MHA
MISSOURI HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

2025 WORKFORCE REPORT

MoHospitals.org

Turnover and vacancy rates experienced continued moderation since historically high rates recorded in 2021 according to newly released data in the Missouri Hospital Association's 2025 Annual Workforce Report.

For the first time since 2020, combined data for all surveyed positions finds that **vacancy rates in 2024 dropped below 10%.** Vacancy rates now are below pre-pandemic levels among registered nurses and all surveyed positions when aggregated.

During the same period, **turnover has gradually declined, maintaining 22.2% over the past two years.** R.N. turnover rates also have dropped below 2020 levels, although at 16.1%, remain uncomfortably high.

Although these results are positive overall, real challenges remain. Reduced vacancy rates suggest recruitment and pipeline expansion efforts for health professions could be yielding results. However, the consistency of the R.N. turnover rate overall signals a troubling churn of employees in this essential profession. This suggests that while hospitals are filling positions, retention remains a challenge. Although the data does not examine specific root causes, turnover can reflect burnout or engagement and culture issues among the nursing cohort within hospitals.

Every Missouri hospital experiences recruitment and retention challenges within their workforce, though there is variation regionally and within the surveyed positions. This emphasizes the need for multifaceted strategies to improve workforce sustainability, including investments in training pipelines, enhanced support for current staff and developing solutions that are informed by and aligned with the needs and opportunities of Missouri's communities.

MHA is actively partnering with hospitals across the state to build and support a dynamic health care workforce that is ready to meet the needs of their patients and communities today and into the future. These efforts span the continuum of workforce strategy — helping hospitals and workforce partners build awareness of health professions, expand training, recruit and retain workers, and support the long-term health of the workforce with targeted, sustainable solutions.

To address recruitment and workforce readiness challenges, MHA is working to:

> » Develop and grow pipelines specific to physicians, nurses and allied health roles in addition to existing academic partnerships and expanding access to apprenticeships, training and student experiential learning opportunities.
> » Provide ongoing financial support of existing Graduate Medical Education state programs.
> » Produce resources, tools and education to support the recruitment of physicians, nurses, technology roles and international staffing solutions (where needed and appropriate).
> » Reduce barriers to entry such as minimizing Board of Healing Arts delays, expansion of clinical faculty and streamlining student clinical onboarding.

To further strengthen retention, MHA is supporting leadership development and helping build empowering environments by:

> » Equipping staff to provide great care through clinical and technology innovations, tools and work redesign.
> » Engaging staff through intentional leadership approaches to support complex adaptive systems and programs.
> » Strengthening hospitals' retention programs by providing tools and strategies to effectively onboard, mentor and train new staff, helping reduce turnover and retain staff through our Preceptor Academy and other clinical quality education programs.
> » Examining trends and providing tangible recommendations that support recruitment, retention, economic development and employee benefits such as support for employees' families.

INSIGHTS

Declines in vacancy and turnover demonstrate ongoing progress against the historically high rates experienced in 2021. Nonetheless, significant challenges remain for hospital staffing in clinical and nonclinical positions.

Continued investment in talent pipeline development remains critical to building and maintaining the workforce, today and in the future.

Focus on organizational culture and burnout prevention remains essential to retention and long-term workforce stability.

Workplace safety remains a top concern, and MHA is supporting hospitals in addressing violence in health care settings.

To help hospitals address shortages in critical roles, MHA is facilitating innovative recruitment strategies and creating educational partnerships. MHA supports leveraging new technologies to reduce administrative burdens, maximize workforce efficiencies and support care delivery, while also engaging with policymakers to maintain fair reimbursement models, reduce regulatory burdens and protect hospitals from financial instability that could reduce access to care for Missourians.

By focusing on these strategic priorities, MHA remains committed to strengthening the health care workforce, supporting front-line staff and ensuring hospitals can meet the evolving demands of patient care in an ever-changing landscape.

Statewide Vacancy & Turnover — All Surveyed Occupations

Source: Missouri Hospital Association
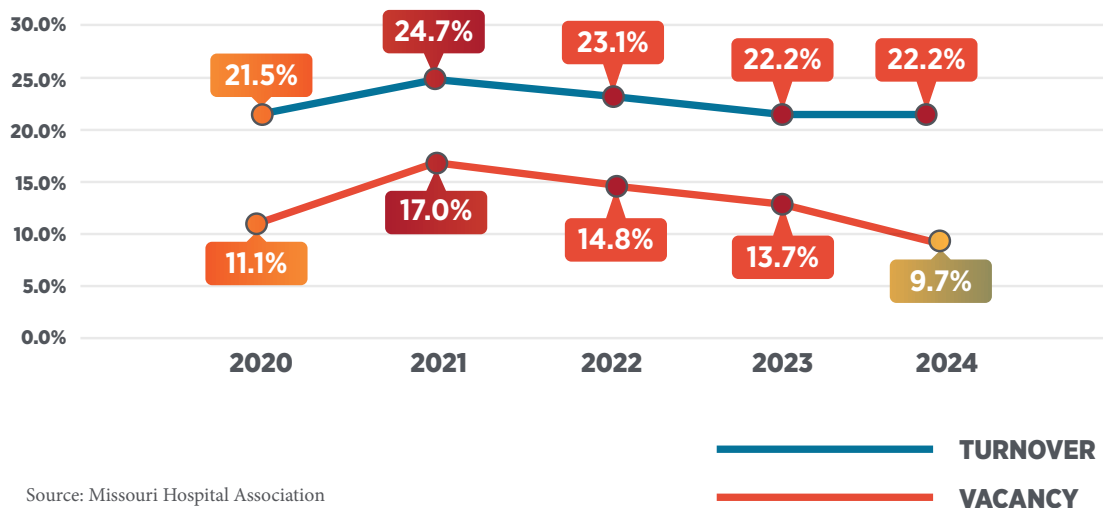
TURNOVER
VACANCY

Hospital-wide employee turnover and vacancy rates varied significantly from 2020 to 2024. Turnover gradually decreased from 2022 to 2024, remaining steady at 22.2% in both 2023 and 2024. While the turnover rate has slightly declined, it remains relatively high, suggesting ongoing workforce instability.

Vacancy rates steadily declined each year since the pandemic peak in 2021, reaching 9.7% in 2024. The steady and more significant decline indicates improved staffing or more success in filling open roles.

Workforce challenges remain across health care roles, with data highlighting both talent pipeline shortages and retention issues. Imaging roles such as CT, MRI and radiology technologists that have high vacancy rates but do not appear on the turnover list suggest a lack of interested and available candidates. In contrast, nurse assistants, phlebotomists, licensed practical nurses and surgical technicians are experiencing both high vacancy and turnover rates, signaling the need for short-term retention strategies and long-term investments in training pipelines and career pathways. Support roles such as environmental services, food service and sterile processing staff have extremely high turnover but lower vacancy rates, indicating that while these positions can be filled, organizations struggle to keep staff in the long term. Overall, the data suggests the need for expanded workforce pipelines and targeted retention strategies — specifically for front-line and support roles.

MISSOURI HOSPITALS Top 10 Professions With the Highest Employee Vacancy
CT Technologist
Licensed Practical Nurse
Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologist
Advanced Practice Registered Nurse
Surgical Technician
Nurse Assistant
Phlebotomist
Physician Assistant
Radiology Technologist
Respiratory Therapist

| MISSOURI HOSPITALS Top 10 Professions With the Highest Employee Turnover |
| --- |
| Environmental Services |
| Phlebotomist |
| Nurse Assistant |
| Food Service Worker/Dietary Aide |
| Licensed Practical Nurse |
| Sterile Processing Technician |
| Medical Assistant - Clinic |
| Medical Laboratory Technician |
| Pharmacy Technician |
| Surgical Technician |

The careers included in the tables are listed in order of highest to lowest percent.

Status of the Statewide Nursing Workforce

The R.N. turnover rate remained relatively stagnant at 16.1% in 2024, suggesting some recovery and stabilization as compared to a peak of 22.1% in 2021 during the height of pandemic-related stress. While turnover is improving, the rates remain high, and efforts must continue to stabilize the nursing workforce in the long term. Vacancy has consistently improved since 2021 — down to 10.1% in 2024. These declines indicate progress in attracting and hiring R.N.s.

Vacancies have improved more sharply than turnover since rates in both categories spiked in 2021, hitting a crisis point which reflected the immense strain on the R.N. workforce. Targeted workforce strategies such as nurse residency programs, compensation evaluations and well-being initiatives may be helping to support the workforce, though the extent of their influence is complex to calculate.

Statewide Vacancy & Turnover — Staff Registered Nurse

Source: Missouri Hospital Association

TURNOVER

VACANCY
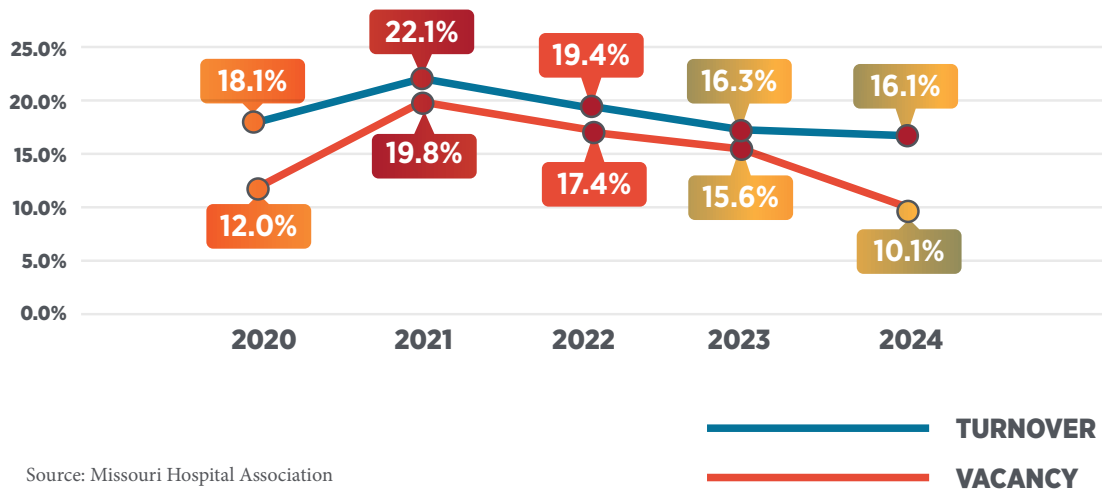
NATIONAL SNAPSHOT

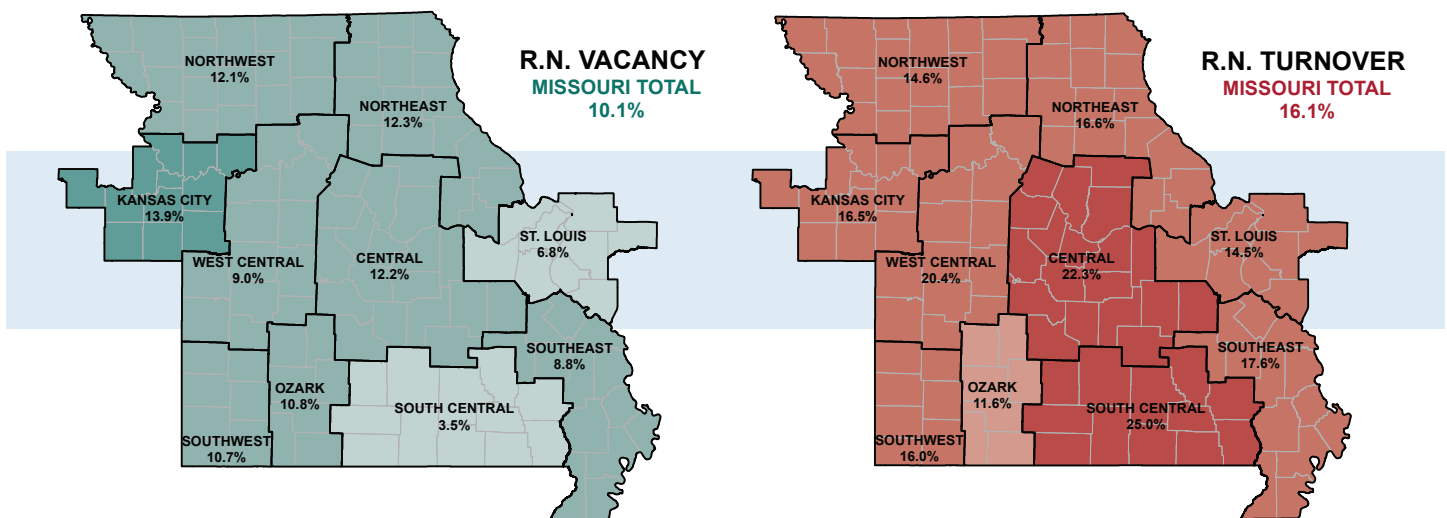According to the 2025 NSI National Health Care Retention & RN Staffing Report, all regions across the country experienced a modest decline in R.N. turnover in 2024, which is a positive shift for hospitals navigating ongoing workforce challenges. Despite this progress, the average cost of turnover for a staff R.N. rose by 8.6% over the past year, reaching $61,110, with costs ranging from $49,500 to $72,700. This represents an increase from the 2023 average of $56,300. The financial implications remain significant, as each 1% change in R.N. turnover can cost or save the average hospital approximately $289,000 annually.

On the recruitment front, the national R.N. vacancy rate stood at 9.6% in 2024, a slight improvement of 0.3% from the previous year. Hospitals responded by hiring around 98,000 R.N.s, resulting in an add rate of 5.6%. Additionally, the time required to recruit an experienced R.N. improved modestly, averaging 83 days — three days faster than in 2023 — with recruitment times ranging between 62 and 103 days.

Regional Data

In addition to a statewide perspective, the 2025 Annual Workforce Report explores regional differences in hospital occupations throughout the state. Data for 10 Missouri regions is available on MHA's website. Several occupations show strain across Missouri's regions, particularly among entry-level and support roles such as phlebotomists and environmental services staff. Nuclear medicine and MRI technologists show high vacancy in several areas due to a smaller workforce coupled with high demand. Nurse assistants and licensed practical nurses stand out with high turnover and vacancies in several regions, with turnover exceeding 60% in some cases.

The Northeast and Southeast regions consistently show the highest levels of both vacancy and turnover. Metropolitan areas like Kansas City and St. Louis experienced more moderate vacancy rates but still face elevated turnover, which could be a sign of job-switching in a competitive labor market. The South Central region has high turnover across multiple roles. In contrast, vacancy and turnover rates for highly specialized roles such as advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants in clinical and physician practices remain relatively low, reflecting stronger alignment between workforce demand and supply in those areas. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to recruitment and retention as each region faces unique workforce dynamics.

R.N. VACANCY
MISSOURI TOTAL
10.1%

- NORTHWEST 12.1%
- NORTHEAST 12.3%
- KANSAS CITY 13.9%
- WEST CENTRAL 9.0%
- CENTRAL 12.2%
- ST. LOUIS 6.8%
- OZARK 10.8%
- SOUTH CENTRAL 3.5%
- SOUTHEAST 8.8%
- SOUTHWEST 10.7%

R.N. TURNOVER
MISSOURI TOTAL
16.1%

- NORTHWEST 14.6%
- NORTHEAST 16.6%
- KANSAS CITY 16.5%
- WEST CENTRAL 20.4%
- CENTRAL 22.3%
- ST. LOUIS 14.5%
- OZARK 11.6%
- SOUTH CENTRAL 25.0%
- SOUTHEAST 17.6%
- SOUTHWEST 16.0%

The side-by-side maps of Missouri's R.N. turnover and vacancy rates showcase regional workforce dynamics across the state. The statewide R.N. turnover rate is 16.1% and the vacancy rate is 10.1%. Higher than average turnover rates at 22.5% and vacancy rates at 12.7% in the Central Region indicates significant challenges with both retention and recruitment. The South Central region's high turnover rate of 25% yet very low vacancy rate of 5.3% suggests hospitals can fill positions but struggle to retain nurses once hired. The Kansas City region has a higher vacancy rate of 13.9% but relatively moderate turnover in comparison, pointing more toward supply issues or competition for talent. Other regions' data, including St. Louis and Southwest, shows greater stability, possibly due to strong local education pipelines, retention initiatives or workplace supports.

Regional variations underpin the importance of strategies to address nursing workforce shortages to be tailored to local challenges and needs. Areas of high turnover should focus on improving work environments, staff support and career development.

2025 MISSOURI SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS Collected January 2025

Job Title	Number of FTEs	Number of FTE Vacancies	Vacancy Rate (FTE)	Number of Employees	Average Number of Employees	Number of Vacant Positions	Employee Vacancy Rate	Total Employee Separations	Employee Turnover Rate
Nursing & Medical									
Nurse Assistants (Patient Care Technician, Certified Nurse Assistant or Unlicensed Assistive Personnel)	8,493	1,243	12.8%	13,124	12,823	1,733	11.7%	5,236	40.8%
Licensed Practical Nurse	1,688	265	13.6%	2,179	2,102	328	13.1%	684	32.6%
Advance Practice Registered Nurse	1,412	230	14%	1,742	1,671	241	12.2%	175	10.5%
Staff Registered Nurse	27,616	3,348	10.8%	37,134	36,655	4,180	10.1%	5,903	16.1%
Physician Assistant	241	33	12%	291	273	35	10.7%	30	11%
Employed Physicians	5,380	438	7.5%	6,366	6,140	480	7%	735	12%
Diagnostic Imaging									
CT Technologist	666	101	13.1%	912	898	147	13.9%	101	11.3%
Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologist	398	44	9.9%	502	487	71	12.4%	56	11.5%
Mammography Technologist	260	8	3%	340	333	15	4.2%	32	9.6%
Nuclear Medicine Technologist	234	17	6.9%	298	294	26	8%	31	10.6%
Radiology Technologist	1,177	159	11.9%	1,664	1,649	196	10.5%	232	14.1%
Sonographer/Ultrasound Technologist	890	73	7.5%	1,195	1,150	116	8.8%	116	10%
Laboratory									
Medical Laboratory Technician	443	38	7.9%	512	495	44	7.9%	117	23.7%
Medical Technologist/Laboratory Scientist	1,084	74	6.4%	1,313	1,293	92	6.5%	191	14.8%
Phlebotomist	1,236	155	11.1%	1,591	1,579	196	11%	676	42.8%
Therapies									
Occupational Therapist	690	49	6.6%	1,023	1,002	85	7.7%	136	13.6%
Occupational Therapy Assistant	160	8	4.8%	256	235	15	5.5%	38	16.2%
Physical Therapist	1,270	95	6.9%	1,681	1,648	140	7.7%	176	10.7%
Physical Therapy Assistant	463	37	7.4%	618	600	49	7.4%	71	11.8%
Respiratory Therapist	1,710	194	10.2%	2,440	2,390	286	10.5%	405	16.9%
Speech Pathologist	354	24	6.4%	537	539	46	7.9%	76	14.1%
Pharmacy									
Pharmacist - Clinical/Staff	1,373	68	4.7%	1,756	1,755	102	5.5%	195	11.1%
Pharmacy Technician	1,308	57	4.2%	1,671	1,602	77	4.4%	368	23%
Surgery									
Surgical Technician	1,257	165	11.6%	1,532	1,489	207	11.9%	268	18%
Sterile Processing Technician	816	56	6.4%	882	844	67	7.1%	253	30%
Miscellaneous Hospital Based Positions									
Medical Records Coder	932	27	2.8%	973	930	28	2.8%	86	9.2%
Environmental Services	3,703	327	8.1%	4,017	4,022	366	8.4%	2,202	54.8%
Registered Dietitian	363	31	7.9%	455	446	40	8.00%	53	11.9%
Food Service Worker/Dietary Aid	2,208	186	7.8%	2,828	2,806	229	7.5%	963	34.3%
Clinic & Physician Practices									
Staff Registered Nurse - Clinic	2,230	128	5.4%	2,609	2,480	140	5.1%	370	14.9%
Licensed Practical Nurse - Clinic	1,690	192	10.2%	1,846	1,828	195	9.6%	322	17.6%
Advance Practice Registered Nurse - Clinic	1,879	94	4.8%	2,100	2,044	105	4.8%	212	10.4%
Medical Assistant - Clinic	3,211	221	6.4%	3,495	3,413	242	6.5%	952	27.9%
Physician Assistant - Clinic	471	35	6.8%	524	493	38	6.8%	45	9.1%

A comprehensive collection of workforce data, trends, and color-coded vacancy and turnover maps is available at MoHospitals.org.

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METHODOLOGY

This report includes statewide and regional data from 127 hospitals and includes vacancy and turnover rates for 34 hospital- and clinic-based positions. Responses are collected by the Missouri Hospital Association, with data reported as of Dec. 31, 2024. A comprehensive collection of workforce data, trends and color-coded vacancy and turnover maps are available at MoHospitals.org

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