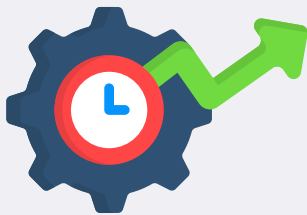


Financial Impact of Dental Assistants on the Dental Practice

New research reveals the tangible, financial value that dental assistants deliver.



Dental assistants make a meaningful impact on dental practice productivity.

94% of dental leaders believe dental assistants help improve patient retention.

Dental practices that support their dental assistants have improved bottom lines.

A survey of dental leaders found that dental practices that provided higher dental assistant wages also benefited from:

- Greater patient retention
- Higher dental assistant retention
- Increased estimated practice profitability



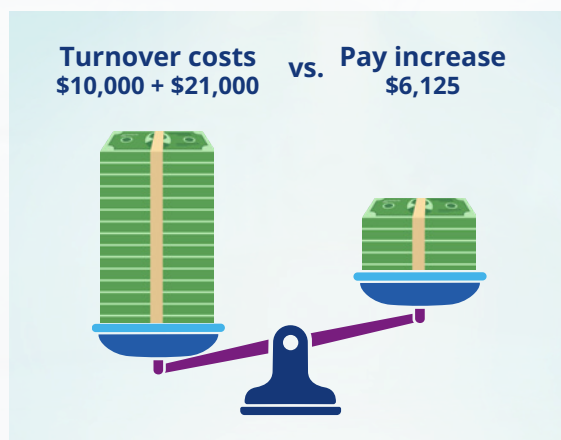
Increasing dental assistant pay will reap financial returns.

Reduce dental assistant turnover + Save hiring and training costs + Preserve at-risk revenue = **Gain cost savings and increased revenue**

Salary is a top job factor for dental assistants. Insufficient pay is the top reason for dental assistants' dissatisfaction at work and the number one reason assistants leave the profession. Increasing pay can increase retention while offsetting the costs of turnover — resulting in increased productivity and higher revenues.

15% increase in dental assistant pay (\$6,125 annually)*

*Based on a dental assistant earning \$23/hour, working a 35-hour week for 50 weeks, and receiving a \$3.50 raise



Dental practices spend significant time and resources on hiring and training.

The average dental practice hires **3 dental assistants every 2 years**, either to fill a vacant role or to grow the team.

Dental practices spend approximately **5 months hiring and training** a new dental assistant.

It takes practices in rural settings **almost twice as long** to hire compared to practices in urban settings.



Hiring and training to fill vacant dental assistant roles strains the dental team's productivity and efficiency.

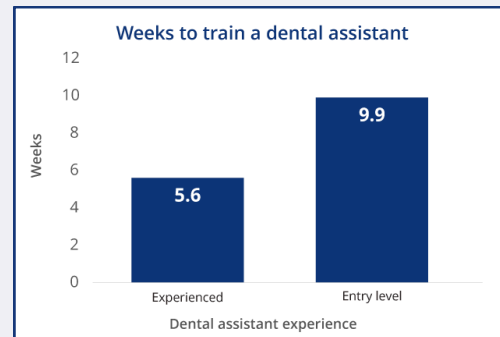
How long does it take to hire?

It takes an **average of 2.5 months** to fill the position. Rural and specialty practices take longer to hire than urban and general dental practices.



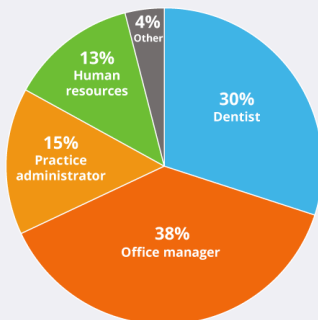
How long does it take to train?

An **average of 1 to 2.5 months** is spent training new hires. Entry-level dental assistants require more training than experienced assistants.



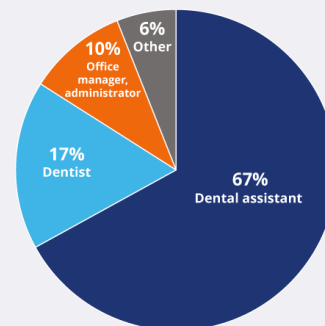
Who is responsible for hiring?

Dentists' and office managers' time is devoted to hiring the new dental assistant.



Who is responsible for training?

Dental assistants are often responsible for training a new dental assistant.





The cost of dental assistant turnover affects the dental practice for months.

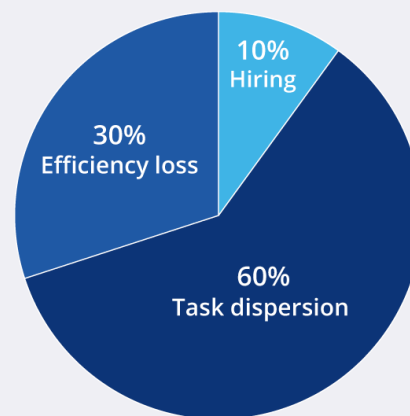
Cost of dental assistant turnover

\$10,000 (25% of the dental assistant's annual pay)



Expenses related to dental assistant turnover and unfilled positions are cumulative and include the **direct costs** of advertising and recruiting, as well as **indirect costs** such as training and orientation, loss of productivity, and reduced patient volume.

Turnover cost breakdown



At-risk revenue

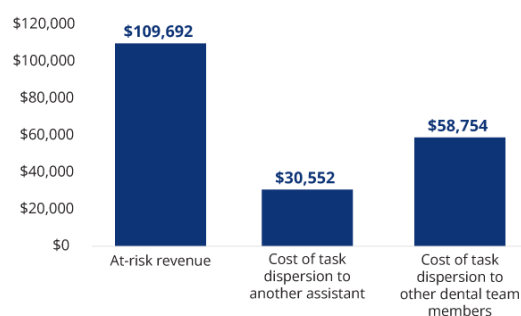
\$21,000 (1.2% of the practice's annual revenue)

Costs per year

There are numerous financial costs to vacant dental assistant positions, and hiring to fill open roles is even more challenging now due to the ongoing shortage of qualified dental assistants.

If the dental practice had an open dental assistant position for a full year, it could potentially incur even greater costs and lose out on significant revenues.

Annual costs of dental assistant vacancies



Note: Cost of turnover is based on a dental assistant earning \$40,000/year. At-risk revenue is based on practice revenue of \$1.8 million and the dental assistant position being vacant for 10 weeks. Costs of task dispersion represent the additional costs beyond the wages that would have been paid to the dental assistant, if the position were filled.



Dental practices are negatively impacted financially by dental assistant vacancies.

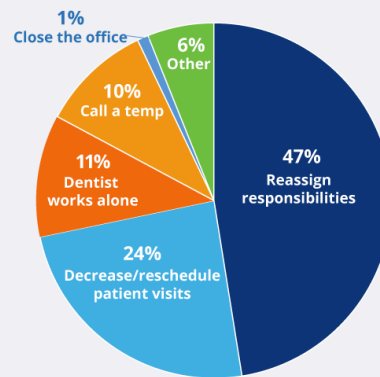
When the dental assistant is out of the office, practices adjust schedules and responsibilities.

1 in 4 dental practices decrease or reschedule patient visits. As a result, dental practices experience a **6% decrease in average daily revenue**.

For public clinics, the impact is more significant, with **almost half** decreasing or rescheduling patient visits.

1 in 2 dental practices reassign the dental assistants' responsibilities, which leads to a **76% increase in daily cost** for the practice.

Adjusted schedules and responsibilities

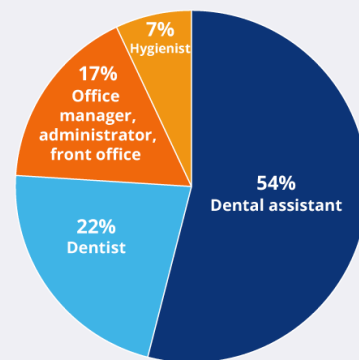


Other team members take on more tasks when a dental assistant role is vacant.

More than half of reassigned tasks are delegated to **another dental assistant**.

About one-quarter of reassigned tasks are taken on by the **dentist**, the role with the **highest labor cost**.

Delegation of dental assistant duties



About the research

The Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) and the DALE Foundation conducted this research project with consulting firm Global Skills X-Change. The survey was distributed in December 2023 through several partner organizations, including the American Association of Dental Office Management, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, the National Network for Oral Health Access, and other contact lists.

Survey respondents included dentists, dental office managers, and dental practice administrators from every U.S. state, including urban and rural regions. Respondents also represented a mix of general and specialty practices, as well as private practices, dental support organizations (DSOs), and nonprofit/public clinics. More than 560 responses were received and analyzed, with a 95% confidence level and 5-6% margin of error.