2016 Merit Principles Survey Path Leadership

You are previewing this assessment.

Dear Federal Colleague:

Your opinion counts! The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) asks that you take a little time to participate in our Merit Principles Survey 2016, a Government-wide survey of Federal employees and supervisors that covers a variety of workforce issues such as the merit system principles, prohibited personnel practices, HR support and advisory services, and selected aspects of your work experience. Because you are part of a random sample of Government employees, your views about your work and work environment will represent those of the larger Federal workforce. This is an opportunity for you to inform policy by voicing your opinions and concerns about workforce issues.

This survey is an important part of MSPB's responsibility to assess the soundness of Federal merit systems. Your responses will help us make recommendations to the President, Congress, agency leaders, and other decision makers on how to improve the Federal workplace. The information you share will make a positive difference.

Your responses to this survey are voluntary and strictly confidential. Only MSPB staff and our survey support contractor staff will have access to the surveys and no data that could be used to identify you will be disclosed to anyone.

On average, the survey will take about 30 minutes to complete. It may be completed at your work site or at home. If you have questions or trouble navigating this survey, please email us at MPS2016@mspb.gov or call our survey hotline at 410-981-9315. There is also a Fact Sheet for Employees that may answer questions you have about the survey. The URL for the fact sheet is www.mspb.gov/netsearch/viewdocs.aspx

Thank you! We appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

James Read, Director, Office of Policy and Evaluation, U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board

To begin the survey or assessment, click Next.

Please select your language English (US)

In assessment preview mode, email address and custom fields are not displayed because they are campaign specific.

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U.S. MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD

2016 Merit Principles Survey Path Leadership

General Information

Privacy Statement

MSPB wants to assure survey participants that your involvement in the Merit Principles Survey 2016 is both voluntary and confidential. This Privacy Statement identifies MSPB's authorization to conduct the survey and explains how we will manage the data we receive.

- The purpose of collecting this information is to study how well the Federal Government is managing its workforce in adherence to the merit system principles. A summary of the results of the survey will be shared with the President, Congress, and other Federal decision makers to be used in developing policy that supports both merit and mission accomplishment.
- Collection of the information is authorized by 5 U.S.C. § 1204.
- Your responses to this survey are completely voluntary. There is no penalty if you choose not to participate. However, we encourage your participation to ensure that our data is complete and representative of the Federal workforce.
- Only MSPB staff and our survey support contractor staff will have access to individually completed surveys. In accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-579), no data will be disclosed that could be used to identify individual participants.

Definition of Survey Terms

Executives are members of the Senior Executive Service or equivalent.

Leaders are an agency's management team. This includes anyone with supervisory or managerial duties including supervisors, managers, and executives.

Organization means an agency, office, or division.

Supervisors are first-line supervisors who do not supervise other supervisors; typically those who are responsible for employees' performance appraisals and approval of their leave.

Team leaders are those who provide employees with day-to-day guidance in work projects, but do not have supervisory responsibilities or conduct performance appraisals.

Work unit means an employee's immediate work unit headed by the employee's direct supervisor.

Before proceeding, you must certify that you are the person to whom the survey invitation was directed and that the responses that you provide are true and accurate to the best of your knowledge.

☐ By checking this box, I certify and acknowledge the foregoing statement.

Leadership Demographics-1

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Are you responsible for supervising Federal civilian employees?	○	○	○

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Leadership Demographics-1A

Approximately how many civilian employees do you directly supervise (no intermediate supervisor between you and them)?

What is your grade level?

- ◯ WS-1 to WS-19 or equivalent (blue collar supervisors)
- ◯ GS-1 to GS-09 or equivalent in a different pay system
- ◯ GS-10 to GS-11 or equivalent in a different pay system
- ◯ GS-12 to GS-13 or equivalent in a different pay system
- ◯ GS-14 to GS-15 or equivalent in a different pay system
- ◯ Senior Executive Service or equivalent in a different pay system
- ◯ I do not know where my position would be placed in a GS system

Have you ever served on active duty in the U.S. Military?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Leadership Demographics-2

What is your supervisory status?

- ◯ Non-Supervisor (You don't supervise other employees.)
- ◯ Team Leader (You are not an official supervisor; you provide employees with day-to-day guidance in work projects, but don't have supervisory responsibilities or conduct performance appraisals.)
- ◯ Manager (You are in a management position and supervise other supervisors.)
- ◯ Executive (You are in the Senior Executive Service or equivalent and supervise managers or other executives)

If you are a member of the Senior Executive Service, are you:

- ◯ Career SES
- ◯ Non-Career SES
- ◯ I am not a member of the SES

Where do you work?

- ◯ Headquarters
- ◯ Field

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Being a Supervisor

	Yes	No	Not Sure
According to Federal regulations, all new supervisors (including those who are already in the civil service) must serve a probationary period to demonstrate success as a supervisor. When you first became a Federal civil service supervisor, were you told that you would have to serve a probationary period?	○	○	○
Was your performance during your probationary period as a supervisor actually used to decide if you should continue in a supervisory role?	○	○	○

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Managing Performance

Please indicate which of the following statements comes closest to describing your viewpoint. (It is okay if others might view it differently.) A subordinate is an employee whose performance you supervise.

To me, poor performance by a subordinate means...

- ◯ Performance that is less than excellent.
- ◯ Performance that is below the average performance of employees with similar duties.
- ◯ Performance that needs substantial improvement before it could be called fully successful.
- ◯ Failure at any work task.
- ◯ Failure at a work task that is critical to success in the position.
- ◯ Failure at multiple work tasks that are critical to success in the position.

A critical element is a task for which management has told the employee that success in the task is necessary for success in the position.

Approximately what percentage of the employees that you currently supervise directly (with no intermediate supervisors) are **less than fully successful** *without* **outright failing** at any critical elements of the job?

- ◯ Zero (no employees that are less than successful without outright failing)
- ◯ 1-10%
- ◯ 11-20%
- ◯ 21-30%
- ◯ Over 30%
- ◯ Not Applicable

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Performance Management: Standards

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements for positions where you have performance appraisal responsibilities.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure	Not Applicable
The performance standards for my subordinates accurately reflect the critical elements necessary for success in their jobs.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The performance standards for my subordinates have measurements that I can use accurately to determine success in the critical elements.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I use performance reviews to make meaningful distinctions between subordinate employees with differing levels of performance.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If too many of my subordinate employees were outstanding, I would be forced to distribute the ratings so that some got lower ratings than outstanding.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am held accountable for ensuring that successful employees receive recognition for their good work.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If my subordinate employees are outstanding, I can reward them appropriately.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Most of my subordinate employees have a good understanding of their own individual strengths and weaknesses.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I often don’t realize how much a particular employee is doing until he or she tells me about it during an official appraisal communication (e.g., mid-point review, employee list of contributions for appraisal form).	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I often don't realize the obstacles my subordinate employees have faced until after the particular task has been finished or has failed to occur on time.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Performance Management: Appraisal Levels

At a minimum, an appraisal system must have two levels (pass/fail). Additional levels can be added to indicate various levels of success (such as outstanding, good, fully successful, needs improvement but has not yet failed), but there is only one level that means critical failure.

If you could choose for your entire workforce, how many formal levels would you **want** the system to have? (You can still have discussions with your employees about the details of their performance regardless of the number of formal levels.)

- ◯ Two (pass/fail)
- ◯ Three (2 types of success and the fail level)
- ◯ Four (3 types of success and the fail level)
- ◯ Five (4 types of success and the fail level)
- ◯ Six or more (5 or more types of success and the fail level)
- ◯ No Opinion or Not Applicable

How many levels were in the performance appraisal system for the last cycle in which you issued an appraisal of record? (If your subordinates do not all have the same system, select the option that applies to the largest number of your subordinates.)

- ◯ Two (pass/fail)
- ◯ Three (2 types of success and the fail level)
- ◯ Four (3 types of success and the fail level)
- ◯ Five (4 types of success and the fail level)
- ◯ Six or more (5 or more types of success and the fail level)
- ◯ Not Sure
- ◯ Something Not Listed Above

Appraisals

The following list of items are about the extent to which your agency's appraisal system helps you to assess your employees. The questions do not cover the ability to take action on that assessment.

To what extent does your agency's performance appraisal process help you to identify…

	A Great Extent	Some Extent	Little Extent	No Extent	Don't Know/Can't Judge	Not Applicable
…the training needs of your employees.	○	○	○	○	○	○
…which employees ought to be rewarded.	○	○	○	○	○	○
…the degree to which your employees ought to be rewarded.	○	○	○	○	○	○
…which employees ought to be moved to positions that better match their strengths.	○	○	○	○	○	○
…which employees ought to be retained in a reduction-in-force.	○	○	○	○	○	○
…which employees ought to receive a within-grade-increase (WIGI).	○	○	○	○	○	○
…whether a formal performance improvement plan is likely to assist a subpar employee to become fully successful.	○	○	○	○	○	○
…which employees ought to be removed for poor performance.	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Do you currently have any employees whose performance you feel is not at an acceptable level of competence? (Please define "an acceptable level of competence" yourself rather than using anyone else's definition.)	○	○	○

Appraisal Process

The performance appraisal process...

	A Great Extent	Some Extent	Little Extent	No Extent	Don't Know/Can't Judge	Not Applicable
... ignores performance management of good performers by focusing too much on identifying poor performers.	○	○	○	○	○	○
... ignores performance management in favor of creating documents to justify personnel decisions.	○	○	○	○	○	○
... is necessary to ensure that I have conversations with my subordinates about their performance.	○	○	○	○	○	○
...is a good use of my time as a supervisor.	○	○	○	○	○	○
... is a good use of my employees' time.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Poor Performance

For the purpose of the rest of this survey, poor performance is defined as failure in one or more elements that management has told the employee is/are critical to successful performance.

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements. Remember, for these questions, a poor performer is **a person who fails in one or more critical elements** of the position.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure	Not Applicable
A person who fails in one aspect of the job tends to fail in most aspects of the job.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is easy to identify *why* a poor performer is not doing well.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is easy to identify *how* a poor performer can improve his or her performance.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is easy to *improve* the performance of a poorly performing employee.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is easier to remove an employee for misconduct than for poor performance.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I think that agencies should reassign poor performers to other positions if they seem more likely to succeed elsewhere.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Resources

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure	Not Applicable
My agency has realistic expectations about what my subordinates can accomplish.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My work unit(s) has/have the resources they need to effectively accomplish their mission(s).	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My subordinates have reasonable workloads.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My subordinates have all the tools that they need to accomplish their tasks effectively.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
We sometimes hire the wrong people.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am confident that I would be allowed to hire a new employee to replace someone removed for poor performance.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am confident that I would be allowed to hire a new employee to replace someone removed for misconduct.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Training

I receive adequate training about…

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure	Not Applicable
...how to discuss performance expectations with subordinates.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
…how to discuss performance deficiencies with subordinates.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
…my options for addressing poor performance in a subordinate.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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Perceptions

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure	Not Applicable
My supervisor has a good understanding of the performance levels of my individual subordinates.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
As long as my office succeeds overall, my supervisor does not care about the performance of individual employees.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My subordinates have a good understanding of how well each of their peers is performing.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If one of my subordinate employees performed poorly it would negatively affect the ability of other subordinates to do their own jobs.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If a supervisor in my organization failed to address poor performance by a subordinate, it would affect the morale of that supervisor's other subordinates.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If a supervisor in my organization failed to address poor performance by a subordinate, there would be negative consequences for that supervisor.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Poor Performer Activities-1

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Have you ever directly supervised any employees who met the definition of poor performer (a person who failed to meet established performance standards in one or more critical elements of the employee's position)?	○	○	○

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Poor Performer Activities-2

Approximately how long ago was your most recent direct supervision of a poor performer (failure in one or more critical elements)?

- ◯ 3 years or less
- ◯ 4-6 years
- ◯ 7-10 years
- ◯ More than 10 years
- ◯ Not Applicable

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Poor Performance: Reasons

For your most recent poor performer (failure in one or more critical elements), please indicate the extent to which you think each of the following played a role in the poor performance.

	A Great Extent	Some Extent	Little Extent	No Extent	Don't Know/Can't Judge	Not Applicable
The employee did not understand what was expected from him/her.	○	○	○	○	○	○
The employee did not understand how to do the work.	○	○	○	○	○	○
The employee lacked needed resources or tools.	○	○	○	○	○	○
The employee was given more work than he/she could handle.	○	○	○	○	○	○
The employee was distracted by matters in his/her personal life.	○	○	○	○	○	○
The employee engaged in misconduct (e.g., AWOL, abusive treatment of customers or co-workers).	○	○	○	○	○	○
The employee was the target of an interpersonal workplace conflict (e.g., bullying, harassment, discrimination).	○	○	○	○	○	○
The employee was not suited for that particular type of job.	○	○	○	○	○	○
The employee was not interested in doing the necessary work to succeed.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Poor Performance: Results

For your most recent poor performer (failure in one or more critical elements), please indicate the item that best describes what happened to the employee.

- ◯ Employee remained in the organization and performance is currently fully acceptable or better.
- ◯ Employee remained in the organization and performance is currently less than fully acceptable.
- ◯ Employee is no longer in the organization (e.g., resigned, removed, retired, transferred).
- ◯ None of the above.

Did something happen other than the results listed above?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Poor Performance: Results-A

You have indicated that your most recent poor performer currently has less than fully acceptable performance. Please indicate which of the below best describes the situation.

- ◯ The employee is currently on a formal performance improvement plan that includes reasonable assistance to improve and a warning that a failure to improve may result in demotion or removal.
- ◯ The employee is currently on an informal improvement plan.
- ◯ We attempted an improvement plan for this employee in the past, but the employee is not currently on an improvement plan.
- ◯ We have not attempted an improvement plan for this employee.
- ◯ Not sure

Did something happen other than the results listed above?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Please use the space provided to briefly describe the 'other' result if there was one.

Characters Remaining: 1000

Do you believe that this approach was in the *Government's* best interest?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not Sure
- ◯ Not Applicable

Do you believe that this approach was in the *public's* best interest?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not Sure
- ◯ Not Applicable

Poor Performance: Results-B

You have indicated that your most recent poor performer is no longer in the organization. Please indicate which of the below best describes the circumstances under which the employee departed.

- ◯ The employee chose to leave the organization (e.g., resigned, retired, got another job elsewhere).
- ◯ The employee was moved by management to a different position in the same agency (e.g., promotion, demotion, reassignment).
- ◯ The employee was removed for conduct-related reasons.
- ◯ The employee was removed for performance-related reasons.
- ◯ Not sure.
- ◯ Other.

Please use the space provided to briefly describe the 'other' result if there was one.

Characters Remaining: 1000

Do you believe that this outcome was in the *Government's* best interest?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not Sure
- ◯ Not Applicable

Do you believe that this outcome was in the *public's* best interest?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not Sure
- ◯ Not Applicable

Results: Other

Please use the space provided to briefly describe the 'other' result.

Characters Remaining: 1000

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Poor Performance: Improvement Approach

Below is a list of some possible approaches for dealing with a poor performer (failure in one or more critical elements). For the most recent poorly performing civilian employee that you have supervised, please indicate the extent to which you found that each approach below was **successful in causing the poor performer's performance to improve to an acceptable level.** If you have not attempted a particular approach to deal with your most recent poor performer, please mark the box labeled "Did Not Try" for that item.

	Did Not Try	Successful to a Great Extent	Successful to Some Extent	Successful to a Little Extent	Successful to No Extent	Not Sure or Insufficient Opportunity to Judge
Discussed with the employee possible reasons for the poor performance.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Asked the employee what you could do to help the employee improve.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Orally provided additional communication about expectations.	○	○	○	○	○	○
In writing, provided additional communication about expectations.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discussed with the employee possible negative consequences if performance remained inadequate.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Met more frequently with the employee to provide feedback and coaching.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Monitored the employee's work more closely.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Changed the employee's work assignments to other, *less* needed work.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Changed the employee's work assignments to other, *equally or more* needed work.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Reduced the work quantity or quality expectations required of the employee.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Paired the employee with a better performer to serve as a mentor.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Put the employee under an *informal* plan to improve performance.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Put the employee under a *formal* performance improvement plan that included assistance to improve and a warning that a failure to improve could result in demotion or removal.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Gave the employee a low performance appraisal rating.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Performance Improvement Period

For the purpose of this survey, the "performance improvement period" (PIP) is a period of time - set by management after the employee has been warned that his/her performance is inadequate - in which the individual is given assistance to improve to an acceptable level. For the period to qualify as a PIP, the employee must be warned that failure to improve may result in a demotion or removal.

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

Using a PIP would help me to feel better about any adverse action I may later take against the employee in question.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Somewhat Agree
- ◯ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ◯ Somewhat Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Don't Know/NA

Using a PIP would help me to persuade others that an adverse action has become necessary.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Somewhat Agree
- ◯ Neither Agree nor Disagree
- ◯ Somewhat Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Don't Know/NA

Approximately how long ago was your most recent use of a PIP for a subordinate?

- ◯ 3 or less years
- ◯ 4-6 years
- ◯ 7-10 years
- ◯ More than 10 years
- ◯ I can't recall
- ◯ I don't think I have ever used a PIP for a subordinate

Performance Improvement Period: PIP Use

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

In my experience...

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/NA
...I wait longer than I should to start a poor performer on a formal PIP.	○	○	○	○	○	○
...other supervisors wait longer than they should to start a poor performer on a formal PIP.	○	○	○	○	○	○
...I often use an informal opportunity to improve before putting in place a formal PIP.	○	○	○	○	○	○
...higher level supervisors are supportive of efforts by lower level supervisors to give a poor performer a meaningful PIP.	○	○	○	○	○	○
...the extent to which a PIP leads to better performance depends heavily on the employee's personal characteristics (e.g., conscientiousness, agreeableness).	○	○	○	○	○	○
...the extent to which a PIP leads to better performance depends heavily on the *tasks being performed*.	○	○	○	○	○	○
...a PIP is useful when the employee has a *knowledge deficiency* (e.g., they are missing information or education).	○	○	○	○	○	○
...a PIP is useful when the employee has a *skill deficiency* (e.g., they do not know how to apply knowledge to the task at hand).	○	○	○	○	○	○
...poor performers see the PIP as a *genuine effort by management to help the employee.*	○	○	○	○	○	○
...an employee who improves during the PIP will often have deteriorating performance once the period is over.	○	○	○	○	○	○
...poor performers make a serious effort to use the PIP to improve their performance.	○	○	○	○	○	○
...poor performers see the PIP as a warning sign *causing them to voluntarily leave the work unit in question.*	○	○	○	○	○	○
...the PIP often results in the employee improving to an acceptable level or better.	○	○	○	○	○	○
...the tasks that a supervisor must perform to place an employee on a PIP use a reasonable amount of the supervisor's time.	○	○	○	○	○	○
...the use of a PIP helps ensure that employees are treated fairly.	○	○	○	○	○	○
...human resources staff provide competent assistance regarding PIPs.	○	○	○	○	○	○
...supervisors receive timely training to help them effectively implement a meaningful PIP.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Managing Conduct

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/Can't Judge	Not Applicable
It is easy to identify *why* an employee engages in particular misconduct.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is easy to identify how to help an employee improve his/her conduct.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is easy to get a misbehaving employee to end his/her misconduct.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Suspending employees for misconduct is harder than it should be.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Demoting employees for misconduct is harder than it should be.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Removing employees for misconduct is harder than it should be.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Employees should be protected from *erroneous* discipline (i.e., not punished when innocent of charges).	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Employees should be protected from *improper* discipline (i.e., not punished for an improper reason such as discrimination or retaliation for reporting wrongdoing).	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Knowing that the employee can grieve or appeal a serious adverse action makes me feel more comfortable about taking such actions.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Federal employees have too many rights.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I think that some supervisors do not manage their employees' conduct because the supervisors want to avoid conflict.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Ability to Act: Misconduct

	Yes	No	Not Sure
If a subordinate employee engaged in serious misconduct are you confident that you would be able to remove that employee?	○	○	○

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Ability to Act: Misconduct Issues

To what extent would the following pose a challenge in your attempts to remove an employee for serious misconduct?

	A Great Extent	Some Extent	A Little Extent	No Extent	Not sure/Not applicable
How well I understand the process to accomplish this	○	○	○	○	○
The level of proof required by law	○	○	○	○	○
The quality of service provided by my human resources office	○	○	○	○	○
The degree of support given by managers and leaders above me	○	○	○	○	○
My agency's culture regarding removing people for misconduct	○	○	○	○	○
The degree to which I am comfortable taking a person's job away from him/her	○	○	○	○	○

Ability to Act: Performance

	Yes	No	Not Sure
If a subordinate employee was deficient in a critical performance element after completion of a PIP, are you confident that you would be able to remove that employee?	○	○	○

;

Ability to Act: Performance Issues

To what extent would the following pose a challenge in your attempts to remove an employee for poor performance after a PIP?

	A Great Extent	Some Extent	A Little Extent	No Extent	Not sure/Not applicable
How well I understand the process to accomplish this	○	○	○	○	○
The level of proof required by law	○	○	○	○	○
The quality of service provided by my human resources office	○	○	○	○	○
The degree of support given by managers and leaders above me	○	○	○	○	○
My agency's culture regarding removing people for poor performance	○	○	○	○	○
The degree to which I am comfortable taking a person's job away from him/her	○	○	○	○	○

Level of Certainty

For the following questions, please select the level of certainty that comes closest to how certain you would need to feel before taking the particular type of adverse action, regardless of what answer you think others might give.

In general, how certain do you need to feel that a conduct charge is proven before you will propose or decide to **suspend** an employee?

- ◯ Beyond a reasonable doubt that charge was proven
- ◯ Highly likely that the charge was proven
- ◯ More than likely than not that the charge was proven
- ◯ A reasonable person could conclude that the charge was proven
- ◯ Not Sure/Can't Judge

In general, how certain do you need to feel that a conduct charge is proven before you will propose or decide to **remove** an employee?

- ◯ Beyond a reasonable doubt that charge was proven
- ◯ Highly likely that the charge was proven
- ◯ More than likely than not that the charge was proven
- ◯ A reasonable person could conclude that the charge was proven
- ◯ Not Sure/Can't Judge

In general, how certain do you need to feel that a charge of **failing a critical performance element** is proven before you will propose or decide to remove an employee

- ◯ Beyond a reasonable doubt that charge was proven
- ◯ Highly likely that the charge was proven
- ◯ More than likely than not that the charge was proven
- ◯ A reasonable person could conclude that the charge was proven
- ◯ Not Sure/Can't Judge

Managing Conduct: Removal-1

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Have you ever proposed the removal of any employees for misconduct?	○	○	○

;

Managing Conduct: Removal-2

Approximately how long ago was it that you most recently proposed the removal of an employee for misconduct?

- ◯ 3 or less years
- ◯ 4-6 years
- ◯ 7-10 years
- ◯ More than 10 years
- ◯ I have never proposed the removal of an employee for misconduct

;

Managing Conduct: Removal-Results

For the most recent conduct-related removal that you proposed where the agency has made its final decision, which of the below best describes the outcome?

- ◯ Employee is no longer employed by the agency.
- ◯ Employee is still employed by the agency.
- ◯ Not sure.

;

Managing Conduct: Removal-Results-A

You have indicated that the employee is no longer employed by the agency. Please indicate which of the below best describes the circumstances under which the employee departed.

- ◯ Employee was removed.
- ◯ Employee resigned.
- ◯ Employee obtained a different Federal job.
- ◯ Employee retired.
- ◯ Don't Know.
- ◯ Other.

Please use the space provided to briefly describe the 'other' result if there was one.

Characters Remaining: 1000

Do you believe that this outcome was in the *Government's* best interest?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not Sure
- ◯ Not Applicable

Do you believe that this outcome was in the *public's* best interest?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not Sure
- ◯ Not Applicable

Managing Conduct: Removal-Results-B

You have indicated that the employee is still employed by the agency. Please indicate which of the below best describes the outcome.

- ◯ Employee was permitted to remain in the same position.
- ◯ Employee was suspended, demoted, or reassigned.
- ◯ Don't know.
- ◯ Other.

Please use the space provided to briefly describe the 'other' result if there was one.

Characters Remaining: 1000

Do you believe that this outcome was in the *Government's* best interest?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not Sure
- ◯ Not Applicable

Do you believe that this outcome was in the *public's* best interest?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not Sure
- ◯ Not Applicable

Managing Supervisors

A ***subordinate supervisor*** is a person who works at a lower level of the organization than you, reports to you, and has the responsibility to supervise other individuals. For example, a branch chief may be a subordinate supervisor working under a division chief.

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Do you supervise employees who supervise other civilian employees?	○	○	○

;

Managing Supervisors-2

Approximately how many civilian employees are under your authority, including those who are supervised by people you supervise?	

;

Managing Supervisors-3

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements. **Remember, for these questions, a poor performer is a person who fails in one or more critical elements of the position.**

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure	Not Applicable
If one of my subordinate supervisors had a poor performer, I think the subordinate supervisor would let me know about it.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I hold my subordinate supervisors accountable for the ***performance*** of their employees.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I hold my subordinate supervisors accountable for the ***conduct*** of their employees.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am held accountable for ensuring that my subordinate supervisors meet their office performance goals.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am held accountable for ensuring that my subordinate supervisors address any ***individual poor performers.***	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am held accountable for ensuring that my subordinate supervisors address any individual ***misconduct.***	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
When I want to communicate expectations to employees who work for my subordinate supervisors, I usually do so through the subordinate supervisor.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am involved in setting performance expectations for employees who work for my subordinate supervisors.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is harder to manage the performance of a supervisor than it is to manage the performance of a non-supervisory employee.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Managing Supervisors-3A

Remember, for these questions, a poor performer is a person who fails in one or more critical elements of the position.

Approximately how long ago was it that you most recently managed a supervisor whose subordinates included at least one poor performer?

- ◯ 3 or less years
- ◯ 4-6 years
- ◯ 7-10 years
- ◯ More than 10 years
- ◯ I have never had this happen

;

Managing Supervisors-4

For the most recent situation in which you had a subordinate supervisor who was responsible for the oversight of a poor performer (failure in one or more critical elements of the position), please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure	Not Applicable
My subordinate waited longer than he/she should have before telling me there was a poor performer.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My subordinate kept me informed about efforts to improve the poor performer.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My appraisal of my subordinate fully reflected the extent to which he/she properly addressed the situation with his/her poor performer.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Skills and Tasks

Please rate on a scale of 1-7 how challenging you find each of the following (1 is very easy, 7 is very difficult).

	(Very Easy)1	2	3	4	5	6	(Very Difficult)7	Not Applicable/Can't Judge
Establishing performance standards for subordinates that cover all critical elements of the jobs.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Establishing in subordinates' performance standards clear measurements for success in each element.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Communicating with employees about how they can improve their performance.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Addressing performance that does not improve.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Providing meaningful recognition for good performance.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Finding ways to increase employee engagement.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Managing employee morale.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Managing office interpersonal relationships.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ensuring that higher-level supervisors appreciate what my subordinates have accomplished.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Getting enough employees to accomplish the work.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Getting enough resources to give my subordinates the tools to accomplish their work effectively.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Managing employee conduct to prevent serious misconduct from occurring.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Addressing serious misconduct that has occurred.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Managing employee training.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Creating recruitment plans to identify the best candidates for particular jobs.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Getting a pool of quality candidates.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ensuring that subordinates have accurate position descriptions.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Paying employees an amount that is appropriate for the work they do.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ensuring that employees do not experience unlawful discrimination.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Human Resources: Responsibiity

This section of the survey asks a series of questions related to Human Resources (HR). Certain terms that are used frequently are defined below:

Staffing: Recruitment to fill vacant positions or the promotion/reassignment of current employees.

Classification: Establishing position descriptions that define the duties of the position and assigning a title, series, and grade.

Management-Employee Relations: Assisting management to address performance or conduct issues of subordinate employees.

Labor Relations: Assisting with the relationship between management and a union, bargaining unit, or professional association.

Training: The development of current employees by formally or informally expanding their knowledge or skills.

When the circumstances permit or require it, which of the following are you responsible for? (Select all that apply.)

- ☐ Staffing/Recruiting Decisions
- ☐ Determining Subordinates' Duties
- ☐ Managing Subordinates' Duties
- ☐ Addressing Subordinates' Conduct
- ☐ Relationship with a Union or Professional Association of Employees
- ☐ Authorizing Subordinates' Training
- ☐ None of the Above

;

Human Resources: General Support

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Do you have at least one person subordinate to you who is not part of an HR office but whose official duties include advising you on HR issues (Shadow HR)?	○	○	○
What percentage of your total HR services come from the Shadow HR? (The total would include advice and processing of the full range of HR functions, such as staffing, classification, management-employee relations, labor relations, and training.)			

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Human Resources-Services: Consultation

For which of the following do you frequently consult with Shadow HR staff? (Select all that apply.)

- ☐ Classification (position description)
- ☐ Staffing/Recruiting
- ☐ Training
- ☐ Labor Relations
- ☐ Management-employee relations (includes addressing conduct and/or performance issues)
- ☐ My own personal issues not related to my employees
- ☐ Other
- ☐ None of the Above

;

Human Resources-Shadow HR

Please indicate the extent of your agreement with the following statements. **My shadow HR is/are** ...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/NA
Knowledgeable about the principles behind HR.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledgeable about relevant laws, rules, and regulations.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hard-working.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Responsive.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Given too much work with insufficient resources.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Committed to my organization's success.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Effective in this aspect of his/her job.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Effective as a consultant on HR issues.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Essential to the success or failure of my office.	○	○	○	○	○	○

;

Human Resources: Points of Contact

Are you permitted to directly contact someone in the HR office when you need help with an HR issue?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not Sure

I know the person to contact for help in the following HR disciplines: (select all that apply)

- ☐ Classification
- ☐ Staffing
- ☐ Training
- ☐ Management-employee relations
- ☐ Labor Relations
- ☐ None of the Above

If you needed help in one of the above disciplines for which you do not already know who to contact, how difficult do you think it would be to find the person responsible for helping you?

- ◯ Very Easy
- ◯ Somewhat Easy
- ◯ Somewhat Difficult
- ◯ Very Difficult
- ◯ No Opinion/Not Applicable

Human Resources-Issues

When communicating with HR (the office that officially provides you with HR advice and services), what percentage of your time is spent on each of the following types of issues? (Must total 100%.).

- [ ] % Classification
- [ ] % Staffing/Recruiting
- [ ] % Training
- [ ] % Management-employee relations (includes addressing conduct and/or performance issues)
- [ ] % Labor relations
- [ ] % My own personal issues not related to my employees
- [ ] % Other

;

Human Resources-Services

The next series of questions will ask you about HR services you have used in the past 2 years and their quality.

	Yes	No	Not Sure
In the past 2 years, have you used HR's staffing services (includes recruitment actions as well as reassignments or promotions)?	○	○	○

;

Human Resources: Staffing

The HR person most responsible for helping me with actions involving staffing is…

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/NA
Knowledgeable about the principles behind effective recruiting.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledgeable about the relevant laws, rules and regulations.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hard-working.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Responsive.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Given too much work with insufficient resources.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Committed to my organization's success.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Effective in this aspect of his/her job.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Effective as a consultant on recruitment actions.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Essential to the success of my office.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Human Resources: Classification 1

	Yes	No	Not Sure
In the past 2 years, have you used HR's classification services (position descriptions, including designating the title, series, and grade of a position)?	○	○	○

;

Human Resources: Classification 2

The HR person most responsible for helping me with classification is…

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/NA
Knowledgeable about the principles behind classification.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledgeable about relevant laws, rules, and regulations.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hard-working.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Responsive.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Given too much work with insufficient resources.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Committed to my organization's success.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Effective in this aspect of his/her job.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Effective as a consultant on HR issues.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Essential to the success or failure of my office.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Human Resources: Classification-Supervisor

The role of classifying job duties into different pay grades should be to:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Properly classify positions at the appropriate grade level.	○	○	○	○	○
Attract excellent job candidates.	○	○	○	○	○
Reward high performing employees.	○	○	○	○	○

	Agree	Disagree	I don't supervise GS employees	Don't Know
In order for a position to be properly classified at a certain General Schedule (GS) grade, it must meet the statutorily defined level of complexity and responsibility of that grade.	○	○	○	○

	Great Extent	Moderate Extent	Small Extent	Not at All
To what extent are standardized pre-classified position descriptions or job duties used by your organization?	○	○	○	○
To what extent does your servicing human resources office provide you assistance in classifying positions?	○	○	○	○

Human Resources: Performance Management 1

	Yes	No	Not Sure
In the past 2 years, have you sought help from HR regarding a subordinate's performance?	○	○	○

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Human Resources-Performance Management 2

The HR person most responsible for helping me with performance-related issues involving subordinates is…

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/NA
Knowledgeable about the principles behind good performance management.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledgeable about relevant laws, rules, and regulations.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hard-working.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Responsive.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Given too much work with insufficient resources.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Committed to my organization's success.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Effective in this aspect of his/her job.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Effective as a consultant on HR issues.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Essential to the success or failure of my office.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Human Resources: Conduct 1

	Yes	No	Not Sure
In the past 2 years, have you sought help from HR regarding a subordinate's conduct?	○	○	○

;

Human Resources: Conduct 2

The HR person most responsible for helping me with conduct-related issues involving subordinates is…

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/NA
Knowledgeable about the principles behind effectively addressing conduct issues.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledgeable about relevant laws, rules, and regulations.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hard-working.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Responsive.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Given too much work with insufficient resources.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Committed to my organization's success.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Effective in this aspect of his/her job.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Effective as a consultant on HR issues.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Essential to the success or failure of my office.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Human Resources: Labor Relations 1

	Yes	No	Not Sure
In the past 2 years, have you sought help from HR regarding a labor relations issue (unions)?	○	○	○

;

Human Resources: Labor Relations 2

The HR person most responsible for helping me with labor relations is…

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/NA
Knowledgeable about the principles behind effective labor relations.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledgeable about relevant laws, rules, and regulations.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hard-working.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Responsive.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Given too much work with insufficient resources.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Committed to my organization's success.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Effective in this aspect of his/her job.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Effective as a consultant on HR issues.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Essential to the success or failure of my office.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Human Resources: Training 1

	Yes	No	Not Sure
In the past 2 years, have you sought help from HR regarding training issues?	○	○	○

;

Human Resources: Training 2

The HR person most responsible for helping me with training issues is…

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/NA
Knowledgeable about the principles behind the effective selection and use of training.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledgeable about relevant laws, rules, and regulations.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hard-working.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Responsive.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Given too much work with insufficient resources.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Committed to my organization's success.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Effective in this aspect of his/her job.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Effective as a consultant on HR issues.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Essential to the success or failure of my office.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Human Resources: General Support

Who is the employer of the individual most responsible for helping you with the following issues?

	My Federal Agency	A Different Agency	A Private Sector Contractor	Don't Know/NA
Staffing/Recruiting	○	○	○	○
Position descriptions (classification)	○	○	○	○
Performance-related issues involving subordinates	○	○	○	○
Conduct-related issues involving subordinates	○	○	○	○
Labor relations	○	○	○	○
Training	○	○	○	○

Human Resources: Location

Where is the HR office most responsible for helping you with the following issues?

	In my building	In my local commuting area	Outside my local commuting area	Don't Know/NA
Staffing/Recruiting	○	○	○	○
Position descriptions (classification)	○	○	○	○
Performance-related issues involving subordinates	○	○	○	○
Conduct-related issues involving subordinates	○	○	○	○
Labor relations	○	○	○	○
Training	○	○	○	○

Human Resources: Compliance

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/NA
The people providing me with HR services comply with the laws, rules, and regulations related to HR.	○	○	○	○	○	○
The people providing me with HR services know how to find creative solutions within the law.	○	○	○	○	○	○
The people providing me with HR services have a too-narrow interpretation of the law.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I understand the laws, rules, and regulations related to HR.	○	○	○	○	○	○
The laws, rules, and regulations related to HR are too complex.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I wish Congress and the President would simplify the HR laws.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I sometimes hesitate to tell HR staff what I really want because they may tell me that there is a rule that prohibits it.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Human Resources: PPP Reporting

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know/NA
I know what the 13 prohibited personnel practices (PPPs) are.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I know how to avoid committing prohibited personnel practices.	○	○	○	○	○	○
If a supervisor tried to do something that is a prohibited personnel practice, my HR specialist would figure out that the supervisor was trying to commit a PPP.	○	○	○	○	○	○
If a supervisor insisted upon doing something that is a prohibited personnel practice, my HR specialist would report the supervisor to someone in authority.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I think HR specialists should report supervisors who try to commit a prohibited personnel practice.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Human Resources: Challenges

Please indicate the extent to which the following factors cause difficulties for supervisors.

	A Great Extent	Some Extent	A Little Extent	No Extent	Not sure/Not applicable
Complexity of HR policies and procedures.	○	○	○	○	○
Rigidity of HR policies and procedures.	○	○	○	○	○
Lack of sufficient staff resources in the HR office.	○	○	○	○	○
HR staff's concern with the rules and procedures.	○	○	○	○	○
HR staff's concern with results.	○	○	○	○	○
Lack of sufficient knowledge in the HR staff.	○	○	○	○	○
Lack of customer service by HR staff.	○	○	○	○	○

Human Resources: Outcomes

To what extent are you satisfied with the ***outcomes*** that you experience in the following HR areas?

	A Great Extent	Some Extent	A Little Extent	No Extent	Not sure/Not applicable
Classification (position descriptions)	○	○	○	○	○
Staffing/recruiting	○	○	○	○	○
Training	○	○	○	○	○
Management-employee relations (includes addressing conduct and/or performance issues)	○	○	○	○	○
Labor Relations	○	○	○	○	○
My own personal issues not related to my employees	○	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○	○

Human Resources: Supervisory Training

To what extent...

	A Great Extent	Some Extent	A Little Extent	No Extent	Not sure/Not applicable
... were you trained to become a supervisor prior to your first supervisory position?	○	○	○	○	○
... was supervisory training provided after you first became a supervisor?	○	○	○	○	○
... does the profile of your office or your position affect the quality of the HR service you receive?	○	○	○	○	○

Back

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Thank you for participating in the 2016 Merit Principles Survey.
Your responses will be held in the strictest confidence.