



# WORKPLACE DIFFERENCES AMONG MEN AND WOMEN

**Are there differences in how men and women experience the workplace?** As part of our *Best Places to Work in the Federal Government*<sup>®</sup> analysis, based on the Office of Personnel Management’s (OPM) 2010 employee survey, the Partnership for Public Service and Deloitte set out to answer that question.

The analysis revealed that women are slightly less satisfied than men in nine out of 10 workplace categories, and slightly more satisfied in only one category (skills/mission match). In many instances, the gaps are minimal, indicating that the government, as a whole, has done a good job of integrating women into its workforce. However, the leadership climate for women appears to be another matter. The analysis revealed areas of concern in two subcategories of effective leadership: empowerment and fairness (table 1).

TABLE 1  
**Workplace categories by gender**

	WOMEN	MEN	GAP
Skills/Mission Match	79.8	78.6	1.2
Overall Satisfaction Index	66.1	67.9	-1.8
Pay	64.7	66.0	-1.3
Teamwork	64.4	67.2	-2.8
Work/Life Balance	61.5	61.7	-0.2
Training and Development	60.8	62.7	-1.9
Support for Diversity	57.3	59.6	-2.3
Strategic Management	57.0	57.5	-0.5
Effective Leadership	54.6	57.1	-2.5
Supervisors	63.2	66.6	-3.4
<b>Fairness</b>	51.4	56.0	<b>-4.6</b>
Leaders	50.9	50.6	0.3
<b>Empowerment</b>	48.1	52.5	<b>-4.4</b>
Rewards and Advancement	46.2	48.5	-2.3

## Empowerment and Fairness Issues

Government-wide, men rated the overall effective leadership category higher than women did, giving a score of 57.1 (out of 100) versus 54.6. To understand this gap, we looked more closely at the effective leadership subcategories, which included leaders<sup>1</sup>, supervisors, empowerment and fairness. The empowerment and fairness subcategories included questions that address the environment created by leaders at all levels, such as whether or not employees feel involved with decisions, and have a safe and impartial atmosphere at work. The gaps in those two subcategories are greatest, with a difference of 4.4 on empowerment and a difference of 4.6 points on fairness. Women gave lower ratings on all four empowerment and fairness questions, but they gave the lowest scores, compared with men, on the question about fear of reprisal for disclosing suspected violations (figure 1).

## Managers/Executives

Interestingly, those gaps on empowerment and fairness diminish slightly as women take on increasing management responsibility, but another challenge emerges for female managers and executives.<sup>2</sup> For them, a new gap appeared in the category of work/life balance, with women in management being less satisfied than men in management by 2.4 points. Questions in the work/life category include, “My workload is reasonable,” “My supervisor supports my need to balance work and other life issues” and “I have sufficient resources (for example, people, materials, budget) to get my job done.”

FIGURE 1  
Percentage of positive responses to empowerment and fairness questions by gender

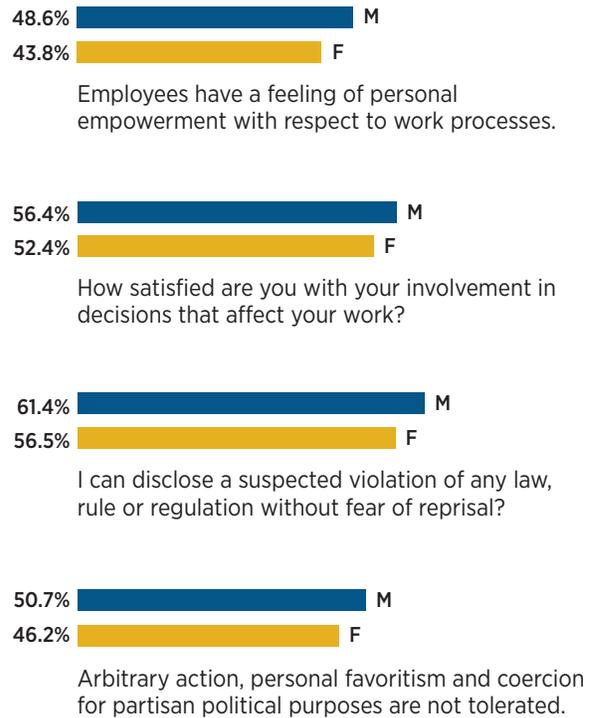
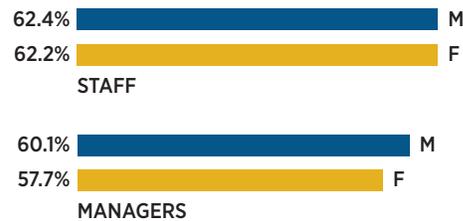


FIGURE 2  
Work/life balance scores among staff and managers



<sup>1</sup> Leaders include the head of the agency and their immediate team, typically Senior Executive Service members.

<sup>2</sup> More than 27,000 managers/executives responded to the OPM survey. Of those, 33.5 percent were women and 65.9 percent were men. Similarly, women represented 30.4 percent of the nearly 7,000 career members of the Senior Executive Service (OPM, FedScope, September 2010).

## An Agency By Agency View

While it's valuable to examine women's perspectives across government, it's also important to understand what is happening within individual agencies. That analysis revealed greater variations. For example, at the Department of Veterans Affairs, men scored empowerment 10 points higher than women did, while at OPM and NASA, the difference in views between men and women was slight, at 0.2 of a point. On fairness, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) showed the largest difference between the genders, with men giving scores almost 11 points higher than women. The disparity on fairness was smallest at the Department of Justice, at just 0.5 of a point. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), responsible for enforcing laws against workplace discrimination, had relatively large gaps between women and men on both empowerment and fairness.

## Conclusion

While government has a lot to be proud of with regard to integrating women in the workplace, the survey data reveal noteworthy disparities in how men and women view their agency's leadership climate for fairness and empowerment. Why is this important? Today, women are half the labor market and fill a growing number of management and professional jobs.<sup>3</sup> Managing the workforce of tomorrow will require leaders to tap the potential of all employees, men and women.

Each agency should examine its data by workplace category and subcategories, and develop strategies to improve the satisfaction of all federal employees, particularly in the areas of empowerment and fairness, where gaps between men and women loom largest. We encourage agencies to conduct more precise analyses of their Best Places to Work scores looking at where their workforce disparities may exist, and encourage sharing of best practices to learn and continually improve satisfaction and commitment.

*This Best Places to Work in the Federal Government® snapshot was made possible by the generous support of Deloitte.*

TABLE 2  
Empowerment and fairness gaps

EMPOWERMENT			
BIGGEST GAPS	WOMEN	MEN	GAP
VA	41.3	51.3	-10.0
EEOC	41.2	48.7	-7.5
NRC	64.9	72.1	-7.2
SMALLEST GAPS			
DHS	43.7	43.9	-0.2
NASA	63.9	64.1	-0.2
OPM	49.1	49.3	-0.2
FAIRNESS			
BIGGEST GAPS	WOMEN	MEN	GAP
NRC	64.8	75.7	-10.9
EEOC	40.2	50.6	-10.4
ED	45.5	55.7	-10.2
SMALLEST GAPS			
DOT	48.5	50.6	-2.1
GSA	54.7	56.8	-2.1
DOJ	54.9	55.4	-0.5

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration and Executive Office of the President Office of Management and Budget, Women in America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being, March 2011.