

The Best Places to Work in the Federal Government®

The Best Places to Work in the Federal Government® rankings, produced by the Partnership for Public Service and Boston Consulting Group, offer the most comprehensive assessment of employee engagement and satisfaction across the federal workforce. The 2021 rankings include 503 federal agencies and their subcomponents, the most in the history of Best Places to Work: Seventeen large agencies, 25 midsize agencies, 29 small agencies and 432 subcomponents are featured in total. A complete list of the rankings and accompanying data is available at bestplacestowork.org.

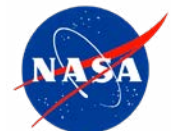
The 2021 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government employee engagement and satisfaction score is 64.5 out of 100, representing a 4.5-point decrease from 2020. This downturn came as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to disrupt the federal workforce during the November and December of 2021 survey period. During this time, tens of thousands of civil servants faced uncertainty about returning to the office after more than a year and a half of working remotely part or full-time, while a large portion of the workforce remained on the frontlines performing critical public services as the health crisis persisted.

The sizable drop in employee engagement and satisfaction came during President Biden's first year in office, presenting a major challenge for an administration that has described federal employees as the "backbone of our government."

Although the private sector has faced many of the same workplace issues as the government during the pandemic, data provided by the employee research firm Mercer placed the 2021 private sector employee engagement and satisfaction score at 79.1 out of 100, 14.6 points higher than the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government tally.

Additional Key Facts

- For the 10th year in a row, NASA achieved the number one Best Places to Work ranking among large federal agencies, scoring 85.1 out of 100. In the midsize category, the Government Accountability Office maintained its first place ranking with a score of 89.8, while the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation is the top ranked small agency with a score of 85.6.
- The Department of Homeland Security ranked last among 17 large agencies for the 10th straight year, posting a 2021 score of 56.5 out of 100. The Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency and the National Labor Relations Board tied for last place in the midsize category with scores of 60.9 points, while the Federal Election Commission ranked last among 29 small agencies with a score of 56.8.
- The National Endowment for the Humanities improved by 20.5 points from 2020 for a score of 84.9 out of 100, jumping from 25th to second place in the small agency rankings. The U.S. Agency for Global Media improved by 11.7 points for a score of 64.7, the largest increase among midsize agencies, while the Department of Veterans Affairs was the only large agency to register an improved score in 2021, moving from eighth place to fifth place in the rankings for a tally of 70.2.



- The Federal Trade Commission fell from second to 22nd place in the midsize rankings, dropping 24.2 points for a score of 64.9 out of 100. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service dropped 14.4 points and from 11th to 24th place among small agencies for a score of 66.1. Among the large agencies, the Department of Transportation dropped 8.1 points and fell from third to seventh place in the rankings for a score of 68.0.
- Federal workers were largely positive about how agency leaders supported their well-being during the pandemic, posting a score of 85.2 out of 100 based on a series of questions related to COVID-19. But views on agency handling of “return to work” planning were less positive, with the score in a separate COVID-19 category on the possible return to the physical office standing at just 63.0. This score reflects concerns about effective communication regarding future plans and employee safety.
- This uncertainty over the return to the physical office occurred as fewer employees teleworked every day when employees were surveyed in November 2021. Just 36.2% teleworked full-time then compared with 47.3% in September and October of 2021 and 59.0% in 2020 just after the pandemic began.
- Supervisors drew a rating of 79.8 out of 100 when judged on their leadership, with senior leaders rated considerably lower at 56.1. Employees gave their work units a score of 84.9 out of 100 based on performance and a score of 79.9 on the performance of their agency, but only 61.2 for satisfaction with pay and 59.8 for agency efforts to recognize good work through awards and advancement.
- Those in the age range of 30 to 39 had the lowest employee engagement score of any age group, while employees aged 60 and over registered the highest satisfaction. Low engagement scores were recorded for those identifying as LGBTQ, people with disabilities, Native Americans and Alaskans, and those who identified as two or more races.



The majority of the data used to develop the Best Places to Work rankings was collected by the Office of Personnel Management through its Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.