

DentalPost



2025

DENTAL ASSISTANT Salary Survey Report

HIRING

WAGES

TURNOVER



ENDEAVOR BUSINESS
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RDH

Dentistry IQ

Dental Assistant Report

SUMMARY & HIGHLIGHTS

Between October and November 2024, DentalPost conducted its annual *Dental Industry Salary Report*, drawing participation from 366 dental assistants.

Key Highlights & Takeaways

◆ **Earnings** hit a three-year high. The mean (average) total income of responding full-time dental assistants in 2024 was \$47,440.00, a 7.1% increase compared to \$44,295 in 2023.

- ◆ Additionally, of all responding assistants, two in three (**66.4%**) have seen a pay raise within the past two years.
- ◆ Despite these increases, many don't think compensation is keeping pace with their needs: More than one-third (**36.6%**) of DAs are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their total package, compared to 33.3% who are satisfied or very satisfied.

◆ **Job happiness** looks sunnier, with more than half (54.9%) of responding DAs saying they're satisfied or very satisfied with their current work.

◆ Still, there's lots of **movement on the career front**, propelled in part by the desire for more pay. All told, less than half (47%) of DAs plan to stay put for the foreseeable future.

- ◆ Nearly one in four (**23.2%**) have changed jobs within the past 12 months. Chief among desires driving the jump were a better work environment, higher pay, and a more appreciative employer.
- ◆ As for those looking to leap soon, **30.1%** of responding DAs say they are currently applying for new jobs or plan to do so before 2026, a 38.5% increase compared to the proportion on the hunt this time last year.
- ◆ Additionally, one in five (**21.9%**) DAs say they plan to retire within the next six years.

Total Annual Income

249 full-time dental assistants reported total primary income from their dental practice ranging from **\$20,000 to \$150,000**.

- ◆ The mean (average) full-time income of responding dental assistants was **\$47,440**.
- ◆ Their median total income was **\$45,000**.
- ◆ Year over year, the average income **increased by 7%** in 2024.

Hourly Wage

Topline Trends

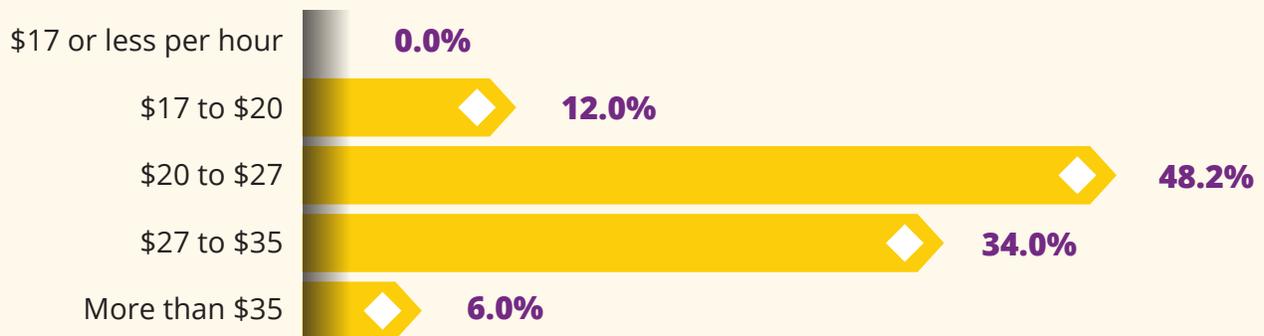
366 dental assistants reported an hourly wage in 2024 ranging from **\$15 to \$118 per hour**.

- ◆ The mean (average) hourly rate of responding dental assistants was **\$26.96**, a 7% increase compared to the mean reported in 2023.
- ◆ Their median rate was **\$26.00** per hour, a full dollar less than the median in 2023. While this decrease is noteworthy, it's important to consider that the smaller sample size this year (366) compared to last year (547) may have influenced the findings.
- ◆ Despite bumpy hourly rates, two-thirds of responding DAs (**66.4%**) have received a pay raise within the past 1–2 years.

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Earning Levels

Responding DAs earned between **\$18 and \$118 per hour**.

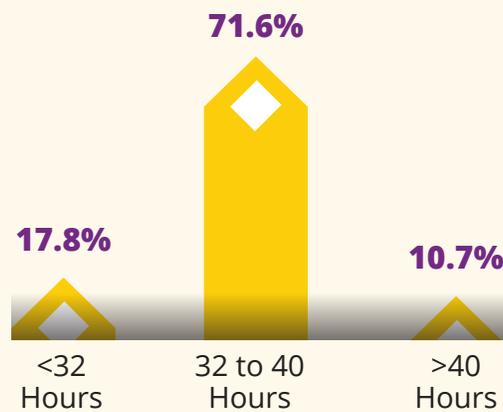


Hourly Rate by Years of Experience

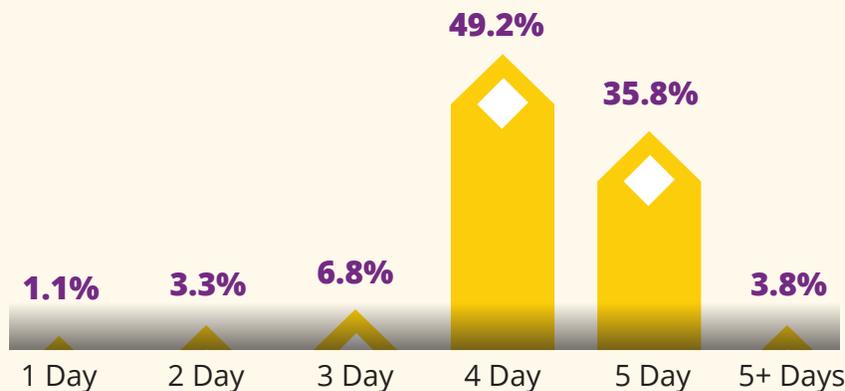


Average Workweek Outlook

82.3% of responding DAs worked an average of 32 or more hours per week in 2024 — roughly the same proportion that worked this level in 2023. 10.7% reported working more than 40 hours a week, a notable uptick compared to the 6.49% who worked this much in 2023, and a rate more consistent with 2022 levels.



Nearly half of DAs (**49.2%**) worked four days in the average week last year.



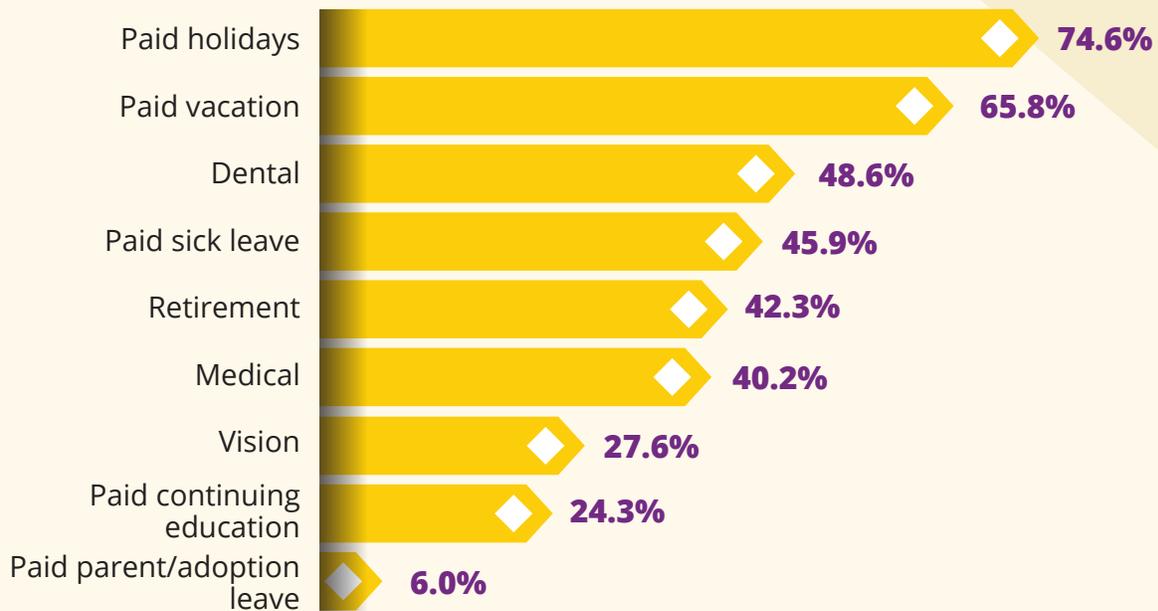
Benefits

Year-Over-Year Comparison of the % Who Receive Benefits

In 2024, **88.5%** of DAs received benefits of some kind, roughly the same proportion who received them in 2023 (89%).

The Benefits Dental Assistants Received

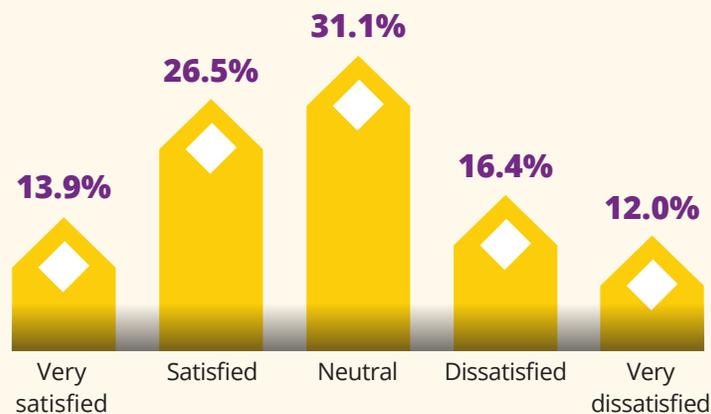
As in 2023, the top benefits DAs received in 2024 were paid vacation, holidays, and sick leave, along with dental and retirement. The benefits they wanted most if they did not already have them were medical and retirement.



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Satisfaction with Benefits

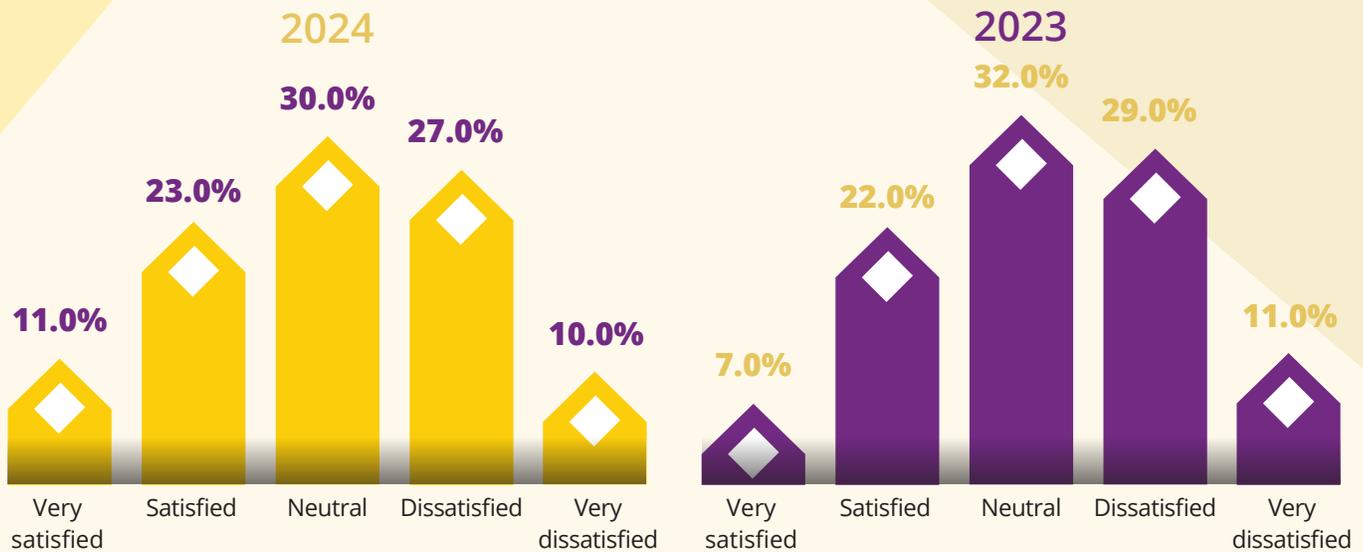
Overall, sentiment about benefits was up in 2024: 40.4% were satisfied or very satisfied with their benefits, compared to 37.3% in 2023; 28.4% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, compared to 33.6%.



Satisfaction with Total Compensation

When it comes to total compensation (including primary wages/salary, bonuses, commissions and benefits), we saw a rise in strong sentiment — on both ends of the spectrum:

- ◆ More than one third (**36.6%**) are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their total compensation, down from reported dissatisfaction in 2023 (39.7%).
- ◆ That said, nearly as many (**33.3%**) say they're satisfied or very satisfied with their 2024 compensation, a notable improvement compared to 2023 levels (28.8%).

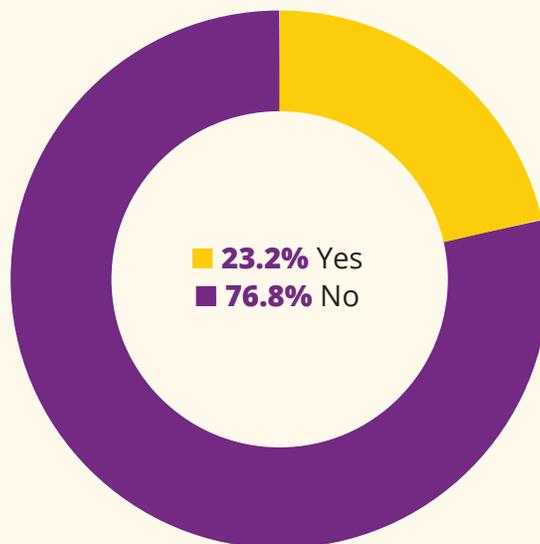


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Job Turnover

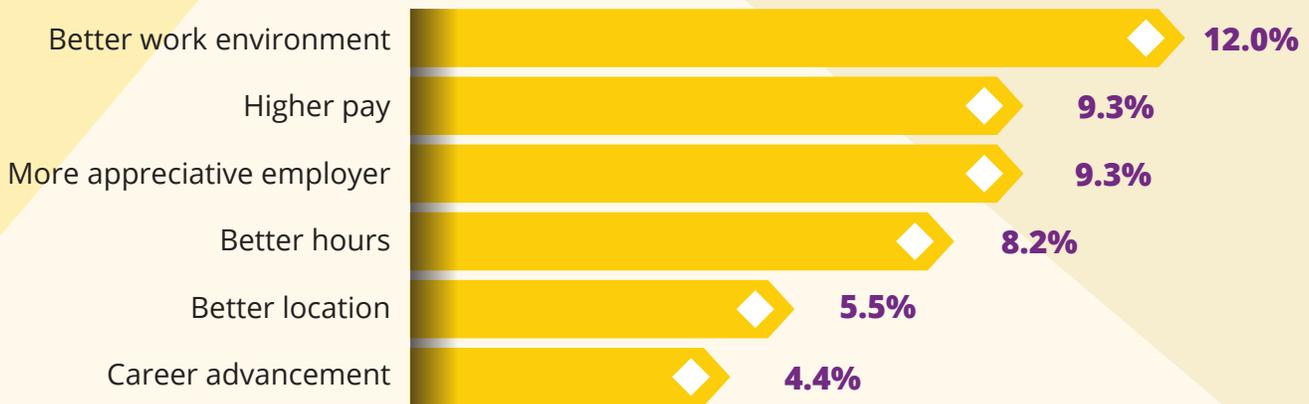
Changed Employers in the Previous 12 Months

23.2% of dental assistants changed jobs within the previous 12 months, a slight dip compared to the 24.7% who transitioned in 2023.



Motivations for Changing Jobs in 2024

Those who made the jump were most often motivated by the desire for a better work environment, a more appreciative employer, higher pay, and/or better hours — all among the top drivers for those in this position the year prior. Nearly three-fourths (**74.1%**) of transitioners reported that they achieved their goals.

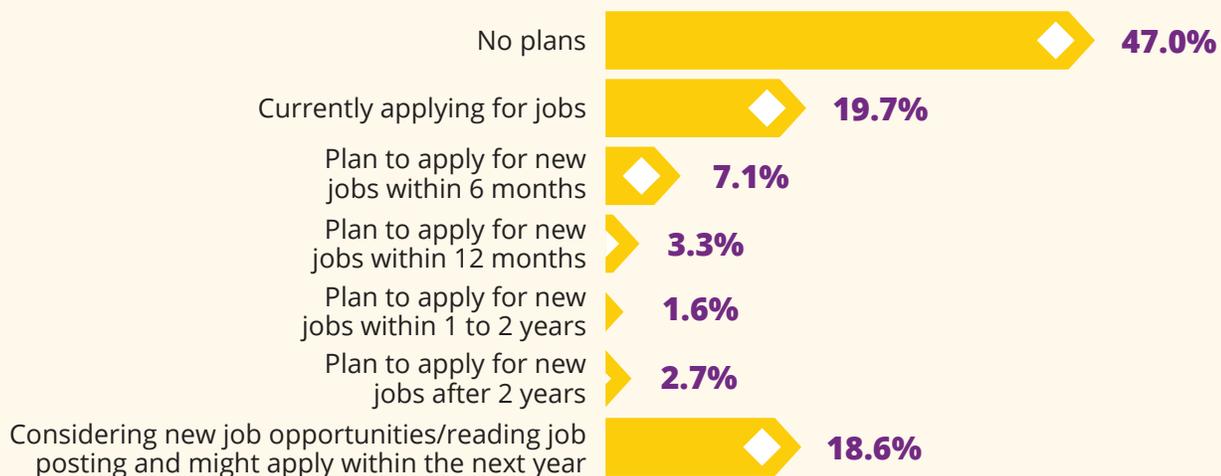


“The wide array of newfound technologies I am exposed to. The newer techniques that are implemented. Growth within the company. Lastly, the amount of continuing education that is invested into me.”

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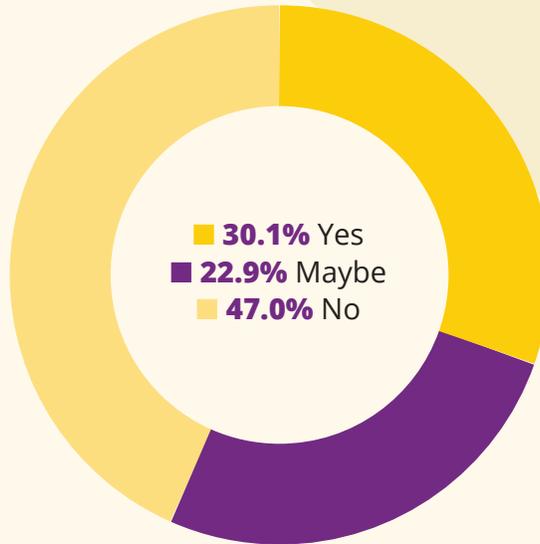
When Job Searchers Plan to Apply to New Jobs

As for those exploring their options, more than half (**56.7%**) are currently applying for new jobs or planning to do so before 2026. Another 35.1% are considering the idea.



Plan to Apply for New Jobs

Echoing mixed levels of pay and job satisfaction, nearly half (**47.0%**) of DAs have no plans to jump ship, while just under a third (30.1%) are actively applying to new opportunities or planning to do so before 2026.

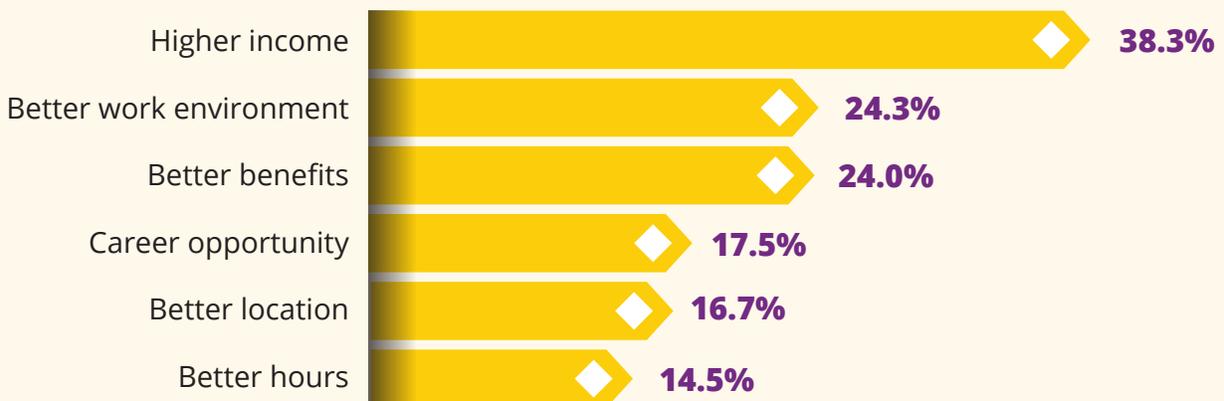


“I absolutely love my community and being able to give back. There is nothing better than going to a hometown Friday night football game and knowing everyone that is walking around, and being able to strike up conversations with them. I absolutely love being an EFDA, but unfortunately what would happen if I became a single parent? There is absolutely no way in this economy for me to raise my children on this income.”

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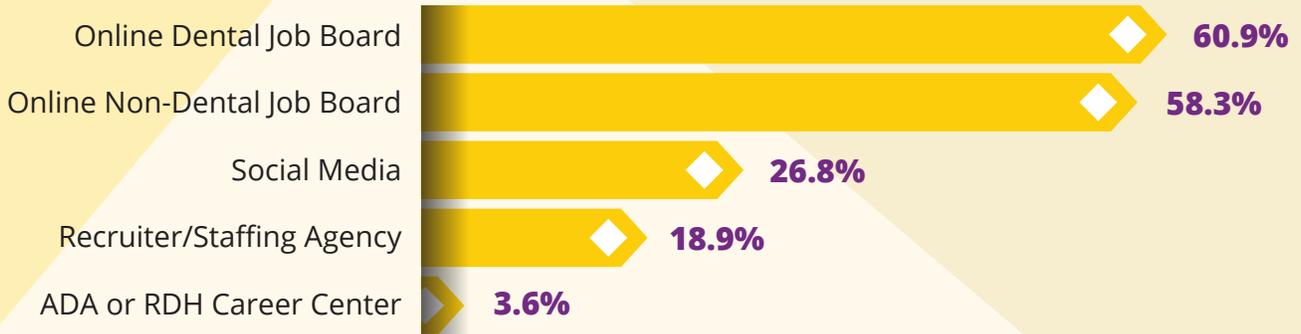
Motivations for Changing Jobs in 2025

Higher income is far and away the top driver for DAs pursuing a job change this year.



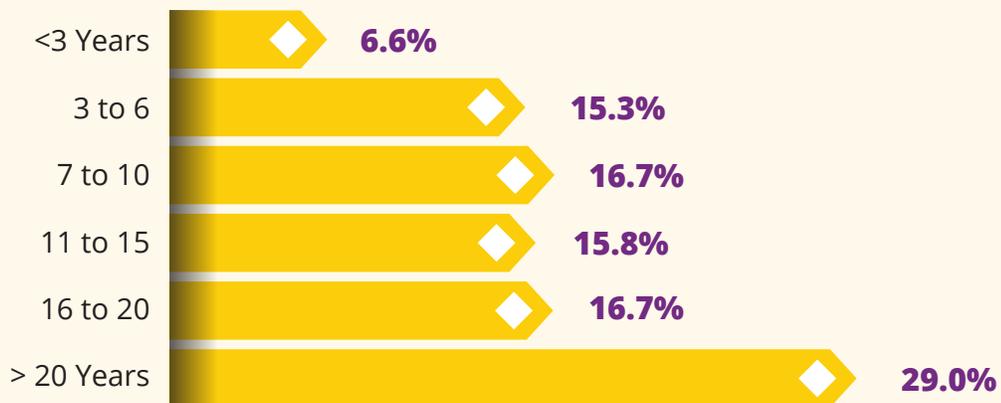
Where Dental Assistants Look for New Jobs

Responding DAs continue to prioritize dental-specific and general job boards in their search efforts.



Planned Years to Retirement

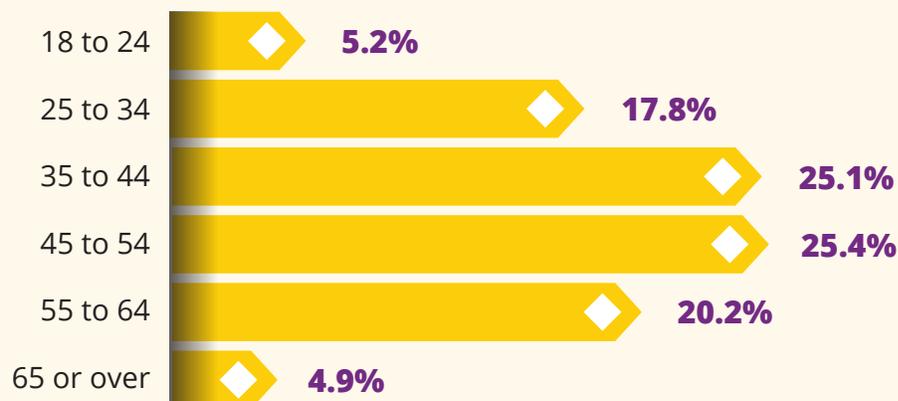
One in five (**21.9%**) responding DAs say they plan to retire within six years, compared to 25.9% of those who said as much last year.



Age & Experience

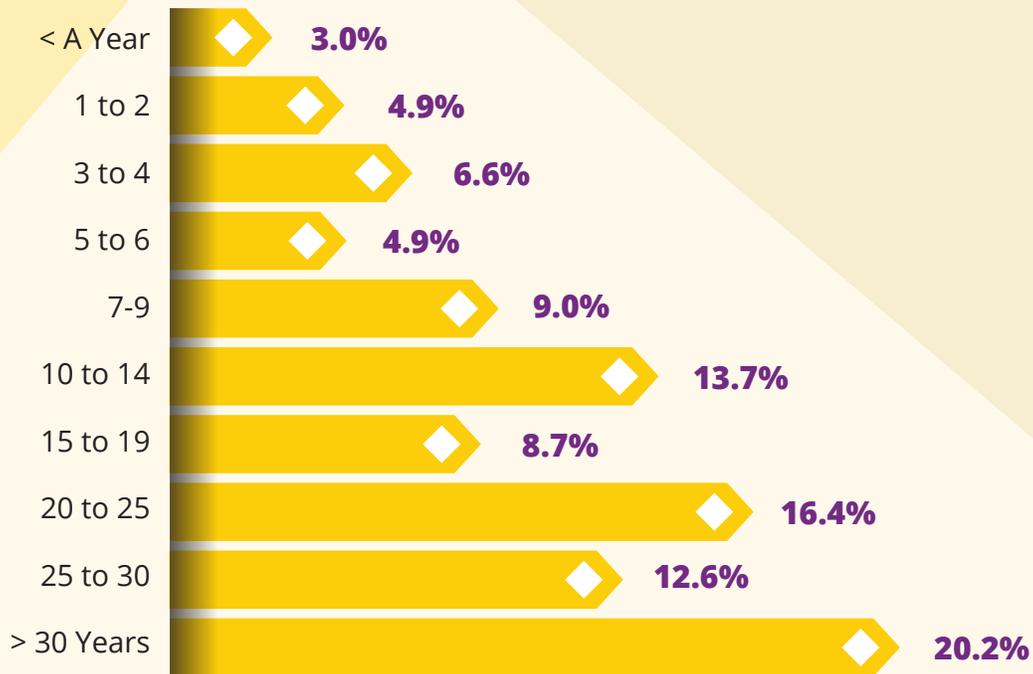
Age

As in 2023, more than half (**50.5%**) of responding DAs were between the ages of 35 and 54.



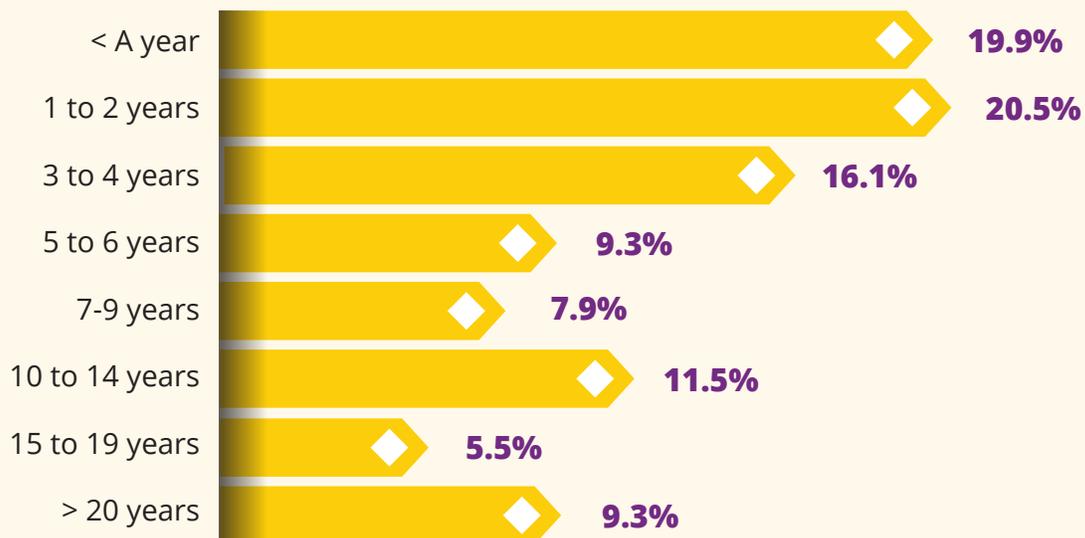
Experience

DA tenures trend long, with nearly three in four (**71.6%**) having at least a decade of experience in the field.



Longevity with Current Employer

Like last time around, more than half (**56.5%**) of responding DAs have been with their current employer for four or fewer years.



Top Career Wins and Washes

Many dental assistants love the autonomy and flexibility their role affords. They take great pride in sharing and being recognized for their expertise; working with kind and skilled teams; and helping patients become healthier and more at ease in what some find a stressful environment. They are also a techy bunch, with several praising their office's use of sophisticated equipment to provide an exemplary experience. Many say the constant change, quick pace, and ample room to learn and grow within their field and workplace keep things interesting.

At the same time, though, some say such a pace is untenable thanks to jam-packed or too-sparse schedules. Other lowlights include disorganization, poor communication, office politics, outdated equipment, and compensation that's not commensurate with contributions and experience. Several say that uneven certification requirements for assistants across states and workplaces undermine the profession, and would prefer to see mandatory licensing that raises the bar for rates and responsibilities.

The following responses have been lightly edited for length and clarity.

Challenges

“Appointment schedule is either feast or famine”

“Double booked schedules, staffing issues, poor management, constant back/shoulder pain, feeling unappreciated and overworked”

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“I am a CA RDA, DANB CDA, AA in dental assisting, and BA in behavioral science, and have 38 years dental assistant experience and yet we are treated like we are the scavengers of the office. I would like to see dental assistants REQUIRED to be certified or licensed before stepping in a dental office treating patients. Make us HAVE to be certified, and let us do more, like local anesthetic for example.”

“I am not appreciated enough to be financially compensated for all I do, for how hard I work, & for all the time I have been there. I am good at what I do, and I deserve more \$ and gratitude.”

“Stressful environment in a fast-paced, high-volume dental office that is open seven days a week, 12 hours on each weekday.”

“The dental assistant has so much on their job list. We are the heart of an office, and it is NEVER enough. We are the least paid of the staff with the most responsibility.”

“The way that the dental assistant profession has been undermined and devalued, working with unqualified and inexperienced people due to lack of regulations and credentialing requirements, not being able to get an actual degree in my field without going to a hygiene or dentist/doctoral specific program.”

Wins

“Being able to freely serve people in my own way without judgement”

“Flexibility with schedule to spend more time with my family”

“Building lasting relationships with patients, restoring the ability to eat and smile. When patients describe their prosthetic as life changing, it makes it all worthwhile.”

“Getting to learn new technology. Working in a smaller practice. Having doctors that listen to my ideas and what I think. Getting along with coworkers.”

“Helping people, relieving their pain and embarrassment. Knowing the dentist I work for does quality work.”

“My dentist is humble, hardworking, and kind. She is fun to work with and leads by example, which means a lot. I care a lot about patient advocacy and education and it’s good to work for a dentist that upholds those values and is not running a practice to make money, but to help people.”

“The ability to use my knowledge and experience to empower both patients and new employees.”

“Team atmosphere, owner dentist’s door is always open, and she truly cares about each member of her staff.”

“The wide array of newfound technologies I am exposed to. The newer techniques that are implemented. Growth within the company. Lastly, the amount of continuing education that is invested into me.”

“I love the environment of a private practice, the relationships we build with our patients. I love being in dental because every day, every patient is so different. We could be doing the same procedure on two different patients, and the appointments could go completely different. Different materials, instruments, complications. Dental never gets boring.”