

2008 Federal Human Capital Survey Summary of NARA Results

This summarizes the results of the 2008 Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS), a government-wide survey administered bi-annually by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) as part of their ongoing effort to assess and improve human capital management in the Federal Government.

The FHCS was designed to measure Federal employees' perceptions about how effectively agencies are managing their workforces. Approximately 417,000 Federal employees were asked to respond to 74 questions in seven areas: 1) Personal Work Experiences; 2) Recruitment, Development, and Retention; 3) Performance Culture; 4) Leadership; 5) Learning (Knowledge Management); 6) Job Satisfaction; and 7) Satisfaction with Federal Benefits. More than 212,000 Federal employees responded to the survey for a government-wide response rate of 51 percent. NARA had a response rate of 62 percent, with 1370 respondents. Attachment A summarizes NARA's responses to the 74 survey items and how those responses compare with the government-wide average.

Overall, NARA's 2008 results are largely consistent with our results from the 2006 and 2004 surveys:

- The majority of NARA employees continue to like the work they do, believe the work they do is important, feel a sense of personal accomplishment from their work, know how their work relates to the agency's goals and priorities, believe that staff cooperate with each other to get the job done, and are satisfied with long-standing and widely used benefits (i.e., vacation and sick time, retirement, health and life insurance).
- NARA continues to receive high marks in the area of performance management and awards. Seventy-one percent of NARA staff agree that their performance appraisal is a fair reflection of their performance (up 3 percent from 2006 and 8 percent higher than the government-wide average) and 81 percent feel they are held accountable for achieving results. Seventy-four percent responded positively to the statement, "In my most recent performance appraisal, I understood what I had to do to be rated at different performance levels (e.g., Fully Successful, Outstanding)". This is 10 percent higher than the government-wide average. In addition, NARA employees are satisfied with the recognition they receive for doing a good job, scoring 11 percent higher than the government-wide average in response to the statement, "Awards in my work unit depend on how well employees perform their jobs".
- NARA staff continue to express confidence in their immediate supervisors, feel that they support employee development, and understand staff need to balance work and family issues. However, they continue to respond less favorably to the

statement, “In my organization, leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce” (only 33 percent responded positively).

- Only 28 percent of NARA employees see a link between performance and pay raises. The item “Pay raises depend on how well employees perform their jobs” received the highest negative rating on the survey (42.5 percent negative) but still exceeds the government-wide positive results by 2 percent.
- NARA employees continue to express concern regarding their opportunities to get a better job in their organization (41% negative response rate). Positive responses to this question (33 percent) are 6 percent below the government-wide average.

There are three areas in which NARA’s positive response rates increased significantly since the 2006 and 2004 surveys¹.

- More NARA employees have electronic access to learning and training programs readily available at their desks. Positive responses to this item were up 22 percent from 2006.
- Sixty-seven percent of NARA employees feel their organization has prepared them for potential security threats, an increase of 8 percent from 2006.
- Half of NARA respondents agree that arbitrary action, personal favoritism and coercion for partisan political purposes are not tolerated, and forty-seven percent of staff feel they can disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule or regulation without fear or reprisal. Positive responses to these items were up an average of 7 percent.

There are only a few areas in which NARA’s positive response rates have declined in any significant amount since the 2006 and 2004 surveys:

- Fewer NARA employees feel that their workload is reasonable. Positive responses to this item were down 4 percent from 2006 and 7 percent from 2004, and are below the government-wide average by 4 percent.
- Fifty-three percent of NARA staff indicated satisfaction with alternate work schedules, a decrease of 5 percent from 2006. However, the positive response rate on this item exceeds the government-wide average by 6%.

Additionally, there are some areas where, although some positive change occurred between NARA’s 2004 and 2006 results, we continue to lag behind the rest of the Federal government.

¹ OPM defines “significant” as +/- 5 percent.

- ***Knowledge management.*** Forty-seven percent of NARA respondents indicated that their training needs are assessed, representing an increase of 5 percent from the 2006 survey. However, NARA positive responses are approximately 7 percent lower than the government-wide average. In addition, NARA's positive responses were 8 percent lower than the government-wide average on the item: "Managers promote communication among different work units (for example, about projects, goals, and needed resources)".
- ***Health and safety.*** Approximately 65 percent of NARA employees feel they are protected from health and safety hazards on the job. This response rate is lower than the government-wide average by approximately 11 percent.
- ***Diversity.*** NARA positive responses to the survey questions related to diversity were up an average of 3% from 2006. Over half of NARA's respondents believe their supervisors and team leaders are committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society. However, NARA positive responses to the items of "Policies and programs promoted diversity in the workplace (for example, recruiting minorities and women, training in awareness of diversity issues, mentoring)" and "Managers, supervisors, and team leaders work well with employee's of different backgrounds" remain 8 percent lower than the government-wide average.
- ***Employee's overall satisfaction with their jobs, training, pay, and organization.*** An average of 55% of NARA employees indicated a positive response to a series of four questions designed to measure overall satisfaction with their jobs, training, pay and organization. The response rates for these questions are lower than the government-wide average by 5 percent.