

Talent attraction and retention for local governments

2022 – 2030



**Diputació
Barcelona**

Innovation, Local Governments
and Territorial Cohesion Department

CONTEXTUALISATION

Local governments in the coming years

The current municipal structure is characterised by the fact that many of its local governments often have less than a thousand inhabitants (29% of the municipalities in the case of the Barcelona area), despite covering a very large municipal area and a concentration of more than 70% in the same territory.

These local governments, as well as those with greater demographic weight, require human, material and financial resources to carry out their services and tasks, without which municipal life cannot be carried out normally and with legal certainty. Hence the importance of determining, approximately, what type of staff and in what number a local body needs to

ensure that it works properly, as well as the amount of financial resources it should have based on the expenditure needs to be covered and, ultimately, how many material means it should have to manage the daily running of the municipality (supplies, assets, etc.).

At present, many municipalities encounter difficulties in filling structural jobs (secretariats-interventions, architecture, engineering, recruitment technicians, HR specialists, STEM profiles, etc.). This project aims precisely to help alleviate these shortcomings from a temporary perspective.

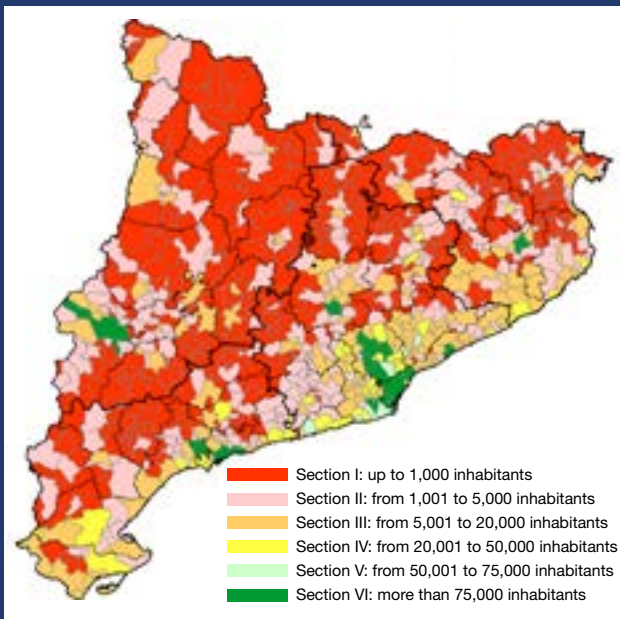


Chart 1. Projected population growth in 2026

Table 1. Staff employed in local governments

Area	No. of municipalities	No. of staff
Total Barcelona	311	53,001
Total Girona	221	9,217
Total Lleida	231	5,115
Total Tarragona	184	10,218
Total Catalonia	947	77,551

The Barcelona area accounts for 68% of local employees in Catalonia.



Age of staff

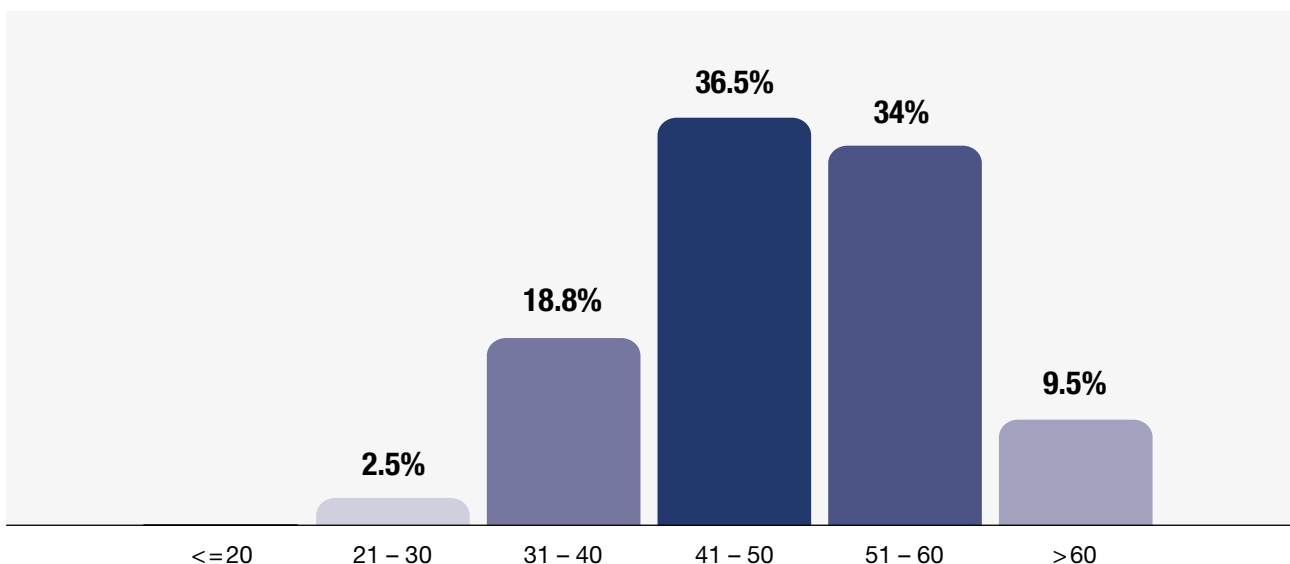
According to data from the latest **Salaries Survey**¹, the average age of local government employees is 48.5 years and, if we look at data from other areas of government (e.g. the General State Administration), the figure rises to an average of 51.5 years.²

In addition to the average age, it is useful to analyse whether there is generational relief, i.e. whether there is a balance between older and younger employees. This relationship between both age groups is defined by an index that, since SAOM³, has been called the Ageing Workforce Index (IEP), which currently stands

at 354 and therefore far exceeds the balance, which would be 100.

If, as it seems, there is no direct replacement for the bulk of people who will leave the local administration, the activities carried out by these employees will be discontinued. Is it possible that artificial intelligence (AI) or technology will replace or compensate for the disappearance of these activities? It is possible, but where this loss will occur and what functions or activities will no longer be performed as a result of the outflow of local public employees should be known.

Chart 2. Distribution of local employees by age group (2021)



¹ All the data on local government employees shown in this publication are taken from the Salary Survey in which most regional councils in the Barcelona area participate.

<https://www.diba.cat/web/assistenciaorganitzacio/estudi-de-retribucions>

² <https://www.mptfp.gob.es/dam/es/portal/funcionpublica/funcion-publica/rcp/envejecimiento/Estudio2021.pdf>

³ Municipal Organisation Assistance Service. Management of Local Government Assistance Services. Area of Innovation, Local Governments and Territorial Cohesion (Barcelona Provincial Council).



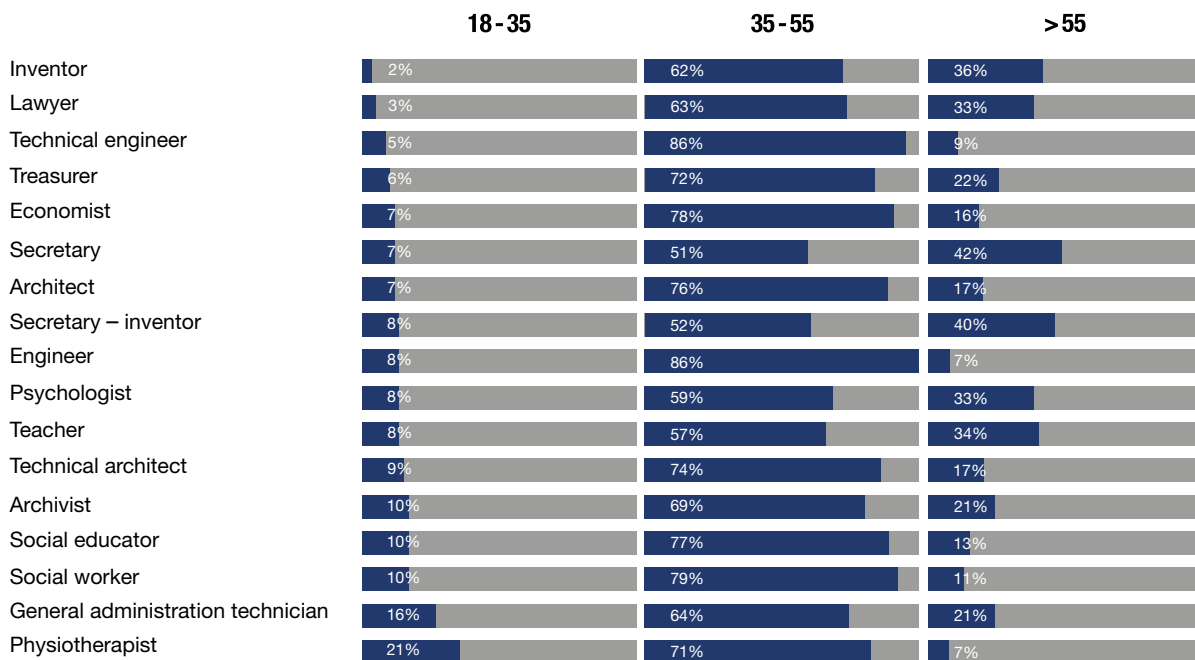
The table below shows the age distribution of technical positions in local government. It clearly shows that there are key positions in which more than a quarter of the occupants will "leave" within 10 years without an equivalent rate of replacement.

Faced with this scenario, it is necessary for administrations, in this case the local governments, to plan and prepare their organisations so that the services they provide are not undermined.⁴

This fact coincides with the emergence of technology and the digitalisation of local governments, so

it is also worth thinking about the incorporation of a whole series of professionals to help in this new reality. The introduction of these technological elements, which, in fact, is slowly beginning to take place, implies a disruptive change in the provision of public services and in citizen services. In this sense, it will be crucial in the coming years for local governments to incorporate staff into their organisations with innovation and digital skills – regardless of their role or category – that not only facilitate, but also drive this transformation. Thus, it is highly necessary to incorporate and retain talent to provide the services that citizens require.

Chart 3. Distribution of employees in technical positions by age groups



Source: 2021 Salary Survey



4 A Guide to Generational Change for Local Governments https://www.diba.cat/documents/189253/0/Guia+de+releu+generacio-nal+per+als+governos+locals_CAT+%282%29.pdf/26dbe7c1-cc70-4dcf-b28d-1d29d14332bc?t=1643007699883



EMERGING NEEDS

Identification and treatment

If we analyse the types of technical profile jobs currently existing in local governments and compare them to the emerging demands of society, we can see that there is a lack of technical profiles in addition to those already existing in the traditional secretarial/intervention profiles, architecture, engineering, etc.

At present, there are virtually no jobs with so-called STEM profiles⁵, nor are there, with a few exceptions, big data analysts or technical staff in cybersecurity or even specialists in robotics or blockchains, all areas which, according to a large number of studies, will be necessary in the medium term, without forgetting, for instance, the need for specialists in recruitment and human resources.

The supra-municipal governments must play a crucial role in the treatment and search for solutions to these needs that are beginning to emerge. In this sense, the Area of Innovation, Local Governments and Territorial Cohesion has worked more closely with regional councils⁶ to provide these bodies with the necessary technical profiles to be able to offer the local assistance service in engineering, architecture

and, of course, also with the classic profiles, such as secretarial/intervention. The Local Government Assistance Management Department has also launched a line of work to manage the generational replacement⁷ that considers the present and future needs of local governments in terms of jobs, and not only current functional profiles, but also those that will be needed in the short or medium term, and to determine which are the key positions for local governments and how the much-needed knowledge transfer can be carried out. In this regard, the Training Directorate, through the Training Actions Bank (BAF), makes a large amount of training resources available to those interested, both to prepare the syllabus of the selection processes and to obtain complementary training certifications that improve the personal development, abilities, attitudes and professional skills of the people who make up local governments.

All these systemic changes also require a broadening of profiles and a modification of skills of the profiles working in the field of human resources and recruitment.

⁵ Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

⁶ By way of example, the development of the general protocol for smaller municipalities through the regional councils: technification, digitalisation and talent. <https://www.diba.cat/web/assistenciagovernlocal/captacio-de-talent>

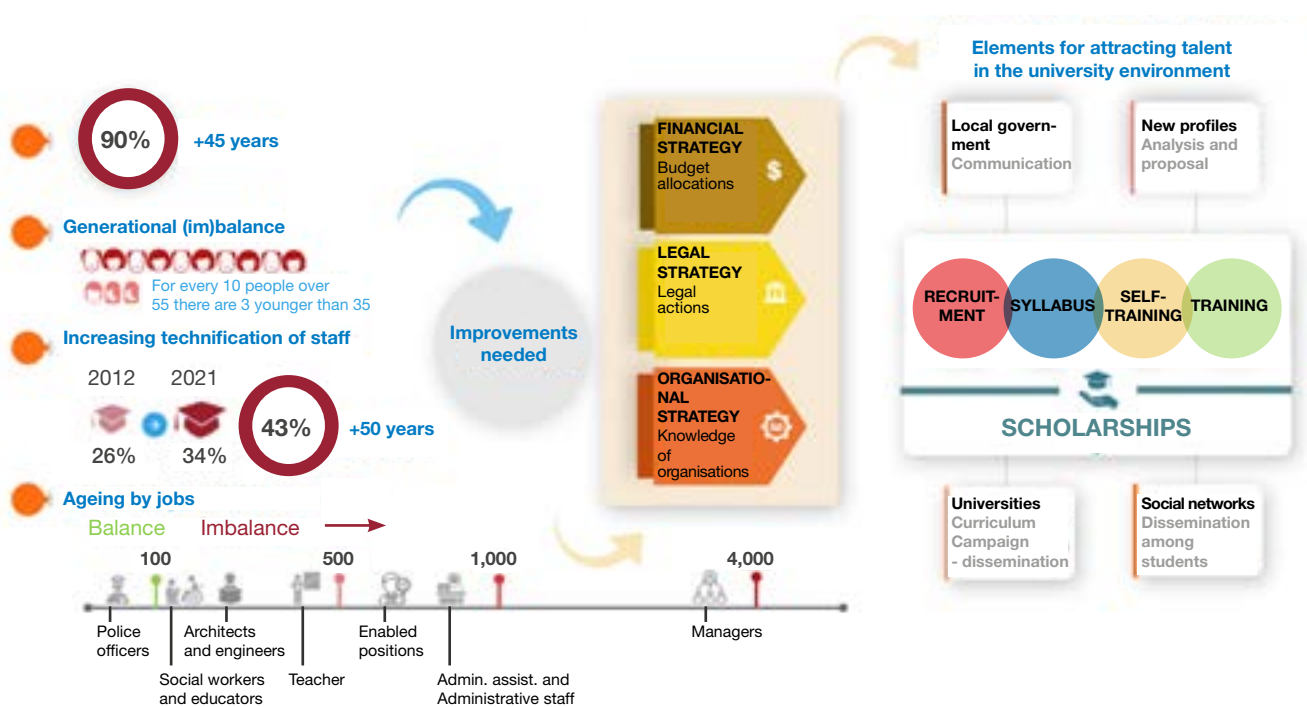
⁷ A Guide to Generational Change for Local Governments https://www.diba.cat/documents/189253/0/Guia+de+relleu+generacio-nal+per+als+governos+locals_CAT+%282%29.pdf/26dbe7c1-cc70-4dcf-b28d-1d29d14332bc?t=1643007699883



At present, part of the population does not consider public administration as an interesting career path (according to many studies), but public administration undoubtedly needs the best profiles to tackle the transformation that will take place in the near future, which is why actions must be implemented to contact people with the necessary talent and motivation to drive change. Barcelona Provincial Council is starting to develop a series of strategies to be able to properly contact the talent and people who can

nurture the jobs in our local governments. It is with this aim in mind that guidelines are being suggested, some more immediate and others in the medium and long term, for a change that will not be automatic.

Some descriptive factors of local body staff





GUIDELINES

Medium- and long-term projection

It is clear that these shortcomings cannot be solved in a short period of time, but it is also clear that, in order to solve them in the medium term, it is necessary to start immediately. Thus, a series of guidelines are suggested below to empower and motivate people with skills and knowledge, who are currently at a training sta-

ge, to consider local administration as an enriching career path. To this end, the aim is to promote new learning strategies and new systems for attracting and retaining talent, as well as to create collaborative learning spaces.

1. COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

Communicating, through platforms and tools which are accessed by students or recent graduates, while using channels that are close to them, providing them with content that generates interest with regard to public administration.

Communication actions will be carried out that take into account their motivations, ideas and options for change in relation to their community, and from this a message will be extracted that arouses interest in participating in their community and especially in transformative projects: "Join us to improve the living conditions of citizens"; "Do you want to get more bike lanes? Join the team that makes it happen, your city council."; "Do you want to know how the European Union works internally? Do you want to create and develop European projects? Join our Brussels Office and you will be able to access it." "Join our ARI project, our virtual citizen service robot." These are some of the examples to help motivate greater proximity between young graduates and local governments.





2. ORGANISATION OF EVENTS

Facilitating contact between new graduates and what the civil service has to offer, as well as addressing any concerns they may have regarding access and the functions to be performed.

Organising meetings (hackathon-style) to develop solutions applicable to public administration programmes and projects, both in the technological and social fields, among others, or even setting up intensive training courses (bootcamps) that can be used to attract talent. In other words, to convene groups of students to try to solve public problems and that can be used to attract these people, especially those with the best qualities and motivation, to public administration.



3. PLACEMENTS IN ADMINISTRATION

Pilot programme to attract people with bachelor's or master's degrees in the local civil service by means of a paid internship in a local body.

A more innovative scholarship system is proposed for the professional preparation of graduates and university graduates by carrying out support tasks for local government activities. The profiles would mainly be from the fields of law, economics, architecture and STEM. The incorporation of talent mentoring is considered, from the point of view of internal talent to attract external talent. It is intended that these placements will also provide incentives of all kinds to help new graduates in the selection processes for new staff.





4. SPECIFIC STUDIES

Incorporating, in the different faculties that prepare for different professions, the vision of the particularities of the specific profession, if it is developed in public administration.

The theoretical functions of an architect, for instance, are not identical to those of an architect in public administration. Thus, it is considered necessary to incorporate specific training resources or actions that deal with these issues. By way of example, the case of the municipal architect in the local administration, their responsibilities, tasks, peculiarities, etc. can be considered. The need arises to prepare these professionals from the university so that they can perform their functions in the municipal sphere, which are essentially different from those carried out by the profession in the private sphere.

In this sense, the following is proposed:

- **Creation of specific training resources or actions** for administration within the curricula or other teaching activities of different professions (architecture, engineering, IT, documentation, law, etc.).
- **Helping to participate in and expanding the range of specific doctorate studies** that enable access to the civil service already existing. Aid is therefore proposed for specific training linked to professional qualification.



5. PROPOSALS FOR INNOVATION IN SELECTION PROCESSES

As far as possible, it is necessary to promote changes to facilitate access in general and, in particular, to consider access options for strategic positions and talented staff, especially with regard to the selection in processes of first placement in administration.⁷ The journey to achieve these and other accesses, such as British fast-tracking, is interesting and motivating enough to find initiatives for local governments.



6. LOOKING FURTHER STILL!

Based on the development of these first 5 actions, and to the extent that the project has a vocation of sustainability and progressiveness, new lines will be defined to help consolidate the spirit of this project as well as to cover the retention of current talent in our local governments and that which will have been incorporated in the development of these actions that are now being launched.

In this sense, the recent work entitled *Selection processes in the local world: challenges for the future and elements of innovation* can be envisaged.

⁷ https://www.diba.cat/documents/294618829/0/Plantilla_digital+v2.pdf/6c3c0ede-5a26-05d0-d07f-170c0cae3867?t=1654166789646



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