

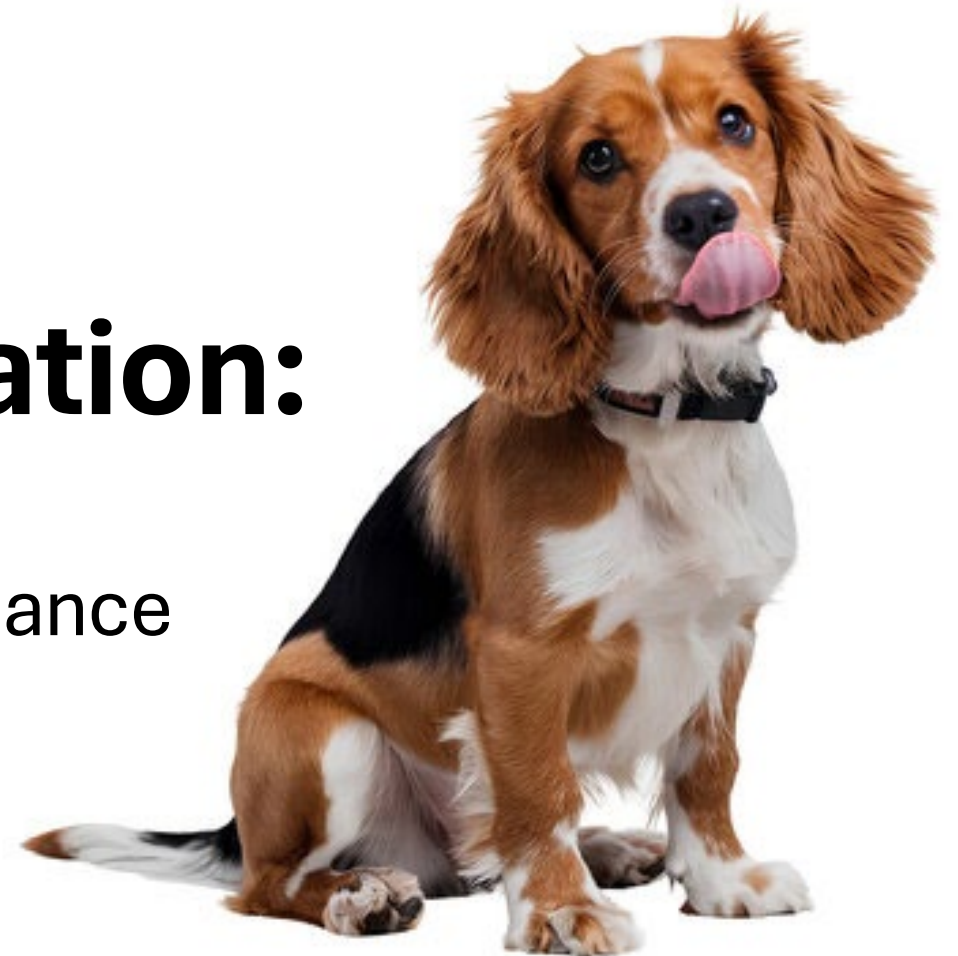
Jane Wigen

Director of Member Relations

August 2025

Demystifying Compensation:

Leveraging every conversation to maximize recruitment, retention, loyalty, and performance



What Will We Talk About?

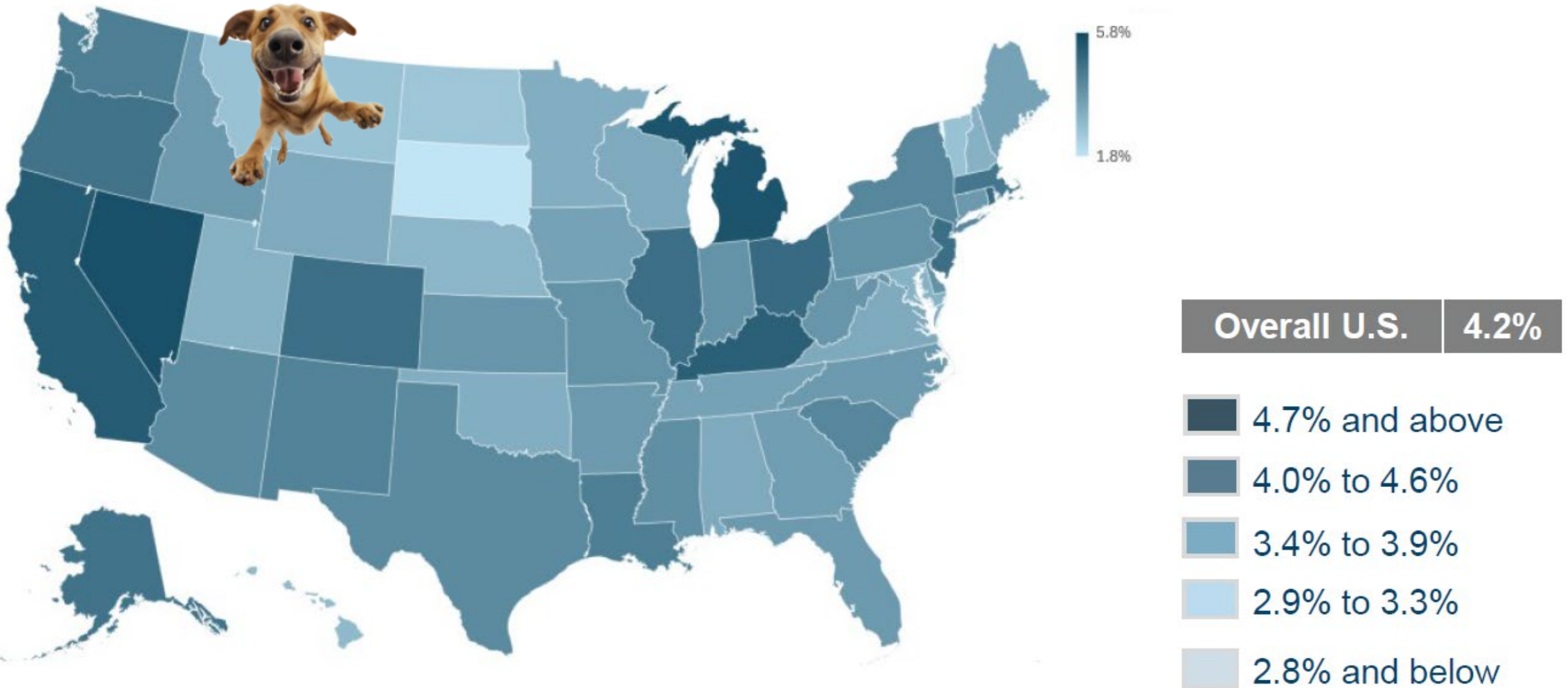
- Workforce Landscape
- Compensation Data Details
- Compensation Strategy Considerations
- Employee Conversations & Education
- The Value of a Human Resource Partner





NTA BENEFITS
THE RURAL BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

Unemployment Rates by State



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, April 2025

Number of Unemployed Persons Per Job Opening

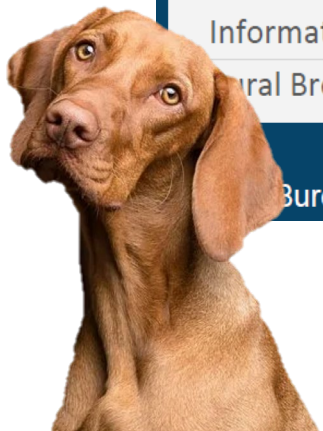
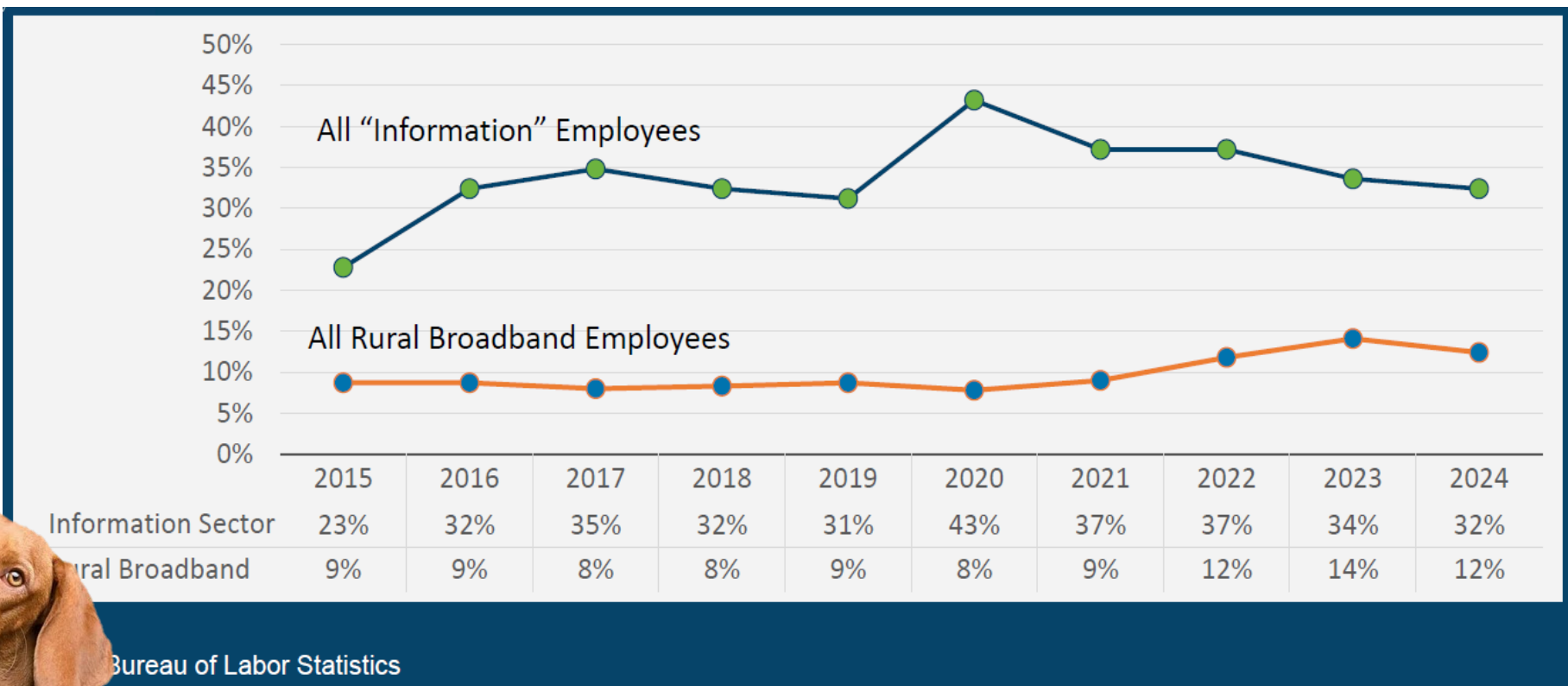


Note: Shaded area represents recession, as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



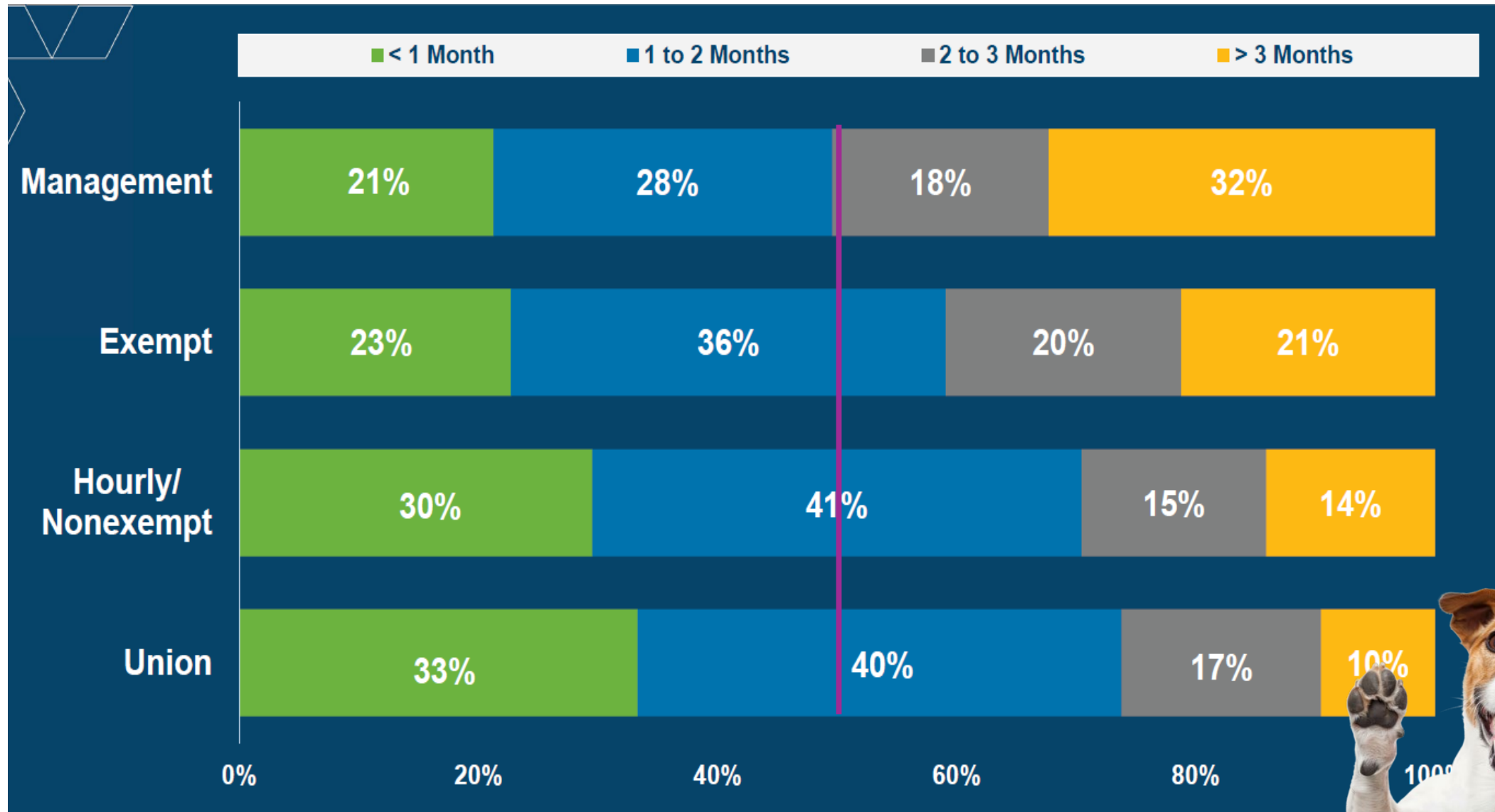
Turnover Rate – Bureau of Labor Statistics

2025 – Largest carrier reported 22%, smallest reported 7.7%



Average Time to Fill Open Position

2022 NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association Compensation & Benefit Survey



Top Worries of Business Leaders

Industry Insights – Cross Industry Compensation Survey, Spring 2024

Which of the following is a major concern/issue of your company?

Finding qualified employees

55%

Employee retention

38%

Costs of healthcare

37%

Increased labor costs

33%

Price competition

30%

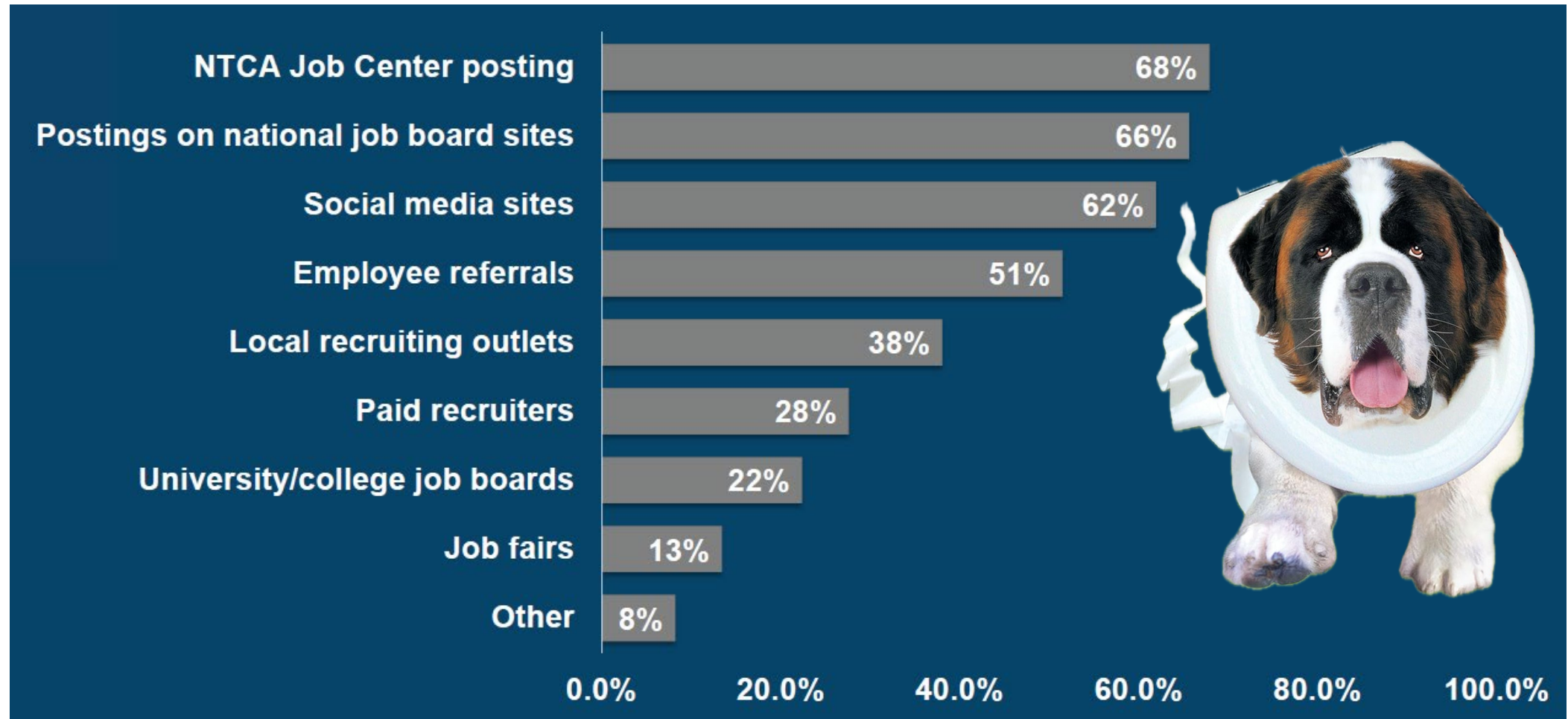
Increased operating costs

30%



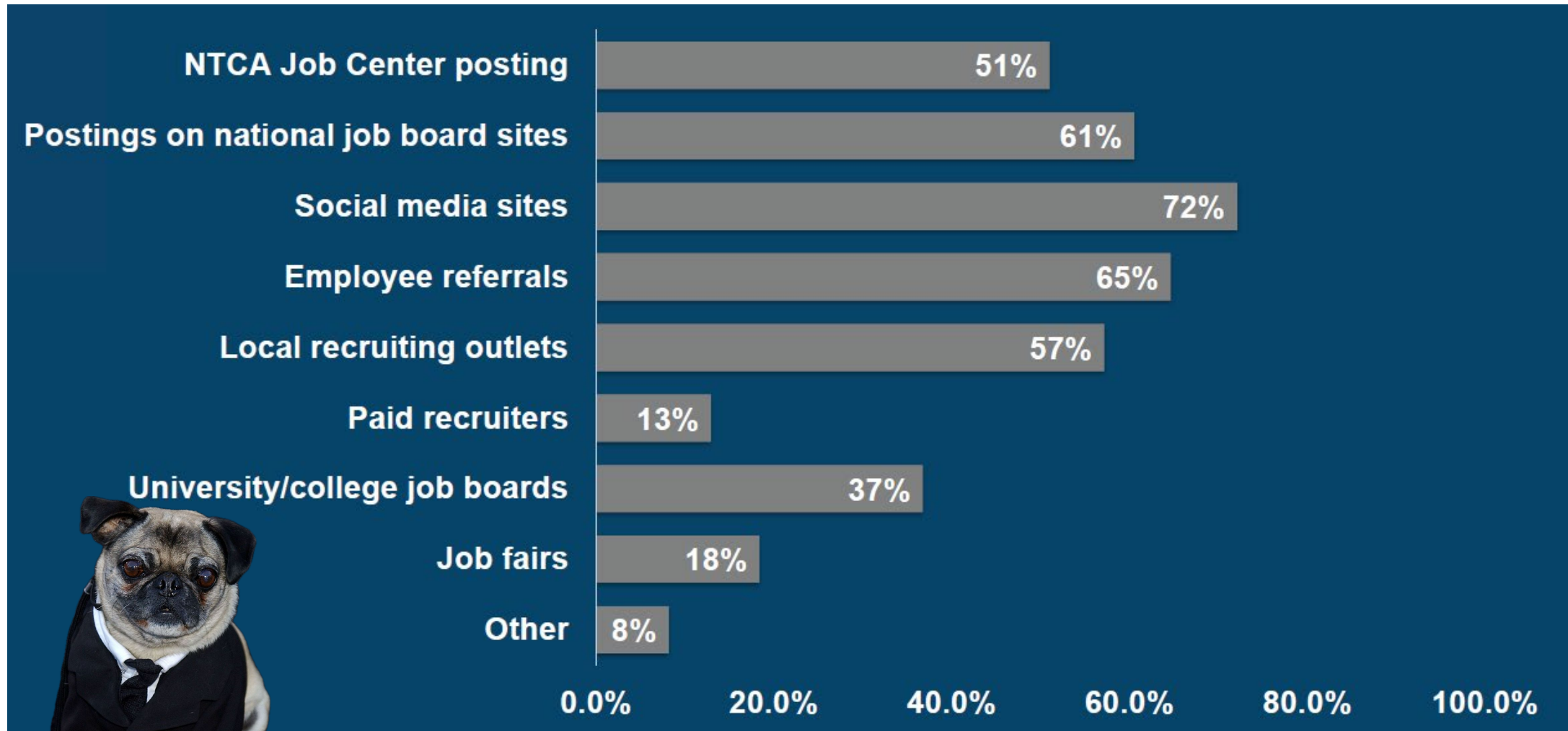
Recruiting Methods: Management

2022 NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association Compensation & Benefit Survey



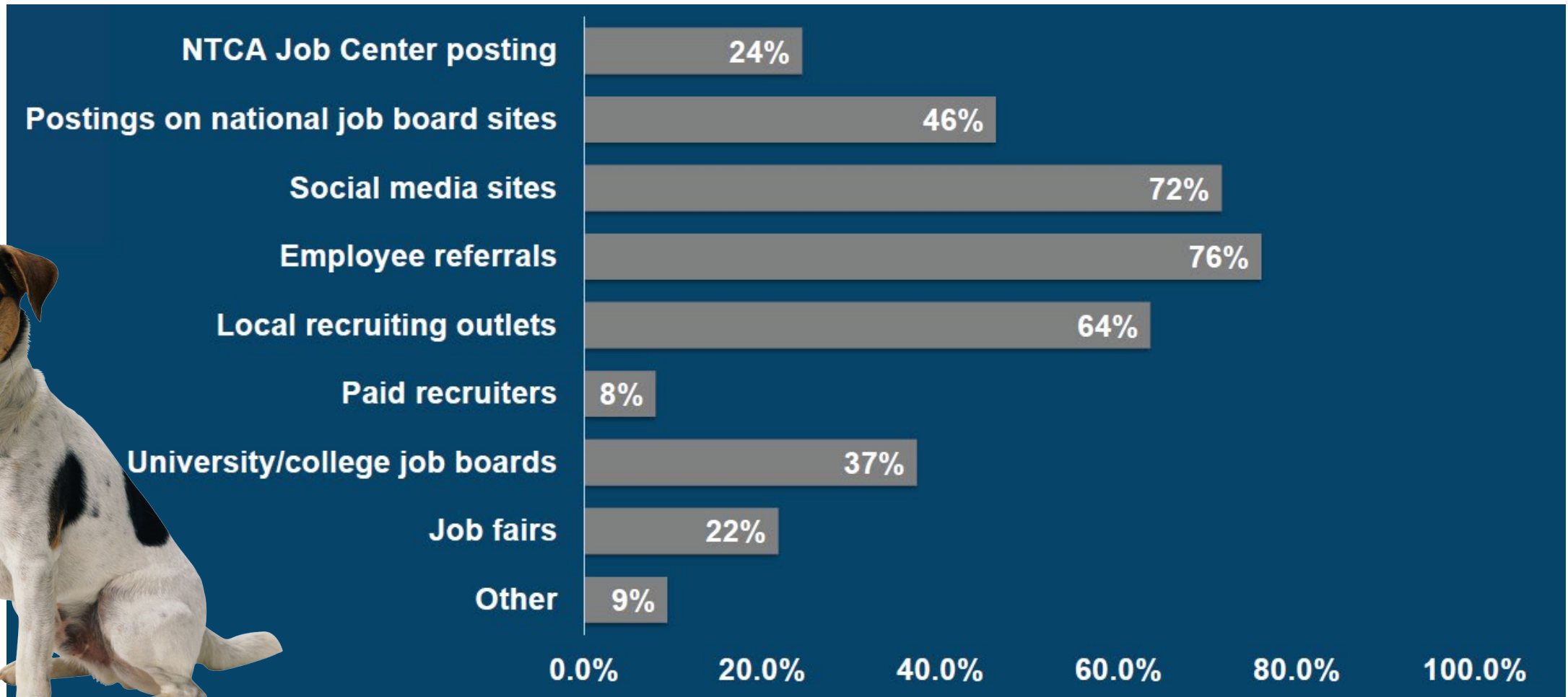
Recruiting Methods: Exempt Employees

2022 NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association Compensation & Benefit Survey



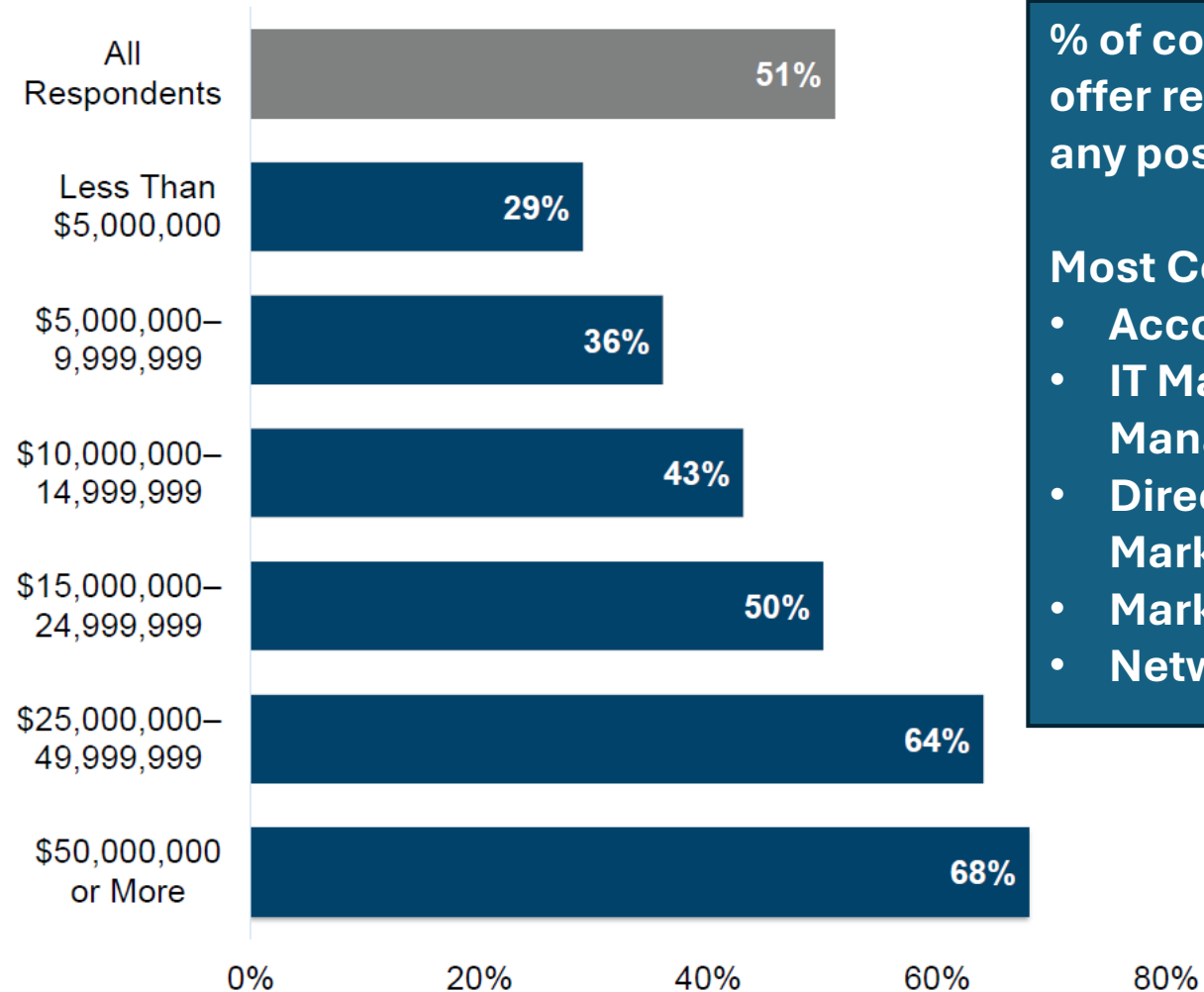
Recruiting Methods: Hourly Employees

2022 NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association Compensation & Benefit Survey



% Offer Remote Work Opportunities

2025 NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association Compensation & Benefit Survey



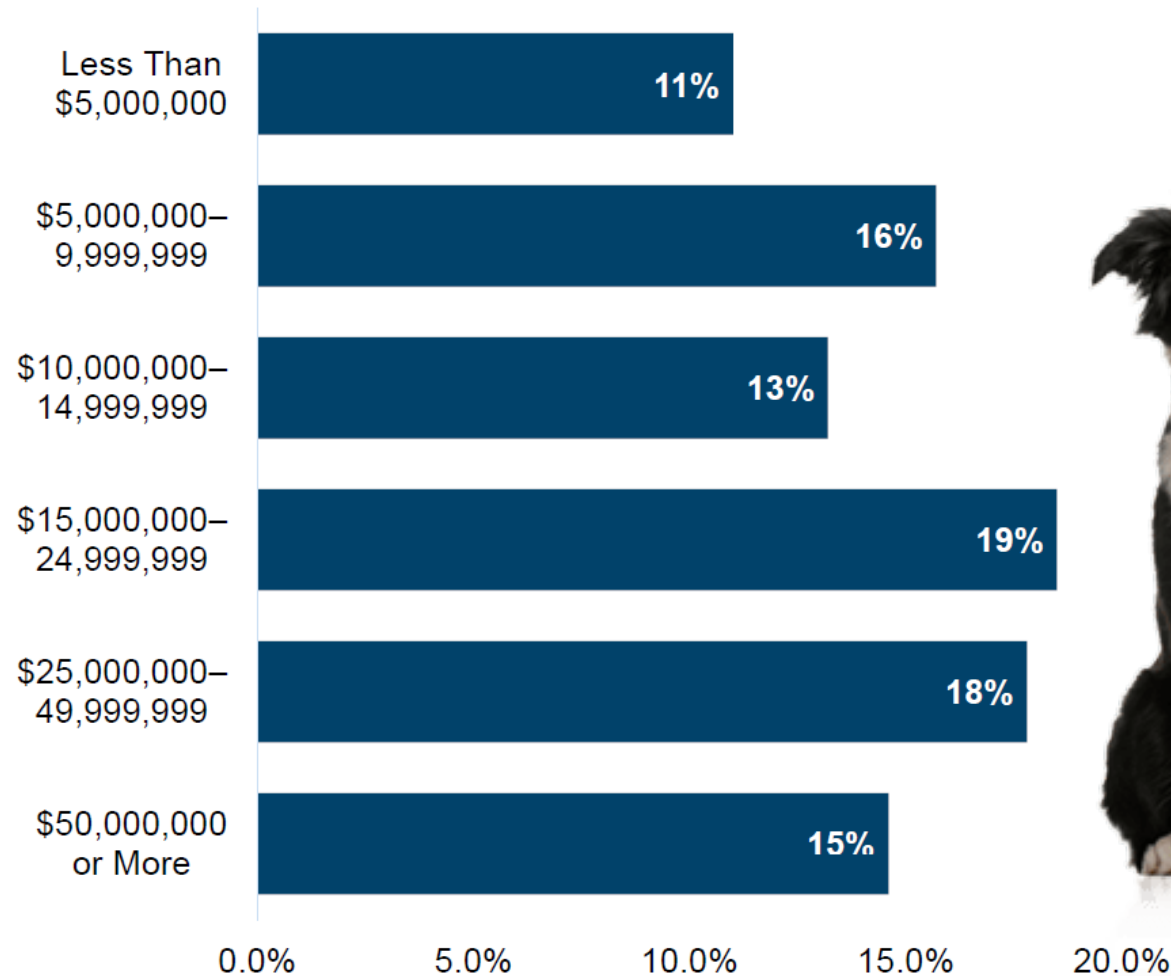
% of companies that offer remote work for any position in 2024.

Most Common:

- Accountant
- IT Manager/ Network Manager
- Director of Marketing & Sales
- Marketing Specialist
- Network Engineer

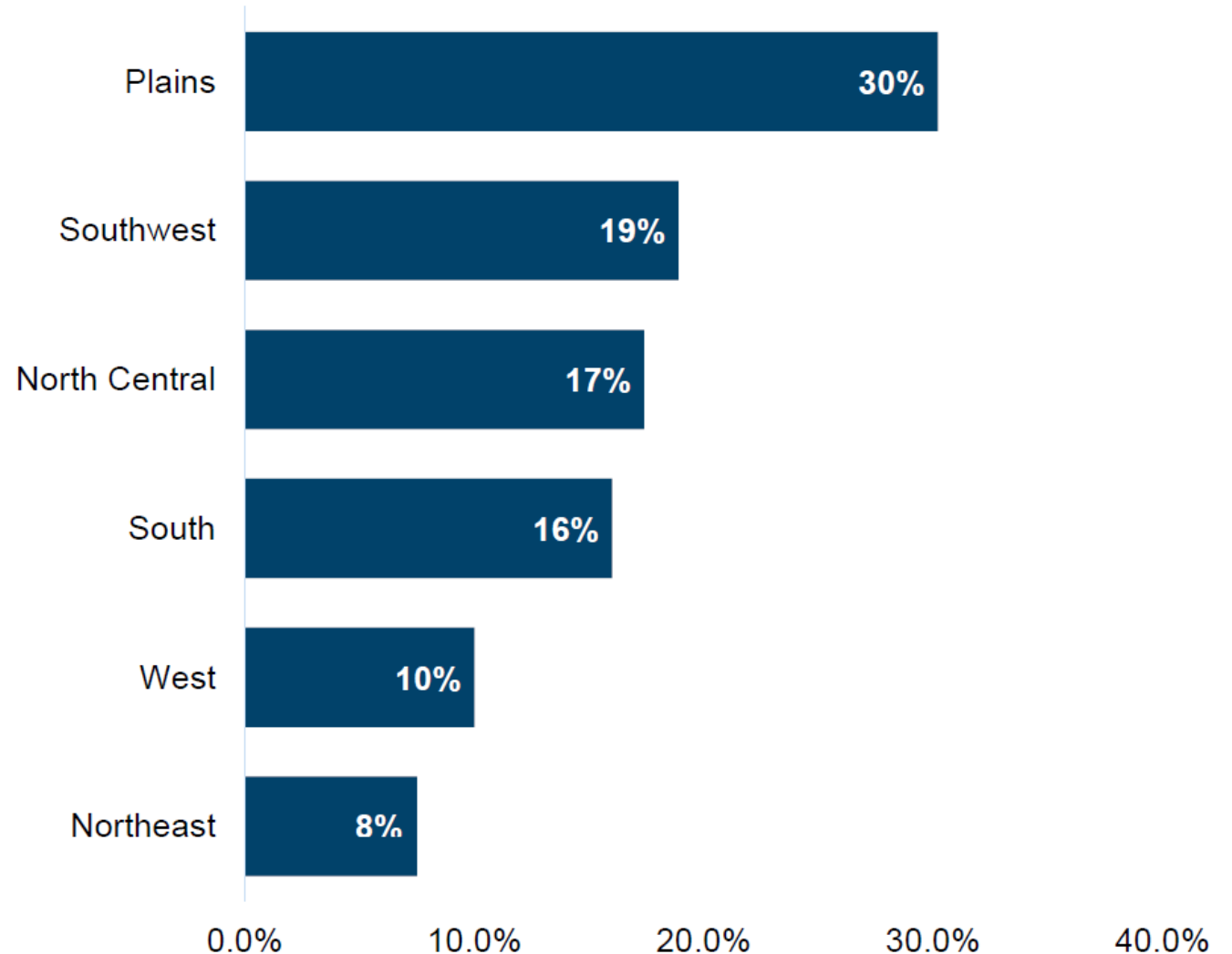
% Offer Remote Work Opportunities: Revenue

2025 NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association Compensation & Benefit Survey



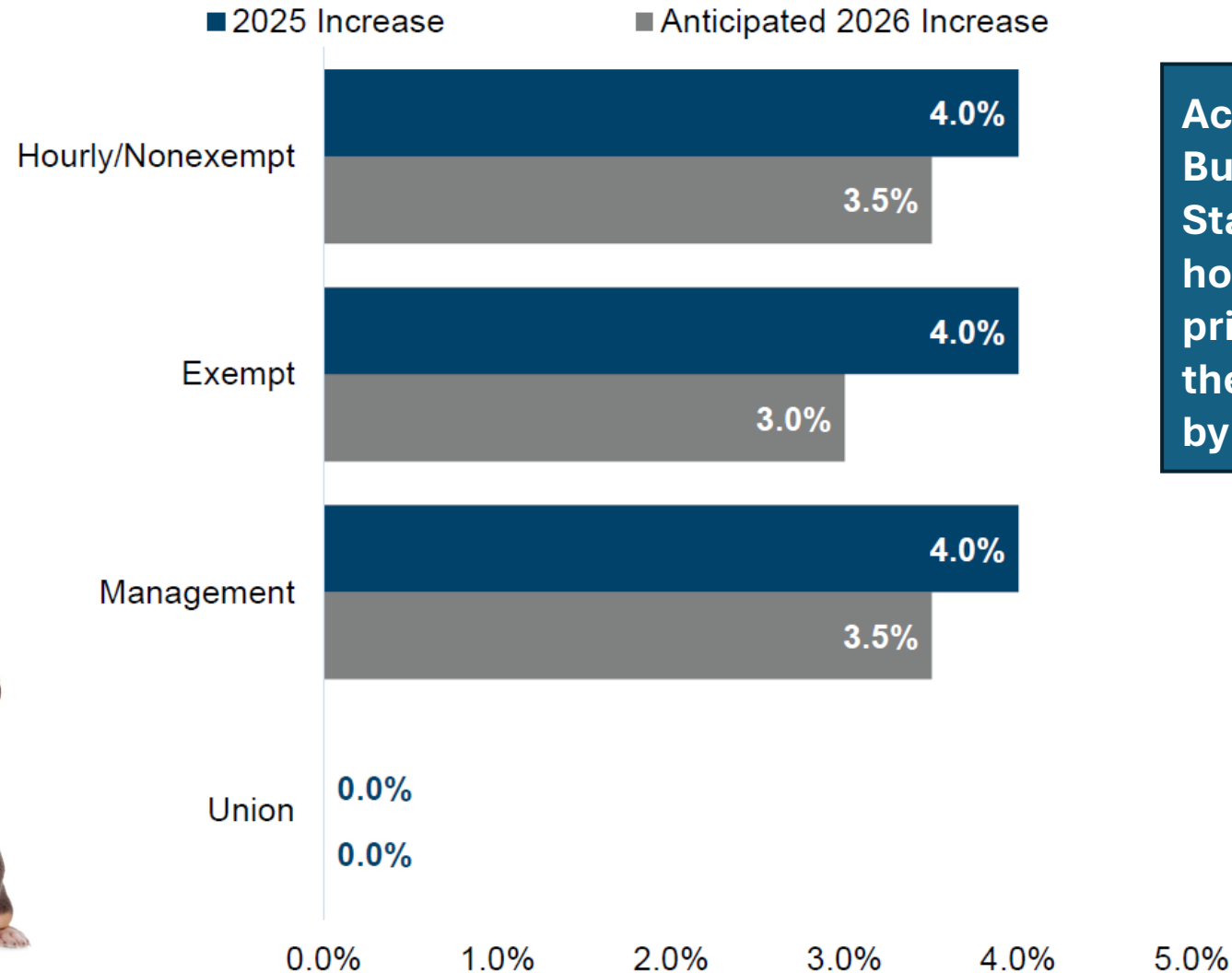
% Offer Remote Work Opportunities: Region

2025 NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association Compensation & Benefit Survey



Pay Increases: 2025-2026 Expected

2025 NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association Compensation & Benefit Survey



According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' - average hourly earnings of all private employees in the United States rose by 4.0% during 2024.



Company Retirement Benefit Options

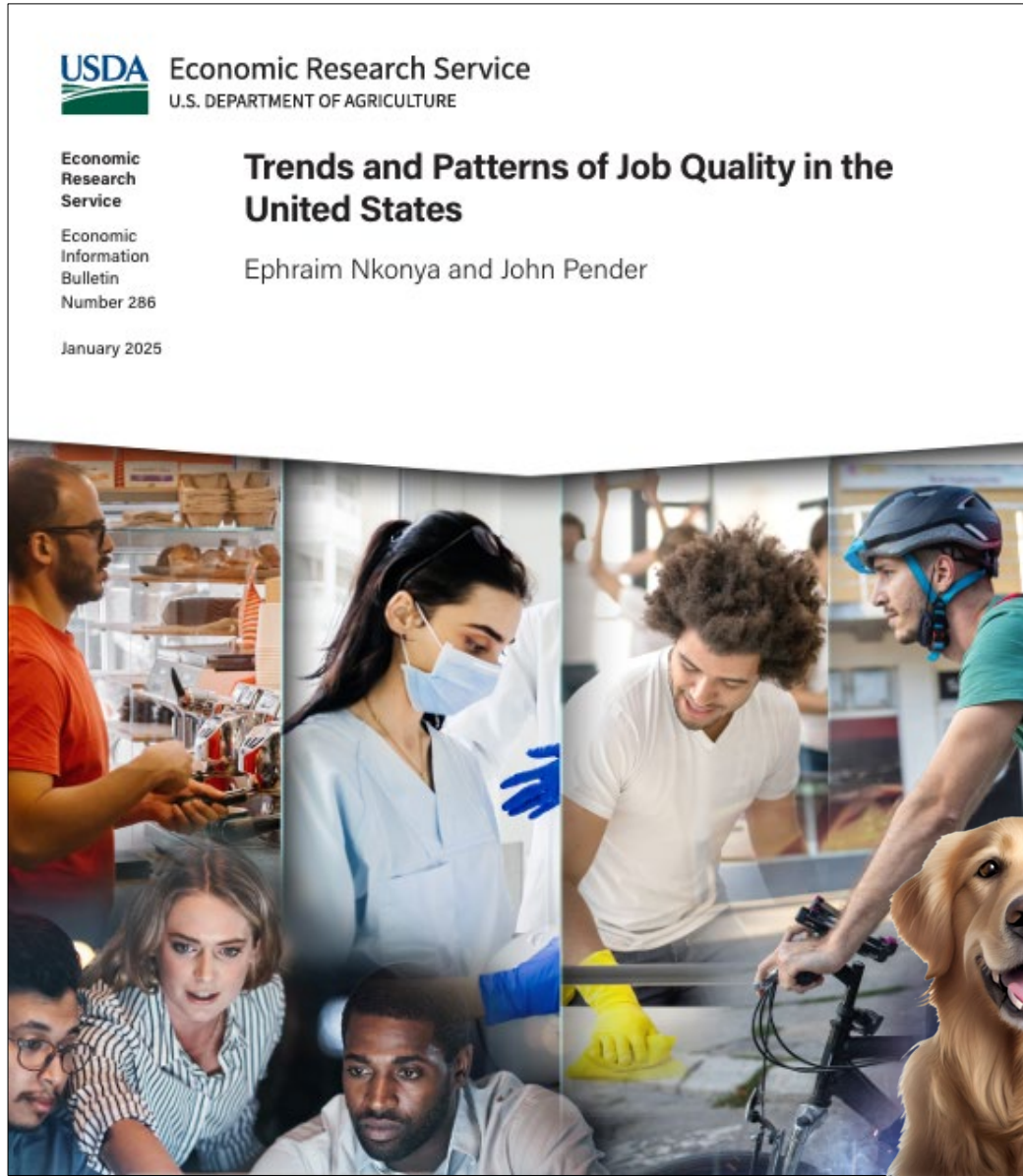
2025 NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association Compensation & Benefit Survey

100% of Companies
Provide Retirement Program
Benefits



Top Retirement and Savings Plans Offered	
NTCA Savings Plan	65%
NTCA Retirement and Security Program	51%
Non-NTCA Defined Contribution Plan (401k, 403b), IRS-Qualified	38%
Nonqualified Deferred Compensation Plan (457b, 457f, SERP, etc.)	16%
Non-NTCA Defined Benefit Pension Plan, IRS-Qualified	11%

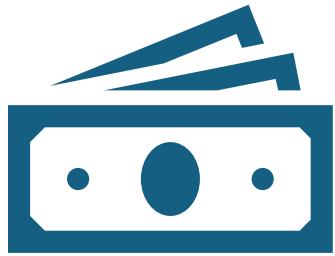
Total Reward Package – You Already Standout!



- Study examined trends and patterns of real wages, employer sponsored healthcare, and retirement benefits between 2000 and 2022.
- ***Nonwage benefits from employers are increasingly important considerations*** when assessing employee welfare and ***job quality***—especially health insurance benefits.
- ***Employer provided retirement savings benefits have been increasingly important to the welfare of workers and their families.***
- Between 2001 and 2022, the share of families holding retirement accounts increased from 52.8 percent to 54.4 percent, while the median value of assets held in retirement accounts increased from about \$49,000 to \$87,000

Total Reward Package - Be Intentional

Your demographic is unique - educate/inform employees on the total rewards with you as their employer



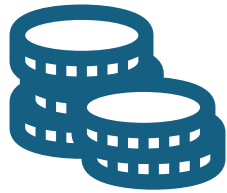
Salary
Bonus/Commissions
Incentives



Health Care Benefits
Retirement Offerings
Life/Disability/Accident
Vacation/PTO
Flexibility
Work Environment/Culture
Leadership
Advancement/Growth
Opportunities



“Show me the money!” - Build a Compensation Strategy



Questions you must answer:

- What to pay *new employees*
- What to pay *current employees*
- How does this fit with your current operating budget & strategy?



What is your Market Strategy:

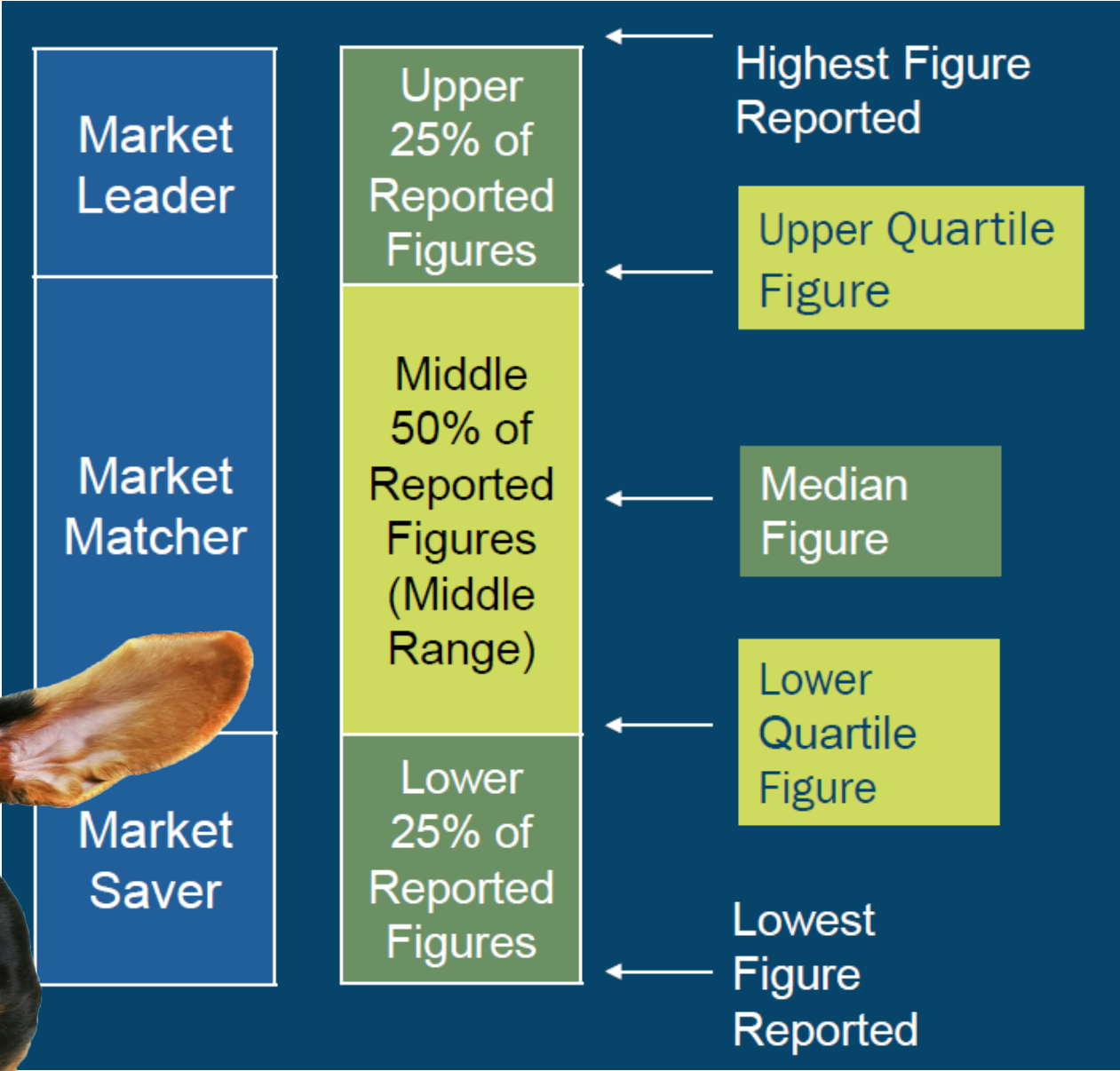
- Market Leader
- Market Matcher
- Market Saver



Define Your Approach

Considerations: Length of service, type of company, revenue, region of the country, etc.

Accountant (204)	
	Total Compensation
Average	\$74,215
10 th Percentile	\$56,763
Lower Quartile	\$62,000
Median	\$72,009
Upper Quartile	\$82,740
90 th Percentile	\$92,977



You Had Me at Health Insurance

- Educate About Pay Structure
- Annual Increases – Years it does not feel like enough?
- Recognition Programs, PVO – Paid Volunteer Hours, Flexibility
- Quality Onboarding Programs & Performance Management
- Emerging Leaders - Retention



Employees Want More Than Salary

Baby Boomers

- Recognition of Expertise & Contributions
- Mentorship Opportunities
- Clear Hierarchy & Structure
- Respect for time & work ethic

Gen X

- Work-Life Balance
- Autonomy & Independence
- Direct/Informal Feedback
- Career Dev./Growth
- Meaningful Work
- Work Relationships

Millennials

- Purpose-Driven Work & Social Impact
- Development & Advancement
- Recognition & Regular Feedback
- Positive Company Culture & Inclusivity

Gen Z

- Authenticity & Transparency
- Real-time & Personalized Recognition
- Peer-to-Peer Recognition
- Purpose & Social Impact
- Flexibility & Work-Life Integration
- Growth & Development Opportunities



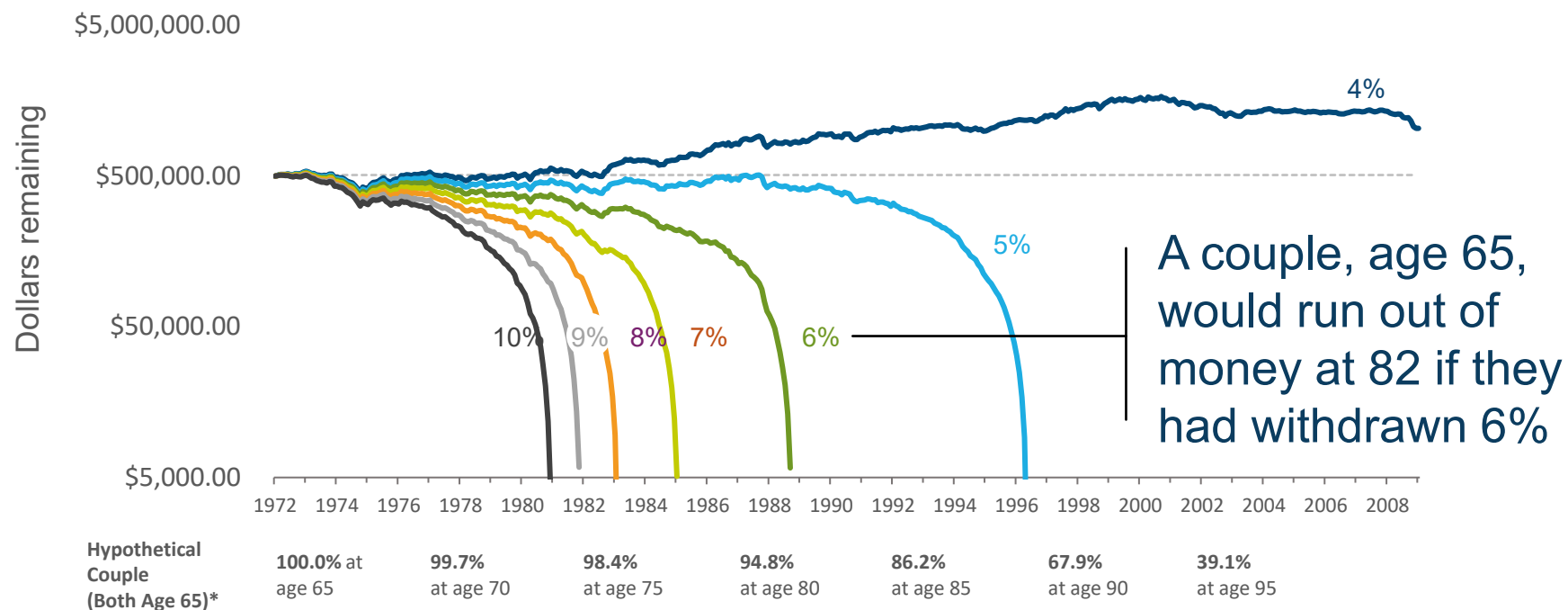
Top Down Culture, Education, & Teaching Financial Literacy

- 1 in 3
- 51%
- 24% of 20 yo
- 315K Health Care
- Read a Paycheck?
- Pre/Post Tax Contributions
- Investing/Compounding Interest



Impact Withdrawal Rates

\$500,000 – 50% Stocks, 40% Bonds, 10% Short-Term Investments
Withdrawals starting in 1972, double-digit inflation, worst moments to retire, unless one withdrew at a prudent rate



*Hypothetical value of assets held in an untaxed account after adjusting for monthly inflation-adjusted withdrawals and performance. Initial investment of \$500,000 invested in a portfolio of 50% stocks, 40% bonds, and 10% short-term investments. Hypothetical illustration uses historical monthly performance, from Morningstar, for the 35-year period beginning January 1972: stocks, bonds, and short-term investments are represented by the S&P 500® Index, U.S. intermediate-term government bond, and U.S. 30-day T-bills, respectively. Initial withdrawal amount based on 1/12th of applicable withdrawal rate multiplied by \$500,000. Subsequent withdrawal amounts based on prior month's amount adjusted by the actual monthly change in the Consumer Price Index for that month. This chart is for illustrative purposes only and is not indicative of any investment. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

Average Balances vs. Median Balances

2024 Federal Reserve Statistics: AVERAGE vs. MEDIAN
for active employed 55-64 aged households



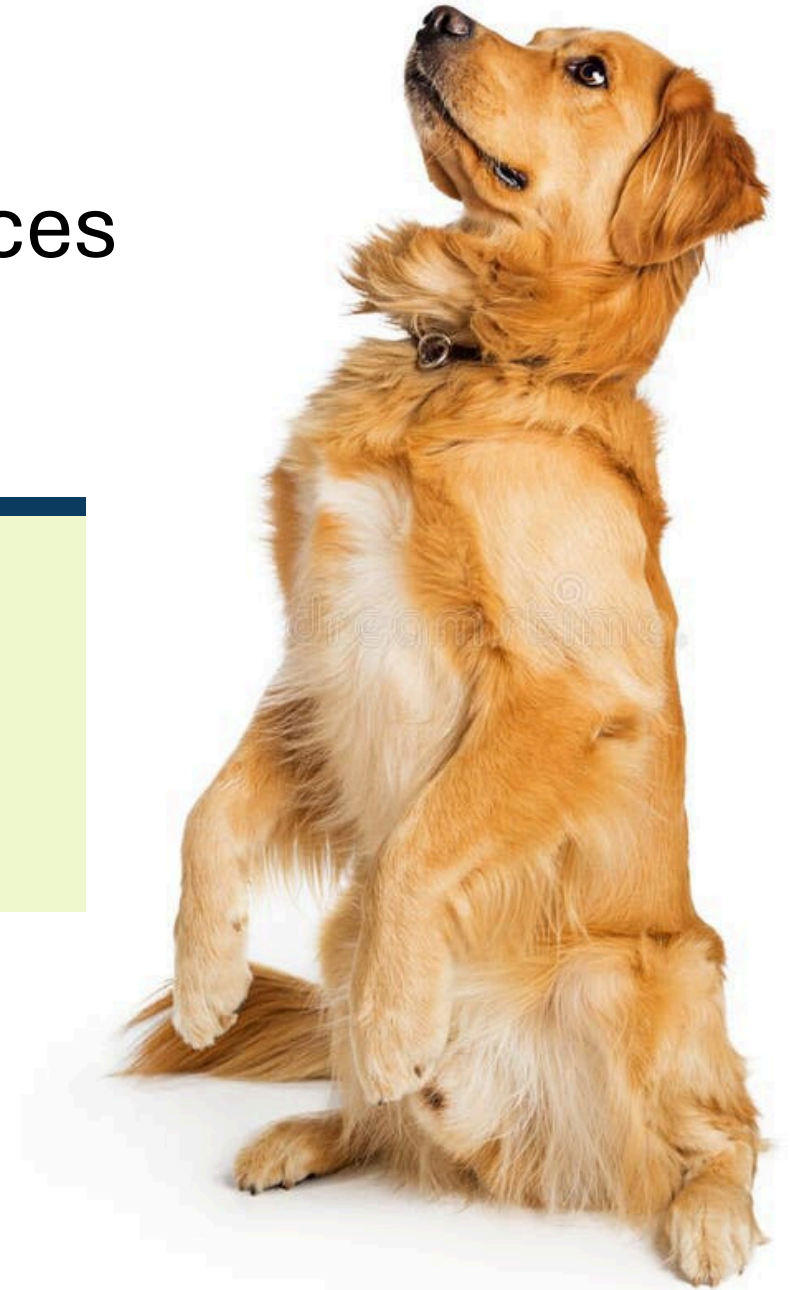
4% withdrawal rate

$$\begin{aligned} &\$289,000 \times 4\% \\ &= \$11,560 \end{aligned}$$

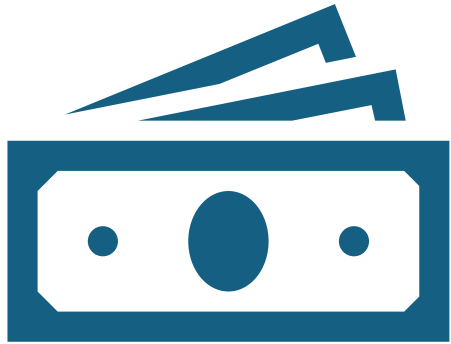


4% withdrawal rate

$$\begin{aligned} &\$89,000 \times 4\% \\ &= \$3,560 \end{aligned}$$



I Need “X” from My 401(k)



\$50,000/year

$$\div 4\% = \$1,250,000$$

SAVING FOR THE FUTURE

- Creating the quality of a retirement paycheck today
- Income pie: pension, 401K, Social Security, IRAs, earned income, other?
- Planning at 20, 30, 40, 50, 60
- Spending intentionally today and in retirement!



Culture – Experiential Values

- Who are you – what do you value?
- In a competitive market space – what makes your customers choose you?
- How do you want employees to carry that out?
- How do employees want to carry that out?
- Culture is not optional
- Foster employee relationships and experiences that carry culture expectations







Final Thoughts

- Have total compensation conversations
- Implement strong performance management practices
- Be transparent with pay structures
- Recognize that culture impacting decisions need to be very deliberate – acquisitions, reorganizations, reductions in force, etc.
- Create strategy around compensation
- It is not only about the average or median – look at how wide the ranges are.
- Market Saver - not a bad thing – however, know that the biggest mistake you make is underpaying your stars!

Leveraging every conversation to
maximize recruitment, retention,
loyalty, and performance.





Thank you!

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Who thinks they have the count on dogs?

How about the famous ones?



