

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ▷

Purpose

Methodology

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ▷

Observations and Findings

Recommendations for Service Improvement

SYSTEMS AND TECHNICAL REVIEW ▷

Summary of Observations

Technical Review

OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT ▷

Summary of Observations

Prioritization and Benchmark Analysis

Operational Recommendations for Service Improvement

RECRUITMENT AND NC MARKET RESEARCH ▷

Key Findings

Recommendations

TRAINING AND QUALITY ▷

Summary of Observations

Training and Quality Assurance Recommendations for Service Improvement

APPENDIX ▷



MAKE YOUR MARK!

Executive Summary

NC Retirement Systems Counseling Center

Prepared by Alphanumeric

December 10, 2025

The NC Retirement Systems Counseling Center faces significant operational and service delivery challenges that threaten member experience and compliance. Persistent staffing shortages caused by high absenteeism, intermittent FMLA leave, and three vacancies leave the center operating at 21.5–27.5 FTE daily versus the 30–32 FTE required. This shortfall drives poor performance metrics, including service levels of 24–40% (vs. 80% target) and average speed of answer of 10–15 minutes (vs. 20 seconds), alongside abandonment rates of 18–25%.

Operational inefficiencies are compounded by fragmented communication, manual scheduling, and lack of workforce management tools, while cultural silos and limited leadership visibility hinder collaboration and morale. Training and quality assurance processes also require major improvements: current onboarding lacks adequate shadowing and refreshers, leaving counselors underprepared for complex cases, and QA scoring remains inconsistent due to subjective criteria and paused calibration sessions.

Despite these challenges, the center demonstrates strong staff commitment and effective caller authentication processes. The NICE CX One platform is reliable and supports advanced features, though opportunities exist to leverage SLA/SLO reporting and call disposition tracking for better insights.

Key Recommendations:

- **Immediate Actions:** Fill vacancies, reallocate budget for contract hires, stagger breaks, implement unified communication channels, clarify Team Lead roles, and introduce automated reporting and FMLA tracking.
- **Medium-Term:** Enhance training with extended shadowing, structured refreshers, and realistic scenarios; integrate QA tools; build supervisor dashboards; improve adherence monitoring.
- **Long-Term:** Focus on retention and recruitment, workflow automation, AI-assisted knowledge search, and advanced call routing for complex cases.

Failure to act against risks of continued service degradation, compliance issues, and employee disengagement. Implementing these recommendations will stabilize operations, improve member experience, and strengthen overall performance.

NC Retirement Systems Counseling Center

Service Improvement Assessment

Workforce Optimization and Performance Analysis

Prepared by Alphanumeric



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Part 1: Methodology	4
Data Sources and Scope	4
Metrics and Analysis	4
Analytical Methods	4
Part 2: Observations and Findings	5
Current Performance vs. Industry Benchmarks	5
Key Finding: Performance Issues Are Systemic	6
Root Cause Analysis	6
Caller Patience vs. Actual Wait Times	6
Break Scheduling and the "Snowball Effect"	6
FTE Availability Constraints	7
Non-Available Time During Peak Demand	7
Queue-Specific Performance	8
Staffing Analysis Results	8
Part 3: Recommendations for Service Improvement	10
Recommended Performance Targets	10
Immediate Priority: Fill Existing Vacancies	10
Immediate Priority: Break Schedule Optimization	10
Short-Term Priority: Adherence Compliance and Availability Management	11
Medium-Term: Staffing Buffer and Wellbeing	11
Future Considerations	11
Summary of Recommendations	12
Conclusion	12

Executive Summary

This report presents a full-scale assessment of the NC Retirement Counseling Center's contact center operations, based on analysis of data from May through October 2025. The assessment identifies performance gaps compared to industry benchmarks and provides actionable recommendations to improve service delivery for retirement counseling callers.

The primary performance challenges are high abandonment rates (18–25%) and long wait times (10–15 minutes), driven by a structural mismatch between caller patience and actual service availability. These issues are systemic rather than seasonal, with performance shortfalls arising from operational constraints rather than fluctuations in call volume.

The analysis reveals that clustered break scheduling creates a "snowball effect" that degrades mid-day performance, and that effective Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) availability is materially lower than nominal staffing levels due to adherence issues and structural unavailability.

Mathematical modelling confirms that required FTE consistently exceeds true available capacity, with 30–32 effective FTE needed to meet service targets at current hourly call fluctuations. Structural unavailability and a persistent deadlock FTE segment further reduce actual capacity, underscoring that filling vacancies is essential to stabilizing abandonment and wait times.

With targeted operational improvements, including staggered break schedules, improved adherence monitoring, and filling existing vacancies, the center can achieve meaningful performance gains within realistic timelines.

Part 1: Methodology

This section describes the analytical approach used to evaluate contact center performance and develop our recommendations. The methodology was designed to provide a rigorous, data-driven foundation for identifying performance gaps and their root causes.

Data Sources and Scope

The analysis drew upon multiple datasets extracted from the NICE inContact platform and internal operational records covering May through October 2025. Sources included call detail records, counselor status logs, workforce scheduling data, absenteeism records, After Call Work and hold time reports, and discussions with operations managers.

Only frontline Member Services Counseling staff were included; team leads and support personnel were excluded. The scope was restricted to the "Call Center" campaign, phone channel, and inbound interactions only. Approximately 6% of records were excluded due to attribution issues, ensuring the dataset reflects only Member Services Counseling performance.

Metrics and Analysis

Key performance metrics computed included: call volume, Average Speed of Answer (ASA), Abandonment Rate (ABR), Average Handle Time (AHT), Service Level (SLA), Hold Time and After Call Work time. Staffing metrics included counselors available by interval, login adherence, and time spent in each operational state, alongside call distribution patterns and counselor occupancy

Analytical Methods

Several complementary approaches were employed: time-series analysis to identify trends and determine whether issues were seasonal or systemic; Erlang queueing models (Erlang C and Erlang A) to estimate required FTE under different SLA scenarios; a Monte Carlo discrete-event simulation with 3,000 scenarios to capture stochastic variation; and benchmarking against industry best practices adjusted for retirement counseling complexity.

A critical modeling consideration was defining call arrival time for staffing purposes. Post-IVR queue entry time (when calls enter the queue after completing the IVR) was determined to be most appropriate, as it reflects when callers actually start waiting for a counselor.

Part 2: Observations and Findings

This section presents the key findings from our analysis, including current performance metrics compared to industry benchmarks, identified performance gaps, and the root causes driving these gaps.

Current Performance vs. Industry Benchmarks

The data analysis indicates systemic shortfalls in current performance metrics. The following table summarizes current performance against industry benchmarks:

Metric	Current State	Industry Benchmark	Gap Assessment
Service Level (SLA)	24–40% within 120 sec	80% within 20 sec	Large shortfall
Average Speed of Answer	10–15 minutes	~20 seconds	~9.5–14.5 min over benchmark
Abandonment Rate	18–25%	<5–6%	12–20 percentage points over
Average Handle Time	~10 minutes	6–10 minutes	Acceptable for complexity
Occupancy	>85% during peaks	75–85%	Exceeds healthy band
First Contact Resolution	Not tracked	70–80%	Data gap – cannot measure

Under the local definition, a call answered within 120 seconds is considered to have met Service Level, but common industry practice is 80/20 (80% within 20 seconds). Currently, SLA attainment is often between 24% and 40%, falling far below the industry benchmark.

Observed analytics on wait-time thresholds and abandonment behaviour indicate that an 80% within 120 seconds Service Level reflects actual caller tolerance and is realistically attainable with consistent staffing and adherence.

Key Finding: Performance Issues Are Systemic

Across the May through October 2025 analysis window, no monthly or weekday demand patterns were identified that would explain the consistently high wait times and abandonment rates.

Performance issues were observed uniformly throughout the months and weekdays, indicating that external demand variation is not the primary driver of the observed service gaps. While overall call volumes remained stable, hourly demand fluctuated significantly within each day, without a consistent intraday pattern, creating a wide gap between minimum and peak calls per hour. This volatility directly influences staffing model accuracy and highlights the need for scheduling approaches that account for intraday variability rather than aggregate volume stability.

The absence of an obvious temporal pattern indicates that operational factors, particularly staffing levels and scheduling decisions, are more likely contributing to high wait times and abandonment rates than extraordinary spikes in demand.

Root Cause Analysis

Caller Patience vs. Actual Wait Times

A persistent structural gap exists between caller patience and actual service availability. Caller patience clusters around 5 minutes, while average queue wait time for answered calls ranges from 10 to 15 minutes. This mismatch directly drives abandonment and dissatisfaction.

The abandonment-time distribution shows that 29% of callers abandon within the first minute and another 24% by the second minute. Around 53% of abandoned calls occur within the first two minutes of waiting. Only 6% of callers wait beyond 20 minutes before abandoning. This confirms that excessive pre-answer wait time, rather than variations in Average Handle Time, After Call Work, or hold time, is the dominant driver of abandonment.

Break Scheduling and the "Snowball Effect"

Clustered breaks create a "snowball" effect that significantly impacts performance. When many counselors take breaks at the same time, available FTE drops sharply, queues build quickly, and the resulting backlog continues even after counselors return. The queue of waiting callers that accumulates during break periods persists after counselors return, and it takes additional time to work through the accumulated workload.

This dynamic explains the observed pattern in which performance in the opening hour is acceptable, while performance degrades later in the morning. At the start of the day, all scheduled counselors are logged in and there is no backlog, so early calls are handled close to

NC Retirement Systems Counseling Center Operational Assessment



real time. After the first break cluster, queue lengths and abandonment rates increase and remain elevated through the mid-day period.

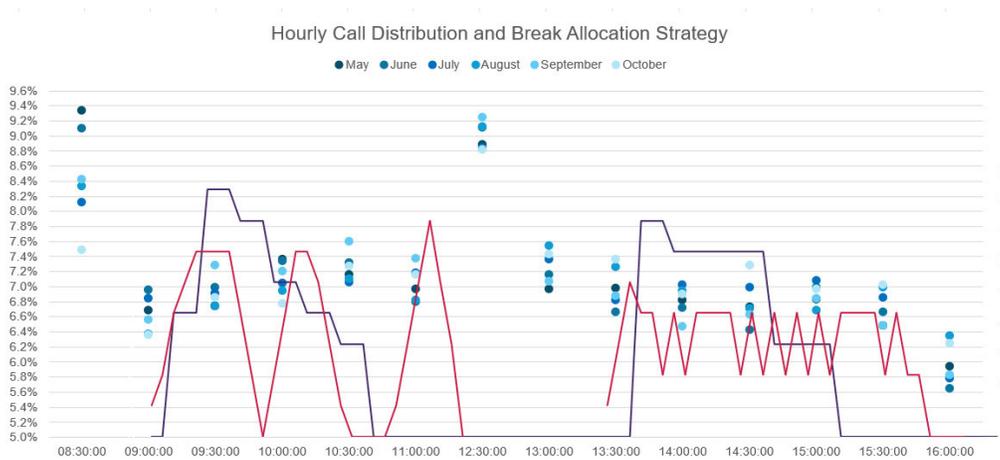


Figure 1: Hourly call distribution (blue markers- Key Model 2: Post-IVR Queue Entry Time) shown for May through October, overlaid with the current break allocation (purple line), structured in 15-minute intervals, and the optimized break allocation (red line), primarily structured in 5-minute intervals. The optimized schedule redistributes breaks into smaller and more frequent segments to avoid large groups of staff going on break simultaneously. This approach improves alignment between staffing availability and the observed call-arrival patterns, minimizing the risk of creating large gaps in waiting times. Implementing this approach requires scheduled rotation and periodic redistribution of break assignments.

FTE Availability Constraints

The organizational headcount, daily login FTE, and actual available FTE represent three distinct metrics with substantial variance. Queuing theory and simulation results indicate that meeting a target of calls answered within 120 seconds at monthly volumes of 25,000–27,000 requires approximately 30–32 effective FTE. While nominal staffing levels appear adequate, effective capacity is reduced by adherence gaps, absenteeism, structural unavailability and FMLA, creating a persistent deadlock segment that does not convert into productive service capacity and resulting in occupancy rates exceeding 85% during peak intervals.

Non-Available Time During Peak Demand

Although call volume does not display a sharp, single peak, there are intervals where relative demand is higher. In these periods, non-available time such as training, coaching, outbound work, or administrative tasks can have a noticeable effect on abandonment and wait time. The analysis indicates that periods of higher demand require closer monitoring of non-available states so that extended unavailability does not coincide with natural peaks in the call distribution.

Overall Productivity

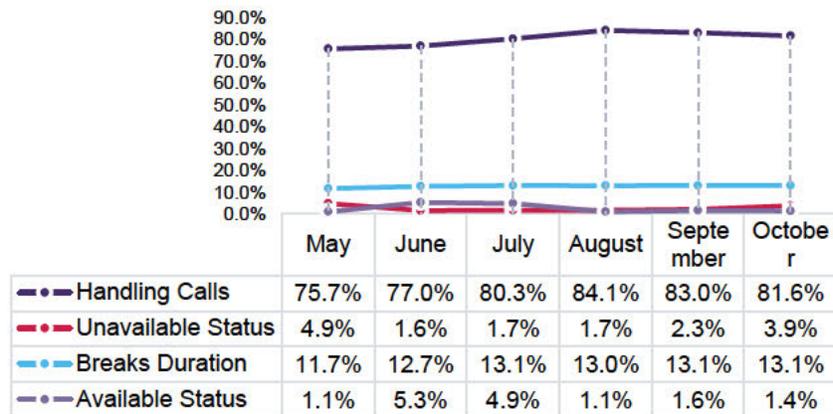


Figure 2: Monthly breakdown of counselor productivity states from May to October. The chart presents the proportion of time counselors spend in each system status category. Handling Calls reflects active incoming call-processing time. Available Status represents system-available time when counselors are ready to take a call. Unavailable Status captures all non-productive states excluding inbound and outbound calls, after-call work, callbacks, admin tasks, and scheduled breaks or lunch. Breaks Duration includes all designated break and lunch periods. The distribution highlights stable patterns and a consistently high share of call-handling time, with month-to-month variation in available and unavailable states.

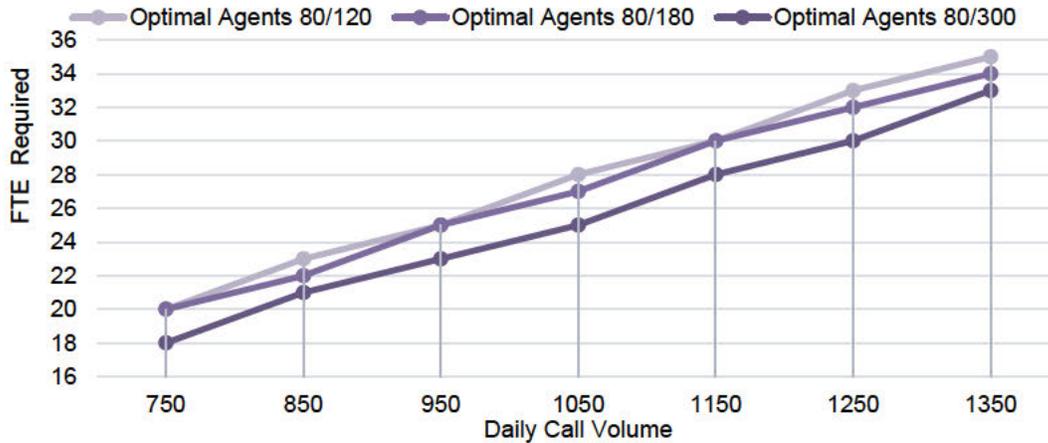
Queue-Specific Performance

The RSD General (GS) queue has both higher interaction volume and lower routing priority than other queues. In this queue, abandonment rate and average queue wait time are consistently higher than in the rest of the environment. The other queues have lower volume and higher routing priority, and their performance metrics do not show the same level of concern. Average Handle Time and After Call Work are broadly similar across all queues, with no material queue-by-queue differences, indicating that differences in handling duration are not driving the observed performance gap.

Staffing Analysis Results

More than half of hourly intervals show that modelled required FTE is very close to the theoretical FTE but very far from the observed available FTE. On paper, the operation appears sufficiently staffed, yet the actual workforce available on the desk is substantially different. This reinforces the need for the staffing model to incorporate an additional buffer above the calculated minimum requirement.

Optimal Staffing Levels Across Different SLAs



Figurer 3: Estimated FTE requirements across varying daily call volumes under three SLA targets (80% of arriving calls answered within 120 seconds, 80% answered within 180 seconds, and 80% answered within 300 seconds) based on Erlang C/A queueing models). The figure illustrates how required staffing levels increase with higher call volumes and how stricter SLAs (e.g., answering 80% of calls within 120 seconds) necessitate correspondingly higher counselor capacity. The curves reflect Erlang-model outputs using observed arrival rates, empirical AHT (10 minutes), and scenario-specific shrinkage assumptions, providing a mathematically grounded translation of workload and service-level goals into required staffing levels.

Part 3: Recommendations for Service Improvement

Based on the analysis findings, we present the following recommendations organized by priority and implementation timeline. These recommendations are designed to address the root causes of performance gaps while being realistic about the operational constraints of a retirement counseling environment.

Recommended Performance Targets

Given the complexity of retirement counseling interactions and the nature of this service environment, we recommend establishing a desired state that balances industry best practices with operational realities. The target should be to achieve SLA compliance of at least 80% of calls answered within 120 seconds, reduce abandonment rate to below 10%, and align available FTE with modelled requirements including a buffer for structural unavailability.

Scenario evaluation across alternative SLA targets shows that even with full staffing as reflected in the organizational chart, volume levels above approximately 1,400 calls per hour remain outside feasible SLA attainment under stricter objectives. However, when using more suitable targets for this desk (for example, 80% of calls answered within 240 seconds with ABR below 10%), and correcting schedules together with redistributing non-available time away from higher-demand intervals, the modelled results indicate that these operational expectations are realistically achievable.

Immediate Priority: Fill Existing Vacancies

The analysis demonstrates the need to fill the existing vacancies reflected in the organizational chart. Given the current vacancies, progressing with hiring into those roles is advisable. This assessment quantifies how the gap between required FTE and available FTE affects service levels and demonstrates that filling vacancies has a substantial impact on overall performance.

While mathematical staffing models show gaps between required and available FTE, effective staffing is materially lower due to consistent unavailability patterns. This reinforces the need to fill current vacancies to restore minimum operational capacity.

Immediate Priority: Break Schedule Optimization

Breaks should be staggered into smaller, offset intervals rather than clustered at the same time. Shifting from clustered breaks to shorter, staggered intervals (for example, 5-minute offsets) does not solve abandonment on its own, but it reduces sharp drops in availability and helps moderate the resulting peaks in wait time and abandonment.

The optimized break allocation should redistribute breaks into smaller and more frequent segments to avoid large groups of staff going on break simultaneously. This approach improves

NC Retirement Systems Counseling Center *Operational Assessment*



alignment between staffing availability and observed call-arrival patterns, minimizing the risk of creating large gaps in waiting times. Implementing this approach requires scheduled rotation and periodic redistribution of break assignments.

Short-Term Priority: Adherence Compliance and Availability Management

Based on hourly call pattern observations, even a one-hour delay in counselor availability, or short unnecessary periods of unavailability within the shift, materially reduces coverage and should be explicitly factored into staffing and adherence management. Adherence should be improved by monitoring late logins, early logouts, and availability events during moderately elevated demand periods. Activities such as meetings, coaching sessions, training, and callbacks should be preferentially scheduled in afternoon intervals and distributed throughout the month to minimize the likelihood of more than two counselors being unavailable simultaneously.

To support more precise monitoring and performance alignment, we strongly recommend the development of a detailed daily tracking tool. This tracker should map key call metrics and status-duration logs at the counselor level. This would enable Operations to review daily performance patterns, analyze event-level disruptions, and generate consolidated weekly and monthly views to inform targeted feedback and development activities for counselors.

Medium-Term: Staffing Buffer and Wellbeing

We recommend incorporating additional buffer FTE above the calculated minimum requirement to account for structural deadlock. Scenario-based staffing forecasts using mathematical models should be implemented for ongoing capacity planning.

Occupancy analysis indicates counselors are heavily loaded during constrained intervals, with implications for adherence, absenteeism risk, and sustainability. Occupancy levels exceeding 85% increase burnout risk and SLA failures. Given that queues are closed during lunch, one option could be slightly extending lunch or rest periods to support mental recovery, with corresponding shift adjustments for counselors who opt in.

Future Considerations

Additional analyses may be valuable for future work, including:

- Comparing performance for on-site versus remote work periods
- Analyzing abandonment caller clusters and the behavior of returning callers, including their abandonment patterns
- Evaluating the effect of reducing IVR duration on caller patience and subsequent abandonment rates
- Assessing potential automation of specific call components (for example, identity verification) and their impact on Average Handle Time and queueing
- Examining whether improved documentation and knowledge support can reduce hold time and the frequency or duration of holds

Summary of Recommendations

Priority	Recommendation	Expected Impact
Immediate	Fill existing vacancies reflected in organizational chart	Restore minimum operational capacity
Immediate	Stagger break schedules into smaller, offset intervals	Reduce mid-day performance degradation
Short-Term	Implement daily KPI and adherence tracking tool for counselor performance	Improve daily coverage
Short-Term	Schedule non-available activities during low-demand intervals and longer service window (afternoon)	Reduce availability gaps
Medium-Term	Implement buffer FTE in staffing models	Account for structural unavailability
Medium-Term	Address occupancy and employee wellbeing concerns	Reduce burnout risk and improve retention

Conclusion

The primary drivers of high wait times and abandonment are internal operational factors rather than unusual demand patterns. The combination of long queue wait times relative to caller patience, clustered breaks creating a "snowball" effect, non-available time overlapping with higher-demand intervals, and mismatches between required and available FTE, including staffing shortfalls due to vacancies, explains the persistent service level gaps.

With the recommended improvements, particularly staggered break schedules and filling existing vacancies, the center can realistically achieve an 80% service level within 120–240 seconds and reduce abandonment rates to below 10%. These findings provide a foundation for operational improvements and support more sustainable performance over time.



MAKE YOUR MARK!

NC Retirement Systems Counseling Center

Systems Review Consulting Assessment

Prepared by Alphanumeric

Table of Contents

Part 1: Summary of Observations	3
Caller Identification / Identity Management	3
Average Handle Time	3
Agent Behaviors	3
Imaging Issue	4
Onboarding Lockouts	4
Webinars	4
Part 2: Technical Overview	5

Systems Observations

Part 1: Summary of Observations

Caller Identification / Identity Management

Following proper process to accurately identify the caller is time consuming, but not nearly as bad as had been indicated in initial interviews. Implementing the planned new identity management solution should improve this function. However, in observing the work of experienced agents, most callers can be properly authenticated in less than a minute. The exceptions to this are the handling of “locked out” Orbit users, a problem that commonly occurs during the onboarding process, and issues with some callers struggling to remember their security questions, or which email address/addresses that they had utilized to access Orbit in their post-retirement. The lockout issue is expected to see some improvement due to process changes expected in March.

Average Handle Time

Average Handle Time is highly consistent, between eight and nine minutes. The handling time appears appropriate to the type and complexity of the calls being handled, and in line with expectations. Average handle times for tier 1 calls within the financial services space are approximately 4-6 minutes, but average handle times for higher complexity calls within the financial services space average 6-10 minutes. Given the complexity of the call types handled by this contact center, including disability claims, retirement preparation, and beneficiary disputes. Given the gravity of the services being provided, and the legal implications that could arise from inaccurate work, handle times in the eight-minute range fall in the center of the 6-10 minute range common to “tier 1.5” financial services contact center handling metrics.

Agent Behaviors

Agents observed displayed a high degree of professionalism and patience. They were able to utilize active listening skills, while still maintaining control of the call direction, and kept their callers on topic. Agents generally utilized a Microsoft Word document with common call notes to improve their note-taking efficiency. Agents generally were able to take notes at the pace of the call and required very little post-call time to complete annotating their tickets. Senior agents indicated that they typically shared their note template document with new agents, when new agents were being trained.

Imaging Issue

If two or more documents arrive in the same envelope via postal mail, the imaging process will generally place all of the documents in a single form entry within Orbit. Agents are aware of this and are trained to look for “missing” documents that may be filed together within a single form entry, but this does pose an efficiency problem. Agents handling disability calls are particularly impacted, as they may need to search numerous Orbit entries for “missing” medical documentation that has been filed under another Orbit form. There may be no simple solution to addressing this within the imaging process, but it may be worth investigating.

Onboarding Lockouts

New hires often experience lockout problems with their Orbit account and need to be referred back to their employing organization or to Human Resources. This may be somewhat mitigated by new identity management solutions planned for March. However, it may be beneficial to produce a job aid for staff at employer organizations, and to circulate this on a recurring, scheduled basis, to reduce lockout problems experienced by new hires.

Webinars

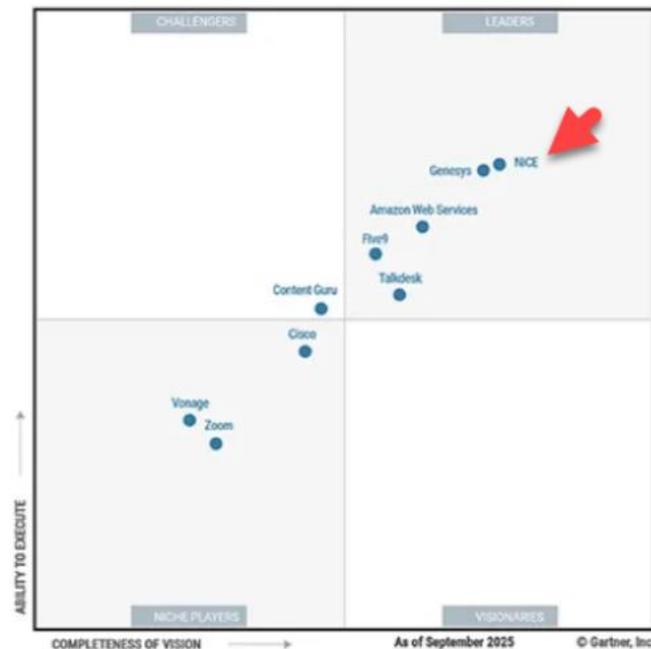
Contact Center leadership conducts webinars to proactively disseminate information. This is a worthy project, as this allows staff to interface with numerous clients at a time, rather than in a “one on one” basis and improves efficiency. One of the frequently observed problems with callers is that callers are simply unaware of information that is commonly provided, or do not read information that has been furnished to them. Some are simply overwhelmed by the complexity of an impending retirement. Conducting retirement planning webinars on a scheduled basis, to proactively reach a wide audience, would likely be a productive and cost-effective means of reducing calls to the contact center. Technical Assessment

Part 2: Technical Overview

The contact center utilizes the NICE CX One ACD/IVR platform. This is the industry leading contact center “software as a service solution and is rated as an upper right quadrant solution by Gartner.

Magic Quadrant

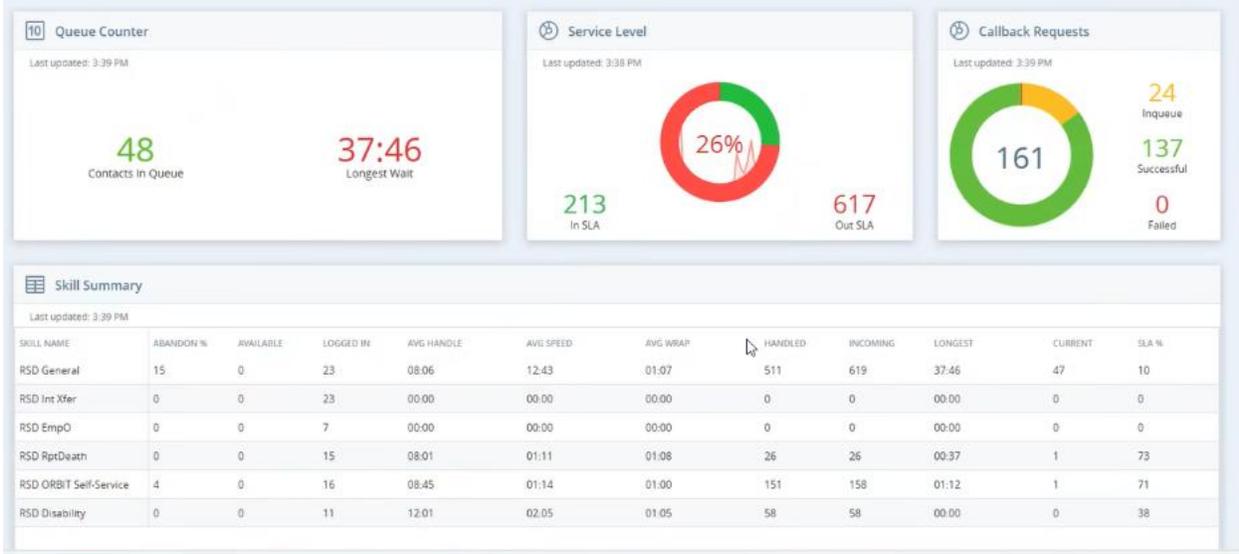
Figure 1: Magic Quadrant for Contact Center as a Service



The RSD contact center would be categorized as a small contact center, given its small number of agents and skills / queues. The ACD/IVR is a very straightforward configuration, with minimal complexity, and demonstrates fit for purpose.

The solution demonstrates stability and proper configuration, and no performance impacting problems with the platform were observed during the assessment. Interviews with staff have indicated satisfaction with the platform, and staff also indicated that the “self-help” solutions and ability to insert “message of the day” informational prompts following the initial greeting assist greatly in providing information to callers and have helped to reduce call volume. The use of “virtual hold” / “callback” function is well utilized and allows callers to have the system hold the caller’s place in line, and generate a callback when the caller’s turn arrives. Review of call data indicates that callbacks are generally successful in reaching the caller upon the return call.

Contact center leadership make use of the real-time dashboard functionality to monitor calls in queue, and the length of time calls have been holding, and can utilize this information to adjust staffing, to the extent that they have personnel available to re-direct. Due to the small size of the available workforce, and lack of contingent resources, however, this is often limited to re-directing team leads to join in fielding calls. Review of six months of historical data show limited use of team leads as contingent resources to augment the agent pool.



The SLA mechanism is generally not being utilized by contact center leadership. While the contact center does service an internal constituency, and is not governed by contractual service level standards, it is recommended that the NICE CX One “SLA” capability be utilized to represent “Service Level Objective”, commonly referred to as “SLO.” The mechanism is based upon answering “x percentage of calls within y minutes”, and it is recommended that an internal SLO for each skill type be determined and configured within the “SLA” fields for each skill, so that the reporting mechanism can be used as a management tool. Given the present staffing challenges, it is unlikely that an appropriate SLO/SLA target can be met, but it would still be useful to review the tool’s SLA reports, to determine if progress is being made, and if improving the staffing level is producing quantifiable service level improvements.

Contact Center leadership also has other dashboard elements available to provide monitoring of individual agent status. However, during observation of activities, this was not being referenced frequently.

Agent List

Last updated: 3:39 PM

AGENT NAME	STATE	TIME	TEAM
	Inbound Contact (RSD General)	05:44	CC Green
	Inbound Contact (RSD General)	01:18	CC Purple
	Unavailable: Admin	02:22:04	CC Blue
	ACW: Wrap up	00:56	ERG Yellow
	Unavailable: Admin	02:52:15	CC Purple
	Inbound Contact (RSD General)	00:41	CC Purple
	Inbound Contact (RSD General)	09:46	CC Purple
	Inbound Contact (RSD Disability)	05:05	CC Purple
	Inbound Contact (RSD General)	00:45	CC Gold
	Inbound Contact (RSD Disability)	10:12	CC Gold
	Inbound Contact (RSD General)	01:09	CC Gold
	Inbound Contact (RSD Disability)	23:25	CC Gold
	Inbound Contact (RSD Disability)	01:03	CC Gold
	Unavailable: Break	14:12	ERG Yellow
	Inbound Contact (RSD General_EM)	10:12	ERG Yellow

The above real time dashboard, coupled with agent availability reporting and handle times, should be utilized to monitor agent performance. This is being done, to some extent, but the status dashboard is very useful in managing a distributed workforce.

The Nice CX One platform provides a means of prioritizing which agent should be preferred for receipt of calls, on a per “skill” (queue) basis. The term NICE uses for this function is “proficiency”, which can be somewhat misleading. An agent set to a lower numeric value has a setting of the highest “proficiency.” This does not necessarily mean that the agent is more proficient in servicing that skill, however; it is merely the term applied to the mechanism used to “weight” the algorithm that selects which agent to assign to an incoming call. The ACD system will seek the highest proficiency agents first and will then select the agent who has been idle the longest from among the agents that are available within that proficiency setting. If all agents with a proficiency of “1” are currently busy or otherwise unavailable, the system will select from the available agents with a proficiency of “2”, selecting the agent that has been idle the longest from within this pool.

As shown below, this mechanism is used to provide a preference for routing calls within the RSD Disability pool to some agents over others. This is a common use of “proficiency” to assign complex calls to more experienced agents.

ACD Skills Create New

RSD Disability

Details Post Contact **Users** Do Not Call Points of Contact Tags Notes Audit History

Assigned Users

Search... 11 - 20 of 42 (0 hidden) >

<input type="checkbox"/>	ID	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME ^	TEAM	PROFICIENCY	ACTIVE
<input type="checkbox"/>	56466104	Andrea	[REDACTED]	DefaultTeam	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	34612371	Myron	[REDACTED]	CC Gold	1 - Highest	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	34612524	Marie	[REDACTED]	ERG Yellow	1 - Highest	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	34612314	Corinne	[REDACTED]	CC Purple	1 - Highest	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	34612313	Alisa	[REDACTED]	CC Purple	1 - Highest	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	34612377	Cornelia	[REDACTED]	ERG Yellow	2	<input type="checkbox"/>

There are, however, other reasons to set “proficiency”, and one solution might be to set a lower proficiency value for experienced agents within skills (queues) that handle rote work, such as Orbit access.

RSD ORBIT Self-Service

Details Post Contact **Users** Do Not Call Points of Contact Tags Notes Audit History

Assigned Users

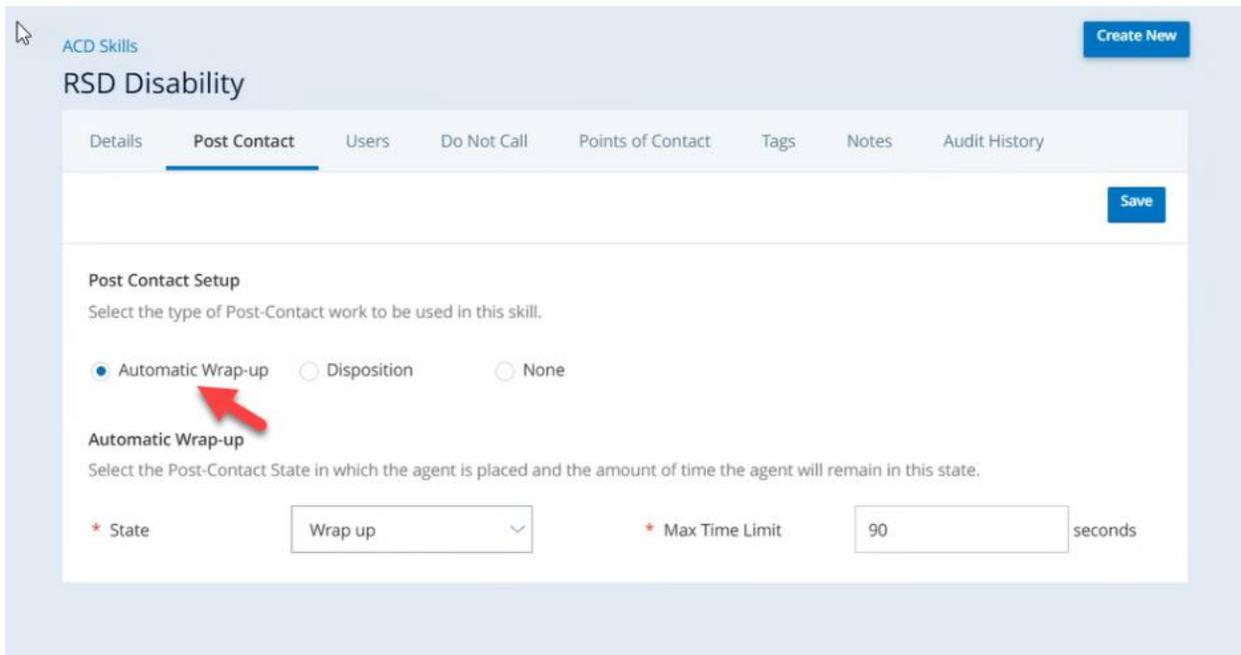
Search...  < 1 - 10 of 53 (0 hidden) >

<input type="checkbox"/>	ID	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME ^	TEAM	PROFICIENCY	ACTIVE
<input type="checkbox"/>	34612310	Jennifer		CC Purple	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	34612522	Ryan		DefaultTeam	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	43861118	Tiffany		CC Blue	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	34612384	Emmanuel		CC Green	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	34612368	Nakia		CC Gold	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	34612312	James		CC Purple	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	34612527	Tamitha		ERG Yellow	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	34612369	Tracey		CC Gold	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	34612370	Nechelle		CC Gold	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	39464599	Elizabeth		ERG Yellow	3	<input type="checkbox"/>

Save Proficiencies Remove Users Remove All

As seen above, the skill (queue) for Orbit self-service has all agents set for the same proficiency. This will cause the ACD to route the Orbit self-service call to whichever agent has been idle the longest. As Orbit support calls constitute a large portion of the total call volume, and are often of a rote nature, it may be advantageous to lower the proficiency setting for the staff who are trained to field disability calls. This may help to reduce using the most experienced agents to field rote, easily handled calls. However, note that the system will still be selecting from available agents; when call volumes are high, and agents are being assigned the next call from full queues, the agent becoming available immediately after concluding a call is likely to be the only agent available to select from, and will be routed the call that has accumulated the most points by waiting in queue, regardless of the agent proficiency setting. Lowering the agent proficiency for the most experienced agents in this rote call type skill is recommended for consideration, but it will do little or nothing to address call handling challenges when the call skills (queues) are constantly occupied with calls waiting for the next agent.

Call reporting data could be enhanced by making changes to the post contact configuration. The post contact mode presently in place makes use of the automatic wrap-up timer, which is used to place agents back into an available state 90 seconds after concluding the call. This has the advantage of making agents available to take their next call.



ACD Skills Create New

RSD Disability

Details **Post Contact** Users Do Not Call Points of Contact Tags Notes Audit History

Save

Post Contact Setup
Select the type of Post-Contact work to be used in this skill.

Automatic Wrap-up
 Disposition
 None

Automatic Wrap-up
Select the Post-Contact State in which the agent is placed and the amount of time the agent will remain in this state.

* State * Max Time Limit seconds

Another option, however, would be to switch the post call mode to utilize dispositions. This would permit the agent to select the “disposition” of the call at the conclusion of the call. The list of dispositions is configurable. Contact center leadership could create the disposition descriptions that meet needs. The reporting system can then be used to generate reports indicating the disposition of each call. An example of how this could be used would be to have two dispositions for retirement planning calls, with one code used to indicate that the caller was within the permitted window for initiating retirement, and another code used to indicate with the caller is attempting to initiate retirement prior to the permitted window. This, in turn, would allow reporting data to indicate to what extent callers are generating workload by calling outside their retirement window.

 No changes to dispositions will be saved unless you click on 'Save'.

Post Contact Setup
Select the type of Post-Contact work to be used in this skill.

Automatic Wrap-up
 Disposition
 None

Disposition
Select the dispositions you want the Agent to select during Post-Contact Work.

Required

* State * Max Time Limit seconds

* Select dispositions to use with this skill

Search...	ID	DISPOSITION	AUTOMATED OUTBOUND
<input type="checkbox"/>	2472	Address Name Change	
<input type="checkbox"/>	2468	All Other	

Dispositions assigned to this skill

 No disposition selected for this skill

Please note that if a disposition code is required of the agent, the system will wait until the code has been provided and will not automatically place the agent back into an available state. This configuration would require changing agent work habits at the conclusion of calls.

Our recommendation is that, in general, when using a CRM (Customer Relationship Manager), that the CRM be used to track and report on disposition. However, in discussion with staff, it appears that modifications to Orbit to accomplish this may be expensive and time-consuming. Therefore, the use of NICE CX One to collect disposition data is a potential option.

Observation of the use of NICE CX One indicates that the system is being properly used and is meeting agent need. The ability of contact center staff to routinely update front-end messaging has been useful in disseminating answers to common or current questions, reducing calls to agents. This practice should be continued and encouraged.



MAKE YOUR MARK!

NC Retirement Systems Counseling Center

Operations Consulting Assessment

Prepared by Alphanumeric



Table of Contents

- Operations Consulting Assessment 3
- Introduction 3
- Methodology 3
- Part 1: Summary of Observations 4
- Part 2: Prioritization and Benchmark Analysis 8
 - 2.1 Staffing Shortages: Critical, Immediate 9
 - 2.2 FMLA and Capacity Planning 10
 - 2.3 Fragmented Communication..... 10
 - 2.4 Performance Metrics 12
- Part 3: Operational Recommendations for Service Improvement 13
 - Tier 1: High-Impact, Critical Intervention 14
 - 3.1 Leadership Visibility and Cultural Transformation 14
 - 3.2 Address Immediate Staffing Gaps 15
 - 3.3 Team Lead Phone Support 16
 - 3.4 Team Lead Workload 18
 - 3.5 Quality Assurance 19
 - 3.6 Supervisor Workload & Reporting 20
 - 3.7 Supervisors and Employee Coaching 21
 - Tier 2: High-Impact, Moderate Implementation 22
 - 3.2.1 Retention Strategy 22
 - 3.2.2 Recruitment..... 24
 - Tier 3: Moderate Impact, Longer Implementation 25
 - 3.3.1 MSREQ Workflow Risks & Recommendations 25

Operations Consulting Assessment

Introduction

This report presents a comprehensive summary of observations and recommendations from Alphanumeric’s assessment of the NC Retirement Systems Counseling Center. The review focuses on overall operations, leadership practices, communication methods, and workflow efficiency—rather than individual performance. Our objective is to evaluate how the team operates as a unified entity to manage the contact center and achieve its mission.

The purpose of this assessment is to identify systemic challenges and opportunities for improvement that impact service quality, employee engagement, and operational efficiency. The scope includes organizational structure, staffing and scheduling practices, leadership visibility, cultural dynamics, communication channels, workflow processes, and technology tools. By analyzing these components, the report provides actionable recommendations to strengthen performance and align operations with best practices for contact centers across diverse environments.

Methodology

Data was collected with 3 primary methods:

- Documentation: call reviews, performance metrics, monthly scorecards, evaluations, coaching forms, performance, attendance policy, HR policies,
- Staff Interviews: Executive Director, Director of Member services, Business Systems & Staff Development Manager, four Supervisors, four Team Leads, two Trainers, two Counselors.
- Observations: call shadowing, onsite interviews, tour of center, working at vacant desk, Mystery Caller evaluations, review of telephony dashboards, counselor use of resources, escalation workflow, Member Services Requests (MSREQs).

Part 1: Summary of Observations

Hybrid Work Model and Leadership Presence

The Counseling Center operates under a hybrid model with shared workspaces and minimal leadership presence on the floor. While counselors demonstrate strong technical skills, adherence to protocols is inconsistent. Communication is fragmented across segmented Teams chats, lacking a unified platform for collaboration.

Work Environment and Layout

The workspace is clean, quiet, and fragrance-free, with shared cubicles due to the two-week remote/on-site rotation. The dress code is casual, and employees may eat at their desks. Limited lunch options and the absence of a breakroom lead many employees to eat offsite. During observation, several desks were vacant. Supervisors work in private offices and are rarely visible, while Team Leads remain on the floor. Interaction among staff was minimal, with only brief exchanges observed. A single monitor displays call queues, but leadership places limited emphasis on improving these metrics.

Performance and Scheduling Challenges

Interviews and call shadowing confirmed counselor proficiency; however, some fail to update their status during personal calls. Service levels are met only under ideal conditions, and performance declines sharply during staffing shortages or call spikes. Leadership lacks visibility into schedules, complicating proactive planning.

Communication Gaps

Communication is primarily electronic, with segmented Teams chats and no unified channel for all counselors. Broad updates are sent via email, and business needs are posted on SharePoint. Interdepartmental communication occurs through MSREQ workflows, which often involve multiple departments and have variable turnaround times. Team Leads and supervisors track these requests and handle follow-up calls when counselors are unavailable. These delays require manual follow-up and negatively impact call volume and overall performance.

Employee Engagement and Morale

Engagement efforts include onsite events and recognition programs, but morale challenges persist. Supervisors make personal efforts to engage counselors through activities such as potlucks, themed days, and seasonal events, though participation is voluntary. Community service initiatives, such as food bank rotations, were also suggested. Recognition programs are metrics-based, with interest in adding gamification and team-building elements. Remote teams maintain connection through weekly huddles and virtual camaraderie.

Operational Risks and Absenteeism

Unpredictable call spikes caused by external factors, combined with inconsistent communication, delay issue resolution. High absenteeism and intermittent FMLA leave significantly impact coverage, 12 of 29 employees are on intermittent FMLA, creating uncertainty and complicating capacity planning.

Retention and Workforce Trends

Retention rates are approximately 9.1%, driven by three vacancies resulting from one resignation and two internal promotions. While internal promotions can be positive, the loss of productivity remains a concern. Interviews indicate that employees often seek advancement within the NC state system but prefer roles outside the contact center environment to reduce stress from call interactions while retaining their skill set.

Organizational Structure & Roles

The Counseling Center is organized into four teams, each led by a supervisor and team lead, with 8–9 counselors per team. These teams alternate between onsite and remote work every two weeks, creating siloed groups with minimal interaction. Leadership responsibilities are rarely shared, and reliance on backups adds strain. Extended absences exacerbate challenges—for example, one team lead is on a 12-month FMLA leave, forcing her counterpart to absorb two roles, increasing stress and burnout risk.

Supervisors noted excitement when counselors or team leads return onsite outside scheduled rotations, highlighting the lack of cross-team engagement. This disconnect extends from supervisors to new hires.

Staffing & Scheduling Insights

The center is understaffed approximately 23% of the time due to planned and unplanned absences, FMLA leave, and unpredictable availability. Breaks scheduled in large blocks create call spikes. Training and administrative tasks often overlap with peak periods, further degrading service levels. Agent occupancy exceeds 80%, increasing fatigue and burnout risk.

Call-outs remain a significant issue. Supervisors often need to track down messages, connect with team leads, or contact counselors directly if they do not see them logged in on time. Combined with unscheduled FMLA absences, three vacancies, and poor visibility into absence patterns, these factors create a structural staffing deficit that drives high abandonment rates, long wait times, and missed service-level targets. Attendance policies remain lenient, allowing multiple tardies and absences before disciplinary action, reducing accountability. These gaps make proactive planning difficult and significantly impact productivity and service quality.

FMLA Impact on Total Workforce

The center should have 29 agents providing 4,640 hours monthly, but FMLA absences reduce this to 4,006 hours, which is a 14% loss before accounting for breaks and training. Three vacancies further cut capacity, leaving the center at roughly 80% of planned staffing.

Intermittent FMLA leave is the primary driver, with 12 counselors creating up to 634 lost hours monthly, equivalent to 2.5 full-time employees missing each week. Some counselors are nearly absent full-time, while moderate cases accumulate significant gaps. This structural deficit limits flexibility for scheduled time off, increases callouts, and makes proactive planning difficult due to poor visibility into absence patterns.

Supervisor Workload

Supervisors manage attendance, callouts, tardies, early outs, and FMLA compliance, as well as approving time-off requests. Employees communicate absenteeism and tardies through personal calls or texts. Supervisors also monitor performance metrics, prepare engagement reports, scorecards, and development plans, share quality evaluations, and handle second-tier coaching and HR issues. They are involved in complex escalations, address member account issues, and intervene in system problems. Recruitment and hiring add further complexity, as supervisors actively interview candidates and onboard new hires.

Team Lead Workload and Challenges

Team Leads face heavy workload pressures due to dual responsibilities and unpredictable daily workloads. Although allotted a two-hour administrative block, they remain available to assist counselors, limiting uninterrupted time for critical tasks. Outside these blocks, most time is spent on calls, escalations, QA reviews, and follow-ups. Escalations are time-intensive, requiring call reviews, research, member callbacks, and coaching and are often 30–60 minutes per case. Expectations for phone coverage are unclear, with inconsistent thresholds and uncertainty about whether TL's should take calls during admin time. QA duties, shifted from a dedicated team in 2022, add further strain. Seasonal peaks from October to June exacerbate these challenges. Training gaps persist, with TL's reporting insufficient hands-on practice and soft skills development. Trainers spend the first week with new hires, but onboarding quickly becomes TL's' responsibility. Overall, unpredictable call volume, dual roles, and extended peak seasons create a high-pressure environment that limits efficiency and quality outcomes.

MSREQ Workflow Challenges

When counselors cannot resolve a member issue, they create a Member Services Request (MSREQ) and send it to operations, meaning another retirement services department for processing. Once completed, the information returns to the contact center—not directly to the member—requiring counselors to make follow-up calls. This creates inefficiencies such as missed follow-ups, voicemails, repeat calls, and even additional MSREQs. Team Leads often step in to resolve these cases, adding to their workload.

The absence of service-level agreements (SLAs) for MSREQ processing worsens delays, with some requests pending for months. These long turnaround times increase call volume, erode member trust, and negatively impact overall service quality.

Leadership & Culture

Organizational restructuring over the last year introduced adjustment challenges and created the need to backfill internal positions. Two supervisors are new to the organization which has a learning curve. Engagement among supervisors and Team Leads varies and change initiatives have met with mixed levels of comfort. Additionally, the absence of a clearly defined career path for Team Leads combined with workloads that feel disproportionate to compensation may contribute to morale concerns and retention risk.

Cultural Dynamics and Change Readiness

The current culture tends to maintain established practices, which slows the adoption of new initiatives. This resistance is compounded by the lack of formal capacity planning and KPI tracking, limiting visibility into performance trends and staffing needs. When leadership teams are uncertain or cautious about change, efforts such as process redesign, technology enhancements, and KPI-driven management lose momentum. This creates ambiguity for frontline staff, reducing confidence and slowing adoption of new practices.

Operational Impact

As a result, inefficiencies such as outdated workflows, limited capacity planning, and inconsistent performance monitoring continue to affect service levels and member experience. Over time, these challenges may erode morale, increase turnover, and create operational risks if processes and tools do not evolve to meet changing demands.

Part 2: Prioritization and Benchmark Analysis

Benchmarking Framework

We assessed industry standards various operational measures in call centers handling complex financial and retirement services. These benchmarks are limited for retirement centers although call complexity is mirrored in the financial centers. Most of these benchmarks' retirement and benefits calls often involve sensitive personal and financial information, so it's not just about quick answers but balancing speed with thoroughness and accuracy. Most benchmarks are factored around KPIs and performance metrics. The key call-handling benchmarks are stated below using the reporting provided by your service.

Key Observations Prioritization

Completion of Phase One marks the conclusion of the discovery and assessment stage for the Counseling Center. A comprehensive list of key action items has been identified for comparison against industry standards. Recognizing that these items vary in priority and required effort, a prioritized action plan has been developed for review. *(See table in Appendix for full listing and prioritization.)*

Priority	Category	Impact
1	Staffing	Critical
2	FMLA & Capacity Planning	Critical
3	Scheduling	High
4	Communication	High
5	Leadership Visibility & Culture	High
6	Performance Metrics	High
7	Supervisor Workload	High
8	Team Lead Workload	High
9	Workflow Inefficiencies (MSREQ)	Medium

2.1 Staffing Shortages: Critical, Immediate

Current State: The center is facing severe staffing shortages. They have 33 possible counselors when fully staffed. However, due to 3 vacancies and a loss on average of 2.5 FTE from intermittent FMLA, the current total maximum number is 27.5 FTE. There are 3 scheduled absences a day, so if all are taken the 24.5 FTE. Due to the potential for callouts, outside of the unplanned absences from FMLA, the likelihood of more than 3 is rare. Therefore, the staffing range is 27.5 to be as low as 21.5 FTE each day.

Key Gaps: Based on workforce assessment, there needs to be at least 30–32 FTE to manage the call volume. However, the current staffing level is reduced by a minimum of 5.5 FTE and an upper level of 8 or more FTE based on call-out patterns.

Industry Benchmark: Most contact centers target an 80/20 service level and size staffing using Erlang C, factoring in 30–35% shrinkage and keeping occupancy at or below 85%. Persistent capacity gaps and poor shrinkage planning lower service levels and increase abandonment. Plan for 30–35% shrinkage to avoid shortfalls; current shrinkage modeling—especially for intermittent FMLA—is inadequate, causing chronic understaffing and daily volatility.

Current State	Benchmark	Gap	Operational Impact
Staffing levels consistently 23% below requirement	Best-practice staffing variance is less than 5%	18% variance and 5.5 FTE vacancies	Foundational driver of high abandonment and low SL.
High absenteeism / intermittent FMLA (12 of 29 counselors) equals 14%	Absenteeism < 5% (industry norm)	Exceeds target by ~15%	Without accurate forecasting and scheduling, call coverage is inconsistent, leading to missed SLAs and longer wait times.

2.2 FMLA and Capacity Planning

Current State: Supervisors act as the current workforce managers but lack training in advanced scheduling tools. As a result, breaks are clustered and FMLA is tracked manually, creating compliance risks, heavy administrative burden, and poor visibility into absence patterns, making proactive coverage planning difficult.

Key Gaps: There is no structured workforce management (WFM) capability or automated scheduling system in place. Supervisors lack training in advanced WFM tools and rely on manual processes for FMLA tracking and break scheduling. This results in poor visibility into absence patterns, inability to forecast capacity, and increased compliance risk. Without real-time scheduling insights, proactive planning to meet coverage needs is not possible.

Benchmark: Contact centers typically use automated WFM systems with real-time scheduling visibility, plan for 30–35% shrinkage and assume 1–2% daily absenteeism for FMLA. Most centers have only 3–6% of the workforce on active FMLA at any time, supported by dashboards for forecasting and compliance.

2.3 Fragmented Communication

Current State: The center lacks a unified communication structure. Chats are segmented by sub-team, creating silos and limiting collaboration. This fragmentation leads to inconsistent processes, updates, and guidance, increasing workload. Interdepartmental communication is also disjointed, contributing to operational delays and repeat calls. Counselors primarily communicate through MSREQs, but once submitted, visibility is lost, causing frustration. Without clear processing timelines, counselors cannot set accurate expectations, which results in duplicate requests despite training to avoid them.

Key Gaps: The Counseling Center lacks consistent messaging across the entire team, resulting in confusion, delays, and unnecessary workload. Segmented communication channels prevent collaboration and timely information sharing. Additionally, the absence of defined processing timelines and service-level agreements (SLAs) for MSREQs limits counselors' ability to set accurate expectations for members. This gap often leads to duplicate requests and increased frustration, despite training aimed at preventing repetition.

Desired State: Implement a unified communication channel that includes all counselors and leadership. This centralized platform would enable standardized updates, reduce delays, and foster collaboration. By streamlining communication and establishing clear SLAs for MSREQ processing, the center can minimize duplication of work, improve efficiency, and enhance overall member experience.

Issue	Current State	Desired State	Operational Impact
Fragmented communication	No unified communication channel for all the team	Provide a unified team chat allowing for rapid and standardized disbursement of information to all members at once.	Causes inconsistencies in process, updates, and guidance. Creates inconsistent direction, duplication of questions, and slow issue resolution.
	Manual follow-up on MSREQs	Automated ticketing system with dashboard for rapid review of workflow status. Define SLAs; Automate follow-up notifications; Create escalation paths	Increases TL and Supervisors' workload and reduces time for coaching and QA.
	MSREQ delays with no SLAs with multi department process and potential long turnaround time	Ability to provide expectations to members and avoid multiple requests. Reduces repeat calls, improves turnaround time and enhances service quality	Direct driver of repeat calls, increased call volume, and member dissatisfaction.
	Siloed 4-team structure with limited cross-team engagement	Improves collaboration, reduces overload, enhances flexibility	Creates inconsistent practices and limits collaboration

2.4 Performance Metrics

Current State: Leadership decided to pause KPI tracking because service levels are consistently below benchmarks (e.g., SLA at 24–40% vs. 80% target, ASA at 10–15 minutes vs. 20 seconds). With chronic capacity gaps, metrics were seen as unhelpful for daily operations since they only confirm what is already known, performance is far below standards due to staffing shortages.

Key Gap: KPI tracking with automated dashboards to monitor SLA, ASA, ABR, and CSAT although it is not high numbers, the information is useful for root cause analysis, resource planning, and continuous improvement.

Benchmarks: Contact centers consistently track common KPIs (SLA, ASA, ABR, CSAT, FCR) even during operational challenges to identify trends, drive accountability, and support and assess improvement.

KPIs with Identified Gaps

Area / KPI	Current Value	Benchmark	Desired State	Gap	Operational Impact
Service Level (SLA)	24–40% within 120 sec	80% within 20 sec	≥ 80%	Large shortfall	Customer dissatisfaction; high ABR
Average Speed of Answer (ASA)	10–15 min	~20 sec		≈9.5–14.5 min over benchmark	Primary driver of abandonment
Abandonment Rate (ABR)	18–25%	<5–6%	≤ 10%	12–20 percentage points	Lost calls; reduced trust, Caller patience mismatch
Average Handle Time (AHT)	≈10 min	6–10 min		Near upper bound	Acceptable given complexity
Occupancy	High during peaks (>85%)	75–85%		Exceeds healthy band	Risk of burnout; adherence issues
FTE Alignment	Nominal ≠ Effective	Full alignment + buffer		Material gap	Capacity constraints; SLA failure
First Contact Resolution (FCR)	Not tracked	70–80%		Data gap	Cannot measure quality

Customer Satisfaction (CSAT)	No center data	75–85%	Assess customer experience for agent, center, and process	No data available on center performance	Current CSAT only assesses agent performance for that one call
Queue Wait Time	10–15 min avg.		≤ 2–5 min		Excessive delays
Staffing Coverage	Nominal FTE ≠ Effective FTE		Full alignment + buffer		Structural deadlock
Break Scheduling	Clustered breaks		Staggered breaks		Creates backlog
Non-Available Time	Overlaps peaks		Minimized during peaks		Operational inefficiency

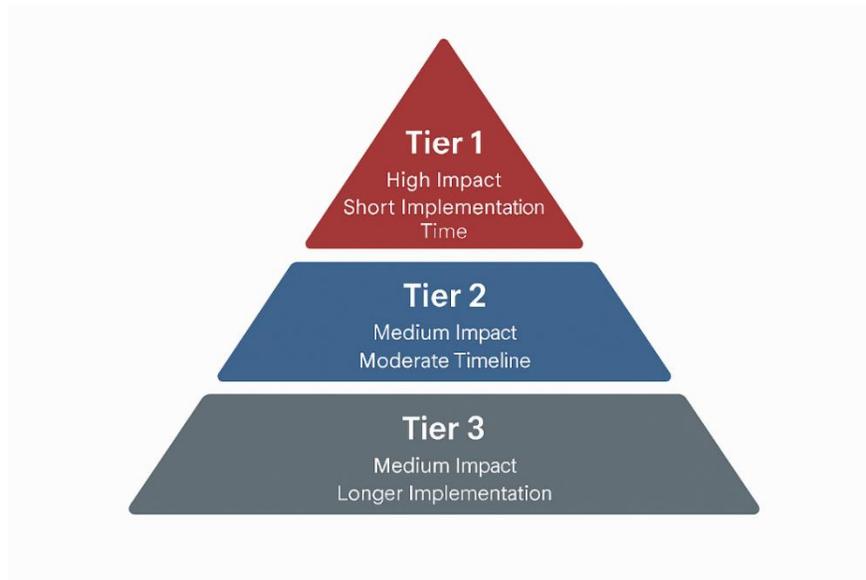
Part 3: Operational Recommendations for Service Improvement

Introduction to Recommendations

The following recommendations have been prioritized based on their potential impact and ease of implementation. To provide clarity and guide decision-making, each recommendation is categorized into tiers that reflect both effort and timeline:

- **Tier 1:** High-impact actions that can be implemented quickly and deliver visible results in the short term.
- **Tier 2:** Medium-impact initiatives requiring moderate effort and a mid-range timeline for completion.
- **Tier 3:** Initiatives with medium impact but higher complexity, requiring significant effort and a longer implementation period.

This tiered approach ensures that immediate operational improvements are addressed first while laying out the foundation for sustainable, long-term improvements.



Tier 1: High-Impact, Critical Intervention

3.1 Leadership Visibility and Cultural Transformation

Current State:

Leadership values and appreciates counselors, but structural practices have unintentionally created silos, limiting collaboration and engagement. Supervisors are often perceived as managers of individual teams rather than the entire operation, and their limited visibility reduces trust and transparency.

Key Challenges:

- Minimal cross-team interaction due to rotating schedules and segmented communication.
- Lack of consistent leadership presence, impacting morale and operational cohesion.
- Uneven workload distribution during extended absences, increasing burnout risk.
- Limited engagement initiatives and unclear career development paths.

Recommendations and Actions Steps:

1. Increase Leadership Visibility

- Implement a structured floor presence schedule for supervisors (e.g., daily 30-minute walk-throughs and virtual check-ins for remote staff at least every other day).
- Encourage supervisors to occasionally work from shared spaces to observe operations and provide real-time support.

2. Break Down Silos

- a. Launch a unified communication channel for all counselors and leadership.
- b. Schedule monthly cross-team meetings and quarterly engagement activities to foster collaboration.

3. Balance Workload

- a. Define clear backup responsibilities and make them voluntary.
- b. Create a workload distribution matrix to ensure equitable task allocation during absences.

4. Enhance Morale and Engagement

- a. Introduce short-term recognition programs (e.g., weekly shout-outs, milestone celebrations).
- b. Develop career paths with roles such as SMEs, peer coaches, and assistant team leads.
- c. Implement gamified learning and inclusive engagement activities for both onsite and remote staff.

Expected Outcome:

These actions will create a more inclusive, collaborative, and supportive environment, strengthen team cohesion, reduce burnout, and improve retention. Visible leadership and structured engagement strategies will transform the Counseling Center into a unified, motivated team aligned toward shared goals.

3.2 Address Immediate Staffing Gaps

Current State:

High absenteeism, driven largely by unplanned FMLA leave, has created severe staffing shortages. The center operates with a minimum gap of 5–5.5 FTE daily, and occupancy levels for remaining staff are extremely high, increasing fatigue and burnout risk. Planned absences and callouts further exacerbate this shortage. While absences generate some budgetary savings, these funds could potentially be redirected to temporary staffing solutions. However, the lack of proactive planning and visibility into absence patterns makes coverage unpredictable and operational stability difficult to maintain.

Key Challenges:

- Persistent staffing gaps caused by FMLA leave and unplanned callouts.
- High occupancy rates for remaining staff, increasing stress and burnout risk.
- Limited ability to forecast and plan for absences due to manual tracking.
- Budget constraints and lengthy hiring timelines hinder rapid response.
- Operational instability during peak periods and seasonal spikes.

Recommendation and Action Steps

1. Leverage Budget Savings

- a. Conduct an analysis to determine if salary lapse savings can fund contract staff, permanent part-time employees, or over-hiring to offset anticipated absences.

2. Implement TL Coverage Rotation – MOD program

- a. Assign three Team Leads (TL's) to provide phone coverage for two hours daily during peak periods.
- b. Designate one TL as “Manager on Duty” (MOD) to handle questions, monitor queues, and manage breaks.
- c. After phone covering blocks, TL's resume administrative duties to maintain QA reviews, escalations, reporting, and other core responsibilities.

3. Utilize Contract Workers

- a. Engage short-term contract staff for rapid coverage prior to peak demand for stabilization of center metrics
- b. Partner with agencies to source experienced contact center professionals who require minimal training and rapidly onboard

4. Centralize FMLA Tracking

- a. Implement a centralized HRIS tracker for FMLA to improve visibility and planning.
- b. Low-cost platforms exist to manage tracking and reduce compliance and FMLA stacking risks.

5. Explore Legislative Options

- a. **Temporary Salary Lapse Fund Usage:** Request approval to use salary lapse funds for short-term staffing or overtime coverage.
- b. **Emergency Staffing Authorization:** Seek legislative approval for temporary positions or contract workers during critical periods.
- c. **Flexible Hiring Rules:** Advocate exceptions to standard hiring timelines or posting requirements during emergencies.
- d. **Budget Adjustments:** Propose contingency funds for workforce stabilization to avoid service disruptions.

Expected Outcome:

These measures will close critical staffing gaps, reduce strain on existing employees, and stabilize service levels. Leveraging budget savings, contract staffing, and legislative flexibility will provide immediate relief while supporting long-term workforce planning.

3.3 Team Lead Phone Support

Current State:

There is a significant disconnect in leadership regarding expectations for Team Lead (TL) phone support. Supervisors report that TL's are not expected to handle calls, while other leaders assume TL's should provide phone coverage to compensate for staffing shortages. This

conflicting guidance has created confusion. Upper leadership believes TL's spend 60–70% of their day on calls; however, system data shows TL's rarely log into InContact, and their phone activity can only be confirmed through call detail reports.

Key Findings:

- TL's handled approximately 10 calls per day in May, but in subsequent months, their activity averaged closer to 5 calls per day.
- Table 1 illustrates the share of calls handled by each TL per month relative to the total counselor team volume:
- TL's are unclear on the instructions provided on the expectations on when they are to provide phone support

	May	June	July	August	September	October
Keisha McLean	1.00%	0.40%	0.40%	0.30%	0.20%	0.10%
Sindy Rojas	1.10%	0.30%	0.30%	0.30%	0.10%	0.00%
Jennifer Adams	1.10%	0.20%	0.40%	0.40%	0.10%	0.10%
Betty McKinney	0.70%	0.20%	0.20%	0.30%	0.10%	0.10%

Recommendations and Action Steps:

1. Clarify Expectations

- Define TL responsibilities for phone coverage in writing and communicate consistently across leadership.
- Establish clear thresholds for when TL's should assist with calls during staffing shortages.

2. Measure Impact

- Use ABR (Abandonment Rate) as a key metric to evaluate improvements.
- Table 2 shows projected ABR reductions if TL's handle 10 calls per day

3. Implement Structured Phone Support

- Assign TL's a modest call-handling target (e.g., 10 calls per day) during peak periods.
- Monitor compliance through InContact reporting and call detail logs.

Table 2: Reduction in Abandonment*

	May	June	July	August	September	October
New ABR	21.80%	8.00%	11.20%	18.50%	15.90%	15.90%
Actual ABR:	26.00%	12.00%	15.00%	22.30%	19.50%	19.20%

*Based on historical data and if each TL was able to complete 10 calls a day to total 40 calls

Expected Outcome:

Scheduling team leads on the phone would result in 30 to 40 more calls handled a day. This would improve ABR and improve customer satisfaction. The overall SLA would improve. Other benefits would be faster resolutions, fewer escalations, and improve FCR by 10-15%. The plan schedules each TL for ~2 hours/day of uninterrupted phone time (\approx 10 calls at ~10 minutes AHT). This is enough to stabilize peaks without consuming their whole day and any additional.

3.4 Team Lead Workload

Current Status: Team Leads play a critical role in supporting both counselors and supervisors. Their responsibilities include assisting counselors during calls, reviewing MSREQs and legal documents (e.g., POAs, guardianship papers), tracking daily activities, handling escalations and follow-ups, and performing QA evaluations with coaching. They also manage special cases such as account blocking or deceased member issues, send recognition emails, and maintain transparency trackers.

Despite these essential duties, Team Leads face significant challenges. Their workload is highly unpredictable, fluctuating with call volume, staff inquiries, meetings, and training sessions. Busy seasons—October through June—add further strain, with holidays creating additional spikes. Although TL's have a two-hour admin block, they often assist counselors and handle escalations during this time, delaying administrative tasks and QA evaluations. Frequent interruptions and time-intensive escalations requiring call reviews, research, and interdepartmental communication increase stress and risk of burnout. Losing these key employees would severely impact productivity, service quality, and overall operational success.

Key Challenges:

- **QA Burden:** QA and coaching shifted to Team Leads (TL's) in 2022, adding heavy workload; tasks need long focus periods, but interruptions make this difficult.
- **Unpredictable Schedule:** TL's must stay available for counselor questions, causing frequent interruptions and delaying QA and admin tasks; escalations are time intensive.
- **Dual Role Strain:** Balancing admin duties with call support often sacrifices critical reporting and QA work.

- Seasonal Pressure: Peak periods (Oct–June) and holidays increase workload and stress.
- Unclear Expectations: Confusion over phone coverage during staffing shortages; inconsistent leadership guidance adds stress
- Burnout Risk: Competing priorities and unpredictability heighten burnout and attrition risk, threatening productivity and service quality.

Recommendations and Action Steps

1. Clarify Role Expectations
 - a. Define TL responsibilities for QA, administrative tasks, and call support.
 - b. Communicate priorities clearly to reduce ambiguity and stress.
2. Protect Administrative and QA Time
 - a. Enforce uninterrupted admin blocks for QA evaluations and documentation.
 - b. Schedule counselor support rotations to reduce constant interruptions.
 - c. Lock the schedule for 2 hours on phone and rest as administrative time.
 - d. MOD is to manage counselor related call questions.
3. Introduce Workload Balancing
 - a. Develop a workload distribution matrix to allocate tasks equitably.
 - b. Utilize supervisors to assist in backup duties when TL's are on phones
4. Explore QA Alternatives
 - a. Evaluate options for partial QA support through automation or shared supervisor involvement.
 - b. Implement streamlined QA processes to reduce time burden.

Expected Outcome:

These actions will reduce workload strain, protect critical QA functions, and improve operational efficiency. By clarifying expectations and balancing responsibilities, the Counseling Center can lower burnout risk, retain key talent, and maintain service quality.

3.5 Quality Assurance

Current State:

Since 2022, Quality Assurance (QA) and coaching responsibilities shifted from a dedicated quality team to Team Leads (TL's), increasing their workload significantly. While supervisors occasionally assist, TL's handle most coaching. One-on-one follow-ups for every QA are not feasible, and immediate coaching occurs only when necessary. This role requires lengthy, uninterrupted time blocks and specialized skills, making it difficult to manage alongside other responsibilities.

Key Challenges:

- QA tasks demand extended focus periods, which are frequently interrupted by counselor questions and escalations.
- TL's lack the time and resources to maintain consistent QA standards.
- Budget constraints prevent hiring dedicated QA staff, as this would compete with critical staffing needs.
- QA often becomes a lower priority due to competing operational demands and unfamiliar skill sets required for effective execution.

Recommendations and Action Steps

1. Clarify QA Priorities
 - a. Define QA expectations and timelines to ensure consistency.
 - b. Communicate priorities clearly to TL's and supervisors.
2. Protect QA Time
 - a. Enforce uninterrupted admin blocks for QA evaluations and documentation.
 - b. Schedule counselor support rotations to minimize interruptions during QA work.
3. Explore Alternatives
 - a. Evaluate automation tools to streamline QA processes.
 - b. Consider shared QA responsibilities with supervisors to reduce TL workload.
4. Develop QA Skills
 - a. Provide targeted training for TL's on QA best practices.
 - b. Offer refresher sessions to improve confidence and efficiency in QA tasks.

Expected Outcome:

These actions will improve QA consistency, reduce workload strain on TL's, and maintain service quality without requiring additional headcount. By clarifying expectations and leveraging automation or shared responsibilities, the Counseling Center can protect critical QA functions and reduce burnout risk.

3.6 Supervisor Workload & Reporting

Current State:

Supervisors are responsible for monitoring team performance in real time and historically identify trends. Currently, many reports require manual extraction, which is inefficient and time-consuming. Each supervisor generates separate reports and reviews data independently, leading to duplication and inconsistencies. These manual processes reduce supervisors' ability to focus on coaching and operational support.

Key Challenges:

1. Lack of automation for reporting and performance dashboards.
2. No centralized repository for reports, templates, and forms.
3. Inconsistent reporting formats and manual data handling.
4. Limited time for QA and coaching due to administrative burden

Recommendations and Action Steps:

1. Dashboards and Enforce compliance

- a. Implement dashboards that pull metrics directly from source systems to eliminate manual spreadsheets.
- b. Standardize reports and automate delivery to ensure consistency and accuracy.
- c. Skill and agent queue status posted and shared by all

2. Create Centralized Resources

- a. Develop a shared repository for reports, templates, and forms accessible to all supervisors.
- b. Create a call out line for unpanned absences for all employees to leave messages for all supervisors and team leads at the same time.

3. Protect QA Time

- a. Allocate dedicated time for supervisors to conduct quality assurance reviews and coaching, even during peak periods.

Expected Outcome:

Automation and standardization will streamline reporting, reduce duplication, and free supervisors to focus on coaching and engagement. These improvements will enhance operational efficiency, maintain quality standards, and support counselor development.

3.7 Supervisors and Employee Coaching

Current State:

Remote agents often lack real-time feedback and connection with leadership. Supervisors have limited opportunities to provide constructive coaching outside formal evaluations, which impacts engagement, confidence, and skill development.

Key Challenges:

- Limited visibility into remote agent performance.
- Inconsistent feedback and coaching opportunities.
- Missed chances for skill reinforcement and morale building.

Recommendations and Action Steps

1. Implement Weekly Shadowing
 - a. Schedule one 30-minute session per week for supervisors to shadow a remote agent.
 - b. Allow agents to handle 2–3 calls before engaging in open discussion for feedback.
2. Foster Supportive Coaching
 - a. Provide constructive, non-judgmental feedback during sessions.
 - b. Use these sessions to reinforce skills, address challenges, and build confidence.
3. Track and Measure Impact
 - a. Monitor QA compliance and improvements in first-call resolution.
 - b. Target reductions in QA-related errors by up to 20% and improvements in FCR by 10–15%.

Expected Outcome:

Weekly shadowing will strengthen communication, boost confidence, and reduce stress for remote agents. Longer-term benefits include improved retention (10–15%), enhanced service quality, and stronger team cohesion—all with minimal time investment. Greatly support team leads and assist in coaching for all agents.

Tier 2: High-Impact, Moderate Implementation

3.2.1 Retention Strategy

Current State:

Retention is currently at 9.1%, driven by vacancies and employees seeking advancement outside the contact center. High-stress situations account for approximately 40% of turnover, and the lack of career development opportunities, poor onboarding, and limited work-life balance further contribute to attrition.

Key Challenges:

- Limited engagement programs and unclear career paths.
- High stress and burnout due to workload and lack of support.
- Inconsistent recognition programs tied to metrics
- Insufficient flexibility for remote work and scheduling.

Recommendations and Action Steps:

1. Implement Engagement Programs

- a. Introduce gamification for learning new material and recognize milestones such as training completion and work anniversaries.
- b. Offer short offline tasks and small incentives (e.g., extra 15-minute breaks) to boost morale.
- c. Ensure engagement activities include both onsite and remote staff.

2. Develop Career Paths

- a. Create roles such as Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), peer coaches, and assistant team leads. Senior Team Leads with defined responsibilities.
- b. Establish clear milestones for progression and communicate growth opportunities to employees.

3. Enhance Communication

- a. Consolidate segmented Teams chats into a unified channel for all counselors and leadership.
- b. Add role-specific subchannels for targeted discussions while maintaining a central space for updates and collaboration.
- c. Introduce a “virtual breakroom” chat for informal interaction to build community and morale.

4. Increase Leadership Visibility

- a. Implement structured floor presence schedules and virtual check-ins for remote staff.
- b. Encourage supervisors to occasionally work from shared spaces to observe operations and provide real-time support.

5. Promote Work-Life Balance

- a. Offer flexible scheduling and remote work options.
- b. Provide strong management support for high-stress situations to reduce burnout.

6. Revamp Recognition Programs

- a. Shift from long-term, metric-based awards to short-term recognition during crisis staffing periods.
- b. Avoid attendance-based awards that reward compliance rather than performance or engagement.

Expected Outcome:

These initiatives will reduce turnover, improve morale, and create a culture of engagement and growth. By offering career development, flexible work options, and visible leadership, the Counseling Center can retain talent, strengthen team cohesion, and maintain operational stability.

3.2.2 Recruitment

Current State:

Attrition and staffing gaps remain a critical challenge for the Counseling Center. Delays in filling vacancies and insufficient screening processes increase the risk of hiring candidates who may not be well-suited for high-stress contact center environments. These gaps directly impact service levels and operational stability.

Key Challenges:

- One-month delay in posting and filling vacancies
- Manual screening processes increase workload for supervisors.
- Lack of a pre-screened candidate pool slows backfilling.
- Limited use of contract roles during peak periods.

Recommendations and Action Steps:

To minimize attrition, prioritize hiring through skill-based assessments and carefully evaluate prior call center experience to identify potential burnout risks.

1. Prioritize Skill-Based Hiring

- a. Use competency-based assessments to evaluate communication, problem-solving, and technical aptitude.
- b. Review prior call center experience carefully to identify potential burnout risks.

2. Streamline Recruitment

- a. Reintroduce Continuous Posting: Reinstate continuous job postings in Workday to maintain a steady pipeline and reduce time-to-fill for urgent vacancies.
- b. Automate Screening Steps: Utilize Workday's automation features for eligibility checks and written assessments to minimize manual workload.
- c. Create a Candidate Pool: Maintain a pre-screened pool of qualified candidates for faster backfilling when vacancies occur.
- d. Consider Contract Roles: Partner with staffing agencies to source experienced team members who require minimal training. These roles can be temporary or permanent based on operational needs.

Expected Outcome:

Implementing these strategies will accelerate hiring, reduce supervisor workload, and ensure candidates are better aligned with role requirements. A streamlined recruitment process combined with skill-based assessments will improve retention, stabilize staffing, and support long-term operational success.

Tier 3: Moderate Impact, Longer Implementation

3.3.1 MSREQ Workflow Risks & Recommendations

Current State:

The MSREQ process introduces significant inefficiencies and operational risks. Requests sent from the contact center to internal retirement teams often experience delays due to unclear ownership and the absence of structured timelines. Once submitted, counselors lose visibility into request status, leading to member frustration and repeat calls. These delays increase call volumes, create backlogs, and negatively impact service levels and abandonment rates. Member dissatisfaction grows as missed follow-ups erode trust and harm Net Promoter Scores. Additionally, counselors spend considerable time on redundant calls rather than addressing new inquiries, reducing overall productivity. Slow processing of retirement-related requests also poses compliance risks, including potential regulatory exposure and audit failures

Key Findings:

- Lack of SLAs for MSREQ processing results in extended turnaround times.
- No centralized dashboard for tracking request status or aging.
- Manual follow-up increases workload for counselors and Team Leads.
- Repeat-call spirals drive higher call volumes and abandonment rates.
- Delayed processing introduces compliance and audit risks

Recommendations and Action Steps:

1. Establish SLAs
 - a. Define clear turnaround targets (e.g., 48–72 hours) for MSREQ processing.
 - b. Monitor SLA compliance through automated dashboards.
2. Implement Workflow Automation
 - a. Enable automated routing and real-time status updates for MSREQs.
 - b. Provide members with timely notifications on request progress.
3. Improve Communication
 - a. Allow internal departments to communicate outcomes directly to members via secure channels.
 - b. Reduce dependency on counselors for follow-up calls.
4. Deploy Centralized Dashboard
 - a. Create a real-time dashboard for tracking MSREQ status, aging, and escalation needs.
5. Create Escalation Framework
 - a. Implement tiered escalation paths for overdue requests to prevent bottlenecks.

NC Retirement Systems Counseling Center
Operational Assessment



6. Conduct Root Cause Analysis

- a. Analyze MSREQ trends to identify systemic issues and resolve upstream process gaps.

Expected Outcome:

These measures will streamline MSREQ workflows, reduce repeat calls, improve member experience, and mitigate compliance risks. By introducing automation, SLAs, and real-time visibility, the Counseling Center can enhance efficiency and service quality while reducing operational strain.

NC Retirement Systems Counseling Center

Recruitment and NC Market Research

Prepared by Alphanumeric



Table of Contents

NC Retirement Services – Contact Center Role Review & North Carolina Market Assessment . 3

Part 1: Methodology 3

Part 2: Observations and Findings 3

 1. Current salaries are broadly aligned with NC market norms..... 3

 2. Job descriptions were accurate but outdated and inconsistent..... 4

 3. Internal salary progression is compressed between Counselor and Team Lead. 4

 4. Supervisor compensation is appropriately positioned..... 4

Conclusion 5

NC Retirement Services – Contact Center Role Review & North Carolina Market Assessment

NC Retirement Services engaged our team to conduct a comprehensive review of three key Contact Center positions within the Member Services division: **Retirement Benefits Counselor**, **Counseling Center Team Lead**, and **Counseling Center Supervisor**. The goal of this assessment was to determine whether current job descriptions and compensation levels remain aligned with:

1. Modern contact center standards,
2. Industry and public-sector market data, and
3. Evolving organizational needs related to service delivery, statutory complexity, and member expectations.

Part 1: Methodology

Our review included:

- A market assessment of comparable roles across North Carolina (public and private sector)
- A compensation comparison against statewide benchmarks
- A structural analysis of the existing job descriptions
- A rewrite of all three job descriptions for clarity, accuracy, and alignment with HR best practices
- Recommendations for refinement of salary progression, internal leveling, and career path visibility

Part 2: Observations and Findings

1. Current salaries are broadly aligned with NC market norms.

Across all three roles, the compensation levels fall within or above the range of comparable positions in the region.

- *Retirement Benefits Counselor* aligns with the mid-market range for roles requiring significant technical and statutory knowledge.

NC Retirement Systems Counseling Center
Operational Assessment



- *Counseling Center Team Lead* aligns closely with statewide averages for contact center leadership positions.
- *Counseling Center Supervisor* sits at or slightly above market midpoint, reflecting the elevated scope of responsibility.

2. Job descriptions were accurate but outdated and inconsistent.

While the functional responsibilities matched the work performed, the descriptions:

- Contained legacy statutory references or case examples no longer essential
- Did not include modern contact center expectations (KPIs, technology, service standards)
- Varied in formatting and structure
- Included internal employee information or excessive technical detail inappropriate for a public-facing JD

Updated, modernized, HR-approved versions of all three job descriptions have been provided.

3. Internal salary progression is compressed between Counselor and Team Lead.

The current differential of approximately \$4,200 between Counselor and Team Lead may not sufficiently reflect the additional responsibilities of coaching, quality support, and workflow coordination. Widening this gap over time could strengthen career progression and retention.

4. Supervisor compensation is appropriately positioned.

The larger jump between Team Lead and Supervisor is appropriate given the Supervisor's people leadership responsibilities, operational oversight, and strategic contribution.

Recommendations

1. **Adopt the revised job descriptions** to ensure accuracy, consistency, alignment with ADA requirements, and clarity for both candidates and current employees.
2. **Establish defined salary bands** (minimum–midpoint–maximum) for each role to support pay transparency and progression.
3. **Gradually increase differentiation between Counselor and Team Lead** salary ranges to reflect leadership responsibilities and encourage upward mobility.
4. **Recalibrate every 2–3 years** to remain aligned with market conditions, particularly as contact center roles evolve with technology and increased member expectations.

Conclusion

Overall, NC Retirement Services maintains competitive compensation and clear role structure for its Member Services Contact Center team. With updated job descriptions and refinements to internal salary progression, the organization will be better positioned to support talent attraction, development, and long-term retention while continuing to deliver high-quality service to its members.

NC Retirement Systems Counseling Center

Quality Assurance & Training Assessment Report

Prepared by Alphanumeric



Table of Contents

NC Retirement Systems Counseling Center 1

Part 1: Methodology 3

 Data Collection Methods 3

 Benchmarking Framework..... 3

Part 2: Observations and Benchmark Analysis..... 3

 2.1 Training and Onboarding 3

 2.2 Quality Assurance Program 4

Part 3: Recommendations for Service Improvement 6

 3.1 Tier 1: High Impact, Near-Term 6

 Training..... 6

 Quality Assurance..... 6

 Tools..... 6

 3.2 Tier 2: Medium Effort, Strategic 7

 3.3 Tier 3: Longer-Term..... 7

 3.4 Risks of Inaction and Expected Benefits 7

 3.5 Suggested Next Steps 7

Part 1: Methodology

This report summarizes observations and recommendations from our review of the NC Retirement Systems Counseling Center's training and quality assurance practices. The work focused on how counselors are prepared for their roles, how quality is measured and coached, and how supervisors are supported with tools and data.

Data Collection Methods

Our assessment combined three primary inputs:

1. **Documentation Review:** SOPs, evaluation forms, training guides, historical quality program materials (including the 26-question scoring guide and calibration procedures).
2. **Staff Interviews:** Two Counselors; two Supervisors; two Team Leads; two Trainers.
3. **Workflow Observations:** Counselor workflows, including DQR usage, call routing, coaching processes, and post-call work.

Benchmarking Framework

We assessed industry standards for QA and training in call centers handling complex financial and retirement services. These benchmarks ensure new hires are adequately prepared for delivering accurate and empathetic service. While retirement-specific benchmarks are limited, standard call center benchmarks remain valuable reference points.

Part 2: Observations and Benchmark Analysis

2.1 Training and Onboarding

Current State: Training provides a solid foundation for basic topics but falls short on complex scenarios (service purchase, reciprocity, health insurance, return-to-work). Full Retirement Benefit Counselor training is eight weeks: six weeks classroom, one week role play/review, one week on-phone practice. Trainers described the program as well organized but extremely tight on time.

Key Gaps: Shadowing is limited and inconsistent despite being highly valued by counselors. The training schedule is compressed, leaving insufficient time for hands-on practice. Job aids are incomplete, requiring trainers to improvise. Post-training refreshers are not structured, resulting in knowledge gaps during early weeks on the floor.

Industry Benchmark: Standards recommend 6-8 weeks for complex financial roles, including 1-2 weeks of shadowing/reverse-shadowing before live calls, and structured refreshers during the first 30-60 days.

Area	Current State	Benchmark	Gap
Shadowing	Limited, inconsistent	1-2 weeks shadowing + reverse-shadowing	Significant gap in real-world exposure
Post-Training Support	No structured refreshers	Refreshers in first 30-60 days	No formal reinforcement
Scenario Learning	Text-based; limited real cases	Real account walkthroughs essential	Classroom doesn't match real complexity

Operational Impact: Training gaps result in increased errors, longer handle times, lower first-call resolution, and early dependency on team leads.

2.2 Quality Assurance Program

Current State: The QA process is designed to be supportive and developmental. Quality is monitored through call evaluations by team leads and supervisors. However, scoring categories (accuracy, completeness, professionalism) remain subjective. The QA form and scoring guide are separate documents. Calibration sessions do not fully resolve interpretation differences.

Key Concerns: Counselors rarely use refutation process, and many don't review evaluations. QA paused for several months during peak season (late 2024 to early 2025). Historical materials show the division previously used a more detailed framework with 26 clearly defined items and behavior-specific definitions.

Issue	Current State	Desired State
Scoring Framework	Subjective categories; open to interpretation	Behavior-based rubric with clear criteria and examples
QA Tools	Form and guide are separate documents	Integrated tool with embedded definitions
Feedback Loop	Counselors often don't review evaluations	Mandatory acknowledgment workflow
QA Capacity	Pauses for months during peak seasons	Protected capacity or dedicated QA role

Operational Impact: Inconsistent scoring undermines accountability and coaching. Seasonal gaps and limited engagement hinder continuous improvement.

2.3 Tools and Supervisor Workload

Digital Quick Reference (DQR): All counselors rely on the DQR extensively. However, search returns too many irrelevant results, slowing call flow. The structure is comprehensive but difficult to navigate quickly under pressure. No consolidated guidance exists for sensitive disclosures (e.g., death benefits). No AI-assisted search is available.

Supervisor Workload: Supervisors spend significant time manually compiling ACW, QA trends, and attendance data. No automated dashboards exist. This manual burden reduces time for coaching, development, and floor support.

Part 3: Recommendations for Service Improvement

3.1 Tier 1: High Impact, Near-Term

Training

1. **Extend and formalize shadowing** to a full week, including reverse-shadowing with real-time feedback.
2. **Reallocate training time** to ensure complex topics (service purchase, return-to-work, refunds, reciprocity) receive adequate hands-on practice.
3. **Deliver targeted refreshers** during the first 4-6 weeks on the floor.
4. **Create disclosure scripts** with "can say/cannot say" rules, especially for death-benefit calls.

Quality Assurance

- **Integrate QA form and scoring guide** into a single tool with embedded definitions. Clarify ambiguous categories with behavior-based criteria.
- **Update QA form using historical materials** as reference to restore clarity without excessive length.
- **Implement mandatory evaluation acknowledgment** at shift start or login.
- **Protect QA capacity during peak seasons** or assign to a dedicated QA role.
- **Create standard Plan-of-Action template** for coaching conversations.

Tools

- **Fix DQR search relevancy** and create quick-access menus for common call types.

3.2 Tier 2: Medium Effort, Strategic

3.3 Tier 3: Longer-Term

- Implement AI-supported knowledge search for DQR.
- Enhance routing logic to direct complex calls to appropriately trained counselors.
- Explore automated generation of member summaries after complex calls.

3.4 Risks of Inaction and Expected Benefits

Risks: Without addressing these issues, the Center will continue relying on workarounds and individual heroics. Risks include slower new-hire ramp-up; inconsistent member experience; potential errors in high-stakes retirement decisions; compliance issues from inconsistent death-benefit disclosures; and prolonged QA gaps allowing inconsistent practices.

Benefits: Implementation offers faster time to proficiency; higher staff confidence and satisfaction; more consistent QA outcomes; increased supervisor capacity for coaching; better trend visibility; reduced hold time and ACW load; and reduced compliance risk.

3.5 Suggested Next Steps

- Confirm priority areas with leadership (shadowing, QA tool integration, basic dashboards).
- Establish cross-functional working group (supervisors, counselors, QA, training).
- Review training schedules to ensure consistent module delivery.
- Engage Legal/Policy to formalize death-benefit disclosure guide.
- Pilot changes with one team, measure impact, adjust before scaling.
- Incorporate successful changes into formal SOPs and performance expectations.

Conclusion

The Counseling Center has strong people and a strong service mindset, but the processes and tools around them need to catch up. Improvements in training depth, QA structure and capacity, and analytic tools would create immediate benefits in counselor readiness, consistency, and member experience. These opportunities directly support the Center's goals of improving member experience, ensuring accuracy, and strengthening staff development.



MAKE YOUR MARK!

Appendix

Table of Contents

Benchmarks: Contact Center Industry Standards Sources.....	2
Retirement Benefits Counselor Job Description	5
Retirement Center Team Lead Job Description.....	14
Retirement Center Supervisor Job Description.....	22
Comparison Table – Current vs. NC Market & Suggested Bands	28
Recommendation for HRIS FMLA Tracker Implementation	30

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Recruitment Appendix Files

Retirement Benefits Counselor Job Description

Retirement Benefits Counselor	
Classification Selection	
Classification Information	
Classification Title	Program Coordinator III
BEACON Code	32001241
Salary Schedule	Other
Banded: C	
Banded: J	
Banded: A	
Salary Grade	NC12
MIDPOINT	59813
Minimum Education & Experience	Bachelor s degree from an appropriately accredited institution and two(2) years of experience related to the area of assignment; or an equivalent combination of training and experience.
Position Details	
Employee Details	
Employee First Name	██████
Employee Middle Name or Initial	██████
Employee Last Name	██████
PERS Number	██████
Position Details	
Working Title of Position	Retirement Benefits Counselor

Beacon Position Number	60009180
Work Schedule	Monday-Friday
Work Hours	8:00 am-5:00 pm
Primary Purpose of the Organizational Unit	<p>The Retirement Systems Division of the Department of State Treasurer administers the North Carolina Retirement Systems retirement benefits, death and disability benefits and the North Carolina Supplemental Retirement Plans created under North Carolina state law. The North Carolina Retirement Systems Division provides benefits to 900,000 members, including: teachers, state government employees, local governmental employees, firefighters, rescue squad workers, judges, law enforcement officers, and many other public workers.</p>

The primary purpose for the Member Services' Section of the Retirement Systems Division is to provide the full range of retirement education, correspondence services and one-on-one counseling and training for all members and employers concerning retirement and disability benefits, statutory provisions, new legislation and information supporting the effectiveness of these efforts. The Member Services Department is critical to the operation of RSD in making sure the delivery of technical benefit information and the interpretation of laws, rules, policies and practices are accurate and in alignment with what is in the best interest of the members and for the agency. Member Services includes the Call Center, the Education Retirement Group and the Learning and Development departments. The Call Center Retirement Benefit Counselors assist members with their inquiries by phone, receiving more than 280,000 calls per year. The Retirement Benefit Counselors in the Educational Retirement Group (ERG) assist more than 3,500 members face-to-face with paperwork, quick questions or one-on-one individual counseling sessions, they conduct over 50 Retirement Readiness webinars and simulcasts, hold more than 180 education Retirement Presentations around the state with over 10,000 attendees nearing retirement per year, they provide monthly employer training averaging more than 30 attendees at each session and they answer more than 30,000 e-mails and correspondence inquiries per year. The Learning and Development group supports all of RSD by conducting more than 80 training sessions for staff per year and by providing quality coaching and monitoring of more than 1,000 calls per year.

Primary Purpose of the Position	<p>The primary purpose of this position is to assist active & retired state and local government employees, beneficiaries, employers and agencies with retirement and benefit inquiries by counseling and educating them on benefit programs administered by the Retirement Systems Division and with explaining statute details and legislative interpretations. This section receives phone calls and e-mails from employees and employers from all around the state regarding all the different retirement systems and responds to a variety of calls and e-mails from simple, moderately complex to very complex questions. These Call Center Counselors are trained as subject matter experts regarding all matters retirement and are equipped to handle even the most complex situations that require additional research and follow up, with an awareness toward customer service.</p>
Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Recommended in this Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable knowledge of general retirement processes such as direct deposits for residents of the State, other states, and members living outside the US; name changes; cost to purchase in a variety of types of allowable service credits; free military service; State Health Insurance; highly compensated member retirement calculations; monthly survivorship options; severance pay for State and local systems. • Considerable knowledge of refund retirement contributions; eligibility requirement for health insurance for long-term disability, extended short-term disability, and Medicare, Tri Care for Life Plan, premium costs for all types of dependent coverage. • Considerable knowledge of procedures when a charter school becomes a member of TSERS.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable knowledge of discontinued service retirements; earnable allowance; LEO retirements; Ag Extension retirements; equitable distribution; death benefits; tax issues; part/full-time reemployment after retirement; leave payouts; full actuarial cost calculations; reciprocity provisions; law enforcement officers and firefighter requirements; AFC for 9 and 12 month employees; teaching contracts.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to communicate effectively in both oral and written form; ability to conduct instructional clinics and prepare addresses for delivery at employee and retiree meetings; ability to make effective presentations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess interviewing skills and responds effectively to an educationally diverse population.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to exercise judgment and discretion in establishing, applying, and interpreting policies and procedures.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with agency personnel, officials, and the general public.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to participate effectively in program planning, evaluation, and quality control methods.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to adapt to changing situations and exercise sound judgment.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to analyze, research, and interpret information of a technical, mathematical, or financial nature.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to think strategically and creatively, juggle multiple priorities, adjust to changing circumstances, organize time efficiently, and remain attentive to details.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to interpret a variety of instructions furnished in written, oral, diagram, or schedule form.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to understand customer needs and deliver excellent quality services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to interpret and understand legal and business requirements and mentor participants in order to stay in compliance.
	Manager Preferences:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent customer service skills
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent written and verbal communication skills
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits administration experience
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call Center experience
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultative expertise
Education and Experience Recommended	Bachelor s degree from an appropriately accredited institution and two (2) years of experience related to the area of assignment; or an equivalent combination of training and experience.
License or Certification Required by Statute or Regulation	N/A
Initiator	
Completed	Yes
Description of Work	
<p>Describe in detail the major work functions of this position as well as the duties and responsibilities required for each of those functions. At least one major function is required, however most jobs usually have between 3 and 5. Indicate the percentage of time (%) the employee spends in each major function. The percentage amounts should add up to 100%. In addition, indicate with an asterisk (*) if a function is considered an essential duty/function as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.</p>	
Description of Work	50% Public Contact/Retirement Counseling

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explains and applies interpretations of laws, codes, AG opinions and procedural guides related to the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System, Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System, former Law Enforcement Officer's Retirement System, Separate Insurance Benefits Plan for Law Enforcement Officers, Register of Deeds' Supplemental Pension Fund and the Disability Income Plan of North Carolina, Legislative Retirement System, Legislative Retirement Fund, Consolidated Judicial Retirement System, National Guard Pension Fund, and the Supplemental Retirement Income Plan.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assesses individual member situations while applying current statute regulations and communicating the appropriate decision to involved parties; scope includes over 900,000 active, inactive, and retired members, and over 1,500 employers.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts as a liaison between other sections and our members, beneficiaries, human resource departments, agencies, and others that contact the Retirement Systems Division.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educates, assists, counsels, and advises members, their dependents, and/or other involved parties of the benefits programs to determine entitlement, eligibility, timing, privileges, obligations, options and benefits, and explains the applicable provisions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectively analyzes each member's situation, selects and applies the appropriate regulations and formulas, and communicates the various options available.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluates requests and problems in order to determine the member's rights or benefits; provides counseling as to the wisdom of certain service purchases, optional payment plans, career changes, beneficiary designations, etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides technical assistance to agencies and HR professionals in regards to the various retirement systems such as procedural matters, reporting requirements and supplies information to administrative and personnel officials of all agencies covered under the variety of retirement plans.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interprets a variety of legislation concerning retirement, depending on the date of enrollment, and the laws in place at that time.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides advice to members in a variety of organizational structures requiring knowledge of personnel regulations and practices, payroll policies, salary plans and the earning of sick, vacation, bonus, and longevity earnings.
	<p>20% Research</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researches complicated benefit provisions regarding statutory and regulatory changes since these changes are cumulative in effect resulting in the date an event occurs may cause the answer to be different than if the event had happened at an earlier or later date.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researches more complex cases and responds via e-mail and/or phone call
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researches open cases by working with other departments to understand TATs and responds back to member or employer via e-mail and/or phone call.
	<p>20% Training</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must pass and complete the mandatory 8-week new hire training class followed by on-going quarterly refresher trainings and assessments.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must participate in quarterly knowledge assessments and on-going training classes as assigned by the Learning and Development department and as requested by leadership.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must complete a 3-day Customer Service Quality Phone Interaction Skills training and pass on-going weekly quality assessments from randomly pulled call recordings.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must complete a 9-month re-assessment followed by a 4-week Disability training class within the first 18 months of employment.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-trains in other departments to assist the division as needed and to strengthen the skills of the Member Services department as a whole.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists with shadowing, mentoring and quality training of new personnel.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists in training members and employers on Orbit Self Service as well as training them on statutes, retirement-on-line and any other retirement/benefit questions or issues as needed.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists in training other departments within RSD with case or system issues as discovered through member reports and feedback.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completes all security, computer and other mandatory training classes as instructed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in peer-to-peer training and coaching
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for staying up-to-date on all information communicated and updated in knowledge systems and desktop guides and in passing random test calls, assessments and scavenger hunt-type activities.
	10% other
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in process improvement assignments.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides support to other departments within RSD by processing work and working extra hours as needed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzes documented feedback and assists with process improvement opportunities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in all agency-wide activities, meetings and training events

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that system updates are accurate and thorough
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures the security of all members by verifying the identity and contact information of all callers and by reporting anything out-of-the-ordinary, immediately.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists with testing technical ticket fixes in a test environment to ensure everything is in order and working properly before implementation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists with updating information in the Digital Quick Reference tool
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for providing feedback about placement, wording and helpfulness of quick reference information and other training documents to ensure the team has what's needed to excel
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performs additional duties as assigned to meet department and division needs.

Retirement Center Team Lead Job Description

Call Center Team Lead	
Classification Selection	
Classification Information	
Classification Title	Program Coordinator III
BEACON Code	32001241
Salary Schedule	Other
Banded: C	
Banded: J	
Banded: A	
Salary Grade	NC12
MIDPOINT	59813

Minimum Education & Experience	Bachelor s degree from an appropriately accredited institution and two(2) years of experience related to the area of assignment; or an equivalent combination of training and experience.
Position Details	
Employee Details	
Employee First Name	██████
Employee Middle Name or Initial	████
Employee Last Name	██████████
PERS Number	██████████
Position Details	
Working Title of Position	Call Center Team Lead
Beacon Position Number	60009195
Work Schedule	Monday-Friday
Work Hours	8:00 am-5:30 pm
Primary Purpose of the Organizational Unit	The Retirement Systems Division of the Department of State Treasurer administers the North Carolina Retirement Systems retirement benefits, death and disability benefits and the North Carolina Supplemental Retirement Plans created under North Carolina state law. The North Carolina Retirement Systems Division provides benefits to 900,000 members, including: teachers, state government employees, local governmental employees, firefighters, rescue squad workers, judges, law enforcement officers, and many other public workers.

The primary purpose for the Member Services' Section of the Retirement Systems Division is to provide the full range of retirement education, correspondence services and one-on-one counseling and training for all members and employers concerning retirement and disability benefits, statutory provisions, new legislation and information supporting the effectiveness of these efforts. The Member Services Department is critical to the operation of RSD in making sure the delivery of technical benefit information and the interpretation of laws, rules, policies and practices are accurate and in alignment with what is in the best interest of the members and for the agency. Member Services includes the Call Center, the Education Retirement Group and the Learning and Development departments. The Call Center Retirement Benefit Counselors assist members with their inquiries by phone, receiving more than 280,000 calls per year. The Retirement Benefit Counselors in the Educational Retirement Group (ERG) assist more than 3,500 members face-to-face with paperwork, quick questions or one-on-one individual counseling sessions, they conduct over 50 Retirement Readiness webinars and simulcasts, hold more than 180 education Retirement Presentations around the state with over 10,000 attendees nearing retirement per year, they provide monthly employer training averaging more than 30 attendees at each session and they answer more than 30,000 e-mails and correspondence inquiries per year. The Learning and Development group supports all of RSD by conducting more than 80 training sessions for staff per year and by providing quality coaching and monitoring of more than 1,000 calls per year.

<p>Primary Purpose of the Position</p>	<p>The primary purpose of this position is to provide real-time support to the Call Center Retirement Benefit Counselors by answering questions, coaching on processes, providing tips on best practices, providing solutions to issues, tracking and handling escalated calls, managing the flow of work going in and out of the Counseling Center, checking research items to ensure accuracy and correct placement, and provide backup phone support as needed. This position also assists with monitoring the Counseling Center Client Management System, ensure that metrics, goals and objectives are being met. They work with the division's legal team to help resolve and process power of attorney and other legal requests that come into the Counseling Center. This position leads the team by participating in agency, training and team initiatives, leadership projects and other assignments as needed and/or requested. This position also provides effective coaching and training to Counseling Center staff on strategic interaction skills, professional writing, accurate communications and additional needs as identified, ensuring the highest quality of service is provided to our members.</p>
<p>Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Recommended in this Position</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable knowledge of retirement processes. • Considerable knowledge of refund retirement contributions; eligibility requirement for health insurance for long-term disability, extended short-term disability.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable knowledge of discontinued service retirements; earnable allowance; death benefits; local disability; tax issues; long-term/short-term, extended short-term disability under DIPNC; Faulkenbury disability; part/full-time reemployment after retirement; leave payouts; full actuarial cost calculations; reciprocity provisions; law enforcement officers and firefighter requirements; AFC for 9 & 12 month teaching contracts.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides constructive feedback to enhance performance and reduce errors.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates clearly and effectively verbally and in writing.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducts effective instructional presentations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds effectively to an educationally diverse population.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapts to changing situations and exercise sound judgment.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzes, researches, and interprets information of a technical, mathematical, or financial nature.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinks strategically and creatively, juggles multiple priorities, adjusts to changing circumstances, organizes time efficiently, and is attentive to details.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interprets a variety of instructions furnished in written, oral, diagram, or schedule form.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands customer needs and delivers excellent quality services.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interprets and understands legal and business requirements and mentors participants in order to stay in compliance.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercises judgement and discretion in establishing, applying, and interpreting policies and procedures.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with agency personnel, officials, and the general public.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans, assigns, supervises, and coaches the work of subordinate positions as needed or instructed.
	Management Preferences:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handles escalated callers professionally; balancing the needs of the caller with the needs of the agency.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent strategic interaction skills.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciative of receiving constructive feedback and effective at providing constructive feedback.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong understanding of retirement benefits with a customer service/contact center background.
Education and Experience Recommended	Bachelor's degree from an appropriately accredited institution and three (3) years of experience related to the area of assignment; or an equivalent combination of training and experience.
License or Certification Required by Statute or Regulation	N/A
Initiator	
Completed	Yes

Description of Work	
<p>Describe in detail the major work functions of this position as well as the duties and responsibilities required for each of those functions. At least one major function is required, however most jobs usually have between 3 and 5. Indicate the percentage of time (%) the employee spends in each major function. The percentage amounts should add up to 100%. In addition, indicate with an asterisk (*) if a function is considered an essential duty/function as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.</p>	
Description of Work	30% Counseling Center Support

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide real-time support to Counseling Center staff in resolving member inquiries.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document issues daily on the Team-Lead spreadsheet.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with Counseling Center Supervisors to assist with coaching and training.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports performance management plans issued to individual team members.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides resolution to complicated and/or unresolved issues and escalations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with call, email, workflow, chat and any other volumes on high volume days proactively and responsibly, modeling exceptional strategic interaction and call handling skills.
	<p>25% Coaching and Monitoring</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides side-by side coaching for team members who require additional assistance.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors workflow; monitors a pre-determined amount of calls per employee per month; monitors error rates and turn-around times in concert with operating standards.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct call calibration sessions with Management Team on a pre-determined schedule.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorizes the error rates to determine the appropriate format for improvement; develops and implements interventions to reduce error rates of individual employees or the group as a whole.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors Counseling Center Telephony systems, including the Client Management System, providing coverage as needed.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that correct and thorough information is provided to members.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that adequate Journal notes are saved in the member's account history for future reference.
	<p>20% Callbacks, Workflow Management and Escalations</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond efficiently to callback requests.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds quickly to the Workflow QC box items.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds within 24 hours to Team Lead email box escalations.
	<p>10% Training</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides weekly training-needs' report to Counseling Center Leadership for review.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively participates in team meetings and leads training initiatives in a positive and professional manner. Supports the business by keeping the agency and the Counseling Center mission at the forefront of all decisions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves as the subject matter expert for all Counseling Center training materials.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with training and developing new staff.
	<p>15% Team Leadership & Reporting</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists with producing, analyzing and managing Client Management System reports used to identify trends, AUX codes usage, adherence and other statistics tied to Counseling Center efficiency and performance.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads the team in establishing and supporting change initiatives, policies and processes.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates in a professional, positive, helpful and supportive manner.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively participates in discussions around ideas, issues and/or obstacles at the appropriate time, in the appropriate place and in a professional manner.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instrumental in assisting with ticket development, ticket tracking, reporting, training and testing.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional duties will be assigned as department and division needs arise.³⁰

Retirement Center Supervisor Job Description

Call Center Supervisor	
Beacon Position Number	60009123
Work Schedule	
Work Hours	
Primary Purpose of the Organizational Unit	<p>The Retirement Systems Division of the Department of State Treasurer administers the North Carolina Retirement Systems retirement benefits, death and disability benefits and the North Carolina Supplemental Retirement Plans created under North Carolina state law. The North Carolina Retirement Systems Division provides benefits to 900,000 members, including: teachers, state government employees, local governmental employees, firefighters, rescue squad workers, judges, law enforcement officers, and many other public workers.</p>

The primary purpose for the Member Services' Section of the Retirement Systems Division is to provide the full range of retirement education, correspondence services and one-on-one counseling and training for all members and employers concerning retirement and disability benefits, statutory provisions, new legislation and information supporting the effectiveness of these efforts. The Member Services Department is critical to the operation of RSD in making sure the delivery of technical benefit information and the interpretation of laws, rules, policies and practices are accurate and in alignment with what is in the best interest of the members and for the agency. Member Services includes the Call Center, the Education Retirement Group and the Learning and Development departments. The Call Center Retirement Benefit Counselors assist members with their inquiries by phone, receiving more than 280,000 calls per year. The Retirement Benefit Counselors in the Educational Retirement Group (ERG) assist more than 3,500 members face-to-face with paperwork, quick questions or one-on-one individual counseling sessions, they conduct over 50 Retirement Readiness webinars and simulcasts, hold more than 180 education Retirement Presentations around the state with over 10,000 attendees nearing retirement per year, they provide monthly employer training averaging more than 30 attendees at each session and they answer more than 30,000 e-mails and correspondence inquiries per year. The Learning and Development group supports all of RSD by conducting more than 80 training sessions for staff per year and by providing quality coaching and monitoring of more than 1,000 calls per year.

<p>Primary Purpose of the Position</p>	<p>The primary purpose of this position is to recruit, hire and provide supervision and leadership to the Member Services Call Center team. This leader must be aware of HR and administrative practices, procedures and policies for the division and lead accordingly. This position is critical in leading the team in the right direction, exercising good judgment and establishing and applying processes that are in the best interest of the members and the agency. This position is responsible for documenting performance results and providing feedback to direct reports on a regular basis, exercising the performance management process and guidelines as documented. This position interacts with all departments, seeking answers and resolution to member's inquiries and is expected to establish and maintain professional relationships with all. This position is responsible for reporting on call volume, call trends and performance and is expected to plan and problem solve in a manner that is most productive for the team. In this role the Call Center Supervisor works with Member Services leadership to analyze, update, report on and enhance team processes and procedures ensuring that goals and expectations are met. This position tests, audits, assesses and reports on Call Center technology and reporting tools, call center management systems and call center equipment supplies on a regular basis ensuring that the call center operation is as efficient, as well staffed and as well maintained as possible.</p>
<p>Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Recommended in this Position</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable knowledge of general retirement processes, benefits, rules and policies • Ability to supervise others effectively; creating a collaborative and developmental workplace • Exercises sound judgment, good attention to detail and urgency when addressing performance issues with staff • Considerable knowledge of call center functions and • Effective oral and written communication skills • Ability to instruct; motivate, train and present information effectively • Possesses interviewing skills and responds effectively to an educationally diverse population • Ability to adapt to changing situations

	• Ability to analyze, research and interpret information of a technical and statistical nature
	• Ability to think strategically and creatively
	• Ability to multi-task, organize, prioritize and adapt to changing situations effectively
	• Ability to understand team, division and customer needs and deliver excellent quality services.
	• Ability to lead, coach and develop others effectively
Education and Experience Recommended	Graduation from a four-year college or university with a major emphasis in business or public administration or a related field and four years of benefits or human resources experience; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Description of Work

Describe in detail the major work functions of this position as well as the duties and responsibilities required for each of those functions. At least one major function is required, however most jobs usually have between 3 and 5. Indicate the percentage of time (%) the employee spends in each major function. The percentage amounts should add up to 100%. In addition, indicate with an asterisk (*) if a function is considered an essential duty/function as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Description of Work	<p>70% Supervise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages performance of call center staff ensuring that plans are developed with measurable goals, that good and/or excellent performance is documented and recognized, ensuring that poor performance is addressed appropriately and documented and ensures that processes and expectations around performance and team goals are followed consistently. • Conducts monthly one-on-one meetings with staff to review individual and team metrics, providing recognition for high performance and coaching for performance improvement. • Conducts mid-year and annual one-on-one performance evaluation meetings for all staff • Analyzes team performance, documents trends and reports metrics to leadership weekly, monthly and quarterly
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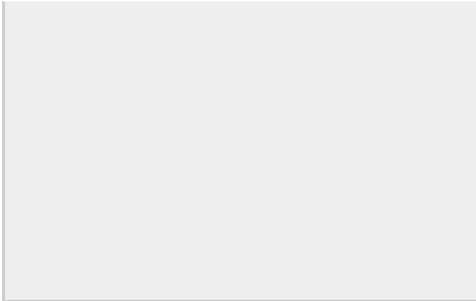
- Partners with the Learning & Development team to ensure effective Quality Management is exercised for the Call Center team
- Reviews existing policies, procedures, and guidelines and proposes changes as needed to achieve maximum productivity, better customer service and efficiency within the Call Center.
- Provides technical insight regarding retirement escalations, laws and existing policies and procedures
- Leads the talent acquisition processes for Call Center staff, ensuring adherence to HR policies and procedures, and selecting the most qualified and best-suited candidate to submit to MS leadership for approval
- Plans and coordinates on-boarding, initial training for new hires, staff development training as well as performance improvement training for existing call center staff
- Participates or leads projects, process improvement initiatives and other duties as assigned.

15% Support

- Acts as a liaison between the members/employers and the RSD teams within the division
- Assists call center counselors and team leads with benefit program information such as entitlement, eligibility, obligations, options, benefits and applicable provisions as needed.
- Ensures that call center staff is trained to objectively analyze members' situations, selecting and applying the appropriate regulations and communicating options appropriately when applicable.
- Ensures the call center staff has what they need to properly interpret and apply legislation to individual situations.

15% Research

- Assists call center staff with research to answer member inquiries when needed
- Researches and provides call history, call trends and call drivers regularly and as requested



- Researches and provides statistical, performance, adherence and attendance data as needed
- Researches and provides case history, recorded call information, journal entry data and situational research as needed
- Researches and provides report details regarding call center systems, tools, equipment and supplies as needed

Comparison Table – Current vs. NC Market & Suggested

Role	Current Salary	Market Reference (NC)	Positioning vs Market	Suggested Salary Band (Guidance)
Retirement Benefits Counselor	\$55,209	State of NC Retirement Benefits Counselor range \$44,588–\$78,028; earlier range \$36,677–\$62,092 (<i>Government Jobs</i>)	Within current state range; around mid-market for experienced counselors	\$50,000 – \$62,000 (with progression to high-50s/low-60s for senior incumbents)
Retirement Counseling Center Team Lead	\$59,452	Call/Customer Service Team Leader in NC avg ~\$60,000–61,000, typical range \$50,000–65,000 (<i>Glassdoor</i>)	Very close to market midpoint; modestly above generic call center leads	\$58,000 – \$66,000 (to widen gap vs Counselor and reflect added leadership scope)
Counseling Center Supervisor	\$74,414	NC/ Raleigh Call Center Supervisor average salary \$56,000–63,500; typical range \$58,000–89,000 depending on source (<i>Salary.com; Glassdoor; Indeed</i>)	At/above ~75th percentile; appropriately premium for specialized retirement contact center leadership	\$70,000 – \$82,000 (maintain premium market position for experienced supervisors)

Bands

Recommendation for HRIS FMLA Tracker Implementation

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to recommend the implementation of an HRIS-based FMLA tracker to improve compliance, prevent FMLA stacking, and enhance workforce planning for the Counseling Center.

Background

During the discovery and assessment phase, we identified significant challenges in managing FMLA leave. Manual tracking increases compliance risk and disrupts staffing forecasts, impacting service levels and operational efficiency. Because counseling roles are specialized, many centers set a *maximum daily threshold* (e.g., no more than 1–2 specialists per team on FMLA intermittent leave at the same time). This is not the case in the NC Retirement Systems Counseling Center. However, every center is business specific, so to assist in management we suggest an electronic tracking system to improve workforce planning and resource management.

Recommendation

After evaluating multiple solutions, we recommend implementing an HRIS based tracking system. We are aware of two different platforms and have provided you with the links for AbsenceSoft or Tilt Leave Management. Both platforms offer automated FMLA tracking, compliance alerts, and integration with existing HRIS systems. There are other systems available, and we sought out solutions designed for mid-sized organizations and provide scalability without enterprise-level costs.

Estimated Cost

Based on industry benchmarks and vendor data, the estimated annual cost for these solutions ranges from \$8,000 to \$15,000, depending on the number of employees and selected features. This includes setup, licensing, and support.

Operational Impact

Implementing an HRIS FMLA tracker will:

- Reduce compliance risk by automating eligibility and documentation.
- Improve workforce planning and coverage by providing real-time visibility into leave usage.
- Minimize scheduling disruptions caused by extended or overlapping absences.

Resources:

Several resources have been used to find more information on this recommendation.

[Tilt Platform Pricing - Tilt Leave Management Software](#)

[AbsenceSoft Reviews 2025: Pricing, Features & More](#)

[J. J. Keller® Leave Manager](#)

[Leave Management Software | FMLA Tracking Solution | LeaveManager.com](#)

[J. J. Keller FMLA Manager 2025 Pricing, Features, Reviews & Alternatives | GetApp](#)