

As part of the National Institute of Justice-funded project, *Real-world Engagement & Turnover Analysis to Inform New Solutions (RETAINS)*, 30x30 is partnering with RTI International to conduct research on strategies law enforcement agencies can use to improve officer retention.

A key phase of this initiative involves developing **user-friendly stay and exit interview protocols** to help agencies better understand why officers leave and leverage these insights to enhance retention efforts.

To inform the development of these protocols, RTI International conducted a survey in late 2024, fielded among all **30x30-affiliated agencies**. The survey sought to determine whether and how agencies currently conduct stay and exit interviews and identify agency needs. **Representatives from 160 agencies participated**, offering valuable insights into existing practices and gaps.

Findings at a Glance

Exit Interview Practices

Prevalence:

- **75% (n=120) of agencies** conduct exit interviews.
- Most interviews are conducted **in person** by agency employees.

Content:

- **97% of exit interviews** ask for the respondent's reason for leaving.
- Other common topics include:
 - Satisfaction with leadership/command staff (**60%**).
 - Work conditions (**59%**).
 - The employee's next job (**54%**).
 - Perceptions of culture or climate (**52%**).

Data Utilization:

- **Only 22%** of agencies use their exit interview data to inform policies or practices.
- **39%** of respondents were unsure how often the data is used.
- **57%** were unsure if exit interviews have informed any policy changes.
- Exit interview data is **most commonly reviewed only as needed or upon request (68%)**.

Challenges:

- Agencies **not conducting exit interviews** cited the following reasons:
 - **71%** - Lack of standardized tools or procedures.
 - **29%** - Perception that data is not useful or used.
- **94%** of respondents indicated a need for templates and implementation guides.
- **44%** expressed interest in webinars for training.

Stay Interview Practices

Prevalence:

- Only **12% (n=19) of agencies** conduct stay interviews.
- Stay interviews are primarily conducted **in person** by agency employees.

Content:

- Common topics include:
 - **Perceptions of culture or climate (79%).**
 - **Satisfaction with leadership/command staff (68%).**
 - **Employment details**, such as length of service and assignment (**68%**).

Data Utilization:

- **47%** of agencies conducting stay interviews use the data to inform policies or practices.
- Stay interview data is **most commonly reviewed only as needed or upon request (53%)**.

Key Takeaways & Recommendations

- **Utilize Exit Interview Data:** Only 22% of agencies use exit interview data for policy changes. Establishing a review process can help integrate findings into retention strategies.
- **Adopt Stay Interviews:** With only 12% of agencies conducting stay interviews, expanding their use can provide proactive insights and address concerns before turnover.
- **Standardize Tools & Training:** 94% of agencies need templates and guides. Providing best-practice templates and training webinars can boost adoption.
- **Enhance Leadership Engagement:** Leadership and culture impact retention. Agencies should use findings to strengthen training and accountability.

Next Steps

New findings and resources from **RETAINS** will be made available through **30x30 and RTI International** throughout the project. Agencies interested in implementing structured interview processes can access forthcoming toolkits and best practices.

For questions or more information about the study, contact: **Tanya Meisenholder**, 30x30 Initiative Lead (tanya.meisenholder@nyu.edu) or **Jenn Rineer**, RTI Project Lead (jrineer@rti.org)

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