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2022 ANNUAL MEETING  
SESSION RECAP

# WESTRENDS BOARD



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Westtrend Board members discuss the future of the state government workforce and the housing affordability crisis.

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## The Future of State Government Workforce: Opportunities & Challenges

Gerald Young, the Senior Research Analyst with MissionSquare Research Institute, which promotes excellence in state and local government to attract and retain talented public servants, provided policymakers insights on a current state and local government workforce survey.

The survey highlighted many workforce changes that spiked during the Covid19 pandemic. These include an increase in the number of public employees resigning or retiring. However, as of April of this year, the full-time workforce in the public sector had grown since 2021, particularly in the health care (nursing), engineering, policing, dispatch, and building permitting and inspections fields, among others.

Mr. Young also discussed the impacts of technology, particularly the fields susceptible to automation, which include customer service, clerical, transportation, and management/supervision.

Concerning necessary skills in new hires, public employers seek analytical/critical thinking, interpersonal, management, and technology, which are the top four areas. Also, employees shared that higher salaries, bonuses, appreciation and recognition, and increased benefits are factors they highly consider in determining whether to remain with a particular agency or department.

Shay Baker, Program Manager for Return Utah, highlighted this innovative state program's scope and goals for adults looking to re-enter the workforce after an extended absence. Ms. Baker stated that they structure opportunities as return-to-work positions that provide the experience, training, skills, and mentoring an individual needs to return to the workforce without starting from the bottom of the career ladder.

The program helps returnees to reacquaint with a career or allows them to explore a new career path, as well as to help returnees feel ready and more confident to return to the workforce.

### Resources:

- [Future of State Government Workforce \(Gerald Young, MissionSquare Research Institute\)](#)
- [Return Utah \(Shay Baker, Return Utah\)](#)

### Presenters:



**Shay Baker**  
Program Manager  
State of Utah



**Gerald Young**  
Senior Research Analyst  
MissionSquare Research Institute

# Practical and Innovative Solutions to Address the Housing Affordability Crisis

Dr. Vanessa Crossgrove Fry, Interim Director of the Idaho Policy Institute and Associate Research Professor for the School of Public Service at Boise State University, provided an overview of the severity of the housing affordability crisis, including the gap in rental homes affordable units for low-income renter households across the country. She also discussed approaches and interventions that state and local governments could take to address housing shortages.

## Resource:

[Practical & Innovative Solutions to Address Housing Affordability \(Dr. Vanessa Crossgrove Fry\)](#)

### The list of potential policy tools includes:

- **Researching and educating on the housing issues**
- **Establishing goals and metrics**
- **Preserving the existing affordable housing stock**
- **Investing in public housing trust funds**
- **Providing fee waivers**
- **Expediting permitting, inclusionary zones**
- **Establishing multisector partnerships**

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## Presenters:



**Vanessa Crossgrove Fry**  
Interim Director  
Idaho Policy Institute



**David Garcia**  
Policy Director  
UC Berkeley Turner Center for Housing  
Innovation