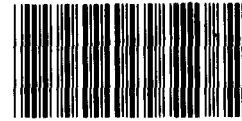


June 1992

FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT

How Federal Employees View the Government as a Place to Work



146873



■

General Government Division**B-248403**

June 18, 1992

**The Honorable John Glenn
Chairman, Committee on
Governmental Affairs
United States Senate****The Honorable William L. Clay
Chairman, Committee on
Post Office and Civil Service
House of Representatives**

As part of a series of examinations of the effectiveness of federal employment policies, we surveyed a governmentwide random sample of federal employees in the spring and summer of 1991. The survey questionnaire asked respondents about their experiences in working for the government, how employment conditions compared to their expectations before they started working, their plans for staying or leaving, and their views on possible employment policy changes. Just over 4,000 employees responded, or about 85 percent of the 4,749 employees to whom we were able to deliver questionnaires. Based on their responses, the survey results can be projected to represent about 1.3 million of the 1.7 million full- and part-time permanent federal employees identified in the Office of Personnel Management's records.

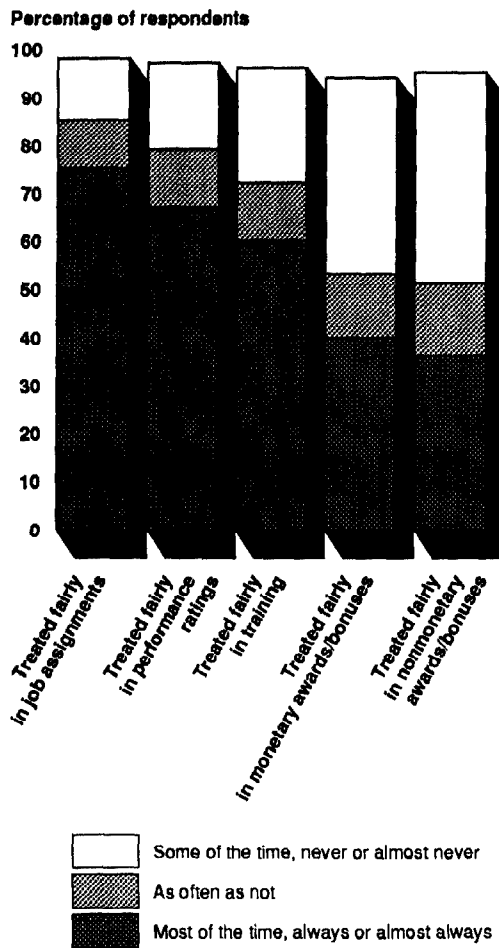
Our findings are presented in the following paragraphs. The percentages are based on the responses of all employees who returned completed questionnaires, except where noted. A copy of the questionnaire, annotated to show the respondents' answers to each question, is included as appendix I. Nearly half of all respondents took the time to write comments on their questionnaires about their own employment experiences and make other observations about federal employment. Appendix II is a compilation of respondents' written comments categorized by the topics most often mentioned. The details of our survey methodology are in appendix III.

**Employees'
Experiences in the
Federal Government**

While the majority of respondents expressed positive views about working for the government, many did not. For example, about two-thirds said they probably or definitely would accept a federal job again if they were making the decision today. However, the other one-third said they probably or definitely would not or were not sure what they would do.

Similarly, most respondents felt they had been treated fairly in specific aspects of their employment experiences. The majority said they had been treated fairly most of the time in relation to job assignments, performance ratings, and training. Conversely, fewer than half thought they had been treated fairly most of the time when monetary and nonmonetary awards were given. Figure 1 shows the responses for these employment factors.

Figure 1: Respondents' Views on Fair Treatment in Specific Employment Experiences



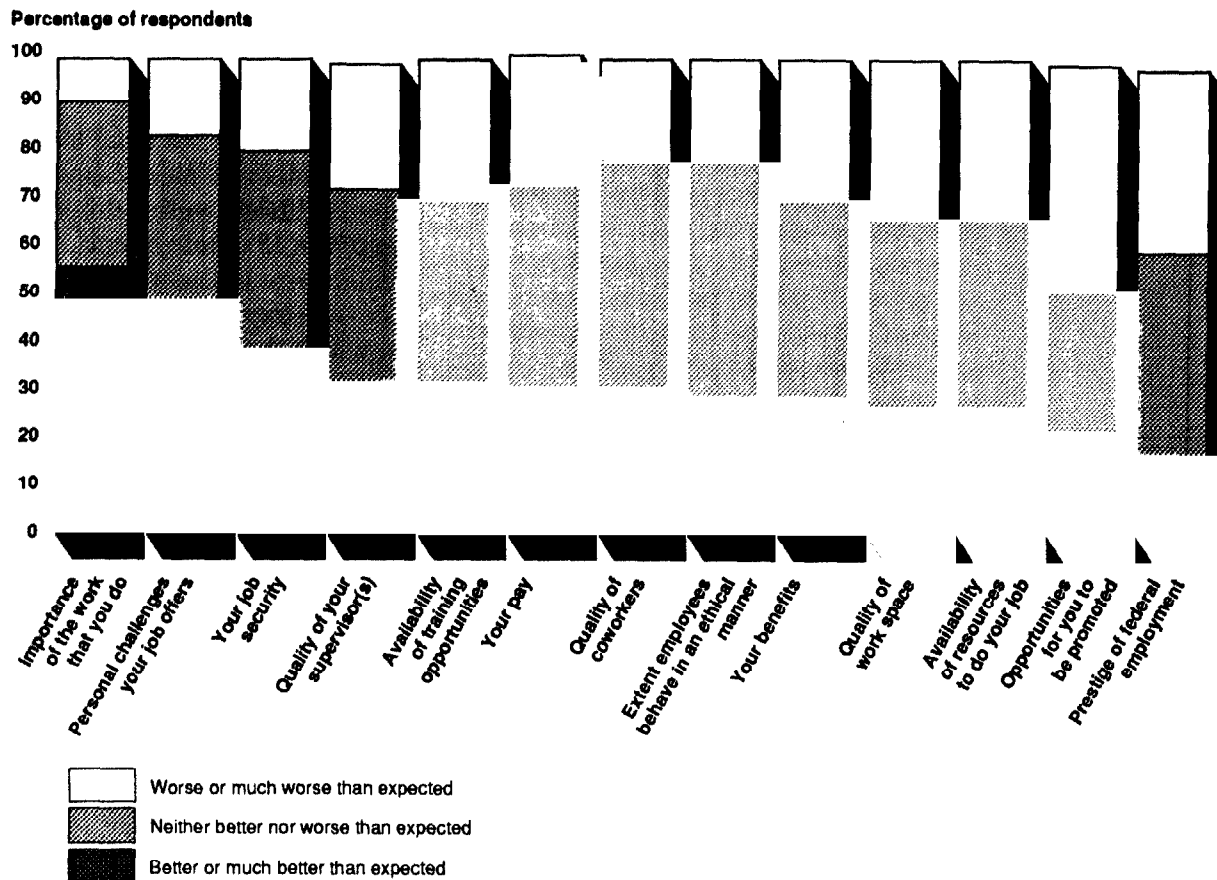
Note: The percentages are based on 4,039 respondents. A bar may not total 100 percent because some employees did not respond to that particular question.

Source: GAO survey (see app. I, question 4).

Thirty-eight percent of the respondents said that, overall, working for the federal government had been better or much better than expected, while 19 percent said it had been worse or much worse than expected. The greatest proportion of respondents (43 percent) said it was neither better nor worse than expected.

When asked how specific employment conditions compared to what they expected before starting work in the federal government, in most cases, the greatest proportion of respondents said the conditions were neither better nor worse than they expected. Only one of the 13 employment conditions listed in the questionnaire—"the importance of the work that you do"—was rated to be better or much better than expected by the majority of the respondents. The conditions in which the respondents expressed the most disappointment were "opportunities to be promoted" and "prestige of federal employment." Figure 2 shows how the respondents rated each of the 13 employment conditions.

Figure 2: How Employment Conditions Compared to Respondents' Expectations



Note: The percentages are based on 4,039 respondents. A bar may not total 100 percent because some employees did not respond to that particular question.

Source: GAO survey (see app. I, question 10).

Employees' Plans to Stay in or Leave Federal Service

The questionnaire asked respondents about their future work plans and what factors influenced them to stay in or leave federal service. It listed 37 employment factors and asked the respondents to indicate the importance of each factor as a reason to stay or leave.

The responses showed many employees were contemplating leaving their jobs. Thirteen percent of all respondents said they were actively seeking

paid jobs outside the federal government.¹ About one-third said it was somewhat to very likely that they would leave within the succeeding 5 years. Only about 60 percent of all respondents said they were somewhat to very likely to stay until retirement.

Most respondents indicated several factors were reasons for staying in federal service. We did not ask the respondents to indicate which of the factors were the most important to them. Of the 37 factors listed, 10 were rated by more than half of all respondents as being important reasons for staying. The 10 reasons are shown in table 1.

Table 1: Reasons for Staying in Federal Service Given by at Least Half of All Respondents

Reasons to stay	Percentage of respondents
Annual leave program	79
Sick leave program	75
Job security	71
Opportunity to work freely on your own	65
Retirement system	63
Opportunity to apply abilities	62
Opportunity to work on challenging assignments	58
Current duties/responsibilities	57
Progress you have made in the federal government	55
Work schedule used	53

None of the 37 factors were cited as reasons to leave federal service by more than half of the respondents. The factor receiving the largest percentage of negative responses was "your pay compared to pay for similar jobs outside the federal government."² This and three other factors were cited by at least one-third of all respondents as reasons to leave (see table 2).

¹Only 7 percent of those respondents actively seeking to leave were eligible to retire.

²The Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act provides that, beginning in 1994, federal white-collar salaries are to be made more competitive. The goal of the act, which is to be achieved over a 9-year period, is to make federal salary rates equal to at least 95 percent of prevailing nonfederal rates in each locality where federal employees work. To the extent that the act is fully implemented as envisioned in the statute, these negative attitudes about pay may change over time.

Table 2: Reasons for Leaving Federal Service Given by at Least One-Third of All Respondents

Reasons to leave	Percentage of respondents
Your total pay compared to pay for similar jobs outside the federal government	40
Your total pay in relation to what you put into your work	38
Your chances of getting promoted in the future	35
How policies and procedures affect your ability to do your job	33

However, almost as many or more other respondents said these four factors were reasons to stay rather than leave federal service. The percentages of respondents citing these factors positively were 40, 36, 39, and 27, respectively.

Respondents' Views on Current Employment Programs and Possible Policy Changes to Address Changing Demographics

Significant demographic changes, including greater proportions of women and older workers in the workforce, and an increasing number of families where both husband and wife work, have caused some employers to reexamine their human resources policies and programs.³ With these demographic developments in mind, the questionnaire gathered information about the respondents' personal and family situations and inquired about their interest in specific employment policy changes that might address their particular needs.

Seventy percent of the respondents said they were married and living with their spouses. Of these married respondents, 76 percent said their spouses were also employed. About 30 percent of all respondents said their spouses and/or other immediate family members worked for the government (2 percent said both their spouses and other family members worked for the government; 13 percent had spouses who were federal employees; and 15 percent had other family members who were federal employees). About 35 percent of all respondents said they had children, parents, or other dependents who needed care at some time during the workday.

The respondents indicated considerable interest in programs to help them cope with their work/family circumstances. However, survey researchers often find that ideas have different appeal in the abstract than in the

³See *The Changing Workforce: Demographic Issues Facing the Federal Government* (GAO/GGD-92-38, Mar. 24, 1992) and *The Changing Workforce: Comparison of Federal and Nonfederal Work/Family Programs and Approaches* (GAO/GGD-92-84, Apr. 23, 1992).

concrete. Thus, respondents' views might change if the programs were actually in place.

Almost half of the respondents said they were greatly or very greatly interested in working under a flexible workplace (i.e., "flexiplace") arrangement. Flexiplace allows employees to work at home or at other approved locations away from the office for all or part of the workweek. A governmentwide project, the Flexible Workplace Project, is under way to test flexible workplace arrangements.

Of the respondents who were not participating in the project, about 40 percent said they believed they could do their jobs satisfactorily outside the traditional workplace for at least part of the workweek. Similarly, about 40 percent said they would be more likely to stay in federal employment if they could participate in a flexible workplace program.

The respondents also showed a great interest in expanding flexible work schedules (i.e., "flexitime") in federal agencies. The flexitime program permits, but does not require, agencies to allow employees to vary their daily starting and ending times and/or work fewer than 10 days in a biweekly pay period by working more than the standard 8-hour workday.

Forty-one percent said they used flexitime. Of those who did not, 55 percent said they would prefer to have more flexibility. Only 13 percent of the respondents who did not participate in flexitime said they did so at their own choosing. Nineteen percent said their agencies had flexitime but did not allow them to participate, and 58 percent said their agencies did not allow any employees to work flexible schedules. Of the respondents who did not use flexitime, 43 percent said they would be more likely to stay in federal service if flexitime were available to them.

The questionnaire asked respondents about their participation in the annual leave sharing program enacted in 1988.⁴ Under this program, employees can donate annual leave to other employees who have personal or family medical emergencies and have used all their available leave. Twenty percent of the respondents said they had donated annual leave under the program.

The majority of respondents whose spouses and/or other family members were also federal employees (about 30 percent of all respondents) indicated a strong interest in seeing the leave sharing program changed to

⁴The Federal Employees Leave Sharing Act of 1988 (P. L. 100-566, Oct. 31, 1988).

allow family members to share annual leave with each other under any circumstances. Fifty-two percent of these respondents said it was somewhat to very likely that they would share annual leave with their spouses or other family members in the next year if the law allowed it, and 25 percent said such an option would make them more likely to stay in federal employment.

Fifty-seven percent of all respondents said they would be greatly to very greatly interested in participating in a flexible benefits plan if one were available to federal employees, and another 23 percent said they were moderately interested. A flexible benefits plan allows employees, within prescribed cost constraints, to customize a benefits package to better meet their personal and family needs than a generic set of benefits such as the government now offers. Under a flexible plan, employees are allowed to select from available options (e.g., health insurance, life insurance, child care, eldercare, savings plan) as they see fit. For example, an employee who is covered by an employed spouse's health insurance plan could have no need for additional health insurance, but could elect a child care benefit instead. Of all respondents, 15 percent said they did not participate in the federal health insurance plan and 76 percent of these respondents said they were covered under a family member's plan. Forty-four percent of all respondents said they would be more likely to remain in federal employment if a flexible benefits plan were available.

As mentioned previously, 35 percent of all respondents said they had dependents who needed care during the workday. These respondents cited a number of ways their agencies could help with their dependent care needs. Forty-two percent said they would like their agencies to provide day care for children; 15 percent said they would like their agencies to provide care for other dependents, such as elderly parents; 17 percent said they wanted their agencies to refer them to day-care and/or dependent care providers; and, 18 percent said their agencies' giving them general information about day care and/or dependent care would be sufficient. One respondent who was having day-care problems commented:

"My agency has spent a great deal of time, effort, and money to make sure I'm competent in my career. Due to a lack of adequate child care all of this effort could be lost to the government. I am not an isolated case. A great deal of talent and experience is being wasted because we are not willing to adequately address family issues. Because of child care problems, it

became necessary to request a year's leave of absence. This extended leave begins in two weeks."

Older Workers' Retirement Plans

The questionnaire had a specific set of questions for employees who were eligible for retirement or would be eligible within 5 years.⁵ The employees were asked how long they expected to stay after retirement eligibility, the reasons for their retirement plans, and whether certain employment policy changes might affect their retirement decisions.

Of the respondents, 6 percent said they were eligible to retire; 4 percent and 10 percent said they would be eligible to retire within 2 and 5 years, respectively. The remaining respondents were more than 5 years away from retirement eligibility or were not sure when they would be eligible to retire.

The great majority (78 percent) of those eligible to retire within 5 years said they had formulated retirement plans. As a rule, they planned to retire shortly after they were eligible. One-third planned to leave within 1 year after eligibility, and another 27 percent said they would retire from 1 to 4 years after eligibility. Only 2 percent planned to stay longer than 10 years.

The respondents cited a variety of reasons for their retirement plans. Of 18 possible reasons listed in the questionnaire, 8 were cited by 20 percent or more of all respondents who were eligible to retire within 5 years. These eight reasons and the percentage of responses for each are listed in table 3.

⁵Does not include disability retirement, or early retirement when agencies are undergoing reductions-in-force.

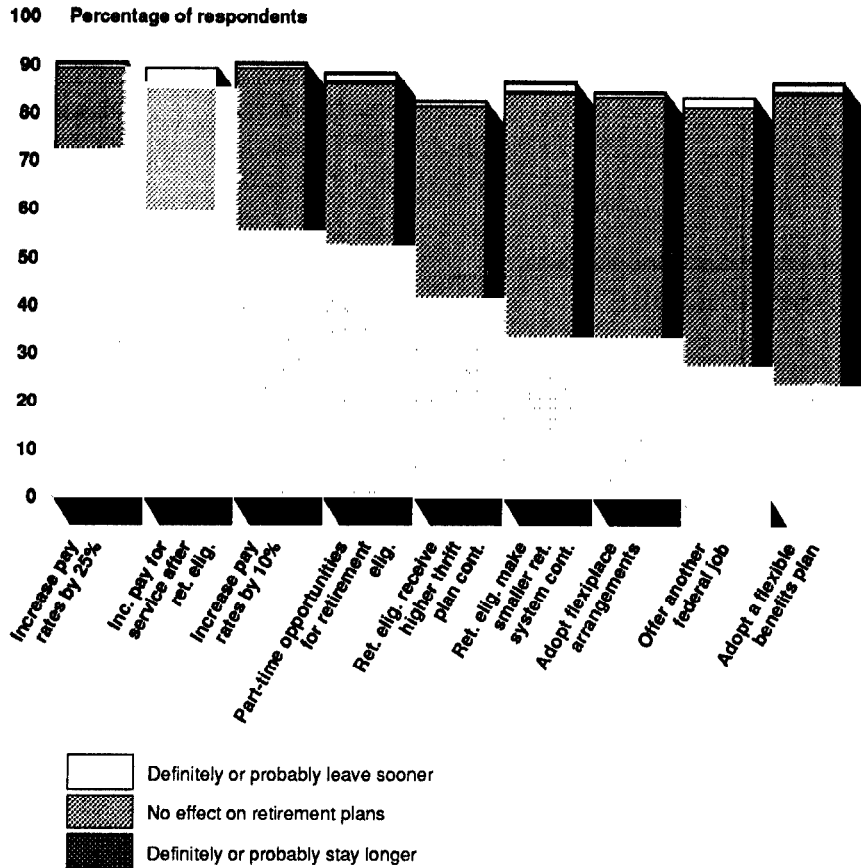
Table 3: Reasons for Retirement Plans Given by Respondents at or Near Retirement Eligibility

Reasons for retirement	Percentage of respondents*
I will have sufficient retirement income so that I will not have to work	34
I want to work after retirement but cut back on my work hours	29
I want to increase my total income by combining my retirement income with pay from another job	25
My retirement plans are based on my expectations of future pay increases and their effect on my high 3-year salary average	23
I plan to keep working until I no longer enjoy my job	22
Actual and proposed cuts in federal employee benefit programs have made me want to leave the government	22
I do not have as many advancement opportunities as younger workers	21
Limitations on past and anticipated future pay increases do not make it worth continuing in a federal job	20

*These percentages are based on the 818 respondents who reported they were eligible to retire or would be eligible within the next 5 years.

The questionnaire listed nine possible employment policy changes and asked the employees at or near retirement eligibility if the possible changes would cause them to alter their retirement plans. Varying numbers of respondents indicated that any of the changes, if made, would prompt them to extend their careers. The changes and responses to each are listed in figure 3.

Figure 3: Policy Changes May Influence Employees' Retirement Plans



Note: The percentages are based on the 818 respondents who reported they were eligible to retire or would be eligible within the next 5 years. A bar may not total 100 percent because some employees did not respond to that particular question.

Source: GAO survey (see app. I, question 49).

For a further indication of whether employees at or near retirement eligibility were interested in exploring options to extend their careers, they were asked about their interest in a (1) "trial retirement" program whereby retirees would be given the opportunity to change their minds and return to work after a period of retirement lasting 6 months to 1 year, and in (2) a "phased retirement" program whereby employees could reduce the

number of hours they worked until they were ready to retire completely.⁶ The respondents showed considerable interest in both of these possible changes. Forty-seven percent said they would be greatly to very greatly interested in a trial retirement program, and 42 percent were greatly to very greatly interested in a phased retirement program. Similarly, 38 percent said they would be greatly to very greatly interested in returning to work for the government on a temporary basis after they retired.

GAO Observations

The information the respondents provided in this survey should be useful to decisionmakers as they consider future employment policy changes for the federal workforce. It is evident from the employees' point of view that the government's employment programs are not meeting employees' needs in many areas. At the same time, the numerous positive aspects of federal employment pointed out by the respondents are encouraging. For example, the fact that a majority of respondents found the work they do to be more important than they had expected when they entered the government can represent a solid foundation upon which to build a better image of federal work among the citizenry in general and prospective employees in particular. Similarly, the apparent willingness of many older employees to extend their careers if appropriate incentives were available indicates that attempts to make greater use of older persons to meet future employment needs could be successful.

We believe the respondents' expressed desires for more flexibility in federal employment programs are especially noteworthy. Their interest in programs such as flexiplace, flexitime, flexible benefits, expanded leave sharing, and dependent care assistance suggests that greater attention to helping employees balance their work and family responsibilities can make the government a much more attractive employer.

OPM's Views on the Survey Results

We discussed the survey results with Office of Personnel Management officials. They said our findings were consistent with their survey of federal employees. They believed the government was already a good employer, but acknowledged that opportunities could always be sought to make it even better. They said our findings will be a valuable source of information as future policy initiatives are considered.

⁶A phased retirement program could be accomplished under the current federal part-time employment program. One of the part-time program's objectives is to provide older workers with a gradual transition into retirement.

Copies of this report are being sent to parties interested in federal employment matters and will be available to others on request. The major contributors to this report are listed in appendix IV. Please contact me on (202) 275-6204 if you have any questions.

Roslyn S. Kleeman
Roslyn S. Kleeman
Director, Federal Workforce Future Issues

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Annotated Survey Questionnaire

Note: The lower case letter n is the number of respondents who were asked to answer the questions that follow. The upper case N is the projected number of full- and part-time permanent federal employees the responses represent. NR = No response to the question. * = Less than .5 percent.

United States General Accounting Office



Survey of Federal Employees' Attitudes About Work in the Federal Government

Introduction

The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO), an independent agency of Congress, is reviewing federal workforce issues. As part of this effort, we are surveying a random sample of federal employees across the nation to learn about their experiences in working for the federal government.

This questionnaire asks about your attitudes toward your job, future career plans, pay and benefit issues, and federal employment in general.

The questionnaire should take about 30 minutes to complete. Your responses will be confidential, combined with others, and reported only in summary form. No individual responses will be identified in any report that we publish, and no agency will see the responses you provide to GAO. Your response is very important to our review of federal workforce issues.

Please complete and return the questionnaire in the enclosed pre-addressed envelope within 10 working days to avoid costly follow-up efforts. In the event the envelope is misplaced, the return address is:

U.S. General Accounting Office
Ms. Laura Shumway
441 G Street, N.W., Room 3820
Washington, D.C. 20548

If you have any questions, please call either Laura Shumway at (202) 275-6145 or Bob Shelton at (202) 275-6038. Thank you very much for your time.

* * * * *

n=4,139
N=1,238,000

A. Your Experiences in the Federal Government

1. If you were to make the decision today, would you choose to accept a job in the federal government? (Check one.)

- 1. [28.2%] Definitely yes
- 2. [39.0%] Probably yes
- 3. [16.0%] Uncertain
- 4. [12.1%] Probably no
- 5. [4.2%] Definitely no
- 0.5% NR

2. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your immediate supervisor? (Check one.)

- 1. [31.4%] Very satisfied
- 2. [39.0%] Generally satisfied
- 3. [13.7%] As satisfied as dissatisfied
- 4. [9.9%] Generally dissatisfied
- 5. [5.6%] Very dissatisfied
- * NR

3. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your most recent performance rating? (Check one.)

- 1. [38.0%] Very satisfied
- 2. [35.1%] Generally satisfied
- 3. [10.6%] As satisfied as dissatisfied
- 4. [8.2%] Generally dissatisfied
- 5. [5.7%] Very dissatisfied
- 6. [2.0%] Have not had a rating
- * NR

**Appendix I
Annotated Survey Questionnaire**

Note: The lower case letter n is the number of respondents who were asked to answer the questions that follow. The upper case N is the projected number of full- and part-time permanent federal employees the responses represent. NR = No response to the question. * = Less than .5 percent.

**n=2,590
N=256,000**

8. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the training you have received in the past 2 years? (Check one.)
1. [20.9%] Very satisfied
 2. [51.2%] Generally satisfied
 3. [17.7%] As satisfied as dissatisfied
 4. [7.7%] Generally dissatisfied
 5. [2.1%] Very dissatisfied
 6. [*] No basis to judge
- * NR

9. Do you believe that the training you have received in the past 2 years has improved your ability to do your job? (Check one.)
1. [38.6%] Definitely yes
 2. [40.4%] Probably yes
 3. [7.8%] Uncertain
 4. [10.0%] Probably no
 5. [2.9%] Definitely no
- * NR

10. How do your current employment conditions compare to what you expected before starting work in the federal government? (Check one box in each row.)

CONDITIONS	n=4,039 N=1,288,000							
	Much better than expected (1)	Better than expected (2)	Neither better nor worse than expected (3)	Worse than expected (4)	Much worse than expected (5)	Not sure or no basis to judge (6)		
1. Your pay	7.1%	22.6%	41.8%	21.4%	5.6%	0.8%	0.8%	NR
2. Your benefits	5.4%	22.2%	41.3%	22.7%	6.7%	0.8%	0.9%	NR
3. Your job security	8.5%	29.3%	41.3%	13.0%	5.5%	0.9%	1.4%	NR
4. Quality of coworkers	5.5%	24.2%	46.5%	16.8%	4.6%	0.7%	1.7%	NR
5. Quality of your supervisor(s)	8.1%	23.3%	39.6%	17.7%	8.6%	1.0%	1.6%	NR
6. Quality of work space	5.6%	20.5%	38.6%	22.6%	10.5%	0.9%	1.2%	NR
7. Prestige of federal employment	3.4%	12.9%	41.8%	25.7%	12.7%	1.6%	1.9%	NR
8. Extent federal employees behave in an ethical manner	5.2%	22.5%	48.8%	14.9%	5.7%	1.5%	1.5%	NR
9. Availability of training opportunities	5.2%	25.4%	37.5%	21.7%	7.6%	1.7%	0.9%	NR
10. Availability of resources necessary to do your job	4.4%	21.8%	38.9%	23.7%	9.4%	0.6%	1.2%	NR
11. Importance of the work that you do	14.5%	40.6%	33.6%	7.1%	2.2%	1.0%	1.1%	NR
12. The personal challenges your job offers	12.8%	35.1%	33.8%	11.6%	4.5%	1.1%	1.1%	NR
13. The opportunities for you to be promoted	5.4%	16.0%	29.3%	25.9%	21.1%	1.4%	0.8%	NR
14. Other (Please specify.) _____ 1.1% Write in/no rating	*	*	*	1.9%	5.8%	*	90.4%	NR

**Appendix I
Annotated Survey Questionnaire**

Note: The lower case letter n is the number of respondents who were asked to answer the questions that follow. The upper case N is the projected number of full- and part-time permanent federal employees the responses represent. NR = No response to the question. * = Less than .5 percent.

4. In your current job, how much of the time, if any, are you treated fairly in each of the following areas? (Check one box in each row.)

	Always or almost always (1)	Most of the time (2)	As often as not (3)	Some of the time (4)	Never or almost never (5)	Does not apply (6)		
1. Job or project assignments	36.8%	38.3%	9.6%	9.6%	3.2%	1.5%	1.0%	NR
2. Training	27.9%	32.0%	12.4%	13.7%	10.5%	2.2%	1.2%	NR
3. Formal performance appraisals/ratings	33.3%	34.1%	11.9%	11.6%	6.3%	1.5%	1.3%	NR
4. Monetary awards and bonuses	19.2%	20.6%	12.8%	14.9%	26.1%	4.8%	1.6%	NR
5. Nonmonetary awards and recognition	15.8%	19.9%	14.5%	17.0%	26.7%	4.4%	1.7%	NR

5. To what extent, if at all, does your agency encourage you to participate in training? (Check one.)

- 1. [12.6%] To a very great extent
- 2. [23.1%] To a great extent
- 3. [25.9%] To a moderate extent
- 4. [18.6%] To some extent
- 5. [17.8%] To little or no extent
- 6. [1.7%] No basis to judge

* NR

6. In your opinion, how much additional job-related training, if any, do you need? (Check one.)

- 1. [3.9%] A very great deal
- 2. [15.0%] A great deal
- 3. [42.1%] A moderate amount
- 4. [26.2%] Some
- 5. [12.5%] Little or none
- * NR

7. Within the past 2 years, have you participated in any training activities provided or paid for by your agency? (Check one.)

- 1. [73.8%] Yes (Continue to Question 8.)
- 2. [24.3%] No
- 3. [1.4%] Not sure } (Skip to Question 10.)
- 0.6% NR

**Appendix I
Annotated Survey Questionnaire**

Note: The lower case letter n is the number of respondents who were asked to answer the questions that follow. The upper case N is the projected number of full- and part-time permanent federal employees the responses represent. NR = No response to the question. * = Less than .5 percent.

**n=4,039
N=1,288,000**

11. Overall, has working for the federal government been better than you expected, neither better nor worse than you expected, or worse than you expected? (Check one.)
- 1. [7.1%] Much better than expected
 - 2. [30.4%] Better than expected
 - 3. [42.8%] Neither better nor worse than expected
 - 4. [16.6%] Worse than expected
 - 5. [2.3%] Much worse than expected
 - 6. [*] Not sure/no basis to judge
- * NR
12. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your job? (Check one.)
- 1. [18.4%] Very satisfied
 - 2. [50.2%] Generally satisfied
 - 3. [17.9%] As satisfied as dissatisfied
 - 4. [10.0%] Generally dissatisfied
 - 5. [3.0%] Very dissatisfied
- 0.5% NR
- B. Your Future Plans to Stay in or Leave Federal Service
13. Are you actively seeking a paid job outside the federal government (i.e., making efforts to leave the federal government for a paid job or for self-employment)? (Check one.)
- 1. [13.1%] Yes
 - 2. [86.2%] No
- 0.7% NR

14. How likely or unlikely are you to leave the federal government within the next 2 years? (Check one.)
- 1. [8.9%] Very likely to leave (Skip to Question 17)
 - 2. [11.1%] Somewhat likely to leave
 - 3. [13.1%] As likely as unlikely to leave
 - 4. [15.4%] Somewhat unlikely to leave
 - 5. [47.1%] Very unlikely to leave
 - 6. [3.8%] Not sure
- * NR
- (Continue to Question 15.)

**n=3,663
N=1,168,000**

15. How likely or unlikely are you to leave the federal government within the next 5 years? (Check one.)
- 1. [10.9%] Very likely to leave (Skip to Question 17.)
 - 2. [15.0%] Somewhat likely to leave
 - 3. [12.9%] As likely as unlikely to leave
 - 4. [15.9%] Somewhat unlikely to leave
 - 5. [39.4%] Very unlikely to leave
 - 6. [5.5%] Not sure
- * NR
- (Continue to Question 16.)

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Annotated Survey Questionnaire**

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n=3,751
N=1,037,000

16. How likely or unlikely are you to leave the federal government before you retire? (Check one. If you are already eligible for regular federal retirement, check category 7.)

- 1. [5.6%] Very likely to leave
- 2. [10.8%] Somewhat likely to leave
- 3. [12.1%] As likely as unlikely to leave
- 4. [16.1%] Somewhat unlikely to leave
- 5. [45.7%] Very unlikely to leave
- 6. [7.3%] Not sure
- 7. [2.0%] Already eligible for retirement

* NR

n=4,039
N=1,288,000

17. Which one of the following will be your primary activity when you leave the federal government? (Please give your best estimate. Check one.)

- 1. [21.7%] Retirement, not working
- 2. [23.0%] Working full time for pay
- 3. [20.0%] Working part time for pay
- 4. [7.6%] Self-employed full time
- 5. [7.2%] Self-employed part time
- 6. [1.7%] Going to school
- 7. [3.8%] Volunteer work
- 8. [2.9%] Homemaking
- 9. [2.0%] Other (Please specify) _____
- 10. [7.5%] Not sure

2.6% NR

Appendix I
Annotated Survey Questionnaire

Note: The lower case letter n is the number of respondents who were asked to answer the questions that follow. The upper case N is the projected number of full- and part-time permanent federal employees the responses represent. NR = No response to the question. * = Less than .5 percent.

18. Currently, how important, if at all, are each of the following as reasons for you to stay with or leave the federal government?
(Check one box in each row.)

	Very important reason to stay (1)	Somewhat important reason to stay (2)	Neither a reason to stay nor to leave (3)	Somewhat important reason to leave (4)	Very important reason to leave (5)	Not applicable/ No basis to judge (6)		
YOUR JOB								
1. Your current duties and responsibilities	27.6%	29.4%	32.5%	5.5%	3.1%	1.0%	0.9%	NR
2. Opportunity to work on challenging assignments	26.0%	31.7%	28.3%	6.8%	4.4%	1.8%	1.0%	NR
3. Opportunity to apply your abilities on the job	29.8%	32.1%	23.8%	6.6%	5.5%	0.9%	1.3%	NR
4. Opportunity to work freely on your own	31.3%	33.2%	24.5%	5.0%	3.2%	1.5%	1.2%	NR
5. Physical work environment (office space, facilities, etc.)	10.5%	20.9%	49.0%	10.9%	5.4%	2.1%	1.2%	NR
6. Availability of computer and other support equipment	15.4%	26.9%	42.1%	6.7%	3.5%	4.5%	0.9%	NR
7. Staffing (number of staff assigned to handle the workload)	9.0%	17.6%	43.1%	17.2%	9.3%	2.6%	1.3%	NR
8. Training opportunities available to you	12.1%	24.6%	43.5%	11.0%	5.5%	2.4%	1.0%	NR
9. Neighborhood in which your work site is located	18.2%	23.5%	46.4%	5.4%	2.8%	2.8%	0.8%	NR
10. Commuting time	19.4%	23.1%	42.6%	8.3%	3.8%	1.7%	1.1%	NR
11. The work schedule you generally use	21.6%	31.0%	38.7%	4.2%	2.4%	1.0%	1.0%	NR
12. Job security	37.5%	33.0%	19.0%	4.6%	3.5%	0.9%	1.6%	NR
PEOPLE YOU WORK WITH								
13. Your coworkers	15.6%	30.4%	43.8%	6.0%	2.7%	0.6%	0.9%	NR
14. Your supervisor	16.4%	24.9%	39.5%	10.5%	7.0%	0.7%	1.0%	NR
15. Career managers in your agency	5.7%	11.8%	47.8%	14.8%	10.5%	8.0%	1.3%	NR
16. Political appointees in your agency	2.7%	5.0%	48.9%	7.8%	7.2%	26.9%	1.4%	NR

Question 18 continued on next page.

**Appendix I
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18. (CONTINUED) Currently, how important, if at all, are each of the following as reasons for you to stay with or leave the federal government? (Check one box in each row.)

	Very important reason to stay (1)	Somewhat important reason to stay (2)	Neither a reason to stay nor to leave (3)	Somewhat important reason to leave (4)	Very important reason to leave (5)	Not applicable/ No basis to judge (6)	
YOUR AGENCY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT							
17. The way your agency keeps you informed	7.5%	17.5%	51.5%	15.4%	5.6%	1.5%	0.9% NR
18. Opportunity to participate in important decisions affecting your work	13.5%	25.6%	30.5%	17.7%	9.2%	2.6%	0.9% NR
19. How policies and procedures affect your ability to do your job	9.1%	17.4%	37.9%	23.6%	9.1%	1.8%	1.2% NR
20. Reputation of your agency as an employer	13.1%	23.7%	45.6%	9.8%	4.5%	2.0%	1.4% NR
21. Reputation of the federal government as an employer	11.7%	21.1%	47.7%	13.0%	3.5%	1.6%	1.4% NR
22. Limitations on political activities (Hatch Act)	2.2%	4.4%	66.8%	7.5%	3.7%	13.7%	1.7% NR
YOUR PERFORMANCE, PROMOTIONS AND REWARDS							
23. Opportunity for your supervisor to see the results of your work	17.4%	29.5%	41.0%	7.1%	3.0%	0.9%	1.1% NR
24. The way your supervisor evaluates your performance	18.4%	26.9%	31.8%	13.5%	7.1%	1.2%	1.1% NR
25. The progress you have made in the federal government	21.7%	33.5%	24.3%	10.6%	8.0%	0.7%	1.1% NR
26. Your chances of getting promoted in the future	17.7%	21.5%	23.5%	16.9%	17.8%	1.7%	1.0% NR
27. Your chances of receiving financial awards (other than within grade increases or promotions) for outstanding job performance	15.6%	21.0%	31.0%	15.6%	14.0%	1.8%	1.0% NR

Question 18 continued on next page.

**Appendix I
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18. (CONTINUED) Currently, how important, if at all, are each of the following as reasons for you to stay with or leave the federal government? (Check one box in each row.)

	Very important reason to stay (1)	Somewhat important reason to stay (2)	Neither a reason to stay nor to leave (3)	Somewhat important reason to leave (4)	Very important reason to leave (5)	Not applicable/ No basis to judge (6)		
YOUR PAY AND BENEFITS								
28. Your total pay (excluding benefits) compared to pay for similar jobs outside the federal government	16.9%	22.9%	18.4%	23.7%	16.0%	1.3%	0.8%	NR
29. Your total pay (excluding benefits) in relation to what you put into your work	13.7%	21.8%	24.7%	23.2%	15.0%	0.6%	1.1%	NR
30. The federal employee benefits program in general	16.7%	30.0%	26.9%	16.0%	8.4%	0.8%	1.2%	NR
31. Your federal retirement system	27.8%	35.5%	21.7%	8.2%	4.4%	1.1%	1.2%	NR
32. The federal health benefits program	18.1%	26.7%	27.3%	13.7%	10.8%	2.3%	1.1%	NR
33. The federal life insurance program	14.3%	26.7%	43.7%	6.0%	3.8%	4.0%	1.5%	NR
34. The federal annual leave program	34.3%	44.3%	17.9%	1.5%	0.8%	*	0.8%	NR
35. The federal sick leave program	32.1%	42.4%	21.0%	1.8%	1.1%	0.5%	1.1%	NR
36. Dependent care assistance (e.g., children or eldercare) that your agency provides	5.0%	6.5%	36.6%	5.2%	5.2%	39.7%	1.7%	NR
OTHER FACTORS								
37. The cost of living where you work	13.8%	22.6%	36.6%	13.8%	9.7%	1.9%	1.6%	NR
38. Other (Please specify.)								
* Write in/no rating	1.9%	*	*	1.0%	3.8%	*	91.8%	NR

**Appendix I
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C. Your Views on Possible Employment Policy Changes

The following questions deal with flexiplace. Flexiplace is an arrangement in which employees work at home or at other approved locations away from the office for all or part of the workweek. A governmentwide project, the Flexible Workplace Project, is underway to test such flexible workplace arrangements on a limited basis.

19. Are you currently participating in the Flexible Workplace Project? (Check one.)

- 1. [5.2%] Yes (Skip to box above Question 23.)
 - 2. [92.9%] No
 - 3. [1.0%] Not sure
- } (Continue to Question 20.)
- 0.8% NR

n=3,793
N=1,210,000

20. Considering your own job's requirements, do you believe that you could do your job satisfactorily outside the traditional workplace for all or part of the workweek? (Check one.)

- 1. [18.4%] Definitely yes
 - 2. [20.7%] Probably yes
 - 3. [7.6%] Uncertain
 - 4. [20.9%] Probably no
 - 5. [29.7%] Definitely no
 - 6. [1.6%] Not sure/No basis to judge
- 1.1% NR

21. If it were available to you, much how interest, if any, would you have in working under a flexible workplace arrangement? (Check one.)

- 1. [27.7%] Very great interest
 - 2. [19.4%] Great interest
 - 3. [16.7%] Moderate interest
 - 4. [11.3%] Some interest
 - 5. [18.7%] Little or no interest
 - 6. [5.2%] Not sure/No basis to judge
- 0.9% NR

22. If you could participate in a flexible workplace arrangement, what effect, if any, would it have on your decision to stay with or leave the federal government? (Check one.)

- 1. [20.2%] Much more likely to stay
 - 2. [18.6%] Somewhat more likely to stay
 - 3. [48.0%] Neither more likely nor less likely to stay or leave
 - 4. [1.0%] Somewhat more likely to leave
 - 5. [0.7%] Much more likely to leave
 - 6. [10.7%] Don't know/No basis to judge
- 0.9% NR

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The following questions deal with flexitime. Flexitime is flexible and compressed work schedules (including flexitour, alternate work schedules, etc.). Employees choose when to arrive at and leave work but must work (if not on approved leave) during a specified period of the day. In some agencies, employees can work fewer than 10 days in a 2-week period by working more hours each day.

n=4,039
N=1,288,000

23. Do you currently use flexitime? (Check one.)

- 1. [41.2%] Yes (Skip to Question 26.)
- 2. [56.9%] No (Continue to Question 24.)
- 3. [1.2%] Not sure (Skip to Question 26.)

0.7% NR

n=2,300
N=734,000

24. Why are you not using flexitime? (Check all that apply.)

- 1. [12.5%] My agency has flexitime but I chose not to participate
- 2. [19.1%] My agency has flexitime but I am not allowed to participate
- 3. [57.6%] My agency does not have flexitime
- 4. [12.1%] Other (Please specify.) _____

0.8% NR

25. If you could use flexitime, what effect, if any, would it have on your decision to stay with or leave the federal government? (Check one.)

- 1. [20.8%] Much more likely to stay
- 2. [22.0%] Somewhat more likely to stay
- 3. [48.6%] Neither more likely nor less likely to stay or leave
- 4. [0.7%] Somewhat more likely to leave
- 5. [0.3%] Much more likely to leave
- 6. [7.1%] Don't know/No basis to judge

0.5% NR

n=4,039
N=1,288,000

26. Which of the following describes your preference about your work schedule? (Check one.)

- 1. [46.8%] Prefer to continue the current one, as is
- 2. [44.5%] Prefer to have more flexibility (e.g., use flexitime, or vary starting time)
- 3. [0.8%] Prefer to have less flexibility (e.g., not use flexitime)
- 4. [2.2%] Prefer to work on a different shift (e.g., change from a day shift to a night shift)
- 5. [4.3%] Other (Please specify.) _____

1.4% NR

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The government currently has a leave-sharing program that lets you donate annual leave to another employee who has a medical or family emergency but has used all his/her annual and sick leave.

n=1,174
N=375,000

27. Have you ever donated or received annual leave under the government's existing leave-sharing program? (Check all that apply.)

- 1. [19.6%] Yes, I have donated annual leave to other employee(s)
 - 2. [0.9%] Yes, I have received annual leave from other employee(s)
 - 3. [78.9%] No, I have not donated or received leave
 - 4. [*] Not sure/Don't remember
- 0.5% NR

28. Do you have a spouse and/or any other immediate family member (such as a parent, sibling, or child) who works for the federal government? (Check one.)

- 1. [12.5%] Yes, spouse
 - 2. [14.6%] Yes, other immediate family member
 - 3. [2.0%] Yes, both spouse and other immediate family member
 - 4. [70.1%] No
 - 5. [*] Not sure
- * NR
- (Continue to Question 29.)
- (Skip to box above Question 31.)

29. Suppose the leave sharing program was changed by 1) allowing donations to employees who still have leave and 2) allowing spouses and immediate family members (such as parents, siblings, and children) who are federal employees to give annual leave to each other.

How likely or unlikely would you be to give annual leave to your spouse and/or other family member in the next year? (Check one.)

- 1. [37.6%] Very likely
 - 2. [14.5%] Somewhat likely
 - 3. [19.4%] As likely as unlikely
 - 4. [9.0%] Somewhat unlikely
 - 5. [15.2%] Very unlikely
 - 6. [3.7%] Not sure
- 0.6% NR

30. Suppose the leave-sharing program was changed as described in Question 29.

What effect, if any, would these changes have on your decision to stay with or leave the federal government? (Check one.)

- 1. [10.0%] Much more likely to stay
 - 2. [14.5%] Somewhat more likely to stay
 - 3. [70.4%] Neither more likely nor less likely to stay or leave
 - 4. [*] Somewhat more likely to leave
 - 5. [*] Much more likely to leave
 - 6. [3.8%] Don't know/No basis to judge
- 0.5% NR

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Information for Questions 31 and 32

Questions 31 and 32 deal with flexible benefits plans. Suppose the following flexible benefits plan was available to federal employees:

- All employees would be covered by the current annual leave, sick leave, and retirement program.
- Employees would choose all other benefits from a list of options (see below).
- The number and type of optional benefits would depend on the government's contribution plus the amount of money the employee chooses to pay.

Possible benefit options:

Dependent care (children/elders); disability insurance; extra annual/sick leave (up to 1 week); health insurance (individual/family); help with commuting costs; insurance for dental care; legal services; life insurance; paid parental leave (childbirth and adoption); routine eye care (e.g., eye exams, glasses, contact lenses); and tuition assistance (yourself or your children)

n=4,039
N=1,288,000

31. Keeping in mind that the cost to you, if any, is uncertain, how much interest, if any, would you have in participating in a flexible benefits plan in which employees would choose some benefits from a list of options? (Check one.)

1. [29.7%] Very great interest
 2. [26.8%] Great interest
 3. [23.3%] Moderate interest
 4. [8.7%] Some interest
 5. [6.7%] Little or no interest
 6. [4.1%] Not sure/No basis to judge
- 0.8% NR

32. If the federal government had a flexible benefits plan, what effect, if any, would it have on your decision to stay with or leave the federal government? (Check one.)

1. [16.9%] Much more likely to stay
 2. [26.7%] Somewhat more likely to stay
 3. [48.9%] Neither more likely nor less likely to stay or leave
 4. [0.9%] Somewhat more likely to leave
 5. [*] Much more likely to leave
 6. [5.7%] Don't know/No basis to judge
- 0.7% NR

D. Background

33. What is the highest educational level or degree that you have attained? (Check one.)

1. [1.8%] Less than high school diploma
2. [12.3%] High school diploma or equivalent
3. [12.0%] High school diploma or equivalent plus technical training or apprenticeship
4. [27.0%] Some college without a degree
5. [8.5%] Associate's degree
6. [17.5%] Bachelor's degree
7. [8.6%] Postgraduate study without a degree
8. [8.5%] Master's degree
9. [1.8%] Doctorate/Ph.D.
10. [1.0%] Professional degree (law, medicine, etc.)
11. [0.7%] Other (Please specify.)

* NR

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34. How many years of job experience (including all full-time and part-time positions) do you have working for the following types of employers?

(Report the number of years you have been employed in each category. Round to the nearest year. If none or less than six months, enter "0".)

<u>Work experience</u>	<u>Number of years</u>	
	<u>RANGE</u>	
1. Other federal departments or agencies (civilian job)	<u>1 - 38</u>	39.6%
2. The department or agency in which you currently work	<u>1 - 62</u>	93.5%
3. Military service	<u>1 - 40</u>	37.3%
4. State/local government	<u>1 - 40</u>	13.8%
5. Private company	<u>1 - 40</u>	66.5%
6. Nonprofit organization	<u>1 - 46</u>	8.8%
7. Employed by college/university	<u>1 - 30</u>	13.2%
8. Self employment	<u>1 - 37</u>	13.7%
9. Other (Specify.)	<u>1 - 45</u>	3.8%
TOTAL		
	NR	0.9%

35. Aside from your job(s) for the federal government, are you currently employed in other paid jobs? (Include any paid employment, such as working for a private company, self-employment, etc. Check one.)

- 1. [12.1%] Yes
- 2. [87.4%] No
- 0.5% NR

36. What is your marital status? (Check one.)

- 1. [70.1%] Married and living with your spouse (Continue to Question 37.)
 - 2. [2.6%] Separated
 - 3. [11.9%] Divorced
 - 4. [1.7%] Widowed
 - 5. [13.2%] Never married
- 0.6% NR
- (Skip to Question 38.)

n=2,831
N=903,000

37. Which of the following best describes the employment status of your spouse? (Check one.)

- 1. [63.0%] Employed full time
 - 2. [12.8%] Employed part time
 - 3. [23.1%] Not employed
- 1.2% NR

n=4,039
N=1,288,000

38. Do you have children, parents (including your spouse's parents), or other dependents for whom you are responsible and who need care for some time during your workday (whether or not they live with you)? (Check one.)

- 1. [35.4%] Yes (Continue to Question 39.)
- 2. [63.9%] No (Skip to Question 42.)
- 0.8% NR

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n=1,428
N=455,000

39. What are the ages of those for whom you are responsible and who need care while you are working? (Provide their ages below. Round to the nearest year. If less than 1 year old, enter "1".)

Year of Age	Percent w/ Dependents	Number of Dependents	Percent
Less than 6	38.9%	1	44.1%
6 - 12	50.3%	2	34.7%
13 - 18	25.2%	3	14.1%
19 - 24	5.4%	4	4.3%
25 - 64	6.4%	5	1.4%
More than 64	14.3%	6 - 7	0.5%
	0.9% NR		0.9% NR

40. Which of the following, if any, would help meet your family's needs for day care and/or dependent care? (Check all that apply.)

1. [41.5%] Your agency providing day care for children. Your cost would be based on the cost of providing the service.
2. [14.8%] Your agency providing care for other dependents, such as an elderly parent. Your cost would be based on the cost of providing the service.
3. [17.2%] Your agency offering referrals to providers of day care and/or dependent care.
4. [18.2%] Your agency giving general information about day care and/or dependent care.
5. [17.7%] Other (Please specify.)

13.4% NR

41. Which of the following specific steps, if any, are you currently doing because of your day care/dependent care arrangements? (Check all that apply.)

1. [2.5%] Holding a part-time job instead of a full-time job
 2. [6.7%] Holding a less challenging job
 3. [4.6%] Holding a job with day care assistance
 4. [19.9%] Holding a job close to home
 5. [7.8%] Holding a job in a particular part of the country
 6. [19.0%] Holding a job with a flexitime work schedule
 7. [11.5%] Other (Please specify.)
-
8. [43.7%] No specific steps taken
- 4.7% NR

n=4,039
N=1,258,000

42. Is money deducted from your paycheck for health insurance through the federal government? (Check one.)

1. [84.0%] Yes (Skip to box above Question 45.)
 2. [15.2%] No (Continue to Question 43.)
 3. [*] Not sure (Skip to Question 44.)
- 0.5% NR

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n=615
N=196,000

43. Why is no money deducted from your paycheck for federal health insurance? (Check all that apply.)
1. [82.1%] I am already covered by other health insurance
 2. [18.7%] The federal employee health insurance program is too expensive for me
 3. [0.5%] I am willing to accept the risk of not having health insurance
 4. [6.2%] The program's benefits are inadequate for my needs
 5. [0.8%] The program provides more benefits than I need
 6. [1.5%] I did not have sufficient information to select one of the federal employee plans
 7. [0.8%] I didn't know that I had to choose a plan by a certain deadline date
 8. [12.4%] Other (Please specify.)

- 1.8% NR

n=625
N=199,000

44. What health insurance coverage do you have, if any? (Check all that apply.)
1. [32.2%] I am covered by federal employee health insurance through a family member
 2. [43.5%] I am covered by health insurance through a family member's employer (note: this employer would not be the federal government)
 3. [12.5%] I am covered by health insurance some other way
 4. [3.7%] I am not covered by any health insurance
 5. [10.1%] Other (Please specify.)

- 1.1% NR

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E. Retirement Plans

For regular retirement purposes both the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) have the same minimum eligibility requirements for employees born before 1948. These requirements are:

- Age 55 with 30 years of service
- Age 60 with 20 years of service
- Age 62 with 5 years of service

Most federal employees are covered by these requirements. Some occupations, such as firefighting and law enforcement, have different minimum requirements. Please use the requirements that apply to you when answering the questions in this section.

n=4,039
N=1,288,000

45. Under the criteria described above, within what time period will you be eligible for regular retirement? (Please give your best estimate. Check one.)
- | | | |
|--------------|--|------------------------------|
| 1. [6.3%] | I am currently eligible to retire | } (Continue to Question 46.) |
| 2. [3.7%] | Less than 2 years | |
| 3. [10.3%] | 2 to 5 years | |
| 4. [75.6%] | More than 5 years → (Skip to Question 53.) | |
| ----- | | |
| 5. [3.0%] | Not sure → (Skip to Question 53.) | |
| 1.2% | NR | |

n=818
N=261,000

46. How long do you expect to stay in the federal government after you become eligible to retire, or if you are already eligible, how much longer do you expect to stay? (Please give your best estimate. Check one.)
- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1. [2.0%] | Plan to leave before eligible to retire |
| 2. [18.3%] | Plan to retire on eligibility date |
| 3. [7.8%] | Less than 6 months after eligibility date |
| 4. [6.5%] | 6 months to less than 1 year after eligibility date |
| 5. [14.7%] | 1 to 2 years after eligibility date |
| 6. [12.5%] | 3 to 4 years after eligibility date |
| 7. [14.2%] | 5 to 10 years after eligibility date |
| 8. [1.5%] | More than 10 years after eligibility date |
| 9. [22.1%] | Not sure at this time |
| 0.5% | NR |

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Note: The lower case letter n is the number of respondents who were asked to answer the questions that follow. The upper case N is the projected number of full- and part-time permanent federal employees the responses represent. NR = No response to the question. * = Less than .5 percent.

If you will be eligible for regular retirement in 5 years or less, continue. Otherwise, skip to Question 53.

47. A person's decision on when he or she plans to retire may be based on many different reasons. Please select statements from the list below that describe important reasons why you plan to retire from the federal government at the time you indicated in Question 46. (Check all that apply.)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. [33.9%] I believe I will have sufficient retirement income so that I will not have to work. | 10. [21.8%] Actual and proposed cuts in federal employee benefit programs have made me want to get out of the government. |
| 2. [9.3%] My physical condition will preclude my continuing to work in my present job. | 11. [29.1%] I want to keep working after retirement but cut back on my work hours. |
| 3. [15.0%] I want to change jobs and will do so when I retire from my federal job. | 12. [2.0%] I will retire as soon as a particular project/program I am working on is completed. |
| 4. [13.4%] I am tired of my job and am looking forward to leaving it. | 13. [14.5%] No one in my agency is encouraging me to extend my career. |
| 5. [25.2%] I want to increase my total income by combining my retirement income with pay from another job. | 14. [20.8%] I do not have as many advancement opportunities as younger workers. |
| 6. [8.2%] My federal salary will not be sufficiently greater than my retirement income to justify continuing in a federal job. | 15. [10.6%] I do not receive as many training opportunities as younger workers. |
| 7. [22.9%] My retirement plans are based on my expectations of future pay increases and their effect on my high 3-year salary average. | 16. [8.3%] I do not receive the training needed to keep my job skills current. |
| 8. [21.9%] I plan to keep working until I no longer enjoy my job. | 17. [13.6%] My agency does not value my contributions. |
| 9. [19.8%] Limitations on past and anticipated future pay increases do not make it worth continuing in a federal job. | 18. [4.0%] I need to care for my spouse or other family member. |
| | 19. [13.9%] Other (Please specify.) _____ |

4.5% NR

4

Appendix I
Annotated Survey Questionnaire

Note: The lower case letter n is the number of respondents who were asked to answer the questions that follow. The upper case N is the projected number of full- and part-time permanent federal employees the responses represent. NR = No response to the question. * = Less than .5 percent.

48. Among the reason(s) you checked in Question 47, which is the one most important reason why you plan to retire?
(Enter item number below.)

Question 47
item number

The most important reason for why you plan to retire _____

These represent all reasons given as the most important by more than 5 percent of those eligible to retire within 5 years.

<u>Most important reasons</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. I believe I will have sufficient retirement income so that I will not have to work.	17.2%
8. I plan to keep working until I no longer enjoy my job.	9.2%
19. Other	8.8%
9. Limitations on past and anticipated future pay increases do not make it worth continuing in a federal job.	7.0%
5. I want to increase my total income by combining my retirement income with pay from another job.	6.7%
7. My retirement plans are based on my expectations of future pay increases and their effect on my high 3-year salary average.	6.5%
11. I want to keep working after retirement but cut back on my work hours.	6.0%
2. My physical condition will preclude my continuing to work in my present job.	5.9%
NR	10.3%

**Appendix I
Annotated Survey Questionnaire**

Note: The lower case letter n is the number of respondents who were asked to answer the questions that follow. The upper case N is the projected number of full- and part-time permanent federal employees the responses represent. NR = No response to the question. * = Less than .5 percent.

If you will be eligible for regular retirement in 5 years or less, continue. Otherwise, skip to Question 53.

49. If any of the following changes were made, would you stay longer, leave sooner, or not change your retirement plans? (Check one box in each row.)

CHANGES	Definitely would stay longer (1)	Probably would stay longer (2)	No change in retirement plans (3)	Probably would leave sooner (4)	Definitely would leave sooner (5)	Doesn't apply (6)	
1. Increased overall federal pay rates by 10 percent (this does not include "cost-of-living" increases)	18.7%	35.9%	33.5%	0.5%	*	*	11.0% NR
2. Increased overall federal pay rates by 25 percent (this does not include "cost-of-living" increases)	46.1%	25.6%	16.9%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	9.7% NR
3. Increased retirement pay for service completed after retirement eligibility	27.9%	31.1%	26.0%	2.6%	1.1%	1.0%	10.4% NR
4. Increased agency contributions to the thrift savings plan after retirement eligibility (for CSRS employees, this means your agency would begin to contribute to a thrift savings plan for you)	17.1%	23.6%	39.6%	0.7%	*	8.2%	10.5% NR
5. Lowered employee contributions to the retirement system after retirement eligibility	12.1%	20.4%	50.7%	2.2%	-	3.3%	11.2% NR
6. Adopted a flexible benefits plan in which you would choose your own benefits from a variety of benefits options	6.6%	16.4%	60.6%	1.5%	*	3.1%	11.7% NR
7. Gave retirement-eligible employees the option of converting from a full-time to a part-time work schedule	17.5%	34.5%	34.2%	1.5%	*	1.8%	10.1% NR
8. Adopted flexiplace arrangements where employees could work at home or other locations outside of the office	10.6%	21.9%	50.0%	0.6%	*	6.1%	10.6% NR
9. Offered another job in the federal government	7.9%	18.7%	54.4%	1.1%	0.6%	5.1%	12.1% NR
10. Other (Please specify.) _____ * Write in/No rating	2.1%	1.5%	*	*	*	1.1%	94.5% NR

**Appendix I
Annotated Survey Questionnaire**

Note: The lower case letter n is the number of respondents who were asked to answer the questions that follow. The upper case N is the projected number of full- and part-time permanent federal employees the responses represent. NR = No response to the question. * = Less than .5 percent.

If you will be eligible for regular retirement in 5 years or less, continue. Otherwise, skip to Question 53.

50. How much interest, if any, would you have in a "trial" retirement program, where you would be given the option of returning to work after a period of retirement lasting 6 months to 1 year? (Check one.)

- 1. [28.2%] Very great interest
 - 2. [18.6%] Great interest
 - 3. [17.5%] Moderate interest
 - 4. [7.1%] Some interest
 - 5. [17.6%] Little or no interest
 - 6. [2.1%] Not sure/No basis to judge
- 8.9% NR

51. Suppose the federal government adopted a "phased" retirement program, in which employees could reduce the number of hours worked each week until ready to retire completely from the federal government.

How much interest, if any, would you have in participating in a "phased" retirement program? (Check one.)

- 1. [24.1%] Very great interest
 - 2. [17.8%] Great interest
 - 3. [17.6%] Moderate interest
 - 4. [8.8%] Some interest
 - 5. [20.2%] Little or no interest
 - 6. [2.8%] Not sure/No basis to judge
- 8.7% NR

52. After you retire, how much interest, if any, would you have in working for the federal government on a temporary basis? (Check one.)

- 1. [21.9%] Very great interest
 - 2. [16.4%] Great interest
 - 3. [21.3%] Moderate interest
 - 4. [11.9%] Some interest
 - 5. [16.5%] Little or no interest
 - 6. [3.3%] Not sure/No basis to judge
- 8.8% NR

Section F: Comments

n=4,039
N=1,288,000

53. If you have any comments that you would like to make about your job, your agency, or working for the federal government, please use the space provided below. If necessary, you may continue your answer on the back of this page or attach additional sheets.

- 47.1% Provided comments
- 52.9% No comments

Thank you for your time and assistance.

GGD KJ 4/91

Summary of Written Questionnaire Comments

The respondents were invited to add written comments at the end of the questionnaire about their jobs, agencies, or working for the federal government. Forty-seven percent (1,902) of the 4,039 respondents made comments on various issues. While these comments provide valuable insights into federal employees' attitudes, they can only be taken as representative of the views of those who elected to make comments and cannot be generalized as the views of questionnaire respondents as a whole.

We analyzed a random sample of 400 of 1,898 questionnaires with comments to identify and summarize the issues raised in the comments using content analysis, a technique for analyzing written material.⁷ The technique involved developing categories of the comments made and coding each comment to the appropriate category. We checked the reliability of the coding by having each comment independently coded by two analysts. Any differences in coding were reviewed by a third analyst, discussed among the three analysts, and then agreed upon by all analysts. We then determined the frequency of the coded data and reviewed the results for patterns and relationships.

Types of Comments

A variety of respondents in terms of age, gender, race, agency, occupation, grade level, and geographic location provided comments. The written comments concerned many issues, such as pay and benefits, promotions and awards, supervisors and coworkers, working conditions, resources and staffing, training, job and employment satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and job security. We identified and coded comments into 20 specific categories. We also coded comments that did not fit any of the specific categories as "other." For each category, we identified and coded both positive and negative comments. Because many individuals' comments were about more than one issue, the total number of comments we coded, 958, far exceeded the 400 questionnaires we selected for analysis. Table II.1 lists the categories and the number of comments made in each category.

⁷At the time we selected the random sample, we had received 1,898 questionnaires that had comments. We later received another four with comments, making our total number of questionnaires with comments 1,902.

**Appendix II
Summary of Written Questionnaire
Comments**

**Table II.1: Number of Comments in 400
Questionnaires by Category**

Category	Number of comments		
	Positive	Negative	Total
Pay	6	76	82
Managers and supervisors	7	63	70
Benefits (other than health insurance and annual/sick leave)	8	50	58
Treatment of employees	1	48	49
Promotion and award processes	2	47	49
Job satisfaction or dissatisfaction	37	9	46
Federal employment in general ^a	45	0	45
Health benefits	1	43	44
Training	5	36	41
Prospects for promotion	6	35	41
Coworkers	14	20	34
Job security	9	20	29
Physical working conditions	3	23	26
Staffing and resources	1	24	25
Job classification systems	0	24	24
Atmosphere of workplace	4	14	18
Performance appraisal systems	0	18	18
Image of federal employees	1	15	16
Discrimination	0	12	12
Annual and sick leave	6	5	11
Other comments related to questionnaire issues	22	198	220
Total	178	780	958

^aSee pp. 37-38 for further discussion of this category.

Summary of Comment Categories and Presentation of Selected Comments

As shown in table II.1, more than 40 of the 400 sample respondents made comments in 10 of the 20 specific categories we identified. Selected comments from each of the 10 categories and the "other comments" category are presented in the following sections. We chose these comments to show the broad range of issues about which respondents wrote.

The majority of the comments were negative. But in two of the 10 categories, the comments were more positive than negative. These two categories were job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and federal employment in general. The fact that the federal employment category

received all positive comments might seem inconsistent given the large number of negative comments made about various aspects of federal employment, such as pay. However, in many cases when respondents wrote positive comments about their employment, they were of a general nature. When respondents wrote negative comments about their employment, they were usually very specific, and we included those comments in specific comment categories.

To put the comments in a context, we also present the responses to related questions in the questionnaire that were asked of all respondents, not just those who chose to write comments. For example, in the comment category of physical working conditions, 23 respondents provided negative comments and 3 provided positive comments. In comparison, in responding to actual employment conditions vs. expectations (question 10), 33 percent of all respondents (1,338 respondents) said the quality of their work space was worse or much worse than what they had expected before starting work in the federal government, and 26 percent (1,053 respondents) said that work space was better or much better than expected.

Pay

Seventy-six of the 82 comments on pay matters were negative. As a rule, the respondents who commented were concerned that federal pay rates were not competitive with rates paid in the nonfederal sector and that uncompetitive pay hurt the government's ability to recruit and retain quality employees. In comparison, 27 percent of all respondents (1,088 respondents) said their actual pay vs. their expectations was worse or much worse than what they had expected before starting work in the federal government and 30 percent (1,200 respondents) said pay was better or much better than expected (question 10). Following are a number of the negative comments.

"I believe that because of ongoing pay and benefit deficiencies, quality college graduates will not even consider the federal government as a future employer. This will eventually play a big part in the ability of the federal government to provide quality service to the people of this country."

"The [agency] does not keep pay schedules up. Other [employers] in the area pay much better with equal or better benefits."

“The salaries are not competitive with the private sector. The government is losing good employees to the private sector because it pays better.”

“When I began work for the federal government, I made a commitment to give 100% of my best efforts when on the job. I’ve been faithful to that promise. The federal government had a commitment to pay a fair salary that kept pace with inflation and the increased demands put on employees. This promise was not kept, and the loyalty and commitment of federal workers has suffered accordingly.”

“Unfortunately we have [employees] that get part-time jobs to make ends meet because of low salaries and high cost of living.”

“My years with the federal government have been, overall, very rewarding. However, when salary and benefits are compared to the private sector, for like positions, the federal government is light years apart.”

“I have had many good experiences in my career as a supervisor. I do have a problem with the engineering pay scales. Engineering pay is low and the government band aid to promote quickly to the journeyman level sends the young engineers the wrong message. I would like to see the pay adjusted and the quick promotion schemes deleted.”

“With . . . a pay scale that lags the civilian sector by light years, it is becoming extremely difficult not to succumb to the lure of the private sector and take the leap! “

“When I entered the government 8 years ago, I did so with a salary competitive with that which I had as a university professor. Every year since then my salary has fallen behind because of the salary cap on GM-15, step 10 salaries. I can only continue to subsidize the federal government so long.”

One of the positive comments was:

“I’m making a good income and enjoy my job—which is a lot more than some people [can say]—so I’m basically quite content and have no complaints.”

Managers and Supervisors

Sixty-three of the 70 comments about managers and supervisors were negative. The views of those who commented included a broad range of

issues such as questioning managers' or supervisors' competence, ethical behavior, and knowledge/abilities. Two questions in the questionnaire related to this issue. In question 10, 26 percent of all respondents (1,064 respondents) said the quality of their supervisors was worse or much worse than expected before starting work in the federal government and 31 percent (1,270 respondents) said that the quality was better or much better. In question 2, 16 percent (625 respondents) said they were dissatisfied with their immediate supervisors, while 70 percent (2,844 respondents) said they were satisfied. Several of the negative comments follow.

"Management in my experience has based their evaluations of work on whether or not they like you, not on your ability to do the work or handle the responsibility."

"Too many federal employees are promoted far beyond their level of incompetence [sic]. Managers are managers in name only. Too often higher grades lack an educational background to support their position."

"In the past eight years [my organization] has gone through five major (computer) systems changes, we presently have eight computer systems ongoing. The management buying this equipment does not have a clue what we do."

"The 'old-style' manager definitely plagues this office/agency. If it wasn't done that way in the past, it doesn't fly with management. The managers are very non-technical and computer illiterate . . . [and] statistical and mathematical skills are imperative. Our managers have none of these skills resulting in a poor end product. Thus far, 33 percent of our employees have resigned in 2 years. I will never work for the government again. It was a wasted two years for me. It's too bad the economy was equally in dire straights [sic], otherwise, my move would have been sooner."

"Every supervisor I've ever had was more dedicated to pleasing the boss and minimally concerned about doing the right thing. This approach or attitude I'm talking about applies in almost every aspect of managerial responsibility. I also have seen, over and over again, supervisors who have ducked responsibility, passed the buck, and generally caused their subordinates headaches and hassles for one reason, to cover their rear."

"From personal experience I feel the majority of supervisors (chiefs) are not qualified on a management level to head departments within the

government. I have experienced, for the majority of my employment, dealing with incompetent supervisors.”

“I am dismayed at the fact that first and second line supervisors can sabotage an employees’s career by disciplining them for the most petty of infractions. However, these same supervisors are immune to similar disciplinary treatment when the rank and file employees complain about mistreatment or violations by their supervisors. . . . The inequity here being that management can do no wrong, while rank and file employees are harassed and intimidated by vindictive supervisory/management personnel.”

One of the positive comments was:

“I feel my job gives back to me what I put into it. My government service has been rewarding and the supervisors I have been blessed with have been supportive of my career growth.”

**Benefits (Other Than
Health Insurance and
Annual/Sick Leave)**

Fifty of the 58 comments about benefits were negative and expressed concerns that federal benefits were inadequate, uncompetitive, and unstable. In comparison, 29 percent (1,186 respondents) of all respondents replied that their benefits were worse or much worse than expected before starting work in the federal government, and 28 percent (1,116 respondents) said the benefits were better or much better than expected. Some examples of the comments follow.

“A manager in any major corporation has a much . . . better retirement system that provides more retirement dollars at less cost to the employee.”

“The quality of employee entering the air traffic ranks is continually deteriorating due to a lack of competitive . . . benefits. The type of person needed to carry out ATC [Air Traffic Controller] duties can find more attractive offers in the private sector.”

“I worked for a private employer for 15 years before they moved. I had always heard about the benefits of working for the federal government. I am happy to have a job, but I have yet to see the benefits that I had always heard about.”

"I entered federal employment in September 1976 . . . , since that time, I have seen the pay and benefits erode from good to substandard when compared to the nongovernment sector."

"At this point, retirement benefits are the only incentive for me to remain in federal service. If these benefits are continually reduced (e.g., loss of Alternate Annuity), I will have little incentive to stay."

"The lack of an intermediate term disability plan is a problem area. Large corporations offer this to their employees, but not the government."

One of the positive comments was:

"I enjoy working for the federal government. The benefits, job security, and opportunities for promotions are the main factors for staying with the federal government."

Treatment of Employees

In this category, we coded 49 comments that dealt with the equity and fairness of how the government, agencies, management, or supervisors treated employees. The respondents had to make a comparison to another person or group for their comments to be included in this category. All but one of the comments were negative. The responses to question 4 about how often respondents had been treated fairly in assignments, training, performance ratings, awards, bonuses, and recognition add perspective to these comments (see fig. 1). The majority of all respondents said they had been treated fairly most of the time in relation to assignments, training, and performance ratings. But more than half (over 2,000 respondents) thought they had not been treated fairly most of the time when awards, bonuses, and recognition were given. Some of the written comments follow.

"The performance appraisals here are based on how many extra activities people are involved in (being safety monitor, etc.), and not on the quality of the production work done. I do excellent work, and my boss agrees, but that isn't reflected in my performance ratings. For now the benefits outweigh the problems, but some day the frustration (seeing coworkers who do very poor work getting better ratings) may get to me, and I may quit."

"[My] biggest complaint is the way promotions are made. Promotions seem to be political decisions based on favoritism, race and sex. Certain

candidates are 'groomed' for promotion or given education/training opportunities generally not afforded to others. This is extremely demoralizing."

"It is demoralizing for rank and file employees to see the front office all get outstanding ratings and big awards while the rest of us get fully successful ratings. But who cares?"

"I would like to comment on what I believe to be an inconsistency in the services and benefits available to federal employees. The two examples I have in mind are day care and exercise facilities. The availability of these facilities and the cost for their use varies by federal agency and geographical location within an agency. This strikes me as unequal treatment and leads me to believe that some federal employees are receiving more through their employment circumstances than others."

"I see a great deal of disparity between agencies with regard to the grade of virtually identical positions. My agency appears to be very conservative and I've seen many good employees move to other federal agencies - do the same work - and make more money."

Promotion and Award Processes

All but 2 of the 49 comments about promotion and award processes were negative. Some of the issues mentioned were preselection and the inability of the processes to ensure that selections are made on the basis of employees' qualifications. Putting these comments in context is difficult because none of the questions in the questionnaire asked specifically about promotion and award processes. Several questions—question 3; question 4, parts 3, 4, and 5; question 10, part 13; and question 18, parts 23 through 27—are related in that they deal with issues that could affect the processes or affect the results of the processes. For all these questions, there were substantial numbers of respondents who answered either positively or negatively. The comments below only help to explain why individual respondents may have answered the way that they did.

"Unfortunately, the seeming lack of incentive to be efficient has created a climate where promotions and job assignments are often based on the buddy system. I prefer a system where qualifications and talent are the prerequisites to advancement."

"One particular 'gripe' of employees here is the way in-house job opportunities are written. We can tell by the way it's written up whether

the job is really competitive or if there's already been preselection. One particular way this happens is that the announcement will state 'current experience.' Usually this means only persons are qualified that are presently working in that area. This disqualifies all employees who worked the same or like job 5 years ago. A great deal of time these jobs are written with 'screen out' statements, disqualifying persons who are quite capable and experienced."

"I enjoy my job, but my supervisor does not give fair evaluations if she doesn't like you, which affects your awards. Also, I've seen so much preselection for new jobs being created that it's a sin. Someone needs to investigate this."

"I am very dissatisfied with the promotion system within the federal government. People are not promoted based on their knowledge and capability but who they know."

"Some supervisors get away with promoting friends and favorite workers over the more qualified person. It seems as if the Personnel Department doesn't want to get involved."

Job Satisfaction or Dissatisfaction

Thirty-seven of the 46 comments about job satisfaction were positive. Enjoying their work or coworkers were some of the most frequent comments in this category. The results of question 12 on job satisfaction affirm the large number of positive comments in this category. Sixty-nine percent of all respondents (2,772 respondents) said they were generally to very satisfied with their jobs, 13 percent were generally to very dissatisfied, and the remaining 18 percent were as satisfied as dissatisfied. Several of the positive comments follow.

"Working in direct contact with the public is one of the most rewarding experiences; helping others is the underlying reason that I enjoy my work."

"Overall, I enjoy the work I do and feel the majority of my fellow employees feel the same. I feel my job is important . . . and I do the best job I possibly can."

"I love the work I do and the people I have met. I only wish I would have started with the federal government sooner. I encourage all young people to finish their education and look into careers with the federal government."

"I believe the department has given me job security, job opportunities, and the chance to achieve my BA degree in a manner that no other employer in this area could have. As a single parent raising four children, this job has been a blessing. I've always been proud of my job and employer for its willingness to assist an employee who is under hardship."

"I enjoy my job immensely."

One of the negative comments was:

"I like being on the evening shift, and the work is easy. Unfortunately, it's not very challenging."

**Federal Employment in
General**

All the 45 comments in this category were positive.⁸ They included topics such as the job itself, federal service, coworkers, and the importance of the job. Some of the comments follow.

"Overall, my federal career has been both stimulating and rewarding. There have been opportunities to travel, make salient programmatic input, and even to craft policy and procedures."

"I am very proud to be working for the U.S. government. I don't consider my position as a 'job' but also my way of contributing to the security assistance of our country. I feel that working for the government is a privilege, and I'm very thankful for the opportunity. In my organization, an employee has the opportunity to learn and grow. There is no reason for anyone to become stagnant."

"I have enjoyed being a federal employee, working for and with good hardworking people. My job has allowed me to work on some interesting projects and to meet very interesting people."

"I feel I was very fortunate to have the career I've had with the federal government. I came to work with only a high school diploma and hopes of becoming the best clerk typist ever hired. Today, I'm a GS-12 Personnel Specialist."

"I have been very satisfied with the agencies where I have worked. I feel there are a lot of hardworking, dedicated people working with the federal

⁸For a context to this category, see pp. 37-38 for further discussion of the "federal employment in general" category.

government. My work has always been appreciated. I have received many awards, including cash. Therefore, I believe if one works hard and well, appreciation will be given.”

Health Benefits

The 44 comments about health benefits were similar to those about other benefits. The comments were primarily that the health benefits were inadequate or uncompetitive. With the exception of one comment, all comments were negative. To add a context for these comments, 84 percent of all respondents (3,394 respondents) participated in the health insurance program and about 30 percent (1,186 respondents) said that benefits in general, i.e., not limited to health, were worse or much worse than expected before starting work in the federal government. (See questions 42 and 10, part 2.) Examples of the negative comments follow.

“Health benefits for a government worker do not match major private corporations. Even state governments have better health insurance systems.”

“The health benefits plan needs to be broken down and started over from scratch. Especially needed is a good dental plan, maybe even a separate one. People have more needs than just routine dental care.”

“I don’t like the way the health insurance is handled. I don’t mind paying my share bi-weekly, but it seems we pay more each year and get less coverage each year.”

“The health benefits program within the government appears to be aimed at keeping a myriad of insurance companies in business, rather than providing the best health care at the lowest possible cost. Dental care provisions are woefully deficient and eye care (optical lenses) coverage is slightly worse. Yearly cost of living raises are eaten up by yearly health insurance premium increases, losses of coverage, and increased red tape. Simplicity and efficiency are gone in the health care game.”

Training

Some issues identified in the written comments about training were the opportunities for and the amount, quality, and type of training given to federal employees. Thirty-six of the 41 comments in this category were negative. In comparison, about 24 percent of all respondents (981 respondents) that they had not participated in any training activities provided or paid for by their agencies within the past 2 years (question 7).

The majority of those who had received training replied that they were satisfied with it (question 8) and that the training had probably improved their ability to do their jobs (question 9). But respondents' comparison of the availability of training opportunities to their expectations before starting work in the federal government showed that many—about 30 percent or 1,184 respondents—believed training opportunities were worse or much worse than they had expected (question 10). Some of the 36 negative comments follow.

“Funding for training and education is inadequate at my agency. Tuition assistance to permit employees to take college-level courses would enhance their job performance in many areas.”

“The training I receive presently applies to things I must know about my job to perform it safely. I have received only a small amount of skills training. Some has been available in the past, but not much recently. I have obtained outside training from local schools, from my own efforts.”

“Job-specific training and retraining to keep pace with the changing state-of-the-art is often a problem even in specialized areas.”

One of the positive comments was:

“I am happy to be a federal government employee and I feel I have risen through the ranks of the GS grades to a better pay than I would have attained in private industry. The tuition assistance program got me started in college when I would otherwise not have been able to afford to go. The on-the-job training has also been good training.”

Prospects for Promotion

Thirty-five of the 41 comments in this category were negative. This was not surprising since one of the employment conditions that nearly half of all respondents found to be worse than expected was the opportunity to be promoted (see question 10, part 13). Some of the comments follow.

“It is too bad to see quality people leave federal employment frequently for better paying jobs with potential promotions.”

“The fact remains that I’m sitting at a dead-end job promotion-wise and in order to advance I will have to leave my field (secretarial) and move into another field, which I haven’t been trained for.”

“The elements which most degrade the quality of employment within the government for a working physicist [include] . . . inadequate advancement for technical positions forcing conversion to management or separation.”

One of the positive comments was:

“As a long-term career employee (over 23 years), I have generally been satisfied with the promotion opportunities available to me in the federal government and particularly in the contracting career field. I started out as a GS-2 and currently hold a GM-13 . . . position at the headquarters level of a major command. Throughout my career, I have received recognition for significant contributions to the positions I have occupied. In the pursuit of my chosen career, I have had to move (for better promotion opportunities) to five different [locations] in all. I consider this work experience of tremendous value to me in my current job.”

Other Comments

None of the issues identified in the “other comments” category was mentioned by more than 10 of the 400 sample respondents. Of the 220 comments in this category, most were negative. The comments that follow are intended to show the broad range of issues that respondents wrote about and do not reflect the number of times any one issue was mentioned.

“The federal government should keep trying to build a competent workforce with good morale and benefits.”

“Challenging work for engineers is becoming harder and harder to find within government.”

“If I knew 15 years ago what I know today I never! never! would have entered federal [service] as a career.”

“Working for the federal government was the worst decision of my life.”

“Overall, I am very satisfied with the work I do for the federal government. I function quite independently on the job I do, and am on a flextime basis which allows me to cover all aspects of the job which is a 24 hour a day operation.”

“My agency needs to adopt a more lenient part-time employment policy so that new parents are not forced to choose between parenthood and a career.”

“My agency is a grass roots agency that works directly with landowners one on one. Twenty years ago we spent about 60% of our time working with the landowner and 40% working to document our 60% for Washington. Today it is more than reversed. I believe we spend 60% of our time documenting studies and such for Washington and less than 40% of our time in the field.”

“Minorities and women are hired because we must diversify our workforce. However, as a rule no attempt is made to assist these people to move up. It's as though they (we) should be grateful for the job and have no aspirations.”

“The best way to keep highly motivated and productive workers is to provide them with adequate equipment and support, pleasant work environments, ready access to supplies and minor equipment, and a feeling of recognition and appreciation. All of these are rare in many government organizations.”

“Although I have not, as yet, compared my retirement plan (FERS) against others, I am very comfortable with it. It is a very good reason for me to continue with the government. The Donated Leave program came through for me in a time of need and I am thankful for that program.”

“It is indefensible how political appointees are allowed to convert from their initial 'appointive' status to high level career positions (with minimal or non-existent skills or proven capabilities) at the expense of career workers with demonstrated, proven abilities.”

Questionnaire Survey Methodology

The objective of our questionnaire was to learn about federal employees' experiences in working for the government. We sought to determine their attitudes about their jobs, future career plans, pay and benefits issues, and federal employment in general. By taking a "snapshot" of federal workers' views toward their work, we hoped to develop quantitative data on the state of the federal workforce that would be useful to employment policy decisionmakers and would identify matters of concern to workers that could be the subjects of further exploration and more in-depth analyses.

Sampling and Survey Methodology

Because we wanted the survey to include employees governmentwide in all federal occupations and grade levels, we selected our sample from the Central Personnel Data File maintained by the Office of Personnel Management. The file includes employment information on federal workers in most agencies, the major exclusions being Members and employees of Congress, the Judicial Branch, and the United States Postal Service. At the time we planned our survey, the latest file was dated September 30, 1990. It contained information on 1,676,078 full- and part-time permanent employees, including the Senior Executive Service. We did not independently verify the information in the file.

From the file, we randomly selected 5,255 employees as our preliminary sample. We then excluded employees from the sample who were located in foreign countries (because of the difficulty in forwarding and receiving questionnaires by mail in some foreign locations) or for whom insufficient identifying information was available. Others were excluded because information we subsequently obtained showed they had retired, resigned, transferred, or died, or were on extended leave after September 1990. In total, we eliminated 506 employees from the sample, leaving 4,749 persons to whom questionnaires were delivered. See table III.1.

The file does not contain employee addresses. Therefore, we had to depend on each employee's personnel office, as identified in the file, to mail the questionnaires. The personnel offices completed checklists indicating the employees to whom questionnaires were delivered. The checklists also gave the reasons why some questionnaires could not be delivered (e.g., retirements, resignations, and transfers).

We pretested the questionnaire with 12 employees before mailing. They included white- and blue-collar employees, supervisors and nonsupervisors, an employee with 2 years of service, and employees within 5 years of retirement. This helped to assure us that the questions

could be interpreted correctly by many types of employees and that employees could provide the information requested.

The questionnaires were forwarded to the personnel offices in May 1991, and a follow-up mailing to nonrespondents was made in July 1991. We received 4,039 usable replies—an 85-percent completion rate—during the spring and summer of 1991.⁹ Based on the 4,039 usable replies, the survey results can be projected to represent approximately 1.3 million federal employees. Table III.1 summarizes the questionnaire returns.

Table III.1: Analysis of Questionnaire Returns

	Number
Total employees sampled	5,255
Employees deleted from sample	
Located in foreign countries	55
Insufficient identifying information ^a	85
Total questionnaires mailed	5,115
Questionnaires subsequently deleted from the survey	
Ineligible recipients ^b	366
Total questionnaires delivered	4,749
Questionnaires returned incomplete	1
Questionnaires not returned	693
Refused to participate	16
Usable questionnaires returned	4,039

^aThe records obtained from the Office of Personnel Management's data file either did not contain the individuals' names or list their personnel office.

^bIncludes individuals who resigned, retired, transferred to another agency, were on extended leave, deceased, were outside the United States, or had some other reason for not being sent a questionnaire.

Analysis of Data

We reviewed and edited the completed questionnaires and made consistency checks on the data. Also, as discussed on page 35, we analyzed and categorized the comments written at the end of the questionnaire by a random sample of 400 of 1,898 respondents who made comments. We did not test the validity of the respondents' answers or the comments they made.

⁹The completion rate is the usable replies taken as a percentage of the total questionnaires mailed minus undelivered questionnaires and those sent to ineligible recipients.

Because the survey used random sampling, the results obtained are subject to some uncertainty or sampling error. The sampling error consists of two parts: confidence levels and ranges. The confidence level indicates the degree of confidence that can be placed in the estimates derived from the sample. The range is the upper and lower limits between which the actual universe estimates may be found. Our sample was designed so that the sampling error would not be greater than 5 percent at the 95-percent confidence level. Thus, if all federal employees in our survey universe had been surveyed, the chances are 95 out of 100 that the results obtained would not differ from our sample estimates by more than 5 percent.

We administered the questionnaires and analyzed the responses between May 1991 and April 1992 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

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