



Employee Engagement Survey

Appendices

2021

June 2022 | Report 11.261

“Spring in Blake Office Park Parking Lot” • Third Place (tie)
DSHS Photo Contest • Category: DSHS in Action
By Julietta Davidson, with permission

2021

DSHS Employee Engagement Survey

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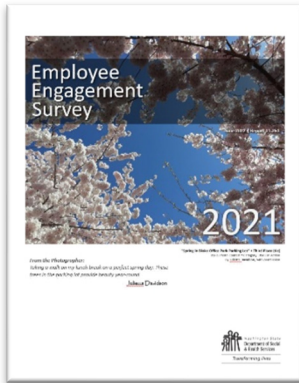
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2021 DSHS Employee Engagement Survey

APPENDIX A

Background, Methods, and Response Rates

Background, Methods, and Response Rates

BACKGROUND | PREVIOUS SURVEYS

DSHS has long recognized that a focus on staff well-being and professional growth is vital to ensuring quality service to agency clients. Because of the interest in employee perspectives, in the 1980s and 1990s many of the administrations, divisions, regions, and offices conducted their own employee surveys.

There have been many previous DSHS-wide employee surveys. The first DSHS-wide employee survey was given to a random sample of DSHS employees in 2000. The survey was based on the 50 questions in the standard Washington State Department of Personnel Employee Survey with 11 additional questions based on the DSHS Balanced ScoreCard.

The second DSHS-wide employee survey was designed to meet the need for program-specific information, in addition to agency-wide results. It was conducted as a “rolling” survey, and consisted of a series of program-level surveys conducted between October 2002 and July 2004. Each of the program-level surveys included the 61 questions that were included in the 2000 DSHS-wide survey, plus additional questions for individual programs.

In 2006, a statewide survey was requested by Governor Christine Gregoire. The survey was created by a committee called together by Department of Personnel (DOP), with oversight by the Governor’s cabinet. Instead of using the traditional 50-question “DOP survey,” the committee pared the statewide survey down to 12 questions. DSHS added six additional standard questions and two narrative questions for agency use. The survey was conducted by the survey section of the DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division (RDA) from March 1 to April 14, 2006. For the first time, all DSHS employees were asked to participate in the employee survey. Also, for the first time, the DSHS Secretary required each Administration to complete an Action Plan in response to survey findings.

Further agency-wide surveys were conducted by RDA’s survey section in odd-numbered years from 2007 through 2015. All these surveys were conducted in collaboration with surveys of all state agencies by the Office of Financial Management (OFM). Questions were added or dropped during this time period. For example, four questions originally included only in the DSHS survey were incorporated into the survey for all state agencies, with some minor wording changes.

In 2014, there was a statewide initiative to conduct the survey on an annual basis. In order to meet this goal, DSHS began to participate in the Washington State Employee Engagement Survey in even-numbered years, following OFM guidelines for the survey, without the many added features included in the DSHS Employee Engagement Survey conducted in odd-numbered years. These surveys had a more streamlined approach to recruitment and data management, and no specialized or targeted recruitment methods were used. There were also no open-ended or DSHS-specific questions, and reports were only prepared for Administrations and major divisions. These OFM-sponsored surveys, conducted in 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020 are considered to be “spot checks” in the two-year DSHS survey cycle. The response rate was 48% in 2014, 35% in 2016, and 51% in 2018 based on FTE totals. The response rate was 54% in 2020, based on agency headcount totals. Because these response rates are generally much lower than the surveys conducted in odd years, we advise against comparing even-year survey results to other survey years.

Starting in 2015, a pop-up reminder was presented to most DSHS employees when they logged into their computers. The reminder persisted until an employee either completed the survey or selected the survey link without completing the survey. Reminders were implemented in all locations but ESA and Eastern State Hospital.

In 2016, the Office of Financial Management added three questions to the statewide survey:

- People are treated fairly in my work group. (Adapted from previous DSHS surveys)
- At my job, I have the opportunity to make good use of my skills.
- I would recommend my agency as a great place to work.

In 2017, the Office of Financial Management added a pilot question concerning satisfaction with the work environment for the state’s “Building a Modern Workplace” initiative. Employees were asked to rate their satisfaction with five dimensions of their work environment (Flexibility, Mobility, Physical Space, Technology, and Well-being).

In 2018, the Office of Financial Management added the following question to the statewide survey:

- At my workplace, I feel valued for who I am as a person.

In 2019, the Office of Financial Management added two of the five work environment dimensions (Flexibility and Mobility) to the standard questionnaire, and removed the others (Physical Space, Technology, and Well-being). DSHS added new questions to the survey about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and removed the original fair treatment question that was later adapted for statewide use. The following questions were added to the DSHS survey:

- My agency clearly communicates that bullying and harassment are not acceptable.
- In the past two years, I have personally witnessed or experienced instances of bias while working at my agency. (This question was excluded from reporting due to issues during survey administration, and the question has not been reinstated)

The following question was removed from the DSHS survey in 2019:

- People are treated fairly in my work group, without discrimination.

In 2020, the Office of Financial Management made substantial revisions to the standard questions. The following questions were **removed**:

- I receive the information I need to do my job effectively.
- I know how my work contributes to the goals of my agency.
- I receive clear information about changes being made within the agency.
- We are making improvements to make things better for our customers.
- We use customer feedback to improve our work processes.
- People are treated fairly in my work group. (removed by OFM but retained for the DSHS survey)
- My supervisor trusts me to make decisions or recommendations that affect my work. (2019 rotating question)

The following questions were **revised**:

- My agency supports a diverse workforce. (previously “My agency consistently demonstrates support for a diverse workforce.”)
- My supervisor gives me helpful feedback. (previously “My supervisor gives me ongoing feedback that helps me improve my performance.”)

The following questions were **added**:

- I receive helpful communication from my agency.
- I find meaning in my work.
- My agency helps me navigate change.
- My agency sets the expectation for inclusion by embedding it in everyday interactions. (2020 rotating question)

In addition, several supplemental questions were added concerning the COVID pandemic:

- My agency makes decisions that prioritize my safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- My agency takes steps to positively impact my work/life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- I find meaningful ways to stay connected to coworkers during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- My agency keeps me informed about workplace impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- When the workplace is safe to reopen for employees, I would be interested in teleworking:
 - Not telework at all
 - Less than 1 day per week
 - 1-2 days per week
 - 3-4 days per week
 - 100% every week
 - N/A – Doesn't apply to my position

Additionally, a new series of demographic questions was asked in 2020 on a pilot basis, including:

- What is your age?
 - Under 18
 - 18 to 24
 - 25 to 34
 - 35 to 44
 - 45 to 54
 - 55 to 64
 - 65+
 - Prefer not to say
- What is your gender?
 - Female
 - Male
 - Non-binary/X
 - Prefer not to say
- Are you a U.S. Veteran?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to say
- Do you identify as having a disability?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to say
- Do you identify as LGBTQ+?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to say
- What race and/or ethnicity do you consider yourself?
 - American Indian/Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Pacific Islander
 - Black or African American
 - Hispanic or Latino
 - Middle Eastern or North African
 - White
 - Another race or ethnicity
 - More than one race or ethnicity
 - Prefer not to say

In addition to the demographic questions, DSHS included several follow-up questions concerning employee reactions:

- Did any of the questions about your personal characteristics make you feel uncomfortable? (Select all that apply)
 - How long you've worked at the agency
 - Supervisor status
 - County
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Veteran status
 - LGBTQ+ status
 - Disability status
 - Race
- [IF ANY SELECTED] What made you feel uncomfortable about these questions? [Open Comment]
- Every two years we ask what unit you work in, so that survey results can be used to give feedback and make changes where they are most needed. Work group questions will be asked next year (Fall 2021). As always, we will make sure no one has access to this data in a way that could allow them to identify an individual respondent.

Would you be comfortable identifying your work group if we also asked the previous questions about your personal characteristics?

- Yes – I would be comfortable.
- No – I would not be comfortable.
- Don't know

THE 2021 SURVEY | ADMINISTRATION

The survey was conducted from November 1 to December 17, 2021. The survey was delayed by one month due to the COVID vaccine mandate that was implemented in October 2021. Many agency surveys are conducted by HR departments, who would not have been able to implement the mandate while conducting the survey. RDA staff worked with each administration to identify work groups and additional program-specific questions. RDA also administered the survey on behalf of the Health Care Authority (HCA) and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF).

- Surveys were primarily collected on the internet using SurveyMonkey, a web-based survey service (www.surveymonkey.com). The survey was configured so that it did not collect identifying information such as computer network addresses.
- Surveys were also available as printed copies for employees without computer access or those who felt more comfortable submitting a paper survey. Return envelopes were provided in institutions where some employees had limited computer access, so paper surveys could be anonymously mailed to RDA.

Several features were built into the survey process to ensure respondent anonymity and boost response rates:

- Along with invitations and reminders to participate in the survey, employees were sent a link to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), explaining survey procedures and features that ensure anonymity. A detailed privacy policy statement was made available through a link in the FAQ document.
- We worked with the Office of Communications and the Office of Innovation, Strategy, and Visual Communications to create and publicize an infographic of reporting procedures, as well as a video series of DSHS employees sharing why the survey is important to them.
- We asked survey coordinators and EDAI Communities of Practice in all Administrations to work together on improving outreach to historically under-represented groups.
- RDA only released survey information in summary format as follows:
 - Answers to all standard questions were released in reports containing summary tables. If a work group had fewer than 6 respondents, no reports were issued. Reports did not include respondent demographic information.

- Answers to the narrative questions were released in large lists, generally containing the responses of more than 100 respondents.¹ Lists did not include respondent demographic information.
- Identifying information was redacted from the narrative responses before general distribution.
- Analyses of respondent demographics were conducted at the administration/large division level, and only if there were at least 20 respondents in each demographic response group.

The survey was initially announced via email message to all Department staff from Acting Secretary Don Clintsman. With consultation and general direction from RDA, staff from each administration and institution customized procedures to distribute and publicize surveys to all employees. Typically, these steps included email to each individual, periodic email reminders, reminders distributed through supervisory channels, notices in program websites and newsletters, prominently displayed posters, internal distribution of the reporting infographic and employee video series “Why I take the survey,” and paper surveys distributed to those without computer access. Because many employees were working remotely, we did not use automatic pop-up reminders in 2021 as the reminders did not work well over remote connections in previous surveys.

In 2021, the Office of Financial Management made minimal changes to the standard questions. The rotating question was **revised**:

- My agency encourages inclusion in the workplace. (2021 rotating question, previously “My agency sets the expectation for inclusion by embedding it in everyday interactions.”)

The questions on COVID were **removed, and replaced** with:

- My agency listens to my needs for reopening the workplace.
- My agency clearly communicates the reasons for decisions it makes with reopening the workplace.
- In my current work environment, I am satisfied with my ability to develop and maintain relationships with coworkers.
- Overall, I am satisfied with how my agency is responding to staff needs during the pandemic.

The following **DSHS question was revised**:

- My agency responds effectively to bullying and harassment. (previously “My agency clearly communicates that bullying and harassment are unacceptable.”)

The demographic questions introduced in 2020 were retained in 2021. The question “What race and/or ethnicity do you consider yourself?” was changed so that more than one response could be selected.

NARRATIVE COMMENTS

Each survey respondent was asked two narrative questions:

- “What do you like best about your current job?”
- “What changes would you like to see in your workplace?”

These questions strengthen the survey analysis by allowing mixed methods analysis (combining both quantitative and qualitative findings). The qualitative analysis of the themes in the responses to these two narrative questions assists in understanding why scores on the standard questions change from year to year and what issues underlie the concerns or praise expressed through scores on the standard questions.

The coding process started with use of a coding scheme and definitions developed in response to previous employee surveys. As new themes emerged, they were added to the code lists and definitions. A summary of the current coding scheme is found in Appendix C.

A number of steps were employed to ensure accurate and consistent coding:

- An electronic system facilitated coding. The coder sees the comment at the top of his or her computer screen, and is able to “click” on the appropriate codes.

¹ Smaller groups were sometimes used because of small program sizes.

- Each coder worked from a standardized list of code definitions.
- All employees who worked as coders and code checkers were trained, and most had extensive prior experience. New coders attended training sessions, and worked on sample sets of responses to ensure reliable and consistent coding.
- Coding meetings were held regularly to identify any questions or differences in interpretation.
- As areas of ambiguity were identified, the coding instructions and definitions were modified to address these issues.
- The former principal investigator (Dr. Nancy Raiha) checked the coding of every response.

RESPONSE RATES

10,170 employees completed the employee survey. Response rates for each program are included in the table below. In general, it was more difficult to obtain responses from large institutions with many shift workers and staff without internet access. Smaller divisions tended to have higher response rates.

The 67% overall response rate is relatively low, down from 81% in 2019. The decrease in the response rate may have been due to the delayed survey start, the lack of pop-up reminders, and/or fatigue due to reduced staffing and increased workload in some parts of DSHS.

WEIGHTING

Data from all administrations and divisions were combined into a master file for analysis. In order to more accurately generalize results to the population of DSHS employees as a whole, each program’s responses were weighted so that the number of responses from that program reflects that program’s share of total DSHS employees as measured by headcount. For example, 25 percent of DSHS employees work for the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA). For DSHS-wide analyses, the 2,472 responses from DDA were weighted by a factor of 1.52 so that they comprised 25 percent of the total survey responses. The weighting scheme for all programs is shown in the table below.

Administration/Program	Number of Employees in Program*	Percent of All DSHS Employees in Program	Number of Completed Surveys	Weight	Response Rate
AGING & LONG-TERM SUPPORT	2,240	15%	1,691	1.32	75%
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH	3,855	25%	1,717	N/A	45%
Child Study and Treatment Center	188	1%	85	2.21	45%
Eastern State Hospital	796	5%	408	1.95	51%
Western State Hospital	2,224	15%	655	3.40	29%
Special Commitment Center	347	2%	180	1.93	52%
HQ and Office of Forensic Mental Health	300	2%	389	1.00	85%**
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES	3,748	25%	2,472	1.52	66%
DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION	313	2%	263	1.19	84%
ECONOMIC SERVICES	3,709	24%	3,064	1.21	83%
FACILITIES, FINANCE AND ANALYTICS	926	5%	592	1.56	64%
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY	455	3%	371	1.23	82%
TOTAL	15,246	100%	10,170	N/A	67%

*Headcount totals as of November 1, 2021 (Source HRMS). Response rates can exceed 100% due to contractors, new employees, respondents revisiting the survey to give additional comments, and other factors.

**An Administration-wide email sent from BHA headquarters inadvertently included the HQ/OFMH link. Of the 389 responses to this link, 134 did not indicate that the respondent worked at either BHA HQ or OFMH, and could not be reassigned on the basis of other answers. These employees were assumed to work in other parts of BHA for the purpose of response rate calculation ((389-134) / 300 = .85). All cases in this group were assigned a weight of 1.

ANALYSIS

Tables and charts in the main report and in the appendices show the results of survey analysis. Page 5 of the Executive Summary displays bar charts showing the percentage of employees responding positively¹ to each standard question for both 2021 and 2019 surveys. A more detailed table showing all 2021 responses to each standard question, as well as the average responses on a scale of 1-5, can be found in Appendix B (B-2 and B-3). Appendix B also displays this data in bar graphs, showing both the questions that elicited the most positive responses (B-5), and those that elicited the most negative answers (B-6).

A chart on page 6 of the Executive Summary, as well as more detailed charts and tables in Appendix B (B-11 through B-13), show analyses of the themes in the responses to narrative questions. Definitions for each of the comment themes are also provided in Appendix C.

Charts on B-8 and B-9 in Appendix B compare the results from this 2021 employee survey to the results of the 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2019 employee surveys.

Chart E in Appendix B compares the DSHS survey results to survey results for employees from all state agencies, compiled by the Office of the State Human Resources Director in the Office of Financial Management.

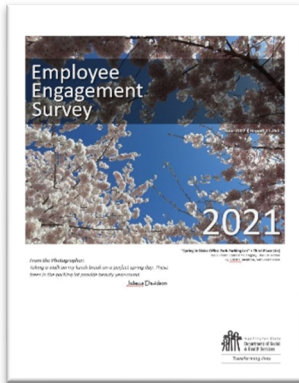
Due to rounding, some percentages reported as whole numbers may not add to 100%.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

Please direct questions about survey methods or analysis to:

- John Rogers: (360) 902-0804; john.rogers@dshs.wa.gov
- Michaela Beals: (360) 902-0744; michaela.beals@dshs.wa.gov

¹ An answer of “Always or Almost Always” or “Usually” is considered a positive response. For the flexibility and mobility questions, an answer of “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied” is considered positive.



2021 DSHS Employee Engagement Survey

APPENDIX B

Standard Statistical Report

2021 DSHS Employee Engagement Survey



for
Department of Social and Health Services
DSHS - Weighted Analysis

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- A2. Statistical Report - Continued
- B. Percent Positive
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- J. Narrative Comments Report
- K. Employee Engagement Survey Question Changes

Statistical Report

DSHS Employee Survey - Nov-Dec 2021

DSHS - Weighted

Number Respondents: 10,170

STATEWIDE QUESTIONS		Number of Responses						Average ¹	Percent Always or Usually ²
		Almost Always or Always	Usually	Occasionally	Seldom	Never or Almost Never	Missing		
1	I have the opportunity to give input on decisions affecting my work.	23%	31%	24%	14%	8%	1%	3.46	54%
2	I receive helpful communication from my agency.	19%	39%	24%	12%	6%	1%	3.54	58%
3	I find meaning in my work.	43%	36%	13%	5%	3%	1%	4.10	79%
4	I know what is expected of me at work.	46%	39%	10%	3%	2%	2%	4.23	85%
5	I have opportunities at work to learn and grow.	31%	30%	20%	12%	7%	1%	3.67	61%
6	I have the tools and resources I need to do my job effectively.	25%	41%	19%	10%	5%	1%	3.72	66%
7	My supervisor treats me with dignity and respect.	66%	20%	7%	4%	4%	1%	4.40	86%
8	My supervisor gives me helpful feedback.	52%	24%	12%	6%	5%	1%	4.11	76%
9	I receive recognition for a job well done.	34%	25%	19%	12%	10%	1%	3.61	59%
10	A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my work group.	38%	31%	16%	8%	6%	1%	3.87	70%
11	I know how my agency measures its success.	22%	32%	21%	13%	11%	1%	3.42	55%
12	My agency supports a diverse workforce.	42%	33%	15%	6%	5%	2%	4.01	74%
13	My agency helps me navigate change.	20%	30%	25%	15%	10%	2%	3.35	50%
14	I am encouraged to come up with better ways of doing things.	24%	27%	21%	16%	13%	1%	3.34	51%
15	At my job, I have the opportunity to make good use of my skills.	31%	35%	17%	10%	7%	1%	3.75	66%
16	At my workplace, I feel valued for who I am as a person.	30%	29%	17%	11%	13%	1%	3.53	59%
17	In general, I'm satisfied with my job.	29%	35%	19%	9%	7%	1%	3.68	64%
18	I would recommend my agency as a great place to work.	27%	28%	20%	12%	14%	1%	3.42	55%
19	My agency encourages inclusion in the workplace.	35%	31%	18%	9%	7%	2%	3.78	66%

¹Average where "Almost Always or Always"=5, and "Never or Almost Never"=1. Does not include missing data.

²Percent answering "Almost Always or Always" or "Usually." Does not include missing data.

†Weighted numbers adjusted to population totals.

Statistical Report - Continued

DSHS Employee Survey - Nov-Dec 2021

DSHS - Weighted

Number Respondents: 10,170

STATEWIDE WORK ENVIRONMENT QUESTIONS		Number of Responses							Average ¹	Percent Very Satisfied or Satisfied ²
		Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Doesn't Apply to My Position	Missing		
20	How satisfied are you with your flexibility? (the ability to balance work and personal life, adjust your scheduled hours as needed)	40%	26%	17%	10%	8%	654	432	3.81	66%
21	How satisfied are you with your mobility? (the ability to work remotely from a variety of locations, such as your home or alternate work site)	45%	20%	17%	8%	10%	2,238	536	3.82	65%

DSHS QUESTIONS		Number of Responses						Average ³	Percent Always or Usually ⁴
		Almost Always or Always	Usually	Occasionally	Seldom	Never or Almost Never	Missing		
22	People are treated fairly in my work group.	34%	35%	15%	8%	8%	890	3.79	69%
23	Overall, my agency supports me in living a healthier life.	27%	31%	20%	12%	10%	957	3.53	58%
24	My agency responds effectively to bullying and harassment.	31%	30%	16%	10%	12%	1,355	3.57	61%

STATEWIDE WORKPLACE REOPENING QUESTIONS		Number of Responses						Average ¹	Percent Always or Usually ²
		Almost Always or Always	Usually	Occasionally	Seldom	Almost Never or Never	Missing		
25	My agency listens to my needs for reopening the workplace.	21%	29%	21%	15%	14%	1,009	3.26	50%
26	My agency clearly communicates the reasons for decisions it makes with reopening the workplace.	22%	29%	21%	15%	14%	863	3.31	51%
27	In my current work environment, I am satisfied with my ability to develop and maintain relationships with coworkers.	31%	38%	18%	8%	5%	642	3.81	69%
28	Overall, I am satisfied with how my agency is responding to staff needs during the pandemic.	24%	31%	18%	13%	14%	656	3.38	55%

¹Average where "Very Satisfied"=5, and "Very Dissatisfied"=1. Does not include Doesn't Apply or missing data.

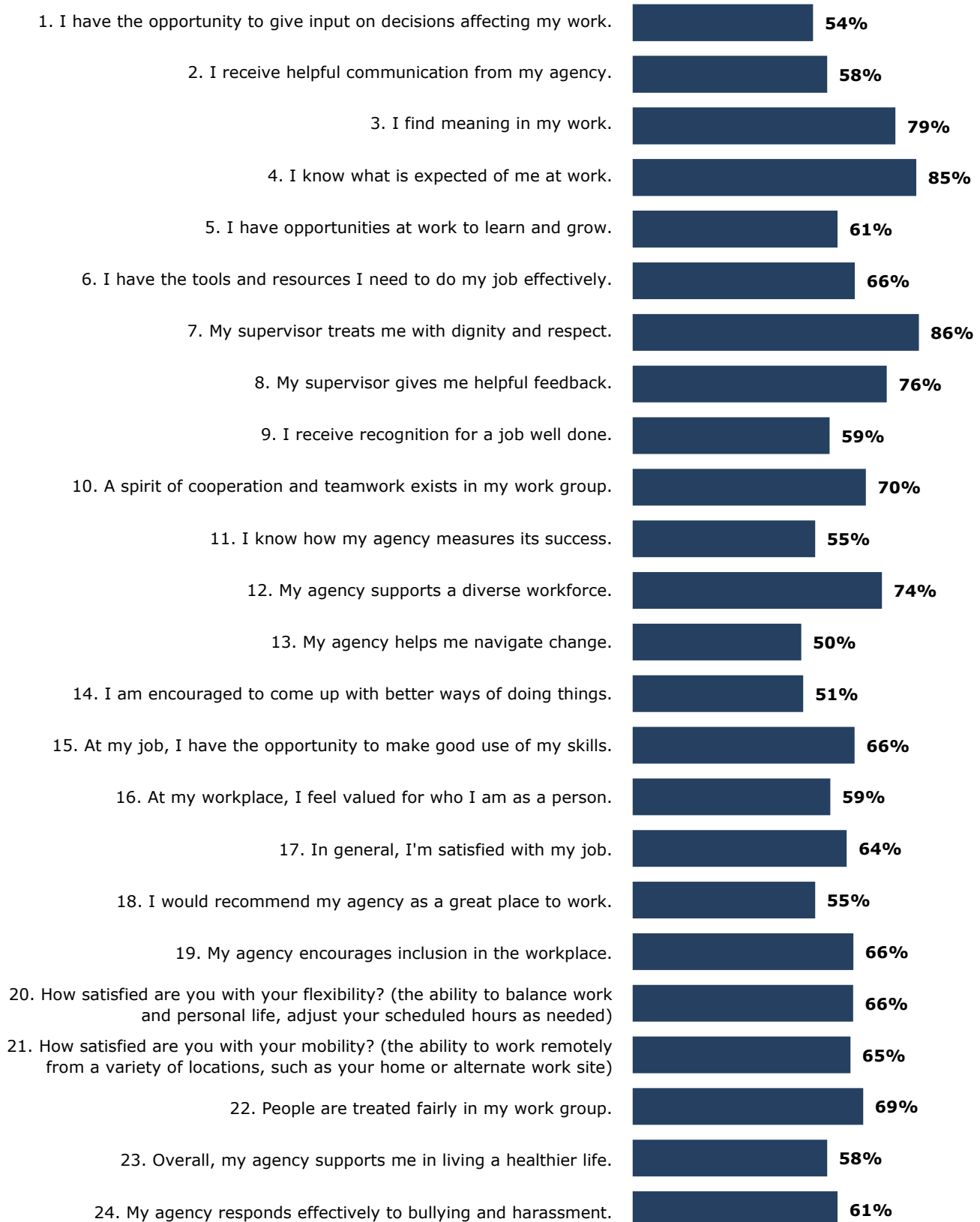
²Percent answering "Very Satisfied or Satisfied." Does not include Doesn't Apply or missing data.

³Average where "Almost Always or Always"=5, and "Never or Almost Never"=1. Does not include missing data.

⁴Percent answering "Almost Always or Always" or "Usually." Does not include missing data.

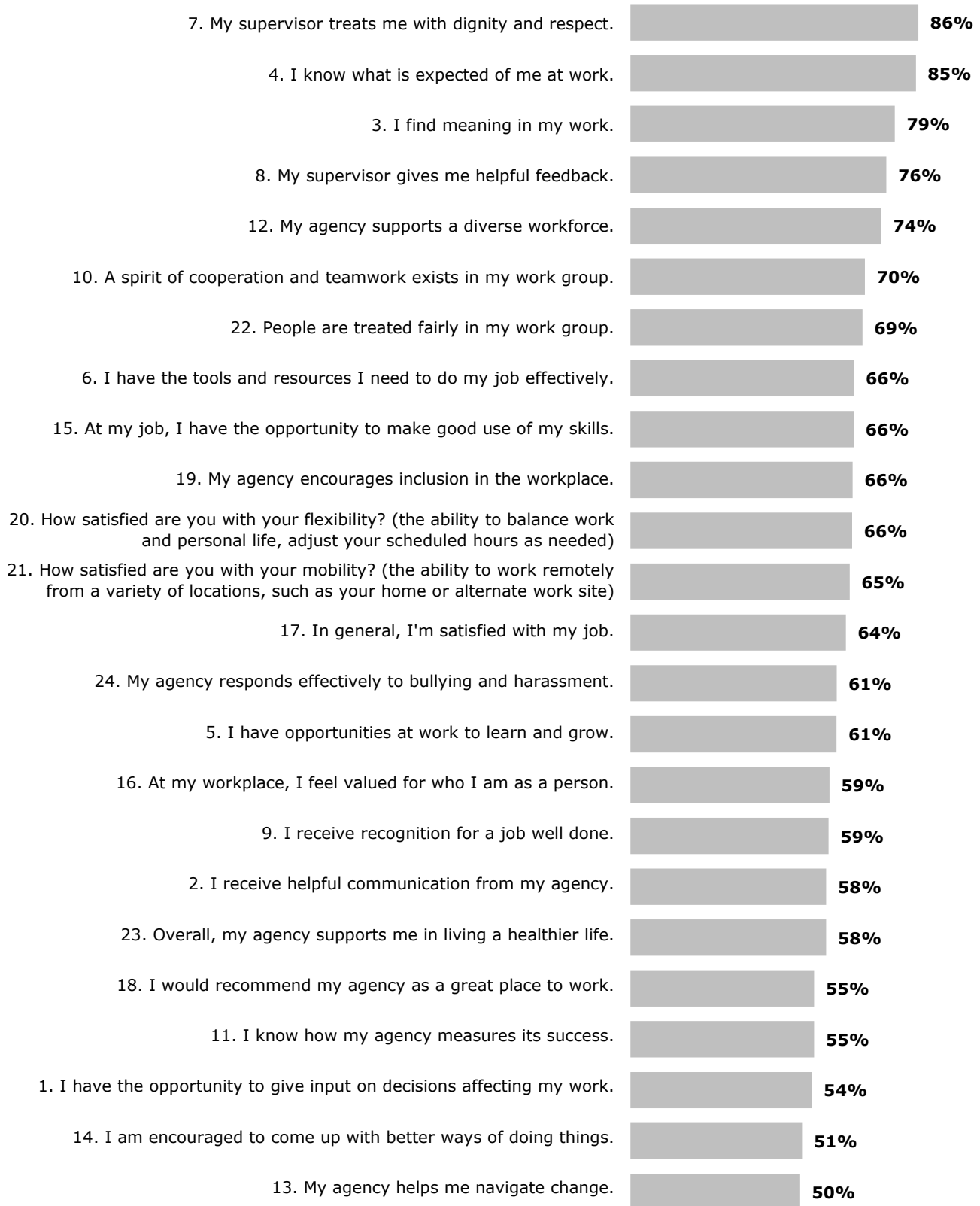
†Weighted numbers adjusted to population totals.

Percent Positive¹



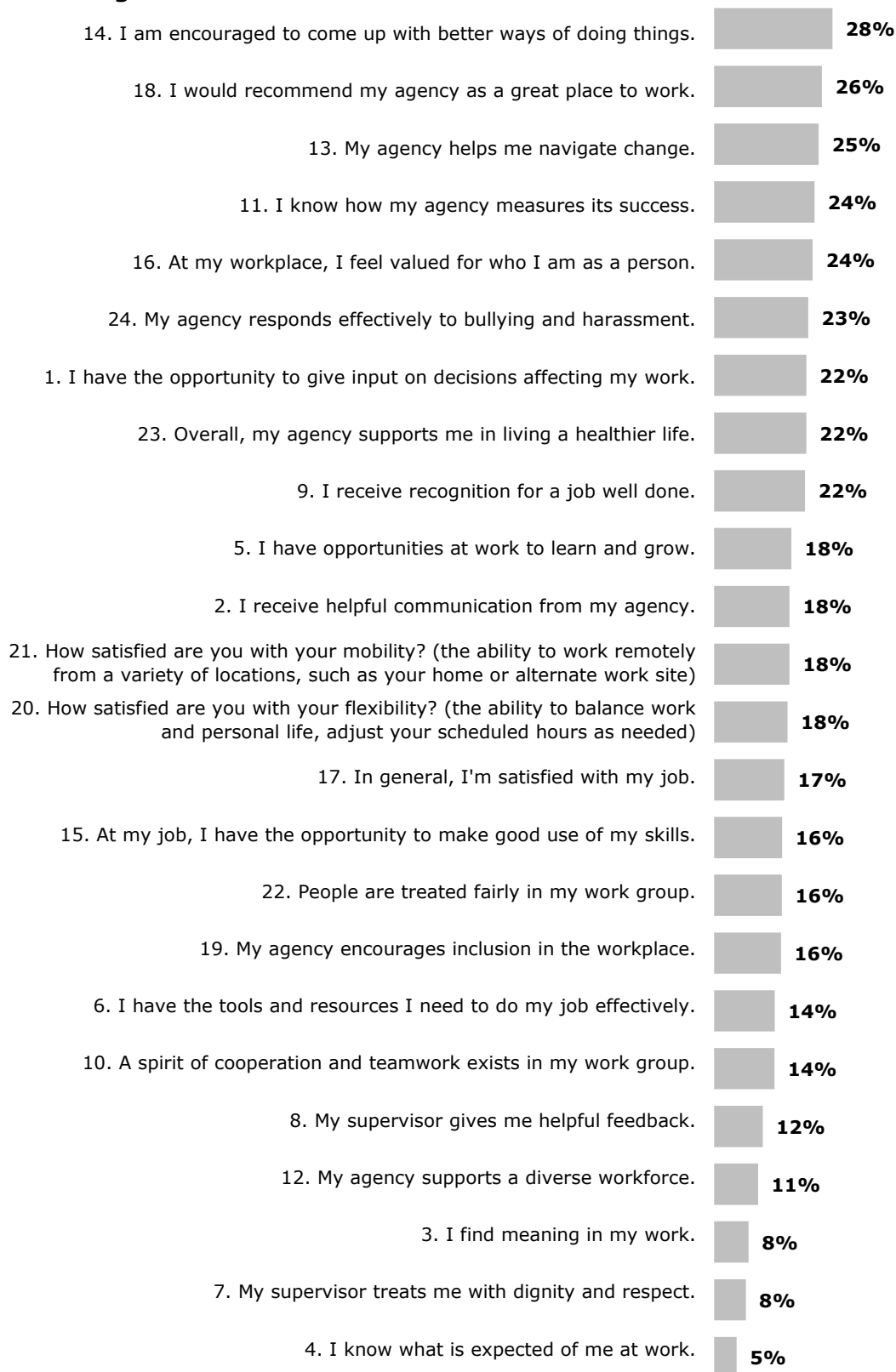
¹ For questions 20 and 21, percent answering "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied." Does not include missing data or "Doesn't Apply." For all other questions, percent answering "Almost Always or Always" or "Usually." Does not include missing data.

**Questions Ordered by Highest to Lowest
 Percent Positive¹**



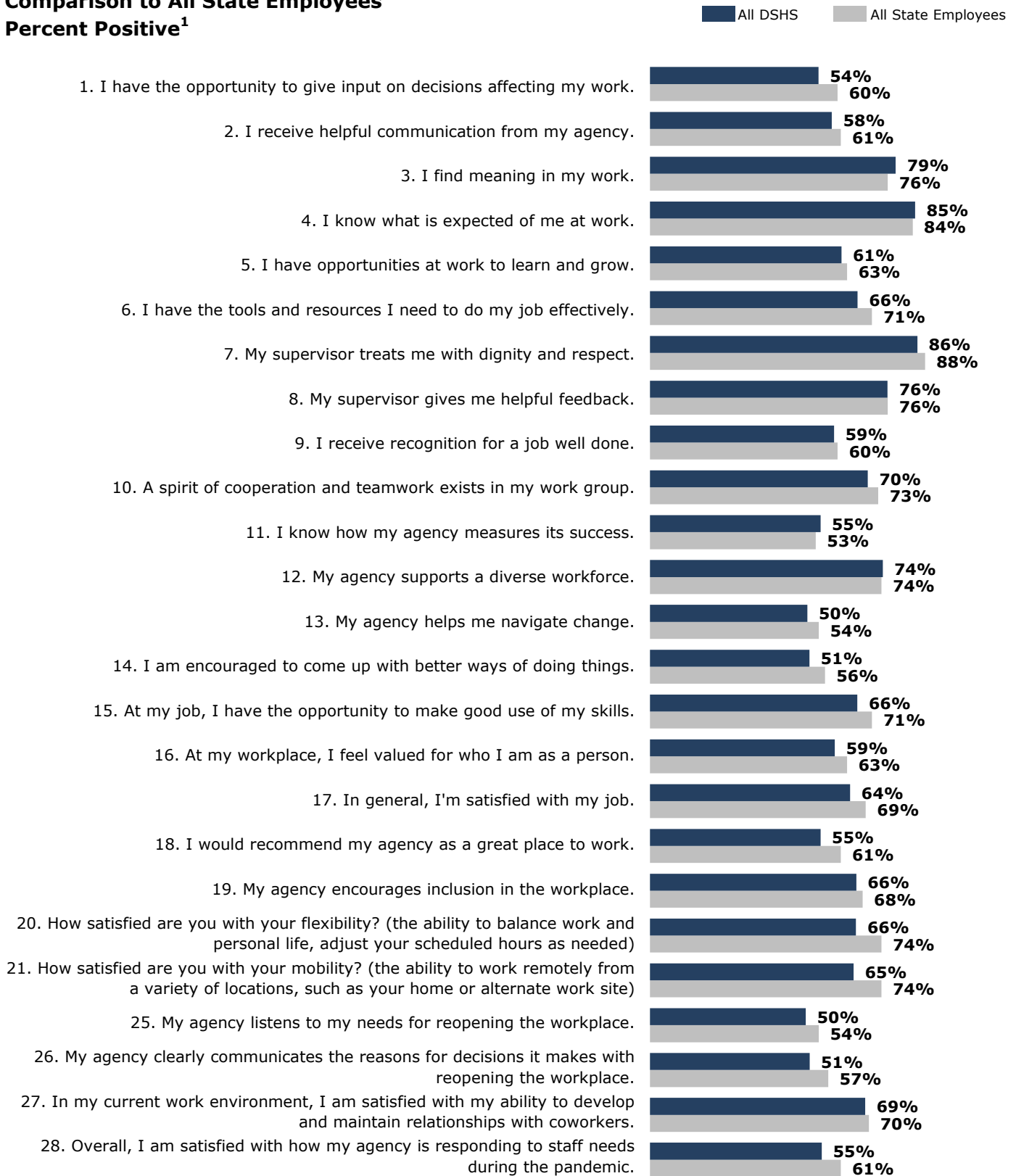
¹ For questions 20 and 21, percent answering "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied." Does not include missing data or "Doesn't Apply." For all other questions, percent answering "Almost Always or Always" or "Usually." Does not include missing data.

**Questions Ordered by Highest to Lowest
Percent Negative¹**



¹ For questions 20 and 21, percent answering "Very Dissatisfied" or "Dissatisfied." Does not include missing data or "Doesn't Apply." For all other questions, percent answering "Never or Almost Never" or "Seldom." Does not include missing data.

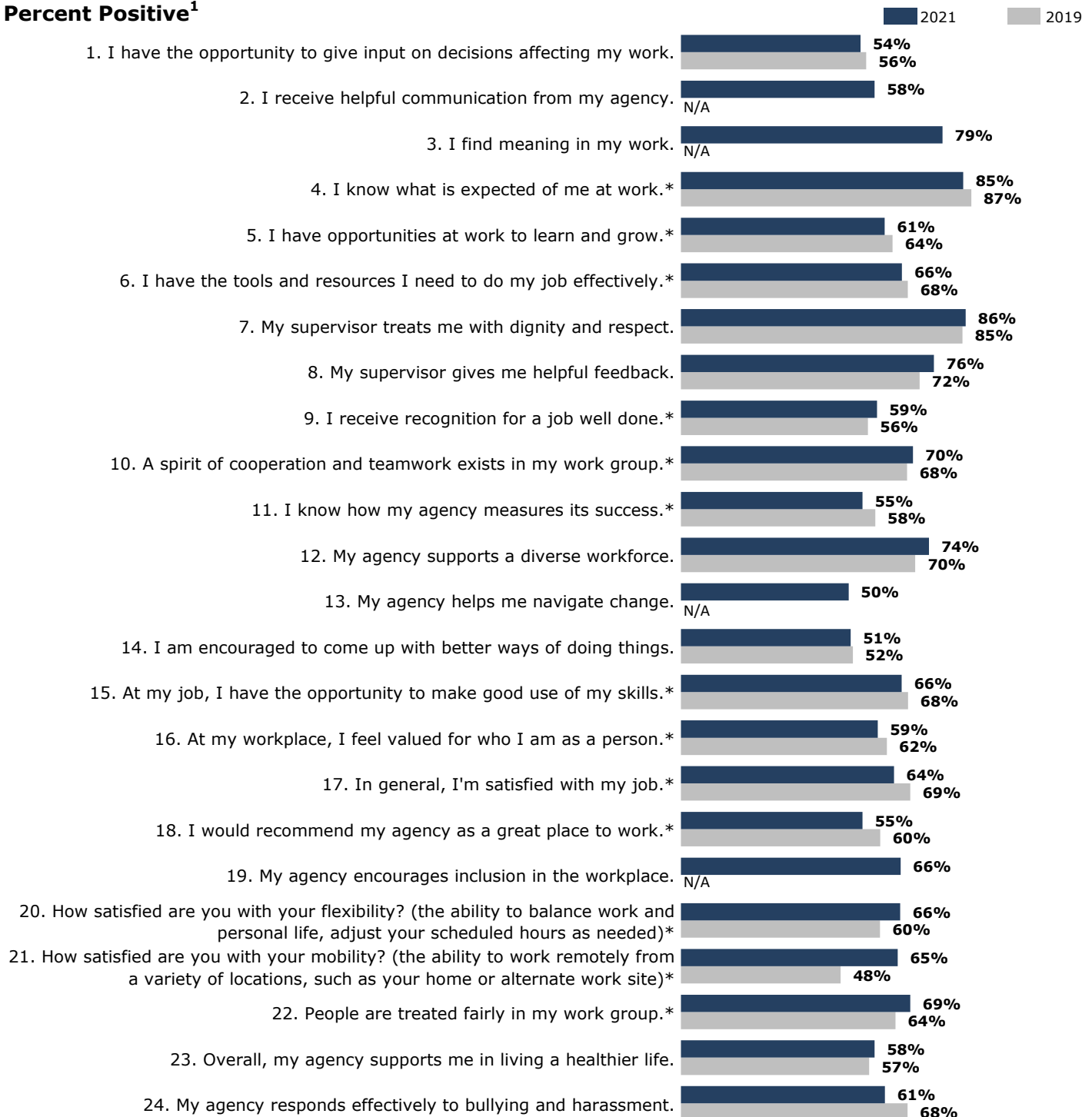
**Comparison to All State Employees
Percent Positive¹**



Statewide Data As Of February 15, 2022

¹ For questions 20 and 21, percent answering "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied." Does not include missing data or "Doesn't Apply." For all other questions, percent answering "Almost Always or Always" or "Usually." Does not include missing data.

Comparison to Previous Employee Survey Percent Positive¹



Notes: Weighted data. For comparison purposes, previous workgroups are matched and grouped with current workgroups so the history is consistent. "N/A" means the question was not asked during the survey year. Significance testing was not done for questions 8, 12, and 24 due to changes in question wording (see tab K).

* Change between 2019 and 2021 is statistically significant at the .01 level.

¹ For questions 20 and 21, percent answering "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied." Does not include missing data or "Doesn't Apply." For all other questions, percent answering "Almost Always or Always" or "Usually." Does not include missing data.

Comparison to Previous Employee Surveys - Percent Positive¹

DSHS Employee Survey - Nov-Dec 2021

DSHS - Weighted

		2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2021	Change 07 - 21	Change 19 - 21 ³
1	I have the opportunity to give input on decisions affecting my work.	53%	50%	47%	52%	55%	57%	56%	54%	0%	-2%
2	I receive helpful communication from my agency.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	58%	N/A	N/A
3	I find meaning in my work.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	79%	N/A	N/A
4	I know what is expected of me at work.	85%	87%	87%	88%	88%	88%	87%	85%	0%	-2% *
5	I have opportunities at work to learn and grow.	57%	53%	48%	57%	61%	64%	64%	61%	4% *	-2% *
6	I have the tools and resources I need to do my job effectively.	64%	68%	65%	68%	67%	69%	68%	66%	2% *	-2% *
7	My supervisor treats me with dignity and respect.	80%	82%	82%	83%	85%	85%	85%	86%	5% *	1%
8 ²	My supervisor gives me helpful feedback.	65%	65%	65%	65%	69%	73%	72%	76%	11% ²	4% ²
9	I receive recognition for a job well done.	51%	50%	48%	51%	55%	57%	56%	59%	8% *	3% *
10	A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my work group.	66%	66%	63%	67%	67%	70%	68%	70%	4% *	2% *
11	I know how my agency measures its success.	54%	54%	52%	54%	58%	61%	58%	55%	1%	-4% *
12 ²	My agency supports a diverse workforce.	63%	65%	65%	69%	68%	71%	70%	74%	12% ²	4% ²
13	My agency helps me navigate change.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50%	N/A	N/A
14	I am encouraged to come up with better ways of doing things.	52%	51%	45%	47%	51%	53%	52%	51%	-1%	-1%
15	At my job, I have the opportunity to make good use of my skills.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	69%	68%	66%	N/A	-2% *
16	At my workplace, I feel valued for who I am as a person.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	62%	59%	N/A	-3% *
17	In general, I'm satisfied with my job.	67%	67%	62%	68%	68%	71%	69%	64%	-3% *	-5% *
18	I would recommend my agency as a great place to work.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	62%	60%	55%	N/A	-5% *
19	My agency encourages inclusion in the workplace.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	66%	N/A	N/A
20	How satisfied are you with your flexibility? (the ability to balance work and personal life, adjust your scheduled hours as needed)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	64%	60%	66%	N/A	6% *
21	How satisfied are you with your mobility? (the ability to work remotely from a variety of locations, such as your home or alternate work site)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	39%	48%	65%	N/A	17% *
22	People are treated fairly in my work group.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	67%	64%	69%	N/A	4% *
23	Overall, my agency supports me in living a healthier life.	N/A	48%	48%	52%	57%	60%	57%	58%	N/A	2%
24 ²	My agency responds effectively to bullying and harassment.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	68%	61%	N/A	-7% ²

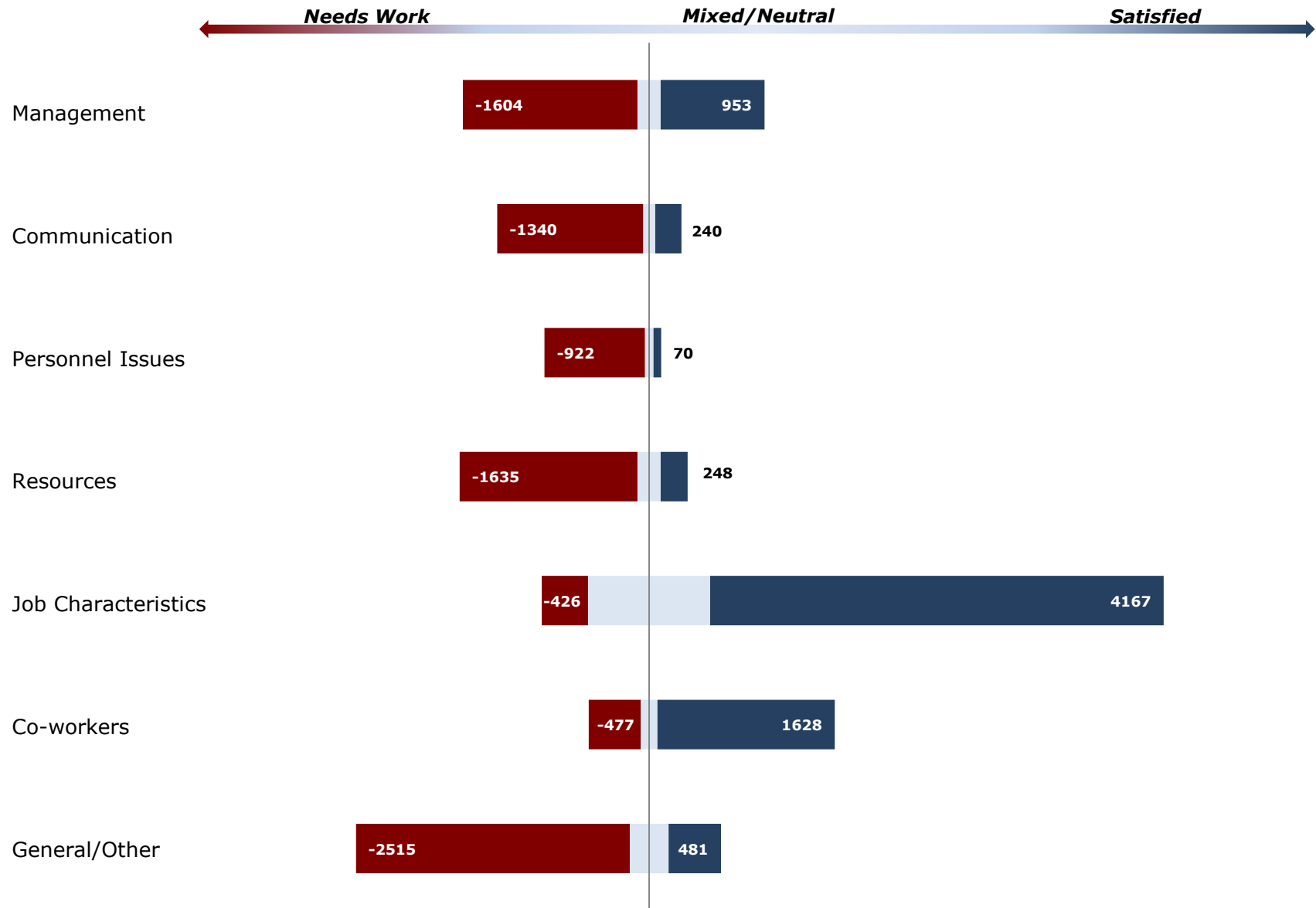
¹ Percent answering "Almost Always or Always" or "Usually." Does not include missing data.

² Significance testing not conducted due to wording change between comparison years. See tab K.

³ Interpret changes with caution. The makeup of the workforce may have changed significantly between survey years as a number of employees left the workforce after COVID-19-related employment re. If a question was not asked in a year, that year is marked "N/A." If there is no comparison workgroup for a previous year, there will be no percents reported for that year, and comparisons cannot be made for that survey year.

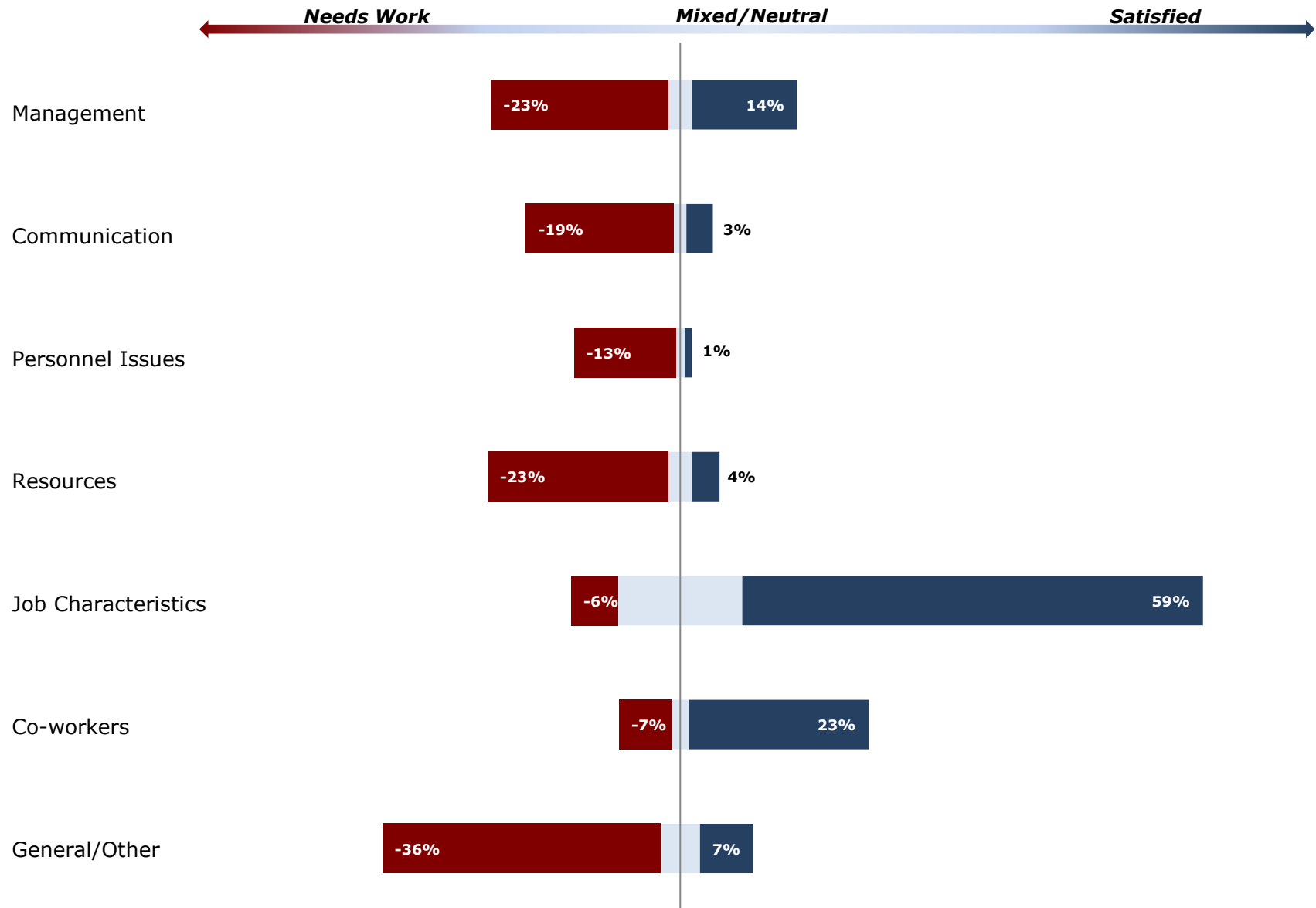
*Change between years is statistically significant at the .01 level.

Major Comment Themes - Number of Respondents Who Made Comments



NOTE: "Needs Work" category is shown as negative to facilitate chart formatting.

Major Comment Themes - Percentage of Respondents Who Made Comments



NOTES: Percentages show respondents who commented on this theme as a percentage of the total number of respondents who made narrative comments. Percentages for "Needs Work" category are shown as negative numbers to facilitate chart formatting. See Report J for more detail.

Narrative Comments Report

DSHS Employee Survey - Nov-Dec 2021

DSHS - Unweighted

7032 of 10170 Respondents Made Comments

MAJOR THEMES AND SUBTHEMES ¹		Total		Satisfied		Needs Work		Mixed or Neutral	
		# ²	% ³	# ²	% ³	# ²	% ³	# ²	% ³
Management		2,770	39.4%	953	13.6%	1,604	22.8%	213	3.0%
Courtesy & Respect	MC	421	6.0%	90	1.3%	319	4.5%	12	0.2%
Support/Mentoring/Availability	MS	1,056	15.0%	501	7.1%	501	7.1%	54	0.8%
Recognition/Awards	MR	477	6.8%	108	1.5%	350	5.0%	19	0.3%
Fairness/Discrimination	MF	480	6.8%	20	0.3%	454	6.5%	6	0.1%
Other Management Issues	MO	1,606	22.8%	573	8.1%	890	12.7%	143	2.0%
Communication		1,692	24.1%	240	3.4%	1,340	19.1%	112	1.6%
Managers Provide Information	CI	730	10.4%	57	0.8%	658	9.4%	15	0.2%
Management Listens/Includes	CL	848	12.1%	149	2.1%	660	9.4%	39	0.6%
Clear Direction, Priorities	CG	93	1.3%	28	0.4%	54	0.8%	11	0.2%
Other/General Communication	CO	388	5.5%	63	0.9%	283	4.0%	42	0.6%
Personnel Issues		1,072	15.2%	70	1.0%	922	13.1%	80	1.1%
Promotion/RIFs, Security	PP	734	10.4%	25	0.4%	670	9.5%	39	0.6%
Diversity/Discrimination	PD	468	6.7%	53	0.8%	366	5.2%	49	0.7%
Resources		2,096	29.8%	248	3.5%	1,635	23.3%	213	3.0%
Facilities, Parking, Environment	RF	297	4.2%	62	0.9%	211	3.0%	24	0.3%
Pay/Benefits for Employee	RP	741	10.5%	220	3.1%	458	6.5%	63	0.9%
Resources for Clients	RC	66	0.9%	3	0.0%	62	0.9%	1	0.0%
Staffing	RS	780	11.1%	0	0.0%	757	10.8%	23	0.3%
Training	RT	495	7.0%	42	0.6%	414	5.9%	39	0.6%
Other Resources	RO	260	3.7%	39	0.6%	207	2.9%	14	0.2%
Job Characteristics		5,715	81.3%	4,167	59.3%	426	6.1%	1,122	16.0%
Helping/Working w/ Clients/Community	JH	2,143	30.5%	2,132	30.3%	2	0.0%	9	0.1%
Workload	JW	378	5.4%	13	0.2%	353	5.0%	12	0.2%
Flex Schedule/Telecommuting	JS	2,741	39.0%	1,486	21.1%	691	9.8%	564	8.0%
Autonomy and Growth Opportunity	JA	667	9.5%	503	7.2%	142	2.0%	22	0.3%
Other Aspects of Job	JO	2,588	36.8%	2,335	33.2%	133	1.9%	120	1.7%
Co-workers		2,259	32.1%	1,628	23.2%	477	6.8%	154	2.2%
Competence, Skill, Accountability	WC	498	7.1%	167	2.4%	283	4.0%	48	0.7%
Teamwork, Support	WT	996	14.2%	654	9.3%	277	3.9%	65	0.9%
Other Co-Worker Issues	WO	1,220	17.3%	1,128	16.0%	59	0.8%	33	0.5%
General/Other		3,353	47.7%	481	6.8%	2,515	35.8%	357	5.1%
Work Process/Policies	GP	2,355	33.5%	106	1.5%	2,108	30.0%	141	2.0%
Morale/Overall Satisfaction	GS	696	9.9%	184	2.6%	477	6.8%	35	0.5%
Staff Safety	GF	302	4.3%	52	0.7%	228	3.2%	22	0.3%
Wellness and Mental Health	GW	135	1.9%	10	0.1%	110	1.6%	15	0.2%
None/Nothing	GN	386	5.5%	251	3.6%	94	1.3%	41	0.6%
Comments About This Survey	GC	113	1.6%	4	0.1%	60	0.9%	49	0.7%
Other	GO	339	4.8%	12	0.2%	150	2.1%	177	2.5%
2021 Topic Specific Codes		1,393	19.8%	61	0.9%	539	7.7%	400	5.7%
Vaccine Mandate	TS1	287	4.1%	6	0.1%	227	3.2%	54	0.8%
Return to Workplace	TS2	789	11.2%	60	0.9%	352	5.0%	377	5.4%
Other COVID-19	TS3	564	8.0%						

¹Major themes (in blue rows) are rollups of the subthemes listed below. They are unduplicated - not the total of the numbers below. I.e., a person who made "Satisfied" comments in both "Staffing" and "Training" is counted only once in the "Resources" row. A person who has a "Satisfied" comment in the "Staffing" row and "Needs Work" in the "Training" row would be counted as a "Mixed" comment in the "Resources" row.

²All # columns show how many persons made any mention of this theme. Multiple comments on the same theme by a single person are only counted once in that theme row. A person with both "Satisfied" and "Needs Work" comments on the same theme is counted in the "Mixed" column.

³Respondents who commented as a percentage of the total number of respondents who made narrative comments.

Employee Engagement Survey Question Changes

DSHS Employee Survey - Nov-Dec 2021

REVISED IN 2020 (STATE QUESTIONS)

- My agency supports a diverse workforce. *(formerly "My agency consistently demonstrates support for a diverse workforce.")*
- My supervisor gives me helpful feedback. *(formerly "My supervisor gives me ongoing feedback that helps me improve my performance.")*

REVISED IN 2021 (DSHS QUESTION)

- My agency responds effectively to bullying and harassment. *(formerly "My agency clearly communicates that bullying and harassment are unacceptable.")*

NEW IN 2020 (STATE QUESTIONS)

- I receive helpful communication from my agency.
- I find meaning in my work.
- My agency helps me navigate change.

REMOVED IN 2020 (STATE QUESTIONS)

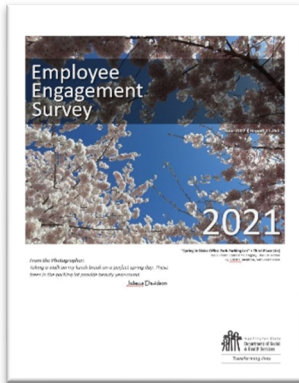
- I receive the information I need to do my job effectively.
- I know how my work contributes to the goals of my agency.
- I receive clear information about changes being made within the agency.
- We are making improvements to make things better for our customers.
- We use customer feedback to improve our work processes.
- My supervisor trusts me to make decisions or recommendations that affect my work. *(2019 rotating question)*

REMOVED IN 2020 for STATE, but retained for DSHS

- People are treated fairly in my work group.

2021 STATE ROTATING QUESTION

- My agency encourages inclusion in the workplace.



2021 DSHS Employee Engagement Survey

APPENDIX C

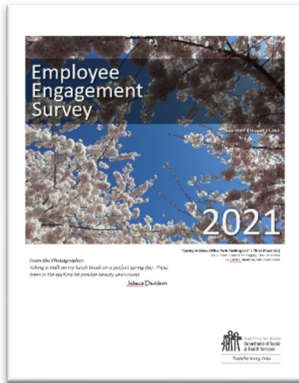
Narrative Comments Coding Glossary

CATEGORIES FOR CODING NARRATIVE COMMENTS

Code	Definition
Communication	
CI	Providing information ; holding meetings (by management/supervisor or leadership). Management transparency.
CL	Listening to staff; including in decisions; encouraging feedback; asks staff opinion; open-door policy to encourage talk (by management, supervisor, or leadership).
CG	Need or get clear direction/vision/priorities in relation to job and Agency; mission; strategic plan.
CO	Other /general communication: includes communication between sections and offices; staff meetings/brainstorming sessions.
Managers/Supervisors	
MC	Courtesy and respect (how they treat staff).
MS	Support ; mentoring; consultation; oversight; responsiveness; planning; problem-solving; availability; caring; staff evaluations.
MR	Recognize/reward good work; positive words/praise/encouragement, value/respect what staff does.
MF	Fair treatment ; favoritism; inequitable work distribution; retaliation. (<i>Note – discrimination/fairness in personnel practices: hiring, advancement, disciplinary action, or firing are under PP; while diversity/fairness issues are under PD</i>).
MO	Other /general management: Personal characteristics (like integrity, honesty); behavior; trustworthiness/trusts staff; competence; skills; knowledge; understand field/knows what’s going on in field; punitive; specific stories about managers or supervisors; should replace them; like/dislike them.
Personnel Issues	
PP	Personnel (HR) processes/policies: Hiring/promotions/advancement ; nepotism, cronyism; disciplinary actions; firing/removal/RIFs; evaluate/upgrade position.
PD	Client/staff discrimination based on race/ethnicity, gender/sexual orientation, age, or disability; sexual harassment; religion; cultural competence; diversity initiatives, workgroups, training; other diversity issues.
Job Characteristics	
JH	Helping /dealing with clients/customers, community agencies, DSHS providers, stakeholders, tribes - as a source of satisfaction/dissatisfaction.
JS	Work Schedule/location ; ability to work part-time/job share/earn overtime; work from home/in field; telecommuting; mentions “work/life balance.”
JW	Workload : too high/too demanding; big variations or differences in amount of work (time for tasks); caseload size.
JA	Opportunities for autonomy and growth ; independence; setting own priorities; able to be innovative/creative; use own judgement; no micromanagement.
JO	Other : Characteristics of job that employee likes or dislikes: job is challenging/stressful; like or dislike doing specific tasks or processes; offers opportunities/challenges/flexibility/variety of tasks; dealing with changes and uncertainty. Proud of accomplishments; good at job.
Co-Workers	
WC	Competence ; skills; professionalism; integrity; knowledge (includes getting rid of incompetent workers); work ethic/dedicated; individual accountability; how treats/cares about clients; abuses leave.
WT	Teamwork ; mutual support; learning from peers; doing share; staff relationships/workgroup atmosphere.
WO	Other : Attitude of/feelings about co-workers; I like or dislike my co-workers/team; mentions office politics/drama with co-workers.
Resources	
RF	Facilities : Parking; environment; location/length of commute; building maintenance/temperature/lighting; configuration of space.
RP	Pay and benefits for DSHS employees; requests for monetary incentives/recognition awards; overtime pay. Job security (“glad to have a job.”)
RC	Resources/money for clients, customers , and client programs.
RS	Staffing : Fill vacancies; high turnover/retention; understaffing; need for support/intermittent staff.
RT	Training : Includes cultural/diversity training; mentoring/job shadow programs; workshops/conferences/seminars; use of “job coach.” Formal/organized education.
RO	Other things staff need: Computers; information systems (technology/software/server); supplies; phones; equipment/tools; furniture; interpreters; state cars.
General	
GP	Work processes and policies ; service delivery; specific programs/processes (how well these work/whether they should be changed – not whether I like doing them); improvements to existing technology.
GS	Satisfaction/dissatisfaction ; morale; burn-out; general office environment/atmosphere/culture.
GN	“None.” “Nothing.” “Not much.” or “Can’t think of anything” in response to narrative question.
GC	Comments specifically about this survey .
GF	Staff safety issues, including safety issues related to Covid-19.
GW	Comments about wellness/mental health : Exercise space; classes; ergonomics; healthy meal options; air/water quality.
GO	Other : Did not fit in other categories; unrelated to DSHS; references to the past.

Covid-19 and Reopening Policies

- TS1** | Comments about **Gov. Jay Inslee's proclamation** that requires all state employees to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by October 18, 2021 as a condition of employment.
- TS2** | Comments about **workplace reopening** plans and policies.
- TS3** | Checkbox added to other primary codes when **COVID-19** is mentioned.



2021 DSHS Employee Engagement Survey

APPENDIX D

Modeling Employee Engagement

Modeling Employee Engagement

WHAT PREDICTS JOB SATISFACTION AND PROMOTION OF DSHS AS AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE?

In 2021, more than six of 10 DSHS employees (64%) said that they are generally satisfied with their jobs and less than six of 10 (55%) said they would recommend their agency as a great place to work (sometimes referred to as “net promotion.”) Both the job satisfaction and net promotion questions had a 5 percentage point decline compared to 2019.

In order to identify effective actions to improve employee engagement, we calculated logistic regression models to predict the independent contributions of each survey question, while controlling for the effects of all other factors. In the logistic regression model, the probability of a binary outcome variable (positive responses for job satisfaction and recommending the agency) is evaluated according to the effects of a set of predictors (the core set of survey questions, coded as positive vs other responses). We selected this method because it is most appropriate for the analysis of binary variables, and because the correlations between responses were too high to justify linear regression techniques.

Changes to the questionnaire likely had an effect on the model. The second highest predictor of job satisfaction in 2019 was a temporary “rotating question” that was not retained in 2021 (“My supervisor trusts me to make decisions or recommendations that affect my work”). Two new questions in 2021 (“I find meaning in my work” and “My agency encourages inclusion in the workplace”) were in the top five predictors of job satisfaction and net promotion, respectively. Because of this variation, we do not recommend making comparisons between models in different survey years.

The top predictor of general job satisfaction is finding meaning in work. All other things being equal, employees who said they always or usually find meaning in their work were eight times more likely to be satisfied with their jobs than employees who said they find meaning in their work occasionally or less often. Similarly, employees who said that they felt valued for who they are as a person were more than four times as likely to report general job satisfaction. The pattern is somewhat different for net promotion, with inclusion in the workplace emerging as the strongest predictor. Satisfaction with the agency’s response to the pandemic and feeling that the agency helps employees manage change are also major predictors of net promotion that are more prominent than in the model for job satisfaction.

Top 5 predictors of job satisfaction and net promotion, with relative odds

Job Satisfaction	Would Recommend Agency
Find meaning in work (8.17)	Agency encourages inclusion in workplace (4.40)
Valued as a person (4.22)	Find meaning in work (3.62)
Job makes good use of skills (2.45)	Valued as a person (2.81)
Know what is expected at work (2.30)	Satisfaction with agency pandemic response (2.03)
Have needed tools and resources (1.90)	Agency helps me navigate change (1.97)

The strongest predictors of job satisfaction are key to an employee’s sense of acceptance by the entire organization as a valued member of the team, but finding meaning in work is also an important factor. Employees who would recommend the agency to others also value inclusion, being valued, and the agency response to change – most notably to the COVID pandemic.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

As in the other analyses in this report, responses on each question were coded as 1 for responses of “Always or Almost Always” or “Usually,” and other valid responses were coded as 0. We used a machine-learning algorithm (stepwise, forward, and backward selection) to identify the combinations of questions that best predict employee satisfaction and propensity to recommend DSHS as an employer. The final models are shown below. Items excluded from the models show no independent association with either of the two outcome variables.

The model results are expressed as *odds ratios*, which indicate the relative likelihood of a positive response for engagement given a positive response on each predictor, while controlling for the effects of all other predictors. For example, the odds ratio for “At my workplace, I feel valued for who I am as a person” in the model of job satisfaction is 4.22. This means that all other things being equal, respondents who said they feel valued were more than four times as likely to be satisfied with their jobs, compared to those who did not say they felt valued. Each odds ratio is shown with 95% confidence intervals. All items listed are statistically significant at $p < .05$.

RESULTS | JOB SATISFACTION

Logistic regression results: “In general, I’m satisfied with my job”, significant predictors only

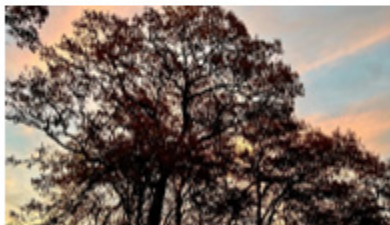
Model Chi-squared = 8019.92 (df = 26), $p < .001$

	ODDS RATIO	LOWER 95% CI	UPPER 95% CI
I find meaning in my work	8.17	6.80	9.81
I know what is expected of me at work	2.30	1.86	2.84
I have opportunities at work to learn and grow	1.53	1.31	1.78
I have the tools and resources I need to do my job effectively	1.90	1.64	2.20
My agency supports a diverse workforce	0.80	0.67	0.96
My agency helps me navigate change	1.31	1.10	1.56
I am encouraged to come up with better ways of doing things	1.21	1.02	1.44
At my job, I have the opportunity to make good use of my skills	2.45	2.11	2.85
At my workplace, I feel valued for who I am as a person	4.22	3.58	4.97
My agency encourages inclusion in the workplace	1.45	1.21	1.73
How satisfied are you with your flexibility?	1.81	1.53	2.14
How satisfied are you with your mobility?	0.84	0.71	0.99
I am satisfied with my ability to develop and maintain relationships with coworkers	1.21	1.04	1.41
I am satisfied with how my agency is responding to staff needs during the pandemic	1.77	1.49	2.11
People are treated fairly in my work group	1.31	1.10	1.55
Overall, my agency supports me in living a healthier life	1.27	1.08	1.49

RESULTS | WOULD RECOMMEND AGENCY

Logistic regression results: “I would recommend my agency as a great place to work”, significant predictors only
 Model Chi-squared = 8368.22 (df = 26), p < .001

	ODDS RATIO	LOWER 95% CI	UPPER 95% CI
I receive helpful communication from my agency	1.45	1.25	1.70
I find meaning in my work	3.62	2.97	4.42
I have opportunities at work to learn and grow	1.37	1.17	1.60
I have the tools and resources I need to do my job effectively	1.82	1.56	2.12
A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my workgroup	1.30	1.10	1.54
My agency supports a diverse workforce	0.78	0.65	0.95
My agency helps me navigate change	1.97	1.69	2.30
I am encouraged to come up with better ways of doing things	1.43	1.22	1.67
At my job, I have the opportunity to make good use of my skills	1.54	1.31	1.82
At my workplace, I feel valued for who I am as a person	2.81	2.39	3.30
My agency encourages inclusion in the workplace	4.40	3.68	5.27
How satisfied are you with your flexibility?	1.49	1.23	1.77
How satisfied are you with your mobility?	0.78	0.66	0.92
My agency clearly communicates the reasons for decisions it makes with reopening the workplace	1.26	1.06	1.49
I am satisfied with how my agency is responding to staff needs during the pandemic	2.03	1.73	2.38
My agency responds effectively to bullying and harassment	1.40	1.20	1.63



Employee Engagement Survey 2021



Washington State
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