**Codebook for Agency Performance Data**

“Do Vacancies Hurt Federal Agency Performance?”

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This dataset is comprised of agency average responses to a series of questions from the 2020 and 2014 versions of the *Survey on the Future of Government Service*. These agency average responses were calculated using weighted responses among survey respondents. Only agencies with at least 5 respondents and 30 potential respondents are included in the dataset. Average survey response questions are accompanied in the dataset with data on the number of observations used to calculate the agency average response.

This dataset also includes data we collected on vacancies in Senate-confirmed positions. The data on the most proximate PAS position was drawn from the *Plum Book*.[[1]](#footnote-1) Data on vacancy lengths for different spells of vacancies drawn from the Partnership for Public Service and the *Washington Post*’s Appointee Tracker[[2]](#footnote-2) and the Senate website, which includes data on the dates of formal nominations and Senate action on nominees.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Finally, the dataset includes variables for structural features of agencies and various kinds of employment data drawn mostly from Selin and Lewis 2018 and Office of Personnel Management data, respectively.

**Survey on the Future of Government Service (2020)[[4]](#footnote-4)**

In 2020 we partnered with academic colleagues and the Partnership for Public Service and Volcker Alliance to conduct the *Survey on the Future of Government Service*. We asked appointed and career executives across the executive establishment about their agencies. We targeted all appointed and career federal executives working in non-advisory agencies headed by Senate-confirmed appointees.[[5]](#footnote-5) This includes all political appointees[[6]](#footnote-6), career members of the Senior Executive Service, all senior Foreign Service officers serving domestically, and comparable managers in agencies without these appointment authorities. It also includes other high level career managers that administered programs or agencies (i.e., GS 14-15 with specific titles). We relied on Leadership Directories’ Federal Government database[[7]](#footnote-7) to provide names and contact information for our target population. This proprietary database contains contact information for department and agency heads in the executive branch, including up to 15 levels of management hierarchy within departments and agencies. The database also identifies individuals in the following types of positions: Presidential Appointments with Senate Confirmation, Presidential Appointments without Senate Confirmation, Schedule C Appointments, Non-Career Senior Executive Service positions, Career Senior Executive Service positions, and Senior Foreign Service positions.

Other senior career executives that were not in the Senior Executive Service or Senior Foreign Service were identified by title. [[8]](#footnote-8) Specifically, the sample includes a census of employees whose titles are variants of Administrator, Commissioner, Secretary (e.g., Under Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretary), Chief or General Counsel, Chief of Staff, Chief Officers (e.g., Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer), Controller, President, Director (e.g., Deputy Director).

Heterogeneity in title usage across agencies makes it difficult to identify a set of titles that reliably identifies senior employees at every agency. Moreover, variants of Chief, Manager, and Supervisor are common among senior employees in subagencies, meaning that the titles used to construct the census sample may not produce a large enough sample to yield a sufficient number of responses to make reliable subagency-level inferences. Therefore, for EOP agencies, subagencies, and independent agencies that had at least 100 employees in the sample frame (i.e., enough potential respondents to yield a reliable agency-level estimate give our expected response rate), we executed the following sampling procedure:

For each agency with at least 100 people in the sample frame and the titles Administrator, Director, Chief, Manager, and Supervisor (in that order),

1. Calculate the number of additional respondents needed to reach a sample size of 100 for the agency
2. Select people in the sample frame not already selected by the census procedures
3. From step b, identify all individual whose title includes “Administrator”
4. If adding all individuals from step c would cause the sample size to exceed 100, take a simple random sample from the set of individuals such that the sample size for that agency will be 100 and proceed to the next agency
5. Otherwise, add all individuals from step c to the sample and repeat step c for the next title
6. If all titles have been searched and the sample size remains below 100, proceed to the next agency

In total, this procedure yielded a sample of 23,824 individuals of whom 2,984 were not part of the census sample. Names and addresses were submitted to a vendor for mail service processing. There were 22,819 records (out of 23,824) that had a mailing address or building location in the directory. About 96% of these addresses were found to be valid delivery points in the USPS delivery sequence file. Through additional editing and research, nearly all of the remaining 4% were validated. The file was also inspected for duplicate names and email addresses. Because the survey is administered online, we then eliminated individuals with no email address resulting in a final sample of 18,035 individuals.

*Survey Execution*

The Princeton Survey Research Center (PSRC) fielded the first 15-20 minute survey in the fall of 2014 (August 14, 2014 to December 15, 2014) and executed the second in the fall of 2020 (June 12, 2020 to December 31, 2020).[[9]](#footnote-9) In 2014 potential respondents received a paper letter and postcard reminders in addition to email prompts, reminders, and telephone calls. In 2020, most federal executives were working from home because of the 2020 global pandemic. This made letters and postcards infeasible since most respondents would not receive their work mail at home. The pandemic also made telephone calls difficult since most executives were working from home rather than the office. We still tried to reach executives through calls to work numbers. Most of the 2020 survey involved electronic communications.[[10]](#footnote-10)

*Response and Participation Rates*

The participation rate for the first survey was 24% (3,551 out of 14,698). Out of 3,551 respondents, there were 429 political appointees (response rate 18%; 429/2,444) and 3,122 career professionals (response rate 25%; 3,122/ 12,254). The rate of the second survey, fielded during the pandemic, was 11% (1,779 full or partial completes out of 16,232).[[11]](#footnote-11) Out of 1,779 respondents, there were 125 appointees (7%; 125/1,605) and 1,654 career professionals (11%; 1,654/14,627). These rates are comparable to most public opinion surveys (response rates for Gallup telephone surveys average around 7 percent).[[12]](#footnote-12)

*Survey Weights*

All analysis includes survey weights to ensure that the answers provided by the sample of respondents are reliable and mirror those of the target population.The results reported are weighted to reduce non-response and noncoverage bias. We created post-stratification weights using iterative proportional fitting, more commonly called raking. The sample drawn from the Federal Government database was used to create population marginals because the sample is primarily a census sample, meaning the sample is our best estimate of the population.

The characteristics used for weighting are:

1. Whether a respondent worked in the DC area (defined as the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia).
2. Position type defined as political appointees (i.e, Presidential Appointments with Senate Confirmation, Presidential Appointments without Senate Confirmation, Schedule C Appointments, Non-Career Senior Executive Service positions), career member of the Senior Executive Service, member of the Senior Foreign Service, and career civil servant.
3. Workplace location in the executive branch defined as the Executive Office of the President, each executive department (separately), and independent agencies (as a whole).

The composite design effect for a sample of size *n* with each case having weight *wi* is:



We set = 0*.*5 and calculated the weighted margin of error as:



*Agency Averages*

To generate agency averages, we first create a count of the number of observations in STATA. Specifically, we use:

bysort bureau: egen nobsb = count(agency\_perf)

Then, we collapsed the individual-level responses using the following STATA command:

collapse (mean) … [iweight=weight]

in 2014. In 2020, we used the following command:

collapse (mean) … [iweight=wt\_full]

We then dropped all cases where the number of observations to calculate the means was fewer than 5 observations. Averages for whole departments in 2020 are based upon responses from executives working in the Office of the Secretary only since these employees are the only ones asked about the entire department.

*What is an agency?*

We include agencies in the Executive Office of the President, the executive departments, independent executive agencies (i.e., not boards or commissions), and independent commissions. We also include major subcomponents of executive departments and executive agencies. We determine a respondent’s workplace with the following question:

Q3. Please select your workplace from the list below: [Drop-down menu – see Table A in the Appendix.]

For cases where the respondent left the workplace question blank, we used information from the *Federal Yellow Book* to determine workplace. This dataset includes only agencies for which have at least 5 respondents selecting a workplace and 30 potential respondents from that workplace.

Calculating Department-wide Averages

In our survey respondents select their exact workplace from a dropdown menu at the start of the survey.[[13]](#footnote-13) This helps better connect answers to questions about “their agency” to a specific unit.[[14]](#footnote-14) For example, the authors of this manuscript work in the Department of Political Science within the College of Arts & Science at Vanderbilt University. If we are asked whether they agree or disagree with a statement about “my organization” it is not clear what organization researchers are targeting. Do they want the respondent to talk about the Department of Political Science, the College of Arts & Science, or Vanderbilt University? Public sector executives have a similar problem, working in offices within divisions within bureaus within larger agencies and departments. By asking respondents to identify their workplace and then populating each subsequent question with that organization name, we have more precision in the mapping from individual responses to organizational attributes. So, for example, rather than asking, “How would you rate the overall performance of your agency in carrying out its mission?”, we ask “How would you rate the overall performance of the Economic Research Service in carrying out its mission?” This gives us more confidence in the data provided by our respondents since we know whether they are answering with reference to the Economic Research Service rather than a part of that agency or the Department of Agriculture.

This practice, however, creates some problems for aggregating responses to the department level. Respondents that work in an executive department could choose the Office of the Secretary (e.g., Office of the Secretary of Labor), one of the large subcomponents of the department (e.g., Wage and Hour Division), or Other e.g., Other (DOL)) as their workplace. Respondents that selected the Office of the Secretary as their workplace were asked about the entire department in their subsequent questions-- “How would you rate the overall performance of the *Department of Labor* in carrying out its mission?” Respondents in specific subcomponents like the Wage and Hour Division were asked “How would you rate the overall performance of the *Wage and Hour Division* in carrying out its mission?” Respondents that worked in other parts of the department were asked “How would you rate the overall performance of *your agency* in carrying out its mission?” Thus, we asked respondents to evaluate different components of the larger department. When we include average responses for the whole department, we include only responses for employees working in the Office of the Secretary since these were the only respondents asked about the departments as a whole.

**Vacancies Data**

After creating measures of agency performance (and related concepts) from the survey data, we connected these agency averages to vacancy and turnover information. To collect information on Senate confirmed positions and vacancies, we needed to identify both the most proximate Senate-confirmed official and code whether the agency was led by a Senate-confirmed appointee or some other official.[[15]](#footnote-15)

To begin, we used the *Plum Book* (<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-PLUMBOOK-2016/pdf/GPO-PLUMBOOK-2016.pdf>) to look up each unit to find the PAS position most proximate to the subunit. When the *Plum Book* was not clear on the most proximate PAS position, we used agency organizational charts (included below) to determine those positions.

* <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda-organization-chart.pdf>
* <https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/media/files/2015/docorgchartfinal.pdf>
* <https://fas.org/irp/agency/dod/org-man.pdf>
* <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/or/index.html>
* <https://www.energy.gov/leadership/organization-chart>
* <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19_1205_dhs-organizational-chart.pdf>

*Boards and Commissions*

For boards and commissions, we tracked vacancies in chair positions. To identify the chair at the start of the term, we began bychecking agency website.If such information was not available, we used the *Wayback Machine* (archive.org/web) and searched the agency website at the end of the Obama administration. To track chairs over the course of the term, we used agency websites for information on subsequent chairs and their length of service. If such information was not available, we used the *Wayback Machine* (archive.org/web) and searched agency website periodically throughout Trump administration to identify every chair that served during the president’s term. Once chairs were identified, we searched for the name of the chair on Leadership Connect for service length.

**Variables**

**dept\_acr:** Acronym for department within which the agency is located. This is an executive department (e.g., USDA, DOD) or IND for independent agencies and EOP for units in the Executive Office of the President (e.g., Office of Management and Budget).

**bureau\_acr:** Acronym for the agency. This is a unique identifier for the data in this dataset.

**agency\_perf:** Weighted agency average response to the question: “How would you rate the overall performance of [your agency] in carrying out its mission?” Respondents were given a sliding scale from 1-Not at all effective to 5-Very effective. They could also indicate a “Don’t know” response. Averages calculated using only the 1 to 5 responses.

**skills\_mean\_20:** 2020 estimates of federal agency workforce skills based upon the opinion of federal executives outside the agency. In our 2020 survey, we asked respondents to identify the agencies that they worked with most frequently (other than their own). We then asked respondents to evaluate the skills of these agencies’ workforces (Richardson et al. 2018). So, for example, an employee in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA) might report that they work regularly with the Environmental Protection Agency, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Department of the Interior. This respondent would be asked to rate these agencies and two other agencies they were likely to be familiar with (e.g., other bureaus in the USDA). Specifically, they were asked, “In your view, how skilled are the workforces of the following agencies?” and given options from 1-Not at all skilled to 5-Very skilled. They were also provided a Don’t know option. Each respondent rated up to 5 agencies, providing thousands of ratings of different agencies. Following Richardson et al. (2018), the ratings were aggregated using a Bayesian multi-rater item response model, adjusting for differences in the way raters use the scale.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Note: We noted that there are some dramatic changes in the estimates of a few agencies in 2020 (e.g., MSPB), notably cases with a few raters. Users would be advised to take a look at estimates to make sure outliers are not driving results.

**nobsb:** Number of observations on which agency average performance ratings are based.

**directPAS (0,1):** This is coded with a 1 if the agency is headed by a Senate-confirmed appointee and 0 otherwise.

**bureau (0,1):** This is coded with a 1 if the agency is a subcomponent of a larger department and 0 otherwise. This is coded with a 1 for agencies in the Executive Office of the President but it is coded with a 0 for all independent agencies. There are a few cases where sub-components of independent agencies are included (e.g., the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is part of the Federal Reserve).

**professionals16:** This is the number of agency employees classified as professionals by the Office of Personnel Management in the December, 2016 data ([www.fedscope.opm.gov](http://www.fedscope.opm.gov)).

**employ16:** This is the number of civilian agency employees in the December, 2016 data ([www.fedscope.opm.gov](http://www.fedscope.opm.gov)).[[17]](#footnote-17)

**employ20:** This is the number of civilian agency employees in the December, 2020 data ([www.fedscope.opm.gov](http://www.fedscope.opm.gov)).[[18]](#footnote-18)

**Days\_2\_Con:** Number of days from inauguration (1/20/17) to date of first confirmation to most proximate PAS position. If no confirmation occurred, date entered as 6/22/20. Date gathered from *Washington Post* appointee tracker (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/trump-administration-appointee-tracker/database/>) or senate.gov.

**Total\_Vacant\_Days:** Total of Vacant\_Period1\_Days, Vacant\_Period2\_Days, and Vacant\_Period3\_Days. We collected data on every vacant period during the Trump Presidency up through June 22, 2020 (when the survey went into the field). Data on vacant periods gathered from *Washington Post* appointee tracker (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/trump-administration-appointee-tracker/database/>) or appointee page on Leadership Connect.

**NQ\_Total:** Number of days where a commission lacked a quorum. We researched and collected data on the number of members required for a quorum. We then determined whether the board or commission had a quorum at the start of the Trump Administration. We tracked board or commission membership for each agency and determined whether spells without quorums occurred. For each spell, we counted the number of days the agency lacked a quorum and summed them.

**eop (0,1):** This variable is coded with a 1 if the agency is part of the Executive Office of the President and 0 otherwise.

**cabinet (0,1):** This variable is coded with a 1 if the agency is an executive department that is part of the cabinet or a sub-component of such and executive department and 0 otherwise.

**ind(0,1):** This variable is coded with a 1 if the agency is not part of the Executive Office of the President or a cabinet department and 0 otherwise.

**indcom(0,1):** This variable is coded with a 1 if the agency is independent (see above) and a board or commission and 0 otherwise.

**offsec(0,1):** This variable is coded with a 1 if the agency is an office of the secretary in an executive department and 0 otherwise.

**skills\_mean\_2014:** 2014 estimates of federal agency workforce skills based upon the opinion of federal executives outside the agency. In our 2014 survey, we asked respondents to identify the agencies that they worked with most frequently (other than their own). We then asked respondents to evaluate the skills of these agencies’ workforces (Richardson et al. 2018). So, for example, an employee in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA) might report that they work regularly with the Environmental Protection Agency, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Department of the Interior. This respondent would be asked to rate these agencies and two other agencies they were likely to be familiar with (e.g., other bureaus in the USDA). Specifically, they were asked, “In your view, how skilled are the workforces of the following agencies?” and given options from 1-Not at all skilled to 5-Very skilled. They were also provided a Don’t know option. Each respondent rated up to 8 agencies, providing thousands of ratings of different agencies. Richardson et al. (2018) aggregated the ratings using a Bayesian multi-rater item response model, adjusting for differences in the way raters use the scale.

**skill\_diff:** Difference between the 2020 and 2014 workforce skills rating.

Note: We noted that there are some dramatic changes in the estimates of a few agencies in 2020 (e.g., MSPB), notably cases with a few raters. Users would be advised to take a look at estimates to make sure outliers are not driving results.

**invest\_now:** Weighted agency average response to the question: “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? ‘[My agency] is investing now to enable our future success’ [Strongly disagree (0), Disagree (1), Neither agree nor disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly agree (4), Don’t know]”. They could also indicate a “Don’t know” response. Averages calculated using only the 0 to 4 responses.

**inv\_nobsb:** Number of observations on which agency average **invest\_now** values are based.

**eff\_mng\_org:** Weighted agency average response to the question: “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?” [My agency] is an effectively managed, well-run organization.” [Strongly disagree (0), Disagree (1), Neither agree nor disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly agree (4), Don’t know]”. They could also indicate a “Don’t know” response. Averages calculated using only the 0 to 4 responses.

**eff\_nobsb:** Number of observations on which agency average **eff\_mng\_org** values are based.

**sup\_misn\_wh:** Weighted agency average response to the question: “How much effort do the following groups spend to ensure that [your agency] has what it needs to carry out its mission?” Respondents are asked about Political Appointees, the White House, and Congressional Committees. The response categories include: None (0), Little (1), Some (2), A good bit (3), A great deal (4), and Don’t know. They could also indicate a “Don’t know” response. Averages calculated using only the 0 to 4 responses.

**swh\_nobsb:** Number of observations on which agency average **sup\_misn\_wh** values are based.

**sup\_misn\_comm:** Weighted agency average response to the question: “How much effort do the following groups spend to ensure that [your agency] has what it needs to carry out its mission?” Respondents are asked about Political Appointees, the White House, and Congressional Committees. The response categories include: None (0), Little (1), Some (2), A good bit (3), A great deal (4), and Don’t know. They could also indicate a “Don’t know” response. Averages calculated using only the 0 to 4 responses.

**scom\_nobsb:** Number of observations on which agency average **sup\_misn\_comm** values are based.

**sup\_misn\_app:** Weighted agency average response to the question: “How much effort do the following groups spend to ensure that [your agency] has what it needs to carry out its mission?” Respondents are asked about Political Appointees, the White House, and Congressional Committees. The response categories include: None (0), Little (1), Some (2), A good bit (3), A great deal (4), and Don’t know. They could also indicate a “Don’t know” response. Averages calculated using only the 0 to 4 responses.

**sapp\_nobsb:** Number of observations on which agency average **sup\_misn\_app** values are based.

**inv\_sme:** Weighted agency average response to the question: How often did you do each of the following in the previous calendar year?

* Discuss policy with outside experts
* Attend seminars or training related to the policy jurisdiction of [your agency]
* Consult subject matter experts at state agencies or international agencies
* Attend industry or trade conferences related to the policy jurisdiction of [your agency]

The response categories are Never (0), Few times a year (1), Monthly (2), Weekly (3), Daily (4), and Not applicable to my job. They could also indicate a “Don’t know” response. Averages calculated using only the 0 to 4 responses.

**isme\_nobsb:** Number of observations on which agency average **inv\_sme** values are based.

**dem:** Percentage of respondents that are Democrats. Respondents were asked, “Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an independent, or what?” Respondents that indicated they were Democrats are coded with a 1 and other respondents are coded with a 0.

**turnpas:** The number of different Senate-confirmed leaders that served in the agency between Inauguration and the start of the survey on June 22, 2020.

**appt:** Percentage of respondents that were appointees. This variable is omitted in the public release in order to comply with human subjects protections.

**invexp:** Weighted agency average of sum of responses to the question: How often did you do each of the following in the previous calendar year?

* Discuss policy with outside experts
* Attend seminars or training related to the policy jurisdiction of [your agency]
* Consult subject matter experts at state agencies or international agencies
* Attend industry or trade conferences related to the policy jurisdiction of [your agency]

The response categories are Never (0), Few times a year (1), Monthly (2), Weekly (3), Daily (4), and Not applicable to my job. They could also indicate a “Don’t know” response. We summed individual responses to these 4 questions (0 to 16; excluding cases with Don’t know responses) and then took average among respondents.

**iexp\_nobsb:** Number of observations on which agency average **invexp** values are based.

**ideo\_rating:** Measure of stable agency ideology. In our 2014 survey, we asked respondents to identify the agencies that they worked with most frequently (other than their own). We then asked respondents to evaluate the ideological leaning of these agencies (Richardson et al. 2018). We asked, “In your opinion, do the policy views of the following agencies tend to slant liberal, slant conservative, or neither consistently in both Democratic and Republican administrations?” and given options from 1-Liberal to 5-Conservative. They were also provided a Don’t know option. Each respondent rated up to 8 agencies, providing thousands of ratings of different agencies. Richardson et al. (2018) aggregated the ratings using a Bayesian multi-rater item response model, adjusting for differences in the way raters use the scale.

**Depprior (0,1):** Coded with a 1 if the department implements a policy that President Trump mentioned in his 2016 campaign document, *Contract with the American Voter*, and 0 otherwise.[[19]](#footnote-19) Coding details included in Appendix A.

**Bprior (0,1):** Coded with a 1 if the agency implements a policy that President Trump mentioned in his 2016 campaign document, *Contract with the American Voter*, and 0 otherwise.[[20]](#footnote-20) Coding details included in Appendix A.

**Notes:** Any data collection notes.

**resp\_pres:** Weighted agency average response to the question: Thinking about the personnel in [agency name], in general how responsive are these different groups to the policy decisions of the President? Respondents are asked about Political Appointees, Senior civil servants, Low to mid-level civil servants, and Contractor employees. The response categories include: Not at all responsive (0), Slightly responsive (1), Somewhat responsive (2), Responsive (3), Very responsive (4), and Don’t know. They could also indicate a “Don’t know” response. Averages calculated using only the 0 to 4 responses.

**respnobsb:** Number of observations on which agency average **resps\_pres** values are based.

**totturn:** Number of different agency leaders between Inauguration Day and the start of the survey on June 22, 2020, including acting officials.

**beptw:** Partnership for Public Service COVID Agency Performance scores.[[21]](#footnote-21) This score based upon federal employee responses to the following questions:

* During the COVID-19 pandemic, my work unit has met the needs of our customers.
* During the COVID-19 pandemic, my work unit has contributed positively to my agency’s performance.
* During the COVID-19 pandemic, my work unit has produced high-quality work.
* During the COVID-19 pandemic, my work unit has adapted to changing priorities.
* During the COVID-19 pandemic, my work unit has successfully collaborated.
* During the COVID-19 pandemic, my work unit has achieved our goals.

**deal\_poor\_perf:** Weighted agency average response to the question: “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? In [my agency], we deal effectively with poor performers” [Strongly disagree (0), Disagree (1), Neither agree nor disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly agree (4), Don’t know].” They could also indicate a “Don’t know” response. Averages calculated using only the 0 to 4 responses.

**dppnobsb:** Number of observations on which agency average **deal\_poor\_perf** values are based.

**sense\_urgency:** Weighted agency average response to the question: “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [My agency] has a sense of urgency for getting things done [Strongly disagree (0), Disagree (1), Neither agree nor disagree (2), Agree (3), Strongly agree (4), Don’t know].” They could also indicate a “Don’t know” response. Averages calculated using only the 0 to 4 responses.

**sens\_nobsb:** Number of observations on which agency average **sens\_urgency** values are based.

**fevs\_agency:** Weighted agency average response to the question: “Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your agency? [Very dissatisfied (0), Dissatisfied (1), Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (2), Satisfied (3), Very satisfied (4)].” They could also indicate a “Don’t know” response. Averages calculated using only the 0 to 4 responses.

**fevsa-nobsb:** Number of observations on which agency average **fevs\_agency** values are based.

**selin\_dm\_ind:** Selin (2015) estimates of federal agency decision maker independence.

**selin\_pr\_ind:** Selin (2015) estimates of federal agency political review independence.

**pty\_dis\_strg:** Weighted agency average response to the question: “How strongly to Republicans and Democrats in Washington disagree over what [your agency] should do?” [No disagreement (0), Low intensity disagreement (1), Moderate intensity disagreement (2), High intensity disagreement (3)] They could also indicate a “Don’t know” response. Averages calculated using only the 0 to 3 responses.

**pty\_nob:** Number of observations on which agency average **pty\_dis\_strg** values are based.

**mngt\_statutes:** Weighted agency average response to the 2014 question: “How much discretion does [your agency] have over the following aspects of its management environment?”

* The proper interpretation of statutes
* The prioritization of some agency responsibilities over others
* The allocation of personnel to different jobs or offices
* Spending decisions after funds have been appropriated by Congress
* Enforcement priorities

The response categories were [None (0), Little (1), Some (2), A good bit (3), A great deal (4)] They could also indicate a “Don’t know” response. Averages calculated using only the 0 to 4 responses.

**mngt\_nob:** Number of observations on which agency average **mngt\_statutes** values are based.

**Trump\_Time\_Nomination:** Number of days from President Trump’s inauguration until a nomination was made to the most proximate PAS position. Data gathered from gathered from *Washington Post* appointee tracker (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/trump-administration-appointee-tracker/database/>) or, for positions not included on the tracker, Senate.gov.

**Bush\_Number\_PAS:** Number of Senate-confirmed appointees that filled the most proximate PAS position during the Bush administration. Names and service length of appointees gathered using data from Resh, Hollibaugh, Roberts, and Dull (2021). For positions not covered by Resh et al. (2021), appointee names and start dates were gathered from Senate.gov. End dates were gathered from agency websites or online news sources.

**Bush\_Vacancy\_Length\_Total:** Number of days the most proximate PAS position was vacant during the Bush administration. Vacant periods determined using data from Resh et al. (2021). For positions not covered by Resh et al. (2021), appointee names and start dates were gathered from Senate.gov. End dates were gathered from agency websites or online news sources.

**Obama\_Number\_PAS:** Number of Senate-confirmed appointees that filled the most proximate PAS position during the Obama administration. Names and service length of appointees up until 2013 gathered using data from Resh, Hollibaugh, Roberts, and Dull (2021). For positions not covered by Resh et al. (2021) and for appointees that served after 2013, appointee names and start dates were gathered from Senate.gov. End dates were gathered from agency websites or online news sources.

**Obama\_Vacancy\_Length\_Total:** Number of days the most proximate PAS position was vacant during the Obama administration. Vacant periods up until 2013 determined using data from Resh et al. (2021). For positions not covered by Resh et al. (2021) and for vacancies that occurred after 2013, appointee names and start dates were gathered from Senate.gov. End dates were gathered from agency websites or online news sources.

**Per\_Vacant\_Quarters\_PA**: Percentage of days without a Senate confirmed appointee where the agency is led by an acting official that is a political appointee. The names of acting officials were gathered from the Federal Yellow Book and Leadership Connect and information on appointment status was researched using Leadership Connect, LinkedIn, and other sources.

**References**

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**Appendix A. Coding of Agency Priority, Trump Administration, 2017**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Policy Issue** | **Agency--Department Level** | **Agency--Bureau Level** |
| Term limits | Department of Justice |  |
| Hiring freeze | Office of Personnel Management |  |
| Regulatory policy | Office of Management and Budget | Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OMB) |
| Ethics | Office of Government Ethics |  |
| NAFTA | Office of the United States Trade Representative; Department of State | Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment (STAT); Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (STAT) |
| TPP | Office of the United States Trade Representative; Department of State | Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment (STAT); Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (STAT) |
| Currency Manipulation[[22]](#footnote-22) | Department of the Treasury | International Affairs (TREAS) |
| Trade Abuses[[23]](#footnote-23) | Department of the Treasury; Department of Commerce; Office of the United States Trade Representative; Department of State; US Agency for International Development, US International Trade Commission, US Trade and Development Agency, Department of Agriculture | International Trade Administration, Foreign Agricultural Service, Bureau of Industry and Security, U.S. Commercial Service, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Treasury (International), International Affairs (Energy), EPA (International Programs) |
| Energy production | Department of the Interior; Department of Energy | Office of Fossil Energy; Bureau of Ocean Energy Management; Office of Surface Mining and Enforcement; Bureau of Land Management; Land and Minerals Management |
| Keystone Pipeline | Department of State |  |
| Climate Change | Environmental Protection Agency; Department of State; Department of Commerce; Council on Environmental Quality | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration |
| Executive Orders | Department of Justice | Office of Legal Counsel (DOJ) |
| Gorsuch Nomination | Department of Justice | Office of Justice Policy (DOJ) |
| Sanctuary Cities | Department of Justice |  |
| Immigration enforcement | Department of Homeland Security | Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Citizenship and Immigration Services; Customs and Border Protection |
| Visas | Department of State; Department of Homeland Security | Bureau of Consular Affairs; Citizenship and Immigration Services |
| Tax Relief | Department of the Treasury; Council of Economic Advisers | Tax Section; Internal Revenue Service |
| Offshoring | Department of the Treasury | Internal Revenue Service |
| Infrastructure[[24]](#footnote-24) | Department of Transportation; Department of Defense; Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Veterans Affairs; Department of Agriculture | Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, Federal Railroad Administration, Army Corps of Engineers; Federal Aviation Administration; Maritime Administration; Veterans Health Administration; EPA (Water Infrastructure); Rural Development (USDA) |
| School choice | Department of Education | Office of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| Obamacare | Department of Health and Human Services | Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services |
| Childcare and eldercare | Department of Treasury | Internal Revenue Service |
| Border wall | Department of Homeland Security | Customs and Border Protection; Immigration and Customs Enforcement |
| Violent crime | Department of Justice |  |
| Military Spending | Department of Defense; National Security Council | Comptroller; Department of the Army; Department of the Navy; Department of the Air Force; Joint Chiefs |
| Veterans | Department of Veterans Affairs | Veterans Health Administration |
| Cyber security | Department of Defense; Department of Homeland Security; Central Intelligence Agency; Office of the Director of National Intelligence | National Security Agency; Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (DHS) |
| Red tape at FDA | Department of Health and Human Services | Food and Drug Administration |
| Medicaid | Department of Health and Human Services | Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services |

**Appendix B. Survey Instrument for the Survey on the Future of Government Service, 2020**

**2020 Survey on the Future of Government Service Instrument**

# Q1.

**Georgetown Study Number:** 00002441

**Princeton IRB Number:** 12939

**Vanderbilt IRB Number:** 200904

**Principal Investigators:** Dr. David Lewis, Dr. Nolan McCarty, and Dr. Mark Richardson

**Title:** 2020 Survey on the Future of Government Service

**Permission to Take Part in a Human Research Study**

**Key Information:** The following is a short summary of this study to help you decide whether or not to be a part of this study.

**Why am I being invited to take part in a research study?**

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a high-level executive in the federal government.

**What should I know about a research study?**

* If you have questions, someone will explain this research study to you.
* Whether or not you take part is up to you.
* You can choose not to take part.
* You can agree to take part and later change your mind.
* Your decision will not be held against you.
* You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

**Why is this research being done?**

The 2020 Survey on the Future of Government Service is a study designed to understand the experiences and backgrounds of federal executives in the United States. In particular, this survey collects federal executives’ opinions on a broad range of topics of concern to the public service, including recruitment and retention, workforce stressors, organizational performance, and the management environment. The results from the survey will provide important insight into the challenges facing federal agencies and contribute to ongoing efforts to strengthen America’s public service and the operations and management of the federal government.

**How long will the research last and what will I need to do?**

You will complete a survey that takes about 20 minutes.

**Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?**

The only risks associated with participation in this study are consequences that might result from unauthorized use or theft of the survey responses. The research team conducting the study has taken all necessary precautions to minimize the risk of accidental disclosure or theft of confidential data.

**Will being in this study help me in any way?**

We cannot promise any benefits to you or others from your taking part in this research. However, possible benefits include improvements in the management of federal agencies that improve your job satisfaction. Possible benefits to others include improvements in the management of federal agencies that improve government performance.

**What happens to the information collected for the research?**

**Data Use and Security:** The survey data will be used to prepare public reports on the state of the civil service in the United States. The data will also be put to use by researchers for the purposes of scholarly publication. The principal investigators may also share individually de-identified data with researchers from other institutions for the purposes of scholarly publication. Scholars other than the principal investigators will only have access to a limited data set that is designed to prevent the use of survey responses to infer the identities of survey respondents. Survey data will be publicly reported as aggregate statistics or figures that prevent the inference of the identity of individual survey respondents. For agencies with a small population of federal executives, we will never report agency-level statistics. The research team is working with computer scientists at the Massive Data Institute (MDI) at Georgetown University, a Federal Statistical Research Data Center that handles some of the nation’s most sensitive statistical data, to ensure that our reports and publications cannot be used to de-anonymize the survey data using publicly available information about the federal workforce (e.g., OPM records released in response to FOIA requests).

Respondent data such as email address, name, agency, etc. will reside on a private encrypted, server. Survey response data will also reside on a private encrypted, server and be stored separately from respondent data. Data security will be managed by MDI. Compliance with data security protocols will be monitored by the Office of Compliance and Ethics at Georgetown University.

**Privacy:** Your privacy will be maintained in all published materials resulting from the survey.

**What happens if I do not want to be in this research?**

Participation in research is completely voluntary. You can decide to participate or not to participate. You have the right to discontinue the survey at any time. You also have the right to refuse to answer specific questions by skipping over the question.

**Who can I talk to?**

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to the research team at (609) 258-5660; 169 Nassau Street, Princeton, NJ 08542; or psrc@princeton.edu. The researchers for this study are Dr. David Lewis, Dr. Nolan McCarty and Dr. Mark Richardson.

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (“IRB”). You may contact Georgetown's IRB at (202) 687-1506 or irboard@georgetown.edu. You may contact Princeton’s Research Integrity and Assurance office at (609) 258-3321 or ria@princeton.edu. You may contact Vanderbilt's Institutional Review Board Office at (615) 322-2918 or toll free at (866) 224-8273. You should contact them if:

* Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
* You cannot reach the research team.
* You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
* You have questions about your rights as a research subject.
* You want to get information or provide input about this research.

**Consent:** I understand the information presented above and that:

1. My participation is voluntary, and I may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in the project at any time. My refusal to participate will not result in any penalty.
2. By agreeing to participate, I do not waive any legal rights or release Georgetown University, Princeton University, Vanderbilt University, or their agents from liability for negligence.

* Yes, I would like to participate
* No, I do not wish to participate

[Display Q2 if response to Q1 is “No, I do not want to participate.”]

Q2. Your opinions are very important to us. We understand you’re asked to complete many online surveys and that your time is valuable. This confidential survey will provide us with vital information and your input will help us get a better understanding of the current and future states of the public service in the United States.

Okay, I’ll take the survey.

No, I do not want to participate.

[If answer to Q2 is “No, I do not want to participate.”, end the survey.]

[Text] Thank you for agreeing to participate in this important project. The questionnaire was designed to be easy to complete. We estimate that the survey should take approximately 20 minutes. As you finish each page and proceed to the next, your data will be submitted for processing. You can back up and change your answers on the previous page of the questionnaire by using the "Back" button on the screen. Do not to use the "Back" button in your browser. The survey adapts future questions based on some of your answers which prevents you from backing up in a few instances.

If you choose to suspend the survey to take a break, if your computer shuts down, or if you lose your Internet connection, you will be able to resume where you left off. Simply log back on using the link and log in credentials that you received from us.

Thank you, again!

Q3. Please select your workplace from the list below:

[Drop-down menu – see Table A.1 in the Appendix.]

Q4. Please select the three agencies you have worked with the most in order of how often you work with them.

[Do not display the agency the respondent chose in Q3.]

First:

[Drop-down menu – see Table A.2 in the Appendix.]

Second:

[Drop-down menu – see Table A.2 in the Appendix.]

Third:

[Drop-down menu – see Table A.2 in the Appendix.]

Q5. Does your job deal *directly* with decisions about:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [Display order is randomized] | Yes | No |
| Information management (e.g., Information Technology, Database Management) |  |  |
| Grants to state or local governments, other organizations, or individuals |  |  |
| Deciding what enforcement responsibilities to prioritize |  |  |
| Human resources |  |  |
| Budget formulation/proposals |  |  |
| Setting overall priorities in [your agency] |  |  |
| Procurement and contract management |  |  |
| Developing Notices of Proposed Rulemaking, summarizing related comments, writing final rules |  |  |

Q6. We'd like to understand what you value about your job. How important are each of the following job attributes to you?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Display order is randomized.] | Not at all important | Not too important | Somewhat important | Important | Very important |
| Opportunities to influence public policies that are important to me |  |  |  |  |  |
| Salary and benefits |  |  |  |  |  |
| Job security |  |  |  |  |  |
| Opportunities to develop professional skills to move to a job in the private sector |  |  |  |  |  |
| Opportunities to develop professional skills to move to a higher job in the federal government |  |  |  |  |  |

**Workforce Fundamentals**

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Display order randomized.] | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don’t know |
| [My agency] is able to recruit the best employees. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| [My agency] often loses good candidates to other positions because of the time it takes my agency to hire. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| [My agency] effectively uses internships to build a pipeline of talent for the organization. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Leadership in [my agency] is held accountable for recruiting top. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| [My agency] has a strategic recruitment plan aligned with agency workforce needs. |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Display order randomized.] | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don’t know |
| We have enough employees where I work to do a quality job. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| [My agency] effectively integrates agency employees and the contract workforce to meet its human capital needs. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am satisfied with the performance of the contract workforce in [my agency]. |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q8. Think about the last position you personally tried to fill. How long did it take to fill the position from the time you advertised it to the time a new employee started?

[Dropdown 1 have not tried to fill a position, one month increments from 1-24 months, Longer than two years, Did not fill the position].

**Workforce Fundamentals**

Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

An inadequately skilled workforce is a significant obstacle to [my agency] fulfilling its core mission.

[Responses displayed left to right.]

Strongly disagree [left]

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

Don’t know [right]

[If response to Q9 “An inadequately skilled workforce is a significant obstacle to [my agency] fulfilling its core mission” is “Agree” or “Strongly agree”, display Q10.]

Q10. To what extent do the following factors contribute to the difficulty [your agency] has in maintaining a skilled workforce?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Display order is randomized] | Not at all | Little | Some | A good bit | A great deal | Don’t know |
| Lack of resources |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lack of proactive recruiting strategy |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Political pressure to keep growth of workforce low |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lack of qualified applicant pool |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Aging workforce with high employee retirement rate |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Inadequate career growth opportunities for staff |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Hiring process takes too long |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cannot compete with salaries offered by other employers |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Civil service rules prevent me from hiring the best candidates |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Display order randomized.] | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don’t know |
| [My agency] is able to provide necessary training for high performance |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Promotions in [my agency] are based on a person’s ability. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| At [my agency] we deal effectively with poor performers. |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q12. [My agency] is able to retain its best employees.

[Responses displayed left to right.]

Strongly disagree [left]

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

Don’t know [right]

Q13. Now thinking about the people, apart from yourself, who work in your agency, in general how competent are the following?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Slider] | 1 – Not at all competent | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 – Extremely competent | Don’t know |
| Political appointees |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Senior Civil Servants |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Low to mid-level civil servants |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Contract employees |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q14. Does [your agency] have the skills necessary to implement effectively the core tasks given it by Congress and the President?

Has none of the necessary skills [left]

Has few of the necessary skills

Has some of the necessary skills

Has most of the necessary skills

Has almost all of the necessary skills

Has all of the necessary skills

Don’t know [right]

Q15. In your view, how skilled are the workforces of the following agencies?

Below is a screen shot using the Council of Economic Advisers as an example. Respondents will evaluate five agencies.

Graphical user interface, application

Description automatically generated

**Workforce Stressors**

Q16. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Display order randomized.] | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don’t know |
| [My agency] is routinely impacted by the need to plan for possible government shutdowns. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| The shutdown of 2018-2019 imposed a financial hardship on me and my family |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| It is difficult for [my agency] to fulfill its mission while operating under a continuing resolution. |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q17. Thinking of the most recent government shutdown, what best characterizes your work status during the shutdown?

Furloughed

Worked without pay during the shutdown

Worked in an agency receiving appropriations

Q18. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Display order randomized.] | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don’t know |
| My work portfolio changed as a result of the pandemic. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| The public services [my agency] provides suffered as a result of the pandemic. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| In [my agency], we had the IT tools necessary to telework effectively during the pandemic. |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q19. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Display order randomized.] | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don’t know |
| I trust the senior leadership in [my agency] to respond well in a crisis. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I trust the White House to respond well in a crisis. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| The federal government is a good employer during a crisis. |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q20. Were you involved in planning for the 2016 presidential transition in [your agency]?

Yes

No

[If answer to Q20 is “Yes,” then display Q21 – Q23.]

Q21. How prepared was [your agency] for the presidential transition?

Not prepared at all

Somewhat prepared

Prepared

Very prepared

Q22. How prepared was the landing team for [your agency] for the presidential transition?

No landing team

Not prepared at all

Somewhat prepared

Prepared

Very prepared

Q23. How much of a priority was transition planning for senior leadership in [your agency]?

Not a priority

Low priority

High priority

Top priority

Q24. Some agencies’ policy agendas changed after the inauguration of President Trump. Other agencies’ policy agendas stayed the same.

In your experience, how much did the policy agenda of [your agency] change as result of the transition?

Did not change

Changed minimally

Changed moderately

Changed significantly

I did not experience the change in administration

Don’t know

Q25. What about you? How much did your day-to-day work at [your agency] change after the inauguration?

Did not change

Changed minimally

Changed moderately

Changed significantly

I did not experience the change in administration

Don’t know

**Organizational Culture and Performance**

Q26. How many times in the last 3 months has somebody who works in [your agency] made an innovative suggestion for improving internal processes or procedures?

[Drop down menu 0 – 20+]

Q27. Think about the most recent such suggestion, was it:

Not accepted

Partly accepted, partly not

Accepted with changes

Accepted completely

Q28. Think of the person who made the suggestion above. Would you describe this person as (check as many as apply):

A more diligent employee than average

Something of a rebel

Highly respected in the organization

Very meticulous in their work

Something of a loner

More skilled than most at what they do

Q29. The work environment at [my agency] supports the development of new and innovative ideas.

[Responses displayed left to right.]

Strongly disagree [left]

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

Don’t know [right]

Q30. In my job, coming up with ideas for how to do the job better is:

Discouraged

Neither encouraged nor discouraged

Encouraged

Q31. I recommend [my agency] as a good place to work.

[Responses displayed left to right.]

Strongly disagree [left]

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

Don’t know [right]

Q32. Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job?

[Responses displayed left to right.]

Very dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Satisfied

Very Satisfied

Q33. Considering everything, how satisfied are you with [your agency]?

[Responses displayed left to right.]

Very dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Satisfied

Very Satisfied

Q34. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Display order randomized.] | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don’t  know |
| There is a climate of trust within [my agency]. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I feel I have the right tools and resources to do my job properly (equipment, software, etc.).  [My agency] is an effectively managed, well-run organization |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q35. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Display order randomized.] | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don’t  know |
| [My agency] has a sense of urgency for getting things done. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| [My agency] is investing now to enable our future success. |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| [My agency] makes decisions based on data. |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q36. How would you rate the overall performance of [your agency] in carrying out its mission?

Slider: [1- Not all effective, 7 – Very effective] Don’t know

Q37. How would you rate the overall performance of the following agencies in carrying out their missions?

[Respondent will evaluate five agencies.]

Slider: [1 – Not all effective,7- Very effective] Don’t know

Q39. How often did you do each of the following in the previous calendar year?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Display order is randomized.] | Never | Rarely | Few times a year | Monthly | Weekly | Daily | Don’t know | Not applicable to my job |
| Consult subject matter experts at state agencies or international agencies |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Discuss policy with outside  experts |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Attend industry or trade  conferences related to the  policy jurisdictions of [your agency] |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Attend seminars or training related to the policy jurisdiction of [your agency] |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q40. Some types of expertise can only be acquired by working in an agency (e.g., agency procedures, policy expertise). Other expertise can be acquired by working in lots of different organizations (e.g., communications skills, managing people).

What percentage of the expertise that you have acquired in [your agency] can only be acquired by working in [your agency]?

Table

Description automatically generated

**Agency Rulemaking**

[Display Q41-Q42 if respondent answered “Yes” their job deals with “Developing Notices of Proposed Rulemaking, summarizing related comments, writing final rules.”]

Q41. The number of issues that an agency needs to address via rulemaking often exceeds the agency’s capacity to develop new proposed rules. We would like to understand how senior leaders in [your agency] decide which new proposed rules to place on the Unified Agenda (i.e., what is included in the Unified Agenda).

In your experience, how much influence do the following groups have over which issues get included on the agency’s Unified Agenda?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Display order is randomized] | No influence | Little influence | Some influence | A good bit of influence | A great deal of influence | Not applicable |
| Political Appointees in [your agency] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Career civil servants in [your agency] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Members of Congress and their staffs |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| The President/White House |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| [Do not display OMB if respondent selected OMB as their workplace.]  OMB/OIRA |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Courts (e.g., litigation settlements and consent decrees) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Private citizens (e.g., public petitions for rulemaking) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Regulated parties (e.g., private firms, trade organizations) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Public interest advocacy groups (e.g., non-governmental organizations) |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q42. Our regulatory system deals with public policies of varying complexity. As a result, our understanding of the cause and effect relationship between the content of a rule and the ultimate effects of the rule is better in some areas than others.

Thinking about rules issued by [your agency], how easy or difficult is it to know the effects of these rules before they are implemented?

[Responses displayed left to right.]

Very difficult [left]

Difficult

Somewhat difficult

Somewhat easy

Easy

Very Easy

Don’t know [right]

[Display Q43 if respondent answered “Yes” their job deals with “Deciding what enforcement responsibilities to prioritize” or “Yes” their job deals with “Developing Notices of Proposed Rulemaking, summarizing related comments, writing final rules”.]

Q43. Some people think that the scope and stringency of regulation by federal agencies is too burdensome and should be decreased. Suppose these people are at one end of a scale, at point 1. Other people think that the scope and stringency of regulation by federal agencies is too lax and should be increased. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 7.

Thinking about regulations enforced by [your agency], where would you place **yourself** on this scale?

Application

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

**Management Environment**

Q44. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

The policies of my agency are a particular priority of President Trump.

[Responses displayed left to right.]

Strongly disagree [left]

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

Don’t know [right]

Q45. We would like to better understand which agencies face challenges created by partisan disagreement.

How often do Republicans and Democrats in Washington disagree over what [your agency] should do?

[Responses displayed left to right.]

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

Don’t know

Q46. How strongly do Republicans and Democrats in Washington disagree over what [your agency] should do?

No disagreement

Low intensity disagreement

Moderate intensity disagreement

High intensity disagreement

Don’t know

Q47. In general, how much influence do you think the following groups have over policy decisions in [your agency]?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | A great deal | A good bit | Some | Little | None | Don’t know |
| Democrats in Congress |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Republicans in Congress |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| White House |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Senior civil servants |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Political appointees |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| [Do not display OMB if respondent selected OMB as their workplace.]  Office of Management and Budget |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Congressional committees |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q48. Of all the Senate committees, what committee’s jurisdiction overlaps most with the work of [your agency]?

[Drop-down menu with a list of the committees.]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry | Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs |
| Senate Committee on Appropriations | Senate Select Committee on Intelligence |
| Senate Committee on Armed Services | Senate Committee on the Judiciary |
| Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs | Senate Committee on Rules and Administration |
| Senate Committee on the Budget | Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship |
| Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation | Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs |
| Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources | Senate Committee on Indian Affairs |
| Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works |  |
| Senate Committee on Finance |  |
| Senate Committee on Foreign Relations |  |
| Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions |  |
|  |  |

Q49. Thinking of the following senators, how much priority have they given to making sure [your agency] is an effectively managed, well-run organization?

[Respondent gets at list of randomly selected senators who serve on the committee selected in Q48.]

Slider: [1- No priority, 5-High priority] Don’t know

Q50. Thinking about the personnel in [your agency], in general how responsive are these different groups to the policy decisions of the President?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Not at all responsive | Slightly responsive | Somewhat responsive | Responsive | Very responsive | Don’t know |
| Political Appointees |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Senior career civil servants |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Low to midlevel  civil servants |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Contractor employees |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q51. Thinking about the personnel in [your agency], in general how responsive are these different groups to the policy decisions of the Congress?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Not at all responsive | Slightly responsive | Somewhat responsive | Responsive | Very responsive | Don’t know |
| Political Appointees |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Senior career civil servants |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Low to midlevel  civil servants |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Contractor employees |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q52. How often do you have contact (e.g., email, telephone, in person) with:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Display order randomized] | Daily | Weekly | Monthly | Rarely | Never | Don’t know |
| Members or staff of congressional committees |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Political appointees in [your agency] |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Private sector or not-for-profit stakeholders (e.g., regulated parties, advocacy groups) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| White House |  |  |  |  |  |  |

[Display Q53 - Q55 if respondent does not select an EOP agency as their workplace.]

Q53. Policy making in some agencies is driven by personnel in the White House, including the President or senior aides. In other agencies, it is agency senior leaders that drive policy decisions with little input from the White House.

In [your agency], who tends to set the policy making agenda?

Slider: [1-Agency senior leaders drive policy, 3 – Equal influence, 5 – White House] Don’t know.

Q54. How about in the Obama Administration?

Slider: [1-Agency senior leaders drive policy, 3 – Equal influence, 5 – White House] Don’t know.

Q55. How about in the George W. Bush Administration?

Slider: [1-Agency senior leaders drive policy, 3 – Equal influence, 5 – White House] Don’t know.

Q56. The following issues have received significant attention. No one has asked those responsible for implementing these policies their opinions, and we would benefit from knowing the view of federal executives.

Do you agree with the following measures?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [Display order is randomized] | Yes | No | Not sure |
| **Terminate National Emergency:** A resolution to terminate the national emergency related to the U.S.-Mexico border. |  |  |  |
| **International Trade (USMCA):** A bill to implement a new free trade agreement between the United States, Mexico, and Canada, replacing the North American Free Trade Agreement. |  |  |  |
| **Balanced Budget:** A bill to limit federal spending and require a balanced budget amendment be passed before the debt ceiling is raised |  |  |  |
| **NATO Support Act:** A bill to prohibit the use of funds to withdraw the United States from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). |  |  |  |
| **Tax Cut and Jobs Act of 2017:** A bill to reduce tax rates and modify policies, credits, and deductions for individuals and businesses. |  |  |  |
| **American Health Care Act of 2017:** A bill to partially repeal the Affordable Care Act, commonly called “Obamacare,” including repealing the Act’s tax increases, subsidies, penalties, and mandates. |  |  |  |
| **Background Checks:** A bill to require background checks for nearly all private transfers of firearms. |  |  |  |
| **Raise the Minimum Wage:** A bill toincrease to the national minimum wage to $15 per hour over the next seven years |  |  |  |
| **Promoting Marijuana Industry:** A bill to prevent federal banking regulators from penalizing banks for providing financial services to marijuana-related businesses that are legal under state and local law. |  |  |  |
| **Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization:** A bill that would provide protections and assistance programs to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking and prohibit gun possession by offenders. |  |  |  |
| **Expansion of LGBTQ+ Rights:** A bill to expand the Civil Rights Act to include protections for sexual orientation and gender identity |  |  |  |
| **Net Neutrality:** A bill to restore the open internet order of the Federal Communications Commission, commonly called “net neutrality.” |  |  |  |
| **Racial Discrimination and Voting Rights:** A bill to re-establish preclearance of voting practice changes where voting rights violations have occurred |  |  |  |
| **Abortion:** A bill to prohibit federal funding of abortion. |  |  |  |

Q57. Among career managers in [my agency], I have a pretty good idea of who is a Democrat and who is a Republican.

[Responses displayed left to right.]

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

Don’t know

Q58. In [my agency] the policy or political views of career professionals at the GS12 to GS15 level (or equivalents) influence their chances for promotion or attractive assignments.

[Responses displayed left to right.]

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

Don’t know

**Demographics**

[Text] Almost finished! This section asks a few basic demographic questions.

Q59. About how many years, in total, have you been employed in the following? Please include all positions and all time periods even if it has not been continuous (round to the nearest year).

Current position at [your agency] [Drop-down menu of integers 0 to 50]

All positions at [your agency] [Drop-down menu of integers 0 to 50]

Federal government (including [your agency]) [Drop-down menu of integers 0 to 50]

Q60. What is your annual salary?

[Drop-down list]

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Less than $20,000 | $110,000-$119,999 | $210,000-$219,999 |
| $20,000-$29,999 | $120,000-$129,999 | $220,000-$229,999 |
| $30,000-$39,999 | $130,000-$139,999 | $230,000-$239,999 |
| $40,000-$49,999 | $140,000-$149,999 | $240,000-$249,999 |
| $50,000-$59,999 | $150,000-$159,999 | $250,000-$259,999 |
| $60,000-$69,999 | $160,000-$169,999 | $260,000-$269,999 |
| $70,000-$79,999 | $170,000-$179,999 | $270,000-$279,999 |
| $80,000-$89,999 | $180,000-$189,999 | $280,000 or more |
| $90,000-$99,999 | $190,000-$199,999 |  |
| $100,000-$109,999 | $200,000-$209,999 |  |

Q61. What is the highest level of school you completed or the highest degree you have received?

High school degree or less

Some college

College graduate

Some post-graduate work

Graduate degree

Q62. What is your age?

[Drop-down menu.]

Less than 20

20-24

25-29

30-34

35-39

40-44

45-49

50-54

55-59

60-64

65 or more

[Display Q29 if respondent is not a political appointee, a member of the Senior Foreign Service or a career member of the Senior Executive Service.]

Q63. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with this statement.

I am interested in becoming a member of the Senior Executive Service or a Senior Professional.

[Responses displayed left to right.]

Strongly disagree [left]

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

Not applicable [right]

Q64. Are you now or will you become eligible to retire in the next 12 months?

Yes

No

Don’t know

Q65. Have you been approached about a job outside [your agency] since June 1, 2019?

Yes

No

[Display Q66 if answer to Q65 is “Yes.”]

Q66. If so, by what type of organization? [check all that apply]

Private businesses

Federal agencies other than [your agency]

State or local agency

Not-for-profits

Other (please specify): [Text entry box]

Q67. How likely is it that you will leave [your agency] in the next 12 months?

Very likely

Likely

Unlikely

Very unlikely

Not sure

[Display Q68 and Q69 if response to Q67 is “Very likely” or “Likely.”]

Q68. If you plan to leave [your agency], would you be:

Becoming a government contractor or consultant

Taking a job other than government contractor or consultant in the private sector

Moving to another job within the federal government

Joining a state or local government

Retiring

Other (please specify): [Text box entry]

Q69. Why would you be leaving? [check all that apply]

Workload too high

Lack of appreciation

No room for advancement

Lack of autonomy

Organizational culture

Political environment

Higher pay outside

Other (please specify): [Text box entry]

[Text] The last questions on the survey come from the American National Election Study, a biennial national survey of Americans' political views and attitudes. These questions ask about political party and ideology. We ask these questions of all participants so that we can identify the issues on which Republicans and Democrats agree and disagree.

We would like to remind you that your answers are **completely confidential.** You should feel free to express your views openly and honestly. Of course, you are free to refuse to answer any questions.

Q70. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or what?

Democrat

Republican

Independent

Other party (please specify): [Text entry box.]

Don’t know

[Display Q71 if response to Q70 is “Independent,” “Other party,” or “Don’t know.”

Q71. Do you think of yourself as **closer** to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party?

Closer to the Republican Party

Neither

Closer to the Democratic Party

Don’t know

Q72. In general, would you describe your political views as:

Very conservative

Conservative

Somewhat conservative

Moderate

Somewhat liberal

Liberal

Very liberal

Don’t know

[Display Q73 if respondent answered “Yes” their job deals with “Developing Notices of Proposed Rulemaking, summarizing related comments, writing final rules”.]

Q73. We would like to ask more in-depth questions about rulemaking, but we do not want to take too much of your time now. We would be grateful if you would participate in a short follow-up survey comprised of five to seven questions about rulemaking this time next year.

Are you willing to participate in a short follow-up survey next year?

[Responses displayed left to right.]

Yes [left]

No [right]

Thank you for participating in this study. If there is anything else that we should know, please click here to leave us a comment.

[If respondent clicks the link above, display the following question.]

Q74. What else should we know?

[Text entry box]

1. The House of Representatives and the Senate alternate in publishing the *Plum Book* every four years. The *Plum Book* lists the key policy and confidential positions in the federal government. From this document, we gather data on the agencies led by persons requiring nomination by the president and confirmation by the Senate (i.e., PAS positions). We focus specifically on *Plum Book* data from 2016 (https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/GPO-PLUMBOOK-2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Appointee Tracker Website: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/trump-administration-appointee-tracker/database/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Senate website: Senate.gov. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This description of the Survey on the Future of Government Service is borrowed almost word-for-word from Neal Devins and David E. Lewis “Data Analysis Supporting Calculations in Rethinking Independent Agencies.” This “Data Analysis and Supporting Calculations” document was prepared in support of the Devins and Lewis paper “The Myth of Agency Independence” and is on file with the authors. As is clear in that document, it borrows heavily from a number of documents authored by Professor Mark D. Richardson of Georgetown University. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This includes bureaus and offices within the fifteen executive departments, agencies within the Executive Office of the President, and 66 federal agencies outside the executive departments. We used David E. Lewis and Jennifer L. Selin, *Sourcebook of United States Executive Agencies* (2012) to create our list of workplaces. Agencies in the Executive Office of the President were identified using Table 1. We excluded the Executive Residence, Office of Administration, and White House Office. Prominent bureaus and agencies within executive departments were identified using Table 2. The research team made limited adjustments to this list based on which agencies and bureaus the team wanted to be able to analyze separately from the executive department as a whole. Agencies outside the executive departments were identified using Table 5. Scholarship agencies, regional agencies, and non-profits and cooperatives were excluded. Other limited adjustments were made by the research team. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This includes all Senate-confirmed appointees (PAS), other presidential appointees not requiring Senate confirmation (PA), non-career SES (NA), and Schedule C (SC) appointees. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See: https://www.leadershipconnect.io/. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. This section borrows heavily from the document “SFGS 2020 Methods: Sample Construction, Weighting, and Agency List,” on file with the author. Mark D. Richardson wrote this document describing the 2020 survey methodology. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For further details on the surveys, see Richardson *Politicization and Expertise, Effort, and Investment*. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. For details of the 2014 survey timeline and procedure see <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/csdi/research/MethodsDocument.pdf> and for 2020 see the document, “SFGS 2020 Methods” included with this memo. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. We refer to the participation rate since many respondents started but did not complete the whole survey. The denominator has been adjusted from 18,035 to 16,232 because some respondents had moved or retired (591), some turned out to be ineligible (10), and 1,202 never received survey emails. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Stephanie Marken, *Still Listening: The State of Telephone Surveys*, Gallup Methodology Blog, (January 11, 2018) https://news.gallup.com/opinion/methodology/225143/listening-state-telephone-surveys.aspx. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. If the respondent took the survey on paper, they selected their workplace from a list on the survey. We include a copy of the survey instrument in the appendix. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. James R. Thompson and Michael D. Siciliano. 2021. “The ‘Levels’ Problem in Assessing Organizational Climate: Evidence from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.” *Public Personnel Management* 50(1):133-156. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. There were two difficult cases to analyze because the status of these positions changed during the Trump Administration. We omit these cases from the analysis.

    1. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency: PAS Director position created in 2018.
    2. International Development Finance Corporation: PAS Chief Executive Officer position created in transition from Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. For example, some respondent evaluations will be uncorrelated with true performance or for some respondents a 4 means something different than for other respondents. We thank Mark Richardson for providing these estimates. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Data on the 2016 CFPB comes from (<https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/201701_cfpb_FY-2016_MD-715_annual-report.pdf>). For 2016, DFC data use data for Overseas Private Investment Corporation. Data on Federal Reserve employment in 2016 from (<https://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/2016-ar-federal-system-budgets.htm>). Data on 2016 employment for RD generated by adding employee numbers for RHS, RUS, and RBCS. Data for DOD is combined data from DOD proper and military services. The OPM data lists the military services as separate department and its totals include only DOD proper. Data for USPS employment comes from (<https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-history/employees-since-1926.pdf>). Data on Federal Reserve employment in 2020 from (<https://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/2019-ar-federal-system-budgets.htm#xsystembudgetsoverview-f419a871>). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Employment data for DOD is combined data from DOD proper and military services. The OPM data lists the military services as separate department and its totals include only DOD proper. Data for USPS employment comes from (<https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-history/employees-since-1926.pdf>). Data on Federal Reserve employment in 2020 from (<https://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/2019-ar-federal-system-budgets.htm#xsystembudgetsoverview-f419a871>). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. See “Donald Trump’s Contract with the American Voter” (https://assets.donaldjtrump.com/\_landings/contract/O-TRU-102316-Contractv02.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See “Donald Trump’s Contract with the American Voter” (https://assets.donaldjtrump.com/\_landings/contract/O-TRU-102316-Contractv02.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. For details and agency rankings see 2020 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government rankings, COVID: Agency Performance (<https://bestplacestowork.org/rankings/?view=category&size=sub&category=covid_sub_agency_perform&>). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/206/2019-05-28-May-2019-FX-Report.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. <https://ustr.gov/about-us/trade-toolbox/us-government-trade-agencies> [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/budget/fy2018/fact_sheets/2018%20Budget%20Fact%20Sheet_Infrastructure%20Initiative.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-24)