

## Rural Capacity Investment Fund (RCIF)

In 2022, Alberta Health Services (AHS) and the Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA) created the Rural Capacity Investment Fund (RCIF) Committee through the collective agreement. RCIF's mandate was to allocate \$11.4 million by March 30, 2024.

The fund supported retention and recruitment initiatives to grow capacity and HSAA staff in the "difficult-to-recruit" sites in the North, Central, and South zones.

	<b>Allocated</b>
Retention Incentive	<b>\$5,714,625.00</b>
Recruitment Incentive	<b>\$5,584,150.00</b>

### Recruitment Incentive

- \$5,584,150 million was allocated for recruitment incentives for AHS HSAA bargaining unit candidates in the North, Central or South Zones and had to be spent by March 30, 2024
- Permanent full-time and part-time positions were eligible and had to sign a Return-For-Service Agreement

### Incentive Opportunities:

1-year Return for Service <b>\$5,000</b> permanent full-Time Equivalent Prorated for permanent Part-Time	2-year Return for Service <b>\$12,000</b> permanent full-Time Equivalent Prorated for permanent Part-Time	3-year Return for Service <b>\$25,000</b> permanent full-Time Equivalent Prorated for permanent Part-Time
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**Decision Criteria:**

- The Committee followed the The Letter of Understanding (LOU) mandate that initiatives address recruitment and retention challenges experienced by sites/programs/positions deemed by the Parties to be "difficult to recruit to" in the North, Central, and South Zones. (LINK to LOU)
- For the recruitment incentive, the committee decided a position would qualify as “difficult to recruit to” if it had been vacant for more than 90 days OR the department's occupational (job function description) vacancy was => 20%.
- The committee created a Vacancy Dashboard to verify the vacancy rates at the time of application.

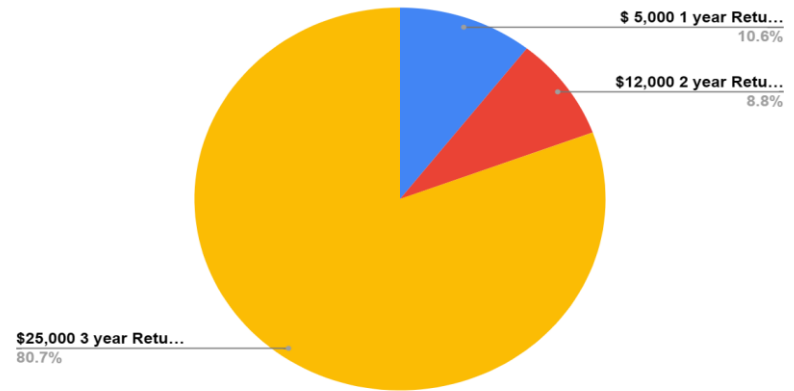
**Total allocated:** \$5,584,150

**Total # of applications:** 371 applications

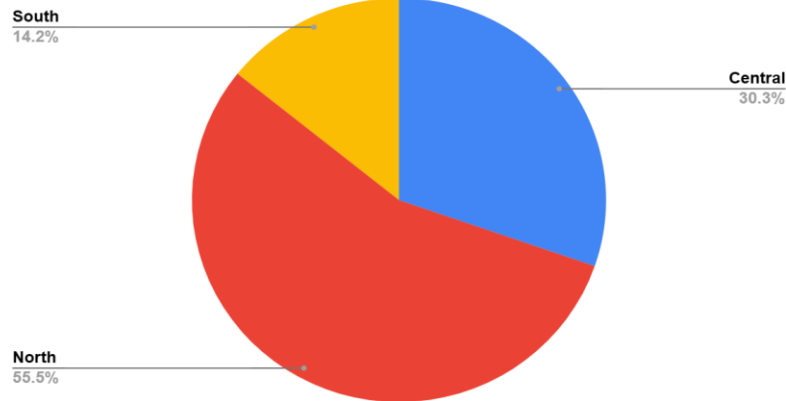
**Total approved applications:** 274

**Total declined applications:** 97

**RETURN-FOR-SERVICE COMMITMENT PERIOD**



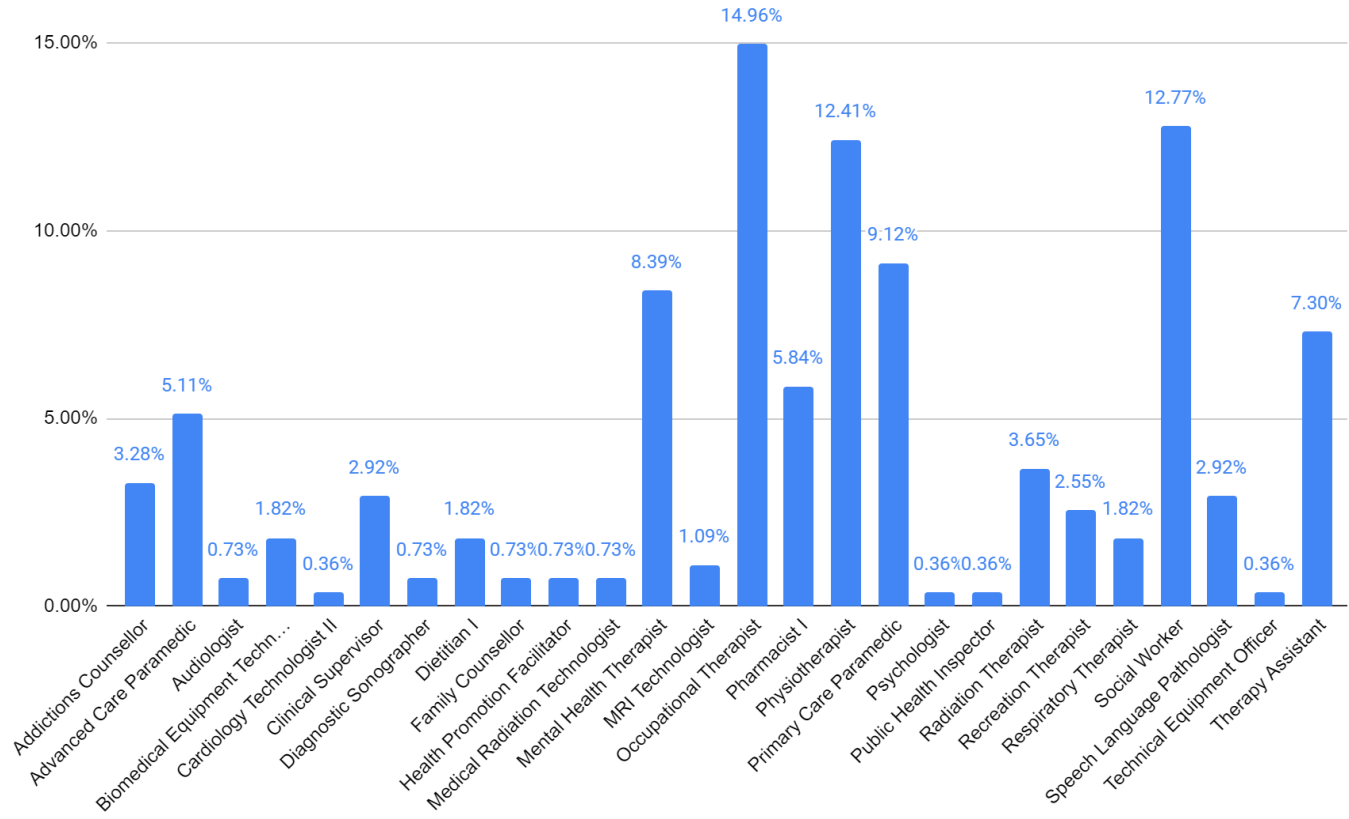
**Health Zone**



## JOB CLASSIFICATIONS

JOB CLASSIFICATION	#	JOB CLASSIFICATION	#
Addictions Counsellor II	1	Occupational Therapist II	13
Addictions Counsellor III	8	Pharmacist I	16
Advanced Care Paramedic	14	Physiotherapist I	21
Audiologist	2	Physiotherapist II	12
Biomedical Equipment Technologist II	5	Primary Care Paramedic	25
Cardiology Technologist II	1	Psychologist I	1
Clinical Supervisor	8	Public Health Inspector II	1
Diagnostic Sonographer	1	Radiation Therapist I	1
Diagnostic Sonographer I	1	Recreation Therapist I	3
Dietitian I	5	Recreation Therapist II	4
Family Counsellor	2	Respiratory Therapist I	3
Health Information Management Professional I	1	Respiratory Therapist II	2
Health Promotion Facilitator	1	Social Work II	34
Health Promotion Facilitator 1	1	Social Worker III	1
Medical Radiation Technologist I	2	Speech Language Pathologist II	7
Mental Health Therapist	24	Technical Equipment Officer	1
MRI Technologist I	4	Therapy Assistant	20
Occupational Therapist I	28	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>274</b>

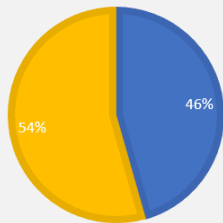
## JOB CLASSIFICATIONS (PERCENTAGE)



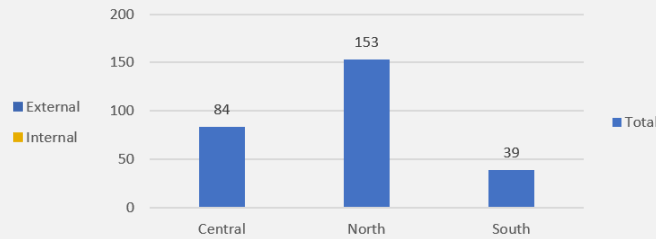
# HSAA RCIF – Overview of Recruitment Incentives Offered



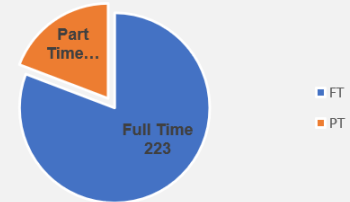
INTERNAL/EXTERNAL



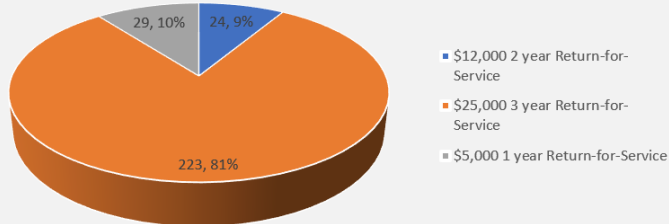
By Zone



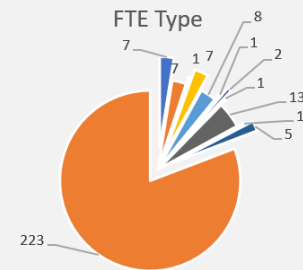
Employee Type



Incentive Offered



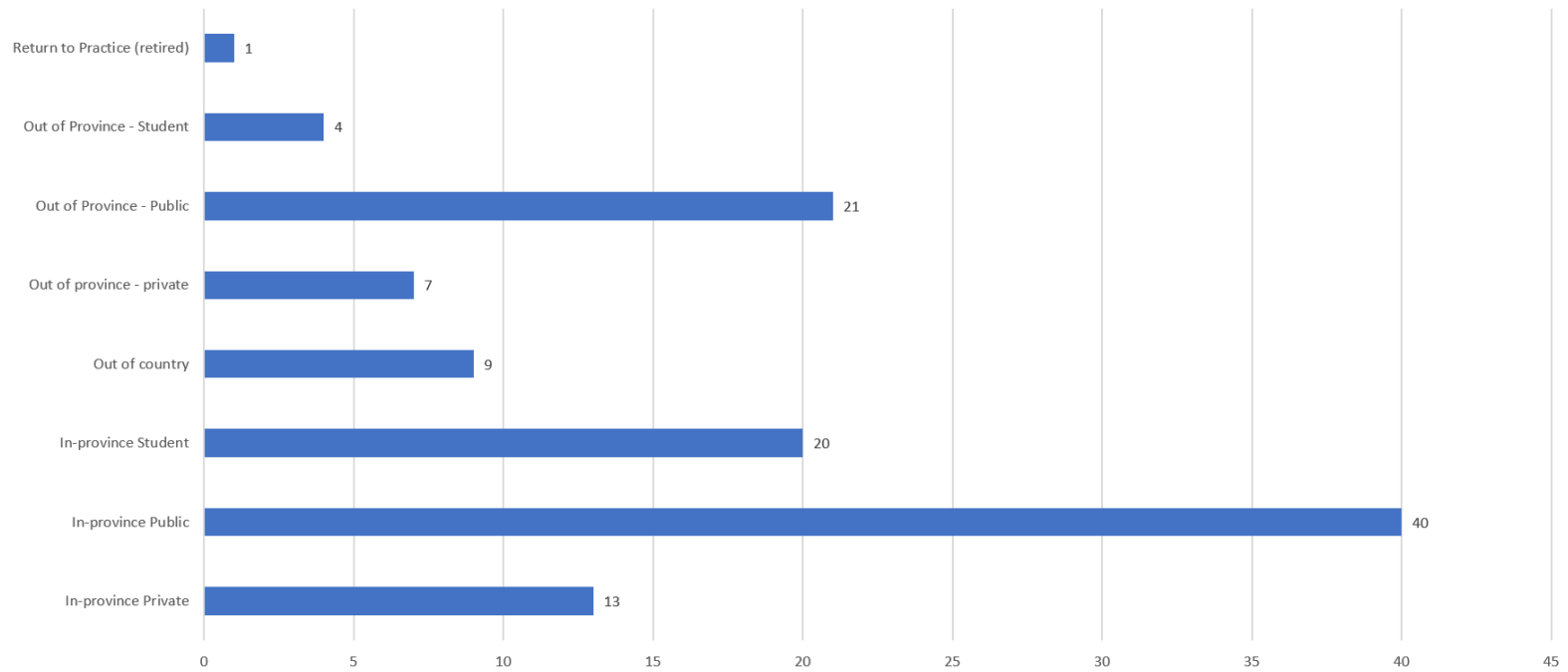
FTE Type



# HSAA RCIF – External Overview



Previous Employer



## HSAA RECRUITMENT INCENTIVE – EMPLOYEE SURVEY SUMMARY *114 Responded*

### Summary

- **Impact and Influence:** The incentive was significant for some in their decision-making, while it was a secondary benefit for others.
- **Awareness and Timing:** Many were unaware of the incentive until after joining, indicating a need for better communication up front.
- **Financial Support:** The incentive was appreciated for its financial assistance, which helped with expenses like relocation, student loans, and taxes and influenced decisions like taking up rural positions or adjusting work schedules.
- **Location and Environment:** The community, family ties, and a preference for rural settings were significant in decision-making alongside incentives.
- **Support and Reassurance:** For some, the incentive offered reassurance during transitions, especially from negative environments.
- **Commitment and Satisfaction:** The incentive contributed to longer tenure for some, and overall job satisfaction was high, with positive feedback on work environments and teams.
- **Concerns and Uncertainties:** There were concerns about the company's future direction, job security, and the financial implications of the incentives, such as high taxation.
- **Family and Career:** Decisions were influenced by family proximity, social ties, and career development opportunities.
- **Work Environment and Management:** Poor management and stressful conditions were deterrents, while desires for specific geographic locations also affected stay decisions.

### Suggestions for improvement focused on:

- **Financial Incentives:** Make them tax-efficient by offering tax-free options or spreading them over multiple paychecks.
- **Relocation Support:** Enhance support for those moving, especially to rural areas.
- **Work-Life Balance:** Emphasize flexible hours, more vacation days, and family support.
- **Professional Development:** Offer ongoing education and skill-building opportunities.
- **Wellness Initiatives:** Focus on health and wellness programs and support.
- **Community Integration:** Aid in socialization and provide resources for families in new locations.
- **Retention and Transparency:** Improve retention strategies, communicate clearly about incentives, and make the process more efficient and transparent.

## **HSAA RECRUITMENT INCENTIVE – MANAGER SURVEY SUMMARY** *42 Responded*

### **Summary**

#### **Recruitment Effectiveness:**

- The incentives significantly attracted candidates, especially for roles in rural or remote areas, with many applying specifically because of the incentives.
- Although not the sole reason for job acceptance, incentives were a key factor for many, underlining their importance in decision-making.
- The incentives particularly drew new hires, indicating their role in attracting talent.

#### **Varied Employee Responses:**

- Responses varied, with new graduates finding the incentives appealing and others, notably experienced staff, less motivated due to concerns like tax implications.
- The process for applying and receiving incentives was generally viewed positively for its ease.

#### **Challenges and Concerns:**

- The incentive program's sustainability and its long-term recruitment effectiveness were questioned.
- The incentive program inadvertently fostered resentment, jealousy, and negative feelings among staff who were not eligible or did not receive incentives.

### **Suggestions for Improvement:**

- Enhance support for relocation and temporary housing to attract candidates, especially to rural areas.
- Build on education-based opportunities for professional development and career progression.
- Introduce varied incentives tailored to individual needs, departmental challenges, and specific regions or zones.
- Support for temporary positions and addressing operational gaps, such as those caused by maternal leave.
- Promote initiatives for new graduates and create pathways for entry into the workforce.
- Simplify processes related to the program and ensure flexibility in incentive offerings to accommodate diverse needs.
- Expand eligibility criteria to include a broader range of positions and roles.
- Improve communication and promotion of the incentive program to raise awareness and attract more candidates.
- Foster collaboration and feedback mechanisms to continuously refine and improve the program based on direct input from employees.



## Retention Incentive

- \$5,714,625 million was allocated for AHS HSAA bargaining unit employees in the North, Central or South Zones and had to be spent by March 30, 2024
- Permanent full-time and part-time positions were eligible and had to sign a Return-For-Service Agreement

Incentive Opportunities:

<p><b>RURAL/REMOTE</b> <i>within one of the three zones</i> <b>1-Year Return-For-Service</b> <b>\$15,000</b> for Full-Time Equivalent Prorated for Part-Time Equivalent</p>	<p><b>URBAN</b> <i>Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray</i> <b>1-Year Return-For-Service</b> <b>\$10,000</b> for Full-Time Equivalent Prorated for Part-Time Equivalent</p>
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- The RCIF committee received 2513 applications from April 17 to May 31, 2023

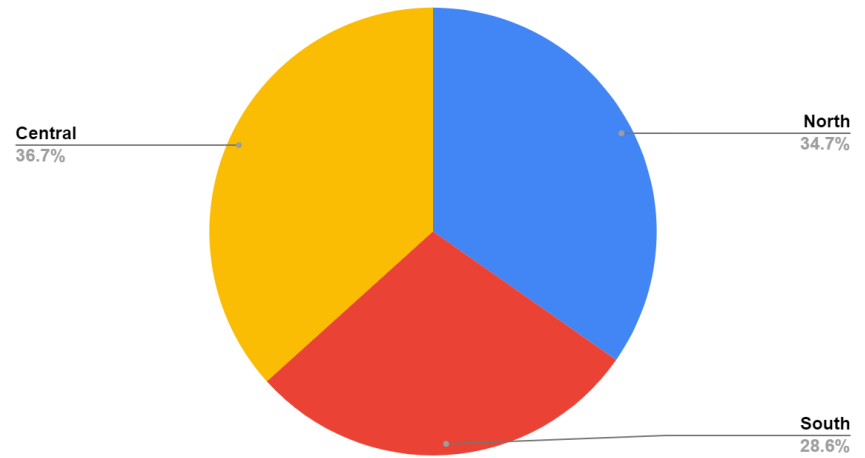
## Decision Criteria:

- The Committee followed the The Letter of Understanding (LOU) mandate that initiatives address recruitment and retention challenges experienced by sites/programs/positions deemed by the Parties to be "difficult to recruit to" in the North, Central, and South Zones. (LINK to LOU)
- For the retention incentive, the committee decided a position would qualify as "difficult to recruit to" if the occupational vacancy by department =>20% **OR** the impact of the employee leaving would make the occupational vacancy by department =>20%.
- Unfortunately, with the limited funds and the number of applications, the RCIF Committee could not fund every application.
- The committee used seniority to prioritize the applications. The HSAA Union criteria for seniority from June 2023 was used to avoid subjective decision-making and remain consistent with the collective bargaining agreement and Union principles.
- Working from top seniority down, application vacancy criteria were validated using a vacancy dashboard and approved.
- The committee created a Vacancy Dashboard to verify the vacancy rates at the time of application.

### Allocated

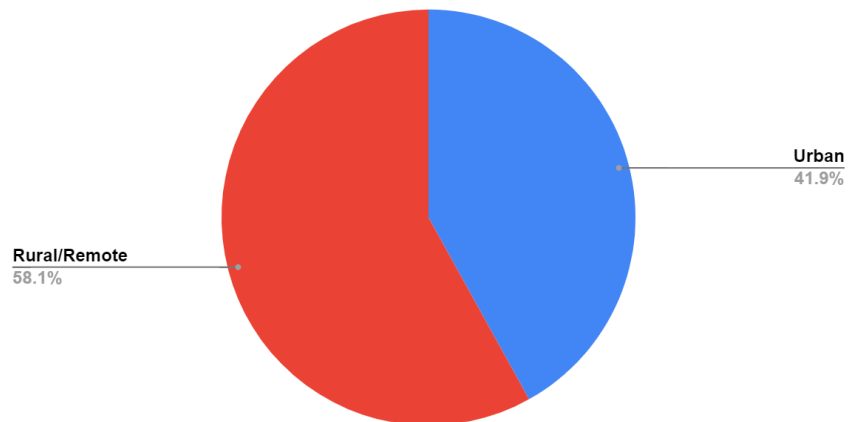
- **Total allocated:** \$5,714,625
- **Total # of applications:** 2340 applications
- **Total approved applications:** 508
- **Total declined applications:** 87

### HEALTH ZONE



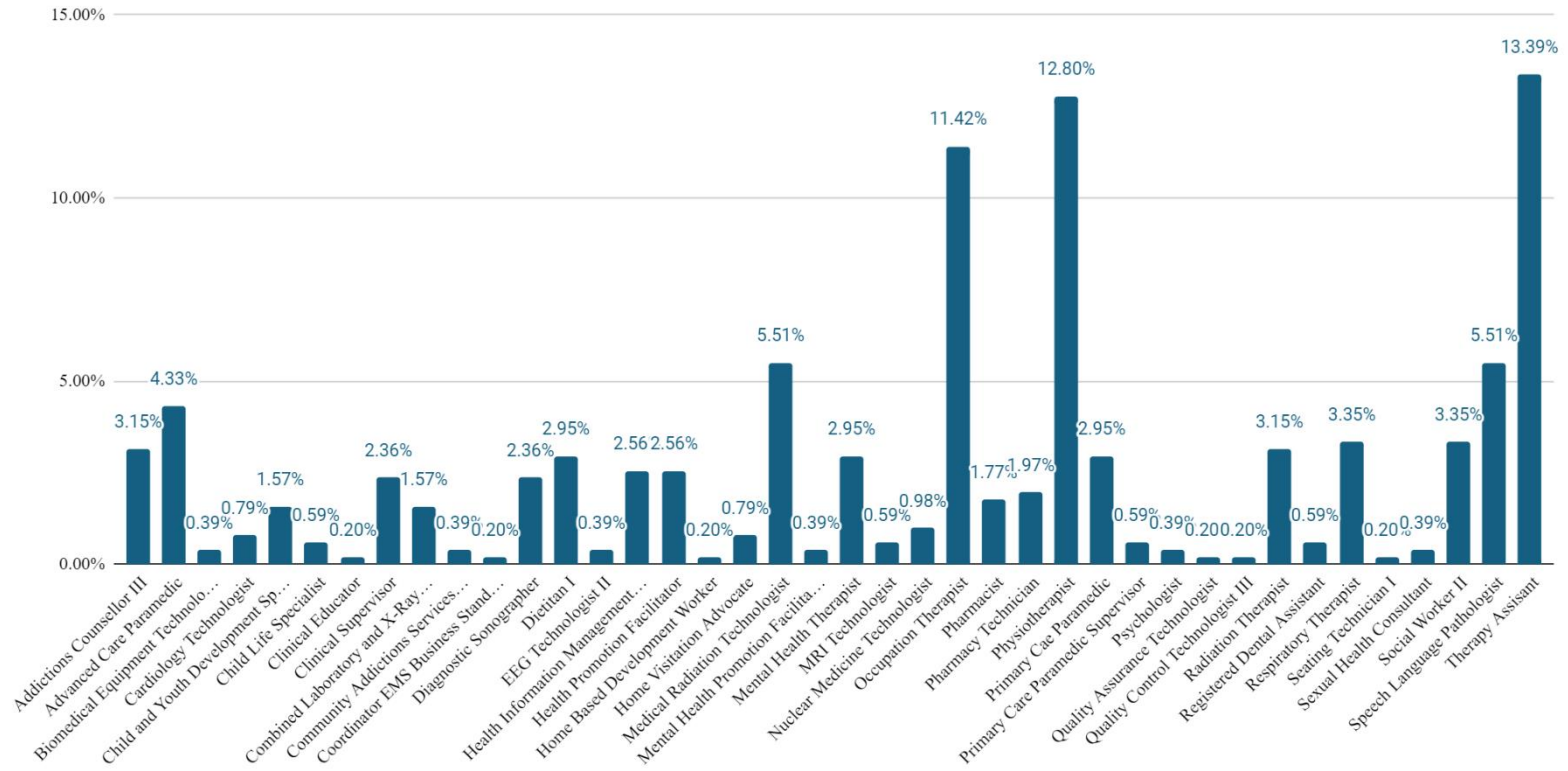
### RETURN-FOR-SERVICE

Rural \$15,000, Urban \$10,000



<b>JOB CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>JOB CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>JOB CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>#</b>
Addictions Counsellor III	16	Health Promotion Facilitator I	1	Physiotherapist III	1
Advanced Care Paramedic	22	Health Promotion Facilitator II	2	Primary Care Paramedic	15
Biomedical Equipment Technologist II	1	Home-Based Development Worker	1	Primary Care Paramedic Supervisor	3
Biomedical Equipment Technologist III	1	Home Visitation Advocate	4	Psychologist I	1
Cardiology Technologist I	2	Medical Radiation Technologist I	6	Psychologist II	1
Cardiology Technologist II	2	Medical Radiation Technologist II	14	Quality Assurance Technologist	1
Child and Youth Development Specialist	8	Medical Radiation Technologist III	8	Quality Control Technologist III	1
Child Life Specialist	3	Mental Health Promotion Facilitator	2	Radiation Therapist I	3
Clinical Educator	1	Mental Health Therapist	15	Recreation Therapist II	13
Clinical Supervisor	12	MRI Technologist I	2	Registered Dental Assistant	1
Combined Laboratory and X-Ray Technologist I	5	MRI Technologist II	1	Registered Dental Assistant II	2
Combined Laboratory and X-Ray Technologist II	3	Nuclear Medicine Technologist	2	Respiratory Therapist i	8
Community Addictions Services Administrator	2	Nuclear Medicine Technologist 1	1	Respiratory Therapist II	8
Coordinator EMS Business Standards & Operations Support	1	Nuclear Medicine Technologist II	2	Respiratory Therapist III	1
Diagnostic Sonographer I	4	Occupation Therapist I	27	Seating Technician I	1
Diagnostic Sonographer II	8	Occupational Therapist II	25	Sexual Health Consultant	2
Dietitian I	11	Occupational Therapist III	6	Social Worker II	12
Dietitian II	4	Pharmacist I	6	Social Worker III	5
EEG Technologist II	2	Pharmacist II	3	Speech Language Pathologist I	6
Health Information Management Professional I	6	Pharmacy Technician	10	Speech Language Pathologist II	20
Health Information Management Professional II	7	Physiotherapist I	30	Speech Language Pathologist III	2
Health Promotion Facilitator	10	Physiotherapist II	34	Therapy Assistant	68

## JOB CLASSIFICATION



## **HSA RETENTION INCENTIVE – EMPLOYEE SURVEY SUMMARY** (307 responded)

### **Tax Impact and Financial Concerns:**

- The incentive's value was perceived as diminished due to significant tax deductions, leading to disappointment among recipients over the net amount received.
- Despite tax concerns, financial support was appreciated to address various personal financial needs, such as debt reduction and household expenses.

### **Appreciation and Recognition:**

- The incentive served as a tangible acknowledgment of employees' long service and dedication, boosting morale and reinforcing their sense of being valued by the organization.

### **Retention and Decision-making:**

- For some, the incentive positively influenced retention and career decisions, encouraging employees to extend their tenure or delay retirement, attributing to respect and recognition.

### **Mixed Reactions and Suggestions for Improvement:**

- Mixed feelings were common, with appreciation for the financial gesture tempered by concerns over tax implications and perceived unfairness, especially towards colleagues who didn't receive the incentive.
- Calls for better communication and clarity regarding the incentive were noted, particularly concerning tax implications and potential structuring to minimize tax burden.

### **Loyalty and Workplace Challenges:**

- Many employees demonstrated loyalty through long-term commitment to their roles despite facing challenges in rural work environments and considering the impact of workplace dynamics on their job satisfaction.

### **Influencing Factors on Retention:**

- Financial incentives were highlighted as significant in influencing decisions to stay, especially nearing retirement, yet bad management and workplace environment issues also played crucial roles in these decisions.

### **Future Uncertainty and Satisfaction:**

- External factors like organizational restructuring, health, and job satisfaction influenced uncertainty about plans, with many expressing love for their jobs despite stress and burnout.

**Desire for Change and Improvement Suggestions:**

- A desire for new opportunities and improvements in the work environment were emphasized alongside suggestions for more equitable fund distribution, addressing taxation, and improving communication.
- Employees value recognition, work-life balance, professional development opportunities, and quality management as crucial for job satisfaction and retention.

**Healthcare System and Process Concerns:**

- System-wide challenges, such as staffing shortages and workload, impacted job satisfaction and retention, calling for more efficient processes and equitable treatment across all employee levels.

**Summary of feedback from those who were not eligible for retention incentive**

- **Disappointment and Frustration:** Many individuals expressed disappointment and frustration with the outcome of the RCIF funding application process. They felt let down by the selection criteria and the perceived lack of transparency.
- **Seniority and Eligibility Concerns:** There is a recurring theme of confusion and dissatisfaction regarding the emphasis on seniority as a criterion for receiving the retention bonus. Many felt that seniority wasn't the best indicator of who would benefit most from the funding, especially regarding retention.
- **Vacancy Rates and Staffing Challenges:** Several messages highlighted issues related to departmental vacancy rates and staffing challenges, particularly in rural and remote areas. A common thread was concern about retaining staff in these locations.
- **Lack of Communication and Clarity:** Some individuals mentioned a need for clearer communication about the eligibility criteria and application process, leading to confusion and misunderstandings.
- **Inequality and Unfairness:** There were perceptions of inequity in the distribution of funds, with some feeling that the process favoured more senior staff members and did not address the needs of those in mid-career or struggling with recruitment and retention challenges.

## **HSAA RETENTION INCENTIVE – MANAGER SURVEY** *52 Responses*

### **Impact on Decision to Stay:**

- While long-term employees appreciated the incentives, many indicated that these did not significantly influence their decision to stay, as they were already committed.

### **Perception Based on Tenure:**

- The program was perceived differently across the workforce. Employees with longer tenure saw it as nice recognition, whereas newer or soon-to-rotate employees found it less meaningful. The seniority-based focus led to dissatisfaction among newer employees, who felt overlooked and underappreciated.

### **Incentives in Hard-to-Fill Positions:**

- In some areas, especially rural, the incentives helped retain employees in challenging positions. However, their impact varied, with some committed employees stating the funds did not alter their loyalty.

### **Suggestions for Improvement:**

- Recommendations include shifting focus towards ongoing recruitment and education incentives for a broader impact, addressing equitable distribution, and enhancing transparency about the program.

### **Negative Workplace Dynamics:**

- The uneven distribution and lack of clarity around the incentive program led to resentment and unfairness, negatively impacting the morale of those not receiving incentives.

### **Workplace Environment and Morale:**

- The implementation process and the perceived unfairness of the incentive distribution have contributed to workplace dissatisfaction and could potentially undermine the program's intended benefits.

### **Future Strategy Recommendations:**

- Adopt more inclusive and balanced approaches, considering employees beyond seniority.
- Improve communication and transparency regarding eligibility and distribution.
- Consider a broader range of incentives, like milestone recognitions, education support, and flexible policies to enhance morale and retention.
- Adjustment in Focus: More equitable distribution, targeted eligibility criteria, and comprehensive support measures could be more effective in retaining a diverse workforce.