



Financial Services Administration

Addressing Employee Concerns

Employees say:

"I have the opportunity to learn new things and improve my ability to make sound decisions that are respected and staff I work with outside my unit treat me as a professional."

"I would like to see more efficiency."

"I enjoy the ability to be self-motivated and also enjoy the challenges I face daily."

"I like that I am treated with respect & given the opportunity to contribute on a daily basis."

"Independence, the ability to create my own tools, management is available and encourages input."

"I would like to see more consistency, appropriate ethical behavior and professionalism."

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, please contact
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Thank you for your input. We are interested and committed to working on improving our support for you. This year, 210 out of 246 employees (85%) responded to the survey. Such a high response rate not only helps provide an accurate picture of the employee environment and health of our organization, but also reaffirms our core set of values that guide our actions in the workplace. The survey results were encouraging but most importantly recognized improvements made after the 2006 survey.

We scored significantly above the DSHS average in areas such as:

- Opportunities to give input on decisions affecting work
- Opportunities to learn and grow
- Being treated with dignity and respect
- Tools and resources needed to do job effectively
- Support for a diverse workforce

We improved in 14 of 19 questions over the 2006 survey and scored above the DSHS average on ALL of the 19 DSHS-wide questions with double digit increases in such areas as:

- People are treated fairly, without discrimination
- Spirit of cooperation and teamwork
- Using staff time and talents well
- Overall Job satisfaction
- Giving input on decisions affecting work

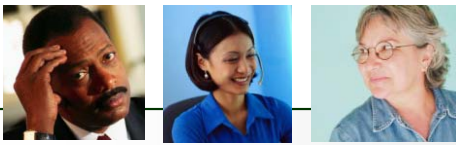
You also shared information in areas where there are potential opportunities for improvement. Other issues important to you included:

- Receiving recognition for a job well done
- Receiving meaningful information regarding performance in performance evaluations
- Using customer feedback to improve work processes
- Knowing how your work contributes to agency goals

Each office within FSA (OAS, OFR, ITO and Budget) have developed action plans to address 2-3 focus areas that have the best potential for realistic improvement. This document is an evolving draft of an overall action plan summarizing common issues shared by each office and provides us with the opportunity to react quickly and effectively. I assure you that the Executive Management Team has read all the results and comments, we are picking a few of the most important issues for initial focus - as so many respondents point out, our workloads are high and too many changes at once can be overwhelming. Although we believe we have made progress, we are committed to improving upon what has already been accomplished and building a culture within FSA where staff feel valued for their talent and contributions towards organizational results.

I challenge each of you to actively participate in identifying solutions. Your feedback is critical. Thank you again for responding to the survey, for all of your hard work and for your continued efforts in making FSA a great place to work. For more detailed information about the employee survey, visit the FSA Web site.

Stan Marshburn, Chief Financial Officer



Strengths: Employees gave high marks to their jobs, their supervisors, and their co-workers

Employees say:

“There are always changes occurring. It makes the job very interesting.”

“The dedication of my co-workers, the ability to bring back money to the people of Washington. My supervisor’s knowledge, fairness and a willingness to allow the team to think for themselves.”

“A friendly supervisor, who is willing to work with every one and recognizes niches that every one contributes and excels in creating an overall team synergy.”

“I love the people I work with, and I love that I am trusted with my own day meaning that I determine my daily priorities and activities.”

“Schedule flexibility and good group of co-workers. There are plenty of opportunities for learning.”

“I’m able to utilize my skills to perform my job. I like the fact that I can be creative and accepted for who I am.”

Over 80% of employees responded “always or “usually” to these statements

- My supervisor treats me with dignity and respect – 92%
- I know how my work contributes to the goals of my agency – 88%
- I know what is expected of me at work – 88%
- My supervisor holds me and my co-workers accountable for performance – 82%

Other statements that rated higher than 74%

- A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my workgroup – 79%
- In my workgroup, people are treated fairly, without discrimination – 79%
- My supervisor gives me ongoing feedback that helps me improve my performance – 77%
- I receive the information I need to do my job effectively – 76%
- I have the opportunity to give input on decisions affecting my work – 75%
- I have the tools and resources I need to do my job effectively – 75%
- My agency consistently demonstrates support for a diverse workforce – 75%

Comments in response to the narrative questions

- Job characteristics – 4 times as many employees made positive comments compared to “needs work.”
- Co-workers – Almost 3 times as many employees made positive comments compared to “needs work.”

Narrative questions:

1. What do you like best about your current job?
2. What changes would you like to see in your workplace?



Opportunity for Improvement #1: My performance evaluation provides me with meaningful information about my performance

What our employees say:

"I would like to see standard, measurable expectations from my supervisor during my performance evaluation"

"I want to see increased employee recognition and a greater focus placed on realistic and meaningful performance evaluations throughout the year"

"I would appreciate and would like to receive honest feedback on my performance evaluation"

"I want meaningful and ongoing performance feedback that will improve my knowledge, skills and abilities"

Summary of the Issue

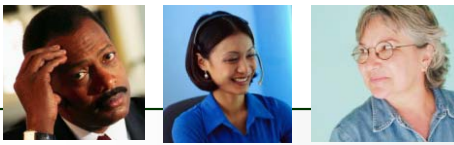
FSA scored 8% higher than the DSHS average on this topic, however 73 staff (16%) felt they seldom or were never provided with any meaningful information about their performance during the employee evaluation process (Performance Development Plan). FSA experienced a 4% decrease in this category over the last two years. Management will work with staff on developing expectations that include measurements in their PDP.

What we're currently doing

- ✓ Management will develop an overview outlining the importance of expectations and measurements, goals, data sources, steps toward achieving the measurement goal as well as challenges and obstacles.
- ✓ Provide on-going manager/supervisory training from the DOP Leadership Series.
- ✓ As part of FSA's quality improvement efforts, staff are participating in small workgroups researching how to write a performance-focused Performance Development Plan (PDP)
- ✓ Provide Managers with related resources/articles on the different motivators that exist among the various work generations. Sharing ideas at management team meetings and as a result of discussion has led to modifying its approach to flexible work schedules along with opening up the discussion in regard to telecommuting /

Our plans for the coming year

- ✓ Continue to oversee timelines. Create a system of oversight, requiring a written plan by the supervisor for evaluation completion if not completed two weeks prior to due date.
- ✓ Revise strategic plan for the administration so clear goals, objectives, and plans are available to link with staff performance expectations.
- ✓ Provide training on the PDP; developing performance expectations; work with each employee to identify an item that can be measured on their desk and provide meaningful feedback on performance evaluations.
- ✓ Managers and Supervisors will receive coaching and necessary training to ensure a comprehensive top-to-bottom integration of the plan.
- ✓ Provide supervisor /managerial training and ensure completion of the DSHS mandatory Supervision course.
- ✓ Leadership will identify and share information on staff motivation, retention and workplace environment; review current strategies and guidelines to determine if changes are needed; work with office management teams on the principles of leadership.



Opportunity for Improvement #2 : My agency uses my time and talents well

Summary of the Issue

FSA scored 10% higher than the DSHS average of 56% on this issue. 47 staff responded that we occasionally use their skills and abilities, but 24 staff felt we seldom or almost never use their time and talents wells.

Question: *My agency uses my time and talents well*

"I would like to see the management team actually take employees inputs and thoughts and apply them"

"Open and honest communication from management. Utilize staff skills and include them in processes...treat employees like they are valued"

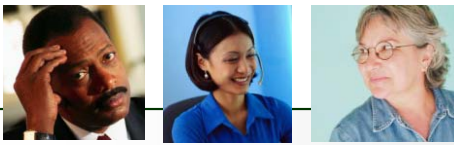
"Help employees by providing more training, cross train coworkers to help them enhance their knowledge"

What we're already doing

- Work teams formed to review survey results and comments
- Define the two issues in the wording "time and talent" (*Do staff believe that their time is wasted or that their talents are not being fully utilized or that their time is being wasted?*)
- Investing time for staff to work smarter rather than working longer
- Office management teams will work on growing the leadership in the office to ensure there is more interaction with staff and that staffs time and talents are used appropriately
- Service Level Agreement, including action steps at the staff level to make targeted customer service improvements

Our plan – Convene a workgroup with strong representation from line staff to:

- Explore rotational assignments/positions designed to discover "hidden" talents
- Conduct internal staff survey to identify areas of interest and aptitudes
- Invest time for staff to learn more about the fiscal business it works so hard to support
- Compile survey data and use as a reference for future positions in teams, projects, etc. that best utilizes an individual's time, skills and abilities, and talent
- Survey each office unit for clarification by researching and identifying additional tools that could better utilize staff talents
- Focus on improvement in this area as part of the office-wide Strategic Plan for the next biennium
- As part of staff development, use Certified Public Manager (CPM) candidate (s) to lead workgroups



Additional Opportunities for Improvement

Employees say:

“Would like to see upper management live up to their promises instead of putting up roadblocks”

“More decision making based on objective, quantitative data rather than on a subjective basis”

“More opportunities to move up in responsibility.. like a mentor program to gain knowledge and experience”

“Better ‘big picture’ planning to include staff input. Provide more opportunities to expand knowledge base and experience”

“More solicitation of recommendations to improve work processes from those who do the work”

We can't separately address every individual situation brought forward on the survey, however that doesn't mean additional concerns are not important to us or will not be addressed in some way. Each office has developed action plans to address these concerns as additional opportunities for improvement. Following are additional opportunities for improvement identified in the survey as important to you and our informal plans to address them.

Other concerns we acknowledge and recognize

- Receive recognition for a job well done
- Be provided with additional opportunities to learn and grow
- Use customer feedback to improve our work processes
- Be encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things
- Be afforded opportunities to give input on decisions affecting my work
- Know how my agency measures its success

Our informal plan to address these concerns

- Remind managers and staff why these are important
- Establish employee recognition committees
- Encourage staff and management to work on and discuss these at the unit/team level
- Incorporate into supervisor/management training
- Encourage informal and formal mentoring
- Build and follow-up on employee succession plans
- Encourage career development opportunities such as in-training, cross-training or rotational job assignments

We are glad to hear what issues concern our employees, and we will do our best to respond to them. This document is the beginning of a high-level roadmap to address areas over the next year. It Represents our commitment to work on the concerns identified from your survey responses.

Thank you for all the thoughtful input!