



## U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board 2021 Merit Principles Survey

This document provides a list of the items currently proposed for the MSPB's 2021 Merit Principles Survey. This document is provided for information and illustration only. Please note that the response options shown are simplified and that the actual survey (1) will be administered online, (2) contains additional instructions and introductory text; and (3) may contain different items or response choices.

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### Your Experience at Work

*Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements.*

- My agency is successful at accomplishing its mission.
- The work I do is meaningful to me.
- My work unit produces high quality products and services.
- I would recommend my agency as a place to work.
- Overall, I am satisfied with my supervisor.
- Overall, I am satisfied with managers above my immediate supervisor.
- I know what is expected of me on the job.
- My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.
- I have the resources to do my job well.
- I have sufficient opportunities (such as challenging assignments or projects) to earn a high performance rating.
- Recognition and rewards are based on performance in my work unit.
- I am satisfied with the recognition and rewards I receive for my work.
- I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization.
- I am treated with respect at work.
- My opinions count at work.
- A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my work unit.

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### Adhering to Merit System Principles

*Indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements.*

My organization...

- ...uses the workforce efficiently and effectively.
- ...eliminates unnecessary functions and positions.
- ...focuses employee attention and efforts on what is most important.
- ...makes good use of employees' skills and talents.

My organization...

- ...addresses poor performers effectively.
- ...provides employees with the resources needed to get the job done.
- ...retains its best employees.

- ...holds employees to high standards of conduct.
- ...puts the public interest first.
- ...provides employees with necessary training.
- ...provides employees with opportunities for growth and development.
- ...recognizes excellent performance.
- ...does not engage in favoritism.
- ...protects employees against arbitrary action.
- ...holds fair and open competition for job vacancies.
- ...selects the best qualified candidates when filling jobs.
- ...recruits a diverse pool of applicants for job vacancies.
- ...pays employees fairly.

In a brief phrase or sentence (20 words or less) tell us which **one** of your skills or abilities is **best used** in your organization.

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### Organizational Climate

*Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements.*

- Supervisors and managers at my agency demonstrate ethical behavior.
- In my job, I am sometimes put under pressure to break the rules.
- In my organization, ethical conduct is valued highly.
- My senior leaders tolerate unethical supervisors.
- In the past 4 months, a supervisor or manager discussed organizational ethics or values with employees.

During the pandemic:

- My agency made appropriate decisions about the management of its workforce.
- My agency kept me appropriately informed about important matters.
- My supervisor showed concern for my personal welfare.

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## Avoiding Prohibited or Improper Personnel Practices

In the past 2 years, an agency official (e.g., supervisor, manager, senior leader, etc.) in my work unit has discriminated in favor or against someone in a personnel action based upon...

- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- National origin
- Age
- Disabling condition
- Marital status
- Political affiliation
- Sexual orientation
- Status as a parent or caregiver

In the past 2 years, an agency official (e.g., supervisor, manager, senior leader, etc.) in my work unit has...

- ...solicited or considered improper employment recommendations.
- ...tried to pressure someone to support or oppose a particular candidate or party for elected office.
- ...obstructed someone's right to compete for employment.
- ...tried to influence someone to withdraw from competition for a position for the purpose of helping or injuring someone else's chances.
- ...tried to define the scope or manner of a recruitment action, or the qualifications required, for the purpose of improving the chances of a particular person.
- ...advocated for the appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement of a personal friend of the agency official.
- ...advocated for the appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement of a relative.
- ...discriminated in favor or against someone in a personnel action on the basis of off-duty conduct which was entirely unrelated to the job.
- ...knowingly violated a lawful form of veterans' preference or veterans' protection laws.
- ...inappropriately favored a veteran.
- ...asked an employee to sign a non-disclosure agreement limiting the individual's ability to blow the whistle on wrongdoing.
- ...accessed the medical record of an employee or applicant in an attempt to commit a prohibited personnel practice.

In the past 2 years, an agency official (e.g., supervisor, manager, senior leader, etc.) in my work unit took or threatened to take a personnel action against an employee because the employee...

- ...disclosed a violation of law, rules, or regulations or reported fraud, waste, abuse, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety.
- ...filed an appeal or grievance.
- ...refused to violate a law, rule, or regulation.

- ↳ For the most recent incident of an official discriminating on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, age, disabling condition, marital status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or status as a parent or caregiver, please indicate who you believe was responsible. Select all that apply.
- A coworker.
  - A team leader.
  - A first-line supervisor.
  - A manager (a supervisor over supervisors who is not an executive).
  - An executive or similarly high-ranking official.
  - A human resources advisor or manager.
  - Other.
  - Don't Know/NA.

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### Non-Disclosure Agreement

- In the past 2 years, has your agency asked you to enter into a nondisclosure agreement?
  - ↳ If yes, did the nondisclosure agreement state that the provisions did not supersede or alter your right to:
    - Blow the whistle on wrongdoing?
    - Whistleblower protections if you made a disclosure of wrongdoing?
- In the past 2 years, has your agency informed you of a nondisclosure policy?
  - ↳ If yes, did the communication about the non-disclosure policy include that the policy did not supersede or alter your right to:
    - Blow the whistle on wrongdoing?
    - Whistleblower protections if you made a disclosure of wrongdoing?

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### Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment

- My agency has a policy prohibiting sexual harassment.

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

- My agency takes sufficient steps to prevent sexual harassment.
- I am familiar with the contents of my agency's policy regarding sexual harassment.
- My agency's policy clearly communicates how employees should act to prevent and respond to sexual harassment.
- This policy is effective in preventing and addressing sexual harassment.
- My agency holds employees accountable for the requirements of this policy.
- Within the past 2 years, have you received training that is focused specifically on preventing sexual harassment? (Yes/No/Don't Know/NA)
  - ↳ If yes, what was the format of the training? Select all that apply.
    - Written materials (e.g., policies, notices, letters, newsletter articles, posters.)
    - Online delivery of recorded materials (e.g., videos, presentation slides, computer-based training modules).

- Interactive webinars or video-teleconferences (e.g., interaction with a trainer in another location).
- In-person training.
- Other.

↳ What was the length of the training?

- Less than 15 minutes.
- 15 minutes – 1 hour.
- More than 1 hour, but less than 4 hours.
- 4-8 hours.
- More than 8 hours.
- Don't Know/NA.

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

- ↳ This training clearly communicates how to prevent and respond to sexual harassment.
- ↳ This training is effective in preventing and addressing sexual harassment.

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

- I am familiar with the formal complaint channels that are available to people who have experienced sexual harassment.
- If I filed an action charging sexual harassment, I am confident that it would be resolved in a fair and just manner by my agency.
- If a supervisor or manager in my organization was found to have committed sexual harassment, management would take appropriate action against that person.
- My work colleagues would stand up for someone who was experiencing sexual harassment.
- I would feel comfortable speaking up if I observed sexual harassment.
- My agency tolerates comments and actions of a sexual nature that I view as inappropriate in the workplace.
- In the past 2 years have any of the following behaviors been directed at you by someone who was present (i.e. physically or electronically) in your workplace or connected to you through your work role? (Select all that apply.)
  - Unwelcome communications (e.g., emails, phone calls, text messages, social media contacts) of a sexual nature.
  - Unwelcome invasion of person space (e.g., touching, crowding, leaning over).
  - Unwelcome sexually suggestive looks or gestures.
  - Pressure for sexual favors.
  - Pressure for dates.
  - Unwelcome sexual teasing, jokes, comments or questions.
  - Unwelcome exposure to sexually oriented material in any format (e.g., photos, videos, written material).
  - Unwelcome exposure to sexually oriented conversations.
  - Offer of preferential treatment in the workplace in exchange for sexual favors.
  - Use of derogatory or unprofessional terms related to a person's gender.
  - Stalking (unwanted intrusion into your personal life (e.g., physically or electronically)).
  - Rape or sexual assault or attempted rape or sexual assault.

↳ Based on your response to the prior questions, you indicated that you experienced one or more of these behaviors at least once within the past 2 years. Select the one experience that had the greatest impact on you and answer the questions in this section in terms of that experience. What action(s) did you take? Select all that apply.

- I avoided the person(s).
- I asked/told the person(s) to stop.
- I threatened to tell or told others.
- I used an informal conflict resolution process, such as Ombuds.
- I reported the behavior to a supervisor or manager.
- I contacted an EEO counselor.
- I filed a formal complaint, such as an EEO complaint or grievance.
- I made a joke of the behavior.
- I went along with the behavior.
- I changed jobs/locations.
- I began teleworking more frequently.
- I ignored the behavior or did nothing.
- Other.

↳ If yes, for each action, did it make the situation: (Better/No difference/Worse/Don't Know/NA)

↳ Why did you not file a formal EEO complaint or grievance about your experience? Select all that apply.

- I did not think the incident was serious enough.
- The behavior stopped.
- My supervisor or management intervened.
- I changed jobs.
- I did not know how to file an EEO complaint.
- I had concerns about the formal complaint process (e.g., confidentiality, how long it would take).
- It could negatively affect my career (e.g., reprisal, being labelled a troublemaker by management).
- I was concerned about how my peers would treat me.
- I did not think the outcome would be worth the effort.
- I intend to file a grievance or a formal complaint but I have not done so yet.
- Other.

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### About You and Your Job

- How many years have you been a Federal civil service employee?
- What is your annual salary, including locality pay but excluding any awards or bonuses?
- What is your supervisory status?
- When will you be eligible to retire from Federal service?

*Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement. During the next 2 years, do you plan to...?*

- ...continue in your current job and role at the same level of responsibility.
- ...take on new challenges, assignments, or roles in your current job.
- ...take on higher-level technical responsibilities.
- ...take on supervisory or managerial responsibilities.
- ...reduce your work hours or responsibilities.

- ...move to a different occupation or line of work.
- ...move to a different organization or agency within the Federal Government.
- ...resign from the Federal Government.
- ...retire from the Federal Government.
  
- Which of the below best describes the last performance appraisal rating your agency gave to you?
  - Lowest possible.
  - Neither lowest nor highest possible.
  - Highest possible.
  - Not sure.
  
- What is your opinion of the last performance rating you received?
  - It was too low.
  - It was correct.
  - It was too high.
  - Not sure.
  
- Are you... (Please mark all that apply)
  - Hispanic or Latino?
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian
  - Black or African American
  - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
  - White
  
- Are you...?
  - Female
  - Male
  - I prefer to self-identify:
  - I prefer not to say.
  
- Do you consider yourself to be...?
  - Heterosexual or straight
  - Lesbian or gay
  - Bisexual
  - I prefer to self-identify:
  - I prefer not to say.
  
- Do you consider yourself to be transgender?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Other:
  - I prefer not to say.
  
- Is your immediate supervisor...?
  - Male
  - Female
  - I prefer not to say.

- Is your immediate work group (you and other employees who also report to your supervisor) composed of:
  - Substantially more males than females.
  - Slightly more males than females.
  - About the same number of males and females.
  - Slightly more females than males.
  - Substantially more females than males.
- What is your age?
  - 25 years or less.
  - 26 to 29 years.
  - 30 to 39 years.
  - 40 to 49 years.
  - 50 to 59 years.
  - 60 to 64 years.
  - 65 or older.
- What is the highest level of education you have completed?
  - Less than a high school diploma.
  - High school, equivalent diploma, or GED.
  - Associate's college degree.
  - Bachelor's college degree.
  - Master's degree.
  - Professional or academic doctorate degree (e.g., J.D., M.D., D.D.S., Ph.D., Ed.D).
- Do you have a physical or mental impairment or disability?
  - Yes, and it substantially limits one or more major life activities. Examples of a major life activity include seeing, hearing, standing, walking, sitting, and bathing.
  - Yes, but it does not affect a major life activity.
  - No.
  - I prefer not to say.
- Telework includes work from home or at a location such as a telework center. It does not include field work. How many days per week did you typically telework before the COVID-19 pandemic?
  - 1 day per week.
  - 2 days per week.
  - 3 days per week.
  - 4 days per week.
  - 5 days per week.
  - I did not telework regularly.
  - I was not eligible to telework.
  - I chose not to telework.

*The following two questions ask about your official occupation as a Federal employee.*

- Please enter your official occupational title.
- If you know your four-digit occupational series number, please enter it below. If your series has fewer than four digits, please add leading zeros. For example, enter 343 as 0343.