



BEST PLACES TO WORK IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT® ANALYSIS

GENDER GAPS AND RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVIDES

How do men and woman employed by the federal government perceive their jobs and their work environment? Are there differences in the way employees from various racial and ethnic groups experience the federal workplace?

These are the primary questions that the Partnership for Public Service sought to answer as part of this *Best Places to Work in the Federal Government*® analysis, which is based on data from the Office of Personnel Management’s (OPM) 2011 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.

Our analysis found that women in 2011 offered more positive views about their jobs and workplaces than men, a shift from 2010 when the workplace satisfaction score for men was slightly higher. As in the past, women were still less satisfied than men when it came to the important issues of workplace fairness and empowerment. However, this gap narrowed between 2010 and 2011.

Regarding ethnic and racial groups, Asians had the highest *Best Places to Work* job satisfaction scores, while the views of whites, blacks and Hispanics regarding the overall work environment were closely aligned. Yet there were wide differences in perceptions regarding federal agency support for diversity, with blacks and Hispanics recording much lower scores than Asians and whites.

Our analysis coincides with the Obama administration’s ongoing efforts to “promote the federal workplace as a model of equal employment opportunity, diversity and inclusion.”

In the summer of 2011, President Obama issued an executive order directing agency leaders to identify and imple-

ment a series of strategies to “remove barriers to equal opportunity in the federal government’s recruitment, hiring, promotion, retention, professional development, and training.”¹ As agencies seek to implement this execu-

TABLE 1 Workplace categories by gender

SCORES	WOMEN	MEN	2011 GAP	2010 GAP
Best Places to Work Index	67.1	66.4	0.7	1.8
Employee Skills/Mission Match	79.9	78.1	1.8	1.2
Strategic Management	58.5	57.6	0.9	0.5
Teamwork	65.3	67.1	1.8	2.8
Effective Leadership	56.2	57.2	1.0	2.5
Empowerment	49.2	51.3	2.1	4.4
Fairness	53.2	56.6	3.4	4.6
Leaders	52.3	51.2	1.1	0.3
Supervisors	65.2	66.6	1.4	3.4
Performance Based Rewards and Advancement	46.9	47.3	0.4	2.3
Training and Development	61.8	61.5	0.3	1.9
Support for Diversity	58.9	60.6	1.7	2.3
Pay	62.3	62.3	0.0	1.3
Work/Life Balance	61.6	60.7	0.9	0.2

1 Executive Order 13583, Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce, President Barack Obama, Aug. 18, 2011.

tive order, it helps to understand how federal employees perceive the current state of diversity and inclusion within their agencies.

Closing the Gender Gap

Given the challenging economic and political environment, it is not surprising that the government-wide *Best Places to Work* employee satisfaction and commitment score decreased slightly in 2011 when compared to 2010—down from 65 points to 64 out of 100.

Yet the 2011 rankings found that the job satisfaction score for women employees,² who comprise about 44 percent of the federal workforce, increased by 1 point during this period to 67.1 on a scale of 100, while overall satisfaction among men decreased by 1.5 points to 66.4. In 2010, men registered a workplace satisfaction score that was 1.8 points higher than women.

Narrowing the Fairness and Empowerment Gender Gaps

The issues of fairness and empowerment reflected the largest gender gaps in the *Best Places to Work* category dealing with attitudes toward agency leadership. Across the government, federal employees registered a score of 54.3 out of 100 when it came to assessing the fairness of their agency leaders. Women were 3.4 points less satisfied than men regarding fairness, although this reflected an improvement from 2010 when there was a 4.6 point difference. Women also felt less empowered than men, scoring 2.1 points lower than their male colleagues. However, this result also represented an improvement from 2010, when the gap was 4.4 points.

Even with the narrowing of the gender gap, there are important workplace issues that should be explored by agency leaders as they seek to create a more inclusive work environment. Women, for example, said they would be less likely than men to disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule or regulation without fear of reprisal. They also were less satisfied than men about their involvement in decisions about their work, and they were more likely than men to believe that arbitrary action, personal favoritism and coercion for partisan political purposes would be tolerated.

² U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Annual Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) Report for fiscal 2010*.

FIGURE 1
Percentage of positive responses to empowerment and fairness questions by gender in 2011 and 2010

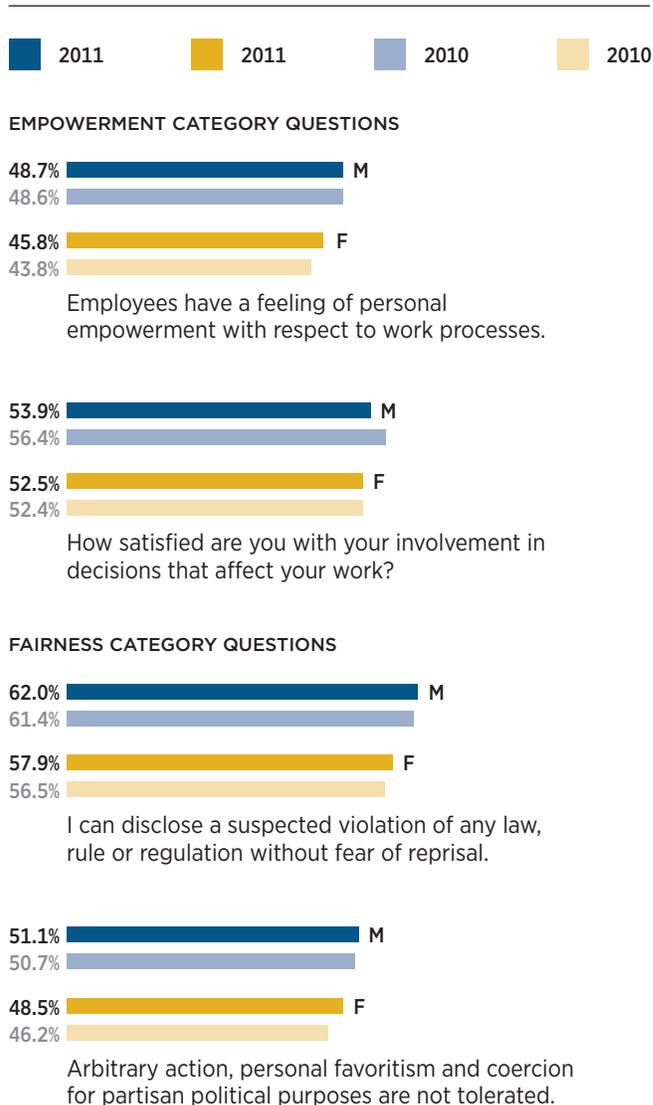


TABLE 2
Top five large agency gender gaps on fairness

	WOMEN	MEN	GAP
Small Business Administration	47.4	58.8	11.4
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	39.9	50.3	10.4
Department of Education	45.5	54.3	8.8
Department of Housing and Urban Development	44.4	52.9	8.5
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	64.7	73.1	8.4
Government-wide	53.2	56.6	3.4

Agency Gender Gaps

As always, the government-wide scores tell one story, but the agency specific information offers another perspective. At the agency level, for example, there were some very wide variations when it came to the issues of fairness and empowerment.

At the Small Business Administration (SBA), men gave their leaders a fairness score of 58.8 out of 100, a figure above the government-wide norm of 54.3. But women at the SBA registered 47.4 on this issue, 11.4 points lower than their male counterparts. Women also were more dissatisfied than men with the fairness of their leaders at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the agency responsible for enforcing laws against workplace discrimination. Men at the EEOC gave their leadership a 50.3 rating, while the score for women was 39.9, the lowest on this issue among all of the large federal agencies. The same pattern emerged at the Department of Education, where men had a score of 54.3, while less than half of the women employees (45.5) felt they were treated fairly by their leaders.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) had the highest leadership fairness score among the large agencies with a 69.3 rating, with both men and women exceeding the government-wide norm. Nevertheless, the

data showed a sizable gender gap, with men scoring 73.1 on this issue and women ranking their leaders 8.4 points lower. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) ranked near the bottom of large agencies on the issue of fairness (47.0), but it too had a sizable gap, with men more than 8 points more satisfied than women with fairness.

The NRC also was the top-ranked large agency for empowerment of employees, registering a score of 67.2. But it had one of the largest gender gaps on this issue, with men scoring 70.1 and women 65.9. NASA presented a different story. It was the third most satisfied agency on empowerment, but the gap between men (63.2) and women (62.7) was negligible.

Job Satisfaction Among Ethnic/Racial Groups: Differences Abound

According to 2010 data supplied by OPM, the federal workforce is 33.8 percent minority compared to 29.7 percent for the civilian labor force. The biggest difference in the composition of the two sectors involves Hispanics, who represent only 8 percent of federal employees and 13.6 percent of the civilian sector, while blacks make up 10 percent of the civilian workforce and account for 17.7 percent of federal employees.

TABLE 3
Workplace categories by racial or ethnic group

SCORES	AMERICAN INDIAN OR NATIVE AMERICAN	ASIAN	BLACK OR AFRICAN-AMERICAN	HISPANIC OR LATINO	MULTI-RACIAL	WHITE
Best Places to Work Index	61.2	71.7	67.8	67.4	59.8	66.8
Employee Skills/Mission Match	78.0	82.8	79.8	80.0	74.1	78.6
Strategic Management	52.5	63.1	60.6	57.9	53.0	57.7
Teamwork	57.2	69.4	67.2	63.7	61.7	67.0
Effective Leadership	48.9	63.1	57.2	56.4	50.6	57.1
Empowerment	46.7	59.6	52.3	50.6	43.6	49.9
Fairness	46.1	60.3	51.4	53.6	46.9	56.9
Leaders	45.2	60.2	54.4	52.9	45.1	50.9
Supervisors	55.1	69.3	65.3	64.2	61.2	66.9
Performance Based Rewards and Advancement	41.4	53.5	47.8	46.1	40.2	47.5
Training and Development	54.3	67.0	63.6	61.2	55.2	61.5
Support for Diversity	49.2	63.2	56.4	57.8	54.2	61.7
Pay	56.5	59.4	58.7	63.1	53.8	64.2
Work/Life Balance	56.1	65.0	64.8	60.9	54.9	60.5

Asian employees, who comprise 5.6 percent of the federal workforce and 4.3 percent of the civilian labor force, registered the highest *Best Places to Work* job satisfaction score in 2011 (71.7), while there were relatively small differences among blacks, Hispanics and whites. Asians were the most satisfied in almost every workplace category surveyed except for pay, an issue that brought the highest satisfaction level among white respondents, who comprise 66.2 percent of all federal workers.

How Well Do Agencies Support Diversity?

The 2011 data shows that Asians were the most positive about their agency's support for workplace diversity (63.2 out of 100), followed by white employees at 61.7—scores that were above the government-wide score of 57.8. They were followed by Hispanics at 57.8 and blacks at 56.4. This pattern was reflected in each of the three questions that were used to compile the *Best Places to Work* support for diversity score.

In addition, the data showed that employees of all racial and ethnic groups gave higher ratings to their managers and supervisors on issues of diversity than to the policies and programs that are in place at their agencies to promote diversity.

Employees at the Government Accountability Office (76.4), the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (75.2), the NRC (73.9) and NASA (71.0) gave high ratings on their agency's support for diversity in the workplace. At the other end of the spectrum, the National Archives and Records Administration (49.6), the Securities and Exchange Commission (49.7) and HUD (50.7) fall well below the government-wide norm on the support for diversity measurement.

Conclusion

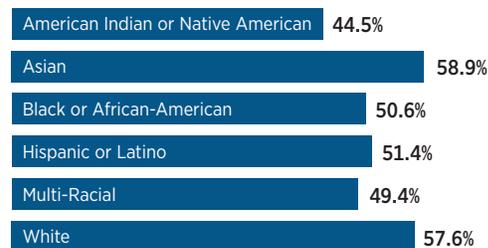
As the federal government seeks to develop a more inclusive and diverse workforce, agencies must closely examine their current work environments and policies to determine whether they have conditions conducive to providing equal opportunity, fairness and empowerment for men and women alike, and for employees from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. This will require understanding current employee attitudes on these issues, and making changes to build a culture that motivates all employees to be engaged and part of a results-oriented, high-performing workforce.

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

TABLE 4
Support for diversity scores by racial or ethnic group

RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP	GOVERNMENT-WIDE EMPLOYEE SUPPORT FOR DIVERSITY SCORES	PERCENT CHANGE BETWEEN 2010 AND 2011
American Indian or Native American	49.2	-4.8
Asian	63.2	+1.4
Black or African-American	56.4	+4.0
Hispanic or Latino	57.8	+1.9
Multi-Racial	54.2	+7.4
White	61.7	+2.1

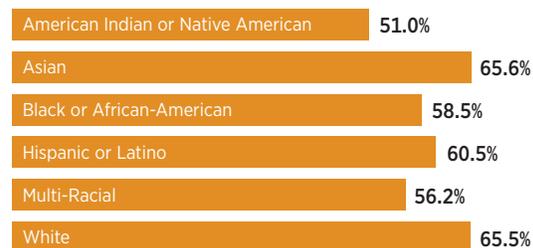
FIGURE 2
Percentage of positive responses to support for diversity questions by racial or ethnic group



Policies and programs promote diversity in the workplace (for example, recruiting minorities and women, training in awareness of diversity issues, mentoring).



My supervisor/team leader is committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society.



Managers/supervisors/team leaders work well with employees of different backgrounds.