

WNCSource CEO Report

March 9, 2023

Recruiting and Retaining Employees

For more than a year WNCSource has been focusing on recruiting and retaining employees. I have listed these efforts several times over the last few months. The data is showing us that we have picked up the pace of hiring. Turnover in our frontline early childhood positions is very high. Particularly for employees that have been with the agency for less than a year. We need to understand why this is happening.

These recruiting and retention issues in early childhood education are not unique to WNCSource. There are consultants studying the problem. WNCSource is going to hire one of these consultants to conduct focus groups, survey current and past employees and give us recommendations to increase hiring and reduce turnover.

Compensation for staff has been an obvious barrier to hiring and keeping staff. We have raised wages substantially and given retention bonuses. Still turnover remains stubbornly high. We need to have a fresh set of eyes look at our current procedures for hiring, onboarding and supporting employees. Before we start implementing new initiatives, we need to truly understand the issues.

Testing for Unvaccinated Employees

With Covid vaccines readily available for most people in the United States and infections, hospitalizations and deaths dropping, It is time to change our policies. Attached to this report is a draft of *Covid Testing for Unvaccinated Workers*. This new procedure would apply to the whole agency. In conjunction with this procedure we will be granting religious exemptions to vaccination by accepting a verbal request, and documenting the employees wishes in their employment file with a form.

Dylan Allanson, Children's Services Health Coordinator, wrote the initial draft of this policy. I have updated it after consultation with Linda Weldon, Children's Services Nurse; Rocky Cabagnet, Agency Attorney and Bobby Kimmons, Vice President for HR. There is also a FAQ attached that was prepared by Bobby Kimmons. This policy change does require action by the WNCSource Board of Directors and Policy Council.