



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Report of the 2020 Food Safety and Inspection Service Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey



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FEVS Background

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) is conducted as a government-wide survey annually by the OPM to measure employee perception of whether, and to what extent, conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in their agencies.

The 2020 OPM FEVS report is designed to provide an overview of survey results, enabling agencies to easily identify issues and take action for improvement. The FEVS results are helpful in providing a starting point for conducting analysis before drilling down into specific components of the agency for a more in-depth analysis. This report also highlights important agency successes and challenges, which the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) wants to acknowledge.

The results are a snapshot in time of employee opinions on topics ranging from work environments to job satisfaction. The report is a valuable tool to help leaders understand how employees feel about their jobs, their ability to advance, their training opportunities, and their sense of empowerment in the workplace. The FSIS electronic-based 2020 FEVS was administered as a census – meaning all FSIS employees with computer access received an invitation to participate. OPM also administered a paper-based survey to a random selection of FSIS employees who did not have access to electronic systems. Additionally, FEVS results are used by the Partnership for Public Service in producing their annual Best Places to Work in Government rankings.

Who Participates in the Survey?

The Office of Personnel Management Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey is administered to full-time and part-time, permanent, non-seasonal employees of Departments and/large agencies and the small/independent agencies that accept an invitation to participate in the survey.

Changes to the 2020 Survey

The OPM FEVS looked a little different this year. In prior years, the survey included 71 standard core items, but this number was reduced to 38 in 2020 for several reasons. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many agencies asked OPM to substantially shorten the 2020 survey to ease administrative burden and demonstrate sensitivity to employee situations. Congress and numerous agencies also asked OPM to include COVID-19-related items to be responsive to changing conditions that might impact the needs of employees and agencies.

The 2020 survey reflects OPM's responsiveness to the needs of employees and agencies in this unprecedented pandemic. OPM added sections to assess the workforce consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, including 18 individual items (e.g., "During the COVID-19 pandemic, on average what percentage of your work time have you been physically present at your agency worksite...?") and sets of questions (e.g., a list of separate policies and actions implemented by organizations to support employee work during the pandemic). Content related to COVID-19 generally covered where and how employees have worked (e.g., telework, leave), workplace

supports for safeguarding employee health, safety, and productivity, and indicators tied to individual and work group performance during the pandemic.

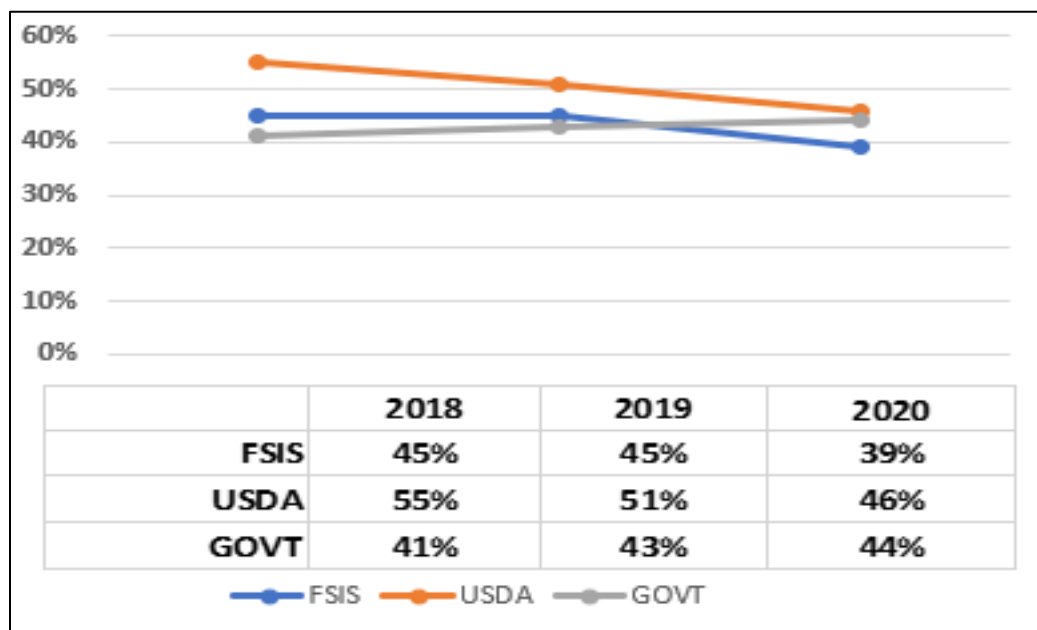
FSIS Results Overview

This analysis is an overview of the FSIS combined results of the OPM electronic and paper-based FEVS. OPM collects the results from the completed electronic and paper-based surveys then aggregates the responses to develop combined results for each question. OPM also uses the combined results to calculate the combined response rate and other indices, such as the Global Satisfaction and Employee Engagement Indices. The results include response percentages for each survey item. The definitions for the Positive, Neutral, and Negative response percentages vary in the following ways across the three primary response scales used in the survey:

- Positive: *"Strongly Agree and Agree" or "Very Satisfied and Satisfied" or "Very Good and Good"*
- Neutral: *"Neither Agree nor Disagree" or "Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied" or "Fair"*
- Negative: *"Disagree and Strongly Disagree" or "Dissatisfied and Very Dissatisfied" or "Poor and Very Poor"*

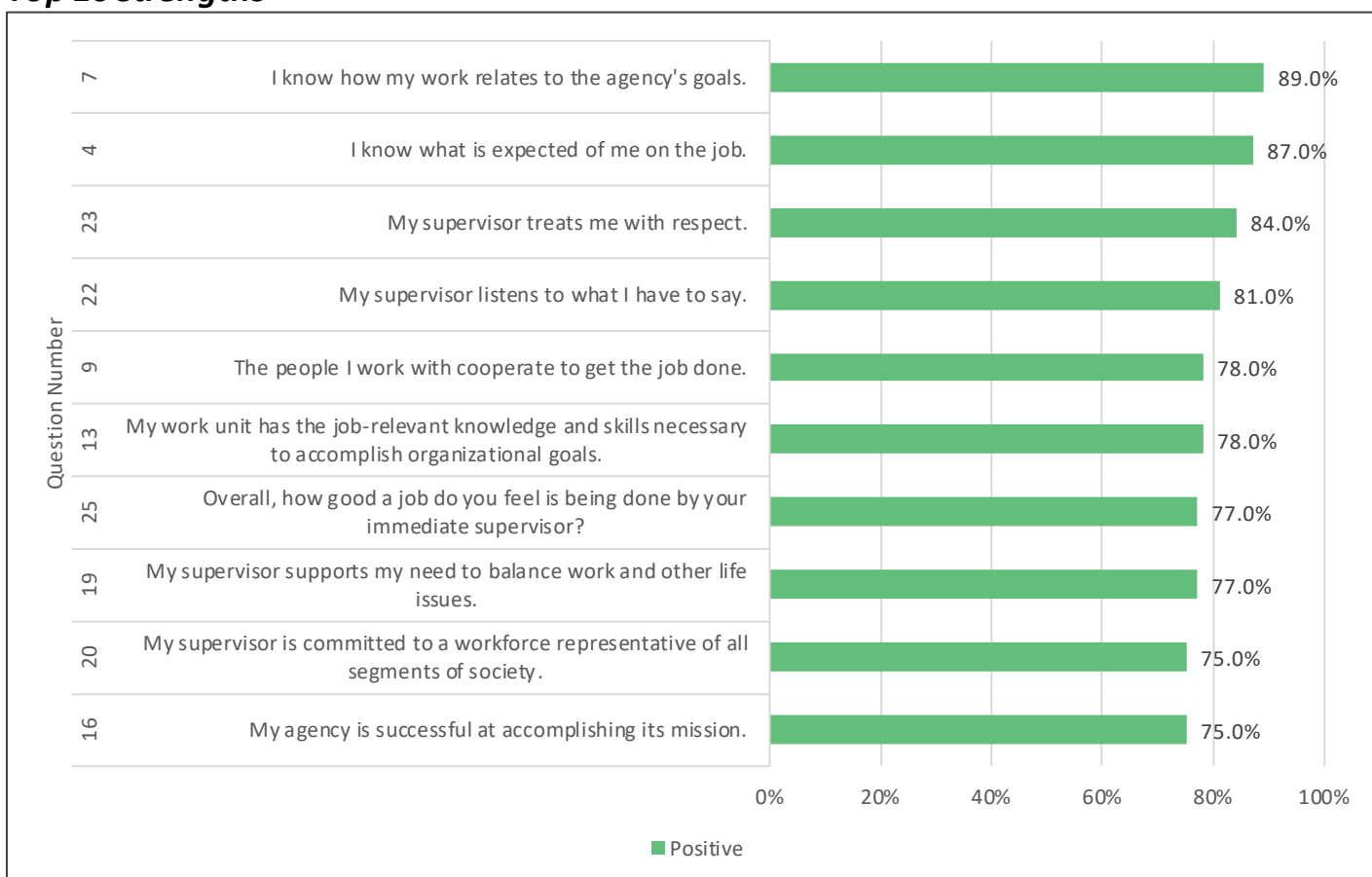
Positive, Neutral, and Negative percentages are based on the total number of responses that are in these three categories.

Combined Response Rates 2018-2020



FSIS FEVS Highlights

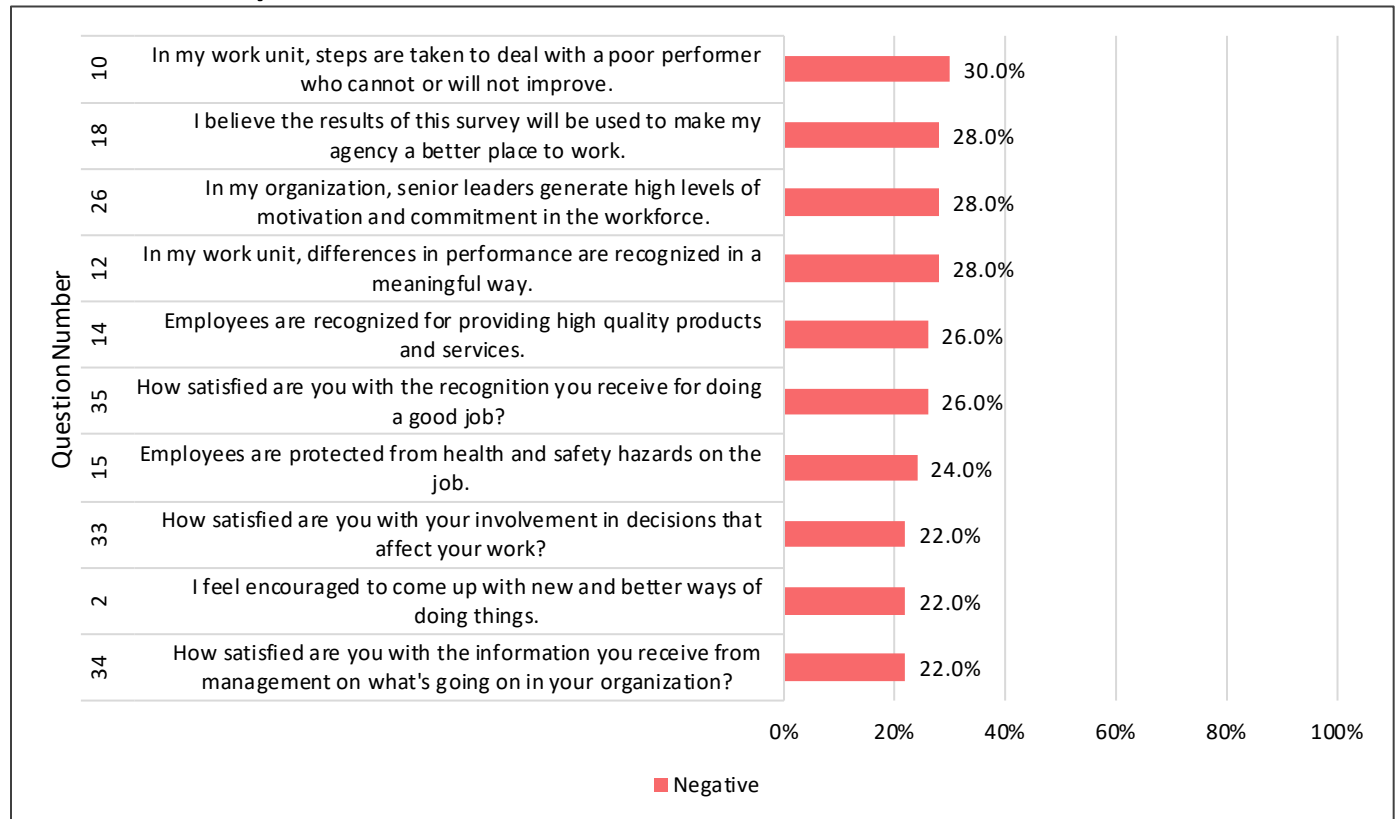
Top 10 Strengths



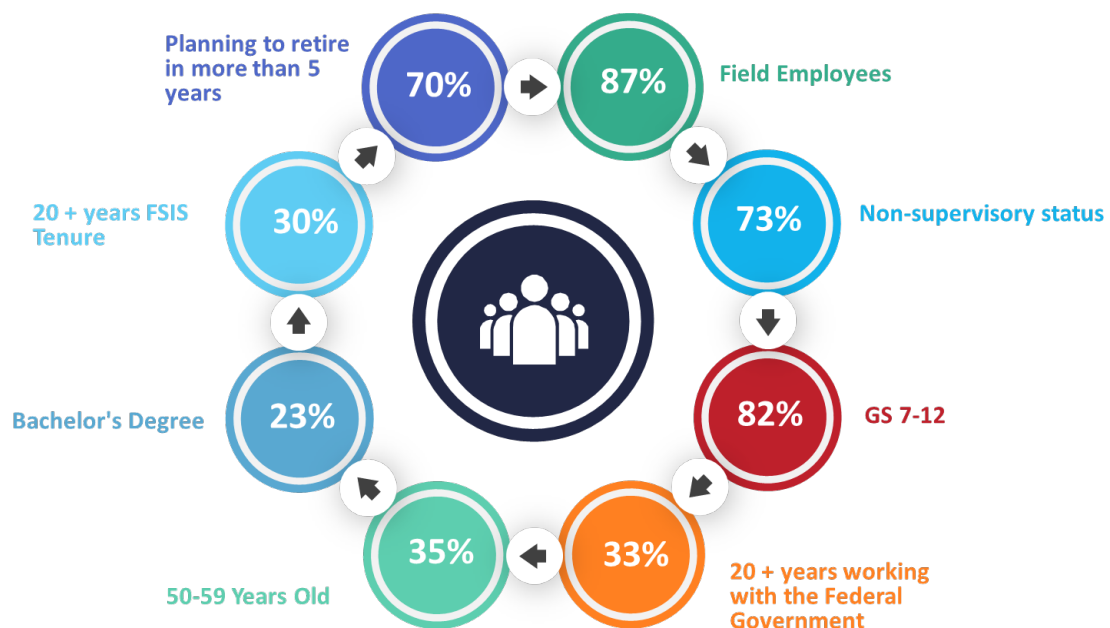
Top 10 FSIS Challenges

In the FSIS 2020 FEVS results, no scores appeared as OPM's threshold of 35% negative or higher to consider for identifying challenges. Because no questions were at or above the 35% negative score, FSIS is focusing its efforts on improving the areas with greater than 20% negative scores.

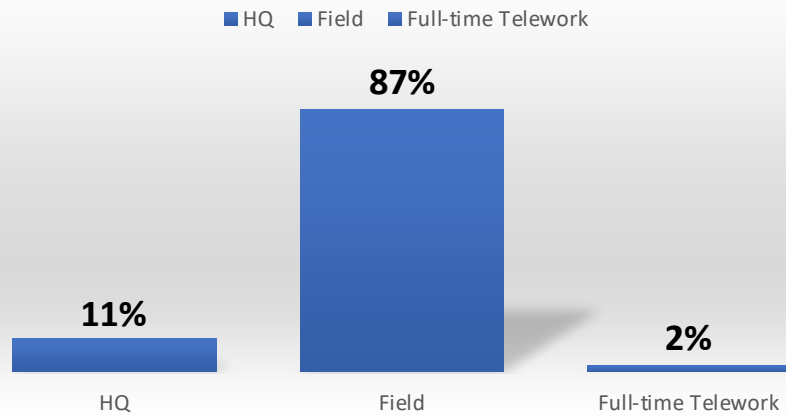
Response Questions



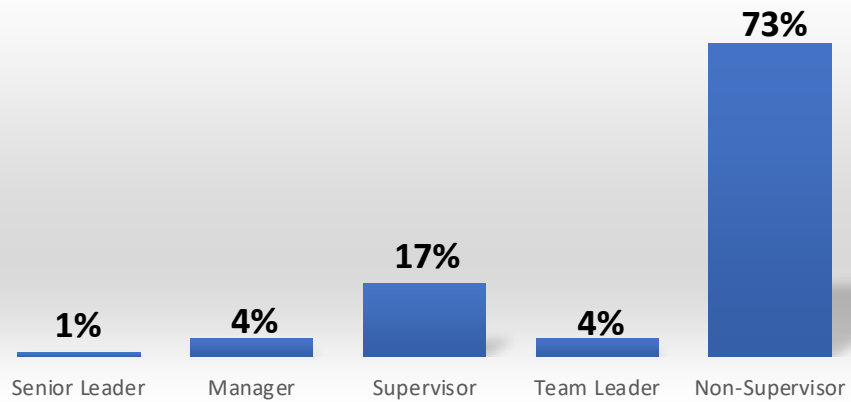
FSIS Employee Demographic Snapshot



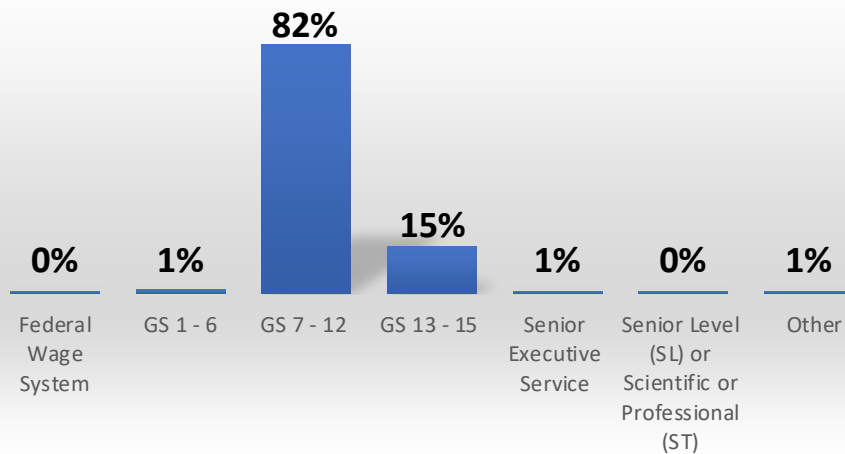
WHERE DO YOU WORK?

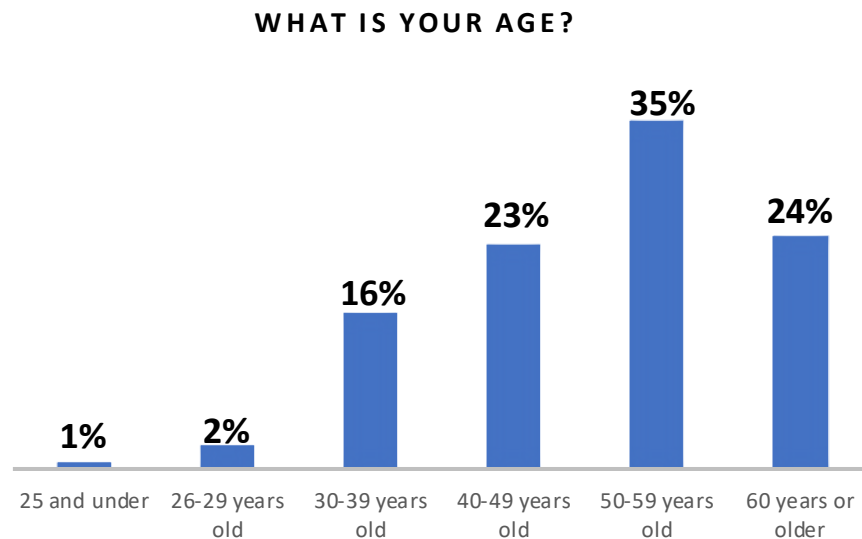
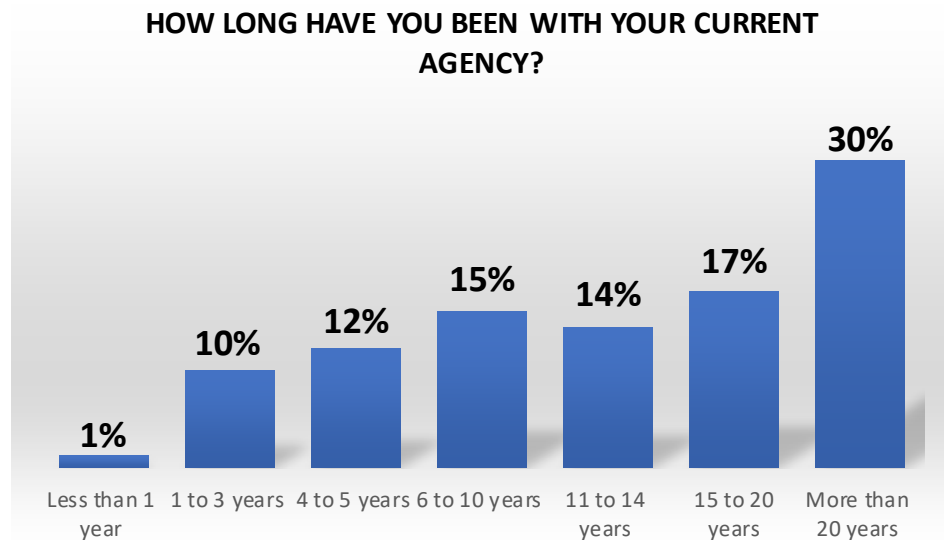


WHAT IS YOUR SUPERVISORY STATUS?



WHAT IS YOUR PAY CATEGORY/GRADE?





Average Ratings of Key Categories

The FEVS consist of questions across six key categories of focus to determine employees' feelings about working at the organization. The table shows the percent of positive responses in each key category.

Key Categories	FEVS Q#'s	Percentage
My Work Experience	1-8	71%
My Work Unit	9-13	60%
My Agency	14-18	59%
My Supervisor/Team Leader	19-25	77%
My Leadership	26-32	54%
My Satisfaction	33-38	58%

OPM Indices

OPM provides two indices that measure workplace conditions that support employee engagement. Each index is a composite of the responses to specific core questions which are present in all FEVS surveys. The OPM FEVS does not directly measure employee feelings of engagement such as passion, commitment, and involvement; however, it does assess the critical conditions conducive for employee engagement. These include effective leadership, work which provides meaning to employees, and the opportunity for employees to learn/grow on the job.

The FEVS Employee Engagement Index (EEI) is a measure of the conditions conducive to engagement, that is the engagement potential of an agency's work environment. The index is made up of three subfactors: ***Leaders Lead, Supervisors, and Intrinsic Work Experience***. Each subfactor reflects a different aspect of an engaging work environment.

Agency & Subagency	2020 EEI	2019 EEI	Difference
Government-wide	72%	68%	4%
Department of Agriculture	69%	65%	4%
Food Safety and Inspection Service	69%	69%	0%

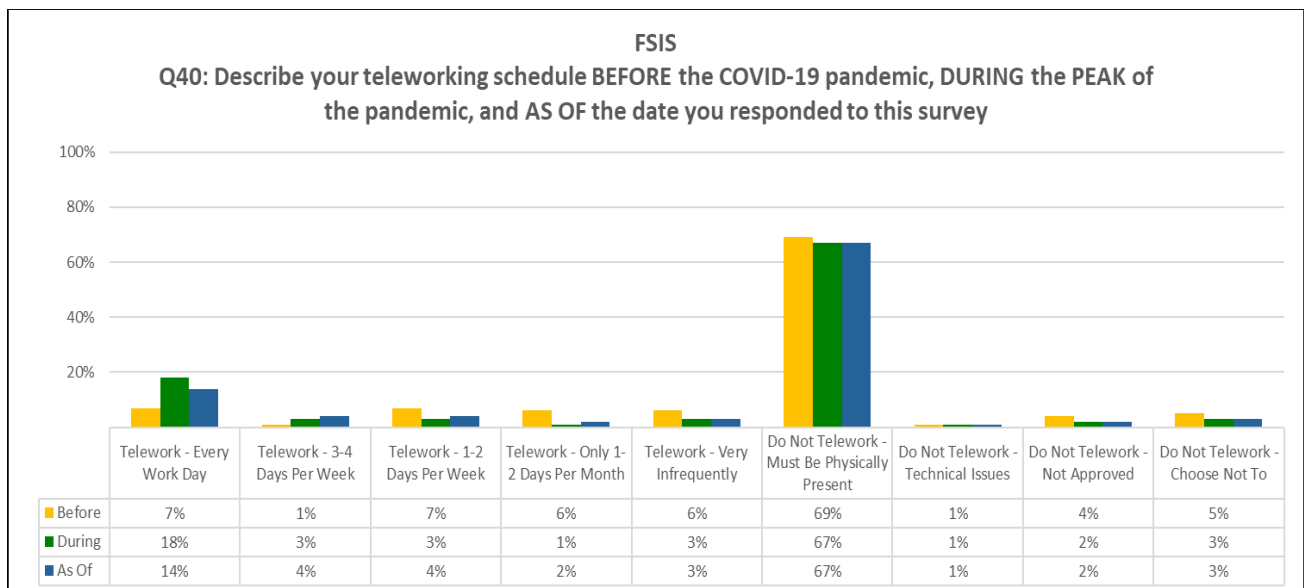
The Global Satisfaction Index (GSI) measures employee satisfaction about four aspects related to their work: their job, their pay, their organization, and whether they would recommend their organization as a good place to work.

Agency & Subagency	2020 GSI	2019 GSI	Difference
Government-wide	69%	65%	4%
Department of Agriculture	64%	60%	4%
Food Safety and Inspection Service	65%	66%	-1%

Telework

The 2020 FEVS included COVID-19 pandemic-related questions (Q40, A-C); providing participants the opportunity to share their perceptions of how their organization supported employee's telework needs during the pandemic.

Items addressing the COVID-19 Pandemic were added to the 2020 OPM FEVS to be responsive to the needs of agencies and to assess employee experiences and challenges before and during this unprecedented time.



Identifying Areas of Focus

These charts provide a useful method to help identify potential areas of focus from the FEVS results.

Identifying Strengths, Challenges and Neutral Findings

In accordance with the Office of Personnel Management, the following thresholds were used to evaluate the responses of the FEVS results.

- 65% positive or higher is considered a strength.
- 35% negative or higher is considered a challenge.
- neutral (30% or higher neutral responses) suggests uncertainty, presenting an opportunity for communication between managers and staff.

Identifying Increases and Decreases

Movement up or down since the previous year is another important piece of information to consider when examining the results. Any increase or decrease in results can be important; however larger increases or decreases (generally 3 or more percentage points) may be a result of significant changes taking place within the agency and should be assessed. Increases indicate positive change that should continue to be reinforced. Decreases, especially in areas considered mission critical, may call for appropriate action to prevent further decline.

Key to Understanding the Tables

The following tables illustrate the positive, neutral, and negative responses according to the guidelines above (Identifying Strengths, Challenges and Neutral Findings). The positive, neutral, and negative columns of results are displayed below:

- A **GREEN** shaded cell designates questions with POSITIVE scores 65 percent or higher, indicating an area of strength.
- A **YELLOW** shaded cell designates questions with NEUTRAL scores 30 percent or higher, indicating an area of improvement opportunity.

The two columns on the left allow for comparison with FSIS' 2020 percent positive with the Government-wide and USDA 2020 percent positive.

2020 Q#	My Work Experience	GOVT	USDA	FSIS 2020 Positive	FSIS 2020 Neutral	FSIS 2020 Negative
1	I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization.	69.9%	67.5%	64.0%	20.0%	16.0%
2	I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things.	66.6%	64.1%	54.0%	24.0%	22.0%
3	My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment.	74.6%	73.9%	73.0%	15.0%	13.0%
4	I know what is expected of me on the job.	83.5%	80.8%	87.0%	7.0%	6.0%
5	My workload is reasonable.	66.7%	56.7%	71.0%	14.0%	16.0%
6	My talents are used well in the workplace.	65.9%	64.2%	64.0%	19.0%	18.0%
7	I know how my work relates to the agency's goals.	87.1%	86.1%	89.0%	8.0%	4.0%
8	I can disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule or regulation without fear of reprisal.	68.5%	61.3%	68.0%	17.0%	16.0%

2020 Q#	My Work Unit	GOVT	USDA	FSIS 2020 Positive	FSIS 2020 Neutral	FSIS 2020 Negative
9	The people I work with cooperate to get the job done.	84.1%	83.4%	78.0%	12.0%	9.0%
10	In my work unit, steps are taken to deal with a poor performer who cannot or will not improve.	42.3%	39.0%	41.0%	30.0%	30.0%

12	In my work unit, differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way.	50.9%	45.5%	44.0%	28.0%	28.0%
13	My work unit has the job-relevant knowledge and skills necessary to accomplish organizational goals.	81.9%	80.4%	78.0%	14.0%	9.0%

2020 Q#	My Agency	GOVT	USDA	FSIS 2020 Positive	FSIS 2020 Neutral	FSIS 2020 Negative
14	Employees are recognized for providing high quality products and services.	64.3%	56.8%	50.0%	25.0%	26.0%
15	Employees are protected from health and safety hazards on the job.	77.3%	74.7%	60.0%	17.0%	24.0%
16	My agency is successful at accomplishing its mission.	81.4%	76.2%	75.0%	18.0%	7.0%
17	I recommend my organization as a good place to work.	70.7%	66.5%	66.0%	20.0%	13.0%
18	I believe the results of this survey will be used to make my agency a better place to work.	42.9%	36.5%	43.0%	29.0%	28.0%

2020 Q#	My Supervisors/Team Leaders	GOVT	USDA	FSIS 2020 Positive	FSIS 2020 Neutral	FSIS 2020 Negative
19	My supervisor supports my need to balance work and other life issues.	84.8%	85.4%	77.0%	12.0%	11.0%
20	My supervisor is committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society.	78.9%	79.0%	75.0%	18.0%	8.0%
21	Supervisors in my work unit support employee development.	77.8%	78.5%	75.0%	15.0%	10.0%
22	My supervisor listens to what I have to say.	82.7%	81.9%	81.0%	11.0%	8.0%

23	My supervisor treats me with respect.	86.5%	85.7%	84.0%	9.0%	7.0%
24	I have trust and confidence in my supervisor.	76.0%	73.9%	73.0%	15.0%	13.0%
25	Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by your immediate supervisor?	78.1%	76.3%	77.0%	15.0%	9.0%

2020 Q#	My Leadership	GOVT	USDA	FSIS 2020 Positive	FSIS 2020 Neutral	FSIS 2020 Negative
26	In my organization, senior leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce. (2)	50.7%	41.7%	42.0%	30.0%	28.0%
27	My organization's senior leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity.	61.0%	52.2%	50.0%	30.0%	20.0%
28	Managers communicate the goals of the organization. (2)	67.6%	63.7%	64.0%	22.0%	15.0%
29	Managers promote communication among different work units (ex., about projects, goals, needed resources).	60.1%	55.0%	52.0%	27.0%	20.0%
30	Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by the manager directly above your immediate supervisor?	66.8%	62.4%	64.0%	21.0%	15.0%
31	I have a high level of respect for my organization's senior leaders.	61.8%	52.7%	58.0%	25.0%	17.0%
32	Senior leaders demonstrate support for Work/Life programs.	64.2%	59.3%	51.0%	31.0%	18.0%

2020 Q#	My Satisfaction	GOVT	USDA	FSIS 2020 Positive	FSIS 2020 Neutral	FSIS 2020 Negative
33	How satisfied are you with your involvement in decisions that affect your work?	57.9%	52.6%	52.0%	26.0%	22.0%

34	How satisfied are you with the information you receive from mgmt. on what's going on in your organization?	57.8%	51.3%	52.0%	25.0%	22.0%
35	How satisfied are you with the recognition you receive for doing a good job?	58.7%	53.3%	50.0%	24.0%	26.0%
36	Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job?	71.6%	68.1%	70.0%	17.0%	13.0%
37	Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your pay?	67.0%	63.0%	63.0%	18.0%	18.0%
38	Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your organization?	65.6%	59.4%	61.0%	22.0%	17.0%

Appendix – FEVS Survey Content

The content of the 2020 FEVS was shortened by OPM compared to prior years. The adjustments were made with consideration to the pandemic and to ease administrative burden and demonstrate sensitivity to employee circumstances. Survey questions reflect the overall goal of measuring how effectively agencies are managing their workforces in the Federal Government. The FEVS focuses on employee perceptions regarding critical work life areas that drive employee satisfaction, engagement, and ultimately, retention in the workforce. The following topic areas were addressed:

Personal Work Experience

Questions 1–8 addressed employees’ personal work experiences and opinions.

Work Unit

Questions 9-13 addressed employees’ opinions regarding cooperation, recruitment, quality, and performance management in their work unit.

Agency

Questions 14-18 covered agency policies and practices related to job performance, performance appraisals, workplace diversity and fairness, as well as perceptions of employees’ personal empowerment, safety, and preparedness. This section also addresses employees’ views of their agency.

Supervisor

Questions 19-25 addressed employees’ perceptions of their supervisor. For instance, this section asked whether supervisors support work life balance, provide opportunities to demonstrate leadership skills, and promote a workplace culture that supports staff development.

Leadership

Questions 26-32 asked about the effectiveness of the agency's senior leaders and managers overall, and in motivating employees, maintaining high ethical standards, communicating organizational policies, and generating respect.

Satisfaction

Questions 33-38 addressed employee satisfaction with various aspects of their jobs, including pay, job training, opportunities for advancement, recognition for work well done, and the policies and practices of senior leaders.

Work/Life

Questions 40A-C, and 58-64 asked employees about teleworking and if they are satisfied with various employment benefits and work/life programs with additional questions related to the pandemic.

Demographics

Questions covered employee information, such as location of employment (headquarters vs. field), supervisory status, gender, ethnicity/race, education, pay category/grade, Federal employment tenure, agency tenure, disability status, veteran status, and sexual orientation.

See pages 6 – 8 for a summary of these responses.

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