



The Department of Personnel and Administration administered a baseline statewide workforce opinion survey (WOS) in July 2008 to begin formally recording state employee's opinions in areas such as work environment, compensation, performance management, leadership and the nature of their work. It has been more than ten years since an opinion survey of this magnitude has been conducted with all State of Colorado employees. More than 12,000 responses to the survey indicate a strong desire for employees to voice their opinions. This response represents more than 20 percent of the state workforce, which is a huge response by survey standards.

While one can look at the results of this year's survey as a "snapshot in time", the intent and value of this opinion survey is to create a baseline of employee opinions or perceptions on state employment, and then begin to track the progress – either positive or negative – over time as issues are addressed. This is important to the current administration for several reasons: first, it gives management a better understanding on a macro level where to find opportunities for management improvements, policy improvements, or benefit changes; second, it supports the business theory that satisfied employees are more likely to stay in their current jobs, thus increasing employee retention and productivity; and, third, an annual survey provides a measurement tool by which management can evaluate changes to determine whether or not they achieve their desired effects, and fourth, it creates an avenue for data-driven management environment where management can look at all areas of its work environment and apply resources according to a broader spectrum of feedback from a larger group of employees that includes both state personnel system employees and employees in other personnel systems (i.e., higher education).

To manage employee expectations, it must also be stressed that, even though an issue ranked high in importance from employees, the progress by DPA and the other state departments to address any one particular issue in the short-term is heavily dictated by the resources the state has available to affect change. In short, the initiation of dialogue through vehicles such as an employee opinion survey is a long-term process that builds upon one change at a time and through as many employees as possible.

It is important to again stress that this survey, in a vacuum, does not attempt to draw any conclusions about the current status of state employment. Rather, it is a means of tracking opinions and attitudes in the years to come.

DPA would like to thank the HR community and department management for encouraging their employees to take the survey, and especially state employees themselves for taking the time and effort to be a part of this milestone endeavor.

## Survey Highlights

### **Favorable Findings**

In 37 of the survey questions, more than 75% of the respondents selected one of the agreement choices. These responses indicate that employees have an overall favorable view of working for the State. A sampling of questions that show the highest percentage of favorable responses from employees across all state departments and institutions of higher education can be grouped within several themes (highest percentages of answers were a sum of “strongly agree”, “agree”, or “slightly agree”).

### **Work Environment**

- “My work area is free from substance abuse.” (95.3%)
- “Workplace violence is not tolerated.” (94.7%)
- “Sexual harassment is not tolerated.” (93.6%)
- “Overall, I am satisfied with my coworkers.” (86.2%)

### **Nature of Work**

- “I provide a valuable service to the public.” (98.3%)
- “Quality of work is expected as much as speed of outcomes.” (86.1%)
- “The work I do is interesting.” (92.8%)
- “Exceeding customer expectations is encouraged.” (88.5%)

### **Job Security/Benefits**

- “My employment with my department is secure.” (88.3%)
- “I am satisfied with the paid leave I receive” (82.6%)
- “I am satisfied with the retirement plan provided.” (87.4%)

### **Opportunities for Improvement**

The areas in which employees have concerns also fell into several general themes. Analyses suggest that employees are concerned about the areas of job stress, medical benefits, performance pay, pay practices, and employment decision fairness. Analyses of the demographic data suggest that job stress increases with increases in the level of position held in the state, years with the state, and age. A sampling of questions that show the highest percentage of less favorable responses from employees across all state departments and institutions of higher education are grouped as follows.

### **Benefits/Pay**

- “I am satisfied with the medical plan options provided.” (56.5%)
- “Employee pay raises are tied to employee performance.” (55.9%)
- “Job opportunities outside my department do not interest me.” (53.7%)
- “Excellent work is rewarded better than average work.” (52.7%)
- “Pay practices encourage productivity.” (50.2%)

## **Workload and Fairness**

“My job is stressful.” (87.8%)

“Favoritism does not enter into employment decisions” (e.g., hiring, promoting). (50.2%)

The Table below shows the statements having the highest and lowest rating averages of the 71 statements. This table represents the top and bottom 10% of the ratings averages.

## **Conclusion**

### **Action Steps – What’s Next?**

While the 2008 Workforce Opinion Survey results did not significantly depart from what are considered common perceptions among state employees, they do reinforce many of the areas where DPA and other departments are already concentrating on making improvements -- performance management, total compensation, and creating a more robust recognition program to name a few. These are topics that ranked high as areas of concern for employees, yet they also help reinforce the state’s strategy. DPA will share the results of the opinion survey with departments and institutions of higher education to evaluate where common efforts can further be initiated, or to see if current efforts are misaligned with the survey results.

It should be reiterated that no individual employee’s responses were tracked. The results underscore the importance of giving employees a voice in their work and environment, yet addressing these areas are limited by the resources the state has to affect change. Only subsequent surveys in the coming years, as well as comparing survey results against industry/market standards will tell whether individual departments or the state as a whole has made any progress toward positive change.

The results of the survey will also be the subject of an ongoing dialogue with department/higher education management to define realistic areas where change can be initiated.

In response to employee’s suggestions on changes to next year’s survey, DPA will add an item to identify the classified or non-classified status of employees, include a space for making brief comments on some of the questions, include more departments/offices, and adjust the occupational groups demographic to reflect the current number of occupational groups.

Again, DPA would like to thank all the employees who completed this year’s survey and invite all employees to complete next year’s. Thank you for your interest and participation in making your working environment better.

[Entire Survey Demographics & Results](#)

[State Workforce Opinion Survey Scales](#)