

TAAEF Workforce Research Study

Retention & Culture Checklist

The research revealed that retention is about more than compensation. Employees stay when they feel respected, supported, developed, and connected to a healthy workplace culture. This guide provides practical strategies and checklists to help apartment operators strengthen retention, improve culture, and create long-term career pathways.



Key Takeaway for Employers

The workforce journey must align. Recruiting, onboarding, leadership, and culture all influence retention. Employers who invest in clarity, respect, recognition, and advancement will be best positioned to reduce turnover and strengthen long-term workforce stability.

Retention Takes More Than a Paycheck

The study found that onboarding, workplace culture, leadership behaviors, and advancement opportunities are decisive moments for retention. Texans overwhelmingly prefer hands-on onboarding, clear expectations, and real-time feedback during the first 30 days.

The findings reinforce that respectful treatment, transparent communication, and supportive leadership are baseline expectations, not differentiators. Toxic or disrespectful workplace culture consistently outweighed compensation and benefits as a driver of turnover.

Explore the full research study and workforce tools at:
taaef.taa.org/research





What Drives Long-Term Retention?

- Respectful workplace culture
- Supportive leadership & communication
- Clear advancement pathways
- Ongoing training & development
- Recognition & appreciation
- Housing & financial benefits
- Purpose & belonging
- Team connection

Workplace Culture & Leadership Checklist

Use this checklist to evaluate whether your culture reinforces trust, professionalism, and long-term commitment.

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| ☐ Managers hold regular checkin-ins with employees | ☐ Employees understand how roles contribute to residents and communities |
| ☐ Team expectations and communication is clearly defined | ☐ Leaders model professionalism, accountability, and transparency |
| ☐ Leadership provides constructive, consistent feedback | ☐ New hires are paired with mentors, trainers, and peers |
| ☐ Employees feel safe sharing concerns and ideas | ☐ Burnout risks, staffing gaps, and workload concerns are addressed proactively |
| ☐ Workplace behaviors and respect standards are actively reinforced | ☐ Employees receive real-time coaching and support |
| ☐ Team accomplishments are recognized publicly and consistently | ☐ Teams regularly celebrate milestones, wins, anniversaries, and accomplishments |



Recognition & Appreciation Ideas

The research found that long-term retention is driven by more than compensation alone. Employees are far more likely to stay when they feel valued, respected, recognized, and connected to a workplace culture that invests in their success. The following recognition-focused retention strategies highlight practical ways organizations can reinforce appreciation through financial rewards, team recognition, and career growth opportunities.



Financial Recognition

- Quarterly performance bonuses
- Leasing or renewal incentives
- Spot bonuses for exceptional service
- Attendance or safety incentives
- Tuition reimbursement or certification sponsorships



Team Appreciation

- Employee appreciation lunches or events
- Property celebration days
- Peer-nominated recognition awards
- Work anniversaries and milestone celebrations
- Resident-nominated employee shoutouts



Career Recognition

- Publicly celebrate promotions and certifications
- Highlight employee success stories internally
- Offer leadership stretch opportunities
- Create mentorship or emerging leader programs
- Recognize cross-training and new skill development

Team Culture Pulse Survey Template & Questions

Regular employee feedback helps organizations identify issues early, improve engagement, and strengthen retention. Use these quarterly pulse survey questions to measure employee perceptions of leadership, communication, recognition, growth opportunities, and workplace culture.

- I feel respected, valued, and recognized by my coworkers and leadership
- My manager communicates clearly and provides the support I need to succeed
- I understand what is expected of me and receive the training and feedback needed to perform effectively
- I see clear opportunities for growth and advancement within this company
- I believe leadership cares about employee wellbeing, workload balance, and workplace culture
- I would recommend this company as a great place to work

About the Research

The TAAEF Workforce Research Study surveyed 1,500 Texans ages 18–58 across Gen Z, Millennials, and Gen X, including key cohorts such as Texans without a college degree and Texas Hispanics, to understand perceptions and decision drivers across the full employee lifecycle.