

Statewide Law Enforcement Officer Retention Study



THE PUBLIC SAFETY SELECTION SPECIALISTS™



Conducted by I/O Solutions, Inc.
in service to the

State of Vermont

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Introduction

A large-scale survey project was undertaken by I/O Solutions, Inc. in service to the Vermont Department of Public Safety. This project's principal aim was to gather data on law enforcement officer turnover throughout the state of Vermont in order to better understand the causes of voluntary officer turnover and transfers. To accomplish this goal, I/O Solutions developed paper-and-pencil surveys to be completed by current, former, and transferred officers. The surveys were mailed to potential respondents with pre-addressed and stamped envelopes. Once returned to I/O Solutions, the surveys were entered into electronic databases and analyzed. Additionally, a telephone questionnaire was developed and administered to a mixture of personnel with high-level insight into the turnover issue. These individuals answered the questionnaire over the phone, and their qualitative input was transcribed into an electronic database and their comments were organized into thematic groups for analysis.

This process is described in full detail, and all results and interpretations of findings are provided in this document.

Step 1: Project Planning

I/O Solutions began work on the Vermont Officer Retention Study in early September of 2005. The project was to be loosely modeled after an earlier survey-based retention study which was conducted in 1991. A telephone conference served as the project's kickoff as the consultant, the Vermont Department of Public Safety (DPS), and members of a specially formed advisory panel established the project's timeline and the responsibilities of those involved. The goal of the study was to investigate the high rate of turnover among Vermont's law enforcement agencies by gathering the perspectives of current and former officers and civilian staff members with front-line information, such as town managers and human resource personnel. Paper and telephone surveys were used to gather this information, and the resulting data were analyzed and interpreted.

During the initial teleconference on September 6th, I/O Solutions' project timeline and methodology were discussed and approved by the advisory panel. The initial project timeline can be found in **Appendix I**. It was decided that the consultant and a contact from the DPS would coordinate the project, while the advisory panel would be called on if needed to facilitate data collection.

In early September the DPS provided I/O Solutions with contact information for the Vermont's state, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies. This contact information was transcribed into a database that would be used to organize and track agency communications. According to the initial timeline, the month of September would be spent creating the survey tools and contacting Vermont's agencies to solicit their participation in the study. At the end of the month the surveys were to be approved by DPS and distributed to participating agencies. The month of October was to be spent conducting telephone interviews and receiving survey data via the postal service. The month of November was to be spent compiling and analyzing gathered data. This timeline was later adjusted to allow for an extra month of data collection.

Step 2: Survey Creation

Surveys had to be created to tap three populations of respondents in the state of Vermont: current officers, former officers, and officers who have transferred to other law enforcement agencies. For our purposes, current officers were defined as those officers who are currently working in one of the state's law enforcement agencies and who have not held another law enforcement position elsewhere. Former officers were defined as those who had previously held a law enforcement position in the state, but left that position voluntarily within the last five years and who had not found subsequent law enforcement work. Transfers were defined as those who had left one of Vermont's law enforcement agencies but subsequently found work at a different law enforcement agency, either within or outside of Vermont.

Rather than create three completely distinct surveys, the decision was made to create a single, superior framework and then derive two surveys from that framework to cover the three target groups. The final products were two surveys: one for current officers and transfers, and one for former officers who had left law enforcement. Both survey versions had questions built in to identify officers who had transferred from one agency to another. So, two versions of the survey yielded three sub-samples: current, former, and transferred officers. The survey for current officers can be found in

Appendix II.

Demographics

The first step was to identify relevant demographic variables; these variables would allow us to look for differences between groups within the population. This information allows specific analysis of individual groups of survey respondents. Rather than looking only at the factors that influence turnover for the entire population, we can search for factors that influence turnover for married males at the rank of lieutenant, for example. Also, gathering this information allows for a better understanding of the sample's makeup.

Job Attitudes

The second step was to create a set of survey items that tapped job attitudes. Job attitude items are statements with which the respondent may agree or disagree. The final set of 87 job attitude items was selected based on clarity and relevance. Respondents were asked to respond to these items using a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The job attitudes section included seven areas of focus: compensation, professional development, stress and burnout, organizational fit, job identification, generation X/Y issues, and quality of life. Each of these areas was addressed by 8-15 individual items and was intended to measure general attitudes about these elements of work life.

Compensation items dealt with pay rates, pay increases, time off, and non-monetary benefits such as medical plans. Nine items constituted the compensation attitudes subscale.

Professional development involves respondents' attitudes about the quality of feedback received, skill development, and career progression. This subscale comprised eight items.

Nineteen of the questions within the survey related to the subject of *stress and burnout* on the job. Stress is found in all workplaces, and can have both good and bad effects on individuals, including influencing work performance, health, and well-being. Burnout may be one important cause of turnover on the job.

The next subscale was titled *person-organization fit*. Person-organization fit can be defined as the degree of compatibility between people and the organizations in which they work. This may involve similarities between the characteristics of the person in question and his or her coworkers, or it may involve shared goals and values between the person and his or her organization. Research has generally found that higher levels of fit between a person and the organization lead to a reduction in turnover.

Job identification is defined as the degree to which a member's identity encompasses his/her work role. In other words, to what degree does the employee define himself as a police officer? This concept is relatively new, but shows promise in the field of personnel psychology.

The *Generation X/Y issues* subscale examined respondents' attitudes toward topics that are of particular concern to Generation X and Y individuals. It is fairly well-established that Generation X individuals were born between 1961 and 1981, while Generation Y individuals are born after 1981. In general, the people of Generation X value the individual over the organization. They are motivated by empowerment and leaders who lead by example. Generation Y individuals generally want the organization to value their opinion. Individuals of Generation Y also value directness and genuine feedback from their leaders. In order to tap into these generational issues, a subscale of eight items was included.

Quality of life items refer to an individual's overall state of subjective well-being. A broad range of human experiences and perceptions contribute to one's feeling of well-being, including physical and emotional health, relationships with family and friends, personal fulfillment and development, and participation in social and/or recreational activities. The quality of life subscale consists of eight items.

Job Satisfaction

The third section of the survey dealt with job satisfaction. Abundant research has linked employee satisfaction to turnover and shown that increased satisfaction is correlated to decreased turnover. Like the previous section, respondents used a 5-point scale to respond to brief statements that described specific elements of the job. This scale ranged from *very dissatisfied* to *very satisfied*. Survey questions were written that tapped issues that were deemed possible sources of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. These questions dealt with more specific issues than the attitudes section. There were twenty-six items in the satisfaction section of the survey.

Importance

The fourth section of the survey was nearly identical to the third. The same survey items that were given in the satisfaction section were listed again in section 4, which was titled *importance*. The satisfaction and importance sections were designed to work together so that, for each specific job aspect, we would gather data on how satisfying that aspect was and how important it was in determining the respondent's overall feelings

toward the job. We felt that satisfaction ratings, if taken alone, were insufficient; one aspect of the job may be extremely dissatisfying, but at the same time so unimportant to the worker that it has virtually no impact on the worker's desire to stay in or leave the job. By combining satisfaction ratings with importance ratings, we have a more accurate understanding of which elements truly impact the decision to remain in or to leave a law enforcement position.

Transfer Perceptions

The final section of the survey focused on job transfers. First, this section gathered information about whether the respondent had previously worked in another law enforcement agency. A series of yes-or-no questions determined if the respondent qualified as a transfer for the purposes of this study. Second, for those determined to be transfers, a series of questions prompted comparisons between the current job and the previous job. This list of comparisons included the same job elements as the list used in the third (*satisfaction*) and fourth (*importance*) sections. There were twenty-six items in this section.

Open-Ended Comment Sheet

Each survey respondent also received a comment sheet which solicited any thoughts or opinions regarding turnover. On this sheet the respondents were free to write any comments they wished. We felt this would serve as a "catch-all" and give respondents an opportunity to bring to light any issues that we had not foreseen when creating the survey. These comment sheets would be read and coded by theme once returned to our offices.

Once the survey was created, it was sent via email to the members of the advisory panel for their review and approval. The panel took one week to review the survey, after which some relatively minor recommendations were made. These changes were then made to the surveys, and the survey went into production at the I/O Solutions office.

Step 3: Initial Agency Communication

While the surveys were being developed, other members of the I/O Solutions team were contacting each of Vermont's state, county, and municipal agencies to secure their participation in the project. Using the contact information provided by DPS at the outset, each agency was contacted in order to introduce and explain the study and secure a commitment to participate. Also, approximate numbers of current and former officers from each agency were obtained. Unfortunately, these efforts yielded mixed results. A number of agencies were initially unresponsive to repeated calls and voicemails. Because a major goal was to obtain as large a sample as possible, I/O Solutions continued to make contact with those agencies throughout the month of September and into October. Additionally, we called upon the advisory board and the DPS to prompt some non-responsive agencies. Five agencies out of sixty-six provided no information to I/O Solutions and therefore were not included in the study. Three other agencies provided incomplete information.

Step 4: Telephone Questionnaire Creation

To supplement the quantitative survey data gathered from current and former police professionals, the project also called for qualitative data to be gathered from various individuals across the state with a more global perspective on officer turnover and related issues. It was recommended by the DPS that town managers, administrators, or other human resource professionals be targeted for this information.

Rather than develop another paper survey for this purpose, a telephone-based questionnaire was created. Such a tool would be more flexible and allow I/O Solutions to gather information on a broader scope of topics. Telephone interviews allow the interviewee to take the conversation in a number of different directions, which can provide valuable insight that could not be gathered using a paper survey.

The telephone questionnaire included twelve questions broken into three different sections: *general turnover perceptions*, *transfers*, and *areas of satisfaction*. Notably, the final question is open-ended, asking the interviewee for any other insights,

recommendations, or general thoughts about law enforcement turnover in Vermont. This item highlights the value of the telephone questionnaire discussed previously.

The questionnaire also included an introductory script to be read by the interviewer. This script outlined the purpose for the phone call, the identity of the caller, and the basic details of the study being conducted. A second script was included to end the interview and answer any questions. These scripts were not read verbatim, but were used as guides for interviewers to ensure all interviewees were given the same introduction and instructions. The telephone questionnaire is attached as **Appendix III**.

Step 5: Data Collection

Once the surveys were approved by the DPS and mass-printed, mailings were assembled. Each survey mailing included: an introductory letter, an instruction sheet, one copy of the survey, one answer sheet, one comment sheet, one pencil, and a pre-addressed and pre-stamped envelope for the return of responses. These items were sealed inside a larger envelope, which was sent to respondents.

Prior to mailing surveys, I/O Solutions contacted each of the 66 departments across Vermont directly via telephone to introduce the project and to gather information on the number of current and former officers from each agency. The list included county sheriff's offices, municipal police departments, and the Vermont State Police. **Table 1** provides the list of 66 agencies, which was provided by DPS at the outset of the project.

Agencies were given two options for distributing surveys to individuals. First, the agency could provide respondent contact information to I/O Solutions so that surveys could be sent directly to the respondents. The second option was to act as a liaison between I/O Solutions and their personnel by forwarding surveys to potential respondents. This second (and more popular) option required I/O Solutions to send a package containing a predetermined number of surveys to the agency, where those surveys would be distributed to personnel. In most cases, agencies elected to distribute surveys to current officers while providing I/O Solutions the last known address of former officers. The main issue here was maintaining the officers' privacy. A smaller group of departments chose to provide us with specific contact information for each

current and former officer on record. In these instances, survey packets were addressed individually and sent directly to the respondents.

Table 1. Agency Contacts

COUNTY AGENCIES	
Addison County Sheriff's Office	Lamoille County Sheriff's Office
Bennington County Sheriff's Office	Orange County Sheriff's Office
Caledonia County Sheriff's Office	Orleans County Sheriff's Office
Chittenden County Sheriff's Office	Rutland County Sheriff's Office
Essex County Sheriff's Office	Washington County Sheriff's Office
Franklin County Sheriff's Office	Windham County Sheriff's Office
Grand Isle County Sheriff's Office	Windsor County Sheriff's Office
MUNICIPAL AGENCIES	
Barre City Police Department	North Troy Village PD
Barre Town Police Department	Northfield Police Department
Bellows Falls Police Department	Norwich Police Department
Bennington Police Department	Randolph Police Department
Berlin Police Department	Richmond Police Department
Brandon Police Department	Rutland City Police Department
Brattleboro Police Department	St. Albans Police Department
Bristol Police Department	St. Johnsbury Police Department
Burlington Police Department	Shelburne Police Department
Castleton Police Department	Springfield Police Department
Chester Police Department	South Burlington Police Department
Colchester Police Department	Stowe Police Department
Dover Police Department	Swanton Police Department
Essex Police Department	Thetford Police Department
Fair Haven Police Department	UVM Police Services
Hardwick-Greensboro Police Dept.	Vergennes Police Department
Hartford Police Department	Vernon Police Department
Hinesburg Police Department	Waterbury Police Department
Ludlow Police Department	Weathersfield Police Department
Lyndonville Police Department	Williston Police Department
Manchester Police Department	Wilmington Police Department
Middlebury Police Department	Windsor Police Department
Milton Police Department	Winhall Police Department
Montpelier Police Department	Winooski Police Department
Morristown Police Department	Woodstock Police Department
Newport Police Department	
VERMONT STATE POLICE	

While multiple attempts were made to solicit information from each agency, some agencies failed to participate, either by ignoring repeated voicemails or by failing to adhere to promises to supply the needed information. The unfortunate, but unavoidable,

result is that not all agencies are represented in the study. Nevertheless, we were able to mail surveys to officers from 58 of the 66 agencies in the state, or 87.8 percent. The breakdown across agency types can be seen in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Agency Participation

Agency Type	Participating	Total
Municipal Agencies	46	51
County Agencies	11	14
State Police	1	1
Total	58	66

Across these 58 agencies we distributed a total of 1,371 surveys, which included both versions of the survey: Current and Former. **Table 3** details the number total surveys sent by survey type. Note that the third sub-group, transfers, was identified using questions placed in the Current and Former versions of the survey.

Table 3. Distribution by Survey Type

Group	Number of Surveys Sent
Current Personnel	1071
Former Personnel	300
Total	1371

Respondents were asked to return two items: the survey answer sheet and the written comment sheet. As survey responses were received, the answer sheets were scanned by a computer scoring system and entered into an electronic database. The comment sheets were read and transcribed into an electronic database, where comments were grouped by topic area for thematic analysis.

The first surveys were received by I/O Solutions about two weeks after the first mailing, and continued to arrive daily over the next month. During the second week of November reminder postcards were distributed to all respondents asking that surveys be returned on or before December 2nd. This date was deemed the latest date at which a

survey could be received, scored, and analyzed in order to meet the DPS project deadline. Such reminders are common in survey research and serve to maximize response rate.

Step 6: Analysis and Results

Data from the surveys, telephone questionnaires, and respondent comment sheets were analyzed starting December 12th. No surveys received beyond this point were included in the analyses.

Turnover Rates

Turnover rates for the state were computed using the data provided by the agencies that participated in the study. I/O Solutions cannot verify the accuracy of these data, and we do not know how accurately the reporting agencies maintain records of voluntary turnover. Some agencies did not report numbers of former officers, and those agencies were not included in this analysis. The county agencies reported the worst turnover ratio, with 8.91% annual turnover. Municipal agencies were next with 8.25%. The state police reported by far the lowest turnover rate at 1.22% per year over the last five years. Overall, Vermont's agencies reported 6.02% turnover per year over the last 5 years.

The Survey – Demographics

A total of 666 surveys were returned and analyzed, for an overall response rate of 48.6%. **Table 4** displays the breakdown of these respondents and their classification. Note that, while we were interested in 3 subgroups (currents, formers, and transfers), only two versions of the survey were distributed (Current and Former). This is because it would have been difficult and time-consuming to deliberately identify transfers at the outset of the project. Instead, transfers were identified using questions on both the Current and Former surveys.

Table 4. Survey Subgroup Breakdown

Survey Type/Classification	Surveys Sent	Surveys Received	Percentage of Total
Current Personnel	1071	398	59.8
Former Personnel	300	77	11.6
Transferred Personnel	N/A	169	25.4
Not Identified	N/A	22	3.2
Total	1371	666	100.0

Because it was possible to contact transfers either at their current agency or through their former agency, both surveys included questions asking the respondent whether he/she had worked at another law enforcement agency in the past. These questions were used to retroactively identify transfers.

We investigated whether an agency's size influenced the amount of turnover it experienced. Unfortunately, the low response rate among formers and the agencies' inconsistent ability to provide accurate contact information rendered this analysis impossible. We also investigated the relationship between the departments that formers had left and the departments that transfers were currently employed at. We felt that identifying the agencies officers were most likely to leave and those that officers were most likely to transfer to may reveal some pattern of movement. Again, identifying the agencies most likely to lose personnel was impossible with these data, but the investigation of transfers provided some interesting findings. The correlation between agency size and percentage of that agency's personnel who are transfers was .57, which is a strong, positive correlation. This indicates that larger agencies are more likely to have a higher percentage of transfers than smaller agencies. This finding is consistent with the findings from our telephone interviews and written comment sheets, which indicated that smaller departments routinely lose personnel to larger departments for a host of reasons, which are more thoroughly discussed in the telephone questionnaire section of this report.

The survey sample was mostly male and virtually all white. Most of the respondents were married and had never been divorced, had some college degree, and held a rank of sergeant or lower. The complete demographic breakdown of the sample is shown in **Tables 5-9**.

Table 5. Sample Demographics - Gender and Race

Subgroup	N	Percentage
Male	583	87.5
Female	55	8.3
Unreported	28	4.2
African-American	3	0.5
Hispanic	5	0.8
Native American	4	0.6
White	618	92.8
Other	4	0.6
Unreported	32	4.7

Table 6. Sample Demographics - Age and Tenure

Variable	Mean	95% Range
Age	38.91	29-48
Tenure	13.19	3-23

Table 7. Sample Demographics - Marital Status

Subgroup	N	Percentage
Single, Never Married	101	15.2
Married, Never Divorced	374	56.2
Married, Previously Divorced	98	14.7
Divorced, Now Single	59	8.8
Not Reported	34	5.1
Total	666	100

Table 8. Sample Demographics - Rank

Subgroup	N	Percentage
Patrol/Warden	306	45.9
Corporal	61	9.2
Sergeant	137	20.6
Lieutenant	43	6.5
Captain	17	2.5
Commander	1	0.2
Major	6	0.9
Inspector	9	1.3
Deputy Chief/Deputy Sheriff	21	3.1
Chief/Colonel/Sheriff	32	4.8
Not Reported	33	5.0
Total	666	100

Table 9. Sample Demographics - Education

Subgroup	N	Percentage
High School or GED	55	8.3
Some College	178	26.7
Associates	143	21.5
Bachelors	231	34.7
Graduate	30	4.5
Not Reported	29	4.3
Total	666	100

The Survey – Job Attitudes

Recall that the job attitudes section was made up of 7 subscales: compensation, professional development, stress and burnout, job identification, organizational fit, generation X/Y issues, and quality of life. The job attitudes section included a 5-point response scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). The data were scored such that high numbers (closer to 5) indicate positive attitudes, while low numbers (closer to 1) indicate negative attitudes. For example, item number 10 read, “My rate of pay is fair for the work I do.” Answering *Strongly Agree* to this statement would yield a score of 5, while answering *Strongly Disagree* would yield a score of 1 and indicate a negative attitude regarding this item. Using this system, we calculated the average scores for each of the subscales. For example, we gathered all the responses to the items in the compensation subscale and calculated the mean score for compensation. This figure gives some indication of the sample’s overall attitude toward compensation. The average scores for the subscales are rank-ordered and presented in **Table 10**. In the absence of other considerations, these numbers indicate that stress and burnout (2.86) was viewed with a generally more negative attitude, while quality of life (3.79) was viewed with a generally more positive attitude. These results should be interpreted with caution, however, because the differences between most pairs of subscales are very small. Also, scale equivalence has not been established between these subscales. Rather, these data provide just one perspective of the overall picture of turnover in Vermont’s law enforcement agencies.

Table 10. Mean Subscale Scores - Job Attitudes

Subscale	Mean	S.D.
Stress and Burnout	2.86	.542
Generation X/Y Issues	2.88	.692
Compensation	2.90	.668
Professional Development	3.34	.633
Organizational Fit	3.51	.645
Job Identity	3.62	.553
Quality of Life	3.79	.571

We thought it would be interesting to identify the highest- and lowest-scoring items within each subscale. When looking at **Table 11**, note the middle and right-hand columns; the middle column displays the job aspect that was viewed most favorably, while the right-hand column displays that which was viewed least favorably by the respondents.

Table 11. Highest- and Lowest-Scoring Items Within Subscale

Subscale	Most Favorable	Least Favorable
Compensation	The non-monetary compensation I receive (benefits, medical coverage) is fair for the work I do.	My rate of pay is fair for the work I do.
Professional Development	I have a clear understanding of my work responsibilities.	I receive useful feedback about my performance on a regular basis.
Stress and Burnout	I often think about my work when I'm not at work.	My routine stress level is adversely affecting my physical health.
Organizational Fit	I greatly enjoy law enforcement work.	N/A
Job Identification	I think I am cut out to do my current job.	Of all the things about me, my job is what I'm most proud of.
Generation X/Y	The feedback provided by my supervisors is genuine.	In my agency, leaders' actions are consistent with their words.
Quality of Life	I have positive relationships with my family.	N/A

When reviewing the results for the job attitude subscales of the survey, we noted that there were no meaningful job attitude differences between currents, formers, and transfers. This serves as just one piece of evidence that these 3 subgroups may not have markedly different perspectives on law enforcement work in the state of Vermont. When we looked for differences on individual survey items, there were a small number of items that indicated differences between the groups. These items were scattered across the entire survey, both throughout the job attitudes section and the satisfaction section that will be discussed next. The general theme was that current officers maintained slightly

more negative views of the job than former officers. It seems that, after leaving a position, one's views of the job soften somewhat. For example, formers tended to express more satisfaction with pay, quality of training, medical coverage, policies, work/life balance, and to see the job as important and to feel more valued in the workplace.

The Survey – Satisfaction and Importance

Recall that the satisfaction and importance sections of the survey each have identical sets of items. The sections were intended to be used in conjunction. Having identical sets of items in each section resulted in two ratings for each statement. For example, "Amount of medical coverage" was rated on how satisfying it was and on how important it was to the respondent. **Table 12** shows the twenty-five items ranked by satisfaction, with importance ratings also displayed. Note that numbers closer to 5 indicate higher levels of satisfaction/importance, while numbers closer to 1 indicate lower levels of satisfaction/importance. The numbers listed are averages across all survey respondents.

The table indicates that the most satisfying job elements are relationships with peers, amount of responsibility, and relationship with direct supervisor, while the least satisfying job elements are magnitude of pay raises, frequency of pay raises, salary, and fairness of awards and promotions given out to personnel. It is notable that salary, frequency of pay raises and magnitude of pay raises were seen as highly important and relatively unsatisfactory. This finding is consistent with qualitative feedback we received from respondents on both the comment sheets and the telephone interview.

Table 12. Job Element Satisfaction and Importance Ratings

Item	Satisfaction	Importance
Relationships with peers	3.93	4.06
Amount of responsibility	3.69	3.72
Relationship with direct supervisor	3.58	3.87
Time of day worked (overnight, day shift, etc.)	3.54	3.66
Quality of training you have received	3.46	4.14
Number of vacation/sick days	3.45	3.92
Amount of supervision	3.40	3.42
Rules governing use of vacation/sick days	3.40	3.45
Strictness of departmental policies	3.31	3.44
Quality of your work/life balance	3.28	4.44
Trauma and stress-related coping resources provided by your department	3.28	3.44
Amount of medical coverage	3.28	4.41
Frequency of policy/rule changes or updates	3.22	3.05
The amount of work done on each shift (workload)	3.16	3.66
Number of hours worked	3.12	3.78
The process governing officers' complaints or grievances against the department	3.07	3.48
Opportunities for advancement	2.99	4.53
Amount of personalized feedback about your performance	2.94	3.82
Opportunities for advancement	2.87	3.89
Frequency of promotions	2.83	3.49
Amount of communication from leadership to subordinate personnel	2.81	3.98
Frequency of pay raises	2.80	4.14
Fairness of awards, promotions, and other perks given out to personnel	2.67	3.69
Your salary	2.55	4.34
Magnitude of pay raises	2.36	4.22

To get a clearer picture of how satisfaction and importance relate, we created an artificial rating. Given that the study's main goal is to investigate (and eventually improve) turnover, we decided to identify which job elements were both dissatisfying and important to respondents. To accomplish this we multiplied the average satisfaction rating by the average importance rating for each job element. Satisfaction data were reverse-coded so that lower numbers indicate dissatisfaction and high importance. This new variable was termed *urgency*. Using this procedure, we computed the urgency ratings and listed them in **Table 13**. High urgency ratings indicate that the job element is largely dissatisfying to Vermont's officers yet is rated as an important factor when they evaluate their jobs.

These findings echo those above, and indicate that pay is a major and important area of dissatisfaction. Three of the top five items here deal with pay. For the first time we see that the retirement plan is another important focus, which was also strongly indicated in the qualitative analyses described later. Communication from leadership, fairness of rewards, and opportunities for advancement are other areas in which satisfaction is low but perceived importance is high.

Table 13. Most Urgent Job Elements

Item	Urgency (Sat. X Imp.)
Magnitude of pay raises	15.61
Your salary	15.16
Employer-sponsored retirement plan	13.70
Frequency of pay raises	13.40
Amount of communication from leadership	12.85
Fairness of awards and promotions	12.55
Opportunities for advancement	12.28
Quality of work/life balance	12.10
Amount of medical coverage	12.01
Amount of personalized feedback about your performance	11.75
Frequency of promotions	11.22
Number of hours worked	11.12
The amount of work done on each shift (workload)	10.61
The process governing officers' complaints or grievances against the department	10.42
Number of vacation/sick days	10.16
Strictness of departmental policies	9.33
Trauma and stress-related coping resources provided by department	9.31
Rules governing use of vacation/sick days	9.27
Relationship with direct supervisor	9.12
Time of day worked (overnight, day shift, etc.)	9.08
Amount of supervision	8.99
Frequency of policy/rule changes or updates	8.62
Amount of responsibility	8.56
Relationship with peers	8.19

Differences in urgency ratings were also analyzed by grouping state, county, and municipal agencies and comparing the three groups on each of the 26 job elements. A number of job elements showed differences between these groups, and nearly all comparisons showed that county personnel find job elements to be more important and less satisfying than their counterparts in state or municipal agencies. In other words, the urgency scores for county respondents were significantly higher than for municipal or state respondents. The following tables represent data from the job elements where differences were found. The percentages shown are the percentages of respondents who scored the job element with an urgency rating of 16 or higher. Note the relatively high numbers for county respondents.

Table 14. Amount of medical coverage

Department Type	Percent Urgent
State	22.58%
County	57.45%
Municipal	20.47%

Table 15. Employer-sponsored retirement plan

Department Type	Percent Urgent
State	19.22%
County	52.17%
Municipal	49.49%

Table 16. Frequency of pay raises

Department Type	Percent Urgent
State	35.56%
County	54.35%
Municipal	45.77%

Table 17. Number of vacation/sick days

Department Type	Percent Urgent
State	17.83%
County	40.00%
Municipal	18.05%

Table 18. Opportunities for advancement

Department Type	Percent Urgent
State	22.39%
County	47.83%
Municipal	37.24%

Table 19. Amount of communication from leadership

Department Type	Percent Urgent
State	25.74%
County	51.06%
Municipal	44.88%

Table 20. Frequency of promotions

Department Type	Percent Urgent
State	20.16%
County	45.45%
Municipal	30.00%

Table 21. Quality of training received

Department Type	Percent Urgent
State	11.90%
County	36.17%
Municipal	17.53%

Table 22. Trauma and stress-related coping resources provided

Department Type	Percent Urgent
State	4.68%
County	29.55%
Municipal	10.14%

Table 23. Relationship with direct supervisor

Department Type	Percent Urgent
State	10.24%
County	15.56%
Municipal	12.78%

From these tables, we see that many of the job elements that are urgent to the survey respondents as a whole are even more urgent for those in county agencies. Pay, retirement, medical coverage, career advancement, and a host of other issues are particularly urgent for county agencies, and typically less urgent for state personnel. In general, job perceptions are most negative at the county level and most positive at the state level, with municipal agencies falling in between.

The Survey – Transfers’ Perceptions

Those respondents who classified themselves as transfers were asked to respond to a final set of twenty-six items. They were asked to indicate whether the twenty-six job elements were better, the same, or worse in their current job than in their former job. This comparison was meant to investigate what elements of law enforcement work were most (or least) improved when an officer left one agency for another. Additionally, we compared these before-and-after ratings with the importance ratings described earlier. The twenty-six job elements in this section are identical to those in the satisfaction and importance sections, making these comparisons straightforward. **Table 24** shows the twenty-six job elements ranked by transfers. Numbers closer to 1 indicate that the job element has mostly improved for the respondent, while numbers closer to 3 indicate that the job element has worsened.

These data reveal that, according to the perceptions of the transferred officers, pay and retirement are the job elements that are most improved when transferring to a new agency. Again, these are the two most prevalent themes from the comment sheets and from the telephone questionnaires, which are discussed in the next section. Rank is the third-most improved element, which is expected since it is likely that officers leave one position for another of higher rank. Time of day worked and the amount of sick/vacation time provided are the 4th and 5th most-improved elements.

Table 24. Ratings of Improvement from Last Agency to Current Agency

Item	Improvement
Your salary	1.40
Employer-sponsored retirement plan	1.48
Your rank	1.50
Time of day worked (overnight, day shift, etc.)	1.57
Number of vacation/sick days	1.58
Frequency of pay raises	1.59
Quality of training you have received	1.63
Quality of work/life balance	1.64
Opportunities for advancement	1.65
Amount of responsibility	1.65
Magnitude of pay raises	1.65
Relationships with peers	1.68
Amount of supervision	1.69
Relationship with direct supervisor	1.69
Amount of medical coverage	1.70
Trauma and stress-related coping resources provided by your department	1.70
Rules governing use of vacation/sick days	1.71
Frequency of promotions	1.72
The process governing officers' complaints or grievances against the department	1.76
Number of hours worked	1.77
Frequency of policy/rule changes or updates	1.78
Amount of personalized feedback about your performance	1.79
Strictness of departmental policies	1.80
Fairness of awards, promotions, and other perks given out to personnel	1.83
The amount of work done on each shift (workload)	1.83
Amount of communication from leadership to subordinate personnel	1.85

The Survey – Summary of Findings

Six hundred sixty-six surveys were returned. About 60% of those were from current personnel, 12% from formers, and 25% from transfers, while about 3% were not identified. The sample was mostly male and nearly all white. Most respondents were from lower ranks, and nearly all had some amount of college education.

Analysis of job attitudes data suggested that attitudes toward stress and compensation are least favorable, while attitudes toward job identity and quality of life are most favorable. More detailed analysis revealed that specific items relating to salary, feedback quality and stress levels were rated unfavorably.

Analysis of job elements revealed that peer and supervisor relationships and levels of responsibility were most satisfying for the respondents as a group, while salary, fairness of awards and promotions, and frequency/magnitude of pay raises were the least satisfying job elements. Opportunity for advancement, work/life balance, medical coverage, salary, and pay raises were rated as most important when evaluating one's job. When a new variable, urgency, was created as a combination of satisfaction and importance, salary, pay raises, and retirement plan were the job elements rated most urgent. This means that these are the elements that are both very important, yet are currently dissatisfying to the worker.

Analysis of the final section, transfers' perceptions, revealed that salary, retirement plan, rank, work shift, and amount of vacation/sick time were the most improved elements after transferring to a new agency.

Respondent Comment Sheet

Respondent comment sheets were voluntary additions to the survey packets and were returned by 299 of the 666 survey respondents, or 45%. These comment sheets elicited any comments or suggestions respondents wished to make and were read by I/O Solutions personnel upon receipt. The comments were then transcribed into an Excel database, where they were coded by theme. A single comment sheet could have as few as 0 and as many as 5 distinct themes, depending on the level of detail by the respondent.

Some comment sheets were judged to have no themes because they included irrelevant statements such as “no comment.” The final framework comprised 15 distinct themes which were submitted by the sample of respondents.

The fifteen themes are listed in **Table 25** along with the number and proportion of total comments that addressed each theme. These data are also displayed graphically:

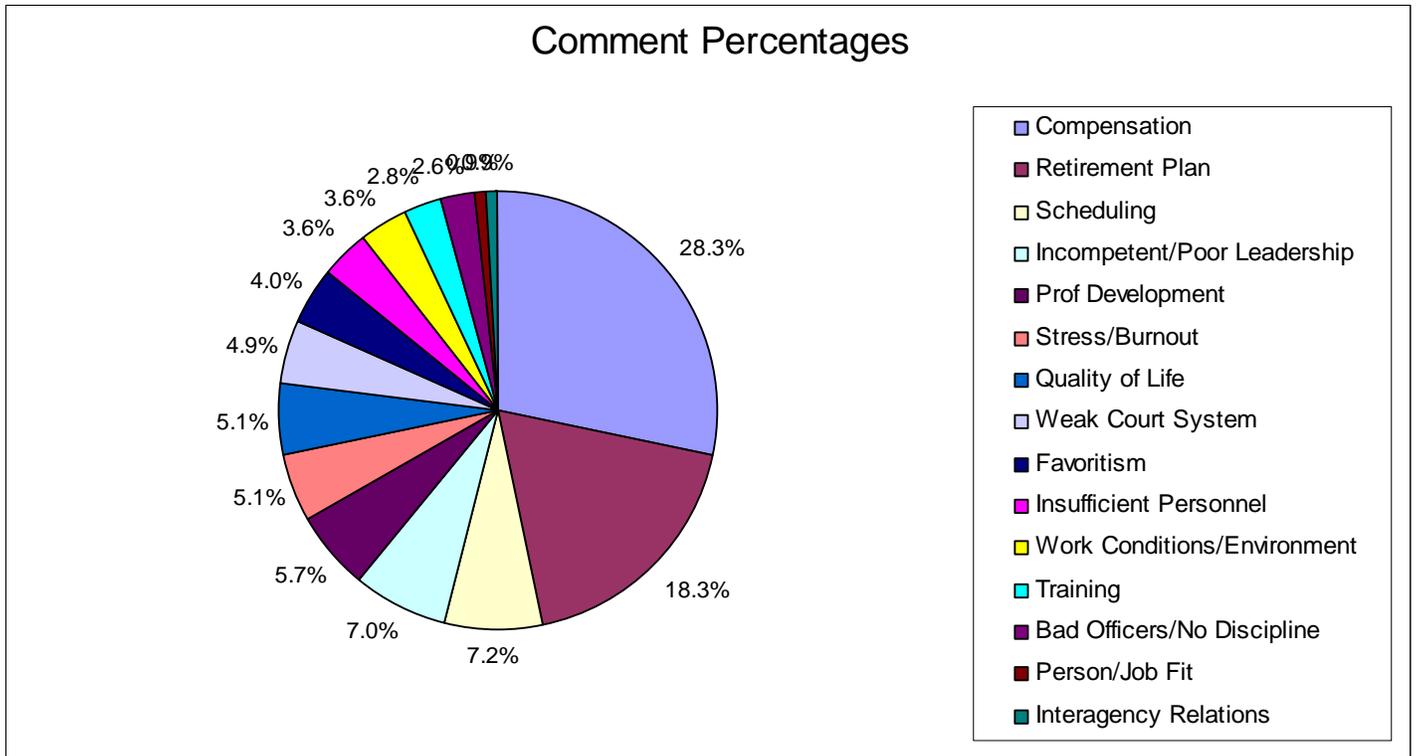


Table 25. Thematic Breakdown - Comment Sheets

Theme	Number of Comments	% of Total
Compensation	133	28.3
Retirement plan	86	18.3
Scheduling	34	7.2
Poor leadership	33	7.0
Professional development	27	5.7
Stress/burnout	24	5.1
Quality of life	24	5.1
Weak court system	23	4.9
Favoritism	19	4.0
Insufficient personnel	17	3.6
Working conditions/environment	17	3.6
Training	13	2.8
Bad officers/no discipline	12	2.6
Person/job fit	4	0.9
Interagency relations	4	0.9
Total	470	100

It should be noted that compensation and retirement alone represent nearly half of all comments submitted and that 168 of the 299 (56%) respondents mentioned one or both of these themes. This finding is consistent with the survey data, which also strongly indicated that pay and retirement were notable job elements in terms of satisfaction and importance. Scheduling, quality of leadership, and professional development were other themes common with the survey data described earlier.

In addition to simply counting the number of occurrences for each theme, we felt it would be informative to identify some actual comments that were indicative of the themes. We identified a number of comments that were typical of each theme, and some comments that offered unique perspectives not found in other sources of information.

Compensation

Sheriff's departments continue to lose personnel because they are not funded by the state and must rely on contracts for revenue. The answer is to keep the pay in line across agencies and make benefits and retirement the same for everyone.

I am only a number. I don't feel the agency cares enough for the retention of its employees, hence our pay and benefits are very bad compared to other agencies.

Wages are always a concern and when a city trash collector makes more than a starting patrolman, there is a problem.

If I did not have a second income, I could not survive on police pay.

Retirement

I am making plans to switch to a N.H. agency because N.H. currently has one of the best retirement and medical benefit packages in New England. Until Vermont can come up with statewide benefits, they will continue to lose officers.

Retirement package is poor and does not include medical benefits.

Scheduling

Rotating schedule was horrible. I would have preferred semi-permanent shifts (4 days @ 10 hours).

The shift work really takes a toll on the family.

Poor Leadership

The biggest problem with my agency is lack of fundamental leadership and genuine concern for subordinates. The evaluation system is unbalanced and you are graded on your popularity and not your work performance.

There is a lack of leadership by example. If a subordinate comes to you with an issue, shrugging your shoulders and saying, "it's not my problem" is unacceptable.

Complete lack of fair and balanced evaluation system. Complete lack of genuine feedback and praise from top level.

Professional Development

My ambitions and strengths are not considered here. I am actively looking for a different place to work. If things were to change, I would reconsider my position. We need positive reinforcement; we need support.

I want a chance to explore specialized aspects of the field, like sex crimes, but this can't happen because we are never fully staffed. We're short-handed all the time. There are days I feel I'm wasting away, just chasing broken taillights.

Advancements are based on seniority not job performance.

Those who are less qualified are constantly advancing. This causes stress and lowers morale...

Did not have a performance evaluation for 5 years. Diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Any advancements, perks, quality training were dealt with according to the "good old boy" attitude.

Regionalizing some specialties could provide officers at smaller agencies with diversity of experience and avoid stagnation.

Stress/Burnout

Stress generated by department working conditions is often the breaking point for officers.

We have no stress/trauma resources.

Being on-call and subject to call-ins is a major stressor for planning life outside of work. The on-call style job is not conducive to today's families.

Having to be available 24/7 leads to burnout. It creates an environment in my "off duty" time, where it has become increasingly difficult to relax and "get away from the job."

Other Unique Insights

Realistic job previews are needed. We should make every effort to see that applicants know what they are getting into before they take the job.

I would like my department to give some form of educational incentive pay, similar to other state police agencies in the country.

[The agency] rewards people that perform below standards to avoid lawsuits.

Change (assignments and responsibility) is key to keeping people "fresh" in this business.

Telephone Questionnaire

The final piece of the turnover project was a telephone questionnaire given to various personnel thought to have a high-level view of law enforcement in the state. Forty-two questionnaires were completed via telephone, each of which represented one of Vermont’s agencies. The questionnaire sample included fourteen police chiefs, twenty-seven town managers, and one human resources professional. Like the survey comment sheet, these responses were transcribed into a database and thematically coded. For each question the responses were grouped into general themes, and the prevalence of those themes was quantified. See the following tables for the results. Note that some respondents provided multiple themes for a single question.

Table 26. Are there any ranks or assignments that seem to experience more turnover than the others?

Response Theme	Number of Responses	% of Total
No difference	20	47.6
Patrol	17	40.5
Younger officers	3	7.1
More experienced officers	2	4.8
Total	42	100

Table 27. Why do you think this is the case? (refers to previous question)

Response Theme	Number of Responses	% of Total
Compensation	11	28.2
Career advancement	10	25.6
Better pay elsewhere	5	12.8
Don’t like policing	4	10.3
Larger city	3	7.7
Scheduling	3	7.7
Better retirement plan elsewhere	3	7.7
Total	39	100

Table 28. What are some negative outcomes that result from turnover in your department?

Response Theme	Number of Responses	% of Total
Budget problems due to recruitment	21	27.6
Increased workload for remaining personnel	10	13.2
Lower morale	9	11.8
Overall inexperience of department	9	11.8
Budget problems due to overtime	8	10.5
Inability to service the public	6	7.9
Short-handed department	5	6.6
Difficulty finding replacements	4	5.3
Remaining personnel experience burnout	3	4.0
Long-term planning is impossible	1	1.3
Total	76	100

Table 29. In your estimation, what percentage of those who voluntarily leave the department take other law enforcement jobs?

Response Theme	Number of Responses	% of Total
90-100	20	54.1
70-79	5	13.5
20-29	3	8.1
50-59	3	8.1
30-39	2	5.4
80-89	2	5.4
0-9	1	2.7
60-69	1	2.7
10-19	0	0
40-49	0	0
Total	37	100

Table 30. Of those who take other law enforcement jobs, what do you see as the biggest factors in their decision to leave or transfer?

Response Theme	Number of Responses	% of Total
Compensation	29	39.2
Career Advancement	15	20.3
Retirement	10	13.5
Scheduling	4	5.4
Want larger department	3	4.1
More excitement	3	4.1
Career change	3	4.1
Working conditions	3	4.1
Larger, different city	2	2.6
More prestige or authority	2	2.6
Total	74	100

Table 31. Of those who take other law enforcement jobs, what types of agencies are the most popular destinations?

Response Theme	Number of Responses	% of Total
State, in VT	19	36.5
Local, in VT	13	25.0
State, outside VT	8	15.4
Larger agencies	7	13.5
Federal	3	5.8
Local, outside VT	2	3.8
Total	52	100

Table 32. Why do you think these agencies attract officers?

Response Theme	Number of Responses	% of Total
Compensation	24	36.4
Career Advancement	14	21.2
Retirement	13	19.7
Larger agency	5	7.7
Prestige	4	6.0
Scheduling	2	3.0
More action	2	3.0
Work conditions	1	1.5
Leadership	1	1.5
Total	66	100

Table 33. What are your recommendations for reducing the number of officers who leave for other law enforcement agencies?

Response Theme	Number of Responses	% of Total
Standardize retirement	11	19.3
Increase salary	9	15.7
Increase retirement	9	15.7
Standardize salary	7	12.3
Improve benefits	7	12.3
Improve recruitment	5	8.8
Increase access to training	2	3.5
Develop non-monetary incentives	2	3.5
Bolster PD reputation among citizenry	2	3.5
Increase developmental opportunities	1	1.8
Increase promotional opportunities	1	1.8
Keep promises and create trust	1	1.8
Total	57	100

Table 34. Can you list 2 or 3 aspects of the job that personnel are most satisfied with?

Response Theme	Number of Responses	% of Total
Sense of community	15	25.4
Supervision/leadership	9	15.2
Career advancement	7	11.9
Training	7	11.9
Equipment	7	11.9
Scheduling	6	10.2
Compensation	5	8.5
Benefits	2	3.3
Retirement	1	1.7
Total	59	100

Table 35. Which 2 or 3 aspects of the job would you say personnel seem least satisfied with?

Response Theme	Number of Responses	% of Total
Compensation	17	24.3
Scheduling	14	20.0
Career advancement	9	12.9
Community/policy	9	12.9
Retirement	5	7.1
Work environment	5	7.1
Insufficient personnel	5	7.1
Equipment/facilities	4	5.7
Supervision/leadership	2	2.9
Total	70	100

Table 36. What are your recommendations for realistic solutions to improve satisfaction and reduce turnover rates?

Response Theme	Number of Responses	% of Total
Increase salary	8	19.0
Increase developmental opportunities	6	14.3
Standardize retirement	4	9.5
Increase retirement	3	7.1
More recognition	3	7.1
Improve facilities/work environment	3	7.1
Regionalize departments	3	7.1
Standardize salary	2	4.8
Improve/modify scheduling	2	4.8
Develop non-monetary incentives	2	4.8
More state-local cooperation	2	4.8
Hire more personnel	2	4.8
Improve benefits	1	2.4
Address person/job fit	1	2.4
Total	42	100

Table 37. Do you have any other insights, recommendations, or general thoughts about law enforcement turnover in Vermont?

Response Theme	Number of Responses	% of Total
Recruitment	9	21.9
Training and education	8	19.5
Retirement	7	17.1
Funding/pay	7	17.1
Regionalization	5	12.2
State and local conflict/cooperation	4	9.8
Generational differences	1	2.4
Total	41	100

The telephone questionnaire succeeded in providing a bird's-eye view of law enforcement in Vermont. A number of themes discovered in the survey data were also raised here, such as pay, professional advancement, and retirement issues. Also, some new themes arose from the telephone questionnaire such as the potential regionalization of departments and conflict between state and local agencies.

Based on the input from the questionnaire, officers in lower ranks are most likely to leave, and they tend to move state agencies or larger municipalities, and they tend to seek more pay, advance their careers, and receive a better retirement plan. These 3 reasons easily combine for over 50% of the responses to questions asking why officers leave and what qualities of an agency attract officers. There was remarkable consistency in responses between these areas. Our sample of telephone interviewees' top 4 recommendations for improving turnover centered again on two predominant themes of the study: pay and retirement. Interestingly, these recommendations changed little when the question was rephrased to prompt "realistic solutions." Increasing developmental opportunities and providing more recognition joined the list. The worst consequences of turnover are budgetary issues stemming from increased demand for recruitment and overtime, an inexperienced and overworked department, and lower morale. This implies a cyclical situation in which turnover depletes the resources of smaller agencies through recruitment, overtime, and training expenses, resulting in higher workloads, lower morale, poorer recruitment, and less development, which in turn contribute to heavy turnover.

Conclusion

When combined, the three parts of this turnover study (quantitative survey, open-ended comment sheet, and telephone questionnaire) allow for some general conclusions. First, DPS' assumption that turnover has reached problematic levels is validated. Officers themselves and those with higher-level views of law enforcement in Vermont seem to agree that turnover is prevalent and is the cause of numerous organizational problems at agencies throughout the state. Many of the telephone interviewees indicated that turnover has been a problem for a prolonged period of time. It was evident from interviews that

town administrators and police chiefs had given considerable thought to the issue in the past, and many had well-developed strategies for improving the situation.

Second, it seems that our three sub-samples differed little in their job attitudes and their prioritization of job elements. Very few meaningful differences were found in the data when current, former, and transfer were compared. The notion that there is one “type” of officer who tends to turnover or transfer was not supported. Tenure in law enforcement did significantly predict transfer status, but this finding stems more from the fact that, by definition, those who transfer must have previous law enforcement experience. Also, gender predicted transfer status in that males were proportionally more likely to transfer than females. A greater proportion of female officers were found in the former officer group, though this finding was not significant at the .05 level. No other demographic variables predicted employment status. Rather than focusing on demographic factors behind turnover, we feel the study strongly points toward more universal factors inherent in Vermont’s law enforcement system that cause turnover.

Third, a number of such factors were uncovered. Primarily, and predictably, salary was a constant theme. It was consistently rated as one of the least satisfying and most important elements of the job and was repeatedly cited in both the comment sheets and the telephone questionnaire. Some respondents expressed personal hardship because of low salaries while others noted the superior salaries in larger departments and neighboring states. While the fairness of salary can be subjectively disputed, its economics cannot. It appears that a major reason for turnover is the constant flow of officers from agencies of lower pay to those of higher pay, whether the latter are at larger agencies, the state level, or outside of Vermont altogether. A second major theme was the equivalence and quality of the retirement plan. Just as salary inequities create a flow of workers from smaller, lower-paying departments, so does the inequity in retirement plans. Several comment sheets and telephone interviewees indicated that retirement is an important factor for young and older officers alike, and is a strong consideration when choosing to seek new employment. While salary and retirement were the primary themes, a number of secondary themes were also found throughout the study. Opportunity for professional development was cited as an important job element, but was also found to be lacking in many instances. A number of comment sheets indicated that respondents felt

undervalued by their agencies and that there was little interest in investing in officer training or specialization programs. This situation may be one part of the unfortunate cycle described earlier; agencies' resources are stretched thin by turnover, which makes additional training difficult, which dissatisfies officers. Additionally, agencies may view such training as a foolish investment when officers are likely to leave and make use of newly acquired skills elsewhere. Another theme which stemmed mostly from respondent comments was that of appraisal and recognition. Many respondents indicated the lack of a performance appraisal system and/or a system that was built on tenure and friendships rather than objectively evaluated performance. Others indicated a lack of recognition from leadership. We felt the issue of recognition was notable in that, while probably not a cure for turnover, it is a rare solution that would not have adverse financial consequences for Vermont's agencies. Still, there is probably no quicker way to improve officer retention than to standardize the pay and retirement plans – at least to some degree – across Vermont's agencies.

A fourth conclusion is that working conditions are not viewed uniformly across state, county, and municipal agencies. Survey respondents from county agencies viewed many of the 26 job elements more negatively – typically less satisfying and more important than their counterparts in state or municipal agencies. While county agencies tended to have higher levels of urgency for many job elements, state respondents had the lowest levels of urgency. This indicates that those working for the Vermont State Police enjoy working conditions superior to those at the municipal or county levels. This finding is compatible with the idea that State Police jobs are the most sought-after and those jobs tend to attract workers from smaller agencies throughout the state. In addition to focusing on improving and standardizing salary and retirement plans across the state, focusing particular attention on working conditions in county agencies seems to be a top priority in slowing the constant flow of officers from smaller municipal and county agencies up to the state level.

Appendix I.

Vermont Officer Retention Study
General Project Timeline

Project Step	Dates	Notes
Kickoff meeting with advisory committee	9/6	Outline project steps and related responsibilities
Gather survey sample names from Vermont agencies	9/6-9/23	Current officers / former officers / transferred officers
Develop surveys for current, former, and transferred officers		
Develop structured telephone interview		To be used with city administrators to gather qualitative information
Present surveys and interview to DPS for review	9/26	
Distribute surveys via mail	9/30	To current, former, and transferred officers
Conduct telephone interviews	10/3-10/14	City administrators, other relevant contacts
Receive surveys, input data	10/17 – 11/11	
Compile, analyze and report results	11/14-11/30	

Appendix II.

Statewide Law Enforcement Turnover Survey

for Current Officers

THE PUBLIC SAFETY SELECTION SPECIALISTS™



Produced by I/O Solutions, Inc.
in service to the

State of Vermont



General Survey Instructions

The next several pages contain questions about yourself and your opinions about working in law enforcement in the state of Vermont.

There are a total of 167 survey questions, which are broken down into the following five sections:

Section 1: Demographic Information

Section 2: Job Attitudes

Section 3: Job Satisfaction

Section 4: Importance Ratings

Section 5: Changing Jobs

The survey should take you between 20 and 30 minutes to complete. Please take your time and answer all sections of the survey, as your input is very important to us. Be aware that the survey is double-sided.

All surveys submitted by current and former officers are analyzed as a group and no effort is made to trace responses to individuals. In fact, extra care is taken to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of responses.

Thank you again for your participation in this process.

Section 1: Demographic Information

Demographic data help us understand what social or personal factors may contribute to an officer leaving a position in law enforcement. Please remember that the surveys submitted by current and former officers are analyzed as a group and no effort is made to trace responses to individuals. In fact, extra care is taken to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of responses.

Instructions:

- Find the bubble-style response sheet that was sent with this survey.
- DO NOT fill in your name or social security number. Your responses will remain confidential.
- Fill in the circle next to your **gender** in the appropriate space in the lower left portion of the answer sheet.
- Fill in your **race** in the appropriate space in the lower left portion of the answer sheet.
- Write and fill in your **age** in the appropriate space in the top center portion of the answer sheet.
- Write and fill in the number of years you've worked in law enforcement in **Box 1** in the top center of the answer sheet.
- Fill in the code for your marital status in **Box 2** using the codes below.
 - 01 = Single, never married
 - 02 = Married, never divorced
 - 03 = Married, previously divorced
 - 04 = Divorced, now single
- Write and fill in your current or most recent rank in **Box 3** using the codes below.

▪ 01 = Patrol/Warden	05 = Captain	09 = Dep. Chief/Dep. Sheriff
▪ 02 = Corporal	06 = Commander	10 = Assistant Chief
▪ 03 = Sergeant	07 = Major	11 = Lt. Colonel
▪ 04 = Lieutenant	08 = Inspector	12 = Chief/Colonel/Sheriff
- Fill in the code for your education level in **Box 4** using the codes below.
 - 01 = High school graduate or GED
 - 02 = Some college, no degree earned
 - 03 = Associate's degree earned
 - 04 = Bachelor's degree earned
 - 05 = Graduate degree earned

Please proceed to the next page. Please remember the survey is double-sided.

- With which agency do you now work? Please fill in the corresponding two-digit code in **Box 5** at the top center of the answer sheet.

Code	Agency	Code	Agency	Code	Agency
01	Addison Cty Sheriff	26	Colchester PD	51	South Burlington PD
02	Bennington Cty Sheriff	27	Dover PD	52	Stowe PD
03	Caledonia Cty Sheriff	28	Essex PD	53	Swanton PD
04	Chittenden Cty Sheriff	29	Fair Haven PD	54	Thetford PD
05	Essex Cty Sheriff	30	Hardwick-Greensboro PD	55	UVM Police Services
06	Franklin Cty Sheriff	31	Hartford PD	56	Vergennes PD
07	Grand Isle Cty Sheriff	32	Hinesburg PD	57	Vernon PD
08	Lamoille Cty Sheriff	33	Ludlow PD	58	Waterbury PD
09	Orange Cty Sheriff	34	Lyndonville PD	59	Weathersfield PD
10	Orleans Cty Sheriff	35	Manchester PD	60	Williston PD
11	Rutland Cty Sheriff	36	Middlebury PD	61	Wilmington PD
12	Washington Cty Sheriff	37	Milton PD	62	Windsor PD
13	Windham Cty Sheriff	38	Montpelier PD	63	Winhall PD
14	Windsor Cty Sheriff	39	Morristown PD	64	Winooski PD
15	Barre City PD	40	Newport PD	65	Woodstock PD
16	Barre Town PD	41	North Troy Village PD	66	Vermont State Police
17	Bellows Falls PD	42	Northfield PD	67	Liquor Control
18	Bennington PD	43	Norwich PD	68	Dept Motor Vehicles
19	Berlin PD	44	Randolph PD	69	Dept Fish / Wildlife
20	Brandon PD	45	Richmond PD	70	Capitol Police
21	Brattleboro PD	46	Rutland City PD	71	A Federal agency
22	Bristol PD	47	St. Albans PD	72	State Police outside VT
23	Burlington PD	48	St. Johnsbury PD	73	County Police outside VT
24	Castleton PD	49	Shelburne PD	74	Municipal Police outside VT
25	Chester PD	50	Springfield PD		

Please use the answer sheet to answer the following questions by filling in the appropriate answer to each question. Begin with space number 1 on your answer sheet.

1. Are you a native of Vermont? A = YES B = NO
2. Does your department have a formal performance appraisal system? A = YES B = NO
3. Do you have other family working in law enforcement? A = YES B = NO
4. Have you received formal discipline from your agency? A = YES B = NO
5. Have you ever served in the military? A = YES B = NO
6. Do you have children? A = YES B = NO
7. In which area do you primarily work? A = PATROL B = INVESTIGATION C = ADMINISTRATION
8. Do you primarily work days or nights? A = DAYS B = NIGHTS
9. Are you still working with a law enforcement agency? A = YES B = NO

Section 1 is now finished. Please proceed to Section 2 on the next page.

Section 2: Job Attitudes

You will now see statements that may relate to your feelings about working in law enforcement. These items were chosen to help us learn about law enforcement workers' attitudes towards their work. Once again, surveys submitted by current and former officers are analyzed as a group and no effort is made to trace responses to individuals. In fact, extra care is taken to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of responses.

Instructions:

1. Read the numbered statement carefully.
2. Look at the response options at the top of the page.
3. Decide which option best describes your reaction to the statement.
4. Carefully bubble in the corresponding circle on your answer sheet.
5. If you wish to change a response, please be sure to erase your original mark completely.
6. Because the answer sheet is scored by computer, it is important that the sheet not be damaged, creased, or wrinkled.

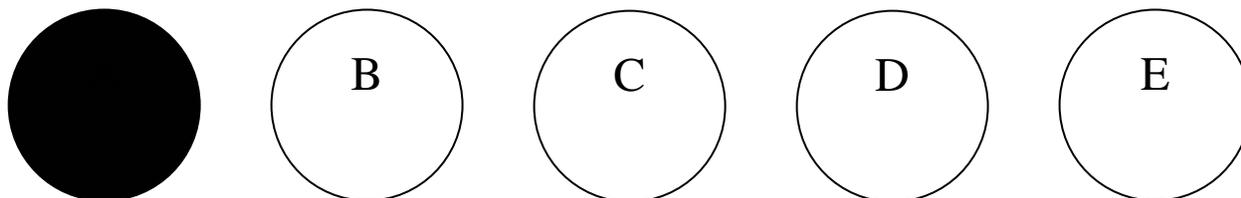
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Example

1. Yellow is my favorite color of the rainbow.

Strongly Disagree A	Disagree B	Neutral C	Agree D	Strongly Agree E
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If you *strongly disagree* with this statement, mark A on your answer sheet:



Please turn the page and continue the survey. Your input is very valuable.

Strongly Disagree A	Disagree B	Neutral C	Agree D	Strongly Agree E
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10. My rate of pay is fair for the work I do.
11. I wish my department's time off policies were less restrictive.
12. I'm satisfied with the frequency of pay raises in my department.
13. My rate of pay allows me to lead a lifestyle I enjoy.
14. Pay is one of the reasons I work in my current position.
15. The non-monetary compensation (benefits, medical coverage, etc.) I receive is fair for the work I do.
16. My medical plan meets my needs.
17. The number of vacation days I receive allows me enough time for my non-work interests.
18. I'm satisfied with the size of pay raises in my department.
19. I have a clear understanding of my work responsibilities.
20. I sometimes lack some information necessary to do my job appropriately.
21. I receive useful feedback about my performance on a regular basis.
22. My performance is measured accurately by my supervisors.
23. I have received adequate training to do my job completely.
24. I have continuing opportunities to develop my skills and expertise in law enforcement.
25. My career is progressing as I expected.
26. I feel optimistic about my future in law enforcement.
27. I often think about my work when I'm not at work.
28. Events during my workday often affect my mood once my shift is over.
29. Others have mentioned to me that I seem stressed or worried.
30. I have taken steps to cope with stress.
31. My supervisor causes me stress.
32. The danger of police work causes me stress.
33. The amount of hours I work causes me stress.
34. Uncertainty about achieving my future career goals causes me stress.
35. Dealing with the public causes me stress.
36. Dealing with criminals causes me stress.
37. Working with the justice system/courts causes me stress.
38. Dealing with conflict between citizens causes me stress.

Strongly Disagree A	Disagree B	Neutral C	Agree D	Strongly Agree E
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39. I have concerns about the amount of stress I routinely feel affecting my psychological well-being.
40. My routine stress level is adversely affecting my physical health.
41. I used to care more about my job than I do now.
42. My stress level has adversely affected my family life / relationships.
43. I would prefer a job that involves less stress.
44. I have a clear understanding of the departmental resources available to me for coping with stress.
45. I feel emotionally exhausted at least once a month.
46. I feel I'm similar in most ways to others in my agency.
47. I feel a sense of belonging as a member of my agency.
48. My role allows me to utilize my natural skills.
49. I am currently doing the kind of police work that I want to do.
50. My agency values people with my characteristics.
51. I greatly enjoy law enforcement work.
52. I am proud of my current job.
53. I see my job as an important part of my life.
54. Working at my job is a fundamental part of who I am.
55. Who I am is completely related to my job.
56. My job is something I just do and is not a part of who I am.
57. When I meet another person in my same occupation, making a connection with that person is easy.
58. I enjoy telling others about my job.
59. I do my job only because I have to.
60. I see my job as a good step toward the career I want for myself.
61. My work is my life.
62. I do not think that I am cut out to do my current job.
63. The job I am doing is something I can be proud of.
64. I think that I am the right person for my job.
65. I do my job only to make money.
66. Of all the things about me, my job is what I'm most proud of.
67. My job is in line with the career I want for myself someday.

Strongly Disagree A	Disagree B	Neutral C	Agree D	Strongly Agree E
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68. Stating what job I do is one of the best ways of telling someone who I am as a person.
69. Sometimes I can hardly believe I get paid to be in my job.
70. My current job is essential to how I define myself.
71. I feel embarrassed about my job when I tell others what I do.
72. My supervisor sets a good example for my performance.
73. In my agency, leaders' actions are consistent with their words.
74. I feel empowered in my job.
75. I wish my input were solicited more often from my supervisors.
76. It is easy for me to voice my grievances, either formally or informally.
77. My supervisors lead by example.
78. My views are valued within the agency.
79. The feedback provided by my supervisors is genuine.
80. I feel I am physically healthy.
81. I have positive relationships with my family.
82. I participate in leisure activities that I enjoy.
83. I feel I am emotionally healthy.
84. I feel generally fulfilled by my life.
85. My job allows me an adequate work-life balance.
86. I have positive relationships with friends.
87. I generally have time to do things for myself.

Very Dissatisfied A	Dissatisfied B	Neutral C	Satisfied D	Very Satisfied E
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Section 3: Job Satisfaction

In this section you will see statements that may relate to your level of satisfaction with various aspects of your current job. In order to understand officer turnover, it is important to know which specific areas of the job are satisfying and which are not. Each item will describe a specific aspect of your job; we ask that you report how satisfied you are with that aspect. We appreciate your candid responses, all of which will remain confidential. Please use the scale at the top of the page to indicate how satisfied you are with each job aspect provided.

88. Your salary.
89. Amount of medical coverage.
90. Employer-sponsored retirement plan.
91. Frequency of pay raises.
92. Magnitude of pay raises.
93. Number of hours worked.
94. The amount of work done on each shift (workload).
95. Time of day worked (overnight, day shift, etc).
96. Number of vacation/sick days.
97. Rules governing use of vacation/sick days.
98. The process governing officers' complaints or grievances against the department.
99. Opportunities for advancement.
100. Amount of supervision.
101. Amount of responsibility.
102. Strictness of departmental policies.
103. Frequency of policy / rule changes or updates.
104. Fairness of awards, promotions, and other perks given out to personnel.
105. Amount of communication from leadership to subordinate personnel.
106. Amount of personalized feedback about your performance.
107. Frequency of promotions.
108. Quality of training you have received.
109. Quality of your work/life balance.
110. Trauma and stress-related coping resources provided by your department.
111. Relationship with direct supervisor.
112. Relationships with peers.
113. Your overall job satisfaction.

Unimportant A	Slightly Important B	Somewhat Important C	Important D	Very Important E
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Section 4: Importance Ratings

The statements below will look the same as in the last section. While the last section addressed your level of satisfaction for each statement, this section addresses how important each job aspect is to you. For example, one aspect of your job may be very satisfying, but still be relatively unimportant to your overall feelings toward the job. Please use the scale at the top of the page to indicate how important each job aspect is to you.

114. Your salary.
115. Amount of medical coverage.
116. Employer-sponsored retirement plan.
117. Frequency of pay raises.
118. Magnitude of pay raises.
119. Number of hours worked.
120. The amount of work done on each shift (workload).
121. Time of day worked (overnight, day shift, etc).
122. Number of vacation/sick days.
123. Rules governing use of vacation/sick days.
124. The process governing officers' complaints or grievances against the department.
125. Opportunities for advancement.
126. Amount of supervision.
127. Amount of responsibility.
128. Strictness of departmental policies.
129. Frequency of policy / rule changes or updates.
130. Fairness of awards, promotions, and other perks given out to personnel.
131. Amount of communication from leadership to subordinate personnel.
132. Amount of personalized feedback about your performance.
133. Frequency of promotions.
134. Quality of training you have received.
135. Quality of your work/life balance.
136. Trauma and stress-related coping resources provided by your department.
137. Relationship with direct supervisor.
138. Relationships with peers.

Section 5: Changing Jobs

This final section will address whether you qualify as a transfer as defined in this survey. In addition to studying turnover in Vermont, it is also important to better understand why officers move from one agency to another. This section will include some final questions that address this issue. Please use the scale provided to the right of each question below to indicate your answer.

139. Have you worked at another Vermont agency prior to working at your current job? A = YES B = NO

If you answered yes to #139, please answer the following questions. Otherwise, turn to the last page to finish the survey.

140. Did you leave your previous agency with the intent of joining another law enforcement agency? A = YES B = NO
141. Was the length of time between your previous job and your current job LESS than six months? A = YES B = NO

If you answered yes to either #140 or #141, please answer the following questions. If you answered no to both, turn to the last page to finish the survey.

Please indicate whether the following elements are better, the same, or worse in your current job than they were in your previous job.

Better Now A	The Same B	Worse Now C	Don't Know D
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142. Your salary.
143. Amount of medical coverage.
144. Employer-sponsored retirement plan.
145. Frequency of pay raises.
146. Magnitude of pay raises.
147. Number of hours worked.
148. The amount of work done on each shift (workload).

Better Now A	The Same B	Worse Now C	Don't Know D
-----------------	---------------	----------------	-----------------

149. Time of day worked (overnight, day shift, etc).
150. Number of vacation/sick days.
151. Rules governing use of vacation/sick days.
152. The process governing officers' complaints or grievances against the department.
153. Opportunities for advancement.
154. Amount of supervision.
155. Amount of responsibility.
156. Strictness of departmental policies.
157. Frequency of policy / rule changes or updates.
158. Fairness of awards, promotions, and other perks given out to personnel.
159. Amount of communication from leadership to subordinate personnel.
160. Amount of personalized feedback about your performance.
161. Frequency of promotions.
162. Quality of training you have received.
163. Quality of your work/life balance.
164. Trauma and stress-related coping resources provided by your department.
165. Relationship with direct supervisor.
166. Relationships with peers.
167. Your rank.

Please turn to the next page to complete the survey.

Thank You!

Thank you for completing the survey. Your input will help the state of Vermont better understand what aspects of law enforcement jobs are satisfying, and which are most important in the eyes of law enforcement personnel. The data from your answer sheet will be added to a database along with other respondents, and the data will be analyzed for trends to help Vermont's agencies better meet the needs of law enforcement personnel like yourself.

Before you package your survey and mail it, please find the separate comment sheet that was included in your envelope. You are free to write any comments you wish on this sheet regarding aspects of your job, Vermont agencies, or your views on officer turnover. All input is welcome and is considered important.

Appendix III.

Introductory Script

Hi Chief/Sheriff _____. My name is...

I'm calling on behalf of the Vermont DPS...

We've spoken with you before about the statewide turnover study and survey...

The second step is to speak with people like yourself or others who have knowledge of...

We're contacting all of Vermont's agencies to get a front-line perspective...

We want to know what you've seen and heard, and get your recommendations...

We'd like to spend about 10 minutes over the phone with you...

Is this a good time?

NO... When would be a good time to call back? RECORD IN DATABASE AND

BELOW

YES... Great!

I'll be asking you some questions regarding your perceptions and recommendations for reducing turnover...

Department / Agency:

Name or Rank of Respondent:

(optional)

Interview Date:

Interviewer:

Call back appointment:

LIST OF AGENCIES

	Agency		Agency		Agency
	Addison Cty Sheriff		Burlington PD		Richmond PD
	Bennington Cty Sheriff		Castleton PD		Rutland City PD
	Caledonia Cty Sheriff		Chester PD		St. Albans PD
	Chittenden Cty Sheriff		Colchester PD		St. Johnsbury PD
	Essex Cty Sheriff		Dover PD		Shelburne PD
	Franklin Cty Sheriff		Essex PD		Springfield PD
	Grand Isle Cty Sheriff		Fair Haven PD		South Burlington PD
	Lamoille Cty Sheriff		Hardwick-Greensboro PD		Stowe PD
	Orange Cty Sheriff		Hartford PD		Swanton PD
	Orleans Cty Sheriff		Hinesburg PD		Thetford PD
	Rutland Cty Sheriff		Ludlow PD		UVM Police Services
	Washington Cty Sheriff		Lyndonville PD		Vergennes PD
	Windham Cty Sheriff		Manchester PD		Vernon PD
	Windsor Cty Sheriff		Middlebury PD		Waterbury PD
	Barre City PD		Milton PD		Weathersfield PD
	Barre Town PD		Montpelier PD		Williston PD
	Bellows Falls PD		Morristown PD		Wilmington PD
	Bennington PD		Newport PD		Windsor PD
	Berlin PD		North Troy Village PD		Winhall PD
	Brandon PD		Northfield PD		Winooski PD
	Brattleboro PD		Norwich PD		Woodstock PD
	Bristol PD		Randolph PD		Vermont State Police

Section 1 – General Turnover Perceptions

1. How many full-time officers do you have in your department?

2. On average, how many of those positions would you say experience voluntary turn over each year?

3. Are there any ranks or assignments that seem to experience more or less turnover than the others?

a. Why do you think this occurs?

4. What are some of the negative outcomes that result from turnover in your department?

Section 2 – Transfers

5. According to your estimation, what percentage of those who voluntarily leave the department take other law enforcement jobs?

6. Of those who take other law enforcement jobs, what do you see as the biggest factors in their decision to leave or transfer?

7. Of those who take other law enforcement jobs, what types of agencies are the most popular destinations?

- a. Why do you think these agencies attract officers?

8. What are your recommendations for reducing the number of officers who leave for other law enforcement agencies?

Section 3 – Areas of Satisfaction

9. Can you list 2 or 3 aspects of the job that personnel are most satisfied with?

10. Which 2 of 3 aspects of the job would you say personnel seem least satisfied with?

11. What are your recommendations for realistic solutions for improving satisfaction and reducing turnover rates?

12. Do you have any other insights, recommendations, or general thoughts about law enforcement turnover in Vermont?

Conclusion and Thanks

That concludes the questionnaire...

Thank you very much for your time and input...

Do you have any questions for me?

*The results from the turnover study should be available from DPS in December or
January...*

*If applicable – Have you had any trouble with the paper surveys that were distributed to
your agency?*

Feel free to give us a call with any further comments or questions, and thanks again...