



Department of Employee Relations

Cavalier Johnson
Mayor

Jackie Q. Carter
Director

Molly King
Employee Benefits Director

Nicole M. Fleck
Labor Negotiator

January 14, 2026

To: Finance & Personnel Committee Members

Re: File #250898 – *Communication from the Department of Employee Relations relating to the annual reporting of exit-survey results to the Common Council*

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

Employee exit surveys are issued to employees who either leave City employment, or transfer to another City department. While exit surveys have been a City of Milwaukee (City) practice for a number of years, in 2024, the Department of Employee Relations (DER) redesigned the employee exit survey. The goal of the redesign was to increase the completion rate by shortening completion time. The optional survey was written in Microsoft Forms, and a link to the form is sent to an employee’s personal email account after they transition (from the department or City employment). Previously, surveys were initiated by department personnel officers or managers before the transition occurred. The new delivery method eliminates the need for department staff to initiate, increasing the consistency of issuing the survey.

The data in this report reflects responses from 144 employees who separated between August 15, 2024 and December 31, 2025. 118 respondents left City employment and 24 transferred to another department. The survey begins with five questions, and breaks out based on whether the respondent is leaving their current department only, or leaving City employment altogether. Questions are formatted with preset multiple-choice options. Some questions also provide “other” as an option, allowing employees to enter options not listed. The numbering included in this report is for ease of reference, it does not coincide with the order in which questions are asked on the survey.

In order to provide context to the data, the following lists the type of separations that prompted the exit survey.

Separations by type	Count	Percent
Discharged	1	<1%
Terminated During Probation	10	7%
Resignation	71	49%
Retirement	29	20%
Transfer to Another Dept.	23	17%
Expiration of Exempt Appointment	5	3%
Expiration of Temp Appointment	5	3%
	144	100%

In the summary that follows, you will find the question, brief notes on the data, followed by a chart that indicates the format of the question and a summary of the data.

I. **Survey Questions & Response Summaries**

Q1. What initially attracted you to City employment? – All respondents

More than 50% of respondents indicated that the desire to work in public service and the City's benefit package is what initially attracted them to City employment.

Choose all that apply	Count	Percent
Desire to work in public service	79	56%
Benefits package	72	51%
Job stability	70	49%
Opportunities for career advancement	59	42%
Salary/compensation	57	40%
Location	35	25%
Work-life balance	30	21%
Work environment	28	20%

Q2. Which of the following best describes you? – All respondents

Only 23 respondents were transferred to another department. Three employees who left City employment responded that they transferred to another department.

Choose one	Count	Percent
I am leaving City employment	118	82%
I am taking another position with the City	26	18%
	144	100%

Q3. Why are you leaving City employment – Respondents leaving City employment

56 respondents indicated that none of the options listed were reasons they left. This indicates that the options listed do not account for all reasons that employees leave. Department should consider adding "Other" as an option to gain further insights.

Choose one	Count	Percent
Found another job	42	36%
Moving	7	6%
Going back to school	5	4%
Family, medical or other personal circumstances	8	7%
None of the above	56	47%
	118	100%

Q4. What would have made you stay with the City longer? – Respondents leaving City employment

This question is only asked of those leaving City employment. Of the 22 respondents who selected "nothing", 14 left due to retirement, four (4) resigned, and three (3) resigned and one (1) was terminated. Respondents who selected "Other" listed a variety of reasons that could be included in the category options listed. Terminated employees noted that leaving was not their choice.

Choose all that apply	Count	Percent
Better work environment	49	42%
Higher salary/compensation	39	33%
Better work-life balance	32	27%
More opportunities for advancement	28	24%
More challenging work	15	13%
Better benefits	12	10%
Nothing	22	19%
Other	18	15%

Q5. Did you consider any other City employment opportunities before leaving City employment?

Of the "No" responses, 33 were resignations and 26 were retirements. 38 respondents resigned after seeking other City positions.

Choose one	Count	Percent
Yes, in my department	9	8%
Yes, in other departments	28	24%
Yes, in my department and other departments	11	9%
No	70	59%
	118	100%

Q6. Would you look for other City jobs in the future? – Respondents leaving City employment

There was no clear pattern among responses. Each reason for leaving City employment was represented in each response option.

Choose one	Count	Percent
Yes	46	39%
Yes, after exhausting other options	21	18%
No	51	43%
	118	100%

Q7. What does your new position offer that your current role does not – Transferring employees

Respondents who selected “Other” indicated a leadership/management as a reason for seeking new roles.

Choose all that apply	Count	Percent
Higher salary/compensation	10	38%
Better benefits	12	46%
Better work-life balance	9	35%
Better work environment	14	54%
More challenging work	4	15%
Promotion / future advancement opportunities	9	35%
Other	6	23%

Q8. Would you recommend City employment to a friend? – All respondents

This question was asked of both those who left City employment and those who transferred to another department. When splitting the two groups, 62% of employees who stayed would recommend City employment, compared to 38% of those who left.

Choose one	Count	Percent
Yes	61	42%
Yes, with reservations	49	34%
No	34	24%
	144	100%

Q9. Which of the following best describes your direct supervisor? – All respondents

“Other” was not included as an option, so no further insight is provided from the 34 respondents that selected “None of the above.”

Choose all that apply.	Count	Percent
Qualified and knowledgeable in their area of expertise	90	63%
Communicative and responsive to questions	74	52%
Facilitated a safe and welcoming work environment	72	51%
Open to feedback	70	49%
Recognized and rewarded high-quality work	51	36%
Worked quickly to act on complaints and grievances	49	35%
Proactive and able to anticipate issues before they arose	46	32%
None of the above	34	24%

Q10. Did you experience harassment, discrimination, bullying, favoritism, unfair treatment or promotional practices, or hostile work environment in this position? – All respondents

Respondents who select “Yes” or “Prefer not to say” are offered the option to share more through survey, submit additional information in a separate forum, or have DER contact them to discuss further. Additional data is not shared on this topic out of respect for confidentiality.

Choose one	Count	Percent
Yes	48	33%
No	77	53%
Prefer not to say	19	13%
	144	100%

II. **Current Use of Survey Data**

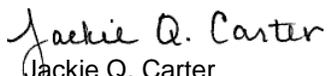
In order to maintain confidentiality of respondents, access to the data is limited to DER staff who play a role in addressing concerns that are reported. Any information that is important for departments to know (safety concerns, management issues, etc.) would be shared with leadership in the relevant department.

III. **Closing**

DER will continue to monitor responses and provide relevant feedback to departments for the purposes of addressing concerns and improving workplace culture. This data will also inform how we prioritize training and development opportunities for managers and staff.

If you have any questions or suggestions regarding the exit survey or the data shared, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully,


Jackie Q. Carter
Employee Relations Director