encouraged to apply.

> Changes in assignment title where there was increased pay were categorized as "Promotions". Times when "leader" or "manager" were added to a title were automatically classified as a promotion. Most of these promotions did not result in the individual leaving their original division. For cases where the title change was not apparent, Dane County class specs for the original and new title were reviewed. If the hourly pay increased, the move was categorized as a "Promotion". Where the hourly pay did not change or decreased, the move was categorized as a "Transfer". Examples of title changes that were classified as a promotion include: Licensed practical nurse to registered nurse, certified nursing assistant to registered nurse, care coordinator to case manager, representative payee specialist to social worker I, care coordinator to case manager 1, etc.

In addition to the "Transfer/Promotion" termination reason there were 15 other reasons provided in the data set. They are summarized under four reasons within this analysis, as presented below in Table 10:

Table 10: Departure Reason Crosswalk

Summary Reason	Termination Reason in original dataset (as coded in data)
Death/Illness	V - LEAVE OF ABSENSE EXPIRATION V - Deceased
Retirement	V - RETIRED V - EARLY RETIREMENT V - DISABILITY RETIREMENT
Involuntary	I - DISCHARGED-DID NOT PASS PROBATION I - Terminated I - Discharged
Voluntary	V - COMPLETION OF CONTRACT V - ACCEPT NEW JOB (NON-COMPETITOR) V - RESIGNED V - RELOCATION V - PERSONAL REASONS V - Return to school I - ABANDONMENT OF JOB

Assignment Title

There are 165 unique and distinct assignment titles throughout DCDHS in 2024. In previous years' analysis, each title was reviewed independently. In the analysis for 2023 & 2024 select titles were combined for the analysis to reflect that the titles share similar work and generally reflect a pay progression, not a significant change of duties. The individual assignment titles are rolled up into the summary titles as shown in the table below:

Table 11: Summary Title Roll-Up

Certified Nursing Assistant	Clerk[14]	Economic Support Specialist	Registered Nurse	Social Worker
Certified Nursing Assistant Driver – Certified Nursing Assistant	Account Clerk II Account Clerk III CDBG Housing Clerk Clerk I-II Clerk III Clerk IV LTE Account Clerk II LTE Clerk I-II/HS LTE Clerk Typist I-II/HS Scheduling Clerk I Scheduling Clerk II	Economic Support Specialist Economic Support Specialist – Bilingual Lead Economic Support Specialist	Registered Nurse LTE Registered Nurse	Social Worker Social Worker I Social Worker II Senior Social Worker Senior Social worker - redlined LTE Social Worker I Social Worker – redlined Lead social worker

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[14] The definition of clerks was expanded in 2024 as compared to 2023 to include account clerks and scheduling clerks.

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