

Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
2013 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results

General

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) conducted the 2013 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) during the period April 23, 2013—June 7, 2013. OPM administered the survey via the internet and eligible employees were notified by e-mail of their opportunity to participate. One hundred nine (109) Board employees were eligible to be surveyed. Of the 109 employees surveyed, 82 completed the 2013 FEVS. The Board's overall response rate was 75.2 percent.

The 2013 survey contained a total of 84 questions, including the 40 questions prescribed by regulation to collect data on Federal employees' perceptions about how effectively agencies are managing their workforces. Because the Board has fewer than 150 employees, it elected to not include demographic questions in the 2013 survey.

Annual employee surveys are required by 5 CFR Part 250, Subpart C.

Summary of 2013 Survey Results

In evaluating the broad impact of the 2013 FEVS results, the Board focused on its average positive responses to key indices of the Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework (HCAAF). As evidenced by the chart below, the Board experienced its second consecutive year of decreases in the percentage of positive responses across all indices. Further, the decrease in positive responses between 2012 and 2013 averaged about 20 percent. Equally troubling, for the first time, the Board underperformed Small Agencies (44 total, including the Board) by a significant amount in each HCAAF index. Specifically, compared to the 2013 average of Small Agencies, the Board attained the same or higher positive response rate in only six (6) of the thirty-nine (39) survey HCAAF items.

HCAAF Index	DNFSB			Small Agencies		
	2013	2012	2011	2013	2012	2011
<i>Leadership and Knowledge</i>	54%	76%	81%	60%	60%	N/A
<i>Results-Oriented Performance</i>	48%	63%	71%	56%	57%	N/A
<i>Talent Management</i>	53%	75%	82%	59%	61%	N/A
<i>Job Satisfaction</i>	54%	78%	82%	64%	65%	N/A

The results of the 2013 FEVS were sobering. The Board managed to equal or surpass the average positive response rate of Small Agencies in only 25 percent of survey items. In addition, the Board experienced other firsts: no positive increase in any of the 84 survey items; nearly 80 percent of the survey items decreased by 5 percentage points or more; and, 12 percent of the survey items had negative ratings of 35 percent or more. There were decreases in nearly every survey item compared to 2012, with the Board maintaining high positive response rates in items related to the physical work environment and a few other scattered items.

The Board is going through a period of significant change. Some changes have been dictated by external forces, but many of the changes have been directed from within. In fact, several of the most important changes—new performance management systems, expansion of the Board’s telework program, training to improve supervisory/management skills—were implemented as a result of employee feedback from previous surveys. Change of this magnitude is difficult to manage under the best of circumstances. But the Board is also dealing with employee morale issues, exacerbated by several years of no pay increases, hiring freezes, elimination of most awards, proposed reductions in employee benefits, and general budgetary uncertainty. The recent government shutdown will only increase employee discontent.

It is clear the Board has much work to do to address employee dissatisfaction. An initial analysis of the 2013 FEVS results show Board employees continue to have concerns about leadership and performance management. However, the assessment also uncovered several anomalies. For example, the survey showed unexpected drops in positive responses to items in which the Board had routinely scored well. The programs addressed by these items have not changed so there is no obvious basis for the decrease in employee satisfaction. Another puzzling inconsistency involves performance management. New performance systems were implemented to address persistent employee concerns about accountability for work, dealing with poor performers, and ensuring differences in performance were recognized in a meaningful way. While the new Board performance systems are not perfect, metrics show the new systems have begun to address the issues raised by employees. Thus, the Board expected to see at least a small increase in positive response rates related to these items, not a continuing decline. Finally, the Board must learn why there was a noted increase in the number of neutral responses (“Neither Agree nor Disagree”) to survey items. Neutral responses had more of an impact on the Board’s overall survey results than the number of negative responses.

The Board plans to act swiftly to address the 2013 FEVS results. The Chairman will establish a committee that includes employees from across the organization to conduct a thorough analysis of the 2013 survey results. The committee will report its findings and make recommendations to the Board before the Board holds its annual winter meeting with senior managers. The Board will review the report and decide where to direct resources to implement improvements. In addition, the Division of Human Resources will incorporate the report findings and Board-approved recommendations into the annual FEVS action plan submitted to OPM. Following this timetable, the Chairman will be able to brief the staff and the Board will begin implementing improvements as early as the second quarter of FY 2014. The Board is committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board is one of the best places to work in the Federal Government.