

2008 Federal Human Capital Survey EPA Results

Every two years, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management conducts the Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) Government-wide to gauge employee perceptions on workplace conditions and the state of various areas of human capital management. On January 8, 2009, OPM announced the results of the FHCS conducted in August and September of 2008. The Environmental Protection Agency's 2008 results were strong, with no significant decreases in positive responses for any questions, and increases of greater than 2% in 47% of question responses. EPA employees indicated significant increases in their belief that EPA rewards employees who do a good job, provide high quality products and customer service, and who are creative and innovative. Our positive responses were higher than Government-wide average responses for 80% of the FHCS questions, and were higher by 6% or more for 13 questions. EPA results were particularly higher than Government-wide averages for rewarding employees, supporting work life balance, use of flexible schedules, and satisfaction with pay and benefits.

How did EPA's 2008 results compare with those of 2006?

Our results are very similar to 2 years ago. No questions saw significant drops in EPA positive responses from 2 years ago. 90% of EPA responses were higher than in 2006, with only one question (on satisfaction with retirement benefits) seeing a slight drop of more than 1% (1.6%). Positive scores for 35 questions rose by 2% or more, 16 of which rose by 3% or more. EPA saw significant increases (above 4.5%) in positive responses to five questions related to the use of flexible work arrangements, benefits, and rewarding of employees.

Which questions' positive responses rose the most compared to 2 years ago?

- Question 73: *How satisfied are you with teleworking/telecommuting?* → 6.2% increase
- Question 68: *How satisfied are you with the Federal Savings Account program?* → 6.2% increase
- Question 57: *How satisfied are you with the recognition you receive for doing a good job?* → 5.6% increase
- Question 25: *Employees are rewarded for providing high quality products and services to customers.* → 5.2% increase
- Question 26: *Creativity and innovation are rewarded.* → 4.6% increase

Overall, what has been the trend with EPA's results for the four times the FHC Surveys have been administered?

From 2002 to 2004, the Agency's positive responses on nearly all questions rose significantly. From 2004 to 2006 overall positive responses for EPA decreased for 54% of the questions, though these decreases were mostly slight (1-4%). In 2008, the Agency's responses held steady: all questions had similar or higher percentages of positive responses relative to those in 2006. 47% of 2008 results saw positive increases over 2006 of 2% or greater.

How did EPA compare to the rest of the Government?

EPA positive responses were higher than Government-wide average responses for 80% of all FHCS questions. They were higher by 2% or more for 60% of the questions, and by 6% or higher for 13 questions.

For which questions were we the most above the Government-wide averages?

EPA positive responses exceeded Government-wide averages by more than 10% for five questions:

- Question 73: *How satisfied are you with alternative work schedules?* → 27.7% above
- Question 25: *Employees are rewarded for providing high quality products and services.* → 13.6% above
- Question 68: *How satisfied are you with the FSA?* → 14% above
- Question 26: *Creativity and innovation are rewarded.* → 12.9% above
- Question 62: *Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your pay?* → 10.2% above

For which questions did EPA score behind the Government-wide averages?

EPA positive responses were lower than the Government-wide averages by 2% or more for 15 questions, and by 4% or more for 9 of those. Only four questions had positive responses that lagged the Government-wide average by 6% or more:

- Question 66: *How satisfied are you with life insurance benefits?* → 7.5% below
- Question 47: *I can disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule or regulation without fear of reprisal.* → 6.2% below
- Question 44: *Complaints, disputes or grievances are resolved fairly in my work unit.* → 6.0% below
- Question 51: *My training needs are assessed.* → 6.0% below

EPA results for each of these questions also lagged the Government-wide averages in the 2006 survey. However, the gaps between EPA results and the Government-wide averages in 2008 have narrowed for each of these four questions. In addition, the gap for Question 23, *In my work unit steps are taken to deal with a poor performer who cannot or will not improve*, which was 6% in 2006, shrank to 4.8% in 2008.

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