The Best Places to Work

IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT®

What the Categories Measure

The vast majority of data used to develop the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government® rankings was collected through the Office of Personnel Management's Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS).

We use three of the survey questions to calculate the Best Places to Work index score that determines the overall agency rankings. We also group questions from the survey into 10 categories that measure employee views on various aspects of their jobs and workplaces, from leadership to work–life balance.

The number in parentheses following each question is the corresponding question number in the FEVS.

CATEGORIES

Index Score

Effective Leadership
- Empowerment
- Fairness
- Senior Leaders
- Supervisors

Employee Skills-Mission Match

Pay

Strategic Management

Teamwork

Innovation

Training and Development

Work-Life Balance

Support for Diversity

Performance-Based Rewards and Advancement

INDEX SCORE

Measures the performance of agencies and their sub-components related to employee satisfaction and commitment. The index is weighted according to the extent to which each question predicts "intent to remain."

- I recommend my organization as a good place to work. (Q. 40)

- Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job? (Q. 69)

- Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your organization? (Q. 71)

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Measures the extent to which employees believe leadership at all levels of the organization generates motivation and commitment, encourages integrity and manages people fairly, while also promoting the professional development, creativity and empowerment of employees.

- Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by your immediate supervisor? (Q. 52)

- My supervisor provides me with opportunities to demonstrate my leadership skills. (Q. 43)

- Employees have a feeling of personal empowerment with respect to work processes. (Q. 30)

- Discussions with my supervisor about my performance are worthwhile. (Q. 44)

- I have a high level of respect for my organization's senior leaders. (Q. 61)

- In my organization, senior leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce. (Q. 53)

- My organization's senior leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity. (Q. 54)

- Arbitrary action, personal favoritism and coercion for partisan political purposes are not tolerated. (Q. 37)

- I can disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule or regulation without fear of reprisal. (Q. 17)

- Supervisors in my work unit support employee development. (Q. 47)

- How satisfied are you with your involvement in decisions that affect your work? (Q. 63)

- How satisfied are you with the information you receive from management on what's going on in your organization? (Q. 64)

Using factor analysis, we divided our effective leadership category into four different subcategories (see below) to help users interpret the findings more precisely. The subcategory scores for senior leaders and supervisors, for example, tend to differ. The 2014 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey included the following definitions:

Senior Leaders
The heads of departments/agencies and their immediate leadership team responsible for directing the policies and priorities of the department/agency. May hold either a political or career appointment and typically is a member of the Senior Executive Service or equivalent.

Managers
Those in management positions who typically supervise one or more supervisors.

Supervisors
First-line supervisors typically responsible for employees' performance appraisals and leave approval.

Non-Supervisor
Anyone who does not have supervisory responsibilities.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP: EMPOWERMENT

Measures the extent to which employees feel empowered with respect to work processes and how satisfied they are with their involvement in decisions that affect their work.

- Employees have a feeling of personal empowerment with respect to work processes. (Q. 30)

- How satisfied are you with your involvement in decisions that affect your work? (Q. 63)

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP: FAIRNESS

Measures the extent to which employees believe disputes are resolved fairly in their work units, whether employees believe arbitrary action and personal favoritism are tolerated and if employees feel comfortable reporting illegal activity without fear of reprisal.

- Arbitrary action, personal favoritism and coercion for partisan political purposes are not tolerated. (Q. 37)

- I can disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule or regulation without fear of reprisal. (Q. 17)

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP: SENIOR LEADERS

Measures the level of respect employees have for senior leaders, satisfaction with the amount of information provided by management and perceptions about senior leaders' honesty, integrity and ability to motivate employees.

- I have a high level of respect for my organization's senior leaders. (Q. 61)

- In my organization, senior leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce. (Q. 53)

- My organization's senior leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity. (Q. 54)

- How satisfied are you with the information you receive from management on what's going on in your organization? (Q. 64)

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP: SUPERVISORS

Measures employee opinions about their immediate supervisor's job performance, how well supervisors give employees the opportunity to demonstrate leadership skills and the extent to which employees feel supervisors support employee development and provide worthwhile feedback about job performance.

- Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by your immediate supervisor? (Q. 52)

- My supervisor provides me with opportunities to demonstrate my leadership skills. (Q. 43)

- Discussions with my supervisor about my performance are worthwhile. (Q. 44)

- Supervisors in my work unit support employee development. (Q. 47)

EMPLOYEE SKILLS–MISSION MATCH

Measures the extent to which employees feel that their skills and talents are used effectively. Furthermore, it assesses the level to which employees get satisfaction from their work and understand how their jobs are relevant to the organizational mission.

- My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment. (Q. 4)
- I like the kind of work I do. (Q. 5)
- My talents are used well in the workplace. (Q. 11)
- I know how my work relates to the agency's goals. (Q. 12)
- The work I do is important. (Q. 13)

PAY

Measures how satisfied employees are with their compensation.

- Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your pay? (Q. 70)

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Measures the extent to which employees believe that management ensures they have the necessary skills and abilities to do their jobs, is successful at hiring new employees with the necessary skills to help the organization and works to achieve the organizational goals with targeted personnel strategies and performance management.

- My work unit has the job-relevant knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish organizational goals. (Q. 29)
- My work unit is able to recruit people with the right skills. (Q. 21)
- The skill level in my work unit has improved in the past year. (Q. 27)
- Managers review and evaluate the organization's progress toward meeting its goals and objectives. (Q. 57)

TEAMWORK

Measures the extent to which employees believe they communicate effectively both inside and outside their team organizations, creating a friendly work atmosphere and producing high-quality work products.

- The people I work with cooperate to get the job done. (Q. 20)
- Managers promote communication among different work units (for example, about projects, goals and needed resources). (Q. 58)
- Employees in my work unit share job knowledge with each other. (Q. 26)

INNOVATION

The Innovation category measures employee perceptions of efforts to improve the way work is done, including their own personal motivation to promote change and the support and rewards they receive for promoting new ideas.

- I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things. (Q. 3)
- I am constantly looking for ways to do my job better. (Q. 8)
- Creativity and innovation are rewarded. (Q. 32)

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Measures the extent to which employees believe their development needs are assessed and appropriate training is offered, allowing them to do their jobs effectively and improve their skills.

- I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization. (Q. 1)
- I have enough information to do my job well. (Q. 2)
- My training needs are assessed. (Q. 18)
- How satisfied are you with the training you receive for your present job? (Q. 68)

WORK–LIFE BALANCE

Measures the extent to which employees consider their workloads reasonable and feasible, and managers support a balance between work and life.

- My supervisor supports my need to balance work and other life issues. (Q. 42)
- I have sufficient resources (for example, people, materials, budget) to get my job done. (Q. 9)
- My workload is reasonable. (Q. 10)

SUPPORT FOR DIVERSITY

Measures the extent to which employees believe that actions and policies of leadership and management promote and respect diversity.

- My supervisor is committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society. (Q. 45)
- Policies and programs promote diversity in the workplace (for example, recruiting minorities and women, training in awareness of diversity issues, mentoring). (Q. 34)
- Supervisors work well with employees of different backgrounds. (Q. 55)

PERFORMANCE-BASED REWARDS AND ADVANCEMENT

Measures the extent to which employees feel they are rewarded and promoted in a fair and timely manner for their performance and innovative contributions to their workplaces.

- Promotions in my work unit are based on merit. (Q. 22)

- Employees are recognized for providing high-quality products and services. (Q. 31)

- Creativity and innovation are rewarded. (Q. 32)

- My performance appraisal is a fair reflection of my performance. (Q. 15)

- How satisfied are you with the recognition you receive for doing a good job? (Q. 65)

- How satisfied are you with your opportunity to get a better job in your organization? (Q. 67)

The Best Places to Work in the Federal Government® rankings are produced by the Partnership for Public Service—a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to improving the effectiveness of government. As part of our strategy for change, we work with numerous agencies, many of which are represented in our Best Places to Work profiles and rankings, on everything from improving employee engagement to leadership development.

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