

Turnover to Tenure:

Compensation and Scheduling Strategies That Keep Officers on Post



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Executive Summary

Security is a people business. When officers leave, quality drops, unbilled overtime soars, and profit margins vanish. Our data shows annual turnover can run anywhere from 100 percent to 400 percent, depending on the business model and working environment. Even when you keep the figure conservative at two thousand dollars per guard for recruiting, onboarding, and overtime backfill, a firm with 300 officers and a 120 percent churn rate leaks more than seven hundred thousand dollars a year.

Our analysis of 200 Belfry customers, 85 metrics, and 600 million data points confirms one clear pattern: firms that pay competitively, publish predictable schedules, and use technology to ensure guards grow faster and keep more revenue in-house.

This white paper distills those findings into an action plan:

- 1 Quantify the hard costs of turnover.
- 2 Adopt compensation policies that lock in baseline loyalty.
- 3 Build schedules that respect work-life balance and eliminate last-minute scrambles.
- 4 Layer in Belfry’s shift marketplace, mobile self-service, and payroll automation to sustain results.
- 5 Forecast your own savings and next steps.

The Hidden Cost of Constant Churn

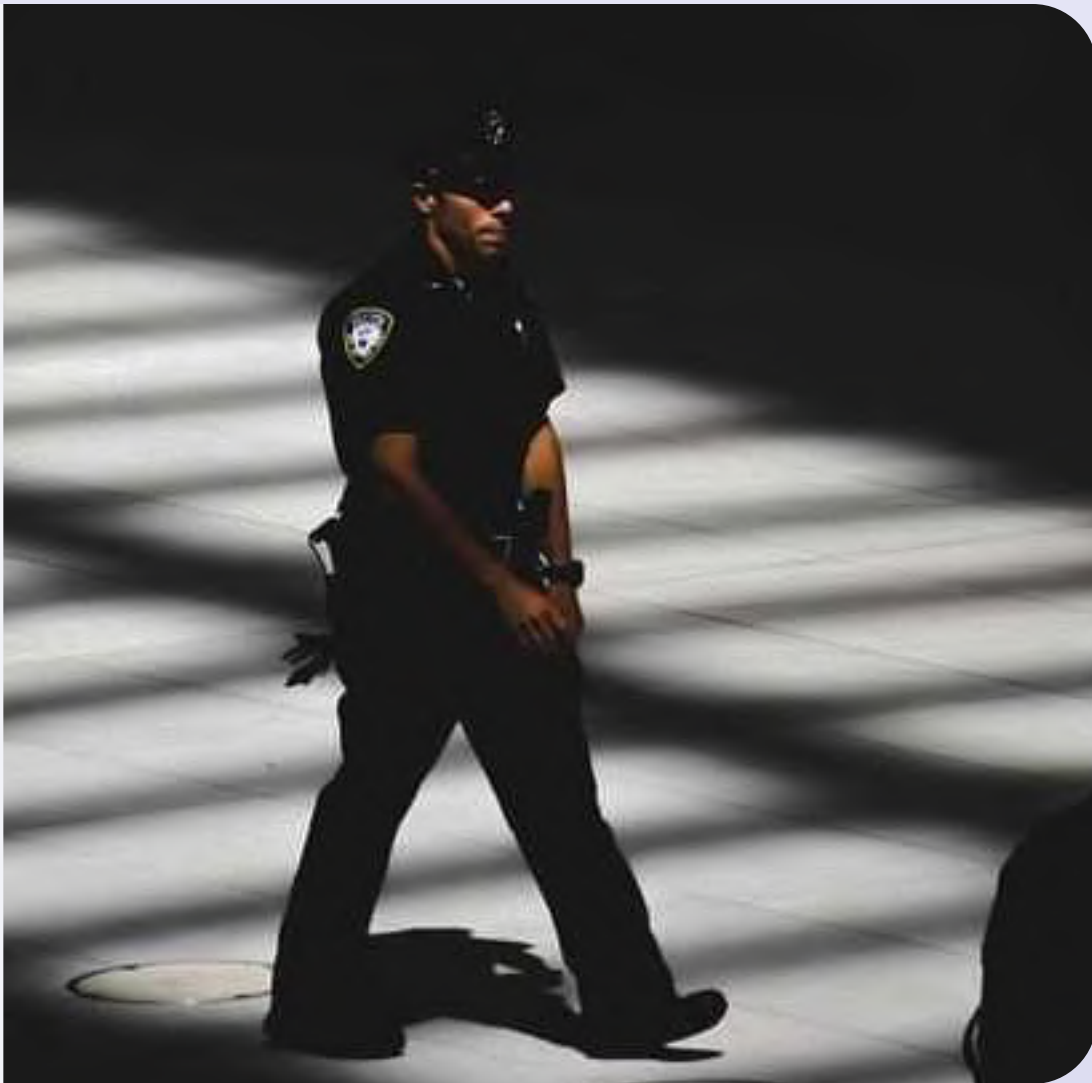
Every time an officer walks, your business pays twice: once to replace the employee and again in overtime and client risk.



Average annualized turnover in contract security exceeds

120%

Source: ASIS 2024 Industry Report



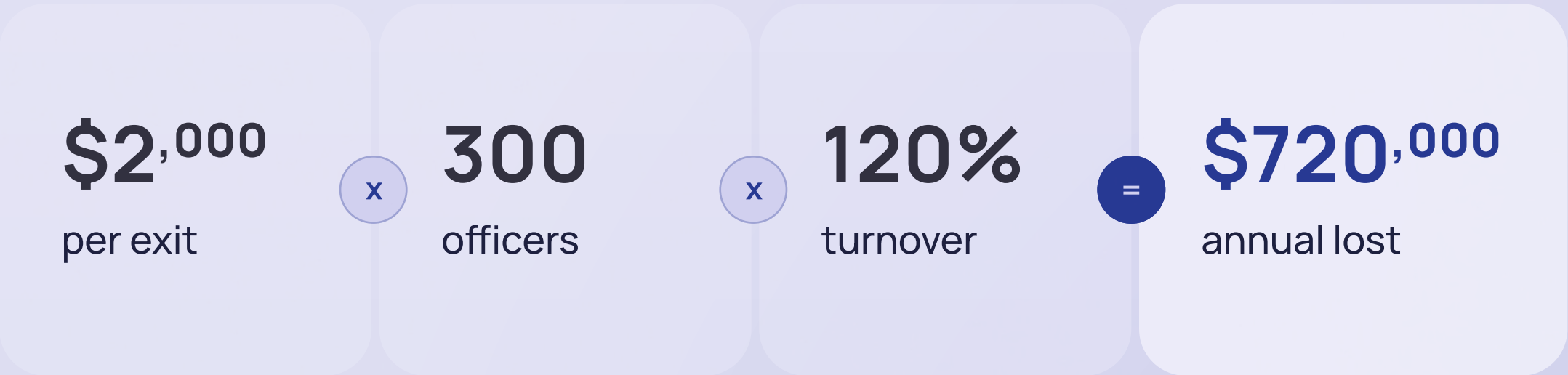
High churn erodes profit through:

Direct Costs

- ✓ Job ads
- ✓ Background checks
- ✓ Uniforms
- ✓ Training

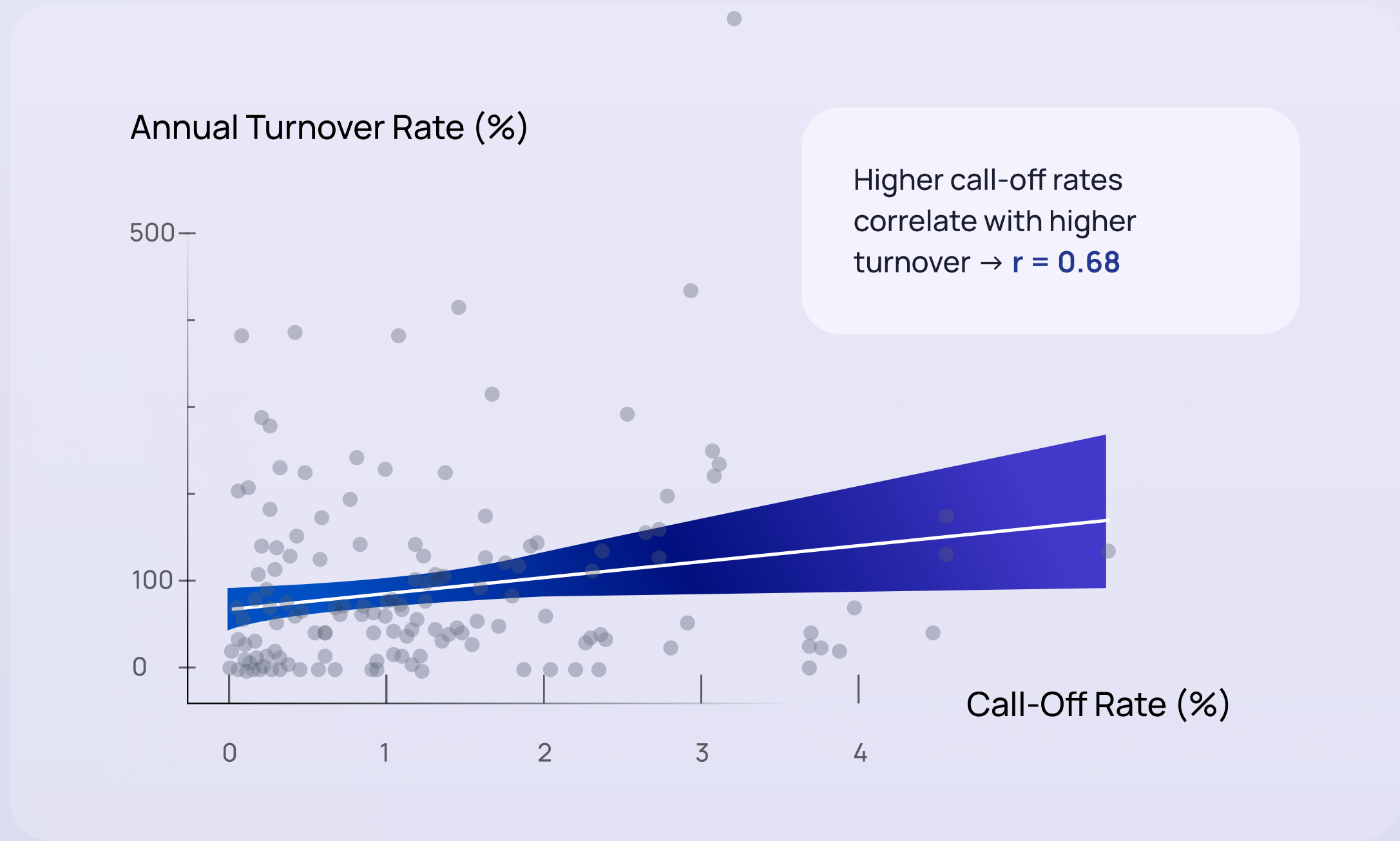
Indirect Costs

- ✓ Supervisor overtime
- ✓ Compliance risk
- ✓ Lost new-contract opportunities

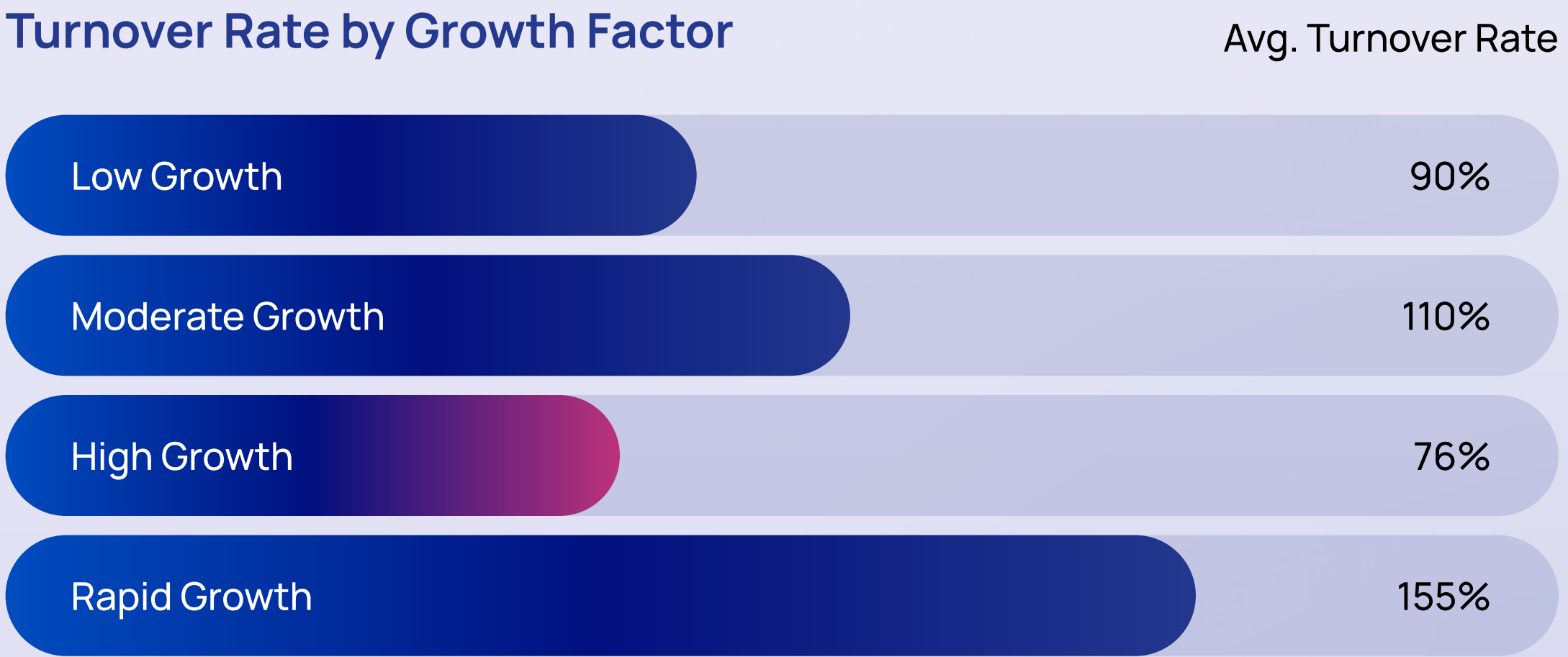


Call-Offs, Absenteeism, and Their Financial Drag

Call-offs are the early-warning signal for churn. High absenteeism triggers last-minute overtime and spoils service quality, forcing account managers to fight fires instead of upselling new contracts.



But there’s a silver lining. Fast-growing firms see more churn, yet the key is converting that early instability into durable staffing as new clients come aboard. Among companies growing 10% to 45%, the average turnover rate hovers around 76%, a workable midpoint between stagnation and chaos.

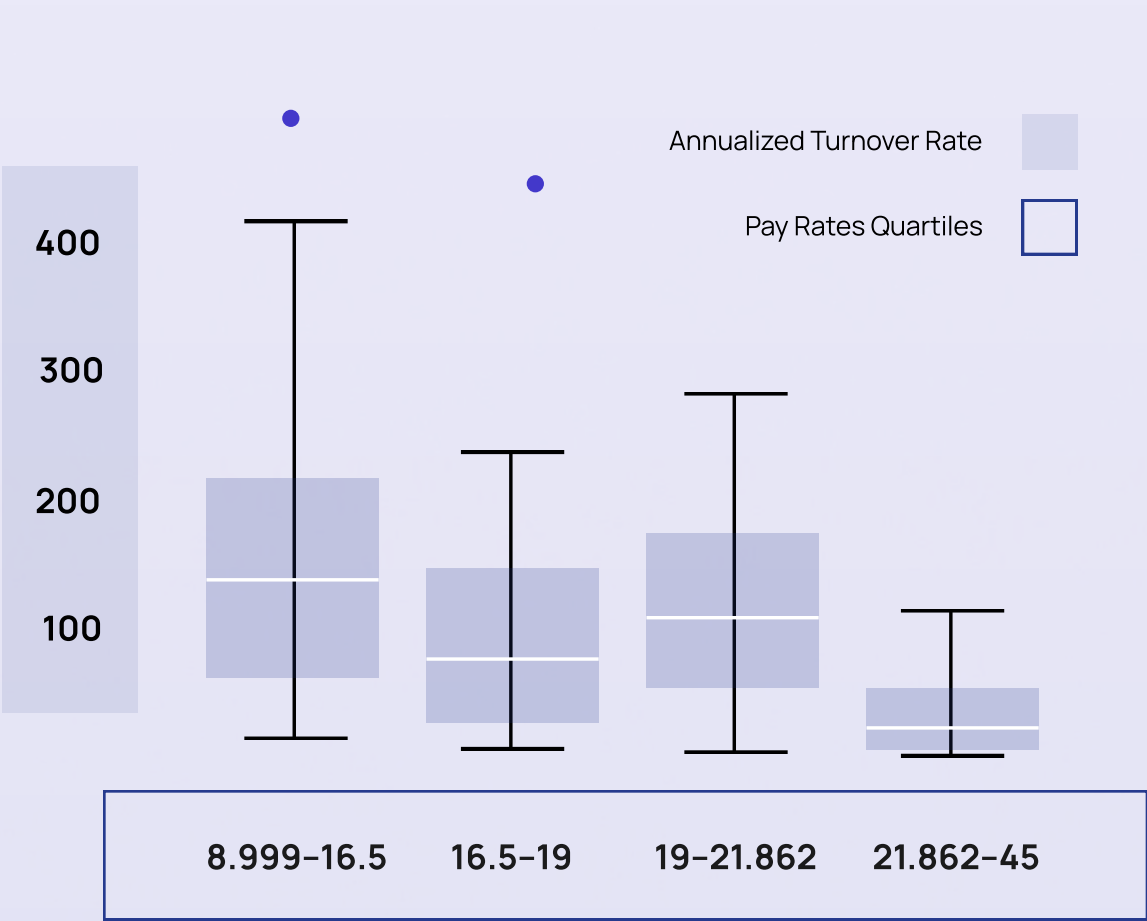
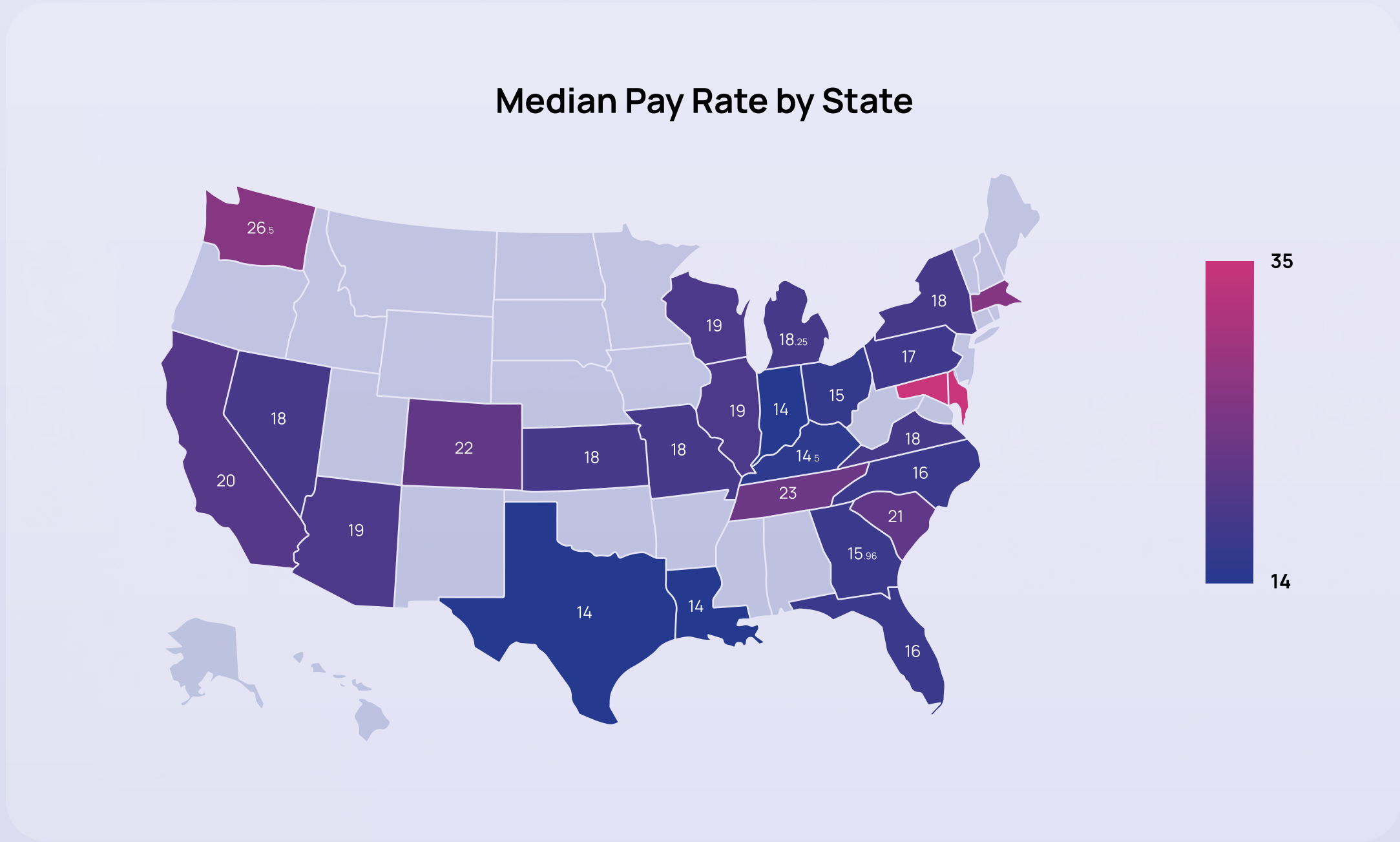


Relative Growth Factor → Low: ≤ -9% | Moderate: -9% to +10% | High: 10% to 45% | Rapid: 45%+

Good	Turnover in periods of scheduled instability (rapid expansion)
Bad	Turnover in periods of operational stability (baseline turnover)

Compensation: Your Baseline Lever

Our state-by-state analysis shows **median pay ranges** from **\$14 per hour in Texas** to **\$35 in Maryland**.



Companies stuck in the bottom quartile of local pay experience **30% higher churn**.

Our data shows a **10% raise** reduces churn **roughly twelve percent**.

While not always a viable lever, security firms that prioritize competitive pay structures see reduced call-offs and turnover.

Best Practices:

- 1 Benchmark pay quarterly against local medians plus vertical premiums.
- 2 Tie micro-bonuses to attendance, punctuality, and incident-free shifts.
- 3 Fund raises with savings from reduced hiring and overtime.

Scheduling for Stability

Erratic rosters drive exits faster than any other factor except pay.
Flexible shift access cuts no-shows.

Companies using Belfry’s **Shift-Offer Engine** post open slots to a verified pool of officers, filling them faster than phone-based dispatch. Mobile self-service lets guards swap or claim shifts inside compliance rules, boosting schedule ownership and lowering call-offs.

What you can do to reduce call-offs:

-  Publish schedules at least two weeks in advance.
-  Offer split shifts for part-time officers where contracts allow.
-  Guarantee twelve hours off between posts.
-  Reward perfect-attendance streaks with priority shift selection.

Book a Demo

→

Send Offer

✓ Set up Offer

✓ Select Officers

✓ Review & Send

Shift Details

Post

Date

Time

Pay Rate

Edit

Offer Details

Offer Messages

Timecard

Bradley Johnson

Scheduled

Actual

Pay Breakdown

Notes

Metrics that matter

Retention improves fastest when leaders track a tight set of operational KPIs and review them every pay period. Below are the four that signal progress—or trouble—most clearly.

KPI	Why it matters	Target Range
Call-Off Rate	Early warning sign of disengagement; spikes preceed churn	< 3% weekly
Vacancy Fill Time	Measures scheduling afility; long fill times lead to overtime.	< 4h: short notice < 24h: advance posts
First-90-Day Turnover	Early warning sign of disengagement; spikes preceed churn	< 15% quarterly
Unbilled Overtime Hours	Early warning sign of disengagement; spikes preceed churn	Trending down Quarter x Quarter

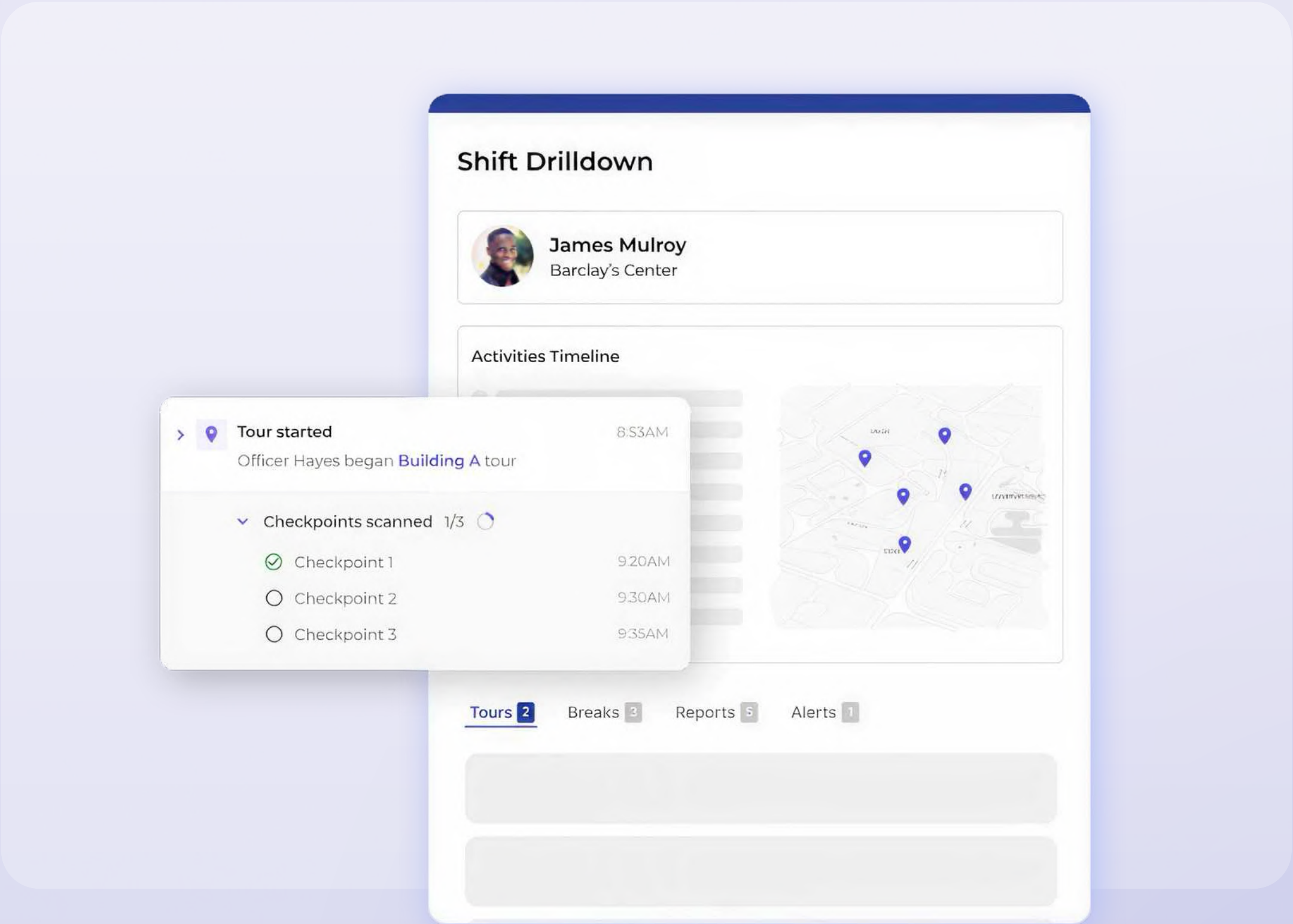
 Use Belfry to help track these metrics.

Onboarding, Payroll, and the First-Week Experience

Turnover spikes in the first 90 days. Belfry helps tackle this with:

- Guided mobile onboarding trims paperwork time from 2 hrs to 25 minutes.
- Same-day pay options through instant payroll cards.
- Payroll accuracy: one system stores hours, rates, taxes, and deductions.
- Automated license tracking to prevent accidental suspensions.

Companies that adopt Belfry’s onboarding flow see a reduction in first-month attrition.



Key Takeaways



Turnover is **the norm, not the exception**. Annual churn across contract security averages 120 percent.



Each departure hurts the bottom line. Replacing one officer costs about **\$2,000** in ads, screening, uniforms, and onboarding time.



Absenteeism signals bigger problems. The call-off rate and overall turnover move together with a correlation of **$r = 0.68$**



Competitive pay pays off. A **10 percent** wage bump lowers churn roughly **12 percent** in our pay-versus-turnover analysis.



Stability and growth can coexist. Firms expanding 10 to 45% a year hold turnover near 76 percent, far better than the industry average



Digital shift offers speed coverage. Electronic offers fill open posts **three times faster** than phone calls.



Local benchmarks matter. Median officer pay runs from \$14/hour in Texas to \$35 in Maryland.

