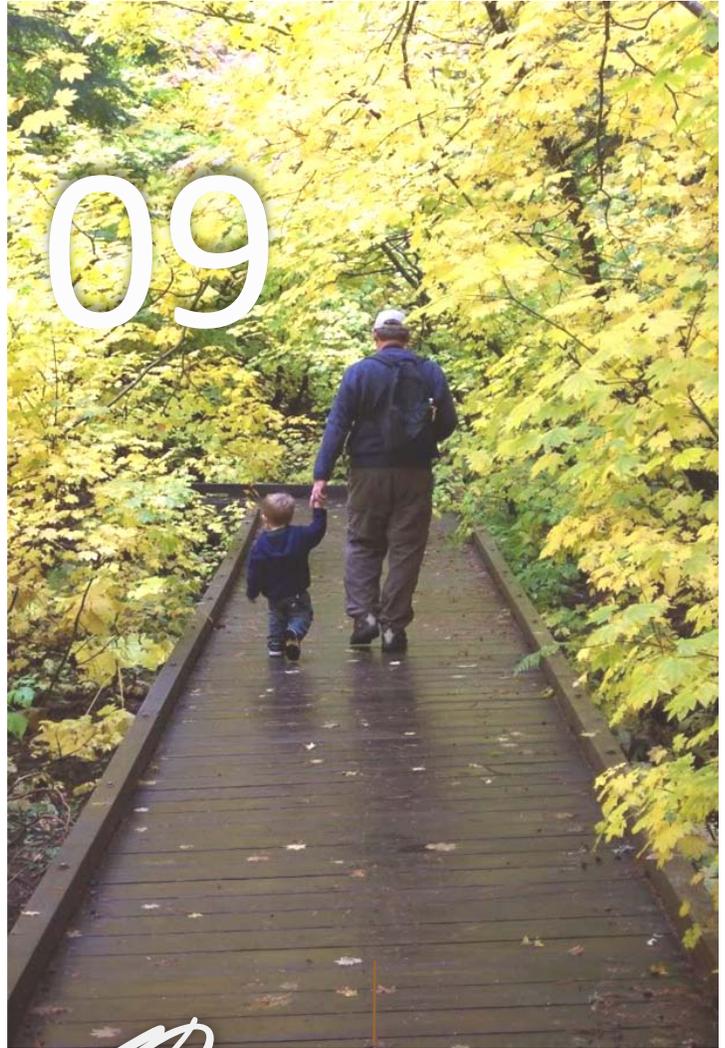


Employee Survey

March 2010 | Report 11.14



One

*One Department,
One Vision,
One Mission,
One Core Set of Values*

DSHS

WASHINGTON STATE
**Department of Social
and Health Services**

Headquarters located at:
14th and Jefferson Street
Olympia, WA 98504



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Title: 2009 DSHS Employee Survey

Abstract: 13,297 employees completed the 2009 Employee Survey. They addressed communication, supervisor/manager support, fairness and diversity, job satisfaction, and business practices.

Survey results were dominated by issues related to the economic downturn. Most employees are glad to have a job, but many are concerned about client well-being in the face of increased demand for services and cuts in budget, staff, and client services. They are hungry for information about future staff and service cuts.

Survey responses helped to define the Department's core values of Excellence in Service, Respect, Collaboration and Partnership, Diversity, and Accountability. Many of the survey respondents addressed these topics.

This survey report also showcases the talents of DSHS employees by publishing the winning entries from the Department's photo contest, which was held in conjunction with the survey.

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DSHS . . . improves the quality of life
for individuals and families in need in
Washington State

DSHS currently serves
one in four state
residents



RDA . . . Brings data and analysis
to the decision-making agenda:

- Better work process
- Better decisions
- Better outcomes

2009

DSHS Employee Survey

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Appendices are available in conjunction with this report on the RDA Website:

www1.dshs.wa.gov/rda

Background, Methods and Response Rates • Statistical Reports • Additional Information



OVERVIEW

Executive Summary

Big Issues in 2009 – It's all about the ECONOMY

Survey results were dominated by issues related to the economic downturn – including increased demand for services and cuts in budget, staff, and client services.

Concerns about increasing demands, service cuts, and staff cuts

Of the 10,086 respondents who answered the open-ended questions about sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the workplace, 1,191 mentioned concerns about the economy and related increases in demand and decreases in resources. Job stability, the availability of client services, and the need for information were major issues.

- **Many employees are happy to have a job.** The number of employees making positive comments about job stability, pay and benefits increased by 40% from 2007. Many simply said, “I’m glad to have a job.”
- **They are highly concerned about the effect of increasing demand and service cuts on clients.** The number of employees who expressed concern about the availability of client services more than doubled from 2007. Major issues were client safety, long-term well-being, and the decrease in activities available to residents of state facilities.
- **They are hungry for information about future staff and service cuts.** 23% of employees said they did not get clear information about recent budget reductions and changes being made within the agency. Many requested more frequent information about the Department’s financial decisions and lay-offs.

Increased focus on worker competence

Staff cuts throughout the agency appeared to heighten consciousness of competence issues.

- **Employees emphasized their own competence.** Scores increased significantly on all four questions that touched on individual worker competence: *I receive the information I need to do my job effectively. I have the tools and resources I need to do my job effectively. I know what is expected of me at work. I know how my work contributes to the goals of my agency.*
- **They appreciate many of their co-workers.** Positive comments about co-worker competence and skills increased by 66%. Significantly more praised cooperation and teamwork.
- **But they would like to get rid of those workers who don’t pull their share of the load.** 47% more complained about co-worker incompetence. They wish there was an easier way to get rid of the “dead wood.” Many criticized the seniority-based personnel system and union for protecting poor workers.

Concerns about the economy and cuts appear to affect other areas of the survey

Employees are less likely to feel that they can personally affect workplace issues. They were less outspoken about issues like facilities, tools, training, health and wellness, and diversity.

- **Employees feel as though they have less input and control in their work life.** Scores were significantly lower on the two questions in this area: *I have the opportunity to give input on decisions affecting my work. I am encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things.*
- **Diversity issues were seen as less pressing.** 22% fewer employees made negative comments about discrimination against protected groups. The two diversity questions showed significant improvement.

- **Other resource and support issues also seemed overshadowed by more urgent concerns.** More employees said they have adequate resources. 21% fewer addressed resource issues like facilities, tools, training, and health/wellness resources in their comments.

Core Issues Highlight Values

Some issues are always important to employees, whatever the current social, political and economic climate. These tend to be closely linked with the Department's values.

Good News: The Department's values are evident throughout survey findings.

Responses to the survey's values questions laid the foundation for the Department's Core Values: Excellence in Service, Respect, Collaboration and Partnership, Diversity, and Accountability.

- **Excellence in Service.** 40% of survey respondents (4,015 employees) spoke of working with and helping clients as a major source of job satisfaction. More than half of all respondents chose "Serving Individuals and Families" as one of the values most often modeled by DSHS staff and experienced by co-workers, clients and partners.
- **Respect.** 83% of employees told us that their supervisor treats them with dignity and respect. This improved from 81% in 2007. Many also spoke of the importance of respecting and listening to clients.
- **Collaboration and Partnership.** 67% of employees said a spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in their workgroup. These results show an upward trend from 65% in 2006 and 66% in 2007. The written survey comments often praised teamwork in the workplace, support from co-workers and supervisors, and productive relationships with community partners.
- **Diversity.** 71% of those surveyed said: *In my workgroup, people are treated fairly, without discrimination.* 64% agreed that: *My agency consistently demonstrates support for a diverse workforce.* Both gained two percentage points from 2007. Written comments showed that many employees value the opportunity to work with diverse clients and co-workers.
- **Accountability.** 77% of respondents said: *My supervisor holds me and my co-workers accountable for performance.* 87% said they know what is expected of them at work – an increase of 3 percent from 2007.

Room for Improvement.

Some issues require constant vigilance and effort. The survey shows there is still work to do in these areas.

- **Work processes and policies.** 3,044 employees (30% of those commenting) suggested changes in the way business is conducted – a 26% increase in such comments. Major concerns included the Community Services Office reorganization, and new computer systems such as FamLink and ProviderOne.
- **Health and Wellness.** In response to a question added this year, only 46% of employees agreed that, "Overall my agency supports me in living a healthier life." 30% reported that they seldom or never receive such support. However, one portion of the Department has shown it is possible to improve: Following a concerted wellness campaign, 61% of Health and Recovery Services Administration Headquarters staff report agency support for healthy living.
- **Communication.** The number of employees writing complaints about how well managers provide information doubled from 2007. As noted earlier, only 51% say they have the opportunity to give input on decisions affecting their work, and 57% say they receive clear information about budget cuts and changes.
- **Continuing Issues:** Employees continue to stress the importance of autonomy, recognition, flexibility, and transparency in personnel actions. They are happy when these are present in the workplace, and discontent when they are not.

Survey Facts

THE 2009 EMPLOYEE SURVEY is the fifth DSHS-wide employee survey.

The survey was:

- Available to all employees from September 15 to October 31, 2009.
- Administered in conjunction with a survey of all state employees, sponsored by Governor Gregoire.
- Standardized across the Department, with the option to add questions to meet specific needs of individual programs.
- Completed by 13,297 Department employees—a 75% response rate.
- Analyzed thoroughly; 647 detailed custom reports were prepared for workgroups throughout the agency.
- Followed up with Action Plans from all parts of the Department.

HOW THE REPORT IS ORGANIZED

This first chapter contains:

- The Executive Summary (pages 1 and 2).
- The page you're reading, with survey facts and a summary of report organization.
- Charts providing an overview of survey findings. The measures summarized in both of these charts are discussed in greater detail in the individual chapters.
 - The chart on page 4 shows the trends in answers to standard questions.
 - The chart on page 5 summarizes the themes that emerged from the written comments.
- Summaries of overarching issues that touch on all the subsequent chapters.
 - Page 6 summarizes comments concerning the economy, and budget, staff and service cuts.
 - Page 7 summarizes responses about the Department's values.

Subsequent chapters in this report each look at a major area of survey concern:

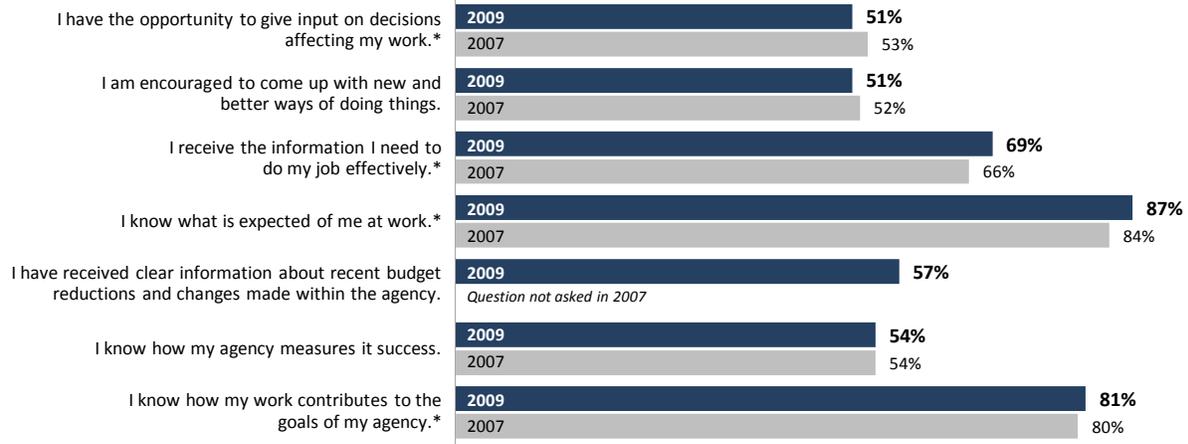
- Chapter 1. Communication
- Chapter 2. Supervisor/Manager Support
- Chapter 3. Fairness/Diversity
- Chapter 4. The Daily Job
- Chapter 5. Business Practices

The chapters combine a discussion of the quantitative answers to the standard survey questions with the more qualitative insights that come from analysis of the respondents' written comments.

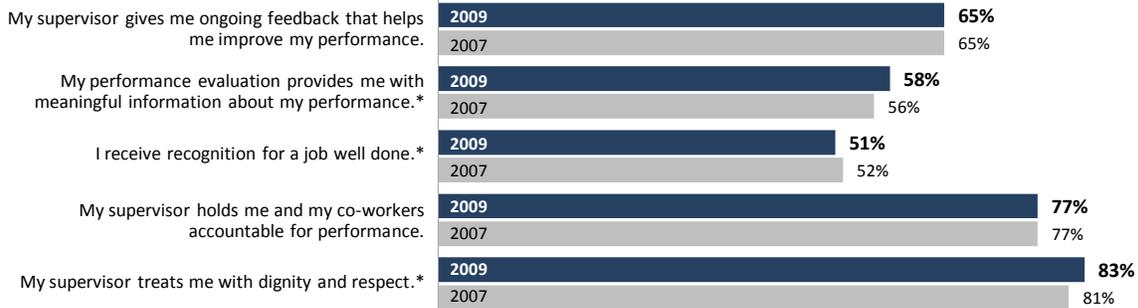
The final chapter shows the winners of the Department's Photo Contest, which was held in conjunction with the Employee Survey.

Changes from 2007 to 2009: Percent of employees answering “Usually” or “Always”

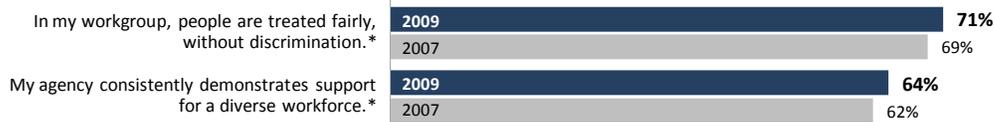
COMMUNICATION



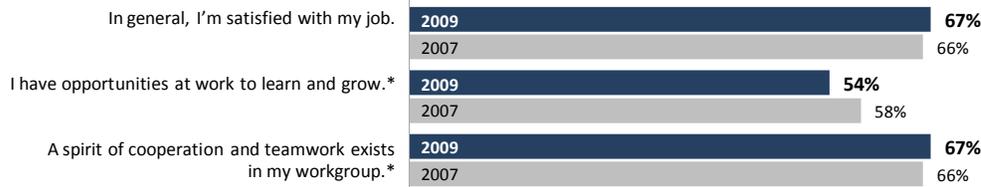
SUPERVISOR/MANAGER SUPPORT



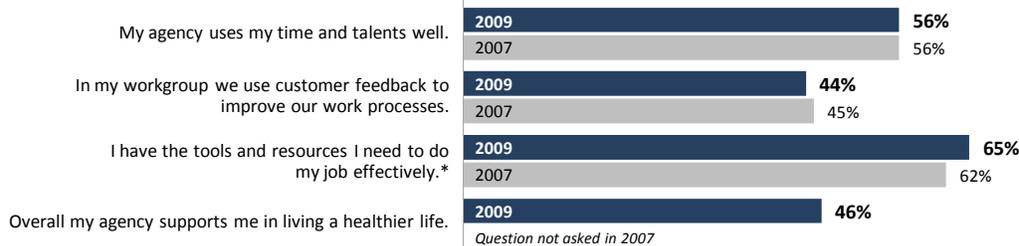
FAIRNESS/DIVERSITY



THE DAILY JOB



BUSINESS PRACTICES

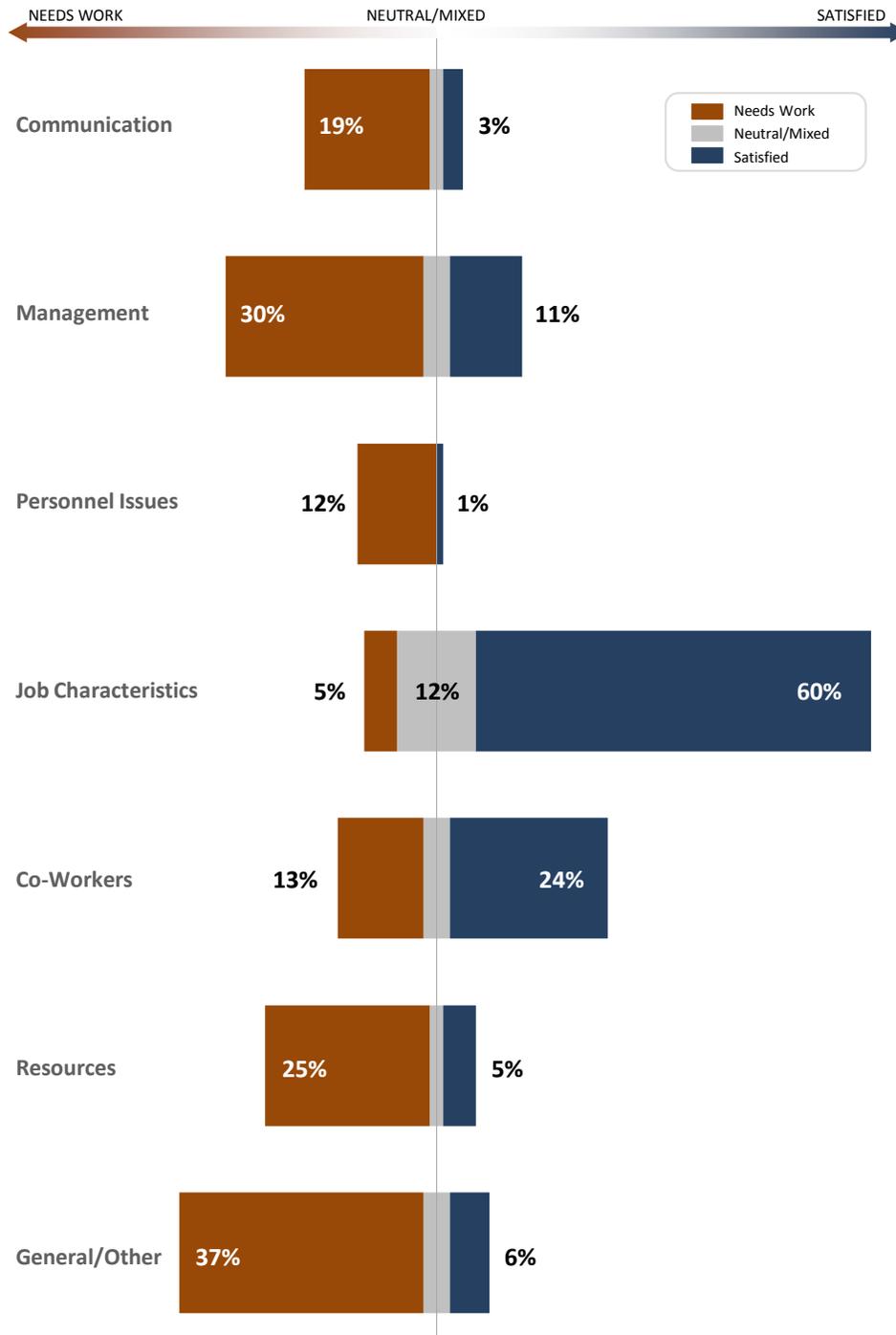


*Change is significant at the .01 level. See Appendix B, Chart F for 3-year trend charts.

Major Comment Themes: Percent of respondents who made comments in 2009

Comments were made in response to these two questions:

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



Note: Percentages show respondents who commented on this theme as a percentage of the total number of respondents who made narrative comments. Themes are discussed at a more detailed level in each chapter of the report. A summary of all themes including sub-categories of these major themes can be found in Appendix B, Table K.

OVERARCHING ISSUE. Economic downturn

1,191 of the 10,086 respondents who made narrative comments addressed the issue of increased need, service cuts, and staffing cuts.

12% commented on this theme (1,191)



The 1,191 employees who wrote about issues related to the economic downturn were concerned about:

- Job stability and insufficient staffing
- Inability to respond to increasing demands
- Client safety and welfare
- Stress related to the concerns listed above

► *What DSHS employees said . . .*

Many employees are distressed that they can't provide quality help to the increasing numbers of clients

"Our buildings, lobbies, resources and humans are seeing a huge increase in numbers. Increased lobby traffic, long waits in several lines, flu season, clients with a myriad of mental issues, small crowded space, pedophiles in close contact with children, all contribute to potential outbursts, God forbid – violence. Think about our clients. We are asking them to take a day off work – if they have a job. We may tell them to try again tomorrow – without considering transportation issues."

"Stop making cuts where it could have devastating effects, on the youth, families, staff and communities."

"Clients are not being served in a timely manner because there are not enough of us. I understand the budget and all that, but aren't we about customer service and helping those that have a hard time helping themselves?"

"I have always taken pride in my work and I still take pride in what I do, but when I have family that has gone without food stamps for two months, I don't feel like I am serving my customers to best of my ability. These are REAL people's lives that we hold in our hands. I believe in providing excellent customer service and I am not providing this. We are in an economic down fall and our customers need these benefits more than anything right now and we can't provide these to them."

They feel they are asked to do more and more with less

"Our State's budget woes have had most DSHS divisions on a roller coaster since last year. Our staff has been cut over and over since January to serve the population that is out of work, poor and frustrated. We do this with less and less every day."

"On an on-going basis, we are being asked to do more with less, with things constantly changing, more being expected of us, and while staff positions are being cut (I know the economy is a large part of this). The stress of this work is exhaustive."

"Budget cuts have hurt us tremendously. It's hard to get equipment, supplies and staff to run programs. Staff are getting frustrated with so many years of having to do more with less and now it seems we have to do more with nothing."

Constant change, fear about their own jobs, and lack of information compound the stress

"It's difficult to work in an environment filled with anxiety about whether or not we'll have jobs in the near future, while watching our colleagues around us getting laid off or their hours cut. I feel like I'm failing to meet expectations, not only of JRA and myself, but of the youth and families we serve. My own health has been suffering and I'm on the verge of burnout. How many more great staff will we lose to burnout as a result of the current state of our agency?"

"It feels ominous/threatening every time we get emails regarding the budget. This has been a really difficult year working with families because of the cuts. I fear that I will lose my job, and that makes me depressed."

"STABILITY! It is unnerving wondering if I will get to keep the job I love to do. I wonder all the time if I should take other job opportunities that are being offered to me 'just in case.' I hope to make it through the cuts. I really don't want to quit."

"I ask myself each day, "is today the day"? Not knowing if I will have a job at the end of the day. Each day I hear of both mental and physical affects pertaining directly to the stressors of the job and situations people are being thrust into."

"The budget/economic situation has had a significant effect on all of us. You can see and feel the effects of stress in the faces of staff, by how seemingly innocent statements or actions are taken as a personal affront causing unnecessary strife."

"If a decision about my job is coming down, I sure wish it would not take months, even years, to tell me. My whole life is on hold. Can I buy a house? What if I'm out of a job? Should I be looking for work? This makes for a tense environment."

However, employees are proud to provide vital DSHS services in this time of great need

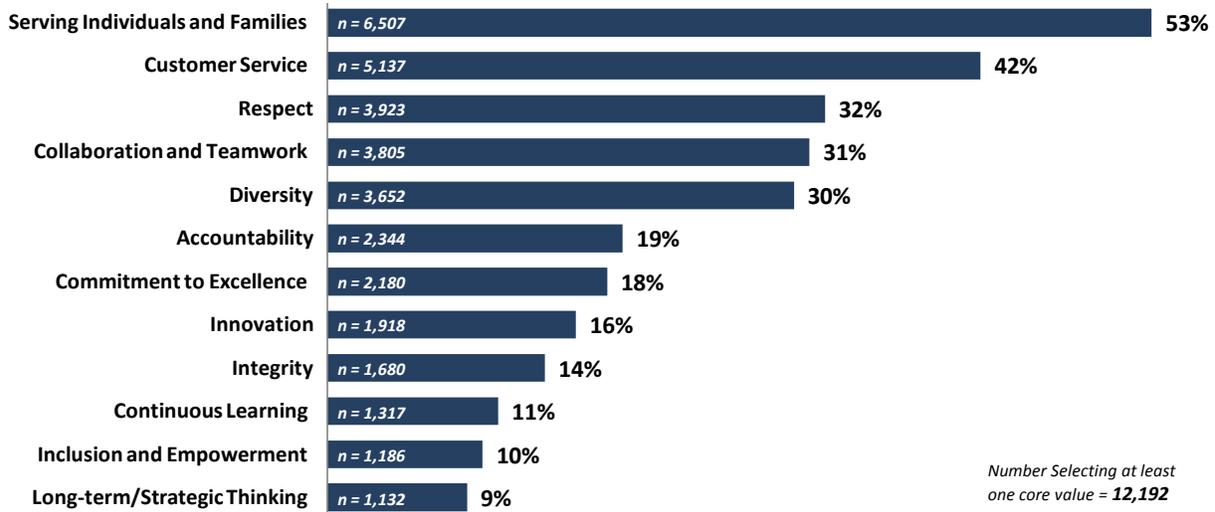
"In today's economy need is larger than ever; to know that I can make a difference in someone's life makes me like my job."

"Knowing that I am helping my community, family and friends to survive in today's economy is a great satisfaction."

"I supervise social workers who are professional and compassionate despite ever increasing demands placed on them by staff reductions. I am honored to work with them as they serve some of the most vulnerable members of our community."

OVERARCHING ISSUE. The Department's values

Survey respondents were asked to "Choose the three values that you feel are most often modeled by DSHS staff and experienced by co-workers, clients, and partners through workplace interactions." The chart below shows the number of employees who chose each value.*



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Many employees see the Department's values "playing out" in their daily work

"We have a great team who work hard and try to the best of their ability to give good quality service."

"I like the way management and supervisors work so hard to help employees better themselves."

"The budget situation over the past year has been difficult. I really rely on the consistency of values within our organization. I can always depend on a client-centered perspective being taken when policy changes are being considered. It is very heartening to know that this compassion and respect for clients is at the foundation of all decisions and planning."

"At the local level, I believe the office I am in is awesome adapting to changes we are forced to make, and we are doing what we can to help and respect one another and our clients."

"I picked diversity because there is a diverse group of individuals working at SCC, I picked respect because I try to show my peers and residents respect, and I picked customer service because I believe good customer service to the residents on my unit creates healthy rapport with the residents."

"Teamwork by our co-workers, employers, agencies, and others in the community enables us to provide quality services to those in need."

"I'm very excited about the new energy surrounding the DSHS Vision. I'm hoping this will revitalize Strategic Planning and tie our work in better with outcomes for citizens. I'm excited about steps to become a learning organization."

Others feel the reality in their workplace runs counter to the Department's stated values

"I find most of [my co-workers] disrespectful to management, to their co-workers, and to clients. They are not held to a standard of excellence – nor do they really have an understanding of core values."

"Collaboration, teamwork, inclusion and empowerment do not exist at Lakeland Village (apart from the clients we serve). Although we are all in the current fiscal crisis together, it feels like the divide between management and staff has increased."

"Core values went out the window during this year's budget cuts – seriously."

"I'd like to see diversity MODELED in my workplace."

"Most of these values are modeled by staff, but not by management."

"I would like to see some core values in place. Most are absent, such as long-term strategic thinking and common sense, integrity and accountability."

"I would like to see a workplace culture that is more concerned with modeling the values it professes."

Some staff offered suggestions – serious and sarcastic – for additional core values. Suggestions include: Flexibility, resiliency, activism, humor, compassion, doing more with less, cover your butt, retaliation, favoritism, and confusion.

*See Appendix C-3 for more detail on the Core Values question.



CHAPTER 1

Communication

KEY COMMUNICATION ISSUES in 2010 revolved around budget, staffing and service cuts. Many employees would like better information about these issues. Fewer feel they have input into work-related decisions. However, most feel they get the information needed to do their job effectively.

INFORMATION FROM MANAGEMENT. The main communication concerns revolve around the many changes in the Department stemming from the current fiscal crisis.

- **A new question highlights current issues.** The 2009 survey included a new question: *I have received clear information about recent budget reductions and changes being made within the agency.* The majority of respondents (59%) said they've always or usually received clear information about these reductions and changes. However, almost one quarter of respondents (23%) reported they are dissatisfied with the information they are getting about the current budget crisis.
- **More complaints than in 2007.** Twice as many employees (9% of those making comments) criticized the way management communicates information. The increase appears to be mainly from those who want more complete and up-to-date information about DSHS budget, staffing and service cuts.

STAFF INPUT. The top-down responses to budget shortfall also appear to make employees feel they have less input into workplace decisions. Only about half of all employees feel they have the opportunity to provide input and innovative ideas.

- **Fewer opportunities for input.** Only 51% of employees (5% fewer than in 2007) said they have the opportunity to provide input into decisions affecting their work.
- **Slight decrease in innovation.** 51% also said they were encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things – the 1% decrease from 2007 was not statistically significant.

INFORMATION FOR PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS. As noted in the Executive Summary, in 2009 employees were more likely to agree with any statement related to their own effectiveness in the workplace.

- **More get needed information and expectations.** 5% more employees (69%) said they receive the information they need to do their job effectively, and 3% more (87%) said they know what is expected of them at work.
- **Most know their contribution.** 81% of employees know how their work contributes to the goals of the agency (up 2% from 2007).

THEME. Overall communication

2,282 of the 10,086 employees who made comments mentioned communication.

23% commented on this theme (2,282)



Communication continues to be an important issue for employees. 82% of those commenting on communication suggested improvements, some directed at local offices and others specific to management. Of the 2,282* employees who mentioned communication:

- 999 respondents addressed whether staff has input into workplace changes (pages 11-13)
- 976 discussed the quality of information staff receives from management (pages 14-17)
- 322 referred to communication about agency guidelines and performance measures (pages 18-20)
- 498 (4.9%) mentioned other communication issues, which are referenced throughout this chapter

Their comments were:



13% positive (286)
5% mixed or neutral (124)

► **What DSHS employees said . . .**

Some employees are satisfied with communication in their workplace

- “The group I work with are a great team to be on. We share information and ideas which help us all do a better job.”
- “I like the openness in communication among the staff that work in the kitchen day-by-day.”
- “Communication within the division is exemplary.”
- “I work with a bunch of highly talented and educated individuals. We brainstorm solutions and staff tough clients to see what resources are available.”
- “[I like] that we work in a division where communication is the key to our success. No hidden agendas, no surprises.”

Most employees who discussed communication feel improvement is needed

- “I think our communications are horrid and we talk about transparency and courageous conversation but it seems we don’t mean it.”
- “Better communication between different levels of staff.”
- “I feel it would benefit us all to have the opportunity to share experiences about the times that have been difficult before in DSHS and how we got through. Also good to share ideas on prioritization, with no new staff to help with caseloads.”
- “A little more communication between shifts.”
- “Direct communication with other financial workers statewide in HCS. There is so much more information that can be shared if we would be allowed to talk to each other without having to go through a supervisor or program manager.”
- “Staff communication skills improved. Answering questions through e-mail, phone, etc., in a timely manner, or at least a recognition that the questions were received.”

When addressing communication, employees often mentioned the value of meetings

- “At least quarterly meetings in person with field coordinators of the programs we manage to assure quality and collaboration.”
- “Ideally, I would like to see the Go-To Meeting format be abandoned and return to ‘live’ meetings. We are losing so much as an agency by not being in the same room with the people we are trying to problem solve with, plan with, be creative with, partner with or learn from.”
- “Need for staff meetings. We have over 150 office staff. There needs to be better communication as to what is going on in the office.”
- “We hold monthly unit meetings and those are helpful, allowing employees to express their thoughts and concerns, and brainstorm ideas in which we can help ourselves to work smarter.”

*Issues listed below total more than 2,282, as some employees mentioned more than one issue related to communication.

THEME. Listening to input from staff

999 of the 10,086 respondents who commented addressed the issue of managers listening to staff.

10% commented on this theme (999)



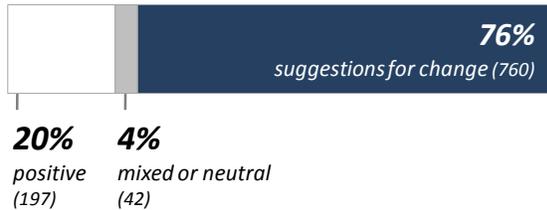
999 respondents offered comments about staff input. One in five (20%) feel their input is listened to and taken into account when decisions are made. Many positive comments were about decision-making in local offices.

More than three out of four respondents (76%) who commented on staff input see a clear need for improvement. Many comments suggested specific changes. Respondents want management to:

- Solicit their input
- Listen carefully to their suggestions
- Include them in decisions about their workplace
- Incorporate their ideas when changes are made

These issues are discussed further in the Autonomy and Growth Opportunities section of Chapter 4, pages 46-47.

Their comments were:



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Staff want managers to listen to their input

- “My supervisor listens to suggestions and lets us know every day that we are valuable members of the team.”
- “We used to have input and were part of a team; now it’s all directives and secrets. Mostly secrets.”
- “I like that my Office Chief and Director have an open door policy and are willing to listen to what I have to say.”
- “My supervisor...barely pays attention to what people are saying, and remembers little of what we say to her.”
- “Current administration has not engaged line staff in recent budget reduction discussions or asked for any input. If you want me to become part of the leadership team, you need to allow and hear my input, otherwise it is just talk as usual.”
- “I like the ability to propose new ways of doing business and suggestions are taken seriously.”

They also want their ideas heard *before* changes are made on their jobsite

- “The division needs to take more time when making changes and really ask those in the field before the changes are made.”
- “Allowing line staff to have a say is not how this CSO is run. The changes have not helped clients or staff.”
- “Local managers should have a bigger voice in the decisions made by headquarters.”
- “Our agency has improved in automating programs but still has a LONG way to go. This would not have taken near as long had they involved line workers in the process who use this multitude of systems every day.”
- “I wish that people who make big decisions for our agency actually talk to field workers instead of administration.”
- “I would very much like this management team...to actually ask the people who are responsible for doing this work how the work can be improved instead of coming up with ideas that are not grounded in the present situation.”
- “I would like supervisors to let us have a voice when it comes to changes in our area. Communication is everything.”

Staff appreciate managers who take their suggestions seriously

- “Don’t ask for input from the field just as an exercise to say that you did it – don’t do it unless it means something.”
- “I would like to see upper management involve staff more in making the decisions resulting from these surveys – opinions are sought but then changes seem to fade away after a time.”
- “My ideas are not always accepted, but they are acknowledged and given proper attention.”
- “[I like that] my manager is always willing to listen to me and consider my opinions, thoughts, and ideas.”
- “If we give input or request information, our e-mails are simply ignored for weeks on end, or we are told that we ought to be grateful we have a job.”
- “I like the ability to input ideas and improve the way I am able to deal with stressful situations without being ridiculed.”

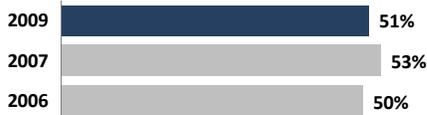
QUESTION. I have the opportunity to give input on decisions affecting my work

Over half of employees (51%) said they have a chance to give input on decisions in their workplace. Another 26% said they are occasionally given a chance to offer such input.

Nearly one in four employees (24%) reported they are seldom or never asked for their input. They indicated they appreciate it when supervisors and managers:

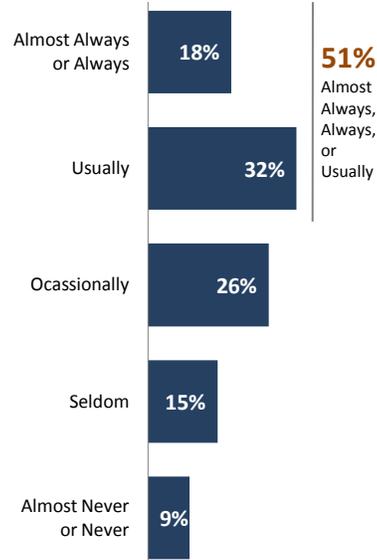
- Request their input, especially on matters affecting their workplace
- Seriously consider their ideas
- Implement their suggestions, whenever possible

Fewer staff in 2009 than in 2007 said they have input into decisions affecting their jobs.



Decrease between 2007 and 2009 is statistically significant at $p < .01$

ANSWERS



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Some employees are pleased they have a voice in their workplace

- “I feel my input is valued by my supervisor.”
- “[I like] having an ACM who is very open-minded about what his staff has to say to ensure the safety of clients and staff.”
- “Our leadership is by far the most transparent, honest and caring leadership I have experienced in state service. The desire to want to know how people are doing, feeling and want to hear their ideas and concerns is priceless.”
- “[I like] having the chance to give my thoughts on how to better run things.”
- “[I like that] I now have some input into how care is provided for the people we serve.”
- “I like the fact that my opinions and voice are heard.”

Others are frustrated their input isn’t requested, or is ignored

- “When you try to offer suggestions or recommendations as to how things could work better and more efficiently, you are immediately put in your place and advised that you are just a line staff, what could you possibly know, shut up and just do your job.”
- “More responsiveness from CFS Managers to input from front line and treatment staff.”
- “I can suggest ideas, and they will be ignored.”
- “It would help staff morale tremendously to know they are being listened to, and that the ideas they produced can indeed take place.”
- “More input from line staff about major changes that are occurring around them and to them.”

Employees feel upper management should ask for, and use, their input

- “[I like] how supervisors actually use a lot of our suggestions.”
- “I would like to see more effort by management to involve line staff Social Workers in major decision-making that ultimately ends up affecting those line staff the most.”
- “I feel fully supported by my supervisor. I feel that my opinions matter and are considered.”
- “I would like state program managers to ask for more input from the field staff.”
- “I would like to see management at WSH actually work with labor in these tough times. Our members have submitted many money saving ideas to WSH management only to have them all blown off. If you ask for ideas and then don’t listen maybe you’re the problem and we can save money without you.”

QUESTION. I am encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things

More than half of respondents (51%) reported they are encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things. Another 22% said they are occasionally encouraged to find creative solutions to workplace problems.

More than one in four respondents (27%) indicated they are seldom or never encouraged to find new approaches to work processes. Respondents like it when they are:

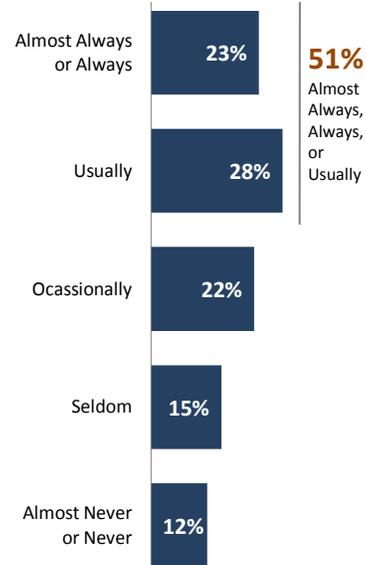
- Encouraged to share innovative ideas
- Listened to carefully
- Allowed to implement some of their ideas
- Given freedom to be creative in their work

Fewer staff in 2009 than in 2007 said they are encouraged to find new ways of doing things, but **more staff in 2009 than in 2006** said they are encouraged to find new approaches.



Increase between 2006 and 2009 is statistically significant at $p < .01$

ANSWERS



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Many staff like being asked for ideas to improve work processes

"[I like] the ability to provide feedback about system changes before, during and after changes are implemented."

"Employees' thoughts are typically received and heard (although suggestions are not always incorporated into processes)."

"Our office manager is willing to listen to new ideas and open discussion on matters that could save our department time and/or money."

"I work with a great crew of people and we are allowed to make changes to streamline our work and better serve our clients. My supervisor makes the time to listen to our thoughts and ideas and it really helps."

"My area administrator listens to what I have to say, and values my input and suggestions for changes in the office."

"I am supported and feel valued for any contributions I make. I feel as though my opinion matters."

Others report they're not encouraged to contribute ideas for process improvement

"The Regional Administrator is arbitrary, unyielding and unable to accept any suggestions or ideas unless they're her own."

"[I would like] the workers allowed to provide information about problems of FamLink without feeling that they are ignored."

"People at headquarters who haven't done our work in ages control everything, don't care what we think in the region."

"The management does not listen to input from workers doing the jobs, but makes decisions according to their own needs."

"At this time, supervisors' and line workers' input is ignored, and costly programs are implemented unnecessarily."

"I would like to see employees more involved in the decisions of their jobs, and able to have input and ideas listened to, and really taken into consideration."

Staff want supervisors and managers to make good use of their expertise

"More respect for my experience, my opinions and my innovative ideas."

"I like that I have some opportunity to speak my piece and exercise my abilities. When given the green light to do a project I not only get the job done but excel in what was asked for!!"

"I for one cannot wait until I can take my skills, abilities and knowledge to an agency/employer who supports, appreciates and wants me to voice my opinion."

THEME. Information communicated from managers to staff

976 of the 10,086 employees who offered comments addressed the issue of managers providing information.

10% commented on this theme (976)

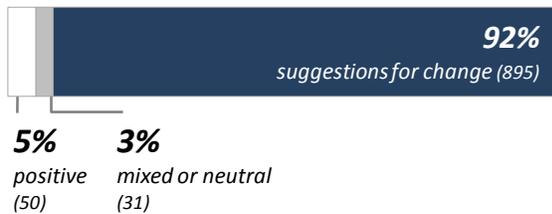


Nearly all of the 976 comments about information sharing by management (92%) were suggestions for improvement. A small number of employees (5%) reported satisfaction with the way information is communicated by supervisors and managers.

The majority of employees want to see improvements – both by local supervisors and managers, and by upper management – in these areas:

- More, and more timely, communications
- Clearer, more complete communications
- Less withholding of information
- Less secrecy

Their comments were:



In this time of economic distress, they particularly want to be advised of any changes driven by budget cuts.

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Some employees like how their supervisors and local managers communicate

“My supervisor and lead worker are very supportive and share information as soon as they have it.”

“This RA...communicates openly, honestly, and frequently with all staff, community, and other agency organizations.”

“I feel my supervisor is good at trying to keep us up to date on any issue of concern to us and giving her honest opinion on what she thinks it means as well.”

“The management team in our office keeps us as informed as possible.”

“I am happy with our current Assistant Secretary’s efforts in trying to communicate regularly and honestly, even going so far as to expanding beyond traditional methods of communication.”

Others think communication between supervisors, managers, and line staff could improve

“With the considerable amount of change that is happening, it would be helpful to have better communication from the local office supervisors.”

“More information about projects, and supervisors and managers not hiding information from workers in secret meetings.”

“There should be very little information except for specific personnel information that supervisors and other management does not share with all staff.”

“The administration is not telling staff the truth about what they are doing.”

“[I dislike] when supervisors tell staff they ‘do not know’ then staff see the plan written out on the blackboard in the conference room. Knowing it was talked about in the morning meeting, it makes one (all house staff) lose faith in their leader. Just because we work for the state does not mean we are dumb.”

Many employees feel upper management needs a new communication style

“More straightforward information from Olympia. A lot of information is provided via the computer, but unfortunately some staff do not have ready access to a computer...nor do they have the time to read and absorb what is there.”

“There is a veil of secrecy, and very little information is passed down through the chain.”

“I would like to see things communicated to all staff in a more timely manner. So often we do not hear things straight away, so everyone is left to wonder what the heck is going on.”

“More written communication vs. just being told.”

“Talk to your people. They can handle the truth. What they don’t like is being lied to or in the dark about issues that are going on. Let them be part of the whole process.”

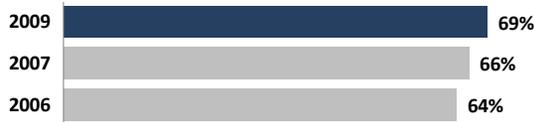
QUESTION. I receive the information I need to do my job effectively

Nearly seven out of ten respondents (69%) said they get the information needed to do their job effectively. However, more than one out of ten (11%) reported they don't have the information needed to do their job well.

The majority of respondents praised supervisors and managers for providing staff with timely, clear and useful information.

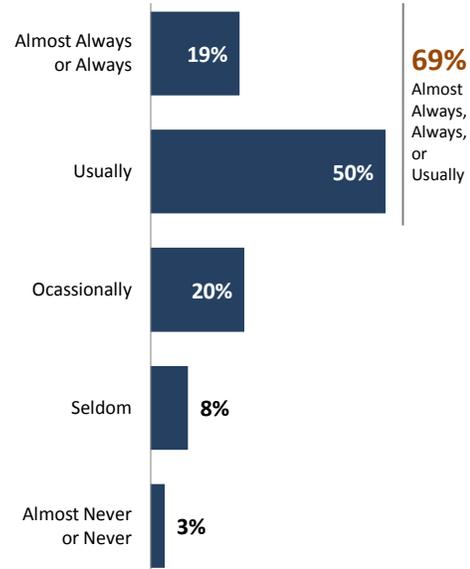
Some, however, indicated the quality of information they receive from supervisors, local managers, and upper management needs improvement. They want to be informed of all changes that affect their jobs as soon as they occur.

More staff in 2009 than in either 2007 or 2006 said they have the information they need to do their jobs.



Increase between 2007 and 2009, and also between 2006 and 2009, is statistically significant at $p < .01$

ANSWERS



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Most staff are pleased with the job-related information they receive

"My supervisors keep me informed of changes."

"ISSD is as good as I've seen (and I've seen a few) for keeping everyone informed and included and this makes things easier."

"My immediate supervisor is a true leader and exceptional role model; the direct communication is consistent and reliable."

"The management of the division and region I work within message things out to the front line staff in a seemingly honest and prompt fashion."

"We have a great supervisor who is my advocate and support, who communicates as clearly as possible in this agency."

"[My supervisor] keeps me informed to his best ability, considering the limited communication he's privy to from the top."

"I appreciate the interim Region 1 manager, Connie Lambert-Eckel, taking the time to send all staff emails to us. Many staff have commented that it helps to know that the lead in our region is communicating with us - it makes us feel respected and valued as employees."

Some feel supervisors and managers should work harder to keep them "in the loop"

"[We need] Management Bulletins that are clear and concise and the ability to give feedback on drafts before they become final."

"I think most supervisors and managers make efforts to keep line workers 'out of the loop.'"

"Without needed information, it is more difficult to properly do the task at hand."

"Supervisors leave AC staff out of the loop. Consistently getting information at the last minute makes it very hard to do our jobs and makes us look incompetent."

"It would be good if upper management met with staff sometimes to let them know what was going on from their perspective (maybe once a year, sort of a state of the institution address). Then staff need to be provided the opportunity to attend and encouraged to do so."

"Better communication when changes occur that affect my position and the way I help my customers. There are many times a form or a procedure changes, without notice, and I just happen to stumble on the change many months later."

"I think it would be beneficial to have more specific communication between field staff and State Office. We appear to have isolated communication and not share what each of the other groups are doing, working on, their goals, their hardships, etc."

"The ability for the workforce to communicate with each other effectively would be an improvement. With budget cuts, it is increasingly more difficult to network. While technology is important and should be utilized, seeing people face-to-face in the field creates a basis for staff to be able to feel they are contributing to the goals of the agency."

QUESTION. I know what is expected of me at work

Almost nine out of ten employees (87%) indicated they understand the job expectations at work. However, one out of twenty (5%) said they seldom or never know what is expected of them.

In their comments, some employees had positive words for supervisors and managers who provide clear and consistent job expectations.

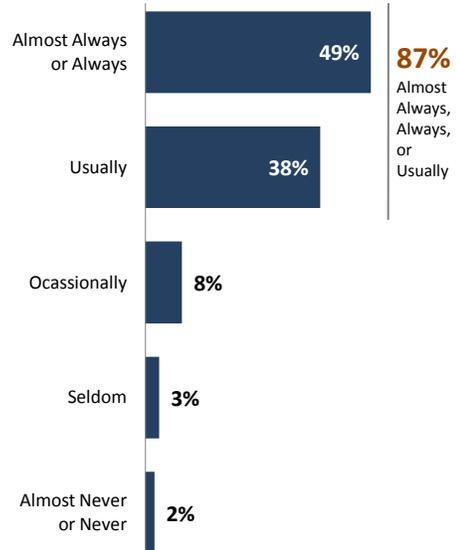
However, others wrote about the lack of clear job expectations. Often they connected this situation with frequent changes in their job responsibilities.

More staff in 2009 than in either 2007 or 2006 said they know job expectations at work.



Increase between 2007 and 2009, and also between 2006 and 2009, is statistically significant at $p < .01$

ANSWERS



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Most employees reported their job expectations are clear

"I appreciate having a supervisor that tells me when I am doing good and also tells me when I need to improve something. My supervisor has set clear expectations and meets frequently to see how things are going."

"I have noticed when staff have clear expectations and are held accountable, the quality of care given and morale of the home has improved."

"Solid leadership that communicates to us what is right and wrong with what we do and pushes us to be part of the solutions."

"Supervisors set clear expectations. I can get information to do my job effectively."

"I am still learning my position and receive consistent support from my supervisor and coworkers as well as updated information about changes related to my job."

"[I like] the management team and their continued commitment to working with and for staff to make the workplace better informed and knowledgeable about their jobs."

Some said their job expectations are unclear, or change too often

"There is little point in bonding with your job as it is taken away and given to others and you are given something else to do. As a matter of emotional health, one learns not to invest anything of yourself into your job as it is transient, at best."

"I would like to get the proper information to actually complete my job, and quit being told 'at least you have a job.'"

"Dramatic changes in personnel, workload, frequently changing expectations, and an increased 'big brother' mentality with micro managing have changed this once delightful and family oriented group of people into fragmented, disjointed individuals looking out only for themselves."

"Staff being able to know their roles, expectations, given information or not be disciplined for not knowing information they haven't received."

Employees want more and better communication when job expectations are changing

"More communication between the workers and upper staff...Our jobs are always changing and evolving and we are told of the 'new' way it has to be done. But not how to do it to get it accomplished."

"It would be nice if we knew a month or two in advance what our new expectations are going to be."

"Better notification when changes in policies and WACs are made. Too many times we as workers find out when change is already in effect."

"I believe that management could help create a content workplace by being as open and honest as possible with staff about changes and why they are necessary."

QUESTION. I have received clear information about recent budget reductions and changes being made within the agency

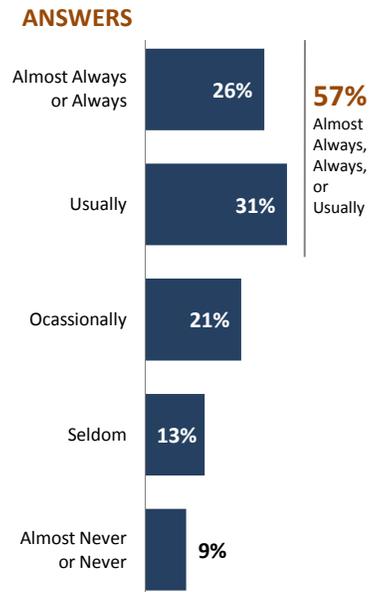
57% of respondents said they've received clear information about recent budget cuts and related changes. Nearly one in four (23%) reported they've not received the budget information they want and need.

Some respondents offered kudos to supervisors and managers who keep them well-advised about budgetary matters.

Many respondents, however, made comments suggesting that supervisors, local managers and upper management could do a much better job of keeping them "in the loop" about the department's financial decisions, and the layoffs and other changes that will grow out of those decisions.

There is further discussion of employee reactions to budget cuts in the Executive Summary, pages 1, 2 and 6.

2009 was the first year this question was included in the survey.



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Some staff are satisfied with the information they're given about the budget situation

"I like how the RA kept our staff well informed as to the budget cuts and outlook for future issues."

"Great communication from my administrator about how larger statewide policies/budget stuff impacts us at the local level."

"My boss...does his best to keep us informed of the budget situation and other news from HQ."

"The budget problems have been very well explained and, although there are worries and many changes coming, I think we have the information we need, or can ask questions."

"Management is quick to share information that impacts our work with us, including budget discussions, considerations, and decisions."

Others want clearer and more current information on budget cuts

"I would like to see emails or other forms of communication directed to line staff that give information about budget cuts in an open way. Why can't we just get the same information supervisors get?"

"Headquarters administrators have been closing JRA programs and NOT COMMUNICATING about the closures to the rest of us. Communication is important for all of us, especially in hard times and with a tough future ahead."

"I would like to have more discussion concerning budget cuts and an open door policy concerning reasons for the cuts."

"More candid and open communication between the field and Headquarters staff to make sure staff are informed of what is happening, especially during challenging times such as budget reductions, program changes with new unfunded mandates/expectations, new direction for the department, etc."

Most of all, staff want regular updates about layoffs

"I am always worried that one day I will come in and I won't have a job...Management DOES NOT communicate budget cuts effectively at all. These are scary times for us and we just want the truth in a timely manner."

"I would like more information regarding the changes that are going on around us in Children's Services regarding the job force reduction. This is depressing to myself and other fellow employees. We need to be kept in the loop and respected."

"I would like to receive tangible information on what the future holds for me within my current position. I may or may not be laid off. When will I hear?"

"Everyone here seems to be walking on pins and needles, due to cutbacks on everything including employees, not knowing whether or not we are going to be told we no longer have a job or Fircrest's doors are closing."

"Staff are being cut...there's no communication...rumors fly and fear runs rampant...no one wants to tell you the truth."

THEME. Clear guidelines from management

322 of the 10,086 employees who commented addressed the issue of clear guidelines from management to staff, which includes communications about policies, roles, expectations, priorities, vision and missions.

3% commented on this theme (322)

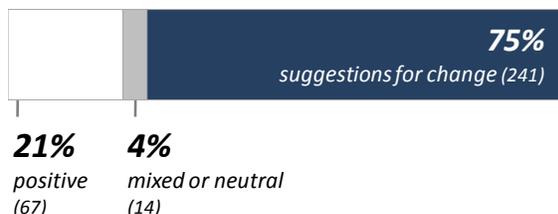


322 employees made comments concerning clear guidelines. Three out of four (75%) indicated that communications about guidelines need to improve.

Although some employees are satisfied with the direction they receive, many more feel management should communicate with staff about guidelines more frequently and more clearly. Specifically, they would like:

- Clear and consistent operating procedures
- Detailed instructions for new processes
- An understanding of management’s priorities
- Complete and comprehensive communications about guidelines
- Timely updates when policy changes are made

Their comments were:



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Some employees appreciate the clear guidelines they receive from management

- “The guidelines are clear and attainable; I feel I do a better job with these guidelines that have been provided to me.”
- “The mission for HCS is clear, our elderly and disabled population and providing options in the community.”
- “I receive clear direction regarding my job responsibilities.”
- “The expectations and outcomes of the job are clear and measurable.”

Many want clearer and more consistent guidance from management

- “Help us make some sense out of what Olympia really wants done.”
- “I would like to see clearer directions from Headquarters when changes are being made...It is frustrating to get started implementing changes and then be told that we have been doing it wrong...or that nobody really knows how the process is supposed to work.”
- “There are no clear standards for the way things are handled and inconsistency within our department gives our customers the impression there are NO standards, that we simply decide that day how to deal with a particular problem.”
- “The field needs timely clear directions when we are implementing complex changes, and someone to answer the many questions that arise.”
- “Many instructions from central office and local management are unclear. We are expected to figure it out.”
- “Everything is a priority. Something’s going to have to give and management must do a better job of communicating what the real priorities are.”
- “We have no direction, no discipline, and no plan for the future. Working here is like watching as a once proud ship dies a slow painful death...as the captain plans his next trip completely unaware that the ship won’t float.”

Employees are unsettled by frequently changing guidelines during bad economic times

- “Changing course without clear direction in the midst of significant funding shortfalls creates an ongoing atmosphere of tension.”
- “I would like to see clear preparations and/or guidelines for field staff from central office for budget reductions that are going to affect our clients.”
- “The administration! They’ve done a terrible job with the layoffs. It is impossible to believe anyone has a plan or clear cut goal except to slash spending. Everything that has been created and found effective these last three years is being torn apart.”

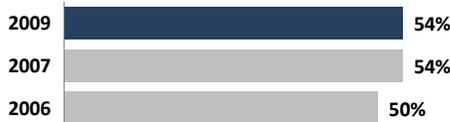
QUESTION. I know how my agency measures its success

More than half of respondents (54%) reported they understand how DSHS measures success. However, 24% said they seldom or never know what methods are used to measure success.

They want:

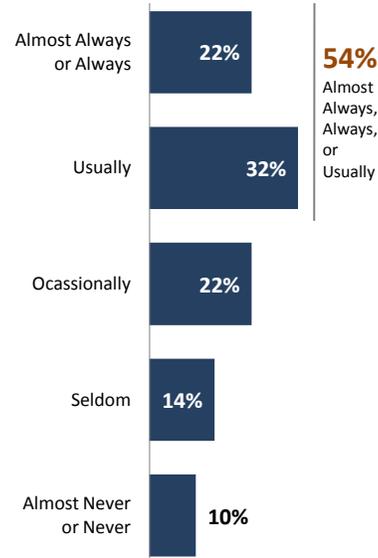
- A clear understanding of how employee success is measured
- Written performance measures
- Measures that don't interfere with good client service
- Assurance that all employees at each job level are held to the same standards

More staff in 2009 than in 2006 said they know how the agency measures success. The percentage of staff saying they know how the agency measures success was the same in 2007 and 2009.



Increase between 2006 and 2009 is statistically significant at $p < .01$

ANSWERS



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Many staff appreciate having clearly defined goals and performance measures

"I like having clear expectations set for me."

"I like working with a national model that is evidence-based. I receive ongoing, quality feedback from my consultant."

"Managers tell us what is expected of us."

"I'm encouraged by the rollout of the standards."

Some value goals and performance measures, but want them to be more transparent

"Define what our REAL goals are. Sometimes we are told it is customer service, sometimes it is federal measures, sometimes it is the Gov's measures. Decide what you really want us to accomplish and then support us in achieving that goal and use that goal to measure our success."

"Set clear, concise guidelines that originate from the top of the chain of command and are effectively carried down."

"If employees knew what was expected of them...we would not have half the issues."

"[I would like] written performance measures and expectations."

"I would like to see clearer goals articulated from executive leadership."

Others are frustrated by such measures

"We are becoming married to our computers with assessments and all the required ETR/ETP, Prior Approvals, policies and procedures – as such, we are becoming less client service oriented."

"Production goals will be set by administration and, months later, we will find out that a different set of production goals were actually being used to grade our performance."

"Less focus on numbers, more focus on the quality of case work."

Staff believe everyone should be accountable to the same standards

"Equal work for all staff. Equal expectations of workload and completed cases."

"I would like to see more accountability for those who do not perform at the levels set forth by management."

"I would like to see that everyone has the same procedures and everyone knows what they are."

"I'd like to see more employee management. When an employee is not doing their work up to standard, I'd like to see it addressed, over and over again if necessary."

QUESTION. I know how my work contributes to the goals of the agency

More than eight out of ten employees (81% of all respondents) reported that they understand how their work contributes to agency goals. A much smaller number (8%) indicated that they don't understand how their work supports the goals of the agency.

Employees appreciate:

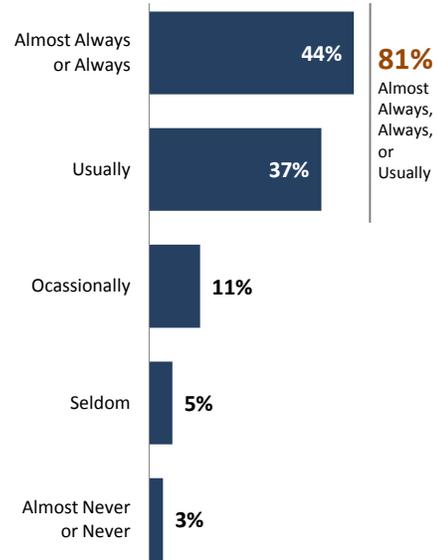
- Having a clear picture of agency goals
- Knowing how their work relates to those goals
- Having the resources to do their job well
- Feeling their work makes a positive difference

More staff in 2009 than in either 2007 or 2006 said they know how their work contributes to agency goals.



Increase between 2007 and 2009, and also between 2006 and 2009, is statistically significant at $p < .01$

ANSWERS



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Most employees know how they contribute to agency goals, and are proud of their contributions

"I can see how my work fits in with the work of others in our division and our administration. And, I see how it helps clients and providers."

"I know and understand where I fit in."

"I know what the expectations are, and I am given the freedom to meet those expectations."

"The mission is very clear – client focused service."

"In many, many different ways I am making a difference."

"I know what is expected of me every day. Seeing a resident change because HE wants to change and watching him finally get [it] is amazing, and knowing I had a small part in that makes this job worth coming to."

Some feel they lack the resources to achieve important goals

"When attempting to meet AFSA guidelines we are not given the appropriate resources to be successful. Evidence-based practices and services are most effective, however the budget is not supportive of this."

"[Give us] resources to do the job, including FTEs to support the changes in service delivery redesign for both CSO operations and CSC operations."

"More accountability in middle and upper management for assuring their staff have clear direction of what is expected and the means to meet those expectations."

"Management makes the decision and wants it implemented yesterday, then realize people don't have equipment or other resources they need to work effectively."

Other employees simply wonder, "What are the agency goals?"

"I'm not understanding our department's mission: what is it now?"

"Clarity on what the department's vision or goal really is – there are too many ever-changing policies."

"I'd like a better idea from executive management of our destination as an organization and the path we all will tread to reach it."

"The new motto for DSHS of One Vision, One Agency seems great in theory, but also seems rather suspect in practice... I would like to see more common understanding, education, and communication around what each sub-agency is responsible for, and what priorities they make."

"More clear direction about determining priorities, as it is not possible to complete all the work that could be done."



CHAPTER 2

Supervisor/Manager Support

IN THIS TIME OF ECONOMIC TURMOIL, there were no major changes in perceptions of manager behavior. The most pressing issues related to management concerned manager communication – addressed in Chapter 1 – and changes to work processes and resources – addressed in Chapter 5. There were small, but significant changes in a few other management areas. It appears that many employees enjoy their relationship with their direct supervisor, but feel higher level management’s attention has turned away from them in the current budget crisis.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIPS. Most employees report positive relationships with their immediate supervisors. Increasing numbers say their supervisor treats them with dignity and respect, and provides meaningful performance evaluations.

- **Most appreciate respect.** 83% of respondents (2% more than in 2007) said their supervisor treats them with dignity and respect.
- **Performance evaluations improve.** 2% more employees (58%) said that their performance evaluation provides them with meaningful information about performance. This continues an upward trend; positive answers to this question have increased 7% from 2006.
- **Remained steady.** The percentage of employees who say that supervisors hold employees accountable (77%) and give useful ongoing feedback (65%) remained the same as 2007.

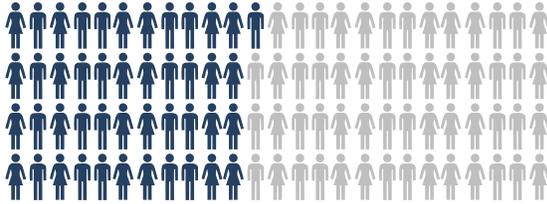
EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION. In the midst of staff and service cuts, fewer employees feel they receive recognition for a job well done. This downward trend is mainly seen in institution staff.

- **Decreased recognition in the institutions.** Only 44% of employees who work in the Department’s residential facilities (for mental health, developmental disabilities, juvenile rehabilitation, and secure confinement) said they receive recognition for a job well done – down from 49% in 2007. However, this is still higher than the 41% in 2006.
- **Comments help to explain the trends.** The comments about management seem to indicate that many employees feel that upper levels of management have turned their attention away from the individual employee in the face of budget and programmatic crises.

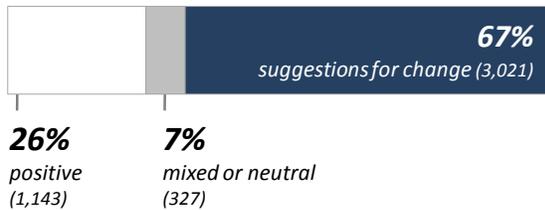
THEME. General treatment by supervisors and managers

Many employees commented on their treatment by supervisors and managers. 4,491 of the 10,086 employees who made comments addressed the issue of supervisor/manager support or other aspects of supervisor/manager behavior.

45% commented on this theme (4,491)



Their comments were:



About one out of four employees who mentioned supervisors and managers (26%) made positive comments. However, more than two thirds (67%) offered ways in which supervisors and managers can improve their treatment of employees.

Of the 4,491 who mentioned supervisor and manager treatment of employees:

- 1,416 (14%) addressed support, mentoring, and feedback (see pages 23-25).
- 807 (8%) discussed staff recognition and awards (see pages 26-27).
- 739 (7%) focused on courtesy and respect (see pages 29-30).
- 977 (10%) wrote about manager fairness (Chapter 3, pages 32-33).
- 2,917 (29%) spoke to other issues concerning relationships with supervisors and managers. These issues are addressed throughout this report.

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Employees appreciate supportive supervisors and managers

“The support of my current regional supervisor, who encourages growth and shows respect and understanding.”

“It would be nice if my supervisor would ask just once how I would like my career to develop, and then offer training and resources to help me get there.”

“My supervisor advocates for all staff and makes us all feel important, valued, and cared about.”

They feel supervisors and managers should hold all staff accountable*

“Supervisors need to monitor their staff better. More accountability is needed.”

“I like the fact that people are held accountable.”

“More support and accountability by supervisors, while still allowing for independence in completing job duties.”

“I would like to see all the lazy state employees held accountable for their lack of work, tardiness, and unprofessional behavior.”

Employees want recognition for their good work

“Better communication within our department, and have people get credit and thank yous for the hard work they do.”

“Recognizing staff at monthly meetings works very well.”

“More support from management. Hear more about what we’re doing right than what we’re doing wrong.”

They also want to be treated with courtesy and respect

“I have a great supervisor who treats me with respect. She has high expectations and always lets me and my unit members know that our work counts.”

“Management is worthless. They DO NOT provide the humor, understanding and respect that we as the core of the ‘people that get the job done’ deserve.”

“I like that we are treated as equals, with respect and the power to change things that are within our powers to do.”

*See p. 28 for further discussion of accountability.

THEME. Supervisors and managers support and mentoring

1,416 of the 10,086 respondents commenting addressed the issue of supervisor/manager support and mentoring – including availability, helpfulness, and feedback.

14% commented on this theme (1,416)

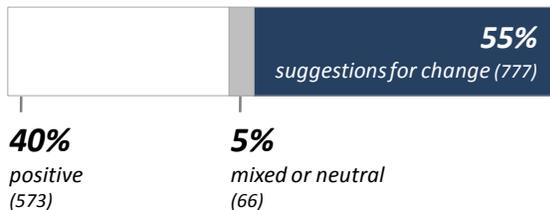


Of the 1,416 respondents who wrote about supervisor and manager support and mentoring, four out of ten (40%) expressed satisfaction, and more than half (55%) saw a need for improvement.

Staff appreciate supervisors and managers who:

- Are accessible when staff need help
- Advocate for their staff
- Offer positive feedback
- Avoid micro-managing
- Acknowledge staff accomplishments
- Are skilled and knowledgeable, and share their expertise

Their comments were:



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Staff want supervisors and managers to be positive and supportive

- “My supervisor is great! Very knowledgeable and supportive.”
- “I don’t feel supported by my Area Administrator. I don’t feel there is an open door where I can express my feelings and know what I say will not be used in retaliation.”
- “Supervisors and Area Administrators need to be experts in positive, calm, direct, solution-focused interactions with staff.”
- “[I like] the support, confidence and encouragement shown to me by my supervisors.”
- “DSHS is fond of saying that state employees are their most valuable assets, but in practice they are treated like pieces on a checkerboard without regard to education, skills, or ability.”
- “I like both of my supervisors, and my intake job. It’s important to work under someone who has knowledge, support and understanding when workers need it.”
- “[Some] management staff have little interest in the line or lower staff, only in their own job and status.”
- “My supervisor and immediate manager are very supportive and always make time available if I need their help or input.”

They welcome meaningful feedback, but don’t want to be micro-managed

- “Certain managers need to stop micro-managing. The workers all know what their job requires them to do and they get the job done in a timely fashion. We don’t need or require a manager hovering over us telling us how to do our job.”
- “Positive feedback would be great instead of only being approached about something by lead and supervisor if they disagree with something that was done or needs to be corrected. No recognition for things that have been done correctly.”
- “I do need to be left alone and not micro-managed by a supervisor that has no idea of EXACTLY what I do.”
- “My supervisor is not a micro-manager. He is sensitive to my needs and helps me whenever he can.”
- “I appreciate that my supervisor/manager allows me to be innovative in seeking and adapting different ways to do my job. I take pleasure in the trust my supervisor/manager has for me in my ability to think and work independently.”

They appreciate supervisors and managers who are good mentors

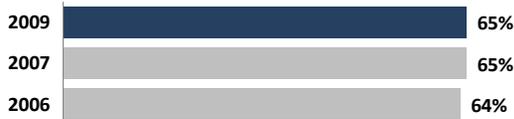
- “[My supervisor] is very supportive in the developmental path that I outline for myself.”
- “I appreciate my supervisor. She is an excellent mentor and has incredible patience to teach me new areas of my job.”
- “Variety in my job, Continuing education. Respect as a professional. Encouraged to grow, and grow beyond my institution.”
- “I appreciate that my supervisor is always available if I have a question, and will explain why something must be done in a particular way. My supervisor is mentor as well as boss.”

QUESTION. My supervisor gives me ongoing feedback that helps me improve my performance

Nearly two thirds of employees (65%) said their supervisor provides regular, ongoing feedback. However, nearly two out of ten employees (18%) reported they seldom or never receive feedback from their supervisors. Employees like supervisors who:

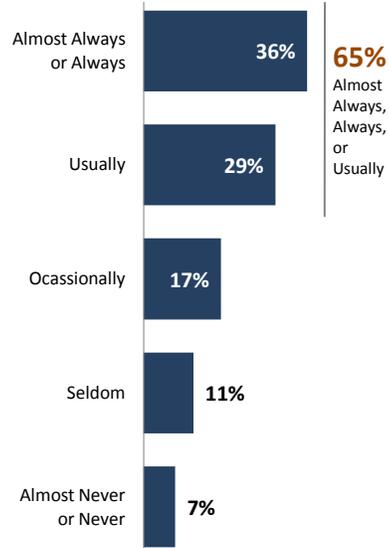
- Provide clear and useful feedback
- Offer constructive coaching/mentoring
- Have a good understanding of their employees' work
- Exhibit genuine concern for their employees' well-being
- View themselves as part of the team

There was no significant change between 2007 and 2009 in employee receipt of ongoing feedback.



Increase from 2006 is statistically significant at $p < .01$

ANSWERS



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Employees look for constructive, practical feedback from supervisors

"My supervisor gives good solid feedback, and I feel like she depends on me to perform a variety of tasks that help the big picture. Our office is continually working to improve practice."

"You hardly hear feedback unless you have done something wrong. We just need a little better morale for the staff."

"The few direct supervisors that we do have now are too busy in meetings to be useful to their own staff."

"I get meaningful, helpful feedback on a regular basis from my supervisor and peers."

"Feedback is often about what 'is not' being done rather than what 'is' being done to help families on a daily basis. This affects employees' well-being on a daily basis."

They view feedback as a learning tool that improves their work performance

"I have an incredible supervisor who is always upbeat, positive, and supportive. She is critical when it is needed and positive, complimentary and re-affirming, when warranted. She constantly trains us on policy and, currently, on solution-based casework. I have learned a lot from her."

"The thing I like best about my current job is how my supervisor works with me and our group. The projects we do are a team effort. [I like] being able to continually enrich my learning."

"There is no dialogue, there is no one to discuss questions and concerns with – just someone talking. That is not an effective way for me to learn."

"The guidelines for each task are spelled out completely, and the supervisor is always ready to jump in and help if it is needed."

Some employees want more, or more useful, feedback from supervisors

"I would like more feedback and constructive criticism."

"My supervisor has no knowledge or understanding of my work. She has no constructive feedback to give."

"If we are doing something wrong, [the supervisor] does not talk to his staff about it. He just does things like e-mails the staff and cc's the office chief who recommends corrective actions, not giving the staff a chance to make those corrections themselves first. It does not make for a very pleasant work environment."

"More useful feedback for candidates about why they don't get positions and how they can better help DSHS."

"Training of staff in core job functions and positive feedback/auditing and accountability is what I would like to see."

"I would like more positive feedback from my supervisor instead of feeling criticized constantly."

QUESTION. My performance evaluation provides me meaningful information about my performance

Nearly six out of ten respondents (58%) indicated their performance evaluation provides meaningful information.

However, nearly one in four (22%) said their evaluation seldom or never includes useful information. Only a few employees commented specifically about performance evaluations. They appreciate performance evaluations that:

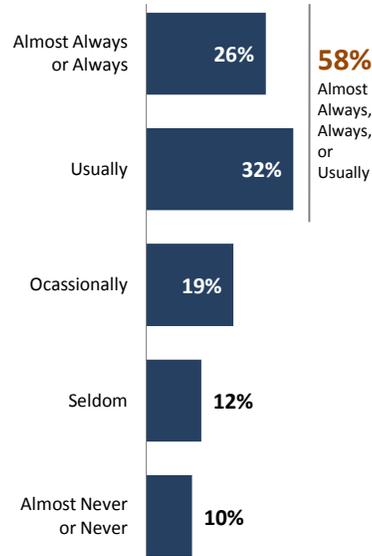
- Are completed in a consistent, timely fashion
- Include honest and practical feedback
- Assist them in improving their job performance

Staff assessment of their performance evaluations shows an upward trend.



Increase between 2007 and 2009, and also between 2006 and 2009, is statistically significant at $p < .01$

ANSWERS



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Staff want regular performance evaluations

"I haven't had a performance evaluation in years. I like to receive feedback on how I am doing in my job so I can improve myself and ensure that what I am doing on a daily basis is in line with my supervisor's goals."

"Supervisors should be performing routine performance evaluations setting goals with staff on an individual basis and high level unit/agency basis."

"I'd like to see staff held accountable for their failure to do performance evaluations on time or not at all."

"I have not had a performance evaluation in my two years with the agency."

"I have had two performance evaluations in 7 years. I do them for my staff annually. It would be nice if others were held to the same accountability."

Some see problems with the performance evaluation process

"My performance evaluation is completed by an individual without sufficient knowledge to evaluate my position."

"The performance appraisal tool and evaluation process is the most ridiculous, unhelpful process I have encountered in my career. It is meaningless to me as an employee and the supervisor's time could be much better spent."

"Better performance evaluation focused on results, rather than picking winners and losers based on perceptions and loyalty."

"I look forward to having a long term performance development plan which entails specific performance goals and meaningful measurement of progress toward those goals. I don't want negative performance feedback based on hearsay again."

"The performance evaluation process is a leftover relic from the past with little benefit to the individual or organization. They are time-consuming to do and they do little or nothing for anyone other than provide an attagirl or attaboy."

Others believe they should have a voice in their supervisor's evaluations

"What kind of evaluation process never asks a co-worker for feedback about their supervisors? It appears to me that management does not want to hear any negative feedback about their supervisors and they care little about what the employees supervised think. The process is disempowering."

"Implement a plan that employees can start evaluating their supervisors; they need to be accountable for their actions."

"Create a standard system for employees to provide feedback when the supervisors are evaluated."

"I would seriously give employees the chance to give input to their supervisors' evaluations."

"I would have employees evaluate their supervisors, and I don't mean this facetiously. They each should be made aware of how they affect the workplace."

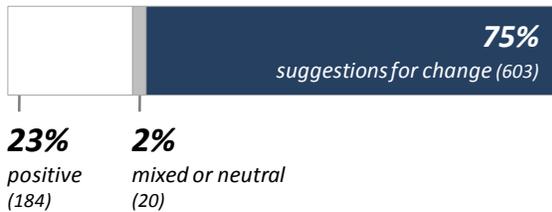
THEME. Recognition and awards

807 of the 10,086 employees who made comments addressed the importance of supervisors and managers recognizing and praising the good work of employees.

8% commented on this theme (807)



Their comments were:



Of the 807 employees who commented about employee recognition, nearly one in four (23%) are satisfied with the current recognition process. However, three fourths (75%) feel the recognition process is in need of improvement.

Employees desire:

- Regular praise for good work
- Special recognition of specific tasks they perform well, or outstanding contributions they make to successful projects

Some feel the Employee Recognition Program should:

- Stop rewarding the most “obvious” candidates
- Recognize more humble, but dedicated, workers
- Disappear completely!

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Employees like supervisors and managers to recognize their good work

“I especially appreciate having my talents and abilities recognized, valued and utilized. It is the best feeling to know I’m contributing my full potential to my job and to ADASA.”

“The supervisors are communicating well, they are encouraging us and telling us daily that we are awesome and doing things right.”

“My manager does a great job helping on the unit and making sure that we all know our responsibilities and commending us on jobs well done.”

“My supervisor is fair, encourages fun and hard work, and gives me praise when I do well.”

“Especially the management are wonderful. They always treat staff with respect and dignity, and recognize our needs or a job well done. So, among us we say, ‘We found ourselves a perfect land.’”

Many would like their positive efforts to be acknowledged more often

“People need to be recognized and appreciated more for the good things they do, especially the outstanding and very personal things. Appreciation can be shown either in tangible or non-tangible ways, but it should always be shown because this is a human need.”

“Change the mindset of rewarding the glitter/glitz in life and stop taking the stalwart for granted.”

“Staff need to be acknowledged for their hard work and not hit over the head for what they couldn’t get done.”

“You may have done a good job for many years, but all of a sudden you’re not longer flavor of the month, and you’re moved along to make room for the current flavor. What kind of leadership is that? People leave with no acknowledgement; people arrive with no acknowledgement.”

Some employees question the worth of the formal Employee Recognition Program

“To me, recognition is not a printed piece of paper that 10 people get for various reasons at every staff meeting, but the ability of the regional administrator to look each person they are responsible for in the eye, speak to them, and call them by their first name.”

“There is a sense that management do not trust, recognize, or appreciate staff. Annual team appreciation events don’t do much.”

“I’d like to feel valued, not in rhetoric but in actions.”

“The current system of recognition is just a popularity contest and only works for those in the ‘in’ crowd. There are thousands of unsung heroes in our midst, who usually get dumped on over and over and used up until they break and move on. It’s a shame, really, because with each departure the agency is diminished as a whole.”

QUESTION. I receive recognition for a job well done

Just over half of respondents (51%) reported they receive recognition for excellent work. 27%) said they seldom or never receive recognition for good work they accomplish. Staff believe:

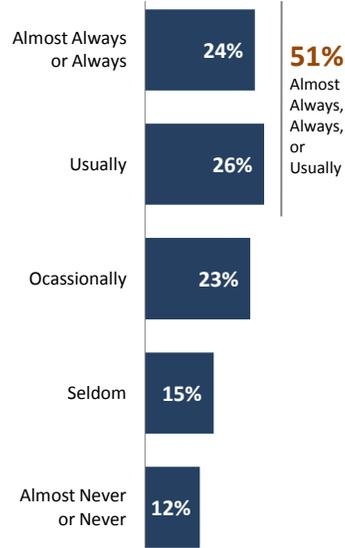
- Frequent, positive recognition from supervisors and managers is important
- Criticism, or the absence of encouragement, has a negative impact on staff morale
- Acknowledgement of individual efforts really matters – whether that recognition is public or private, large or small

Fewer staff in 2009 than in 2007 said they received recognition for a job well done – especially in the department’s institutions.



Decrease from 2007 and increase from 2006 are statistically significant at p<.01. The decrease is found mainly in DSHS institutions – where the number reporting recognition fell from 49% in 2007 to 44% in 2009.

ANSWERS



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Many staff are recognized for their good work

“We have a great supervisor who not only challenges us but compliments us on the work that we do.”

“[My supervisor] and other members of the management team always take the time to thank me for work that I have done to help complete a project, and that means a great deal to me.”

“[My direct supervisor] makes each of us feel a valued member of our team.”

“[I like] the feeling that I am a valued employee.”

“Allowed to work independently but still given help when needed, and rewarded for a job well done.”

Others want more recognition for what they do well

“It’s hard, thankless work where we are targets most of the time. Give us a credit for every year we put our lives on the line here. We go alone into people’s homes who hate us, fear us, distrust us, often because we deemed them too dangerous to care for their own children. I think that warrants a ‘thank you’ in the form of a 3 dollar mug from Target, or a 10 cent certificate printed out on a computer.”

“I feel that we need to do a better job of making people feel valued. We are expected to do our job and be loyal but there is no loyalty coming back to employees.”

“The employees are not feeling secure or appreciated during these hard times, and it is showing.”

“Stop greasing the ‘squeaky wheel.’ Learn how to praise the ones that run smoothly through their own internal lubrication.”

“I would like to see more employees get recognized. It is great that we have employee of the month awards. The problem is that it turns into a popularity contest. I have seen (some) staff do great things that are barely recognized.”

Some staff suggested ways to recognize good work

“Due to budget cuts, we’ve had to cut the formal employee recognition events. I would like to see a commitment to a structured formal way to recognize employees. This was a yearly event, and now it’s gone.”

“When our Employee Recognition event comes around, it would be nice to have ALL the departments represented, and not just the ones social workers and their support staff are in.”

“More rewards for a job well done – recognition. I want a mug or at LEAST a certificate on my anniversary!”

“I worked hard to complete my education so that I have the skills to do my job effectively, and would appreciate there being some distinction that indicates this accomplishment.”

“It would be wonderful if our supervisors could try to do a few nice things to remind us how important we are. This does not have to include monetary things or even much time, just some genuine ‘thank you’s.’”

QUESTION. My supervisor holds me and my co-workers accountable

More than three quarters of employees (77%) said their supervisors hold their staff accountable. However, 11% indicated their supervisor seldom or never holds staff accountable. Employees feel strongly that:

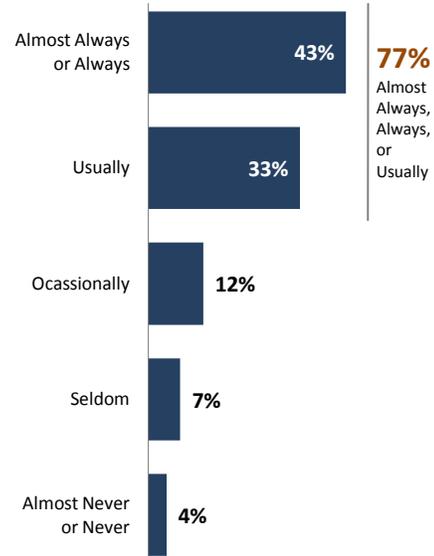
- Supervisors need to hold their staff accountable
- Problem staff should pay a price for their laziness, poor attitude/behavior, or incompetence*
- All staff should be held to the SAME performance standards

There was no significant change between 2007 and 2009 in supervisors holding employees accountable.



Decrease from 2006 is statistically significant at p<.01

ANSWERS



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Employees want supervisors who hold staff accountable

“Supervisor needs to learn how to be a supervisor and model productive behavior, and not be afraid to make decisions that may not be popular with some.”

“In our unit one individual is the source of much stress and anxiety, yet nothing is done to stop this behavior. Bullies are not allowed in public schools, and they shouldn’t be allowed in the workplace.”

“A consistent supervision plan and fair accountability between staff members. It appears some staff members are able to get away with more than other staff members. It appears that supervisors are intimidated by a handful of staff members, causing the workload to become an issue for the remaining staff members.”

“Leadership at the field level should be held accountable for all the ‘deadwood’ already in the system, and schooled in the skills required to clean house and get the division to that lean and efficient model – especially in these economic times.”

They feel that problematic staff should face consequences or removal*

“Attendance is atrocious! Staff need to be held more accountable for their attendance at work.”

“There is no incentive to do a first-rate job. Employees who fall behind in completing paperwork don’t get any consequences.”

“Bullies and troublemakers are NEVER dealt with. They are constantly creating problems.”

“More accountability for those that are not self-directed and never step up to take on new tasks.”

“I would like to see staff who fit the public’s stereotype of government employees being lazy and problematic punished.”

“Deal quickly with chronic leave abusers instead of giving them a million chances. (The leopard doesn’t change its spots!)”

“I wish budget decisions would result in the removal of the incompetent, as opposed to removal of the most recently hired.”

They believe all employees in a work unit should be held to the same standards

“More fairness and accountability for all. Everyone should be treated the same, and they are not.”

“It seems some people are held strictly accountable and others are not. For example, some people come in late 3-4 times a week and no one says anything to them.”

“Performance standards across the board – accountability.”

“All employees held to the same standards and accountability, not special allowances for seniority or complainers.”

“I would like to see an equal accountability standard for employees. I have seen employees violate policies and standards. When I inquire about this, I have been told, That person has been here for a long time and that’s just the way they are.’ I was unaware that was an excuse for not doing your job.”

*See p. 61 for a discussion of the problems of seniority-based reductions and the difficulties of removing incompetent staff.

QUESTION. My supervisor treats me with dignity and respect

More than eight out of ten employees (83%) indicated their supervisor treats them with dignity and respect. Many expressed thanks for this considerate treatment.

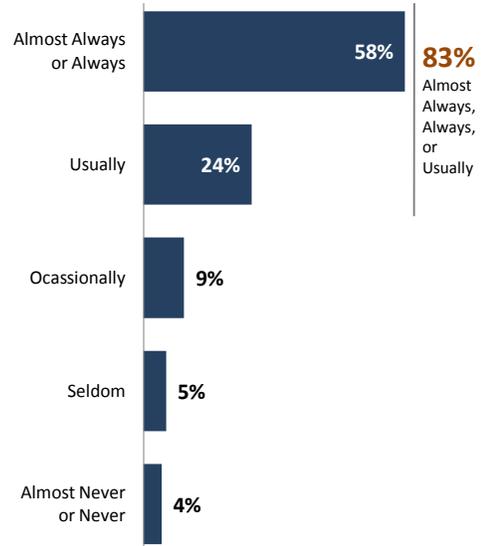
Although less than one out of ten employees (9%) reported their supervisors seldom or never treat them respectfully, some of their comments – which describe supervisors who gossip about, bully, intimidate, target, and retaliate against their employees – are very concerning. A number of these troubling comments can be found in the box below.

More staff in 2009 than in either 2007 or 2006 said their supervisor treats them with dignity and respect.



Increase between 2007 and 2009, and also between 2006 and 2009, is statistically significant at $p < .01$

ANSWERS



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Most employees feel supervisors treat them with dignity and respect

“My supervisor treats each of us like the seasoned professionals that we are. He has created an environment in which, despite the upper management mistakes, we feel respected and appreciated.”

“My supervisor is flexible and kind, and that makes going to work every day very positive and happy.”

“I am always treated with dignity and respect, and my supervisor listens to what I say and recommend.”

“[My supervisor] NEVER rolls her eyes or keeps her back to us when we go into her office to staff cases. This makes us want to work even harder.”

“I feel respected and appreciated for my efforts and job performance by my supervisors.”

“My supervisor treats everybody with dignity and respect. She allows all to give input and will always use ideas and is always thankful for everybody’s input.”

“I love the fact that I finally have a supervisor who knows what it means to be a ‘supervisor.’ For the first time in twenty years of working for the state, I feel respected and treated like I can think an assignment through for myself.”

“My supervisor. He treats his staff with respect and dignity.”

A small, but troubling, number of employees feel intimidated or bullied by their supervisor

“I would like to have a bully free and gossip free environment from my supervisor and management team.”

“Replace or eliminate my supervisor. He’s a pompous ass who keeps being told he’s doing a good job, when no one’s asked the people he intimidates or is prejudiced against. How he’s gotten through the system this long is beyond comprehension.”

“My supervisor is incompetent and petty. He is not ethical and targets workers.”

“[I would like] to see a significant shift in culture, where respect for all is authentically embraced and the fear of retaliation does not inhibit staff from speaking when issues arise.”

Some employees think supervisors should be trained in respectful management

“Mandatory training for all supervisors on how to MANAGE the people they must work with and supervise, without favoritism and with respect.”

“A manager in our unit could greatly benefit from management training with a focus on what makes a good manager, how to encourage a positive working environment by treating their staff with basic common courtesy, dignity and a little respect vs. demeaning and humiliating them.”

“My supervisor needs to go through some form of management training, as she needs education on the role of supervisor. She needs to learn how to treat all employees under her equally and not show favoritism to some and harass others.”

THEME. Courtesy and respect from supervisors/managers

739 of the 10,086 respondents who commented addressed this aspect of supervisor and manager behavior.

7% commented on this theme (739)



Of the 739 respondents who wrote comments about courtesy and respect, nearly one in four (23%) said supervisors and managers treat them respectfully. However, three quarters (75%) see a need for improvement in this area.

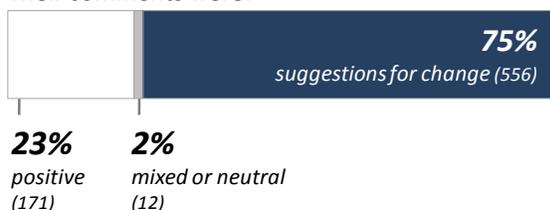
Staff want:

- Respectful, even-handed treatment
- Recognition of their skills and experience
- A strong voice in their workplace

Staff resent:

- Unwarranted criticism
- Being demeaned, dismissed, or ignored

Their comments were:



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Staff praise supervisors and managers who treat them with courtesy and respect

"I appreciate my supervisor. Her sense of humor and kindness are valued by our entire unit, as well as the respect she shows to all of us."

"[I like] having a regional administrator (my boss) who demonstrates a high level of respect and integrity for not only direct reports but ALL staff within the region."

"I'm very pleased with my supervisor, and love that she treats me with dignity and respect. She makes my job so pleasant!"

"We are all treated as adults with a job to do, and we are respected and trusted to do that job."

"My supervisor ensures I have everything to fulfill my duties, and does it with great respect and professionalism."

They're frustrated by disrespectful supervisors and managers

"Managers need to remember that workers are people, first and foremost, and that customer service not only applies to constituents and stakeholders, but also to the staff who work for them."

"There is nothing I like about my job right now. My supervisor has no respect for me as a worker or a person."

"Genuine respect [for workers], especially when you are terminating them or laying them off. At least act like it matters."

"[My boss] is never there to talk to, and if he is you get a smart ass answer and are not taken seriously."

"[I would like] to be treated like a human being, not an automaton."

"If line workers treated clients the way upper management treats staff, they would be fired in a heartbeat!"

"I would like management to treat us line staff as human beings instead of just a tool at their disposal."

"I would really like to see some common respect displayed by our supervisor. Snideness and moodiness is not for the workplace. If your supervisor only cares if she looks good or she is recognized, morale can really suck."

Many staff would like the respect of having a real voice in their workplace

"I would hope and expect that managers would treat case managers as the professional, experienced, educated, and dedicated co-workers they are. Too frequently I and my co-workers feel like we have no voice."

"I do [my job] well in spite of my supervisor's indifference to me. She intentionally leaves me out of the information circle, and overrides my decisions affecting subordinates without discussing the matter with me."

"I would like concerns or questions brought up to be answered, politely, not dismissed with a rude remark."

"The managers need to learn how to treat staff with respect and listen to them. Some of the managers treat staff very critically. We are always wrong."



CHAPTER 3

Fairness & Diversity

THERE WERE SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE TRENDS in the standard questions about fairness and diversity. This improvement may be partially due to these issues being overshadowed by concerns related to the budget crisis. Some employees continued to express concerns about fairness/diversity issues, and questions about sexual harassment increased comments in this area. Although relatively small in number, any concerns about unfair treatment, discrimination or sexual harassment deserve careful examination.

FAIR TREATMENT AND DIVERSITY. Both the standard questions on fairness and diversity and the comments related to discrimination against protected groups showed improvement from 2007. Negative comments about unfair treatment decreased in the 2009 survey.

- **A positive trend in fairness.** Compared to 2007, 3% more employees (71%) said that people in their workgroup are treated fairly, without discrimination. This shows a continuing upward trend, 6% higher than in 2006.
- **More support for diversity.** 4% more employees (64%) said their agency consistently demonstrates support for a diverse workforce.
- **Negative comments decreased by 22%.** Employees making negative comments about discrimination against protected groups decreased by 22%.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT. Two new questions added to the 2009 survey showed that most employees are knowledgeable about sexual harassment. An increase in comments expressing concerns about sexual harassment may be due to increased attention brought by these questions.

- **Most employees are informed.** The two new survey questions showed that 93% of respondents have received sexual harassment training at DSHS and know how to report an incident or where to get the information on how to report. The number of those with such training and knowledge was even greater in DSHS institutions (94%).
- **Sexual harassment comments increased.** Inclusion of two new questions in the 2009 Employee Survey may have prompted the increase in sexual harassment comments compared to 2007. Of particular concern were 35 employees who reported experiencing sexual harassment or being aware of its existence in their workplace.

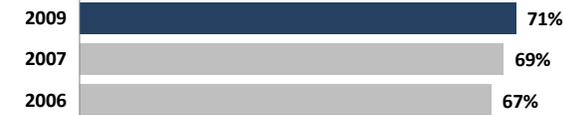
QUESTION. In my workgroup, people are treated fairly, without discrimination

71% of employees said they are treated fairly. 16% reported a pattern of unfairness.

Some staff made general comments about unfair treatment. Others feel that not all employees are held to the same standards, given equal workloads, or offered the same opportunities. Some have concerns about retaliation.

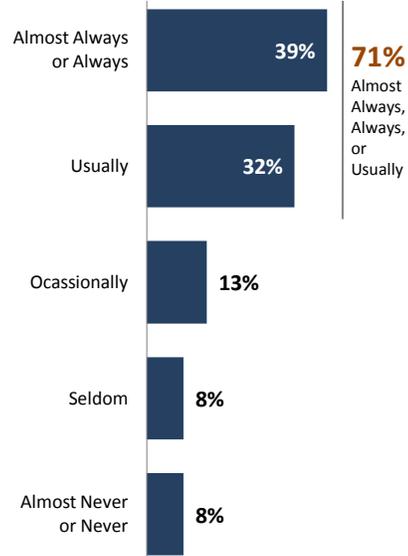
Specific concerns about diversity issues are discussed later in the chapter. Concerns about fairness in promotions and hiring are addressed both in this chapter and in the Personnel Issues section of the Business Practices Chapter, pages 60-61.

More staff in 2009 than in either 2007 or 2006 said they are treated fairly, without discrimination.



Increases are statistically significant at $p < .01$

ANSWERS



► **What DSHS employees said . . .**

Most staff feel they are treated fairly and without discrimination

- “My supervisor. She is VERY honest and straight forward. She is very fair with everyone she interacts with and supervises.”
- “Having a solid, fair Regional Administrator in place inspires the region to continually improve the delivery of services to those in need, improves team spirit and meets the mission of this department!!”
- “My boss and the atmosphere she creates that is a safe environment we can express any concerns and that we are all treated with respect and acknowledged that we have wisdom to offer the team in most all decision making.”
- “Flexibility, support from management for MSW, equality in distribution of cases assigned.”
- “I am appreciative of the fairness my supervisor demands and fights for – she makes me want to be a better employee.”

Some feel strongly that not all are treated fairly, that there are different standards for different workers

- “Workers treated the same. There is blatant favoritism. Some are exempt from the rules that others are expected to follow.”
- “That the management is consistent at all levels in expectations for groups and individuals, application of policies, rules, workload assignment, changes to work practice.”
- “More equality and fair practices for all employees instead of preferential treatment of administrators’ favorites.”
- “It is really a morale sucker to not see all case managers held to the same performance and accountability standards.”
- “People are not being promoted based on their skills and knowledge but solely based on who they know.”
- “The ability to grow as an employee is lacking. I see some people being given the opportunity and understand that it comes from being a favorite in the workplace and not so much the quality of the work. This disappoints me because the agency has talented people that are being overlooked because they are not a favorite.”

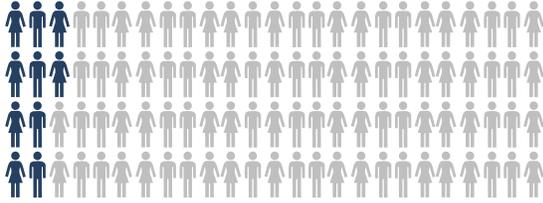
Others suggested that some supervisors do not distribute work fairly

- “It would be nice to feel a sense of fairness, instead of having to settle for certain people having a lighter load by design.”
- “More distribution of workload. It seems as though about 20% of the workforce is responsible for 80% of the workload.”
- “I would like to see the workload split with everyone not just the employee that works and goes the extra mile every day.”
- “On a regular basis, serious caseload size disparities among the offices must be addressed. For most of this year, certain offices have reportedly had a minimum amount of case assignments while other offices have had an overload of casework. Quite frankly caseload sizes that are unmanageable are dangerous to children.”

THEME. Manager fairness

977 of the 10,086 respondents who made narrative comments addressed the issue of management fairness.

10% commented on this theme (977)



Their comments were:



5%

positive (47), or mixed or neutral (6)

Of the 977 employees* who wrote about manager fairness, 95% said there was room for improvement. 5% made positive (47) or mixed/neutral (6) comments.

Employees like it when supervisors:

- Treat everyone equally and fairly
- Hold everyone accountable
- Distribute perks fairly
- Don't threaten retaliation when staff speak up
- Don't set policy on the basis of a few individuals

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Some staff feel supervisors aren't fair with perks and punishments

"Our unit does not have a high morale. We do not feel that we are valued enough by management because of the lack of flex time, when other units around us have flex time."

"Fair treatment for all employees regarding shifts and days off and having to train on days off and the same people left out of retreats and other activities all of the time because they are the ones with the least popular shifts forced on them even though they have more seniority than some of the favored."

"Unfair discrepancies of time off for continuing education for license."

"Would like to see a change of the inequities. Some seem to have plenty of time to visit and work on special projects (employee recognition, CFD activities) while the rest of us rarely if ever take a lunch break, leave work on time, or simply work 8 hour days."

Others fear retaliation for speaking up

"Ability to provide honest feedback and involvement in problem solving with management without fear of retaliation."

"[Concern about] meetings where no one asks questions and fear to share their perspectives, so many staff have given up voicing opinions, or are so afraid of retaliation in some form that they will not speak out."

"Veiled threats about losing one's job if concerns are expressed about being able to effectively absorb considerable increases in job duties w/o the resources to do the job right."

"No retaliation from management and supervisors for speaking out advocating for better work environment and safety concerns for all."

"We should not work in a climate or culture of fear. Winning the hearts and minds of the media and the public is important. What about winning the hearts and minds of the employees? There is simply no need for any employee to walk through the front doors afraid."

Staff resent managers who set policy (or punish everyone) for the problem behavior of one or a few

"I wish supervisors and management would not punish the whole office with special projects to increase our numbers when the employees with performance issues/poor attendance/poor work ethic are the ones who should be written up and made to do their own work."

"Stronger administration that isn't afraid to handle situations on an individual basis and to have them stop using 'global reprimands.' Take care of the person causing the problem instead of making everyone suffer."

"I would like to see knee-jerk mass punishments over an entire department stop when one person or a small number of employees violate policy or make mistakes."

*This count does not include complaints specifically about unfairness in regard to diversity issues, addressed later in this chapter.

QUESTION. My agency consistently demonstrates support for a diverse workforce

64% of employees said their agency shows support for a diverse workforce.* 16% reported a lack of such support.

Employees appreciate:

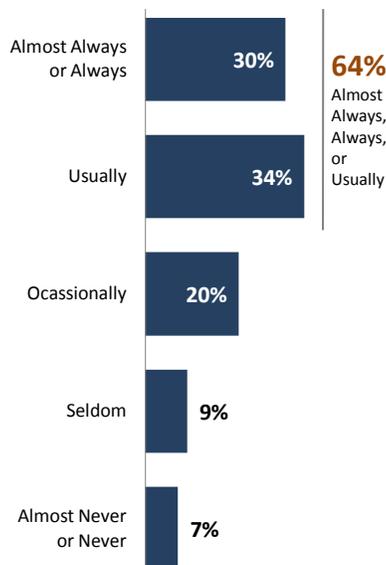
- Diverse co-workers and clients
- Managers who value and promote respect for staff diversity
- Fairness and equal treatment in recruitment, hiring, promotions, and accountability

More staff in 2009 said their agency supports a diverse workforce.



Increase is statistically significant at $p < .01$. This question was not asked in 2006.

ANSWERS



► What DSHS employees said . . .

A number of employees praised the diversity of DSHS

- “I work with an amazing group of people. We are a very diverse group and we cherish that diversity as part of our success.”
- “The chance to work with people from many different cultures towards a common goal.”
- “How staff are encouraged to embrace diversity and respect of one another which includes staff and clients.”
- “I like the diversity of the youth we serve as it enlightens me about the fact that we as humans are more alike than dis-alike.”
- “I like the promotion of respect and dignity for all staff and residents regardless of age, race, or beliefs.”

Some staff feel strongly that diversity can be improved; they would like to see an increase in cultural competency

- “I would like to see further integration of diversity and cultural competency into all aspects of work.”
- “There is a lack of culturally competent professionals to deliver quality culturally relevant services to children, youth, families, and communities regardless of where they live. However, communities of color are affected disproportionately higher.”
- “A greater appreciation for and commitment to cultural diversity among employees as well as a greater commitment to building cultural competency among workers.”
- “I would like to see the department do a better job walking our talk when it comes to respect for all the families we work with and truly honor diversity. With disproportionality a looming issue, the practice of disregarding our stated vision and mission in regards to Indian, African American, and Hispanic children must come to an end. At this time, we are mandated to staff cases involving Indian children either with the tribes or LICWACs. In regards to other children or families of color, there is no mandate so staff often choose to not staff with a diversity or multicultural child protection team.”

Some staff suggested specific ways the agency can promote diversity

- “There is no person designated to be a spokesperson for Diversity. In the past we had a regional diversity program manager and the department should consider recreating this position or assigning someone to this task who has the ability to understand the structural and systemic changes needed to implement change in a truly effective way.”
- “We are in need of training in cultural competence and then accountability in regards to exhibiting this attribute.”
- “Division Directors and Regional Administrators who understand the importance of cultural/ethnic diversity in the workplace not as tokens but as active participants in the design and implementation of programs.”
- “Need to insure objectivity and neutral/diverse hiring panels.”

*Interpretation of this question is somewhat problematic. Most respondents answering “seldom” or “never” to this question probably focused on the phrase “diverse workforce.” They may feel their agency does not work hard enough to recruit a diverse workforce, does not embrace diverse approaches in the workplace, or does not teach cultural competency. However, some respondents may have instead focused on the word “support,” and answered negatively because they feel their agency fails to support the workforce (which happens to be diverse).

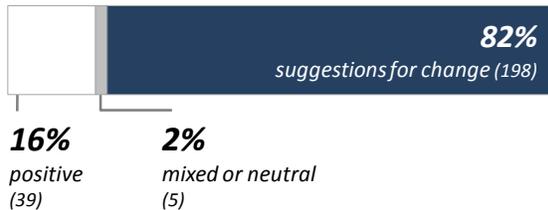
THEME. Favoritism or discrimination involving diversity issues

242 of the 10,086 who made comments addressed discrimination against protected groups.

2% commented on this theme (242)



Their comments were:



39 of the 242 respondents commended agency diversity. 5 made mixed or neutral comments. The majority (198*) expressed concerns about discrimination related to protected groups:

- 86 comments addressed diversity or discrimination without specifying the type of issue.
- 83 addressed unfair treatment related to race, ethnicity, culture, or language.
- 37 spoke about unequal treatment based on gender. Comments on sexual harassment are discussed more specifically on page 37 and are not included in total.
- 22 were concerned about age discrimination.
- 20 made comments about other types of discrimination, including 13 about disabilities and 7 about sexual preference.

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Some employees were concerned about discrimination based on race, ethnicity, culture, or language

"Diversity respecting and embracing differences in race, gender, culture this is not common practice. People of majority are the ones that get promoted and are given the opportunity for on the job training while minorities are not."

"Our leadership whom through overt behaviors send the message every day that Caucasian and other non-African American staff have less value to the agency."

"I would like to see other staff acceptance of different races around them and work together as a team. The animosity against specific race is getting out of control."

"Create a more supportive and accepting environment for some people of color. Some of the other racial minorities seem to have been accepted as okay and are not targeted for often unfounded disciplinary actions. But I've observed that many African Americans/Latinos/Native Americans do receive such actions. Very few are allowed to progress to supervisory positions, and even fewer beyond that level. The glass ceiling for these particular races is in place."

"[I would like] a place where everybody will be treated with respect and dignity; no racial/job discrimination."

Other respondents wrote about gender bias in hiring practices and promotions, while some believe unfair treatment was due to a combination of gender and race

"At this point, there is no male manager at SOLA and hope this unfair treatment of the male staff comes to an end."

"Less discrimination toward women in hiring practices and support in the office."

"All the supervisor promotions in the last year have been white men. New trainees who are male get desk coverage, cases redistributed to other staff to reduce pressure, reduced intake, etc. Women and minorities are put on a 'desk plan.' They get no coverage for vacations or 'off time,' they do not get reduced workloads and they are made to feel incompetent. For the last supervisor opening NO WOMEN even applied."

Some staff complained about discrimination related to age or disabilities

"If you are over 40, you have little (or no) chance of promotion. Many people who are younger (and at times much less experienced) readily move up. The hiring process is not equitable and is very age biased."

"I would like to see an end to age discrimination. I would like to see that people who have spent years in the service of DSHS be recognized and promoted – not overlooked and patronized."

"Opportunities for older workers as well as younger – those who aren't retired and want to continue developing professionally, learning, and contributing (such as aging baby boomers)."

"Diversity – we hear you talk the talk, but our diverse aged and disabled workers are being rified, bumped, and fired."

"Management having compassion with employees who have disabilities/medical problems."

*Individual areas of concern will add to more than 198, as 50 employees mentioned more than one protected group. This count does not include groups discussed on pages 36 and 37.

Related THEMES. Unfair treatment based on issues other than discrimination against protected groups

Some employees made critical comments related to diversity, but not focused on discrimination against protected groups.

► *What DSHS employees said . . .*

62 employees feel family members of other employees receive preferential treatment in hiring, promotion, or job assignments

“Fairer hiring practices. People with experience and seniority constantly pushed aside for friends and family members of supervisors. Work ethics and job performance are not considered. Very much a popularity contest.”

“More diversity in hiring practices instead of family members of current workers.”

“I think it is wrong that the only way you can move up is to have a relative or good friend in an area.”

“Showing family and friends preference in hiring and being placed in better positions. Favoritism is a huge problem. This should really stop. Many people with seniority and military experience and many diverse qualifications are overlooked in hiring while family members and friends are (hired) without qualifications and experience.”

“For the most part however, the group supports the Alpha dog principal of bullying and putting their friends, relatives and family members in positions of power with minimal or less than advertised qualifications for management and other positions of authority.”

45 employees referred to “nepotism” and 25 protested “good ol’ boy” practices – without clarifying any relationship to protected groups. These are counted separately from the family member and gender comments, because some use the words “nepotism” and “good ol’ boy” to mean cronyism. Some may use “good ol’ boy” to refer to longevity.

“A different hiring practice (current hiring practice is based on nepotism, friendship, based on how the individual goes along with management instead of their skills, knowledge, and capabilities.)”

“This agency is filled with people who because of nepotism have maintained positions and produce minimal to substandard work.”

“It is ok to develop friendships but not at the expense of inequality, the good ole boy syndrome, favoritism, etc. and I don’t think a lot of people know how to separate themselves at some key times.”

“Stopping the ‘good ol boy network.’ Giving everybody opportunities rather than hand picking certain individuals.”

49 protested “reverse discrimination” or preferential treatment for protected groups

“Hiring practices – reverse discrimination has to stop. The more qualified applicant needs the job offer.”

“Get rid of the ‘problem staff’ that seem to break all the rules, policies, and laws of this state REPEATEDLY and they NEVER get disciplined or terminated. Solve the ‘reverse discrimination’ that exists here.”

“Promotions for all people not just people of color.”

“I would like to see the entire division look more closely at what appears to be a much more reverse discrimination pattern going on. Many complaints from staff with this issue noted and at what is an alarming rate. Preferential treatment appears to be evident in many staff’s eyes.”

“I’d also like to see people held accountable for their actions and poor work performance, no matter what their ethnicity.”

“People are refused to be allowed to even put in for advancement because they do not speak Spanish. Also being discriminated against for not being of Hispanic descent.”

“More concern over accountability WITHOUT favoritism based on diversity. In other words, sometimes less is expected when they fear accusation of racism. Diverse workforce NOT an issue – over emphasized.”

“Promoting purely to diversify is wrong. We should promote for skill, best bang for the taxpayer dollar. WA State Initiative 200 repealed Affirmative Action so why are state agencies so intent upon imposing it under a different banner?”

8 of the 14 employees who spoke about diversity of beliefs wished all religious beliefs would be respected, while others complained of favoritism based on religious affiliation.

“To recognize that every culture, race, religion should be treated with respect from the very very top to the bottom of the food chain, and to recognize that people have different values and beliefs.”

“The office is not respectful of people’s individual religious beliefs or wishes, and they are punished when their wishes or beliefs are expressed.”

“The hiring of upper level managers and supervisors that is based on the ability and experience of the individual and not based on race or religious affiliation as is currently being done.”

THEME | QUESTIONS. Sexual harassment

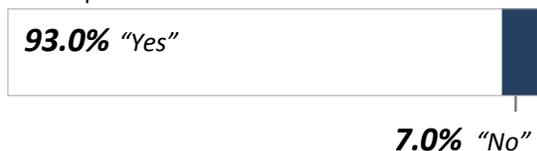
QUESTION. While working at DSHS, have you received sexual harassment training?

The responses were:



QUESTION. Do you know how to report a sexual harassment incident or where to get the information or how to report?

The responses were:



92.8% of employees reported receiving sexual harassment training. 93% said they know how to report a sexual harassment incident.*

Narrative comments. Although the majority of employees responded "Yes" to the two questions shown on the left, 53 of the 10,086 respondents who made narrative comments addressed sexual harassment.** Though small in number, all concerns about sexual harassment are taken seriously.

**Due to the nature of the work and the physical setting, sexual harassment can be of particular concern in institutional settings. Employees in institutions were even more likely than other DSHS employees to be knowledgeable about sexual harassment. 93.5% reported having sexual harassment training, and 94.3% said they know how to report an incident or where to get the information about how to report.*

***The presence of sexual harassment questions on the 2009 survey appeared to prompt more comments about sexual harassment than were received in previous employee surveys which did not include specific questions about sexual harassment.*

► **What DSHS employees said . . .**

35 employees reported experiencing sexual harassment or being aware of its existence in their workplace. 20 of them were very upset about the way reports of sexual harassment were handled. 2 who made complaints identified themselves as men.

"I hear about sexual harassment almost daily (manager)."

"Lots of sexual harassment activity in all units."

"Two male workers that consistently verbally abuse and attack other staff, always women, and nothing is done!"

"I was sexually harassed by a superior staff and I reported it and nothing was done about it. I am outraged that my employer would train people in sexual harassment, but not take action in protecting their employees."

"My experience with the management's understanding and intervention on harassment issues has been the great disillusionment of my social work career. When matters like this are mishandled, nothing else really ever makes sense in the way it should."

"Sexual harassment is a big problem because complaints are IGNORED. I KNOW 1st hand. NO ONE investigates OR CARES about reported sexual harassment."

"Sexual harassment and discrimination, starting from management down to supervisors. If reported, supervisors retaliate [against] subordinates by threatening and terminate the staff."

"Cannot report sexual harassment safely."

A few other employees (11) said sexual harassment is not apparent in their workplace, or they are not sure if they received sexual harassment training or know how to report it

"As for sexual harassment, I don't know. I've never seen it. I don't hear about any incidents because they would be confidential. It never happened to me."

"Unsure if I have received sexual harassment training."

"Unsure how to report a sexual harassment incident or where to get the information."

Some (7 employees) feel sexual harassment is overemphasized, or used to make trouble for other employees

"Sexual harassment is the least of our problems."

"Most people are now well aware of sexual harassment, but don't seem to understand what bullying and general harassment is."

"Focus on sexual harassment by small-minded bureaucrats needs to be scaled back. This is not a big problem in this field, but women making false allegations is a huge problem and this is never addressed. Men are guilty until proven innocent and there is no mechanism to correct this."

"Sexual harassment is a big problem – with over reporting with distorted information to harm cohorts."



CHAPTER 4

The Daily Job

THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE in overall job satisfaction this year. The opportunity to help the vulnerable citizens of Washington State remained the number one source of satisfaction – increasing even over previous high levels. Co-worker teamwork and support were also major contributors to satisfaction. An increased number of negative comments about morale and work environment seems to be associated with concerns about decreased staffing and uncertainty about further cutbacks. Satisfaction levels were also influenced by workload, opportunities to learn and grow, and the availability of flexible work hours.

OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION. Overall job satisfaction remained stable. However, there was an increase in negative comments about morale, general satisfaction, and work atmosphere. Most appear to be connected to concerns about heavy workloads, staff cuts, decreases in client services, and uncertainty about the future.

- **Overall satisfaction remained steady.** 67% of employees said that, in general, they are satisfied with their jobs. The slight increase from 2007 was not statistically significant. In spite of changes, cutbacks and uncertainty, many employees are happy to still have a job.
- **Negative comments about satisfaction/morale increased.** The number of employees who made negative comments about morale and the work environment increased by 58% from 2007. Most of this increase appears to be due to increased stress and anxiety related to increased workload, client needs, and job instability.

JOB CHARACTERISTICS. Job satisfaction is associated with the opportunity to work with clients and co-workers. Opportunities to learn and grow have decreased, and some employees are dissatisfied due to high workloads and lack of flexible work schedules.

- **Helping clients is a great source of satisfaction.** 4,015 employees (40% of those who made comments) wrote about enjoying the opportunity to assist clients. While this is always the number one source of satisfaction, the number of such comments increased 19% over 2007.
- **Co-workers and teamwork usually contribute to satisfaction.** The number of employees who say that a spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in their workplace increased by 1% to 67%. 2,398 employees had something positive to say about co-workers. Positive comments about co-worker support and teamwork increased by 19%. However, 47% more made disparaging comments about the skills and competence of certain co-workers. It appears that in this time of staff cuts, employees are particularly upset by co-workers who don't contribute their share.
- **Opportunities to learn and grow decreased by 6%.** The number of employees who reported they have opportunities at work to learn and grow decreased from 58% in 2007 to 54% in 2009. Even with this negative trend, autonomy in the workplace remained a major source of satisfaction for some employees. 1,007 expressed thanks for opportunities for self-direction.
- **Other sources of dissatisfaction.** 725 respondents complained about workload. And, while 397 made positive comments about flexible hours and worksites, 508 wished for more flexibility in this area.

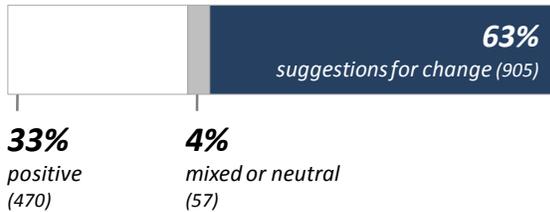
THEME. General satisfaction

Most comments from the employee survey spoke to specific things employees felt good about, or wanted to see changed. However, 1,432 of the 10,086 employees made more general comments about the atmosphere in their workplace, worker morale, and overall job satisfaction.

14% commented on this theme (1,432)



Their comments were:



Many comments included in the “general satisfaction” section address the morale and atmosphere in DSHS workplaces in a broad way. However, some comments speak to particular aspects of work settings, such as:

- Friendly or hostile work environment
- Pleasant or stressful work setting
- The role of supervisors and managers in creating the workplace atmosphere

Many answers in the “general satisfaction” category contained only one word. For example:

- *What do you like best about your current job?* “Nothing.” (A negative answer)
- *What changes would you like to see in your workplace?* “None.” (A positive answer)

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Some employees are happy with their work environment

- “I like coming to work, because of my co-workers and the open, friendly work environment.”
- “I’m truly content with my job. I get to do what I enjoy...have great co-workers and supervisor and...feel like I’m trying to help people the best I can in the current situation they are in.”
- “I love the relaxed atmosphere and the sense of teamwork.”
- “The atmosphere at work is always positive and productive.”
- “I very much appreciate the supportive and inclusive work environment maintained by my supervisor and the whole chain of command. It’s a great place to work!”

The majority of those who made comments about general satisfaction were dissatisfied with their workplace

- “Because of the profound changes both within DSHS and throughout the state due to the depressed economic situation...my current work situation is filled with apprehension, disillusionment, fear and isolationism.”
- “Staff who are remaining are pressured to work beyond their capacity. The ever-increasing workload has created a sense of failure in our jobs.”
- “I’d like the barriers between the different divisions within DSHS to be lowered. It’s very difficult to find the right counterpart to coordinate with on behalf of our customers.”
- “Right now it’s doom and gloom, and people feel like they can’t trust upper management to give them the honest truth.”
- “In the 10 plus years I have worked for the State of Washington I have NEVER been as dissatisfied with my job as I am currently. The work environment is EXTREMELY hostile.”

They want management to take steps to improve the situation

- “I would like headquarters to get a grip and decide where they are going! The constant insertion of ‘new programs’ and ‘new policies’ is mind-sapping! The costs in terms of morale are monumental.”
- “The STRESS level of CSO workers is extraordinary...Management needs to speak with more CSO workers about the changes.”
- “Upper management needs to give more flexibility to their staff.”
- “I would like our Area Administrators to set specific goals for our office that have to do with improving practice.”
- “The constant chaos within the Agency has to slow down; we all get change, but OMG it is out of control, unfocused, abusive, and demoralizing. Everything the Agency [does] starts like a bonfire and then appears to disappear.”

QUESTION. In general, I'm satisfied with my job

67% of respondents said they are generally satisfied with their job. However, 15% outlined problems in this area.

Staff like:

- Relaxed and comfortable workplaces
- Meaningful work
- Support from, and teamwork with, supervisors and co-workers

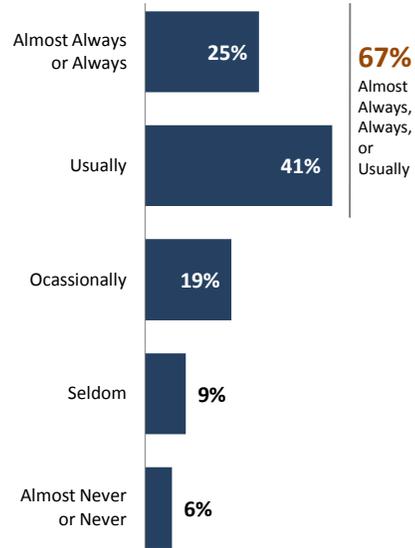
They dislike:

- Unmanageable workloads
- Frequent changes in work processes
- Feeling their work is not valued
- Having no "voice" in work-related decisions

There was no significant change between 2007 and 2009 in general job satisfaction.



ANSWERS



► **What DSHS employees said . . .**

Most staff are pleased with their job

- “My office is a great place to work. I enjoy coming to work every day, and working hard for the community.”
- “Our team is strong and cooperative. It’s a pleasure to come to work in this kind of environment.”
- “I’ve worked for several organizations over the years, and this office is by far the best. Managers support staff, co-workers are always willing to help and the atmosphere is very friendly.”
- “I love working here. I’m as comfortable here as I am at home in most ways.”
- “Nice office environment where laughter is heard and not discouraged.”
- “I enjoy being part of an effective and committed team of people, and being told my work contributes to the success of the program. The morale of my work group is the highest it has been in several years, despite the anxiety of budget problems.”
- “[I like] the work hours and location. I have a great office to work in that is comfortable and clean.”
- “I appreciate my supervisor and my co-workers; we all work together exceptionally well. We all strive to do our jobs in a professional and courteous manner. It’s a pleasure to come to work!”

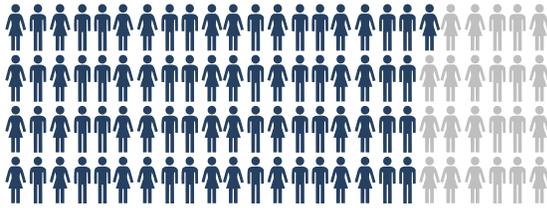
Some staff see a clear need for improvement in their workplace

- “It has become a virtual sweatshop. We are almost to the point of being forced to work overtime simply to keep up with the workload expectations. Morale is way down. Demands on staff are way up. Currently, it is an unpleasant place to work.”
- “If field staff were included more in planning processes, it would likely increase employee satisfaction as well as agency efficiency. We need to create a sense of trust between management and field staff.”
- “I would like to see an end to the constant gloom and doom of not knowing when the next cuts will happen.”
- “For the last year I have dreaded having to come to work every day. Current management in this region does not value the work that we do, nor show any respect for those of us doing the work. Our workload has substantially increased and our staffing level has almost been cut in half...with no relief in sight.”
- “Stress level needs to decrease. A person cannot operate effectively in the higher stress zones for very long, without serious adverse effects. ESD has made TOO MANY high impact changes at the same time...which have had an adverse effect on our customers and employees.”
- “The atmosphere in the last year has really gone downhill. The feeling is now that the ‘lower’ employees are no longer able to make decisions and that everything MUST be done out of Olympia.”

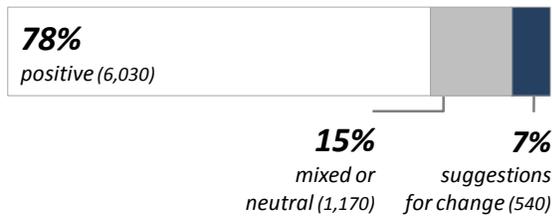
THEME. Job characteristics – an overview

7,740 of the 10,086 employees who made comments addressed job characteristics such as helping clients, work schedules, workload, and autonomy and growth opportunities.

77% commented on this theme (7,740)



Their comments were:



Nearly eight out of ten (78%) of the 7,740 employees who offered comments about job characteristics said something positive about their job. A small number (7%) offered suggestions for change.

Employees want:

- The opportunity to work with and help clients
- Flexibility and autonomy in their workplace
- Challenging work assignments
- Professional growth opportunities
- Variety in their work

They do *not* want:

- Excessive workloads
- Inflexible work schedules
- Boring jobs that don't utilize their skills

These job characteristics are discussed in more detail on pages 43-48.

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Many employees take great satisfaction in helping others

"I like working with families. They remind me of why I came to the field in the first place – to caringly and compassionately help those in need."

"I LOVE the work that I do. Securing safety for children is my passion."

"It gives me personal satisfaction to provide services to people with disabilities that lead to a better life for them, whether that means successful employment or just a roadmap to give them hope and guidance for future living."

"I love my job as a psych nurse, and the care I deliver to my patients."

They want reasonable workloads and flexible schedules

"A 4/10 schedule would be a financial benefit (reduced commute costs) and a professional benefit (allow time after routine office hours to concentrate on the numerous documentation requirements)."

"Less people? Fine. I understand that...How about a little less work to match? Overworking those left behind isn't going to yield very good results."

"No more mandatory overtime (holdovers), and let us volunteer to work on our days off when needed."

"It's very stressful coming to work every day, knowing I have three times as much to do as I can get done."

"I'd love to have the ability and permission to work from home."

They also want work that provides autonomy, challenge, and chances to learn and grow

"I am treated like the professional that I am. I am given significant responsibilities and the autonomy to complete my work using my professional judgment with prescribed processes that, for the most part, make sense."

"I'm not sure why middle management have the need to micro-manage their staff's time so much. This crushes morale."

"I would like to see the job have more variety. I'd like to have a wider array of things to do, [not] the same thing each day."

"I love the challenges and diversity of my job. It requires problem-solving and really analyzing what is going on."

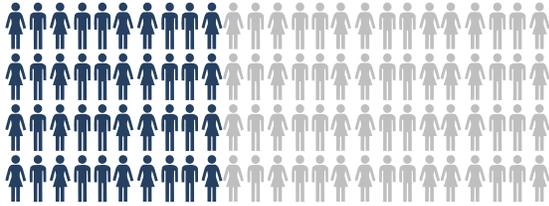
"[I like] to learn new information and use it on the job. Being able to grow and get out of my pigeon hole."

"Due to workload and budget changes, there has been little encouragement to learn and grow. Cross-training would be a positive step in assisting with staff shortages."

THEME. Helping and interacting with clients

4,032 of the 10,086 respondents who commented mentioned working with and helping clients.

40% commented on this theme (4,032)



Their comments were:

99.6%
positive (4,015)

0.4%
mixed or neutral (16), or
suggestions for change (1)

Over 99% of the 4,032 who made comments about working with clients indicated that this is one of the most important and meaningful aspects of their job. “Working with clients” was by far the most popular answer to the survey question “What do you like best about your current job?”

Staff enjoy:

- Helping clients improve their lives
- Supporting their clients through crises
- Witnessing their clients’ successes

They are frustrated when:

- Circumstances prevent them from serving their clients well
- Clients are uncooperative or manipulative

► What DSHS employees said . . .

For many staff, working with clients is enjoyable and meaningful

“It’s very rewarding to bring love, caring, safety and stability to a child whose life has been disrupted by abuse and/or neglect.”

“I get personal satisfaction when I help a very upset client calm down and give them some direction and hope.”

“[I like] being able to help those who need a hand – the elderly, the disabled, and those having difficulty in these rough economic times.”

“I am able to work with the public directly, and the people we serve give me the hope that I need in my life.”

“I love this job. I relate to our clients, as I was one not so long ago. The crisis that most clients are in is real and I like to be there for them.”

“[I like] making the clients and staff happy with my clean floor and kindness.”

“I get to help people with physical and medical problems who cannot help themselves. This give me immense satisfaction.”

“My work matters. I know that the better I do my job, the better chance some client will get their much needed healthcare.”

“[I like] seeing youth with a perma-scowl develop friendlier faces. They feel safe here because we are friendly to them.”

“I like making a difference in the lives of people that most people have given up on.”

“That smile you get from someone who thought they were at the end and you help them.”

Some staff are frustrated by roadblocks to providing good client services

“In spite of severe limitations in the judgment of top leaders, the disaster of FamLink, the lack of imagination, integrity and leadership, we are often able to protect children and provide for their permanency.”

“I feel the recent CSC and batch changes have created...unpredictable violence in the lobbies. It’s not right to make the needy suffer longer and wait for longer periods for their benefits. Don’t try to fix something that’s not broken.”

“Working one on one with the families I serve is negated when it comes time to document these contacts. The FamLink Family Assessment is cumbersome, not user friendly, not family friendly, just not friendly at all.”

“I used to like the involvement with my clients but anymore the workload is so heavy I don’t have an opportunity to really be involved. Now I do rehab as rapidly as possible.”

A small number of staff outlined difficulties in working with clients

“I am getting tired of being cursed at by the very people we are trying to help, and feeling powerless to do anything about it.”

“I enjoy working with people who need my help, most of the time. Some of the parents are extraordinarily difficult to work with.”

“[I like] helping the needy public, the ones that actually need help, not the ones working the system.”

THEME. Flexible schedules and telecommuting

954 of the 10,086 employees who made comments addressed the issues of flexible work schedules and the ability to work from home.

10% commented on this theme (954)

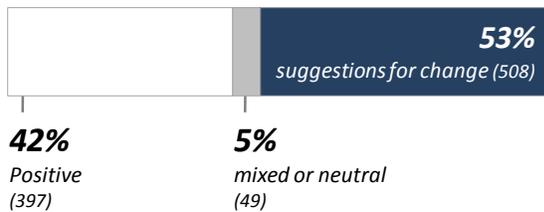


Over half (53%) of the 954 employees who made comments about work schedules or telecommuting suggested improvements. 42% reported that they like their work schedule.

Many employees would appreciate:

- More flexible work schedules
- Less mandatory overtime
- An easier system for scheduling time off
- More part-time and job-sharing opportunities
- The option to telecommute

Their comments were:



Employees with flexible schedules like:

- Having a “say” in their work schedules
- The chance to balance their personal and professional life

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Many employees want more flexible schedules

“We would like to see 4/10s. This ultimately changes our work environment and our attitude towards work. Not only are we able to get more work done, but we are also able to rest more, which allows us to de-stress.”

“Better ways of taking time off. A lot of requests for days off are denied.”

“If an employee is happier, more productive, and more satisfied with his/her work by working 10 am until 7 pm, instead of 8 am to 5 pm, this should be encouraged, not prohibited.”

“Mandatory overtime is an unhealthy and dangerous practice. We at least should be able to use comp time instead of a sick day to recover from exhaustion.”

They also want the option to telecommute

“The ability to telecommute, to save on gas mileage and increase efficiency of work.”

“Ability to work from home on an ‘as needed’ basis to think more efficiently...because of all the distractions at work.”

“It would be nice if we had the opportunity to work from home when completing assessments.”

Some employees are very satisfied with their current work schedule

“I like the flexibility to work 4 ten hour days each week, which allows me to [work] my other job on the other 3 days .”

“TELEWORKING from home is GREAT!”

“I like the flexibility we are allotted to be able to work with families outside the 8 am to 5 pm timeframe.”

“[I like] my outstation position and working part-time. I think part-time employees have more energy for their jobs and value their jobs more.”

They want a healthy balance between work life and home life

“I like that my employer respects my need to have time away from work...and the flexibility with my schedule that allows me to keep my family my top priority.”

“Children’s Administration is not very family-oriented when it comes to employees. In our area, part-time social workers are being told they need to work full-time or leave. I think that’s sad for professionals who want to balance work and family life.”

“My hours give me lots of extra time to do activities. I get off early.”

“Increased friendliness to mothers (and fathers). Ability to work slightly less hours to care for our children without threat of losing rank or benefits.”

THEME. Workload

764 of the 10,086 respondents who commented addressed the issue of workload, and its effect on their job satisfaction.

8% commented on this theme (764)



Their comments were:



5%

Positive (22), or
mixed or neutral (17)

Nearly all (95%) of the 764 respondents who made comments want to see their workload reduced.

Staff believe heavy workloads:

- Are stressful for workers
- Are responsible for many employees' physical and mental health problems
- Decrease worker productivity
- Distract supervisors from supporting employees
- Have a negative effect on client service

A small number of staff described their workload as:

- Quite manageable
- Full of positive challenges

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Most staff dislike heavy workloads

"I feel I am unable to do my job effectively due to the size of my caseload. I am unable to keep up with weekly intakes."

"Reasonable workloads. Supervisory staff...not so ridiculously overworked they can't find time to be pleasant and supportive."

"Hire more people to help us with our heavy workload, so we don't get sick or moody."

"Policies are made that increase line staff workload, seemingly without a thought as to how they will be implemented or resources available. Multiple assignments are given out in a row, and all are a *RUSH* in complete disregard for the current workload that is often unmanageable in a 40-hour workweek."

"Get rid of FamLink! The additional workload it has created has been unbelievable and our workers are drowning."

"We aren't healthy because we have too much work, too much stress and no time to rest and recharge."

"More time to do a quality job, or at least get off our back for being behind. We don't deal with chicken parts here, we deal with people!"

They believe excessive workloads mean poorer service for clients

"Lower workloads. As of right now I'm so far behind that I'm losing integrity with my clients as I cannot meet their needs in a timely fashion. I have never had this happen before."

"Our agency claims they are customer service oriented, however over the past few years I feel customer service has declined. We no longer have the authority or staff to quickly serve our local customers."

"More workers! It should not be about meeting numbers, it's about helping people less fortunate than ourselves."

"Reduce workload. I'm stressed and anxious that because I'm running around putting out fires and being reactive rather than proactive and reflective I'm going to miss something important...leading to the injury or death of a child on my caseload."

"We can't continue to offer the same customer service to three times the number of people we serve with the same number of employees doing the work. IT CAN'T BE DONE...We have more work than people to do it."

A few staff view their workload as manageable, or prefer a heavy workload

"Right now caseloads are manageable and we are able to get court reports out on time. We are not just putting out 'fires.'"

"I have the time to do an excellent job without pressure for quick turnover."

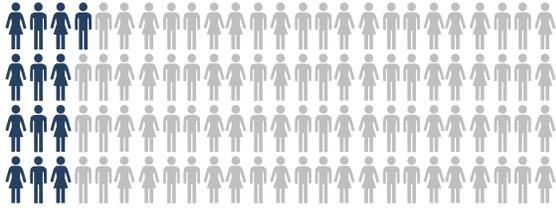
"I enjoy the constant stream of work that comes my way. There's always something to do, so I feel busy, effective, and my days tend to fly by!"

"Workloads are more reasonable now. There's more time for case planning, staffing, and direct social work with our clients."

THEME. Autonomy and growth opportunities

1,297 of the 10,086 employees who made comments addressed the issues of autonomy and growth opportunities in their workplace.

13% commented on this theme (1,297)

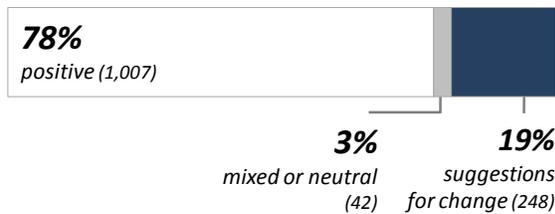


More than three out of four (78%) of the 1,297 employees who commented on autonomy and growth are pleased with the independence and growth opportunities they are given on the job. Nearly one out of 5 (19%) see a need for improvement in this area.

Employees want the ability to:

- Manage their own work tasks, and work schedules
- Put their skills and experience to good use
- Exercise their professional judgment
- Be creative and innovative*
- Learn and grow

Their comments were:



They resent:

- Being micro-managed
- Roadblocks to their professional development

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Many employees want autonomy in the workplace

"We need more autonomy to be professionals and less micro-managing of whether our multitude of forms are filled out correctly."

"I am given the independence to perform my duties in a way that works best for me."

"Flexibility to do my job to the best of my ability and not feel pressure from my supervisor or co-workers."

"A greater level of autonomy and professionalism amongst line social workers and supervisors...This means a greater degree of flexibility from management to effectively engage clients."

"I like the flexibility and the independence to be able to schedule my own appointments to see clients and to do home visits."

They also want to take on new responsibilities and learn new skills

"[I like that] I am constantly learning new skills and broadening my talents into strengths. I am encouraged to be innovative, creative, and [told] it is OK to color outside the lines."

"[I like] the diversity to do different things, within the scope of our section's responsibilities."

"Learn to utilize the resources you have, the strengths of your staff, so you assign work to those who can accomplish what you need. This includes asking for advice from those who know. You have quality staff that you are wasting."

"[I like] the opportunities to learn new skills outside of the ones for which I was hired."

"More opportunity to stretch my wings. I excel at project work and would like to be a project manager."

Employees appreciate supervisors and managers who support their growth, and don't micro-manage

"[I'm] very supported by my supervisor...I'm treated like an adult...I'm trusted to do my job without being micro-managed."

"[I like] the respect of leadership, and specifically the division director. I feel empowered to think outside the box or to create multiple boxes to meet the needs of our partners, staff, and consumers."

"I appreciate that I'm treated with respect, and given a great deal of independence in accomplishing my work."

"Encouragement from my supervisor, who supports [my] developing my own workload management methods."

"My administration allows me the latitude to think outside the box to work out resolutions to ongoing problems."

"The trust and freedom to do my job without micro-managing, and still be held accountable for getting the job done. Great balance between freedom and accountability!"

*See also the Staff Input section of the Communication chapter (pages 11-13)

QUESTION. I have opportunities at work to learn and grow

Over half of respondents (54%) reported they have opportunities to learn and grow. However, nearly one quarter (23%) said they would like more support in this area.

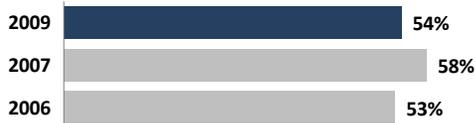
Staff like having opportunities to:

- Gain new knowledge
- Develop new skills
- Think critically, and solve problems
- Share their insights with others

Some staff want more chances to:

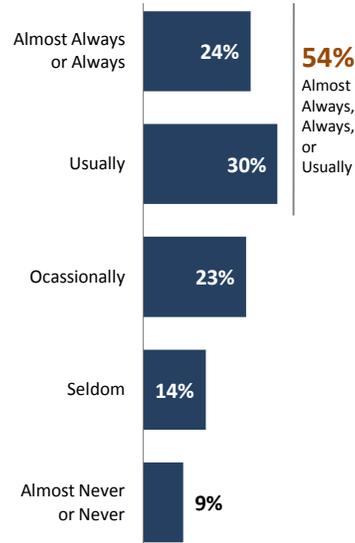
- Expand, and use, their particular talents and expertise
- Express their creativity in their work
- Take on new responsibilities and leadership roles

Fewer staff in 2009 than in 2007 said there are opportunities to learn and grow.



Decrease between 2007 and 2009, and increase between 2006 and 2009, are statistically significant at $p < .01$

ANSWERS



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Staff like their job to challenge them and help them grow

"I have the opportunity to learn and grow and share information with others."

"I have a chance to use my skills and learn new things."

"I enjoy daily challenges and problem solving, thinking of ways to meet customer needs that don't require added resources."

"It's an opportunity for me to grow and learn more about pursuing a career in the health sector."

"I am a shift charge and I like that my manager allows me to take on more duties, so I can learn aspects of her job as well. My co-workers look to me for guidance and clarification, and that makes me feel great."

"Every day offers an opportunity to stretch and grow."

"My supervisor is fantastic about supporting new ideas and gives me lots of freedom to continually grow professionally."

"I enjoy the fact that I am able to do critical thinking and problem solving."

Some staff would like more opportunities to expand their knowledge and skills

"[I want] opportunity for growth based upon abilities, skills, and knowledge, not just on a degree. Training offered to grow and acquire new skills."

"More opportunities for innovation and professional growth. In difficult times like these we need to think outside the box much more than we do. We need to be encouraged and empowered to do so."

"More opportunity for workers to develop skills, and be given a chance to use special skills/talents, would be a good change."

"More leadership opportunities for 'ordinary' workers; management to encourage personal development of their workers; management to invest in personality/gift assessments of their workers to assist them with their career paths."

"I would like to be able to have more responsibility and more opportunity for growth."

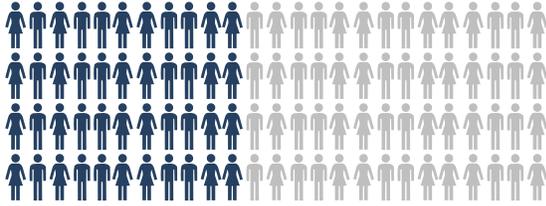
"I would like the opportunity for growth. I would like to attend some of the trainings offered outside the agency."

"We aren't encouraged to think creatively or to employ good social work practice. When I go to the UW or NASW functions for training, I again become energized to employ practices supported by the NASW, only to be deflated back at the office, as those practices are not viewed by the Department as necessary or even alternative practice."

THEME. Other important aspects of the job

4,447 of the 10,086 respondents who commented addressed other important aspects of the job, such as variety, flexibility, and working with others in the community.

44% commented on this theme (4,447)

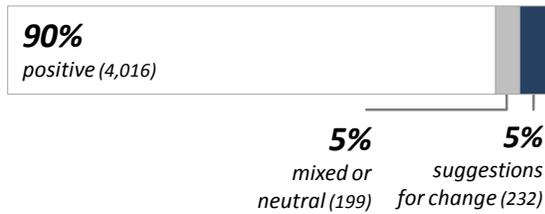


Nine out of ten (90%) of the 4,447 employees who mentioned other aspects of their jobs made positive comments. 5% suggested changes.

Most employees like:

- Variety and challenge in work tasks
- The ability to use both social skills and problem-solving skills
- Collaboration with agencies and individuals in the community

Their comments were:



A small number of employees want:

- Less change and less stress in the workplace
- More variety and challenge in their work
- Better use of their skills and experience
- Better training

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Employees like having variety and flexibility in their work

"I enjoy the variety and complexity, the creativity and use of my social work skills in problem solving."

"[I like] the flexibility of working within a small community. Not a lot of resources, so everyone has to work together to sustain the minimal services we have."

"I enjoy not being stuck at a desk all day. I enjoy meeting a variety of different people and working with local schools."

"The ability to use critical thinking skills during the investigative process. Never had a boring day, there's not time to be bored! This is a fast moving train and you better be 'on.'"

"I'm never bored with my job. Each of my assignments brings its own set of challenges and I'm amazed I'm still learning something new each day. I'm always busy and there is never a lull in my work. The work week flies by."

They value collaborations with others in the community

"I enjoy the process of sharing decision-making and enlisting cooperation with the community. I get excited about trying to find better ways to do our job in a time of dwindling resources."

"[I like] the opportunity to work with the larger medical [and] mental health community and DSHS agencies to build a positive development plan for our clients."

"I feel our relationship with law enforcement and other community partners is valuable, and enjoy working with them."

"[I like] to work with the local Washington Tribes and other tribes in regards to what they think is best for their families in regards to services and permanency."

Some are dissatisfied with aspects of their job – including high stress

"The only thing you want from us is to do more work with less time and less workers. You have no care for the stress and illness that results from your constant abuse. It was difficult years ago. It is agony now."

"More variety in my job duties...more to my job duties than sitting at my desk determining eligibility."

"This has been a really difficult year... because of the cuts...we need to reduce paperwork and increase direct client support."

"I don't think the agency uses my time and talents well. My supervisors rarely solicit my input in matters of substance."

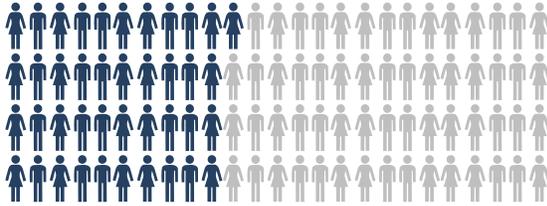
"I was thrown in [to my job]. I still feel I don't really know my job, which makes coming to my job very stressful."

"Stop disrupting claims processing with staff reduction and bumping. It's devastating to our teamwork, work environment and stressful beyond words. ProviderOne will not be successful if our teams are continuously torn apart."

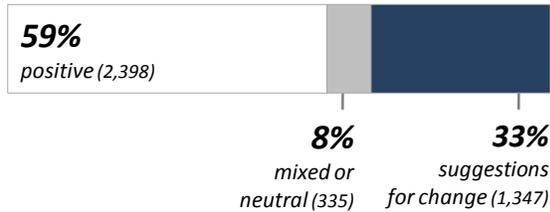
THEME. Co-workers – an overview

4,080 of the 10,086 respondents who commented mentioned their co-workers.

41% commented on this theme (4,080)



Their comments were:



Nearly six out of ten (59%) of the 4,080 respondents who made comments about co-workers had something favorable to say. However, one third (33%) suggested there is room for improvement in co-workers' behavior.

Staff appreciate:

- Teamwork and support
- Competence and professionalism
- Friendliness and caring

They are frustrated by:

- Unskilled and unmotivated workers
- Staff who are not "team players"
- Workplace gossip and bickering
- Policies that protect incompetent staff

Co-workers are discussed in more detail on pages 50-53.

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Most staff enjoy interacting with their co-workers

"The people I work with are the best thing about my job."

"[I like] having great co-workers that collaboratively work for the greater good of the clients we serve."

"I appreciate my co-workers in my unit and in other units that we work closely with. They are incredibly talented and intelligent, and are always available to collaborate, problem solve or support."

"The majority of people I work with are wonderful, hardworking, professional, and very encouraging."

"The people I work with. They work hard and keep a positive attitude and sense of humor despite an enormous workload."

"I enjoy the compassion and positive energy of my co-workers."

"I work in a particularly supportive and 'fun' office. My co-workers are like family. We will all do whatever it takes to help each other, when needed."

"I appreciate that my co-workers are extremely hard workers and operate as a true team."

"I feel safe within my unit with my CPS co-workers. They are very supportive. My unit is always willing to help each other out and even outside of work. We are more of a family than just co-workers."

Some resent their co-workers' behavior

"Putting up with gossip between staff is totally disgusting."

"If those that were slacking were held to the same expectations as everyone else, a lot more work would get done."

"Budget constraints...We are all in this together...it doesn't help to point fingers, we need to support each other to prevent each other from falling into a funk."

"Get rid of people who hate their jobs and don't do a good job."

"[I would like] a better form of camaraderie. Some teamwork, and a little more respect for each other, not only as a co-worker but as a human being."

"The backstabbing needs to stop, and people need to grow up."

"It should not be so hard for a state employee to be reprimanded, demoted, or let go if they cannot hold up the minimum requirements of their job."

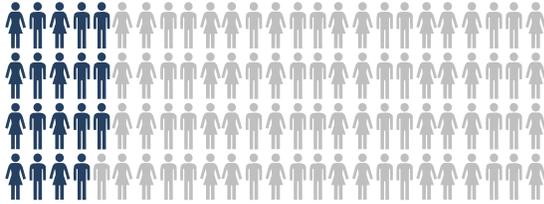
"There are many dedicated and hardworking social workers in our office. That is the norm. There are also some social workers who don't come to work, don't do their job, or falsify home visits. Why aren't they fired immediately?"

"Poor employees degrade the facility and are a burden and a source of resentment to high-performing employees."

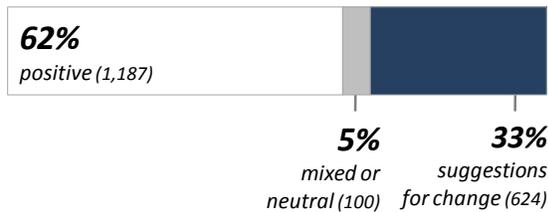
THEME. Teamwork and support

1,911 of the 10,086 employees who made comments mentioned teamwork and co-worker support.

19% commented on this theme (1,911)



Their comments were:



More than six out of ten (62%) of the 1,911 employees who commented on teamwork spoke positively about their co-workers' ability to function as a team and support each other. One third (33%) suggested that teamwork could improve.

Employees like:

- Being part of a strong team
- Being able to count on their co-workers
- Having a sense of "community" in the workplace

They dislike:

- Uncooperative co-workers
- Tension between co-workers
- The negative atmosphere that poor teamwork creates

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Employees like functioning as a "team" at work

"My co-workers are a team. Teamwork is the most basic, but most important, part of this job."

"[I like] working as a team to provide quality services to persons with disabilities and their families."

"My current team has 'fine-tuned' our process, communication, and work patterns to find a partnership that has really worked, and met the needs of each other, our office, and our customers."

"[I like] the incredible TEAM we have become during these very difficult times."

"[I like] the willingness of our team to work together to accomplish any task that is thrown our way and completing it to 110%. Everyone giving it all!"

They appreciate their coworkers' support

"The office I work in is a very close office; the staff rely and lean on each other. There is no back biting, there is no bickering. We all just do our jobs and support each other."

"I have a very supportive team of people to work with, and we do a great job of sharing resources."

"What I like best about my job is that I have the support of my supervisors and co-workers. It's a very positive atmosphere."

"I enjoy working with a group of co-workers that are 'tight' like family. Everyone pulls together to make each situation better, be it a case or be it a personal situation."

"My office is supportive and encouraging. My co-workers and I are trying to facilitate all the changes and restrictions that are coming our way. Brainstorming seems to be our strength."

Some employees think teamwork could improve

"Due to the stressful nature of this work, I feel we should work more closely with one another than we do now."

"I would like to see better unity within units. There really is no structure in place to help cultivate healthy co-worker relationships. There also seems to be no training for supervisors when dealing with problem employees and what effect one person can have on an entire unit."

"I would like to see more of a spirit of cooperation between workers. My opinion is that some of the social workers are competitive with each other more than cooperative."

"Working as a team is difficult because of preconceived ideas and opinions. There is room for teambuilding that would enhance the entire organization to be more productive and innovative."

"I would like to see teamwork, instead of indifference to hostility, between various work staff. Honestly, I have never seen such animosity in a workplace."

QUESTION. A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my workgroup

About two out of three respondents (67%) said their workgroup is cooperative and works as a team. However, 15% feel cooperation and teamwork could be improved.

Staff applaud:

- Co-workers who are friendly , caring and respectful
- Knowledgeable co-workers who act as mentors
- Warm, supportive work environments
- Working as part of a strong team

They do not appreciate:

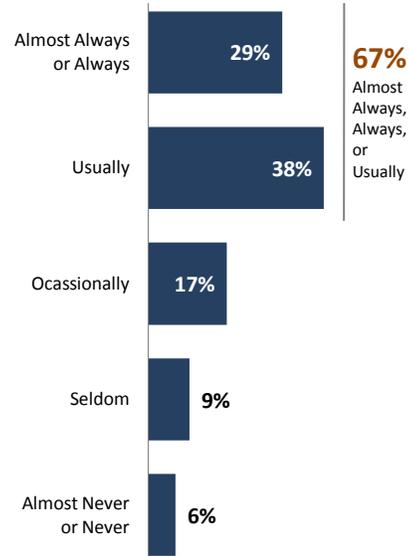
- Selfish co-workers
- Disputes and divisions among co-workers
- Lack of “team spirit” in the workplace

More staff in 2009 than in either 2007 or 2006 reported teamwork and cooperation in their workgroup.



Increase between 2007 and 2009, and also between 2006 and 2009, is statistically significant at $p < .01$

ANSWERS



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Most staff have a strong connection with their co-workers

“People in my workgroup are friendly, helpful, knowledgeable and very supportive. They contribute to my professional growth and learning by being honest and kind in their criticism, and are my cheerleaders when difficult situations arise.”

“My co-workers and manager are like an extended part of my family, and I am happy to come to work to see them.”

“My co-workers are extremely supportive and have the same values and goals for persons with disabilities that I have.”

They feel positively about their work team, and their role on that team

“When large projects are encountered, everyone pitches in to complete the task. There is a strong feeling of support and respect for each other and the work we perform for the Agency.”

“I really enjoy working with the co-workers I work with now. I believe that we work as a good team, in stressful times.”

“The unit I’m in is positive, fun, and offers ideas and solutions to problems. We work well together as a team and everyone listens to each other and shows each other respect.”

“I enjoy my co-workers. We all work as a team. I can ask as many questions about this WAY overcomplicated system as I need to.”

Some staff would like more cooperation and teamwork at their workplace

“I would like to experience increased trust and teaming between leaders, supervisors and lineworkers. I feel like the ongoing infighting is exhausting and depleting to overall morale. We need to help one another reach this agency’s maximum potential. Child safety is a ‘team sport’ not an ‘individual sport.’”

“I would like to know other employees are looking out to help you, not looking for a job opening.”

“More of a collaborative effort between units and co-workers, especially in a time where many units are short-handed and have to step it up on a number of levels with less resources.”

“Less complaining and more teamwork.”

“It would be nice if the clique at this worksite would disband, and people were not spying on other people. It’s demoralizing and divisive. It’s creating a negative environment, and this group has too much potential to have this happening.”

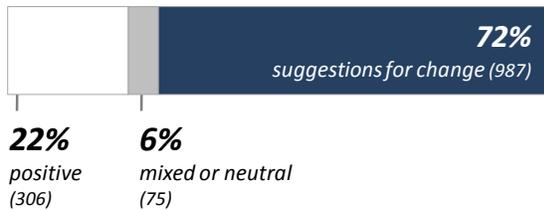
THEME. Co-worker competence

1,368 of the 10,086 employees who made comments mentioned the competence or incompetence of their co-workers. They addressed skills, knowledge, and professionalism.

14% commented on this theme (1,368)



Their comments were:



Nearly three out of four (72%) of the 1,368 employees commenting on co-worker competence suggested their co-workers' performance could improve. Nearly one out of four (22%) made positive comments about the competence of their co-workers.

Many employees resent co-workers* who:

- Don't work hard or expend much effort
- "Steal" time from work to pursue personal activities
- Complain constantly
- Aren't held accountable for problem behaviors*

Employees praise co-workers who are:

- Smart and skilled
- Hardworking
- Dedicated to, and passionate about, their work

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Many employees feel their co-workers' performance could improve

"It is extremely discouraging for those of us who take pride in doing a job well to see those who wander the halls and gossip all day long with no consequences."

"More accountability for co-workers who do not come to work on time, smokers who take more than 3 breaks and the breaks are way longer than 5 minutes. If you don't work your time you are stealing from the State."

"My section of the hospital, a lot of the staff are spoiled and feel entitled. There's a lot of complaining but no work getting done. I would like to see people just come to work and do what is expected of them."

"I would like to see people held accountable for their actions and behaviors. Just because someone has been employed for 20+ years does not mean they can treat clients and co-workers with disrespect."

Some think troublesome or unproductive co-workers should be removed*

"Weed out destructive employees. Everyone knows who they are – they move frequently and have constant needs, saps us dry. The patients are enough, we don't need these crazy staff members hamstringing us."

"Accountability for co-workers who don't put forth an effort to change, learn new ways of business, or pull their weight. If a person can't or won't do their job, they should be removed, downgraded, or fired, not kept on the payroll when people who do work are losing their jobs."

"People who don't show up on time, and call out sick on a regular basis, and those who have alcohol dependency issues, [should] be let go. This is a huge safety issue."

"Employees who do nothing all day, never actually produce anything, be the next to be cut. During difficult budget times, it is especially hard on morale to see good workers let go while unproductive, unaccountable workers are allowed to stay."

Employees appreciate dedicated and capable co-workers

"I really enjoy working with the bright and dedicated people on my team."

"I love the people I work with, who are good with our patients, hard working, and have great senses of humor."

"My co-workers are capable, competent, and care about the work we do."

"My peers within the unit are very knowledgeable and professional in the approach taken with all of our customers and with each other."

"I work with an amazing group of people. The collaboration, respect for one another, intelligence, mentoring, experience, and commitment to excellence truly makes a wonderful work environment."

*See p. 61 for a discussion of the problems of seniority-based reductions and the difficulties of removing incompetent staff.

THEME. Other comments about co-workers

1,956 of the 10,086 respondents who commented addressed some other issue related to co-workers.

19% commented on this theme (1,956)

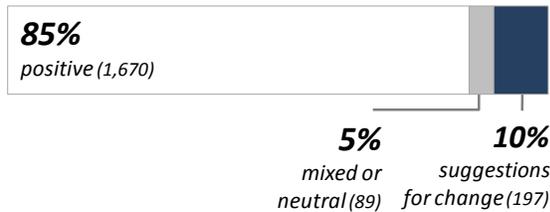


85% of the respondents who made comments about co-worker issues, not related to teamwork or competence, had something positive to say about their co-workers. One in ten (10%) outlined problems their co-workers are causing.

Respondents spoke highly of co-workers who:

- Are supportive and helpful to other staff
- Care about their clients
- Have a good sense of humor
- Are direct and honest in their communications

Their comments were:



They resent co-workers who:

- Are negative or critical
- Engage in selfish behaviors
- Seem to think the rules don't apply to them

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Staff appreciate their co-workers' positive qualities

- "I like the people I work with. They are hard working, dedicated, with a sense of humor when it is needed."
- "My co-workers are very talented, and make me want to do my job better."
- "My co-workers care about the people we serve."
- "I admire and respect so many of my co-workers. I believe we have incredibly smart, hardworking, ethical people."
- "I am working with a great group of nurses. They are supportive, helpful, and work as a team."
- "Only six staff I work with...They are all unique, funny, and a complete joy to support."

Good co-workers make work a pleasure

- "My co-workers and supervisor are the best. They make everything else tolerable."
- "I look forward to coming to work each day [because of] the association with my co-workers who, for the most part, have the same loving and caring ethics [I do] not only for our clients, but for co-workers as well."
- "I love working with my team, who are incredibly supportive and resourceful."
- "I like my co-workers and enjoy working with them. They make the workday go by quickly and smoothly."
- "The camaraderie between my co-workers. Coming to work is pleasurable and straightforward – people on my cottage let you know when you upset them so differences can be solved immediately and resentment doesn't build."

Some employees have concerns about their co-workers' attitudes and behaviors

- "This office is full of nothing but haters that talk, and in the long run that affects work performance."
- "Staff should learn to use their library voice. It's difficult to focus when staff are having loud conversations."
- "Too many workers have an 'I don't give a s..t' attitude, don't follow rules or policies, make up their own."
- "We all need to work our hours and actually WORK the hours. It is not ethical to sleep, do personal business or talk for long periods on 'company time.'"
- "I would like it if my co-workers would clean up after themselves in the restroom."
- "Since recent budget cuts have been announced, many people throughout the office...are engaging in petty activities. Gossip, finger-pointing, e-mails, and criticisms have made the office environment fearful and unpleasant to work in. It feels like co-workers are trying to throw others 'under the bus' to save their own skin."



CHAPTER 5

Business Practices

NOT SURPRISINGLY, economic/budget concerns had a major effect in the business practice area. Many employees wrote about changes in work processes and policies – especially new IT systems and reorganization in response to increased demand and decreased resources. Some resource issues appeared to be overshadowed by more pressing concerns. However, many employees are distressed about lack of resources and staffing to serve clients. Employees are happy to have steady pay and benefits, although less than half say the agency supports them in living a healthy life.

WORK PROCESSES AND POLICIES. The 2009 survey saw an increase in suggestions to improve DSHS business practices. Respondents are concerned about new business processes (FamLink, ProviderOne, and CSO reorganization) and about how the agency is responding to decreased funding and increased client need.

- **More comments.** 3,044 employees expressed concerns about work processes and policies – 26% more than in 2007.
- **1,227 made suggestions about personnel practices.** Seniority-based job reductions are not popular.

SATISFACTION WITH RESOURCES. The number of employees concerned about resources for clients more than doubled this year, but there was a decreased interest in other resource areas such as facilities, parking, environment, and training.

- **Significant positive trend.** 65% said they have the tools and resources they need to do their job – 5% more than 2007 and 10% more than 2006.
- **Resources to serve clients are an issue.** 131% more employees said they are concerned about lack of client resources. 1,194 respondents complained about staff shortages.
- **Happy to have a job.** 30% fewer employees complained about pay and benefits, while 40% expressed gratitude for their job.

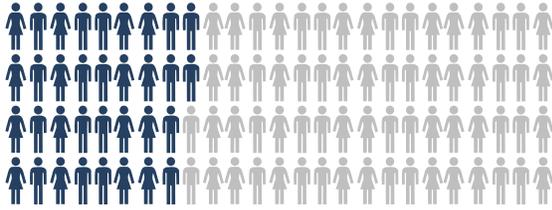
HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND SAFETY. In spite of a new question which showed that many employees don't feel the agency supports healthy living, fewer made negative comments about safety issues or wellness resources. The perceived lack of support for wellness may have more to do with staffing, workload and schedule issues.

- **Few feel supported.** Less than half of employees (46%) said they feel supported in living a healthier life.
- **Relatively few specific complaints.** 104 employees asked for more health/wellness resources in the workplace, while an additional 216 complained about safety issues.

THEME. Work processes and policies

3,405 of the 10,086 respondents who made narrative comments addressed work processes and policies.

34% commented on this theme (3,405)



Their comments were:



5% positive (168)
6% mixed or neutral (193)

Of the 3,405 respondents who wrote comments about work processes and policies, 5% (168) said they are satisfied with how DSHS does things.

Most of those who made comments (89%) gave suggestions for improvement. The 3,044 employees who requested change covered a wide variety of topics. They often mentioned that:

- Too many changes weaken both client services and staff efficiency
- Seemingly meaningless policies and procedures frustrate staff
- Focus should be on quality, not quantity

Comments concerning safety, wellness, personnel issues and unions are reported separately. See pages 60, 61, 70, and 71.

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Employees care about how policies and procedures affect their clients

"I wish actual customer service was more important to headquarters."

"I have never seen such a mess. It appears no one cares about the client trying to get service. Especially not the people that run the show from Olympia."

"I love doing social work but I feel that this agency now cares more about 'numbers' and 'stats', and some of the policies do not reflect what is best for our clients."

"We no longer have time to help people; it's about numbers and quantity."

"Those in power could not care less about the people they serve."

Many employees become discouraged trying to meet what seem to be unreasonable standards

"The requirements and 'quotas' have become ridiculously high and CARE has been complicated to death."

"The time lines and policies are unable to be achieved in 40 hours a week."

"When I see how changes are made without regard to the outcome or the effect that it has on the quality of the work, or the negative impact it has on our ability to do the work, I have more frustration and anger than pride."

"For the last 10 years the decisions and expectations out of Olympia have been so opposite to what line staff needs, in so many areas."

"Personal satisfaction comes from knowing that I help to protect children regardless of the limited resources, redundancy, and the mountains of paperwork we have to do to justify our jobs to headquarters."

Other employees said that dealing with constant change is difficult

"The regular 'roll out' of policies is overwhelming. We try to address new policies but the new policies are heaped upon a workload that is already unrealistic. What it usually means is that we focus on the policy of the day but that means that previous tasks and focus suffer."

"These are very difficult times with all the changes."

"What I like best about my job is helping people. However, I do not feel I have been able to do that with all the new changes."

"Everyone is in turmoil - not knowing what is coming next. Changes daily, weekly - no control over what is going on."

"We are asked to locate budget changes at a breakneck pace which isn't budget savings, it's cost shifting. Sometimes we achieve our savings only to worsen the budgets of corrections, mental health and ERs at the expense of the citizens."

"Quit changing things."

THEME. Specific work processes and policies

Some suggestions were very specific to the individual workplace and DSHS services. The suggestions below are examples of specific comments, and do not necessarily represent the views of the majority of employees. Issues like these can be addressed in each administration's Action Plan, or at the division, office, or institution level.

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Some employees expressed appreciation for improvements in business practice

"I have never experienced an organization having more ambition at making the work place even better."

"The additions to CARE have helped consolidate information and keep better track of the information."

"I like that the agency is working towards a consistent way of doing practice that is research based and empowers the family and promotes teaming through Solution Based Casework."

"I like that most of the processes I use to do my job have been streamlined, or are being streamlined in order to make the best use of my time and resources."

"There is a willingness to change substantially longstanding guidelines to adapt to new information."

"I like that the department is making significant practice changes. I like that we are making progress."

Others feel that new systems make their work more difficult

"FamLink has created many additional workload issues making the job of the social worker more difficult."

"The ProviderOne that's being implemented seems to have wasted so much money. Also the idea of implementing this new computer system during the holidays, to me, represents a non-caring attitude toward employees."

"FamLink has complicated everything and taken time from working with our clients."

"Kind of funny that we are bringing up ProviderOne 12/06/09 when I have been using it since 2008 and it still does not work."

"FamLink has made our jobs much harder - and sometimes impossible. We've spent almost 8 months struggling with a system that either doesn't work or is so time-consuming that one feels frustrated and angry."

"Drop ProviderOne for a system that will work. If the system can't be programmed to function the way that we need cancel the contract and go elsewhere. We are dreaming up 'work arounds' trying to make the system work rather than a system that is designed to work for us."

Employees want to spend less time on paperwork and more time helping clients

"I would like to see more support for social workers in the areas of clerical and paperwork which would free us up to spend more time engaging with our families."

"There is far too much emphasis on having paperwork done 100% on time at the expense of working with patients."

"I wish I was able to spend more of my time with the youth, unfortunately, I spend way too much time...working on paperwork and reports."

"Less bureaucracy and less paperwork. There is so much to keep track of it gets in the way of serving our clients!"

Many employees offered specific ideas for improving policies and procedures

"Elimination of multiple, cumbersome computer systems that don't share the same client & provider database information."

"Non phone duties half a day and phones half the day."

"Would like to have the ability to have a stand/sit station without going through L&I."

"I would like management to reconsider the decision not to have volunteers in the office to help with short term projects. We are all stretched to the point of breaking, and having volunteers would not only help us, but give the volunteer work experience, or just a way for them to give back to the community."

"Stop relying on 'numbers' and focus more on the needs of the families."

"Streamline and consolidate provider and client (customer) inquiries. Keep fewest number of hands touching one job as possible, 'handle the work once.'"

"I would like to take advantage of technology to improve common and repeatable work processes."

"Adoption of an Electronic Medical Record, with information about the current admission (lab reports, progress notes, medications and so on) in an easily and quickly available format."

"I would start with an appropriate Strategic Plan that addressed programs and personnel."

"Streamline the daily reporting process by updating the way the computers are utilized."

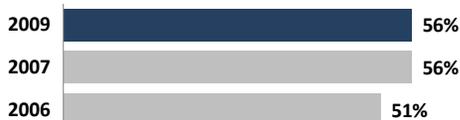
QUESTION. My agency uses my time and talents well

More than half of employees (56%) said that DSHS uses their time and talents well most of the time. However, 24% indicated their time and talents are seldom or never used well. Employees feel that it would help if the Department would:

- Listen to staff recommendations before making changes that affect their jobs
- Let employees do the job they were trained to do
- Remove unnecessary duties from professional staff

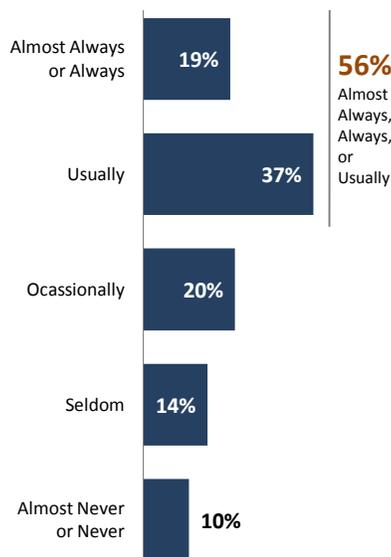
These issues are discussed further in this report's discussions of communication, job characteristics, and management.

The same percentage of staff said the agency uses their time and talents well in both 2007 and 2009.



Increase from 2006 to 2009 is statistically significant at $p < .01$

ANSWERS



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Employees appreciate supervisors who recognize their talents

"We are an awesome workgroup and our talents are being wasted because management will not allow us to excel and assist in the mission as we are so capable of doing."

"Fortunately I am allowed to tell my Supervisor what good work I did to put in my Evaluations, as no one seems to notice or remember."

"The respect for and knowledge of the job I need is not usually recognized by the management."

"I do not feel that my supervisor knows what I do, or that they even want to know."

"That management recognize the skills and abilities of all workers and not pigeonhole staff into boxes where they remain."

Staff express frustration when assigned to jobs that don't make best use of their skill and experience

"My job has changed without my input, and I do not perceive that management cares whether I have meaningful work to do."

"Release social workers, who are professional staff, from the responsibility of doing clerical tasks such as typing and filing...This would free social workers to more fully engage in the professional skill level work for which they are uniquely qualified."

"Utilize staff experience and knowledge to a greater degree."

"I do not feel that I have received the proper training. It seems that the greater part of my job duties are Social Work and other duties as assigned. I do not have a medical background but I am expected to make medical decisions."

"DSHS must do a better job in recognizing and capitalizing on the unique skills, abilities and passions of its workforce and provide the tools they need to capitalize on employees' interest and skill set."

"To pay MSW level employees to do clerical tasks is a waste of tax payers' money."

Employees want management to consult them about major job changes

"Many changes are made without foresight to problems it will cause. Many forms and policies seem to be put into action without any input from the workers affected. Policy changers should consult workers to see what we need and know."

"The staff that actually do the work should have more input in changes that are made by management."

"It's frustrating when we have processes forced upon us that make our job harder to do and we have no input in the decision."

"Those making policy and procedure changes for whatever reason, consult with the work staff that must implement it or use it and see if it really does in fact eliminate or do what is meant to do. So many times the changes made make more work for the persons doing the work and do not work in the real world of assessing and making a process smoother."

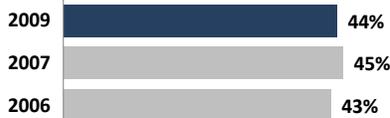
"Administrative decisions are often far removed from actual practice and end up ineffective and even offensive."

QUESTION. In my workgroup we use customer feedback to improve our work processes

Less than half of employees (44%) said that their workgroup uses customer feedback to improve services. Almost one-third (32%) indicated customer feedback is seldom or never utilized to make improvements. While employees rarely made specific comments about the use of customer feedback, many expressed concern about meeting client needs. Staff feel that DSHS could provide better service by:

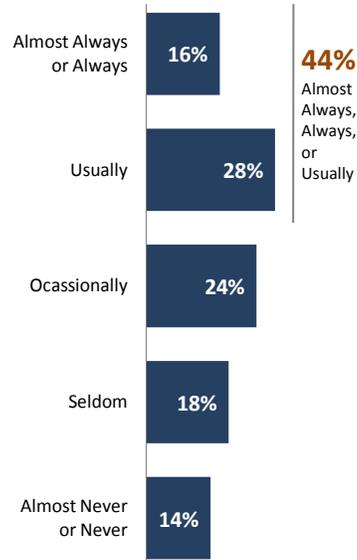
- Paying attention to clients’ actual needs
- Improving customer services and relationships
- Establishing policies to enhance the quality of services

There was no significant change from 2007 to 2009 in use of customer feedback.



Increase from 2006 to 2009 is statistically significant at $p < .01$

ANSWERS



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Employees want what is best for their clients

“I want to be able to come to work and do the most I can for the most people I can. I want to help people in crisis and I want to help them help themselves.”

“I personally have choice in the services I provide to clients - based on their needs.”

“More effort to provide what our customers/clients want and need.”

“I like to have the ability to make some judgment calls on creative ways to serve my clients needs within my job description.”

“I would like it if the changes made to reduce expenditures didn't affect the clients so much.”

Some staff advocate listening more closely to customer needs

“I think that the employees can be more client orientated than focused on themselves.”

“By focusing on our clients’ needs, putting ourselves in their position and clearly thinking of how we can do things best would be greatly beneficial.”

“I learn what the clients wants and needs are to better help them, and they are able to be involved with what is going on with their own life and able to put their own feedback in the decisions.”

“My response - focus on the parents and children I am here to serve and do the best I can to figure out what they really want and help them accomplish that within the services we have to offer.”

Some employees suggest greater efforts to improve client services

“There never seems to be enough resources to help clients achieve what we are asking them to achieve.”

“Tell management to be a little more sensitive to our clients’ needs. It is not all about numbers.”

“Currently our customers are not receiving the services they need in the timely matter they need them in...The customers are calling over and over again as they do not have the benefits.”

“More (heck, ANY) emphasis on...customer service, and serving individuals and families.”

“Our customers need consistent answers and one-on-one contact.”

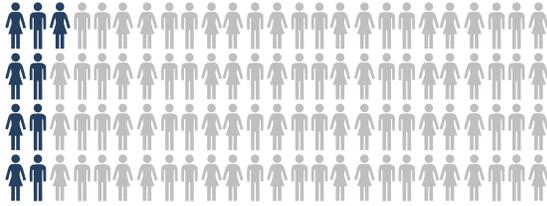
“I see many times at my level where some supervisors care more about meeting budget than they do about meeting the clients’ needs.”

“The customer services redesign around the State has yet to show any sort of benefit to customers and staff alike.”

THEME. Personnel issues

952 of the 10,086 respondents who made comments addressed personnel issues.

9% commented on these themes (952)



Almost all of the comments about **personnel policies** (97%) indicated there was room for improvement in this area. The 926 staff requesting changes asked for:

- Fairness when hiring and promotions
- Job postings that are widely distributed in-house
- A quicker and easier method to discipline and remove non-productive workers
- Faster hiring and replacement of staff

Their comments were:



See the next page for personnel issues directly related to the current economic downturn and budget cuts.

2% positive (19)
1% mixed or neutral (7)

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Some employees feel the current personnel system is unfair

"Positions are being assigned without notice to all employees. They may apply through current application process, but it's pointless when positions are being handed out under the table."

"I see that people are appointed to positions that were not opened to everyone or even posted."

"The way the RIF's have been handled is a disgrace. Jobs are being eliminated and then new jobs and people just pop up. This totally makes morale sag and creates a climate of fear and anxiety."

"People no matter their skill or professionalism are hired and promoted according to who they know, not necessarily their skills and abilities. This system does not lend itself to excellence."

"Absolutely fair and accurate steps to be taken when hiring new employees and filling positions within the agency."

Several staff made specific suggestions for improving personnel processes

"More HR support and get rid of careers.wa."

"I would like my job to be evaluated and upgraded to match others doing similar work."

"Utilization of the probationary period to weed out the dead weight or ineffective social workers and/or supervisors."

"An improvement in the HR system that would speed removal of staff who continually fail to meet performance measures."

"Improve communication between the HR department and employees."

"I would like to see consistency in career opportunities, minimum qualifications should be respected regardless of personal relationships."

See the next page for personnel issues directly related to the current economic downturn and budget cuts.

THEME. Personnel issues related to economic downturn/budget cuts

Current economic difficulties and resulting State budget cuts provoked a number of comments about personnel practices. Employees criticized the methods used to choose staff to be cut. Many objected to reductions based on seniority – feeling that bad workers can be retained while good recent hires are let go. They complained about difficulties removing poor performers under the current system, and sometimes blamed the union for protecting under-performing employees.

This issue is discussed in several other areas throughout the report - in the Supervisor/Manager Support chapter under Accountability (p. 28), and in the Daily Job chapter under Co-worker Competence (p.52).

► **What DSHS employees said . . .**

Some employees feel that seniority-based reductions are counter-productive

“Layoffs have unfairly targeted some of the best employees and the worst are often those whose seniority allows them to feel untouchable - and for all practical purposes, they are! When are we going to take a stand and make merit the touchstone of state employment?”

“With the current economic climate, state jobs are being lost. Many great workers who were recently hired will be losing their jobs while some longer term workers who are practically useless will be kept employed. Union contracts notwithstanding, this is a stupid practice and does not help morale nor foster excellence.”

“What I would like to see is would be good employees kept and underperforming employees let go. This however does not seem to be the way of things. Seniority is not always for the best.”

“It would be nice in these ‘RIF’ times to see some of the marginal employees terminated. Too many good employees have been or are scheduled to be laid off.”

“This union protection for inefficient employees who just happen to have been here for a while is ridiculous. If we do have employees laid off there are highly efficient, hardworking, team player type employees who would go before the lazy, selfish workers with cancerous personalities.”

They are frustrated by difficulties removing poor performers under the current system

“It seems impossible to terminate employees who are insubordinate, don't do their work, ruin office morale and even employees who might come to work 1 day per week if at all. All of that bogs good employees down. I think that those who don't produce should be in fear of losing their jobs, maybe it would force them to do some work. How is it that the state can do so many things like handing out public assistance, placing children in foster care, suspending someone's driver's license, taking money out of someone's paycheck for child support with the push of a button. But getting rid of terrible employees apparently takes years if it even happens at all.”

“I guarantee you, at least in my office, addition by subtraction would be the first/best place to start. If we lay people off, then at least do it wisely. Stop paying benefits for employees who don't show up to work or don't do anything when they get here other than demoralize other employees. I've heard that the leadership can't do anything about these kind of personnel problems. I just don't understand that. Why is it so easy to get rid of employees who don't produce outside of government?”

“I'd like to see us 'trim the fat' and make workers who have become notorious for their non-productivity accountable for their performance – especially since they've been here forever and are at the end of the pay scale.”

“Leadership should be held accountable for all the 'deadwood' in the system - especially in these economic times. Hard to watch people leave that are good at what they do while those that are - at best - mediocre continue to be employed. Why are we continuing to spend taxpayer money to keep them around? Why is leadership so afraid of the CBA?”

Some have other concerns about the methods chosen to reduce personnel expenses

“I do not believe that cuts and closing the deficit or balancing the budget can or should continue to be absorbed by the direct and support care staff. I believe our agency is top heavy. How can we dissolve and reduce programs for our clients through numerous staff reductions and still need all the same administrators?”

“Staff need direction, so cutting our supervisors (those who have the right attitudes, are our line staff leaders and cheerleaders and have customer interests always at the forefront of their actions) is ludicrous. Not to mention these valuable people are our program experts in a time when trainers are almost extinct and travel dollars are gone. Revisit why we do what we do every day, keep leadership in all offices, big and small. Remember our common goals, the people we want to serve and who do have a right to quality service and benefits.”

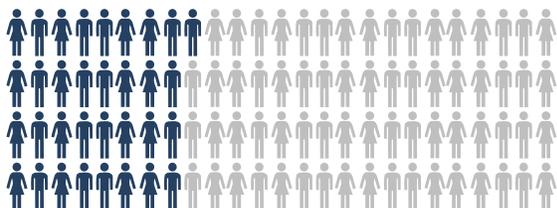
“DO NOT PRIVATIZE! DO NOT PRIVATIZE! Privatization is a great money saving idea, but we are not a bank. Focus on the kids...FOCUS....look away from the bright and shiny political stupidity...”

“When you cut HR, it often takes longer to hire and get qualified staff on board. When you cut ISSD our information systems are threatened. When you cut analytical, planning and performance functions – you can't get reliable information to manage our work or improve processes.”

THEME. General resources

3,331 of the 10,086 respondents who made narrative comments addressed resource issues.

33% commented on this theme (3,331)



Their comments were:



16% positive (524)
7% mixed or neutral (249)

The majority of the resource-related comments (77%) are suggestions for change. Of the 3,331* respondents who addressed resources:

- 1,212 spoke about staffing (page 64)
- 866 mentioned pay and benefits (page 65)
- 756 addressed training (page 66)
- 457 talked about facilities and work environment (page 67)
- 107 commented on resources for wellness (page 71)
- 288 mentioned resources for DSHS clients, and 337 mentioned other resources (page 68)

The survey also asked one standard question about resources: *I have the tools and resources I need to do my job effectively.* This question is discussed on the next page (63).

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Many employees pleaded for more resources

“[I would like] a real commitment to serving this client population on the part of the legislature and executive agencies. These are ‘the most vulnerable citizens’ of the state, yet their support has been slashed drastically. Our institution is imperiled yet again, and outside interests seem to be eager to turn our institution into private property developments.”

“We need more resources! The ‘Policy Roll-Outs’ continue coming in, with increasing requirements placed upon us, however our resources continue to be cut. We are expected to meet performance measures, mandates, timelines, etc., yet we lose staff, service providers, and a vast amount of other resources. How much more can we do short of working 24/7, which is what it already feels like we are doing?! And this is just to TRY and meet the minimum performance requirements, yet our families (both professional and personal) continue to suffer.”

“Increased funding for the most difficult to serve clients. Increasing number of children have a diagnosis of developmental delay and mental health with little resource and cooperation between DDD and MH. Respite, behavioral management and consultation and counseling seem to be the greatest need but few resources. Jail should not become these children’s provider due to lack of resources.”

They believe reduced resources will have an adverse effect on clients

“STOP taking away the resources needed to provide for our clients as this increases the already heavy burden on social workers. Social workers are becoming overworked to the point we are unable to sleep at night due to the heavy workload ahead. It is sad that the Department waits until a wrongful death lawsuit before they step up to make changes. This department needs a better business model put into place.”

“Budget cuts need to stop. We continue to lose vital resources, i.e., swimming pool, living units, staffing, supplies, etc. that we need to accomplish our mission and goals in regards to those we serve. This is impacting our clients and they deserve much, much more.”

“I’m beginning to wonder what the point of my job is when we don’t have \$\$ to assist these high needs families. My hands are tied and that doesn’t make one feel very good about what they do.”

“The budget cuts are immensely affecting the services we can provide to our clients.”

“Reduce budget cuts and reinstate some of the cuts that have already occurred that directly affect our clients. Some of these cuts are cutting deeply into the training and therapy aides that are desperately needed for the clients we serve. These cuts are hurting some of our most vulnerable people.”

“More resources for clients because often there are people in need of help and we are not able to meet that need because of lack of resources.”

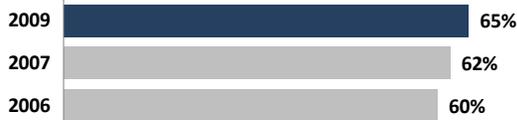
*Issues listed below total to more than 3,331, as some employees mentioned more than one issue related to resources.

QUESTION. I have the tools and resources I need to do my job effectively

About two out of three employees (65%) said that they are provided the tools and resources needed for their job. 14% reported they frequently lack needed tools and resources, impairing their ability to do their job effectively. They requested:

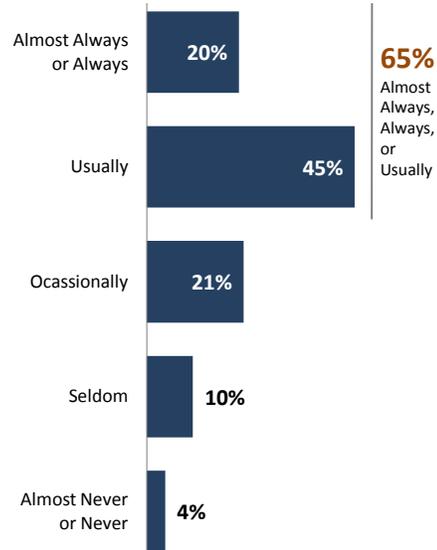
- Laptops, cell phones, and digital cameras
- Professional state identification cards
- More state vehicles
- Office machines in working order
- Basic medical assessment instruments
- Effective cleaning supplies

There is a steady upward trend in the number of staff who say they have adequate tools and resources.



Increases are statistically significant at $p < .01$

ANSWERS



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Most employees are satisfied with the tools and resources available to them

“Technology has really enhanced my ability to serve the people on my caseload more efficiently and effectively.”

“I like that CA provided laptops to field workers to be able to complete work in the field in a more timely [manner].”

“[I like the] easily accessible state cars so I can bicycle to work.”

“I like knowing there are resources available that we can tap into in order to do our jobs.”

Some asked for specific tools and resources to perform their jobs effectively

“All social workers should have laptop computers.”

“[Our regional administrator] has not equipped us with cell phones, so we are depending on our own cell phone minutes for calling facilities, complainants, and our field manager.”

“Cell phones with data lines (blackberries) to use our time wisely while in court along with Wi-Fi cards/Citrix to use on our laptops to continue to use our time wisely while waiting for cases to be called into court.”

“Additional vehicles would enable social workers to complete work and adhere to timelines more successfully.”

“We are required to take pictures of kids on our caseload; each unit should have a digital camera for this purpose.”

“My region/office issues very plain and unprofessional social worker State ID cards that have been questioned by various professionals in the community because anyone could make an identical ID card.”

Others feel they lack the basics, including reliable office equipment

“Office machines that function instead of being broken, adequate machines in order to keep up with the level of demand. When we get put on hold due to issues with a copier, fax, or printer, because they are not in working order, service has been called, or a broken part, we have to travel a distance to a different machine of the same sort and, often times, it’s backed up or broken as well, due to overuse since the other is out of order.”

“More funding for work materials. Such as pens, paper, post its, flip charts.”

“The teleworking sites in my area do not have copiers or fax machines, which are needed for work.”

“Basic client care supply items are frequently in short demand, such as assessment equipment – scales, oximeters, thermometers, etc. There is no guarantee when items will break down and often it takes much effort and time to replace them.”

“Get supplies so we can keep houses sanitary and clean. Don’t buy cheap stuff. Green products don’t work well.”

THEME. Staffing

1,212 of the 10,086 respondents who made narrative comments addressed the issue of adequate staffing.

12% commented on this theme (1,212)



Their comments were:



1%

positive (6), or mixed or neutral (12)

Of the 1,212 employees who wrote about staffing resources, 99% expressed great concern about the lack of adequate staff.

With the hiring freeze and layoffs, most feel the level of inadequate staffing has reached a critical point. The key areas of concern include:

- Inability to provide quality or timely service to clients
- Unsafe conditions for clients and staff
- Insurmountable workloads
- Unreasonable expectations and timelines
- Adverse health effects and burnout from chronic stress

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Many staff are distressed, feeling that they are no longer able to provide quality help to their clients

“The workload is too much. It is dangerous for us to continue operating the way that we are and families are very much at risk. We need more case carrying social workers, period.”

“I would like to see more staff, so we can do more with our children and families. I would like for our office to be able to hire staff in a timely manner when an employee leaves, as the staff who remain on board have to cover the cases until a new employee is hired. This in turn creates an enormous workload and at times gets scary, as some of the work is unable to get completed in a timely manner. It also affects children’s safety and our ability to monitor and manage a case.”

“Enough workers to handle the increasing applications and caseloads. Workers are getting burnt out and constantly feeling the stress of trying to maintain the quality work that they are proud of and the ever increasing demands.”

“Recognition that there is no more wiggle room to remove people and continue on as if nothing has happened. Staff cannot absorb more work and still maintain the basic activities and systems maintenance to ensure basic client health and safety.”

“It breaks my heart to see social workers at Children’s Administration wanting to do their jobs well and spend time with families to help them, but cannot do so because they have over 20 children on their caseload...I’ve seen social workers cry because of the enormous pressures and they are not able to complete their job like they want to in the 40 hours allotted.”

Some spoke of timelines or expectations that are unrealistic with the reduced workforce

“Realistic expectations. This year the workload has doubled while the staff has dwindled on all levels. Social work is minimized to the despair/frustration of the clients. The workload is intense and exhausting. Morale is sinking.”

“More realistic expectations for production from excessively overworked employees. This would allow quality decision making rather than finishing cases just for the sake of keeping the numbers at the required (unrealistic) level.”

“Reduction in the numerous ‘high priority’ assignments. In some instances there have been unrealistic timelines attached to these assignments – especially given the continuous staffing reduction. Just a thought...review PRIORITIES!”

Others fear that chronic stress in the workplace will harm workers’ health

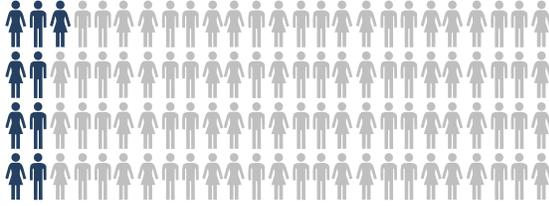
“I am exhausted, have begun taking anti-anxiety meds, am ready to walk out! There is too much work. The expectations just continue to mount. We lost staff in the layoffs but did not lose their workload and more is added daily. We are all grateful to have the jobs that we do, but our workplace has become an unhealthy place to be.”

“I’m in a call center. With so many changes happening in how we do our work, who is doing the work, fewer workers to do the work and more work to do, I feel that we need to adjust the numbers that we are measured to. If we continue to not meet the goals set for us, we will continue to get more stressed out...burned out. We have workers who are having breakdowns, are now on medication and are sick due to the stress level in our office. Myself being one of them. Our workplace feels like a rubber band that is getting pulled in all different directions and stretched to its limit and is about to snap.”

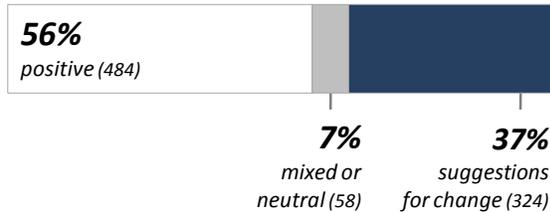
THEME. Pay and benefits

866 of the 10,086 respondents who made comments addressed the issues of pay and/or benefits.

9% commented on this theme (866)



Their comments were:



More than half (56%) of the 866 respondents mentioning pay/benefits made positive comments – most are happy to have a job and benefits. 40% more employees made positive comments in 2009 than in 2007.

One-third fewer employees complained about pay and benefits than in 2007. The 324 who did make critical comments suggested changes such as:

- Increased compensation for advanced education
- Pay reflecting level of responsibility
- Performance based compensation
- Cost-of-living wage increases
- Higher pay to cover increased medical premiums, co-pays, and deductibles

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Many employees are thankful they have a job and benefits

"[I like] helping people who need help. Thank God I have a job to go to."

"We are all well aware of the situation outside of here and we are glad to have a job."

"I appreciate the benefits of medical/dental care, leave, and salary that I am afforded as a state employee."

"Working in my trade and receiving time and/or tuition for work-related classes. Medical, dental and retirement benefits."

"Paydays, vacation and medical insurance. And the opportunity to work with the best, bravest and most dedicated workers in the State."

Some employees would like to be compensated for advanced education, greater responsibilities, and performance

"I believe workers that have obtained a master's degree in the field they are working in at DSHS ought to be compensated financially with a higher step wage. We work on our higher educational degrees in our own time and often at our own expense to improve and professionalize our practice."

"I would like to see us have some kind of tiered system of pay for those who do field work (CPS investigators) versus those who rarely leave the office or duties are minimally more than paperwork (intake workers, CHET workers, court workers, non-case carrying staff) getting more money due to the increased level of responsibility they have."

"I personally would like to get compensated for the two roles/job scopes that I currently cover."

"Not only are we adding additional things to our 'responsibility list,' but we are still understaffed. So I guess my main complaint is that for the work that HCS staff does our compensation is lacking."

"Better ways to recognize outstanding staff performance in a meaningful way, like in the private sector: financial bonuses/incentives/rewards, etc."

"I would like to see DSHS develop performance-based compensation programs that encourage hiring for, and retention of excellence. I would like to see DSHS become a more competitive employer."

Others wish for increased pay to cover cost of living increases and more costly health benefits

"Either more promotional opportunities or overtime to compensate for no cost of living increase; this would be a help because daily living costs are increasing and so will our insurance costs."

"Higher pay. Getting our cost-of-living increase back every July. We need our raises just like anyone else. Quit increasing the medical premiums."

"The higher co-pays and deductibles will mean we will have to reduce our spending in other areas such as groceries and clothing. It's frustrating to see my pay decrease as costs increase."

THEME. Training

756 of the 10,086 respondents who made narrative comments addressed training issues.

8% commented on this theme (756)

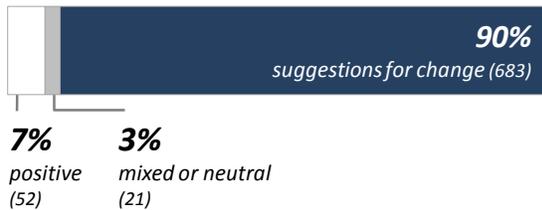


Of the 756 respondents who wrote comments about training, 90% made suggestions for change. 7% (52) made positive comments about training issues, and 3% (21) made mixed or neutral comments.

Changes employees suggested included training:

- To prepare staff for changes and challenges ahead
- For new hires
- For current staff with new responsibilities
- For specific tasks and positions
- For supervisors with poor management skills
- Through cross-training and mentoring programs

Their comments were:



► What DSHS employees said . . .

While some employees are pleased with their training, others requested training for new jobs/responsibilities

“The training I have received has been exceptional and the support of management has well exceeded my expectations.”

“I’ve been provided opportunities and direct training that greatly enhances my skill level and professionalism.”

“I am new and have had a very hard time adjusting as I haven’t been given training to be able to do the new job. It is very upsetting.”

“We also have not been given the proper instruction for how to do our job according to the new duties and the way we are now organized.”

“More communication, more concise direction and training for major changes, less feeling like you are in a leaky rubber boat alone in the middle of the Atlantic.”

Many asked for training opportunities for themselves, or recommended training for their supervisors

“I would benefit in a training on BarCode, as well as continued training opportunities on ‘best practice’ for social workers.”

“More training in mental health, chronic disease process, dealing with difficult people.”

“I would like to see the intake staff who first speak to customers over the telephone have some quality training, customer service training. Training via computer would be just fine but I think it needs to be ongoing, with feedback of some sort.”

“Get more training for the professional technicians that work in Information Technology so that they can better assess the new products and system requirements that vendors are offering and that can advance and enhance the systems we support.”

“Stronger leadership training with focus on respectful communication styles and more sincere acknowledgement of exceptional work within the work force.”

“I would like to see all supervisors trained and held accountable. If they can’t do their job without belittling people or shouting they should be relieved of their position.”

Some spoke with passion about the value of trainings and mentoring programs

“Return to supporting the learning activities that help make each staff person better, more productive, and prepared for changes.”

“Put some resources back into staff training to build capacity. We need to be prudent – but zeroing out almost all training budgets is shortsighted.”

“I would like more cross-training. This benefits the agency with increased flexibility to meet the needs of its clients.”

“A mentoring program where the more experienced workers are encouraged to share their experiences with the younger workers and create a loyalty and dedication to the Agency with the hopes that the younger workers will remain with the Agency.”

THEME. Facilities/environment

457 of the 10,086 respondents who made narrative comments addressed their work environment. These comments touched on offices, institutions, parking, neighborhoods, and surroundings.

5% commented on this theme (457)

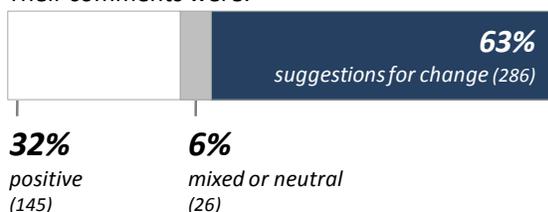


Of the 457 employees who wrote comments about their work facility, 32% were satisfied with the environment they work in. Most of these positive comments were from staff who appreciate a short commute and who like their building’s atmosphere.

Many of those who made comments (63%) indicated there was room for improvement in this area. The 286 comments requesting improvement often concerned:

- Inconsistent HVAC system temperatures
- Poor lighting and air quality
- Inadequate maintenance and cleanliness
- Lack of privacy and elevated noise levels
- Need for more space – in cubicles, for meetings, and for storage

Their comments were:



► What DSHS employees said . . .

Employees appreciate a clean and pleasant workplace

- “It is beautiful here.”
- “Some of the grounds look like trash. The state should be ashamed of itself.”
- “It’s great to work in a nice, clean well cared for facility.”
- “The place needs to be cleaner: dusty, stained, yucky environment reduces our expectations.”
- “There are beautifully landscaped grounds around our workplace.”
- “Paint walls to clean up the very messy, dirty, worn look making it less dreary.”

Lack of necessary space and privacy are troubling for employees

- “More private workspace - it gets really noisy sometimes and even though people try to remember to be respectful of others’ workspace, the noise really travels in cubicle land. Maybe taller cubicles or sound muffling technology.”
- “Larger cube as I have lots of materials I need to store/keep available.”
- “I wish the cubicle walls were higher to offer a little more background noise reduction. I sometimes feel uncomfortable with the conversations I need to have on the phone with my clients and that everyone else has to listen to these conversations - also sometimes other people’s conversations around the cubicles are distracting and hard to get away from.”
- “More space for workers. Cubicle spaces contribute to worker stress as there is not enough room for the files.”
- “It is very difficult to conduct telephonic hearings as well as confidential conversation when my cubicle walls do not extend all the way to the ceiling.”

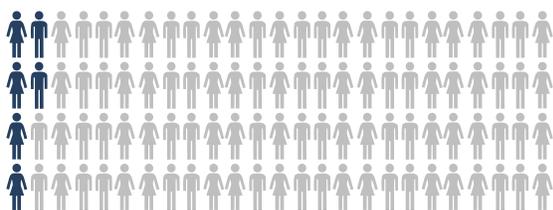
Some employees request improvements in their workplace

- “The environment and lighting in our building makes it feel like a dungeon.”
- “Fix buildings in ill repair (such as the building I’m in... ceiling is constantly leaking).”
- “I would like the physical environment of my office improved. The office appears poorly maintained, with a worn and stained carpet, unused materials in common areas collecting unhealthy amounts of dust, and poor quality florescent lighting that many staff need turned off over their cubicles because of headaches or eye strain.”
- “The temperature of the heating/cooling building system is seldom comfortable.”
- “The carpet is filthy; rat traps in lunch room and on counter; the air quality is questionable in this very old, moldy building.”
- “I would like to see the outside lights stay on longer in the mornings. As it is now it is pitch black when I arrive to work.”

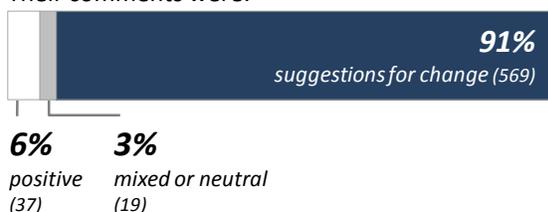
THEME. Resources for clients and other resources

625 of the 10,086 respondents who made narrative comments addressed other resource issues, including resources for clients.

6% commented on this theme (625)



Their comments were:



Of the 625 respondents who wrote comments about other resource issues, 91% requested increased resources. These requests can be grouped into two main categories:

- 288 commented on resources for clients. The number of employees concerned about resources for clients more than doubled in 2009 (131% increase). 263 expressed concern about the lack of adequate resources. 10 were thankful for the resources they have to help clients, while 15 made mixed or neutral comments.
- 356 commented on other resources. 325 asked for more tools to do their job. 27 were appreciative of the available resources, while 4 made mixed or neutral comments. Examples of these comments can be found on pages 62 and 63.

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Many expressed concern for how cuts affect clients' safety

"There is no real strategic, long-term planning that I can see. Our population is aging, we don't have places for them to be cared for, and the budget cuts are devastating to clients and staff alike."

"More advocacy within the legislature regarding funding issues, and how funding cuts directly affect the safety of vulnerable children & their families."

"No more budget cuts, no cut in money for resources for our families and children."

"It's all about \$\$, numbers, and not focused on the family or the safety of those families."

Others wished cuts were made elsewhere - not in client services

"I would like headquarters to stop cutting our services to fix the budget."

"JRA has made it difficult to build alliances and trust with clients and families because there isn't personal service provided. I find it hard to believe that in a state agency as large as DSHS, budget reductions couldn't have been made in a place that doesn't directly affect public safety. Prioritization must start with keeping the community safe."

"I also find it fascinating that services to the vulnerable ones have been cut to the bone but we continue to be administration heavy. No administrators have lost their jobs due to reduction in force or due to budget crunches."

There were numerous requests to stop downsizing activities for residents in state facilities

"I would like to see the clients being thought of first when making the 'budget cuts.' Instead of taking everything away from them; i.e., the swimming pool, chapel, trips, events here at Rainier, food, etc...get rid of some of the management instead of the people giving the direct care to and for the clients. I would like for the clients' happiness to be thought of first!"

"I fear for our ability to achieve success as cuts remove many of the supports clients love and depend on. I have seen clients standing in front of the locked Chapel, waiting and expressing their sadness that no one is there. I see them peering thru the windows and shaking the doors at the locked swimming pool."

"I would like to see the RnR program returned to the clients with the full benefits that are now gone. This program helped with clients that lived here but also the community clients. It reduces behaviors, pain, and increased ROM, promoted relaxation and many more benefits that are greatly needed by our clients."

"Bring back Special Olympics, the swimming pool, the recreation leaders, the library. These are things the clients lived for. We are balancing the budget on the backs of those least able to stand up for their rights."

"Patients first - we need things to do, not just classrooms - water, games, gardens."

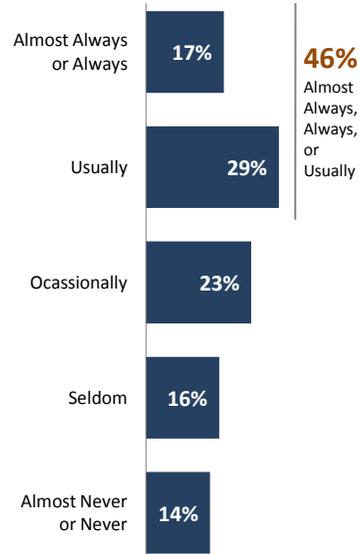
QUESTION. Overall, my agency supports me in living a healthier life.

Less than half of employees (46%) said that DSHS supports them in living a healthier life. Nearly one-third (30%) reported that the agency seldom or never helps them in their efforts to be healthy. Respondents who addressed this issue in their comments feel that being healthier is important for all workers. They believe:

- Management should support a safe/healthy workplace
- Budget cuts should not interfere with providing important safety and wellness resources for staff
- DSHS buildings should be safe and healthy workplaces

2009 is the first year this question was included in the survey.

ANSWERS



► **What DSHS employees said . . .**

Employees appreciate it when their workplace is healthy and safe

- “I like the opportunity to work...IN A SAFE environment.”
- “I would like to see door handles, printers, faxes, phones, conference tables wiped down so we are not spreading germs.”
- “I also appreciate that the work place encourages ‘wellness’ and allows for yoga and other wellness activities at work.”
- “I would like to see the offices be more safety oriented. I would not say that I feel the safest at my office.”
- “It would certainly be refreshing to have a work space that is ergonomically appropriate.”
- “I appreciate my office and the overall efforts to make it a positive, safe and fun environment to work.”

A small, but concerning, number of employees feel unsafe on their jobs

- “Due to ‘budget reductions’ we are constantly left short staffed posing further safety and security issues - sooner or later someone is going to get assaulted and injured...again.”
- “Safety is a big concern in the workplace for me.”
- “I would like to see more done to make my job safer.”
- “Security and safety a MAJOR issue.”
- “Need enough staff to be safe.”
- “Better safety at our front counter & in our parking lots.”

Many employees believe management should be more supportive of health issues

- “I would like threats of workplace violence among staff to be taken serious.”
- “More sensitivity to staff with ergonomic issues (currently it is a nightmare trying to resolve ergo issues).”
- “More rapid response from DSHS to safety needs within the office especially when there have been violent outbursts and other issues with some clients!”
- “It is times like this when management needs to seriously look at the health and well-being of staff and be more proactive allowing them opportunities to break the cycle of stress.”
- “Our office needs some changes to safety, but we are told they cannot happen due to budget restraints.”
- “People should be encouraged more to exercise on their breaks. People are having more health issues and gaining weight rapidly because of physical inactivity at their desks. A healthy workforce is a productive workforce.”
- “I would like to see more emphasis put on safety and security.”
- “Reassure people it would be OK to take an extended lunch to allow exercise, without feeling guilty.”

THEME. Safety issues

234 of the 10,086 respondents who made narrative comments addressed safety issues.

2% commented on this theme (234)



Their comments were:



6% positive (14)
2% mixed or neutral (4)

Of the 234 respondents who wrote comments about safety issues, a small 6% (14) commended their work environment as safe.

Most safety comments (216) were requests for improvements. Employees asked for:

- Better safety-related policies
- Buildings that are safer for employees and clients
- An end to staff reductions as these cuts cause more injuries and safety problems for remaining workers

Safety issues are most prevalent in institutions – where 5% of respondents mentioned safety. Frequent home visits and large client volumes also increase safety concerns. Both Children’s and Economic Services Administrations added survey questions to further address safety issues.

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Employees offered specific suggestions for making the workplace safer

- “It is a safety issue to be here alone for any of us, and that often happens.”
- “In the actual workplace, the visit rooms to have a panic button or something else to insure social worker safety.”
- “This building is not safe for anyone involved because the meetings take place behind the locked doors where all the social workers are working.”
- “Safety glass between the clients and the workers, metal detectors in the doorways, and security guard in the lobby.”
- “There needs to be some kind of a physical barrier at the reception area to protect us from potential danger/assault.”

They want safety policies in place and enforced

- “I feel staff safety has not been addressed.”
- “We need a better plan for assaultive clients. We are seeing more and more clients coming in with ‘street smarts’ with no effective tools to redirect their behavior.”
- “Better safety systems set in place in our office since we do one of the most vulnerable services outside of law enforcement.”
- “Initiate an effective personal safety program.”

Many blame staff reductions for injuries and poor safety on the job

- “I used to love to come to work and now I often dread it because of short staffing and lack of safety because of short staffing.”
- “Staff are being cut and there are more injuries than ever.”
- “Enough hands on staff to SAFELY provide patient programs.”
- “This place will continue to be an unsafe workplace without additional personnel.”
- “Sometimes it is not safe because there are not enough staff.”

Some feel management doesn’t take their safety concerns seriously

- “A realization of the dangers we face and tools to deal with them.”
- “Security is a joke, the patients are assaultive and administration doesn’t care.”
- “Management seems to ‘play the odds’ when it comes to designing security protection, stating things like, ‘Nothing has happened yet, so we’re in good shape.’ This is a naïve approach.”
- “I would like to see management stop using the budget as an excuse to improperly staff the wards, therefore putting the safety of staff and clients in jeopardy.”

THEME. Wellness resources

107 of the 10,086 respondents who made narrative comments addressed resources for wellness/health.

1% commented on this theme (107)



Their comments were:



3%

positive (2), or
mixed or neutral (1)

Even though there was an additional question about wellness, significantly fewer respondents mentioned wellness resources than in 2007. Nearly all of the 107 employees who did comment on wellness in their workplace made requests for improvement (97%). Employees expressed concern about:

- Breathing “sick” air in DSHS buildings
- Lack of sanitizing measures to stop spread of germs
- Need for ergonomic equipment
- Desire for exercise rooms, break rooms, and support for other changes that would improve employee health and fitness

► What DSHS employees said . . .

Employees resent working in “unhealthy” buildings

“Better air quality (too much coughing and sneezing from dust & no fresh air circulation).”

“Better efforts on stopping spread of contagious viruses/flu. Cleaner bathrooms, eating areas, doors, elevators, common areas.”

“Please disconnect half of the fluorescent overhead lights that cause many employees additional eye strain and migraine headaches.”

Some asked for “dedicated” spaces for wellness activities and relaxation

“We do not have a break room, except the file storage room, which is cramped with no window.”

“More attention to social worker health and wellness; membership discounts to health clubs; shower facilities within the building for those who would like to exercise during their break times.”

“To have at least a mini-recreational/fitness space/area for everyone so that at least 15 to 30 minutes in a day to exercise, reduce stress, etc.”

Staff would appreciate more wellness activities

“More wellness options (classes, etc.) for...employees, perhaps one new offering per quarter.”

“More focus on and support, within the office, on being healthy/stress relief of the job: Such as reduced gym memberships, exercise groups at the office, weight loss groups at the office.”

“Incentives to walk, take a full lunch/break times and do healthy things every day.”

“Offer workers the option to join health clubs or participate in local, regional, or State-wide workshops for being a healthy and vibrant worker.”

They requested a variety of wellness improvements in the workplace

“Filtered water for all offices.”

“More attention paid and opportunities given to keeping staff healthy. This includes opportunities for voluntary LWOP for budget reduction purposes to reduce employee stress and more attention to the ergonomic needs of the staff.”

“Put hand sanitizer at the foyer doors – it’s flu season; have non-caffeinated diet soda choices in the vending machines.”

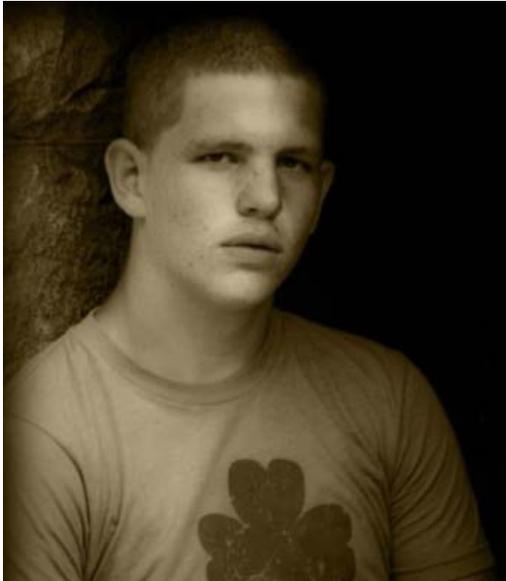
“Healthier food available.”

“Greater encouragement for employee wellness through a full-time wellness coordinator.”



WINNERS

DSHS Photo Contest 2009



BEST IN SHOW - Grand Prize
"Young Man"
Description: I took this picture of my 15 yr old son at The Glover Mansion in Spokane.
Photographer: **Renna Torman**



SECRETARY'S CHOICE - selected by DSHS Secretary Susan Dreyfus
Also - DSHS FAMILY - 3rd Place
"Dragonfly Kisses"
Description: My son is diagnosed with Aspergers. A part of his diagnosis is to fixate on certain things. He adores and is fascinated with insects
Photographer: **Rena Perez**

The many talents and interests of Department of Social and Health Services employees are showcased in the department-wide Photo Contest, which was held in conjunction with the 2009 Employee Survey. Current and former DSHS employees, their relatives, and clients were invited to submit photos in seven different categories: DSHS in Action, DSHS Employees, DSHS Clients, Artistic Merit, Technical Merit, Photographer's Choice, and DSHS Secretary's Choice.

A total of 226 amazing images were received from the 57 people who participated.

Winning photographs are featured in this report and on the DSHS website, <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/RDA/photocontest>. Any stories submitted along with a winning photo are included here. While there was no prize money awarded, each winner received a certificate with ribbon and the honor of being published as part of the Employee Survey Report.

Look for this Photo Contest to be held again in the future – and share your wonderful photos with us!

DSHS CLIENTS



1st Place
"Sunlight on Her Face"
Photographer: Sarah Fader



2nd Place
"Sisters"
Photographer: Michelle Butler



3rd Place
"Seattle"
Photographer: Janet Roller



Honorable Mention
"Baby Blue Eyes"
Photographer: Linda Jesse

3rd Place: I recently had the opportunity to accompany one of my teen clients on a helicopter ride. The ride and interview of the client was to showcase her for the Northwest Adoption Exchange Website in hopes of helping her find a family. I took this shot of the city from the helicopter.

Honorable Mention: This is a picture of my beautiful granddaughter, Jalen. She is unaware of the support she receives from DSHS, but her Mom feels the relief of knowing all her co-pays from our private insurance company are covered by the State's Family Medical program and Jalen's daycare provider is regulated and paid for by DSHS service; making it possible for her to finish school and work towards a future of success for the two of them. Many thanks from our family for the support they receive.

DSHS IN ACTION



1st Place
"For the Feet"
Photographer: Lora Jones



2nd Place
"Future Achievers Thank DSHS"
Photographer: Lora Jones



3rd Place
"Quote from Justin Dart"
Photographer: Lynnae Rutledge



Honorable Mention
"Almost in Step"
Photographer: Daniel Broumley

1st place: DSHS Children's Administration partnered with Capital Kids Connection and Foster Parents at the Annual DSHS Foster and Caregiver BBQ Aug 2009 at Tumwater Historic Park to pass out shoes to all local foster kids for back to school.

2nd place: Foster kids selecting school supplies to fit into their new backpacks at the annual DSHS Foster and Caregiver BBQ Aug 2009 at Tumwater Historic Park. DSHS Children's Administration partnered with Capital Kids Connection and Foster Parents to give all local foster kids a great back to school start!

3rd place: In June 2008, I had the honor of attending a national Summit on Disability Employment Policy in Washington D.C. At an evening reception in the courtyard at the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Art and Portraiture, we were treated to the first viewing of a photographic exhibit on disability and employment. This picture shows a quote from Justin Dart, the respected disability rights advocate and key activist in the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Honorable Mention: Western State complies with the migratory animal act. These Canadian geese nest here at the hospital to raise their young. Both patients and most staff enjoy watching the birds from egg laying to hatching, for the short time they are visible. The parents moved the young shortly after the photo was taken.

DSHS EMPLOYEES



1st Place
"Will & Opa"
Photographer: **Bill Pofahl**



2nd Place
"A HEART for Karlee"
Photographer: **Devon Jenkins**



3rd Place
"CSP in the Morning"
Photographer: **Mack Usrey**

1st place: This is me with my grandson on a hike in the Grove of the Patriarchs - Mt Rainier National Park. He wouldn't hold anyone else's hand - not his mom's or his dad's - only his Opa's hand (mine).

2nd place: This picture is of CA employees in Yakima. This displays the teamwork and support that this office has given me and my family over the past year. My daughter was born last October and has endured a lot of medical issues since then. In February 2009, Karlee (my daughter) had to receive a Heart Transplant to survive. The Yakima office planned two weeks in advance to all wear RED in support of Karlee getting a heart.....the day they planned for it was February 12th. At 1:00 in the morning that same exact day I received the phone call that Karlee was getting her heart! Everyone showed up at work that day in RED not knowing Karlee was in fact getting her heart that day! I get chills thinking about it and am so proud to work with such wonderful people who gave me so much support during my hard times!

3rd place: A picture of the early morning sun shining along the side of Cherry Street Plaza as many DSHS employees are arriving to start their day.

DSHS FAMILY



1st Place
"Snow Play"
Photographer: **Brady Rossnagle**



2nd Place
"Fishing not Catching"
Photographer: **Jim Healey**



Honorable Mention 1
"Precious in His Sight"
Photographer: **Brady Rossnagle**



3rd Place
"Dragonfly Kisses"
Photographer: **Rena Perez**



Honorable Mention 2
"Taiko Drums"
Photographer: **Debbie Macy**

1st place: I took this picture while playing with my oldest daughter in the snow.

2nd place: This is a photo of my grandson on his first fishing trip. I believe strongly in providing as many positive experiences for youngsters as possible.

3rd place: My son is diagnosed with Aspergers. A part of his diagnosis is to fixate on certain things. He adores and is fascinated with insects. Never before have I seen a dragonfly be still on a person as well as not bite (they do bite), but for my son he stood still. Long enough for me to take a picture of my sweet boy and his true love, bugs! I will forever remember this moment.

Honorable Mention 1: This is a picture that I took of my niece.

Honorable Mention 2: The high school students decided in spring 2008 that they wanted to start a Taiko group at school. They spent that summer building Taiko drums from wine barrels & cow hide that they laced & stretched themselves. They completed 14 drums of varying sizes and started the group by Christmas 2008. This photo is their first community performance a year later - in spring 2009.

TECHNICAL



1st Place
"American Eagle"
Photographer: **Rick Houston**



2nd Place
"Ranch"
Photographer: **Leia Knight**



3rd Place
"Mt Hood"
Photographer: **Leia Knight**



Honorable Mention
"Fun in the Sun"
Photographer: **Brady Rossnagle**

1st place: I photographed a young eagle in flight on a clear day. I had a picture with interesting clouds, so I layered the two together and added a little red. The result is a red, white, and blue background for my American Eagle.

3rd place: With Sepia filter applied in post processing.

Honorable Mention: This is a picture I took of my nephew.

ARTISTIC



1st Place
"Night Security"
Photographer: **Rick Houston**



2nd Place
"Sunflower"
Photographer: **Brady Rossnagle**



3rd Place
"Couple at the Beach"
Photographer: **Leia Knight**



Honorable Mention
"Tranquility by the Sea"
Photographer: **Brady Rossnagle**

1st place: Security Night Lights at the port of Nahcotta, entrance to the boat launch.

2nd place: Sunflower in my garden.

3rd place: Just a couple walking on the beach during a rainy day.

Honorable Mention: Relaxing on vacation.

PHOTOGRAPHERS' CHOICE



1st Place
"Fall in Hoodspout"
Photographer: **Kim Karu**



2nd Place
"Wild Raccoon"
Photographer: **Rick Houston**

2nd place: This wild raccoon was in a tree in my yard one morning. He looked friendly, but he had a definite boundary set. He growled at me every time I attempted to take one step closer.

Photo Credentials & Content

Front cover



Will & Opa
Photographer: Bill Pofahl

Back cover



Partnering Under the Umbrella of DSHS
Photographer: Lora Jones



Habitat House HRSA



CSP in the Morning
Photographer: Mack Usrey

Front page for chapter 1-5



Ch. 1: HRSA employee puzzle



Ch. 2: Microsoft clipart



Ch. 3: DCS Tribal Canoe Journey



Ch. 4: Naselle Youth Camp cleans up Long Beach



Ch. 5: ProviderOne Event

Employee Survey '09

