



# The Best Places to Work

IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

2010 RANKINGS



PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE



INSTITUTE for the STUDY of  
PUBLIC POLICY IMPLEMENTATION  
SCHOOL of PUBLIC AFFAIRS

## BEST PLACES TO WORK 2010

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The 2010 *Best Places to Work in the Federal Government* rankings offer the most comprehensive assessment of how federal employees perceive their jobs and agencies, providing unvarnished insights into issues ranging from leadership and pay to teamwork and work-life balance.

The rankings, representing the first in-depth look at the views of federal employees during the Obama administration, reveal good news—an increase in the overall satisfaction with the government workplace. But this positive response is leavened by a wide divergence of opinions about the capability of leadership and the conditions at individual agencies and departments.

The *Best Places* government-wide employee satisfaction score for 2010 reached an all-time high of 65 out of 100, representing a 2.7 percent increase from 2009 and a 7.4 percent jump from 2003 when our rankings were first published.

A high level of satisfaction and employee commitment translates into better organizational performance and government effectiveness. When these conditions exist, employees often have a sense of personal accomplishment, believe their talents are well used, that they can develop professionally and are encouraged to innovate.

For the third consecutive time, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission ranked first and the Government Accountability Office placed a close second in the *Best Places* list of 32 large agencies. Perhaps as noteworthy, both agencies improved their scores even though they were already top-ranked. If either had simply maintained their 2009 index score, they would have dropped down the list, suggesting that to stand still is to fall back when it comes to employee satisfaction and commitment.

At the other end of the spectrum, the lowest-rated large agency in 2010 is the National Archives and Records Administration, which was second from the bottom in 2009 and dropped a notch this year even though it showed a slight improvement. Tied for last place is the Department of

### FAST FACTS

- ★ The 2010 government-wide *Best Places* index score measuring the satisfaction of federal employees with their jobs and organizations is 65 out of 100, up 2.7 percent from 2009 and an increase of 7.4 percent since the rankings were first launched in 2003.
- ★ Employee satisfaction increased in 68 percent of federal organizations, including 80 percent of large agencies, 69 percent of small agencies and 67 percent of subcomponents.
- ★ The highest-scoring workplace categories are, in order, employee skills/mission match, teamwork, pay, and training/development.
- ★ The biggest increase in the 2010 ratings was in the effective leadership category regarding employee perceptions of fairness in the workplace, which was up 8.6 percent.
- ★ The 2010 *Best Places* rankings include 290 federal organizations (32 large federal agencies, 34 small agencies and 224 subcomponents) and are based on the responses of more than 263,000 employees.

Housing and Urban Development, which lost ground as other agencies improved.

This year, the most improved large federal agencies were the Department of Transportation, which raised its standing among employees by 15.8 percent, and the Department of the Treasury, which increased its score by 8.2 percent. On the flip side, the Securities and Exchange Commission dropped by 6.4 percent—the second survey in a row that employees downgraded the financial regulator.

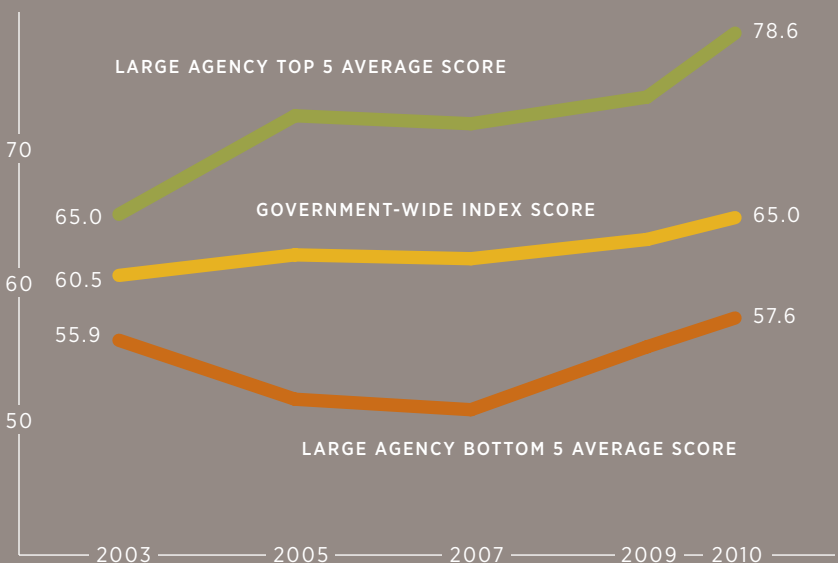
Although some federal agencies are lagging behind, the improvement by 68 percent of federal organizations demonstrates that a determined focus on good management can have a relatively quick and significant impact in the workplace.

While many factors are involved in shaping how employees view their workplace, the 2010 survey for the fifth time in a row showed the primary driver in the federal space is effective leadership, and in particular, senior leadership. Two other key factors influencing satisfaction revealed by the analysis were a belief by employees that their skills were well-suited to their agency's mission, and a satisfaction with pay.

Employees in the private sector, meanwhile, continued to be more satisfied with their jobs, organizations and supervisors than their counterparts in the federal government. But the attitudes of federal employees regarding these three work-related areas are improving, perhaps a reflection of better government management and the economic realities of today's difficult job market.

The *Best Places* rankings and detailed analysis are based on data from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey that was conducted by the Office of Personnel Management during February and March of 2010. The rankings provide a benchmark to measure agency progress, to identify signs of trouble, and to spur our government to improve the way it manages its most important asset—its people.

**TOP TRENDS**



## LARGE AGENCY RANKINGS

RANK	AGENCY
1	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
2	Government Accountability Office
3	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
4	Smithsonian Institution
5	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
6	Social Security Administration
7	Department of State
8	General Services Administration
9	Department of Justice
10	Intelligence Community
11	Environmental Protection Agency
12	Department of the Treasury
13	Department of Commerce
14	Office of Personnel Management
15	Department of the Navy
16	Department of the Army
17	All Department of Defense (tie)
17	Department of the Interior (tie)
19	Department of the Air Force (tie)
19	Department of Health and Human Services (tie)
21	Department of Veterans Affairs
22	Department of Energy
23	Department of Labor
24	Department of Agriculture (tie)
24	Securities and Exchange Commission (tie)
26	Department of Transportation
27	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
28	Department of Homeland Security
29	Small Business Administration
30	Department of Education
31	Department of Housing and Urban Development (tie)
31	National Archives and Records Administration (tie)

## BY CATEGORY

EMPLOYEE SKILLS / MISSION MATCH	
1	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
2	Department of Veterans Affairs
3	Social Security Administration
STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	
1	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
2	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
3	General Services Administration
EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP	
1	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
2	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
3	Department of State
WORK / LIFE BALANCE	
1	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
2	General Services Administration
3	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
PAY	
1	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
2	National Aeronautics and Space Administration (tie)
2	General Services Administration (tie)
4	Environmental Protection Agency

## BY DEMOGRAPHIC

AFRICAN-AMERICANS	
1	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
2	Government Accountability Office
3	Department of Justice
HISPANICS	
1	Government Accountability Office
2	Nuclear Regulatory Commission (tie)
2	Social Security Administration (tie)
4	Department of State
WOMEN	
1	Government Accountability Office
2	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
3	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
YOUNG PEOPLE (UNDER 40)	
1	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
2	Government Accountability Office
3	Social Security Administration

View the complete category and demographic rankings at [bestplacestowork.org](https://bestplacestowork.org).

## SMALL AGENCY RANKINGS

RANK	AGENCY
1	Surface Transportation Board
2	Overseas Private Investment Corporation
3	Congressional Budget Office
4	Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service
5	Peace Corps
6	National Endowment for the Humanities
7	Federal Trade Commission (tie)
7	National Transportation Safety Board (tie)
9	National Endowment for the Arts
10	Commodity Futures Trading Commission
11	Merit Systems Protection Board
12	Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation
13	National Science Foundation
14	Federal Maritime Commission
15	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
16	Railroad Retirement Board
17	Corporation for National and Community Service
18	Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (tie)
18	National Gallery of Art (tie)
20	Federal Labor Relations Authority
21	Federal Communications Commission
22	Millennium Challenge Corporation
23	National Credit Union Administration
24	U.S. International Trade Commission
25	Office of Management and Budget
26	Consumer Product Safety Commission
27	National Labor Relations Board
28	Agency for International Development
29	Office of the U.S. Trade Representative
30	Federal Election Commission
31	Federal Housing Finance Agency
32	Broadcasting Board of Governors
33	International Boundary and Water Commission
34	Selective Service System

## BY CATEGORY

### EMPLOYEE SKILLS / MISSION MATCH

1	Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service
2	Surface Transportation Board
3	National Transportation Safety Board
4	Merit Systems Protection Board
5	Federal Trade Commission

### STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

1	Surface Transportation Board
2	Merit Systems Protection Board
3	Federal Trade Commission
4	Commodity Futures Trading Commission
5	National Endowment for the Arts

### EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

1	Surface Transportation Board
2	Federal Trade Commission
3	Federal Maritime Commission
4	Federal Labor Relations Authority
5	Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service

### WORK / LIFE BALANCE

1	Surface Transportation Board
2	Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service
3	National Endowment for the Arts
4	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
5	Federal Maritime Commission

### PAY

1	Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service
2	Surface Transportation Board
3	Federal Labor Relations Authority
4	Commodity Futures Trading Commission
5	Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency

### TEAMWORK

1	Surface Transportation Board
2	Federal Labor Relations Authority
3	Federal Trade Commission
4	National Endowment for the Arts
5	Federal Maritime Commission

## AGENCY SUBCOMPONENT RANKINGS

RANK	AGENCY
1	Environment and Natural Resources Division (DOJ)
2	Army Audit Agency (Army)
3	Office of Inspector General (Treasury)
4	Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (Treasury)
5	Civil Division (DOJ)
6	Bureau of the Public Debt (Treasury)
7	Goddard Space Flight Center (NASA)
8	Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys and U.S. Attorneys' Office (DOJ)
9	Region 1 - Boston (EPA)
10	Region 9 - San Francisco (EPA)
11	John C. Stennis Space Center (NASA)
12	Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center (NASA)
13	Tax Division (DOJ) (tie)
13	Office of the Inspector General (OPM) (tie)
15	Dryden Flight Research Center (NASA)
16	Office of Thrift Supervision (Treasury)
17	Region 10 - Seattle (EPA)
18	Office of the Inspector General for Tax Administration (Treasury)
19	Federal Highway Administration (DOT)
20	National Cemetery Administration (VA)
21	John F. Kennedy Space Center (NASA)
22	Antitrust Division (DOJ)
23	George C. Marshall Space Flight Center (NASA)
24	U.S. Army National Guard Units (Army)
25	All Other Components (Navy)
26	Office of Inspector General (ED) (tie)
26	Region 3 - Philadelphia (EPA) (tie)
28	Region 2 - New York (EPA)
29	National Institute of Standards and Technology (Commerce)
30	U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command (Army)
31	Langley Research Center (NASA)
32	Region 8 - Denver (EPA)
33	Air Force Special Operations Command (Air Force) (tie)
33	Region 6 - Dallas (EPA) (tie)
33	Office of Naval Research (Navy) (tie)
33	Employee Services (OPM) (tie)

View the complete rankings for all 224 agency subcomponents at [bestplacetowork.org](http://bestplacetowork.org).



## BY CATEGORY

EMPLOYEE SKILLS / MISSION MATCH	
1	Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys and U.S. Attorneys' Office (DOJ)
2	Environment and Natural Resources Division (DOJ)
3	National Cemetery Administration (VA)
4	Civil Division (DOJ)
5	Military Sealift Command (Navy)
STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	
1	Office of Inspector General (Treasury)
2	Environment and Natural Resources Division (DOJ)
3	Civil Division (DOJ)
4	Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (Treasury) (tie)
4	Office of Inspector General (ED) (tie)
EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP	
1	Environment and Natural Resources Division (DOJ)
2	Office of Inspector General (Treasury)
3	Civil Division (DOJ)
4	Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center (NASA)
5	John C. Stennis Space Center (NASA)
WORK / LIFE BALANCE	
1	Office of Inspector General (Treasury)
2	Bureau of the Public Debt (Treasury)
3	Environment and Natural Resources Division (DOJ)
4	Civil Division (DOJ)
5	Office of the Inspector General for Tax Administration (Treasury)
PAY	
1	Office of the Inspector General for Tax Administration (Treasury)
2	Office of Inspector General (Treasury)
3	Office of Inspector General (ED)
4	Employee Services (OPM)
5	Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (DHS)
TEAMWORK	
1	Environment and Natural Resources Division (DOJ)
2	Civil Division (DOJ) (tie)
2	Employee Services (OPM) (tie)
4	Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center (NASA)
5	John C. Stennis Space Center (NASA)

View the complete category and demographic rankings at [bestplacestowork.org](https://bestplacestowork.org).

## FIND MORE ONLINE

Visit [bestplacestowork.org](http://bestplacestowork.org) to access the complete 2010 rankings, formulate customized reports and conduct side-by-side comparisons of agencies and their subcomponents.

Here is what you will find online:

- ★ The **complete rankings** for the 32 largest Cabinet departments and independent agencies, 34 small agencies, and more than 200 organizations within those agencies, with **detailed profiles** of each.
- ★ Capabilities that allow you to generate **customized reports** by selecting the agency features most important to you.
- ★ Capabilities to conduct **side-by-side comparisons** of how agencies or their subcomponents ranked in various categories.
- ★ Rankings focused on **topics that matter** to you, like effective leadership, pay, work/life balance and support for diversity.
- ★ Worker satisfaction rankings broken down by **demographic groupings** including age, gender and minority status.
- ★ An in-depth "**For Job Seekers**" section with the information you need to understand the federal hiring process, find the right job and make your application count.
- ★ **Insightful analysis** of what the rankings mean, with **trend data** to help you understand where the agencies stand and where they are going.

The screenshot shows the website's navigation menu with tabs for RANKINGS, ABOUT BEST PLACES, ANALYSIS, FOR JOB SEEKERS, FOR AGENCIES, FAQs, and CONTACT US. Below the navigation is a header image of a person holding an American flag. The main content area is titled "Overall Index Scores for Employee Satisfaction and Commitment" and includes a "Save as PDF" button. A table lists the top 12 agencies with their 2010 and 2009 scores and percentage change. On the left sidebar, there is a search bar for finding an agency, a "Create a Custom Report" button, and a "Compare up to 3 Specific Agencies" button. Below these are sections for "Overall Index Scores", "Most Improved Agencies and Subcomponents", and "SCORES BY CATEGORY" with sub-sections for Employee Skills/Mission Match, Strategic Management, Teamwork, Effective Leadership, Empowerment, and Fairness.

Rank	Agency	2010	2009	% Change
1	Nuclear Regulatory Commission	81.8	81.7	1.3%
2	Government Accountability Office	81.6	79.6	6.6%
3	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	79.2		0.0%
4	Southwestan Institution	79.2		0.0%
5	National Aeronautics and Space Administration	74.2	71.7	3.5%
6	Social Security Administration	71.6	67.0	6.8%
7	Department of State	70.8	66.1	6.8%
8	General Services Administration	69.8	67.5	3.4%
9	Department of Justice	69.2	68.0	1.9%
10	Intelligence Community	69.0	70.0	-2.0%
11	Environmental Protection Agency	68.9	68.2	0.8%
12	Department of the Treasury	68.4	68.1	0.4%

## ABOUT BEST PLACES TO WORK

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The *Best Places to Work in the Federal Government*<sup>®</sup> rankings—the most comprehensive and authoritative rating of employee satisfaction and commitment in the federal government—are produced by the Partnership for Public Service and American University’s Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation (ISPPI).

The Partnership for Public Service is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working to revitalize our federal government by inspiring a new generation to serve and by transforming the way government works. The Partnership’s workshops, webinars and resources can help you turn your *Best Places* data into workforce solutions that drive real results. To learn more, visit [ourpublicservice.org](http://ourpublicservice.org).

ISPPI at American University conducts research and facilitates dialogue among stakeholders in the public policy implementation process: members of Congress, political appointees, career executives, union leaders, academics and consultants. ISPPI along with American University’s Key Executive Leadership Programs focuses on increasing leadership capacity among public sector leaders. ISPPI is part of the American University’s School of Public Affairs which offers education on the graduate, undergraduate and executive levels in public administration, public policy, political science, organization development and justice. To learn more, visit [american.edu/spa/isppi](http://american.edu/spa/isppi).

### METHODOLOGY

The *Best Places* rankings are based on the Office of Personnel Management’s 2010 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, which included responses from more than 263,000 civil servants. Working with the global management consulting firm Hay Group, the Partnership for Public Service and the Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation created a statistical model to transform these raw survey data into an overall measure of workplace satisfaction and commitment, and 10 workplace environment indices. This information was then used to calculate the results for each organization. Small agencies are those independent agencies that have at least 100 but less than 2,000 full-time, permanent employees. Large agencies are those independent agencies or Cabinet departments with 2,000 or more full-time, permanent employees. Finally, statistical analysis was performed to determine the relationship between the workplace dimensions and the overall *Best Places* index score.

The Government Accountability Office, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Intelligence Community, the Smithsonian Institution, the Congressional Budget Office, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the Peace Corps and the Army Audit Agency did not participate in the 2010 OPM survey. In order to participate in *Best Places*, these organizations conducted a comparable survey that included the three index questions. The survey needed to be administered during the same timeframe, and have a 50 percent response rate. These organizations are not ranked on any of the workplace dimension categories. Only GAO participates in the demographic rankings.

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“AT A TIME WHEN WE NEED TO RECRUIT A NEW GENERATION TO PUBLIC SERVICE, and there is a renewed focus on quality performance, it is especially meaningful that the *Best Places to Work* rankings measure federal employee satisfaction and commitment, which are essential to effective government.”

*U.S. Senator Mark Warner  
Virginia*

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“EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION IS A LEADING INDICATOR OF EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS, and there is no better measure of worker engagement in the federal government than *Best Places to Work*.”

*U.S. Senator Susan Collins  
Maine*

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“THE BEST PLACES TO WORK RANKINGS ARE A ‘MUST-READ’ for anyone who cares about the federal workforce. They provide job seekers with critical information based on the opinions of federal employees and managers with a powerful tool to attract and retain the best and brightest.”

*U.S. Representative Edolphus Towns  
New York*

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“BY MEASURING THE JOB SATISFACTION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES, *Best Places* offers a powerful incentive for managers to create better workplaces and, consequently, a government that is more responsive to the needs of the public.”

*Then-U.S. Senator Barack Obama  
Illinois*

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