



YOUR FEEDBACK IS IMPORTANT!



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Actions Taken Based on Federal Employee Viewpoint
Survey (FEVS) Employee Feedback

Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)

BEA employees' dedication to collaboration and innovation is a huge part of how they make BEA a better place to work. BEA convenes Change Committees and councils, comprised of employees at all levels of the organization, to solicit additional input and to make recommendations to shape the future of OneBEA. In addition, BEA often conducts follow-up surveys, focus groups, and town hall-style events to foster collaborative management and employee engagement. Frequent messaging to staff keeps them informed of bureau happenings and contributes to an atmosphere of sharing and partnership.

Recent initiatives have focused on encouraging bureau-wide collaboration, including the offering of a OneBEA Training Program, a series of interactive sessions devoted to the roles played by each part of the bureau in meeting BEA's mission. Change Committees have recommended enhancements of BEA's physical space, including the creation of a nursing mother's room and employee lounge, as well as the expansion of telework and Alternative Work Schedules (AWS) to ease the work stress of commuting. In 2020, BEA followed-up the 2019 launch of an Individual Development Plan and Training Needs Assessment with a 90-day review of supervisor training options and requirements to better align current programs with training needs. In addition, BEA is sharing metrics on employee recognition with bureau leadership to help supervisors and management leverage existing tools to enhance acknowledgement of achievements. BEA is also increasing management's communication across all levels of leadership.

Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)

In response to FEVS results, BIS created an employee engagement focus group comprised of staff from each office in the bureau to address the 2019 FEVS results. The focus group held four sessions January – March 2020 to identify what's going well with BIS, identify areas for improvement and prioritize these issues via group discussion and review of the FEVS results. The focus group developed specific recommendations presented to the bureau leadership on how to best address the FEVS results.



Recommendations were compiled into an action plan with BIS champions from various offices and timelines for completion. The action plan focused on the key areas of awards & recognition, telework, comp & flex time and change management. BIS leadership is committed to implementing these recommendations throughout the remainder of the year. Additionally, BIS developed communications regarding the privacy of FEVS responses and a snapshot of 2019 FEVS results to distribute to employees. These communications are slated to be distributed prior to the survey launch date in a specific effort to increase the 2020 FEVS response rate.

Bureau of the Census (CENSUS)

As a result of the 2019 FEVS feedback received, several divisions in CENSUS created engagement teams to address divisional issues. Additionally, CENSUS reviewed grade structure for certain occupational series to address fairness concerns.

Economic Development Administration (EDA)

Following FEVS feedback, EDA held informal listening sessions around various topics and established Communities of Practice to encourage better communication and information sharing; implemented employee exit surveys and meetings with the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Development & Chief Operating Officer; made coaching resources available to all EDA employees; discussed

opportunities to initiate and/or participate in various Affinity Groups; initiated “Hot Topics” – a weekly sent to all employees, sharing organizational updates, various announcements, available trainings, virtual tools, etc; and held cultural social events to embrace diversity and inclusion.

International Trade Administration (ITA)

ITA is integrating employee feedback from the FEVS to develop its knowledge management (KM) capabilities and empower employees to share their experiences and insights more effectively. As part of ITA’s KM efforts, ITA is engaging in succession planning to identify and develop a cadre of leaders and critical talent prepared to fulfil key roles across various organizational levels and carry forward the organization’s mission.



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In support of its leadership and KM development, ITA will host a three-day, in-depth training on KM concepts, tools, and technique. Training participants will serve as KM Champions in their business units and will plan and design a Community of Practice to help embed KM principles in ITA's daily work. KM Champions will also identify, shape, and execute an initial set of pilot projects to address challenges within their business units drawing upon knowledge and experience.

Additionally, ITA is migrating its online encyclopedia of administrative information, WikITA, created in 2016 to a new SharePoint Online platform in 2020. The platform will allow for new tools to improve ITA’s knowledge-sharing efforts. As a result of ITA’s KM initiatives, employees will be able to develop and maximize their expertise and enhance their performance.

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

NIST values the employee feedback received through the FEVS and is taking active steps to improve analysis of results. To improve NIST’s ability to analyze FEVS data and develop actions plans, the FEVS-Analysis and Results Tool (ART) designed by the NIH was piloted in a few Operating Units (OU) to gain experience with the tool and obtain feedback from customers. NIST also recorded a presentation on how to use the FEVS-ART and interpret the data for use by other OUs. NIST has received highly positive feedback from the OUs and plan to implement again at NIST in FY21.

Office of Inspector General (OIG)

In 2019, OIG partnered with the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) to gauge employee engagement and the work climate within OIG. The study is being conducted to explore issues raised in the 2019 FEVS. OIG also developed the 2020 OIG Strategic Plan containing strategic priorities to



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promote positive change and maximize the value of our work. Moreover, internal information sharing is supported, making cross-functional and cross-location communications an integral part of performing the work of the OIG. Some of these internal communication strategies include: the IG and Deputy IG meeting with teams across all of OIG; rebuilding the intranet as a productivity and communications tool; and providing staff with access to information on the high-level status and nature of OIG work.

OIG also remains committed to providing environments that support work-life balance. Some strategies that they have worked on is expanding the telework policy; exploring opportunities to improve upon the current 100 percent telework environment; increased availability of alternative work schedules; and implementing “Fit Time” Policy to motivate employees to voluntarily adopt healthier behaviors, and provide opportunities and a supportive environment to foster positive lifestyle changes. Lastly OIG is increasing retention and employee engagement through the new employee recognition program, the IG Awards, and retention and relocation incentives.

Office of the Secretary (OS)

In response to their analysis and findings for the FEVS related to trust, the *OS Office of Acquisition Management (OAM)* managers participated in a one-day team building workshop facilitated by Franklin Covey, covering the subject of “trust” and how it is a critical component for organizations in managing change and executing strategy. The session focused on five waves of trust, to include: self, relationship, organizational, market, and social. OAM also conducted a deep dive into their FEVS results and gave employees an opportunity to provide input on efforts to increase employee engagement, empowerment, involvement, ownership, and accountability in improving operations in the organization. The deep dive identified an outdated work schedule policy as a point of staff frustration that OAM evaluated and determined was no longer needed.



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The *OS Office of Civil Rights (OCR)* conducted a FEVS-related brainstorming session during the office’s annual off-site retreat. As a result, an OCR working group consisting of six employees came together to “refine” the brain storming ideas and developed concrete steps that OCR could implement to help raise identified scores. During calendar year 2020, the working group has developed action plans and implemented some of the strategies such as delivering a virtual educational briefing to OCR staff on the Merit System Principles and the Prohibited Personnel Actions. OCR also plans to purchase the book *The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace* (by Gary Chapman and Paul White) for OCR staff and will discuss the book as a group. Additionally, OCR will dedicate a portion of a staff meeting in late summer to discuss performance awards, and specifically the criteria for receiving a Quality Step Increase as another action identified in the OCR FEVS action plan.

In the *OS Office of Facilities and Environmental Quality (OFEQ)*, a working group was created to discuss optimal solutions for the three main areas of issue, and they have started to implement changes, including revamping All Hands meetings so that they are much more interactive. With the pandemic, OFEQ had the opportunity to have All Hands meetings every two weeks to keep employees engaged. They developed ice breakers that build on personal interests and share information with others that are offered via PDF. Newsletters are also done every other week, where they interview a handful of employees to learn how they’re doing during this time.



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The *OS Office of Financial Management (OFM)* had three focus areas for FY20 as a result of FEVS feedback: employee recognition, improved communication, and training opportunities. OFM developed

a Performance Recognition document outlining requirements and necessary approvals for different categories of employee performance recognition (eg. Shout-Outs, Time-Off Awards, Cash Awards). The OFM work hour policy was updated and pending approval/release. Training is encouraged in OFM by giving employees a \$1,000 training budget annually and by sharing lists of free training opportunities to all employees.

Acknowledging the importance of employee feedback and engagement, the *OS Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM)* conducted focus group sessions to do a deeper dive of results and continued the Employee Engagement (EE) Team efforts to motivate, inspire, and retain OS OHRM employees. Activities/initiatives

include monthly celebrations to recognize birthdays, farewells, and Federal service milestones; monthly Peer Recognition Awards Program recognizing employees nominated by their peers for going above and beyond; “Employee of the Quarter” and “Employee of the Year” awards;



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and individual development sessions (i.e. Toastmasters presentation) to name a few. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the OHRM EE Team kept employees engaged through weekly virtual events including: Meditation Monday, Tidbit Tuesday, Workout Wednesday, and Happy Hour Friday. Leadership also kept in touch with employees through virtual bi-weekly All Hands Meetings. The EE Team has received a lot of positive feedback from OS OHRM employees including ideas on how to improve the program, which will be considered as future strategies are developed.

In line with employee feedback, the *OS Office of Security (OSY)*, completed historical trend analysis of results dating back to 2013 across both employee engagement as well as diversity and inclusion. A Senior Leader Offsite was held in FY19 to discuss historical trends and ways to maintain/improve. Employee Engagement and Diversity and Inclusion goals were added into performance plans for all supervisors beginning in FY19 and the OSY Employee Engagement Committee was tasked with gathering feedback and reporting to management on employee engagement. OSY also updated their Mission/Vision/Goals with the objective to more prominently focus on “One-OSY” and continued quarterly employee feedback sessions and senior management exit interviews with departing employees.

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)

As a result of the FEVS, the USPTO has established an action planning requirement at the Business Unit level, where business unit leadership must develop action plans, including evaluation measures, for targeted FEVS items. USPTO has adopted a “Continuous Listening” communication strategy as part of their overall marketing for both the FEVS and their own internal People Survey and corresponding pulse surveys. As in prior years, USPTO will leverage all communication modes in their marketing efforts, including the use of employee testimonials to reinforce the value of their input.