



Department of Commerce

Actions Taken Based on Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Feedback



Table of Contents

About this Report | 3

Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) | 4

Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) | 5

Census Bureau (Census) | 6

Economic Development and Administration (EDA) | 7

International Trade Administration (ITA) | 8

Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) | 9

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) | 10

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) | 11

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) | 12

Office of the Secretary (OS)| 13

Office of the Inspector General (OIG) | 14

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) | 15

About This Report

FEVS Background

Annually, the Department of Commerce (DOC) conducts the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) administered by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and DOC employees across every bureau are invited to participate. The survey contains a number of core items (89 for 2022), which are common across agencies and often ask for employees to respond using a Likert scale. The items cover topics such as satisfaction with senior leadership, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and overall work experience.

The FEVS allows employees to share their perceptions of their agency and employment experience. DOC leadership analyzes FEVS results at the Department, bureau, and office levels to inform decision-making and to allow organizations to see where improvements might be made.

Every year the bureaus work to develop and submit action plans based on these analyses. Contained in these plans are specific actions for improving their scores based on specific focus areas. This report shows recent actions taken based on feedback received from FEVS by each of the Commerce bureaus to address various areas that they have identified as being of interest.

Executive Summary

In 2022, bureaus across the Department took critical steps to address employee concerns. Some common focus areas for bureau action included managing workload and learning and development.

Bureaus implemented several strategies to provide employees with necessary support to mitigate workload concerns. BEA, for example, evaluated the processes and documentation related to backfilling roles, providing support to employees to accomplish their mission during personnel transitions. NOAA and EDA formed working groups to evaluate their staffing needs and increased hiring efforts to increase bench strength.

Several bureaus employed strategies to enhance their learning and development functions. OS, NOAA, and USPTO implemented several different approaches, including individual development plans, competency assessments, lunch and learns, and mentorship programs to foster a culture of continuous learning.

Throughout this document, you will find additional information about how each bureau is using FEVS results to drive organizational change and enhance the employee experience.

Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)

Based on the FEVS results, BEA selected two key items or areas to focus on: creating reasonable workloads for employees and involving employees in decision making.

Create Balanced Workloads

*BEA observed that **74%** of their respondents reported agreement when asked if their **workload was reasonable**. (question 5 on the 2021 FEVS)*

Actions Taken: Based on the FEVS results BEA launched an initiative to review processes and documentation around hiring, resulting in a bureau-wide hiring effort, an updated external hiring web page, and a more centralized hiring process. BEA also added more employee positions in areas where they are most needed to accomplish their mission and invested in contractor support to keep recruitment actions moving swiftly. BEA is also encouraging managers and supervisors to be more mindful of having backup personnel for critical tasks.

Additionally, BEA has launched an Individual Development Plan program for employees, a training needs assessment, and a 90-day review of leadership training options for supervisors for enhanced leadership development programs and resources. BEA enhanced employee telework experiences by providing additional hardware and technical instructions for operating said hardware. In order to alleviate concerns with current and future workloads, BEA is also addressing gaps in process documentation by conducting self-assessments, across program areas, to identify areas of risk, and developing strategies based on best practices that address those risks.

Impact: BEA is actively helping to alleviate workload concerns, providing the physical resources (equipment, etc.) and additional human resources in hiring to make workloads more manageable. BEA employees continue to critically evaluate their processes to help each employee perform their workload as efficiently as possible.

Improve Employee Efficacy

*BEA observed that **76%** of their respondents agreed that employees were **satisfied with their involvement in decisions that affect their work?** (question 39 on the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: In 2021, BEA convened a Change Committee and conducted a follow-on FEVS survey. This survey focused on staff involvement with processes and decisions that affect their work. BEA work units also conducted a self-assessment of communication practices on production/project schedules to identify areas for improvement while leveraging staff feedback and talent.

Impact: Employees are actively involved in providing feedback into the operations of BEA. BEA is actively evaluating how it communicates decisions and takes in feedback from employees, to best keep employees informed and involved.

Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)

Based on the FEVS results, BIS selected two key items or areas to focus on: recognizing differences in employee performance in a meaningful way, as well as improving perceptions of employees that the results of the FEVS will be used to make BIS a better place to work.

Recognize Differences in Performance

*BIS observed that only **56%** of their respondents reported agreement when asked if In their work unit, **differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way.** (question 12 for the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: The Cheers for Peers or High Five program awarded a total of 17 BIS recipients in the fiscal year of 2022 and is on track to continue these efforts for fiscal year 2023. In 2021, BIS created recommendations based on employee input and feedback from the continued work with the Innovation Program- developing new rewards that recognize the contributions of employees across BIS.

Impact: BIS employees are receiving recognition in their work with the distribution of awards. BIS is adding methods and awards to continue to recognize new aspects of performance.

Communicate FEVS Impact

*BIS observed that only **47%** of their respondents agree that the **results of the FEVS will be used to make their agency a better place to work.** (question 24 on the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: In 2022, BIS implemented the BIS-wide mentor/mentee program, based on the FEVS results and the BIS Innovation Program feedback which serves as a fundamental resource to encourage career development for BIS employees. BIS also initiated a DOC-wide Communication Broadcast for the CFO council mentoring program with a focus on leadership, career development and mentoring sessions. In 2021, BIS provided additional COVID-19 pandemic support based on feedback from the FEVS, improving vital IT support and remote communications abilities. These efforts included providing additional, up to date, hardware, and equipment to BIS employees as well as hosting several learning events.

Impact: Based on the FEVS results BIS employees have more mentoring and career development opportunities. BIS employees also have access to better equipment and other resources that were provided based on findings from the FEVS results.

Census Bureau

Based on the FEVS results, Census selected two key items or areas to focus on: providing more training and development opportunities for employees to improve their skills, as well as protecting employees from health and safety hazards on the job.

Optimize Training and Development

*Census observed that **68%** of their respondents reported agreement when asked if they were given a **real opportunity to improve my skills in their organization** (question 1 for the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: With a focus on the development of employees, Census supported the upskilling of data science knowledge by adding content to its Data Science Training Program, which is part of the Statistical Data Modernization (SDM) project. Census also implemented leadership-level training programs, working to target critical skills and to promote key competency development. Census has also worked to provide relevant training content to all employees through the Percipio training platform.

In 2021, Census established the Census Corporate University (CCU) which maintains partnerships with Prince George's Community College, University of Maryland College Park, and George Washington University – offering employees continuous learning opportunities in a variety of subjects. Census also created a new employee orientation and onboarding program that facilitate learning and mentoring opportunities for employees so that they are prepared and invested in on day one.

Impact: Census employees now have more trainings and learning resources available to them, offered in a variety of platforms and across a variety of subjects so that employees of all tenure or levels can improve their skills and develop in their roles.

Improve Health and Safety Policies

*Census observed that **73%** of their respondents agreed that employees were **protected from health and safety hazards on the job** (question 21 on the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: In 2022, Census worked to establish and implement health and safety policies for the Census Reimagined Effort, updating policy in accordance with the Congressional Affairs Office (CAO). These policies added new working precautions, up-to-date building layouts, and outlined procedures to prioritize the health and safety of every Census employee. Census also continued their efforts with the Ready to Return communication effort - to facilitate transparency and understanding as employees begin in the re-location to Census Bureau facilities from virtual work settings.

Impact: Census established and implemented new policies with special consideration for employees transitioning from telework to in-person work locations. Each of these efforts prioritize the health and safety of Census employees and provides up-to-date communications and resources necessary to reduce hazards encountered on the job.

Economic Development Administration (EDA)

Based on FEVS results, EDA selected the following areas for improvement: alleviating unreasonable workloads of their employees and addressing poor performers within the organization.

Create Balanced Workloads

*EDA observed that only **54%** of their respondents reported agreement when asked if they **their workload is reasonable** (question 5 for the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: Following supplemental funding to support CARES and ARP, EDA hired term employees and contractors with the goal of balancing increased workloads. EDA continues to assess staffing needs and mission requirements by analyzing potential gaps and office workforce profiles. Additionally, EDA has established Office Workforce and Learning sessions with the leadership teams to further develop actionable plans, determine best practices, and formulate new strategies in support of future programs.

Impact: As a result of hiring additional staff, EDA has increased the level of support provided to its current workforce. This in turn has brought greater balance to the growing work demands leading to an improved employee experience.

Identify Performance Opportunities

*EDA observed that only **44%** of their respondents agreed that **steps are taken to deal with a poor performer who cannot or will not improve** (question 10 on the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: EDA strengthened individual and organizational learning by 1) piloting office learning plans in both HQ and regional offices that increased collaboration and knowledge exchange; 2) launching a new EDA Grants Manual with an associated learning campaign to begin evening-out grants performance standards; 3) implementing a Leadership & Development Coaching program with Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) and subsequently developing an in-house leadership development program; and 4) encouraging staff to incorporate individual development plans (IDPs) to their performance period. Additionally, EDA developed a Performance Management Guide/Toolkit for Supervisors and provided additional training and coaching on performance management and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA).

Impact: The actions highlighted above strengthened EDAs supervisory staff to elevate best practices into their team operations and into how they approach performance management for earlier interventions to poor performance.

International Trade Administration (ITA)

Based on the FEVS results, ITA selected two key items or areas to focus on: fostering employees' comfort to disclose suspected violations without fear of reprisal, as well as communicating with employees so that they are informed on what is going on with ITA.

Communicate Organizational Plans

*ITA observed that **68%** of their respondents agreed that employees were **satisfied with the information they receive from management on what's going on in their organization?** (question 40 on the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: In 2021, ITA gathered data via initiating surveys and facilitating thirteen focus groups. These efforts were followed with three information sessions focusing on the results of the FEVS and findings from the focus groups. In these sessions, ITA informed their employees on current state operations and communicated managements' plans regarding FEVS results, plans for a hybrid work environment, and planned revisions on telework policies.

ITA also developed a FEVS dashboard to all their employees that transforms the ability to share data in real time, allowing immediate access to survey results and analysis.

Impact: Employees are now better informed on the strategic plans of ITA and have access to real time data from the FEVS, increasing transparency around trends within ITA.

Improve Organizational Culture

*ITA observed that **72%** of their respondents reported agreement when asked if they **can disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule or regulation without fear of reprisal** (question 8 for the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: To support learning, ITA developed and launched instructor-led trainings covering topics such as government ethics and whistleblower protection. ITA reviewed, updated, and published information related to the protected disclosures of waste, fraud, and abuse on WikITA, the Inspector General Page. In 2021, ITA established the Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Council (DIAC) to help foster a work environment with a deliberate focus on acceptance, education, and inclusion. The DIAC formally serves as an advisory body to the ITA's senior most leadership and works to promote greater awareness and cultural sensitivity to the tenants of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Impact: ITA provided trainings designed to facilitate understanding and internal conversations for the processes and rights of ITA employees to disclose information. ITA also worked to further develop their culture in DEIA efforts that foster the perceptions of security and safety of ITA employees.

Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)

Based on the FEVS results, MBDA selected one key item or area to focus on: creating opportunities for MBDA employees to use their talents in the workplace.

Utilize Employee Talents

*MBDA observed that **70%** of their respondents reported agreement when asked if their **talents are used well in the workplace**. (question 6 for the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: In 2021, MBDA took efforts to provide employees with opportunities to operate at higher levels and pursue management level competencies. These efforts included providing additional trainings focused on supervisory competencies and skills for interested staff. MBDA also opened opportunities for interested employees to work in temporary supervisory roles in the Office of Business Development (OBD) and the Office of Legislative, Education and Intergovernmental Affairs (OLEIA). Further, MBDA instituted 120-day rotational supervisory details where employees can work in a management role and develop leadership interests. MBDA also began to schedule weekly all-hands meetings by operating unit, giving employees a chance to engage with leadership while providing them the opportunity to lead these meetings.

Impact: MBDA employees have more opportunities for taking on management positions in temporary and rotational supervisor positions. Employee led All Hands also provide an opportunity for MBDA employees interested in management to lead meetings and provide opportunities to engage more with top leadership.

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

Based on the FEVS results, NIST selected two key items or areas to focus on: fostering employees' comfort to disclose suspected violations without fear of reprisal, and improving the perceptions of employees that the results of the FEVS will be used to make NIST a better place to work.

Improve Organizational Culture

*NIST observed that **75%** of their respondents reported agreement when asked if they **can disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule or regulation without fear of reprisal.** (question 8 for the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: NIST created, and publicized through a series of marketing efforts, a permanent Ombuds office. The Ombuds Program is intended to support a more inclusive and just work environment by providing members of the NIST community with access to an Organizational Ombuds – a neutral person who works to facilitate the informal resolution of work-related conflict; is independent from compliance related functions or services; and provides an opportunity for confidential assistance.

In 2021, NIST also highlighted related FEVS topics via NIST-wide email notices, town halls, and other sources. Through these efforts, NIST was able to outline topics related to equal employment protections and the processes for reporting workplace discrimination. Town halls increased leadership participation and opened these topics up for conversation and interaction with NIST employees across all organization units and levels. NIST Supervisors were also able to share and address workplace issues in the internal iNET page with other staff, serving as a forum for information and conversations with other NIST employees.

Impact: NIST educated staff on reporting options and build trust with supervisors to instill comfort for reporting issues. NIST provided resources for this information as well as an unbiased personnel to be able to confide in.

Communicate FEVS Impact

*NIST observed that only **52%** of their respondents agreed that **the results of this survey will be used to make their agency a better place to work.** (question 24 on the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: NIST expanded the FEVS iNET page to share more detailed results. This page is hosted on the internal network for NIST and makes FEVS information available to all NIST employees. In 2021, NIST also conducted follow-up meetings with their individual operating units on potential action plans in response to individual FEVS results. These meetings allowed NIST to strategically incorporate FEVS findings and intended actions across units, and to share these operating unit activities in response to FEVS survey results. These actions increased transparency as it relates to FEVS results and actions, while providing necessary resources for achieving strategic results across the entire bureau.

Impact: NIST increased transparency of FEVS results and actions across the bureau. NIST engaged each operating unit to elicit feedback and work to provide communications across all employees.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

Based on the FEVS results, NOAA selected two key items or areas to focus on: addressing the perception of reasonable workload for employees as well as helping supervisors to better support employee development in their work units.

Create Balanced Workloads

*NOAA observed that **61%** of their respondents reported agreement when asked if **their workload was reasonable**. (question 5 for the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: In 2021, NOAA launched the NOAA Workforce Burnout Survey to help identify the key drivers of burnout and increase federal staffing levels to address workload challenges. From this effort, NOAA established the Workforce Burnout Working Group to help understand and provide continued insights into the underlying factors contributing to widespread burnout at NOAA. NOAA also focused on the work-life balance of employees, expanding telework policies and implementing a Mindful NOAA community of practice group that offers mindfulness practices, educational opportunities, and resources to improve workplace culture by enhancing employee health, resilience, performance, and leadership.

Impact: NOAA Launched the Workforce Burnout Survey to help identify the extent and key drivers of burnout and increase federal staffing levels to address workload challenges – resulting in an increase in hiring and the implementation of additional support resources like the wellness program.

Focus on Employee Development

*NOAA observed that **85%** of their respondents agreed that **supervisors in their work unit support employee development**. (question 27 on the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: NOAA launched two leadership development programs, the Foundational Leadership Development Program (FLDP) for GS 1-8 and pay band equivalents and the Mid-Career Leadership Development Program (MCLDP) for GS 9-12 and pay band equivalents. The leadership programs provide employees with career long training, ensuring that NOAA's workforce is prepared to meet current and future organizational needs. Units within NOAA implemented a workplan for Learning Liaisons including Individual Development Plan (IDP) training, which help NOAA employees become more efficient in their work and offer resources that help employees manage their workloads. To help keep employees informed and up to date on these resources, NOAA started a quarterly newsletter, conducted town halls and to elicit the feedback of their employees, implemented "Tea-Time with the Office and Deputy Director" for non-supervisory employees to speak directly with leadership in an open forum setting.

Impact: To foster an environment of life-learning where employees have the resources, tools, and support at all career levels. NOAA implemented a new mentoring program where a more experienced employee guides, counsels, and advises a junior employee for their overall growth and development. NOAA increased feedback opportunities with leadership.

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

Based on the FEVS results, NTIA selected two key items or areas to focus on: increasing work-life balance as it relates to supervisors supporting employee life outside of work, as well as expanding training and development opportunities for employees to improve their skills.

Support Work-Life Balance

*NTIA observed that **89%** of their respondents reported agreement when asked if their **supervisor supports their need to balance work and other life issues**. (question 25 for the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: NTIA conducted a Return-to-Office (RTO) survey to get more information and insights for how NTIA can best accommodate remote workers and ease the transition of employees back into the workplace. Based on these results, NTIA revised and implemented new telework/remote work policies and guidance. Building on this desire to support work-life balance, NTIA provided trainings to all employees and managers on trust, helping them to navigate their interactions within the workplace in a manner conducive to work-life balance and work life flexibility.

Impact: NTIA implemented policies and practices that provide a supportive and flexible working environment conducive to better employee work-life balance.

Improve Upskilling Opportunities

*NTIA observed that **77%** of their respondents agreed that employees were **given a real opportunity to improve their skills in their organization**. (question 1 on the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: In an effort to bolster opportunities for employees to improve their skills, NTIA implemented and managed FirstNet Authority-wide developmental programs, including PIVOT (short-term/part-time projects). Further, NTIA launched an internal mentoring program to encourage employee development and provide employees with an opportunity to network and grow at NTIA. Combined with these efforts, NTIA is working to update their recognition and awards handbook, establishing a recognition and awards committee and communicating these changes to NTIA employees.

Impact: NTIA employees have more opportunities to expand on their skillsets, with training and mentoring programs. New awards encourage recognition and potential for further opportunity for employees to improve- helping to recognize well-performing NTIA employees.

Office of the Secretary (OS)

Based on the FEVS results, the Office of the Secretary selected two key items or areas to focus on: creating meaningful recognition for differences in performance and fostering supervisor support for employee development.

Recognize Differences in Performance

*OS observed that **65%** of their respondents reported agreement when asked if **differences in performance are recognized in a meaningful way** (question 12 for the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: The Office of Acquisition Management (OAM) set forth the objective to identify tools and training for senior executives, supervisors, and employees in employee engagement best practices. To that end, OAM obtained the support of coaching firm, FranklinCovey. With the support of FranklinCovey, OAM identified tools and training for senior executives, supervisors, and employees in employee engagement best practices and organizational operation improvements. OAM developed the Employee Engagement Strategic Plan and conducted strategy meetings to explore different employee engagement approaches. Through strategy meetings, leadership identified specific training sessions covering topics on employee engagement.

Impact: By focusing on the tools and trainings necessary to improve employee engagement and operations across the workforce, OS-OAM has created a work environment that prioritizes employee engagement, from senior leadership to entry-level employees.

Focus on Employee Development

*OS observed that **82%** of their respondents agreed that **supervisors in their work-units support employee development** (question 27 on the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: In 2022, The Office of Security (OSY) set forth the objective to implement policies and practices that provide a supportive and adaptable work environment. To that end, OSY reviewed the robustness and comprehensiveness of training frameworks across a selection of job series and positions. The organization added training opportunities and guidelines for selected job series and training frameworks and disseminated through a variety of communications methods including the OSY website to promote knowledge-sharing. And, to assist with onboarding and employee development for onboarding employees, OSY conceptualized development of a "sponsor/mentor" program for new employees.

Impact: By taking necessary steps to implement training frameworks, OS-OSY has a learning and development function that promotes knowledge-sharing and growth for all employees and will facilitate improved onboarding of new employees.

Office of the Inspector General (OIG)

Based on the FEVS results, OIG selected two key items or areas to focus on: creating opportunities for employee involvement in work-related decisions and increasing overall employee satisfaction with the organization

Improve Employee Efficacy

*OIG observed that **64%** of their respondents reported agreement when asked if **they are satisfied with their involvement in work decisions** (question 39 for the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: OIG set forth the objective of enhancing employees' involvement in important work decisions. The organization obtained leadership approval to establish working groups regarding the Office of Audit and Evaluation Training, Report Review Process, Space Interior Design, Intranet Redesign, and the all-hands working groups. OIG supported these working groups through promotional campaigns and identified resources to accomplish the recommendations set by the working groups.

Impact: By establishing working groups and building on past policies, such as the implementation of after-action Reviews, OIG has positioned itself as a learning organization within the Department, where employees have a voice in key decisions. Since 2019, the organization's focus on involving employees in work decisions has coincided with more than 10-percentage point increase in employee satisfaction regarding their involvement in decision-making.

Improve Organizational Satisfaction

*OIG observed that **67%** of their respondents agreed that **they are satisfied with their organization** (question 44 on the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: In 2022, OIG took steps to promote a positive, collaborative culture to foster a welcoming and respectful environment and improve employee satisfaction. To that end, OIG held quarterly Senior Executive Sessions for new hires and leadership briefings to increase transparency between employees and leadership. To further promote transparency, the organization implemented a guest speaker initiative. Finally, OIG surveyed employees regarding priorities, including new hire, exit, and workload surveys.

Impact: By obtaining input from the workforce, from new hires to tenured leaders, OIG has created a listening organization that responds to the needs of its employees. Employees have responded positively to the changes that OIG has made within the organization; since 2019, employee satisfaction with their organization has increased by over 30 percentage points.

Patent and Trademark Organization (USPTO)

Based on FEVS results, selected the following area for improvement: planning opportunities for employees to develop key strategic positions and encouraging employee development in knowledge and skills within work-units.

Improve Upskilling Opportunities

*USPTO observed that **75%** of their respondents reported agreement when asked if they **are given a real opportunity to improve their skills in their organization** (question 1 for the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: In 2022, USPTO administered competency assessments and skills development programs across the organization. These included competency assessments for the Patent Training Academy and comprehensive succession management programs for the Commissioner for Trademarks. Additionally, USPTO has continued to use Commerce Learning Center as an automated tool to facilitate role-based learning and development across the organization

Impact: By prioritizing job-competencies and skills development, USPTO has created a learning organization that empowers employees to understand how their skills relate to the expectations of their role and enables employees to take control of their own learning and development.

Focus on Employee Development

*USPTO observed that **84%** of their respondents agreed that **supervisors in their work-units support employee development** (question 27 on the 2021 FEVS).*

Actions Taken: In 2022, USPTO took action to promote training efforts within the organization. The bureau participated in the Department's GS-0201 competency assessment and provided career development lunch and learns for HR professionals, covering topics like strategies like career advancement.

Impact: By prioritizing career management skills, in addition to job competency skills, USPTO has created a culture of employee development. Employees have taken note of USPTO's employee development culture; since 2018, the percentage of employees who agree that supervisors in their work-units support employee development has increased by 6-percentage points.