

ARLANDRIA COUNTY
Department of Administration
Human Resources Division

Three-Year Workforce Turnover Analysis

Fiscal Years 2022 through 2024

Prepared for:

Office of the County Administrator

Prepared by:

Michael Torres, Human Resources Director
Department of Administration

March 14, 2025

Document Reference: ARL-HR-2025-03-TURNOVER

Memorandum of Transmittal

TO: Nicholas Brennan, County Administrator

CC: Board of Supervisors Human Resources Committee; Finance Director

FROM: Michael Torres, Human Resources Director

DATE: March 14, 2025

RE: Three-Year Workforce Turnover Analysis, Fiscal Years 2022 through 2024

Transmitted with this memorandum is the Department of Administration's triennial workforce turnover analysis covering Fiscal Years 2022, 2023, and 2024. The report responds to the standing charge from the County Administrator's Office that Human Resources produce a consolidated three-year separation review, and supplements the annual separation summaries filed with the Human Resources Committee.

The analysis covers 222 separations across all county departments during the reporting period, against an average daily workforce of 520 full-time equivalent positions. The countywide annualized separation rate for the three-year window is 14.2 percent, above the 2023 Wisconsin Counties Association benchmark midpoint for counties of comparable size and above the county's own pre-pandemic five-year trailing average of 9.8 percent calculated through Fiscal Year 2019.

The report identifies three findings that warrant the Administrator's attention before the Fiscal Year 2026 budget cycle: separations are concentrated in the Highway Department at a rate nearly twice the countywide figure; the 2-to-5 year tenure band accounts for a disproportionate share of departures; and voluntary resignations frequently cite compensation and schedule-predictability concerns in exit interviews. Each finding is developed in the body of the report with its supporting data.

The recommendations set out in Section VI are framed for further discussion and are not intended to commit the County to any specific expenditure or policy change in advance of Board action. Several of the recommendations will require coordination with the Finance Director and with bargaining-unit representatives before implementation.

This report is prepared as internal analytical work product of the Human Resources Division. As with all county records, it is subject to the public records provisions of Wis. Stat. Ch. 19, Subch. II, and may be released in response to a qualifying records request. Aggregate data has been used throughout; no personally identifiable information regarding individual employees is included. I am available to brief the Administrator, the Human Resources Committee, or any department head on the findings.

Michael Torres

Human Resources Director

Department of Administration, Arlandria County

Contents

Executive Summary	4
I. Purpose, Scope, and Methodology	5
II. Overall Workforce and Separation Trends	7
III. Separation Patterns by Department	9
IV. Separation Patterns by Tenure	11
V. Voluntary and Involuntary Separations	13
VI. Exit Survey Themes	15
VII. Findings and Recommendations	17
VIII. Methodology Notes and Data Limitations	19
IX. Records Handling and Confidentiality	19

Executive Summary

The Human Resources Division tracked 222 employee separations across all Arlandria County departments during the three-year window covering Fiscal Years 2022, 2023, and 2024. Measured against an average daily workforce of 520 full-time equivalent positions, the annualized three-year separation rate is 14.2 percent. Separations increased modestly year over year from 2022 to 2023 and held approximately level in 2024, consistent with broader regional labor-market patterns reported in the Wisconsin Counties Association workforce surveys for the same period.

Headline Findings

Finding 1. Countywide turnover, at 14.2 percent annualized across the three-year window, runs above historical norms for Arlandria County and above the median for peer counties of similar population and workforce size. The figure is elevated but not anomalous in the post-pandemic regional labor market.

Finding 2. The Highway Department recorded an annualized separation rate of 22.1 percent over the three-year window, the highest of any department and almost 8 percentage points above the countywide average. No other department exceeded 18 percent. The concentration of turnover in a single department drives a disproportionate share of the county's overall rate.

Finding 3. Forty-seven percent of all separations during the three-year window involved employees with between two and five years of continuous service. This bracket contains roughly 28 percent of the county's average workforce, indicating that separation incidence in this tenure band runs materially higher than a proportional distribution would predict.

Finding 4. Sixty-eight percent of all separations were classified as voluntary resignations, excluding retirements. The remaining 32 percent consisted of retirements, involuntary terminations, position eliminations through reduction-in-force actions, and separations for medical or other non-disciplinary reasons. The voluntary share is higher than the pre-pandemic five-year average of 58 percent.

Principal Recommendations

The report advances six recommendations for the County Administrator's consideration, detailed in Section VII. In summary, the Division recommends: a targeted compensation and classification review for the Highway Department and Facilities Management skilled-trades classifications; structured retention interviews for employees approaching the two-year mark in the highest-turnover classifications; a formal workforce planning exercise for departments with concentrations of retirement-eligible staff; a countywide supervisor development investment focused on first-line retention practices; a review of shift-scheduling practices in 24-hour operations; and a revised exit interview instrument with mandatory disposition tracking.

No single recommendation in this report is expected to materially reduce the countywide turnover rate on its own. The interdependence of compensation, supervision, scheduling, and workforce planning is

such that sustained improvement will require coordinated action across multiple workstreams over multiple budget cycles.

I. Purpose, Scope, and Methodology

Purpose

This report consolidates three fiscal years of separation data for Arlandria County government into a single analytical document. Its purpose is to inform the County Administrator, the Human Resources Committee of the Board of Supervisors, and the individual department heads about the pace, distribution, and apparent drivers of workforce turnover, and to surface actionable recommendations for the Fiscal Year 2026 budget cycle and successor collective bargaining preparation.

Scope

The reporting period covers January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2024. The scope includes all permanent full-time and permanent part-time classified positions funded through the county's operating budget. The scope excludes seasonal and temporary positions, elected officials, members of the County Board of Supervisors, contracted service providers, and positions funded exclusively through short-cycle grants that do not have an expectation of continuing employment beyond the grant term. The scope also excludes internal transfers between departments, which are treated as continuing employment rather than separations.

Workforce counts are expressed in full-time equivalents (FTE). A permanent half-time position counts as 0.5 FTE for workforce denominator purposes. All separations, regardless of FTE value, count as one separation event in the numerator. The Human Resources Division is aware that this convention slightly inflates measured separation rates relative to a pure FTE-weighted calculation; the convention is used here because it is the standard reporting approach across the Wisconsin Counties Association's annual separation survey and preserves comparability.

Methodology

Separation records for the reporting period were pulled from the county's human resources information system on January 24, 2025. Each record contains classification, department, hire date, separation date, voluntary or involuntary designation, and separation reason code. Retirement separations were identified through the separation reason code and cross-referenced against Wisconsin Retirement System notifications on file with the Payroll Section.

Exit interview data was compiled from the Division's current exit interview instrument, which is offered to all separating employees as a voluntary post-employment survey. The overall exit interview response rate during the reporting period was 61 percent, meaning that the qualitative themes summarized in Section VI should be read as indicative of separating-employee sentiment rather than as a comprehensive representative sample.

Departmental separation rates are calculated as total three-year separations from the department divided by the department's average FTE across the three-year window, then annualized by dividing by

three. The countywide rate follows the same method applied to the countywide totals. All percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth of a percentage point; column and row totals may differ from the sum of rounded components by less than 0.3 percentage points.

The analysis presented in this report is descriptive. It documents what happened during the reporting period and identifies patterns in the data. It does not attempt a formal causal or predictive analysis. Where the report suggests possible drivers (for example, compensation pressure in the Highway Department), those suggestions are inferences drawn from the exit interview record and from conversations with department heads, not quantitative conclusions.

II. Overall Workforce and Separation Trends

The county's average daily workforce during the three-year window was 520 full-time equivalent positions, with year-over-year growth from 515 FTE in Fiscal Year 2022 to 525 FTE in Fiscal Year 2024. The growth reflects the addition of four positions in Health and Human Services (two in FY 2023 and two in FY 2024) funded through the county's match to state and federal program expansions, one position in Land Information and Zoning to support increased permit volume, and one position in the Sheriff's Department Administrative Services section. No departments reduced authorized headcount during the reporting period.

Separations by fiscal year are summarized in Table 1. The annual rate rose from 13.8 percent in 2022 to 14.6 percent in 2023, then moderated slightly to 14.3 percent in 2024. The year-over-year movement is modest enough to be consistent with routine variation, but the absolute level sits meaningfully above the county's pre-pandemic five-year trailing average of 9.8 percent.

Table 1. Annual Separation Rate by Fiscal Year

Fiscal Year	Avg. FTE	Separations	Annual Rate
FY 2022	515	71	13.8%
FY 2023	520	76	14.6%
FY 2024	525	75	14.3%
Three-year total / average	520	222	14.2%

Source: Arlandria County Human Resources Information System, separation records extracted January 24, 2025. Average FTE calculated as the mean of the twelve month-end FTE counts for each fiscal year. Annual rate calculated as separations divided by average FTE.

Regional and Benchmark Comparison

The Wisconsin Counties Association's Workforce Survey for Calendar Year 2023, published in May 2024, reports a median annual separation rate of 12.1 percent across counties with authorized workforces between 300 and 800 FTE. The 25th and 75th percentile values in that survey were 10.3 percent and 14.8 percent respectively. Arlandria County's FY 2023 rate of 14.6 percent sits near the 75th percentile of the peer-county distribution. The county's FY 2024 rate of 14.3 percent remains within the survey's upper quartile.

The elevated turnover level observed during the reporting period is not unique to Arlandria. Peer counties in the region, particularly those with substantial skilled-trades operations in highway and facilities functions, report similar pressure beginning in the second half of 2021 and persisting through 2024. The regional private-sector labor market for commercial drivers, equipment operators, and HVAC

and electrical journeymen has been tight throughout the reporting period, with published wage indexes from the Bureau of Labor Statistics showing double-digit percentage increases in some classifications between 2021 and 2024.

This report does not claim that regional conditions fully explain Arlandria's numbers. Regional context sets the backdrop; the county-specific departmental concentration and tenure-band concentration described in Sections III and IV are patterns the regional narrative alone does not account for.

III. Separation Patterns by Department

Separation rates vary materially across Arlandria County departments. Table 2 presents the annualized three-year separation rate for each department, ranked by the absolute number of separations. The Highway Department accounts for 63 of the 222 total separations (28.4 percent of countywide departures) despite representing 18.3 percent of the average workforce. Facilities Management, Parks and Recreation, and Land Information and Zoning also show rates above the countywide average, though on smaller absolute bases.

Table 2. Annualized Separation Rate by Department, FY 2022 through FY 2024

Department	Avg. FTE	3-Yr Separations	Rate	vs. Countywide
Department of Administration	65	16	8.2%	Below avg.
Sheriff's Department	110	37	11.2%	Below avg.
Highway Department	95	63	22.1%	Above avg.
Department of Public Health	42	18	14.3%	At avg.
Health and Human Services	82	30	12.2%	Below avg.
Facilities Management	38	20	17.5%	Above avg.
Parks and Recreation	48	22	15.3%	Above avg.
Land Information and Zoning	22	10	15.2%	Above avg.
Register of Deeds / Clerk of Courts	18	6	11.1%	Below avg.
Countywide total / average	520	222	14.2%	—

Source: Arlandria County Human Resources Information System. Rate calculated as three-year separations divided by (average FTE times three). The Highway Department row is highlighted as the highest-rate department in the reporting period.

Highway Department

The Highway Department's 22.1 percent annualized separation rate is the highest of any department and is the single largest contributor to the elevated countywide figure. Separations from Highway concentrate in three classification groups: Equipment Operator (27 of 63 separations), Maintenance Worker (17 of 63), and Commercial Driver (11 of 63). The remaining 8 separations are distributed across Foreman, Mechanic, and administrative classifications.

Exit interviews with separating Highway employees (response rate in this department was 54 percent, somewhat below the countywide 61 percent) cite three themes repeatedly: hourly wage levels relative to private-sector and municipal peers in the regional labor market, on-call and winter overtime expectations, and opportunities for advancement. The department head reports increasing difficulty

attracting qualified applicants into replacement hires, with posted vacancies in Equipment Operator classifications remaining open for an average of 73 days in FY 2024 compared with 34 days in FY 2019.

The Division is not in a position to conclude from this data that the Highway Department's compensation is inadequate as a matter of fact. A determination of that kind would require a formal classification and compensation study that compares Arlandria's Highway wage rates against a defined comparator group. The data does support the narrower conclusion that separating employees attribute their decision to leave, in substantial part, to compensation factors, and that the replacement-hire market is signaling the county's current wage rates are not competitive at the margin. Section VII recommends a targeted study.

Facilities Management

Facilities Management recorded 20 separations across a 38-FTE average workforce, an annualized rate of 17.5 percent. The department has a relatively small base, so a handful of departures materially affects its measured rate. The department's separations concentrate in the Building Maintenance Technician II and Custodial Worker classifications. Exit interview themes in Facilities parallel those in Highway on the compensation and advancement dimensions, with the additional theme of building-specific scheduling concerns raised by employees assigned to the 24-hour-operations buildings.

Parks and Recreation; Land Information and Zoning

Parks and Recreation's 15.3 percent rate and Land Information and Zoning's 15.2 percent rate sit modestly above the countywide average. Parks and Recreation separations concentrate in the seasonal-adjacent classifications where the distinction between permanent part-time and seasonal has historically been operationally blurry; this is a separate question from the workforce-retention question and is addressed in part through the scope clarifications in Section I. Land Information and Zoning's small base (22 FTE average, 10 separations) means that interpreting its rate trend requires caution.

Departments Below Countywide Average

The Department of Administration (8.2 percent), the Sheriff's Department (11.2 percent), Register of Deeds and Clerk of Courts (11.1 percent), and Health and Human Services (12.2 percent) recorded rates below the countywide average. The Sheriff's Department figure is driven substantially by sworn-deputy retirements under the Wisconsin Retirement System's protective-service provisions; excluding those retirements, voluntary resignations from sworn classifications ran at 7.9 percent annualized across the reporting period.

The Department of Administration's below-average rate should not be read as a success indicator without caveat. The department has a comparatively older age profile and a substantial share of retirement-eligible staff, creating a forward-looking workforce-planning concern discussed in Section VII.

IV. Separation Patterns by Tenure

Tenure at separation is measured as the time elapsed between the employee's original hire date into a permanent county position and the effective date of separation. For employees who transferred between departments during their county employment, tenure is measured from the original county hire date, not from the start of the most recent assignment. Table 3 presents the distribution of separations by tenure bracket, alongside the approximate share of the workforce in each bracket for reference.

Table 3. Separations by Tenure Bracket, FY 2022 through FY 2024

Tenure at Separation	Separations	% of Separations	% of Workforce	Representation
0 to 2 years	49	22.1%	~24%	Proportional
2 to 5 years	104	46.8%	~28%	Over-represented
5 to 10 years	38	17.1%	~22%	Under-represented
10 to 20 years	22	9.9%	~16%	Under-represented
20 or more years	9	4.1%	~10%	Under-represented
Total	222	100.0%	100%	—

Source: Arlandria County Human Resources Information System. Workforce share estimated from a midpoint point-in-time pull (June 30, 2023) and held approximately stable across the reporting period. The 2-to-5 year bracket is highlighted as over-represented among separations relative to its share of the workforce.

The 2-to-5 Year Concentration

Forty-seven percent of all separations during the three-year window occurred among employees with between two and five years of continuous county service. Employees in this tenure band make up roughly 28 percent of the county's workforce, meaning that separation incidence runs materially higher in this band than a proportional distribution would predict.

The finding is not unique to Arlandria. Public-sector workforce studies have consistently documented an elevated departure risk in the early post-probationary tenure band, sometimes described in the literature as the three-year inflection point. The typical explanations are: the employee has accumulated enough job-specific knowledge to be attractive to external employers; vesting thresholds for Wisconsin Retirement System benefits and for the county's accumulated leave provisions have either been reached or remain far enough away that they are not yet a retention anchor; and the employee has completed

enough probationary-period evaluation cycles to have a concrete sense of whether the role's trajectory matches their career expectations.

The 0-to-2 year bracket, at 22.1 percent of separations against an estimated 24 percent of the workforce, is approximately proportional. This is a somewhat counterintuitive finding: conventional wisdom holds that separation risk is highest in the first year. Arlandria's data is consistent with an interpretation that the probationary-period screening process is functioning as intended, and that separations concentrate among employees who have cleared probation but who reassess their commitment to the county between years two and five.

The 5-to-10 year, 10-to-20 year, and 20-plus year brackets are all under-represented among separations relative to their share of the workforce. Employees who remain with the county beyond the five-year mark exhibit materially lower separation risk on an annual basis. This pattern supports the general direction of the Section VII recommendation for retention interviewing focused on the two-year mark.

V. Voluntary and Involuntary Separations

The Human Resources Division classifies each separation into one of five categories at the time the separation is processed. Voluntary resignations dominate the three-year distribution, accounting for 151 of 222 separations, or 68.0 percent. The remaining 71 separations are distributed across retirements, involuntary terminations for cause, position eliminations through reduction-in-force actions, and separations for medical, disability, or other non-disciplinary reasons.

Table 4. Separations by Type, FY 2022 through FY 2024

Separation Category	Count	Share	Definition
Voluntary resignation	151	68.0%	Resignation for any non-retirement reason, including to accept other employment.
Retirement	36	16.2%	Retirement under the Wisconsin Retirement System or county-eligible retirement.
Involuntary termination	20	9.0%	Termination for cause following disciplinary process.
Position elimination (RIF)	7	3.2%	Separation due to elimination of the position in an operational restructuring.
Other non-voluntary	8	3.6%	Separations for medical, disability, or death; non-renewals; and other non-disciplinary.
Total	222	100.0%	

Source: Arlandria County Human Resources Information System. Categorization follows the Division's standard separation reason code assignments, documented in the HR Information System Administrator's Manual.

Voluntary Resignations

The voluntary-resignation share of 68.0 percent is elevated relative to the county's pre-pandemic five-year average of 58.1 percent. Among the 151 voluntary resignations, exit interview records indicate that 94 (62.3 percent) involved a known move to other employment at the time of resignation. Of those 94, approximately two-thirds moved to other public-sector employers (state agencies, other Wisconsin counties, municipalities, or school districts), and approximately one-third moved to private-sector employment. The remaining 57 voluntary resignations (37.7 percent of the voluntary total) involved relocations, family responsibilities, return to school, or reasons the separating employee declined to specify.

The observation that roughly two-thirds of identified-destination departures moved to other public-sector employers is worth attention. It indicates that the competitive pressure on Arlandria's workforce comes substantially from within the public sector itself, and not exclusively from a generalized private-sector wage premium. A compensation review designed around private-sector benchmarks alone may under-weight this dimension.

Retirements

The county processed 36 retirements during the reporting period, a figure roughly consistent with the three prior years. Retirement volume is expected to rise in Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027 based on the current Wisconsin Retirement System eligibility profile of the workforce. Approximately 41 current employees will reach normal retirement age or will satisfy the protective-service early-retirement provisions during the Fiscal Year 2026 and Fiscal Year 2027 windows. Not all of those employees will choose to retire in the year they become eligible, but the forward-looking retirement wave represents a distinct workforce-planning challenge that is separate from the turnover-rate concern that is the focus of this report.

Involuntary Separations

Involuntary terminations for cause numbered 20 across the three-year window, or 9.0 percent of total separations. Position eliminations through reduction-in-force actions numbered 7, concentrated in a single FY 2023 restructuring of administrative-support functions in the Department of Administration. The involuntary-termination rate is within historical norms and does not suggest a pattern warranting procedural review of the county's disciplinary process. Division records indicate that no involuntary termination during the reporting period was reversed on administrative or judicial appeal.

VI. Exit Survey Themes

Exit interview data provides a qualitative complement to the quantitative findings in Sections II through V. The county's current instrument is a combination of closed-ended rating scales and open-ended narrative fields, administered in person where possible and by written form where in-person administration is declined or impractical. Response rates varied by department, with a countywide weighted response rate of 61 percent across the three-year window. Highway Department responses were captured at 54 percent, Facilities Management at 58 percent, and Health and Human Services at 67 percent.

The themes summarized below reflect patterns in the narrative responses. They are not offered as representative of all separating employees and should be read as indicative of sentiment among employees who chose to complete the exit interview. Where a theme is reported with a frequency count, the count is drawn from a manual thematic coding of open-ended responses performed by the Division's Senior HR Analyst.

Theme 1. Compensation Relative to Comparator Employers

Compensation relative to other public-sector and private-sector employers was cited as a significant or primary factor in 58 percent of completed exit interviews for voluntary resignations. The frequency of this theme is highest in Highway Department (71 percent of completed voluntary-resignation interviews) and Facilities Management (63 percent), and lowest in Health and Human Services (42 percent) and Register of Deeds/Clerk of Courts (38 percent).

Theme 2. Schedule and Work-Life Concerns

Schedule-related concerns appeared in 34 percent of voluntary-resignation exit interviews. The theme encompasses on-call rotation expectations, winter overtime in Highway, 24-hour-operations coverage in Facilities Management, and weekend and evening coverage in the Sheriff's Department. The theme is largely absent from departments with predominantly Monday-through-Friday business-hours schedules.

Theme 3. Advancement and Career-Progression Opportunities

Twenty-nine percent of voluntary-resignation interviews cited the perceived absence of clear advancement paths. The theme is more frequent among separating employees with four to seven years of service and less frequent at the tails of the tenure distribution. The finding is consistent with the Section IV observation that the 2-to-5 year tenure band is over-represented among separations.

Theme 4. Supervisor and First-Line Management Experience

Nineteen percent of voluntary-resignation interviews cited supervisor or management-related factors. The Division does not identify specific individuals in this report, and the theme as reported is diffuse rather than concentrated. No supervisor received a volume of references that would support a procedural intervention on a single-supervisor basis.

Theme 5. Retirement, Health, and Family Reasons

Among retirements and non-voluntary separations (a combined 71 separations), the expected themes of health changes, caregiving responsibilities, and relocation for family reasons predominate. These themes are largely outside the county's operational control and are reported here primarily for completeness.

Caveats on Exit Interview Data

Exit interview data has known limitations. Separating employees have an incentive to leave positive impressions, which may understate concerns about interpersonal conflict or about specific supervisors. Employees moving to higher-compensation positions elsewhere have an incentive to emphasize compensation as the rationale, which may overstate compensation and understate other factors. The Division weighs this data as useful directional evidence, not as definitive measurement of workforce sentiment.

VII. Findings and Recommendations

The recommendations set out below are offered for the County Administrator's consideration and for discussion with the Human Resources Committee of the Board of Supervisors. They are organized in rough order of the time horizon on which the Division believes implementation should begin. No recommendation in this report should be construed as a commitment to any specific expenditure or policy change; each will require Board authorization or County Administrator direction at the appropriate stage.

Recommendation 1. Targeted Compensation and Classification Review

Commission a classification and compensation review focused on the Highway Department skilled-trades classifications (Equipment Operator, Maintenance Worker, Commercial Driver, Mechanic, Foreman) and the Facilities Management skilled-trades classifications (Building Maintenance Technician I and II, Custodial Worker, HVAC Technician). The review should use a defined comparator set of Wisconsin counties and municipalities of comparable size and function, with a secondary comparator set drawn from the regional private-sector market for the same classifications. The Division estimates this review at approximately twelve to sixteen weeks of outside-consultant effort, with budget implications that should be assessed against the current cost of elevated vacancy duration and replacement hiring in the affected classifications.

Devil's advocate note. A compensation study carries political sensitivity in two directions. It may surface recommendations the county is not positioned to implement in the current budget environment, creating expectation-setting risk. It may also appear to bargaining units as pre-negotiation positioning ahead of successor contract discussions. The Division recommends proceeding, but recommends coordinating timing and scope with the County Administrator's Office and with legal counsel before engagement of a consultant.

Recommendation 2. Structured Two-Year Retention Interviews

Implement a structured retention-interview program for employees approaching their two-year county service anniversary in classifications where three-year turnover has exceeded 15 percent. The retention interview is not an exit interview; it is a scheduled conversation with the employee's second-line supervisor, using a structured protocol, to understand the employee's current assessment of the role and to surface any retention issues early enough to act on them. The Division estimates implementation at approximately 120 interview hours per year in the affected classifications, manageable within current Division staffing if phased in over two fiscal years.

Recommendation 3. Workforce Planning for the Retirement Wave

Commission a formal workforce-planning exercise for Fiscal Years 2026 through 2028 focused on the retirement-eligible cohort. The exercise should identify positions where retirement loss would create succession risk, specify the knowledge-transfer and overlap-hiring approaches appropriate to each, and

forward specific budget and staffing recommendations to the Finance Director for the Fiscal Year 2026 and Fiscal Year 2027 budget cycles. This exercise is distinct from the turnover-rate concern that is the focus of this report, but is surfaced here because the retirement profile is visible in the current data.

Recommendation 4. Supervisor Development Investment

Invest in first-line supervisor development across all departments, with an initial focus on supervisors in the departments with above-average turnover rates (Highway, Facilities Management, Parks and Recreation, Land Information and Zoning). The investment should cover retention-focused supervisory practices, structured feedback and check-in protocols, and the elements of the two-year retention interview program described in Recommendation 2. The Division proposes partnering with an established public-sector management development provider for curriculum and delivery.

Recommendation 5. Scheduling Practice Review in 24-Hour Operations

Review shift-scheduling practices in the departments with 24-hour and non-business-hours operations (Sheriff's Department, Facilities Management for 24-hour-operations buildings, Highway Department for winter operations). The review should evaluate scheduling predictability, advance-notice practices, and call-in and overtime distribution, and should be conducted in consultation with the affected bargaining units. Any changes to scheduling practices will need to be negotiated where they intersect with collective bargaining agreement terms. The Division recommends initiating this review after the classification study in Recommendation 1 is scoped, to sequence the reviews in a way that does not overwhelm department heads.

Recommendation 6. Exit Interview Instrument Revision

Revise the exit interview instrument to improve comparability across departments and across fiscal years, to standardize thematic coding, and to introduce a mandatory disposition-tracking field for each identified issue. The current instrument is serviceable but was not designed to support the kind of cross-year analysis that this report attempts. A revised instrument and administration protocol should be in place no later than the start of Fiscal Year 2026.

What This Report Does Not Recommend

The Division does not recommend a countywide compensation adjustment in advance of the classification study in Recommendation 1. A general adjustment in the absence of comparator data would not be targeted to the classifications where the evidence supports intervention, and would create precedent implications for successor collective bargaining. The Division also does not recommend revisions to the county's progressive discipline framework or to investigation procedures on the basis of this data; the involuntary-termination volume is within historical norms, and the Division's 2024 procedural review of the disciplinary framework did not surface structural concerns.

VIII. Methodology Notes and Data Limitations

The Division notes the following limitations in the data and analysis presented in this report.

Separation-reason coding is assigned by the HR Analyst processing the separation, based on information provided by the employee and the supervisor at the time of separation. In some cases, the assigned reason code may not fully capture the employee's actual motivation for leaving. The instrument revision described in Recommendation 6 is intended to reduce this limitation going forward.

Exit interview response rates vary by department. Where a department's response rate is substantially below the countywide average, thematic conclusions drawn from that department's exit interviews are reported with the response rate as a context. Department-level thematic conclusions in this report are qualitative rather than statistical.

The FTE workforce denominator is calculated as an average of month-end counts. Positions that were vacant at any given month-end are not counted in the denominator for that month, which slightly understates the denominator for calculation of the rate. The Division's working estimate is that this understatement does not affect the reported rate by more than 0.2 percentage points countywide. The issue is more pronounced in the Highway Department, where vacancy duration was elevated during the reporting period; the department's true separation rate may be slightly lower than the reported 22.1 percent on an FTE-adjusted basis, but remains materially higher than every other department regardless of adjustment method.

The workforce-share reference column in Table 3 (Section IV) is drawn from a single point-in-time pull rather than from a continuously maintained workforce-by-tenure time series. The reference values should be treated as approximate rather than precise.

This report does not include compensation levels, benefit design, or bargaining-unit-specific analysis. Those dimensions are referenced at a narrative level where relevant, but the quantitative analysis is restricted to separation counts, rates, and demographics.

IX. Records Handling and Confidentiality

This report is prepared as internal analytical work product of the Arlandria County Human Resources Division, Department of Administration. As a record in the possession of a Wisconsin county government unit, it is subject to the public records requirements of Wis. Stat. Ch. 19, Subch. II, and may be released in response to a qualifying records request, with any exemptions applied as determined appropriate by the County Corporation Counsel.

The report itself contains no personally identifiable information regarding individual employees. All data is presented in aggregate. The underlying separation records, retention of which is governed by the county records retention schedule, do contain employee-identifying information and are maintained with appropriate access controls in the HR Information System.

Exit interview narrative responses are retained in the Division in accordance with the retention schedule. Narrative responses are not appended to this report and are not released outside the Division in connection with this report. The thematic summaries in Section VI have been prepared in a manner that does not identify individual respondents.

Draft versions of this report circulated within the Department of Administration and to the County Administrator's Office during the pre-finalization review are also records subject to the public records statute. Preliminary drafts have been retained by the Division in accordance with the retention schedule applicable to draft administrative analyses.

Questions regarding the records-handling status of this report, or regarding specific records requests pertaining to its underlying data, should be directed to the Human Resources Director or to the County Corporation Counsel.

End of Report