

**The Troubled State
of the
Federal Public Service**

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INTRODUCTION

The United States cannot win the war on terrorism or rebuild homeland security without a fully dedicated federal civil service. Unfortunately, federal employees report that both the quality of their work life and their level of job satisfaction have declined since September 11. Fewer federal employees are coming to work for the right reasons, even fewer feel their agencies are providing the tools and training to do their jobs well, and even fewer still believe that their organizations are doing a good job at delivering programs and services.

The evidence comes from a unique pre- and post-September 11 survey of the same random sample of federal government employees. The first telephone survey of 1,051 randomly selected employees was taken from February-June, 2001, while the second survey of 673 of the same employees was taken from March-May, 2002. Both surveys were conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates on behalf of the Brookings Institution's Center for Public Service. Interviewed at home, not on the job, these employees were given a rare chance to be completely candid about life in their organizations.¹

¹All comparisons among federal employees in this report involve answers from the same 673 federal employees who were interviewed at two points in time and asked exactly the same questions. Responses were weighted to match the grade levels within the federal government. Tests of sample bias reveal no gender, educational, income, age, race, ethnicity, or agency bias among the 673. This type of back-to-back survey of the same employees is arguably the most powerful tool for detecting change in a population. This study also involved two separate surveys of private sector employees. The first was in May, 2001, and the second in January, 2002. The comparison of changes in attitudes among the same federal employees and between the two samples of private sector employees can be found in Appendix A.

According to the surveys, federal employees grew less satisfied with their jobs over the past year. They also reported lower morale among their co-workers, continued difficulty securing the resources they need to do their jobs well, growing uncertainty regarding the link between their work and the mission of their agencies, and less trust in their own organizations to do the right thing. Finally, federal employees perceived a significant increase in the number of layers between themselves and the senior leadership of their agencies. Although some of these trends were small in percentage terms, they were statistically significant nonetheless, and definitely moving in the wrong direction for a healthy public service.²

All federal employees were not equally dissatisfied, however. Defense Department employees were more likely to say they were given a chance to do the things they do best in 2002 than they were in 2001, and reported improved performance among their peers. They were also more likely to say that their organizations provided enough employees to do their jobs well, and that they felt a greater sense of purpose in the wake of September 11.³

Not all the trends were positive in the Defense workforce, however. Defense employees were almost as likely as their non-Defense peers to report declines in both their opportunity to accomplish something worthwhile, and morale among their co-workers over the past year. Fewer said they contributed a great deal to their organization's mission in 2002 than in 2001, and more said that their organizations do not always provide enough training to do their jobs well.

²Paired samples like the one used here involve different tests of statistical significance than the much more common (and less expensive) cross-sectional samples used in most public opinion research. Even small percentage changes in a paired sample can be statistically significant in surveys that involve the same respondents over time because it is the same person making the change.

³Employees at other agencies involved in the war on terrorism and homeland security such as the State Department, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Transportation Security Administration, and so forth may be more like Defense employees than non-Defense. There were simply too few respondents from those agencies to construct a statistically significant comparison. Because they are included in the non-Defense sample, it is possible to infer that the non-Defense numbers are slightly more positive than they would have been had these employees been excluded.

The two surveys do not necessarily create a portrait of despair. One can easily argue that frustration is up because federal employees have become more aware of the bureaucratic barriers and poor performance among fellow employees in this post-September 11 world. One can also argue that perceived morale is down because federal employees wanted to do more to help the nation, but felt unable to do so. As one federal employee explained the decline in morale, “There are so many different factors that could contribute to that feeling. There was this neglect of people and facilities. Then we find out we have a major crisis in the country and we’re really not prepared to deal with it. We did not invest in our infrastructure and in our people....Now people are rediscovering the weaknesses that we have, which all of us knew all along, but no one was listening.”⁴

One factor that does not explain the change is the economic recession and nascent recovery. To the contrary, private sector employees interviewed pre- and post-September 11 report higher morale among their co-workers, increased job satisfaction, greater access to enough employees to do the job well, and increased pride in where they work.⁵

⁴This interview was one of 40 in-depth telephone conversations conducted with federal employees, who had already been interviewed in 2001 and 2002, to discuss trends discovered in the second survey. The interviews were conducted by the Center for Public Service staff.

⁵Surveys conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates on behalf of the Center for Public Service, May 11-June 10, 2001, and January 4-January 22, 2002. Sample sizes were 500 and 505 respectively, with a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percent for the full sample.

A TROUBLED SERVICE

A healthy public service has five characteristics. It is motivated by the chance to accomplish something worthwhile on behalf of the country, recruited from the top of the labor market, given the tools and organizational capacity to succeed, rewarded for a job well done, and respected by the people and leaders it serves. By all five measures, the federal service has lost ground since September 11:

Federal employees were less likely to come to work in 2002 for the chance to accomplish something worthwhile.

The number of federal employees who said they come to work solely for the paycheck has increased from 31 percent in 2001 to 41 percent in 2002. During the same period, the percentage of employees who said they were very satisfied with the *opportunity* to accomplish something worthwhile dropped 8 percentage points over the year to 39 percent, while the number who felt that they personally contribute a great deal to their organization's mission fell by 11 percentage points to 45 percent. It is important to note that the number who said that they *actually* accomplished something worthwhile at work remained unchanged at over 90 percent.

The federal government was less likely to offer the kind of challenging work in 2002 that attracts the top of the labor market.

The number of federal employees who saw their work as boring has not changed since September 11, but the number who saw their work as a dead-end with no future has gone up by 3 percent government-wide, and 7 percent among non-Defense employees. Among Defense Department employees, the number who strongly agreed that they are given the chance to do the things they do best increased by 14 percentage points to 59 percent over the year, even as the number of non-Defense employees who strongly agreed fell by 6 percentage points to 38 percent.

Substantial numbers of federal employees believe that their organizations do not provide essential tools to do their jobs well.

Although federal employees reported high levels of continued access to information and technological equipment over the past year, 40 percent said that their organizations only sometimes or rarely provide access to enough training to do their jobs well, and 56 percent reported that their organizations only sometimes or rarely provide enough employees to do the job of the organization well. Although Defense employees reported a significant gain in adequate staffing over the past year, they also reported a significant decline in access to training. Regardless of their agency, federal employees were significantly more likely to complain that there are too many layers between the top and bottom of their agencies.

The federal government continues to have difficulty rewarding a job well done.

Federal employees estimated that 22 percent of their peers were not performing their jobs well both this year and last. (To put the number in perspective, if it can be called good, private sector employees estimated that 23 percent of their peers were not performing their jobs well in 2002.) Asked to evaluate their organizations, they were less likely this year to say their organizations were doing a good job either running their programs and services or helping people. Just 34 percent said their organization was very good at running its programs and services this year, compared to 40 percent last year. Although almost half of federal employees were very proud to tell their families and friends that they work for the government, the number who said they always trust their organization to do the right thing remained statistically unchanged at just 21 percent this year and 23 percent last year.

The federal workforce does not have the confidence and respect of the people it serves.

Americans continue to have doubts about the motivation and performance of federal employees.⁶ Americans remained convinced that most federal employees are motivated primarily by the job security (70 percent pre-September 11 versus 71 percent in May, 2002), salary and benefits (68 percent pre-September 11 versus 71 percent today), and having a secure paycheck (68 percent pre-September 11 versus 69 percent today). According to a May, 2002, Princeton Survey Research Associates survey conducted on behalf of the Center for Public Service, Americans estimated that 42 percent of federal employees do not do their jobs well; a month later, the number had increased to 48 percent.

Given these trends, perhaps it is no surprise that employee job satisfaction declined by 6 percentage points over the year: 49 percent said they were very satisfied in 2001, compared to 43 percent in 2002. Nor is it surprising, perhaps, that federal employees reported a general decline in morale among their peers: 58 percent of federal employees rated morale among their co-workers as very or somewhat high in 2001, compared to 53 percent in 2002.

Not all the indicators are negative, however. As noted above, the number of federal employees who said they actually accomplished something worthwhile at work remained virtually unchanged at 93 percent “yes,” while 70 percent said they would rather work for government if given a choice of sectors from which to choose. Given their complaints about resources and lost opportunities to accomplish something worthwhile, federal employees seem to be saying that are making a difference in spite of their organizations. It may very well be a far better workforce than the federal government deserves.

⁶These surveys were conducted on behalf of the Center for Public Service from June 18-July 18, 2001, September 27-October 6, 2001, and May 2-11, 2002. Sample sizes were 1,003, 1,033, and 986 respectively, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points for each of three cross-sectional samples.

Moreover, as noted above, some of these trends appear to be related to heightened concerns about barriers to high performance. Employees who do not have adequate training can hardly feel as confident that they accomplish something worthwhile at work, while employees who are buried under layer-upon-layer of supervision can hardly feel confident that they are personally contributing to their organization's mission.

Nevertheless, Congress and the president should be troubled by the fact that so many federal employees cannot easily describe how their job contributes to the mission of their organization, or that so few have confidence in their organizations to do the right thing. Moreover, at a time when the flow of information has become *the* issue of the day, Americans can hardly be reassured that so many federal employees see so many layers between the top and bottom of their agencies. If the federal public service is to meet public expectations at this crucial moment in history, it must stay focused on its mission and be given the tools to succeed. Both are question marks today.

WHY WORK?

Americans come to work for many reasons--to pay the bills, work with friends, use their talents, help people, save for retirement, and so forth. But a healthy public service should be motivated first and foremost by the chance to accomplish something worthwhile for the community and country. Although pay, benefits, the opportunity to repay college loans, and job security are important assets in recruiting and retaining talented public servants, the government cannot succeed unless its workforce cares about something more than the paycheck.

Unfortunately, the surveys suggest that federal employees may be paying more attention to the paycheck than the chance to serve their country. Consider their answers to the simple, open-ended question “why do you come to work everyday?”⁷

1. 41 percent of the employees focused solely on the paycheck, up from 31 percent in 2001. Among the common answers were “to pay the bills,” “money,” “it’s my paycheck,” “they pay me,” “the salary and benefits,” “my pocket book tells me I still need to work,” “to survive,” “because I have to eat and live,” “the kids,” “my wife makes me and I have to make a living,” “once in a while I enjoy it, but I need the money to pay the bills,” and “show me the money.”

2. 28 percent of the employees focused solely on personal interest and satisfaction, down slightly from 2001. Among the common answers here were “it’s interesting and challenging,” “I go to work to have fun,” “what we bring to the government is value added,” “love the job,” “I think I’m accomplishing something here,” “just for the challenges of new technologies to work with,” “it’s interesting, valuable work,” “because I get the opportunity to learn,” “accomplishment,” “never a dull moment,” and “because I enjoy getting up and going to work.”

⁷As with all the items in the surveys, answers were weighted to represent the grade distribution within the federal government.

3. 10 percent of the employees centered solely on the work ethic, down slightly from 2001. Among the common answers were “that’s life,” “I am from the old school that just goes to work,” “I have so much to do and have a lot of people counting on me,” and “it’s my job.”

4. 7 percent of the employees responded with a combination of compensation and personal interest/satisfaction, essentially unchanged from 2001.

5. Only 4 percent of the employees talked about the public good, down slightly from 2001. Among the common answers were “I go because I really feel like I am contributing a lot and helping people immediately,” “defending the country,” “my job has a great impact on my community and country,” “because I work for the veterans and care about them,” “I believe in the mission of my agency,” “the work since 9/11 is very important,” and “to serve the people of the United States.”

Although Defense employees were somewhat less likely than their non-Defense peers to focus on the paycheck (37 percent in 2001 versus 42 percent in 2002), the nation deserves better from both workforces. Simply put, too many government employees are coming to work for the wrong reasons.

It is hardly comforting that private employees were even more likely to focus solely on the paycheck as a reason to come to work. Federal employees may be merely catching up to their private sector brethren in becoming more “businesslike,” but they are in anything but a private business. Federal jobs call for a commitment to the public good. They may be frustrated by the lack of resources, worried about their personal safety, even angered by the president’s decision to offer civilians a smaller pay increase than uniformed military personnel this year, but that is no excuse for these findings. Many federal employees need to take a hard look in the mirror. If they are coming to work for the paycheck, they should get out. The nation needs a greater commitment to public service from federal employees.

Federal employees need more than a reality check, however. As we shall see below, they also deserve the resources to do their jobs well. It may be no surprise that so many federal employees come to work for the paycheck. In far too many agencies, that is all they can come to work for.

The September 11 Effect

The 2002 survey also shows that federal employees were clearly affected by the events of September 11. Some federal employees said they were still worried about their own safety. “You never know when the other shoe is going to fall,” said one. “Everybody figures they’re some kind of target. I don’t know whether that’s realistic or not, but it affects your morale for getting up and going to work in the morning.” Others felt greater pride and urgency in their work.

Asked whether the people they work with have more or less of a sense of purpose since September 11, 42 percent of federal employees said “more,” while 1 percent said “less,” and 57 percent said the “same.” But the sense of purpose is not evenly distributed across the federal agencies. As table 1 shows, Defense Department employees are much more likely to feel a greater sense of duty post-September 11 than their non-Defense peers. In fact, the contrast could not be more extreme.

Federal employees can hardly feel a greater sense of purpose post-September 11 if they cannot describe the mission of their agencies or how their own work contributes to that mission. “Maybe it’s a lack of understanding of how important their jobs are,” one federal employee said in trying to explain the finding. “Maybe their superiors or their agencies overall just don’t tell them why they have to do these things. They’re simply told ‘You have to do this,’ but they’re not told why or what will be done with the work produced once they’re finished with it.”

TABLE 1-SENSE OF PURPOSE, POST- SEPTEMBER 11

Since September 11, do people you work with have more of a sense of purpose?	GOVT WIDE	DEFENSE	NON DEFENSE
More	42%	63	35
Less	1	0	1
Same	57	37	63
n=	673	174	499

Interviews conducted February-June, 2001, March-May, 2002.

The two surveys confirm the explanation. Between 2001 and 2002, the number of federal employees who could very easily describe how their job contributes to their organization's mission fell by 4 percentage points government-wide, 7 percentage points among non-Defense employees, and 3 percent among Defense employees. At the same time, the number who said that they personally contribute a great deal to accomplishing their organization’s mission dropped 11 percentage points government-wide, 12 percentage points among non-Defense employees, and 9 percentage points among Defense employees. (See Appendix A for these comparisons.)

The Two Workforces

Defense and non-Defense employees may have come to the same conclusions about their ability to make a difference for very different reasons. As table 2 shows, Defense employees not only said they feel a greater sense of purpose since September 11, they were also more likely to say that their jobs have become more difficult, stressful, rewarding, and challenging. The good news is that Defense employees appear to know the mission very well, the bad news is that Defense is viewed as more difficult, stressful, and so forth than it used to be. The result appears to be a dissatisfaction, perhaps healthy, among Defense employees regarding their individual ability to meet expectations.

Congress and the president clearly need to give the non-Defense workforce greater direction. It has been almost eight months since President Bush has spoken directly to the civil service, for example. He did not mention the civil service in his State of the Union address, for example, and has not brought senior executives together since October 15, 2001. If a healthy public service comes to work for the right reasons and knows how it will measure its success, the non-Defense workforce needs more clarity regarding just how their jobs matter in the post-September 11 world. Just as he has spoken to military personnel about the honor of service in this new era, the president needs to have the same talk with federal workers.

TABLE 2-VIEWS OF THE JOB, POST- SEPTEMBER 11

How has the job changed since September 11?	GOVT WIDE	DEFENSE	NON DEFENSE
More difficult	27%	31	25
More stressful	37	46	34
More rewarding	19	30	15
More challenging	31	45	26
n=	673	174	499

Interviews conducted February-June, 2001, March-May, 2002.

That may mean, for example, greater focus on full implementation of the Government Performance and Results Act, which requires federal agencies to provide detailed strategic plans down to the unit level. This year's performance plans have received scant attention from Congress and the president. Nor are they adequately linked to the budget process.

If the president's budget office has its way, performance is about to matter a great deal. Under the agency's proposed Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), budget analysts will soon be asking very hard questions about how programs are designed, whether and how their success is measured, and whether they tackle the kind of tough, important problems that only the federal government should endeavor to solve. Although the tool is still being refined, it is an important step toward giving front-line employees a better answer to the question about why they come to work each day. And for programs that are clearly failing, the tool will provide a reason for moving those employees to missions that matter.

Congress and the president should also note the important role that leadership plays in workforce motivation. Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is not only one of the most popular appointees with the American public, but also has focused his workforce on the war on terrorism, and is working to remove many of the bureaucratic barriers that frustrate results. He has also asked for higher performance, and appears to be getting it. Like Colin Powell at the State Department, Rumsfeld rightly views human capital as a linchpin in the war on terrorism.

JOBS OF LAST RESORT?

A healthy public service provides the kind of jobs that today's talent pool wants. Study after study show that young Americans value interesting, challenging work above all else. Although employers have to be competitive on salary, pay, and help with college debt, talented recruits are saying "Show us the work."

Unfortunately, federal work has not been showing well lately. Many federal employees report that their jobs simply do not provide the challenge they seek. Consider the following findings from the federal and private employee surveys summarized in Appendix A:

- Private-sector employees were more likely to say that their organization encourages them to take risks a great deal or fair amount of the time (9 percentage point difference).
- Private-sector employees were more likely to strongly agree that they are given the chance to do the things they do best (11 percentage point difference).
- Private-sector employees were less likely to say their jobs were a dead-end with no future (8 percentage point difference).
- Private-sector employees were more likely to be very satisfied with the public respect they receive for their work (12 percentage point difference).
- Private-sector employees were more likely to be very proud to tell friends and neighbors who they worked for (11 percentage point difference).
- Private-sector employees were more likely to say they could describe how their job contributes to the mission of their organizations (10 percentage point difference).
- Finally, private-sector employees were significantly more likely to report higher morale among their co-workers (18 percentage point difference).

Many of the federal employees interviewed for this report might be reluctant to recommend a job in their agencies. The number of federal employees who said they were very satisfied with their job overall has declined seven percentage points over the past year, dropping to 43 percent, while the number who were very satisfied with the opportunity to accomplish something worthwhile has declined 9 percentage points from 47 percent in 2001 to 39 percent in 2002. Although federal employees reported higher satisfaction with their job security, where the number who were very satisfied grew by 5 percentage points from 66 percent who were very satisfied in 2001 to 71 percent in 2002, security is not a sales advantage to college seniors who

expect to stay a few years in a job and move on.

As with previous findings, Defense employees have a very different view on life in their department. As Figure 1 shows, the number of Defense employees who strongly agreed they have the chance to do the things they do best rose 14 percentage points between 2001 and 2002, rising from 45 percent then to 59 percent now. During the same period, the number of non-Defense employees who said their jobs also gave them the chance to do the things they do best fell 6 percentage points, dropping from 44 percent then to 38 percent now.

The Defense workforce is not without problems, however. Defense employees reported roughly the same decline in morale as their non-Defense peers (down 5 percent among the former and 4 percent among the latter), and a similar decline in satisfaction with the opportunity to accomplish something worthwhile.

The decline in morale and opportunity to accomplish something worthwhile appear to be closely related to the events of September 11. It is no surprise, for example, that federal employees who thought their jobs had become more rewarding or fulfilling over the past year might perceive higher morale and greater opportunities to accomplish something worthwhile among their peers. The linkage is easy to make. As table 4 shows, however, Defense employees also seemed to thrive on more stressful and difficult jobs. Perceived morale at Defense went up among employees who said their jobs had become more difficult post-September 11, while the perceived opportunity to accomplish something worthwhile went up among employees who said that their jobs had become both more difficult and stressful.

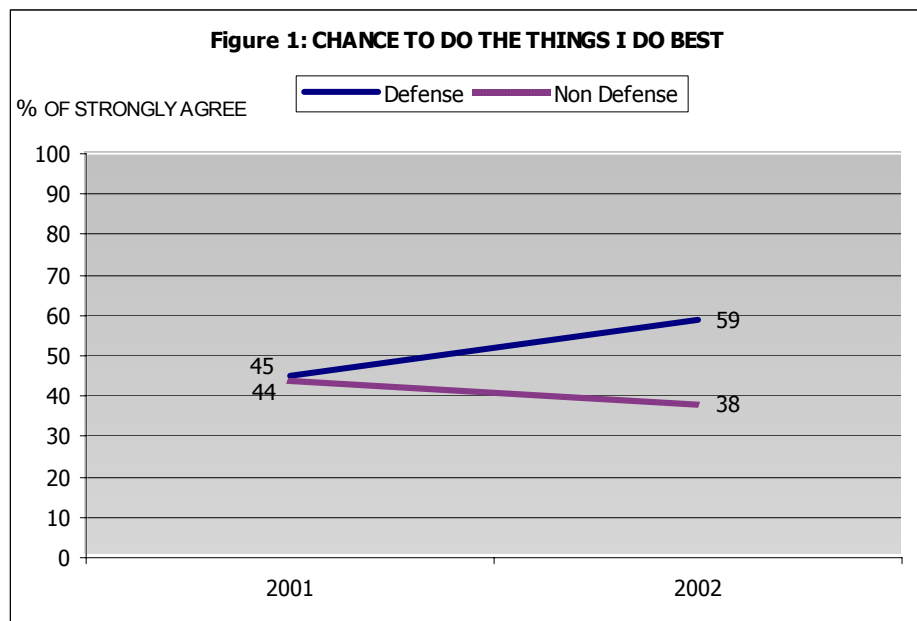


TABLE 3-IMPACT OF POST-SEPTEMBER 11 JOB CHANGES

NATURE OF THE STATISTICAL RELATIONSHIP IMPACT		CHANGE IN JOB			
		MORE REWARDING	MORE CHALLENGING	MORE DIFFICULT	MORE STRESSFUL
Increased Morale among Co-Workers	Defense	+	++++	+++	0
	Non-Defense	+++	0	0	0
Increased Satisfaction with the Opportunity to Accomplish Something Worthwhile	Defense	++++	++++	+++	++++
	Non-Defense	++++	++	++	+

NOTE: a + means a correlation that is statistically significant at least at the 0.15 level, ++ at least at the .10 level, +++ at least at the .05 level, and ++++ at least at the .009 level or higher; a 0 means no statistically significant relationship; there were no negative correlations in this analysis. The more pluses, the greater the strength of the relationship.

It is one thing to link rewarding, challenging jobs to morale and the opportunity to accomplish something worthwhile, and quite another to link difficult, stressful jobs to a surge. Yet, Defense employees were more satisfied with every type of work, be it tough or fulfilling, challenging or stressful jobs. As table 3 shows, so did many non-Defense employees, albeit to a less significant degree.

THE RESOURCES TO SUCCEED

A healthy public service gives its employees the tools to succeed. Even as the Office of Personnel Management continues the long-overdue task of streamlining the federal hiring process, Congress and the president must make sure that it gives its employees the resources and opportunity to succeed. “You can only ask for superhuman effort for so long,” said one federal employee. “Federal employees have been doing it for so long, it’s just wearing on them. I’m seeing more squabbles among co-workers and specialists. It’s just that everybody doesn’t have enough time to get their work done.”

The proof is in the two surveys where significant numbers of federal employees reported continued problems getting access to the tools they need. Although one can argue that the federal government gives its employees enough information and technological equipment to succeed, especially when compared to the private sector, many federal employees report difficulty with training and staffing:

- Forty percent of federal employees reported that their organizations only sometimes or rarely provide the training to do their jobs well in 2002, compared to 30 percent of private employees.
- Fifty-six percent of federal employees reported that their organizations only sometimes or rarely provide enough employees to do their jobs well in 2002, compared to just 36 percent of private employees.

Some of the complaints about staffing shortages may be a defensive response to the Bush administration’s “competitive sourcing” initiative, which will eventually require federal agencies to put 500,000 jobs up for bid with the private sector. “There’s a lot of talk about privatization in government,” one employee answered when asked why so many federal workers do not trust their organizations. “I think that makes people leery about government.”

But many of the complaints may be rooted in a steady decline in the number of federal employees on the traditional front-lines.

TABLE 4-THE CHANGING FEDERAL HIERARCHY

FULL TIME PERMANENT CIVIL SERVICE POSITIONS

MEASURE	1983	1987	1992	1997	2001
Total	2,009,000	2,040,000	2,106,000	1,778,000	1,675,000
General Schedule 1-10	783,000	797,000	767,000	594,000	535,000
General Schedule 11-15	487,000	531,000	645,000	638,000	628,000
General Schedule 11-15 Managers & Supervisors	125,000	137,000	160,000	126,000	119,000

Source: Analysis of data provided through the Central Personnel Data File, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, May, 2001.

As table 4 shows, the federal hierarchy continues its journey from a traditional bureaucratic pyramid with more employees at the bottom than in the middle, to an inverted pyramid, with more employees in the middle than at the bottom.

The old bureaucratic pyramid has not disappeared, however. Rather, the bottom is increasing filled with contract employees who do the front-line work once done by the federal workforce. The federal government is becoming an organization of managers, policy makers, inspectors, and contract officers.

Acknowledging that some of the cuts involved obsolete functions such as clerk/typist, many were the result of hiring freezes instituted in the 1990s to reduce the number of federal employees, which in turn allowed President Clinton to declare an end to the era of big government. Because the downsizing was almost entirely random, many federal agencies suffered excessive cuts entirely because they had higher separation, or quit, rates at the bottom of their hierarchies. Many of the complaints about under-staffing are based on the harsh impacts of a decade of unrelenting downsizing.

Once again, there is good news and bad for Defense employees over the past year. On the one hand, Defense employees were more likely to see enough employees to do the job. In 2001, 46 percent of Defense employees said their organizations always or often provided enough employees; in 2002, the number was up to 55 percent. What is particularly remarkable about this change is that there was no real growth in the number of Defense Department or contractor employees during the period. Either productivity went up, complaining went down, or both.

On the other hand, Defense employees were less likely to report they have enough access to training. In 2001, 34 percent said their organization always provided enough access; in 2002, the number was down to 26 percent. Much as one might attribute this decline to heightened awareness of the need for better training, Defense employees are clearly telling their leaders that they want more access to the resources necessary to succeed.

Giving federal employees the tools to succeed involves more than just adequate staffing and training. It also means creating the kinds of organizations in which talented employees can see the impact of their work every day. Note, for example, that federal employees were twice as likely as their private sector peers to say there are too many layers between themselves and the top of their agencies. "I have a first-line supervisor," said one employee. "I have a foreman

above him. I have an assistant chief above that one, and a chief of the service above that. So, I've got this four-tier operation, where its hard to get anything accomplished. They could cut out two of those people and spend the money elsewhere."

The layering continues in spite of a 25 percent reduction in the total number of federal managers and supervisors during Vice President Al Gore's reinventing government campaign. It turns out that many of the cuts were illusory. "We just made believe on paper that the supervisory responsibility was taken away," one federal employee explains. "So I have people working for me who I call team leaders. They can't sign people's time sheets, and they can't sign their evaluations. But I go to them for their input on evaluations and I treat them just like they are supervisors."

Although federal employees were not asked about having enough dollars to do their jobs, the long interviews revealed considerable disquiet about the budget. One of the most passionate complaints came from a lower-level employee who was willing to give up annual bonuses and awards for the money to fix his organization's equipment.

"I could care less about getting an award or getting a bonus. We're kind of back in the hole anyway, so they don't hardly ever remember us except when something breaks down or doesn't cool down or heat up. What I want is to be able to operate my equipment without it constantly failing....It's hard to deal with that when you go to work. You just kind of throw up your hands. Why try? They're not giving me the stuff. We don't have money for equipment right now; we just have to wait until the next budget comes in. You get tired of hearing that."

ALL ABOVE AVERAGE

A healthy public service rewards its employees for a job well done, not another year on the job. It measures performance rigorously, disciplines its poor performers, and rewards its stars. It also monitors the overall performance of its agencies and gives them credit for what they do well and holds them accountable for what they do poorly. It is impossible to reward performance, however, if it cannot be or is not carefully, even courageously, measured, or if being honest earns managers and supervisors a trip to the grievance office.

Evaluating Employees

Federal employees give themselves mixed grades on performance. On a personal level, the 2001 survey showed that all but a handful of federal employees said they do a “very good” or “above average” job.⁸ But when asked to rate their co-workers, federal employees estimated that 22 percent of their colleagues were not performing their jobs well in both 2001 and 2002.

Something does not add up. Either federal employees are vastly over-rating themselves, or they are vastly under-rating their colleagues.

The answer may be in the federal government’s performance appraisal system itself, which simultaneously tells each employee that he or she is well above average, while undermining overall confidence that such hyper-inflated ratings could be true.

⁸There was so little variation in these self-appraisals that the Center for Public Service research team decided not to ask the question again in 2002. In all likelihood, the percentages would have remained unchanged.

Of the roughly 700,000 federal employees who were rated in 2001 using a pass/fail system, 92.92 percent passed and just 0.06 percent failed.⁹ The rest were not rated. Of the almost 800,000 federal employees who were rated during the same year using a five-point system, 43.12 percent were rated as “outstanding”, 27.56 percent as “exceeds fully successful,” 18.45 percent as “fully successful,” and just 0.55 percent as either “minimally successful” or “unacceptable.” Under either the pass/fail or five-point system, the federal government has come to rival Lake Wobegon as a home for all above average.

There are three problems in using any of these estimates to determine just how well federal employees are actually performing:

1. Current law does not allow federal agencies to use a quota system or grading curve in the annual performance process. Although the law prevents abuse and discrimination, it also weakens the government’s ability to raise the bar on performance. Once employees reach the top of the appraisal system, they have no place to go. Moreover, current law also gives federal individual employees ample incentive to fight anything other than an outstanding rating, which in turn leads managers to inflate the ratings lest they waste precious time in what has become a long and complicated grievance process. Moreover, at least some of the over-grading appears to reflect an effort by managers to protect their employees and departments from reductions in force.

2. Private employees estimated that there were about the same number of poor performers in their midst as in the federal government. In 2001, private employees estimated that 26 percent of their co-workers were not doing their jobs well; in 2002, the number was down slightly to 23 percent. It may very well be that the question about estimated poor performance provokes the same response among all workers--that is, respondents use a normal bell curve to make the estimate.

⁹These data come from an analysis of Central Personnel Data File records compiled by the Office of Personnel Management as of December, 2001. The records are from the 2001 performance appraisal process.

3. Federal employees are much more likely than private employees to blame the poor performance they see on their organizations, not the individual. Asked what might explain the poor performance in 2002, 36 percent of federal employees said that their organizations do not ask enough of the poor performers, 31 percent said the poor performers were not qualified for their jobs, and 18 percent said the poor performers did not have the training they need to do their jobs well. All of these percentages were statistically unchanged from 2001.¹⁰

What is clear from the data is that the number of estimated poor performers in the federal government is higher than the 0.06 percent found in the pass/fail system or the 0.55 percent found in the five-point system.

The question, therefore, is not whether there is poor performance in federal organizations--or any organizations, for that matter--but what the federal government can do about it. Unlike the private sector, where nearly half of employees report that their organizations do a very good or somewhat good job of disciplining poor performers, the federal disciplinary system has earned a well-deserved reputation for being overly litigious, confusing, and slow. Asked to explain the general decline in perceived morale, one federal employee pointed to poor performers: "I can only go by what I see in my office. But there are people who are troublemakers, but know they're safe. They make people's lives miserable. They're everywhere. It's not just in the federal government. They're simply there to collect their paychecks. They should be disciplined."

According to the long interviews conducted for this report, the problem is not just on the lower levels. "I think the federal government has too many managers," one employee argued. "And the working people do all the work, with very little recognition, low pay, sometimes weird hours, and the managers don't manage anything. They're just there. And it's because their managers didn't want to fire them. Or they had no place to put them."

¹⁰Private employees explained the poor performance in 2002 as follows: 31 percent said their organizations did not ask enough of the poor performers, 31 percent said the poor performers were not qualified for their jobs; and 21 percent said the poor performers did not have the training to do their jobs well. The question was only asked of respondents who estimated that at least 1 percent of their co-workers were not doing their jobs well. In the federal government 2002 sample, the sample size was 621; in the private sector 2002 sample, the sample size was 425.

Evaluating Organizations

Whatever the difficulties in evaluating individual performance, federal employees have clear opinions on how well their own organizations are performing. Unfortunately, their opinions are decidedly mixed:

- The number of federal employees who said their organizations were doing very well at running programs and providing services is down 6 percent over the past year.
- The number who said their organizations were very good at helping people was down 7 percent.
- The number who said their organizations were very good at being fair in its decisions remained unchanged, as was the number who said their organizations were very good at spending money wisely.

Even the lack of change is not particularly good news, however. Only 29 percent of federal employees said their organizations were very good at being fair in the 2002 survey, and even fewer, just 20 percent, said the same about spending money wisely.

The key difference in the ratings is that the number of Defense employees who said their organization was very good at helping people did not change between 2001 and 2002, while the number of non-Defense employees who felt the same fell by 9 percent. Non-defense employees cannot be buoyed by the mission if they do not believe their organization performs the mission well.

TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

A healthy public service has the trust and confidence of the people it serves. However, Americans continue to have a love/hate relationship with federal employees and the government. On the one hand, the public feels generally favorable toward federal employees and appear to want more of virtually everything the federal government delivers. On the other hand, Americans think federal employees are motivated more by the security and salary than the chance to accomplish something worthwhile, and believe substantial numbers are not performing their jobs well.

Confidence in Federal Employees

Americans have a distinctly divided opinion of federal employees. According to a May, 2002, survey conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates on behalf of the Center for Public Service, public approval of federal employees rose slightly after September 11, then fell back. Sixty-nine percent of Americans had a very or somewhat favorable opinion of federal government employees in May, 2002, compared to 76 percent in October, 2001, and 67 percent in July, 2001.¹¹

At the same time, public views of what motivates federal employees also barely changed. As table 5 shows, the public believed the worst about federal employees in July and October, 2001, and in May, 2002. Asked to choose between pairs of competing explanations for why federal employees join

TABLE 5-WHAT MOTIVATES FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

CHOICE	WHAT THE PUBLIC SAID MOTIVATES FEDERAL EMPLOYEES TO JOIN GOVERNMENT			WHAT FEDERAL EMPLOYEES SAID DREW THEM TO GOVERNMENT AT THE START OF CAREER
	JULY 2001	OCT 2001	MAY 2002	2001
The job security <i>not</i> helping people	70%	68	71	65
The salary and benefits <i>not</i> the chance to make a difference	68	64	71	69
A secure paycheck <i>not</i> the chance to do something worthwhile	68	63	69	59

government, the public always focused on the negative. As table 5 also shows, the public is not far off target in terms of the basic motivations that brought federal employees into government. Where the public might be quite wrong, of course, is what brings federal employees into work

¹¹The survey was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates from May 2-May 11, 2002. Sample size was 986, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percent. Previous public opinion surveys were conducted in July and October, 2001, with sample sizes of 1,003 and 1,033 respectively.

everyday. They may have come for the security, the paycheck, and the benefits, but a substantial number of federal employees have stayed for the nature of the work.

Regardless of their views regarding what brought federal workers into government, the public is disquieted at best about the actual performance of government as a whole today. Asked how good a job the federal government is doing running its programs, only 36 percent of Americans said excellent or good, while 48 percent said only fair and 13 percent said poor. By comparison, 40 percent of federal employees said their organizations were doing a very good job running their programs and services, and just 9 percent said not too well or not at all well. Although the question categories are not exactly comparable, there is a disagreement between the two groups.

Nor is this the only disagreement. When asked about federal employee performance in early May, 2002, the American public estimated that 42 percent of federal employees were not performing their jobs well, a figure that is 20 percentage points higher than the estimate provided by federal employees. A month later, another sample of Americans put the figure at 48 percent, no doubt in part because of the continued disclosures regarding the events preceding September 11.¹²

It is important to note that federal employees are not the only workers that Americans believe are under-performing. According to the June, 2002, survey, Americans estimated that 42 percent of people who work for business and 39 percent of people who work for charitable organizations are not performing their jobs well, either. Americans obviously believe that a large number of their fellow citizens are not pulling their weight at work.

TABLE 6-ESTIMATES OF POOR PERFORMANCE

How many federal employees are not performing their jobs well? ¹³	AMERICAN PUBLIC		FEDERAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, 2002		
	MAY 2002	JUNE 2002	GOVT WIDE	DEFENSE	NON DEFENSE
Average	42	48	22	20	23
Zero Percent	0	1	7	11	5
1-10 Percent	8	7	35	34	35
11-50 Percent	43	52	47	45	48
Over 50 Percent	40	30	8	6	9
Don't know/Refused	9	11	3	3	3

NOTE: Numbers may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding.

Doubts about employee performance appear to be related to doubts about the federal government as an institution. Whereas 71 percent of Americans had a very or somewhat favorable opinion of charitable organizations, and 65 percent had a very or somewhat favorable opinion of business, just 54 percent had a very or somewhat favorable opinion of the federal government in Washington. In this regard, distrust about the basic performance and motivations

¹² The June survey was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates on behalf of the Center for Public Service, May 29-June 10, 2002. Sample size was 1,463, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percent.

¹³ Federal employees were asked "Just your best guess, what percent of the people you work with do not perform their jobs well?"

of federal workers may act as a dead weight on trust toward the federal government as a whole, which has fallen in recent months from its post-September 11 highs.

Confidence in Government Programs

Whatever they believe about federal employees, Americans still want more of virtually everything the federal government does. Survey after survey shows that Americans want it all: lower taxes and more spending, higher Social Security benefits, a cleaner environment, bigger paychecks, and better government performance. Consider the following tests of their willingness to cut federal programs.

- Only 9 percent of Americans said that federal programs should be cut back greatly to reduce the power of government.
- Fifty-six percent said that the bigger problem in government is not that it has the wrong priorities, but that it has the right priorities and runs its program inefficiently.

As table 7 shows, the public does not support radical changes in what the federal government does. Indeed, looking back over the past five years, the number of Americans who said that (1) federal government programs should be cut back greatly, and (2) the federal government has the wrong priorities has plunged from 16 percent in 1997 to just 10 percent in 2002. During the same period, however, the number who said that (1) federal programs should be maintained to deal with important problems, and (2) the bigger problem in government is inefficiency also dropped from 39 percent of all respondents to 35 percent, while the number who said that (1) federal programs should be maintained, but (2) government's greater problem is the wrong priorities grew from 14 percent to 17 percent.

Although there is no public constituency for dismantling government, there is a substantial and continuing constituency for reforming it. There is also a smaller, but slightly growing constituency for winnowing out the wrong priorities. One can argue that this third group is likely to grow the fastest in coming years as the federal government must make tough choices about how to allocate its scarce resources between guns and butter, which is yet another justification for a more aggressive focus on performance.

TABLE 7-SUPPORT FOR REFORM

Should federal government programs be cut back or maintained?	WHAT IS THE BIGGER PROBLEM WITH GOVERNMENT			
	GOVERNMENT HAS THE WRONG PRIORITIES		GOVERNMENT HAS THE RIGHT PRIORITIES, BUT RUNS INEFFICIENTLY	
	1997	2002	1997	2002
Cut to reduce power (1-3 on a 6-point scale)	16	10	22	19
Maintain to deal with important problems (4-6 on a 6-point scale)	14	17	39	35

NOTE: Data from 1997 are from Paul C. Light, *The True Size of Government* (Brookings Institution, 1999). Numbers do not sum to 100 percent in the table because respondents who answered don't know or refused are not included.

As noted above, the president's budget office recently took an important step toward linking performance to budget. At least for now, however, many federal employees rightly

complain that their organizations get punished for measuring performance. “It was really discouraging for us to get very high marks for having clearly defined, very specific performance goals,” one employee remarked in the long interviews conducted for this project. “Then when the goals were not met, we got beat up for having not met the objectives. The vast majority of agencies never came up with clear objectives in the first place. So the lesson was, don’t come up with clear objectives because you’ll be crucified for them.” Although one can complain about the Bush administration’s arbitrary goal for federal job competitions, its focus on linking performance to budget provides a clear path to helping the public understand what government does well or poorly.

CONCLUSION

This report offers important advice to government's leaders. In the short term, Congress and the president must assure that every federal employee is fully committed to the public good. That means more than adequate training and staff. It also means getting much clearer about what working for the government means in a post-September 11 world, and asking federal employees to commit themselves to the highest performance at all levels of the hierarchy.

In the long run, Congress and the president must also increase the opportunity to accomplish something worthwhile. It hardly helps the federal government or its recruiters to pretend that government work is better than it is. There are many agencies where the work is challenging and rewarding. But there are also agencies, perhaps far more numerous, where federal employees face significant barriers to making a difference.

As this report suggests, federal employees are clearly asking for help in getting the job done, whether through a disciplinary process that weeds out poor performers, more resources to get the job done well, or an end to the incessant and illogical downsizing. As James Loy, former Coast Guard Commandant and now Transportation Security Administration deputy under secretary once said, the logical extension of doing more with less is doing everything with nothing.

INDICATOR	GOVERNMENT			
	GOVT WIDE	DEFENSE	NON DEFENSE	PRIVATE SECTOR
Organization encourages employees to take risks	No significant change (Great deal or fair amount: 55% now)	No significant change (62% now)	No significant change (53% now)	No significant change (64% now)
The work I do is boring	No significant change (Strongly or somewhat agree: 19% now)	No significant change (14% now)	No significant change (21% now)	No significant change (20% now)
I'm given the chance to do the things I do best	No significant change (Strongly agree: 43% now)	Significant change: Strongly agree: +14% (45% then v. 59% now)	Significant change: Strongly agree: -6% (44% then v. 38% now)	No significant change (54% now)
My job is a dead-end with no future	Significant change: Strongly or somewhat agree: +3% (28% then v. 31% now)	No significant change (30% now)	Significant change: Strongly or somewhat agree: +7% (25% then v. 32% now)	No significant change (23% now)
Satisfied with job overall	Significant change: Very satisfied: -6% (49% then v. 43% now)	No significant change (45% now)	Significant change: Very satisfied: -6% (48% then v. 42% now)	Significant change: Very satisfied: +11% (38% then v. 49% now)
Satisfied with salary	No significant change (Very: 35% now)	No significant change (37% now)	No significant change (34% now)	No significant change (30% now)
Satisfied with job security	Significant change: Very satisfied: +5 (66% then v. 71% now)	No significant change (66% now)	No significant change (72% now)	No significant change (52% now)
Satisfied with job benefits	No significant change (Very: 64% now)	No significant change (72% now)	No significant change (61% now)	No significant change (47% now)
Overall morale of the people you work with	Significant change: Very or somewhat high: -5% (58% then v. 53% now)	Significant change: Very high: -7% (19% then v. 12% now) Very or somewhat high: no statistical change (62% now)	Significant change: Very high: -4% (11% then v. 7% now) Very or somewhat high: significant change: -7% (57% then v. 50% now)	Significant change: Very or somewhat high: +8% (68% then v. 76% now)
Satisfied with public respect for work	No significant change (Very: 28% now)	No significant change (29% now)	No significant change (27% now)	No significant change (40% now)
Satisfied with opportunity to accomplish something worthwhile	Significant change: Very satisfied: -8% (47% then v. 39% now)	Significant change: Very satisfied: -9% (49% then v. 30% now)	Significant change: Very satisfied: -8% (46% then v. 38% now)	No significant change (38% now)
How well can respondent describe how job contributes to mission	Significant change: Very easily: -4% (61% then v. 59% now)	No significant change (66% now)	Significant change: Very easily: -7% (61% then v. 54% now)	No significant change (58% now)

INDICATOR	GOVERNMENT			
	GOVT WIDE	DEFENSE	NON DEFENSE	PRIVATE SECTOR
How much does respondent personally contribute to organization's mission	Significant change: A great deal: -11% (56% then v. 45% now)	Significant change: A great deal: -9% (55% then v. 46% now)	Significant change: A great deal: -12% (55% then v. 45% now)	No significant change (55% now)
Percent of Poor Performers	No significant change (Zero: 7% now)	Significant change: Zero: +9 (2% then v. 11% now)	No significant change (5% now)	No significant change (11% now)
What explains poor performance?	No significant change (Organization doesn't ask enough: 36% now)	No significant change (44% now)	No significant change (33% now)	No significant change (30% now)
Layers of supervisors	Significant change: Too many: +7% (39% then v. 46% now)	Significant change: Too many: +10% (34% then v. 44% now)	Significant change: Too many: +5% (41% then v. 46% now)	No significant change (23% now)
Does organization provide information to do job	No significant change (Always or often: 74% now)	No significant change (77% now)	No significant change (74% now)	No significant change (79% now)
Does organization provide technological equipment to do job	No significant change (Always or often: 72% now)	No significant change (81% now)	Significant change: Always or often: +4% (64% then v. 69% now)	No significant change (76% now)
Does organization provide enough employees to do job	Significant change: Always or often: +5 (39% then v. 44% now)	Significant change: Always or often: +9% (46% then v. 55% now)	No significant change (40% now)	Significant change: Always or often: +5% (59% then v. 64% now)
Does organization provide enough training to do job	No significant change (Always or often: 60% now)	Significant change: Always: -8% (34% then v. 26% now) Often: +7 (30% then v. 37% now)	No significant change (57% now)	No significant change (69%)
How good is agency doing running its programs and services	Significant change: Very good: -6% (40% then v. 34% now)	No significant change (39% now)	No significant change (33% now)	No significant change (46% now)
How good is organization at helping people	Significant change: Very good: -7% (52% then v. 45% now)	No significant change (46% now)	Significant change: Very good: -9% (53% then v. 44% now)	Significant change: Very good: +8% (47% then v. 55% now)
How good is organization at being fair in decisions	No significant change (Very good: 29% now)	No significant change (29% now)	No significant change (29% now)	No significant change (39% now)
How good is organization at spending money wisely	No significant change (Very good: 20% now)	No significant change (25% now)	No significant change (17% now)	No significant change (37% now)

INDICATOR	GOVERNMENT			
	GOVT WIDE	DEFENSE	NON DEFENSE	PRIVATE SECTOR
Does respondent accomplish something worthwhile at work	No significant change (Yes: 93%)	No significant change: (96%)	No significant change (92%)	No significant change (91%)
Proud to tell friends and neighbors where work	No significant change (Very: 49% now)	No significant change (56% now)	No significant change (46% now)	Significant change: Very proud: +8% (50% then v. 58% now)
Trust own organization to do the right thing	No significant change (Always: 21%)	No significant change (29%)	Significant change: Always: -4% (22% then v. 18% now)	No significant change (38%)
If given choice, would rather work for current sector	No significant change (Current sector: 70% now)	No significant change (76% now)	No significant change (67% now)	No significant change (57% now)

Topline Report

Health of the Public Service II

Prepared by Princeton Survey Research Associates
for The Brookings Institution

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Results based on n=673
Interview dates: April 1, 2002 – May 7, 2002
Margin of error is plus or minus 4 percentage points for results based on the full sample

Q1 How much does your organization encourage its employees to take risks or try new ways of doing their work—a great deal, a fair amount, not too much or not at all?

	Great deal	Fair amount	Not too much	Not at all	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	17	38	36	8	1	0
TOTAL 2001	20	36	35	9	*	1
DOD 2002	20	42	30	6	2	0
DOD 2001	23	41	28	8	0	0
NON-DOD 2002	17	36	38	9	*	0
NON-DOD 2001	19	34	37	9	*	1

Q2 I'm going to read some statements people make about their job. Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with them. The first|next is:

List items were rotated

a The work I do is boring.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	5	14	26	54	1	0
TOTAL 2001	5	17	21	57	0	*
DOD 2002	3	11	31	54	0	0
DOD 2001	6	19	17	56	0	1
NON-DOD 2002	6	15	24	55	1	0
NON-DOD 2001	5	16	22	57	0	*

b I'm given a chance to do the things I do best.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	43	39	11	6	1	0
TOTAL 2001	44	39	11	7	0	0
DOD 2002	59	29	8	2	1	0
DOD 2001	45	36	11	8	0	0
NON-DOD 2002	38	42	12	7	1	0
NON-DOD 2001	44	40	11	6	0	0

c My job is a dead-end with no future.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	14	17	26	42	*	*
TOTAL 2001	11	17	25	46	1	*
DOD 2002	15	15	31	39	*	0
DOD 2001	13	23	23	41	*	*
NON-DOD 2002	14	18	25	44	*	*
NON-DOD 2001	10	15	26	48	1	0

Q3 Overall, how satisfied are you with (Insert)—very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied, not satisfied at all?

List items were rotated

a your job overall

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not too satisfied	Not satisfied at all	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	43	47	7	3	0	0
TOTAL 2001	49	43	6	3	0	0
DOD 2002	45	47	7	1	0	0
DOD 2001	50	42	5	2	0	0
NON-DOD 2002	42	47	6	4	0	0
NON-DOD 2001	48	43	6	3	0	0

b your salary

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not too satisfied	Not satisfied at all	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	35	54	7	4	0	0
TOTAL 2001	37	50	6	6	0	*
DOD 2002	37	55	5	2	0	0
DOD 2001	35	56	3	5	0	*
NON-DOD 2002	34	54	8	5	0	0
NON-DOD 2001	38	48	7	6	0	*

c your job security

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not too satisfied	Not satisfied at all	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	71	25	3	1	0	0
TOTAL 2001	66	29	3	2	*	*
DOD 2002	66	32	1	1	0	0
DOD 2001	61	31	6	1	1	0
NON-DOD 2002	72	23	4	1	0	0
NON-DOD 2001	67	28	2	2	*	*

d your job benefits, such as health insurance and vacation time

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not too satisfied	Not satisfied at all	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	64	30	5	1	*	*
TOTAL 2001	66	28	3	2	*	*
DOD 2002	72	24	3	1	0	0
DOD 2001	72	21	2	4	0	*
NON-DOD 2002	61	32	5	1	*	*
NON-DOD 2001	64	31	3	1	*	*

Q4 How would you rate the overall morale of the people you work with—is it very high, somewhat high, somewhat low or very low?

	Very high	Somewhat high	Somewhat low	Very low	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	8	45	33	13	1	0
TOTAL 2001	13	45	32	10	*	0
DOD 2002	12	50	29	9	0	0
DOD 2001	19	43	31	6	1	0
NON-DOD 2002	7	43	34	15	1	0
NON-DOD 2001	11	46	32	11	0	0

Q5 How satisfied are you with (Insert)—are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied or not satisfied at all?

List items were rotated

a the public respect for the type of work you are doing

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	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not too satisfied	Not satisfied at all	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	28	50	13	6	2	*
TOTAL 2001	32	46	14	7	*	*
DOD 2002	29	48	15	6	2	0
DOD 2001	33	46	14	6	1	1
NON-DOD 2002	27	51	13	7	2	*
NON-DOD 2001	32	47	14	8	*	0

b your opportunity to accomplish something worthwhile

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not too satisfied	Not satisfied at all	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	39	48	9	4	1	0
TOTAL 2001	47	42	7	3	*	0
DOD 2002	40	51	7	1	0	0
DOD 2001	49	43	6	1	*	0
NON-DOD 2002	38	47	10	5	1	0
NON-DOD 2001	46	42	8	4	0	0

Q6 Just your best guess, what percent of the people you work with do not perform their jobs well?

	Mean	0%	1-5%	6-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-100%	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	22.2	7	16	19	27	20	8	2	1
TOTAL 2001	22.7	4	20	21	21	25	6	2	*
DOD 2002	20.4	11	19	15	24	21	6	3	0
DOD 2001	21.6	2	25	18	17	32	3	2	1
NON-DOD 2002	22.9	5	15	20	28	20	9	2	1
NON-DOD 2001	23.1	5	18	22	23	23	8	2	*

Q7 And which one of these reasons best explains that poor performance?

Based on those who say 1% or more are performing poorly

		They do not have the training to do their jobs well	My organization does not ask enough of them	They are not qualified for their jobs	Don't know	Refused
n=621	TOTAL 2002	18	36	29	15	3
n=632	TOTAL 2001	17	40	27	12	4
n=129	DOD 2002	15	44	28	11	1
n=138	DOD 2001	21	43	24	9	3
n=492	NON-DOD 2002	18	33	29	16	3
n=494	NON-DOD 2001	16	39	28	13	4

Q8 A variety of factors motivate people to come to work everyday. Why do you come to work everyday?

	TOTAL L 2002	TOTAL L 2001	DOD 2002	DOD 2001	NON- DOD 2002	NON- DOD 2001
Compensation	41	31	37	34	42	31
Personal interest/satisfaction	28	31	28	30	28	31
Work ethic	10	13	11	18	9	11
Co-workers/social	1	*	0	*	1	*
Compensation + personal interest/satisfaction	7	6	4	6	8	6
Personal interest/satisfaction + coworkers/social	2	3	1	3	3	3
Compensation + personal interest/satisfaction + coworkers/social	1	1	1	0	*	1
Compensation + work ethic + co-workers/social	0	*	0	0	0	*
Common good	4	6	9	3	3	7
Personal interest/satisfaction + common good	1	2	1	3	1	2
Compensation + Work ethic	1	2	2	1	1	2
Personal interest/satisfaction + co-workers/social + common good	*	*	0	0	*	*
Compensation + co-workers/social	*	*	0	0	*	*
Compensation + common good	1	1	1	*	1	1
Compensation + work ethic + personal interest/satisfaction	*	0	0	0	1	0
Compensation + personal interest/satisfaction + common good	*	*	0	0	*	*
Personal interest/satisfaction + Work ethic	*	1	1	*	*	2
Common good + coworkers/social	*	*	0	0	*	*
Common good + work ethic	*	*	0	0	*	*
Personal interest/satisfaction + common good + work ethic	*	*	0	0	*	*
Compensation + work ethic + common good	0	*	0	*	0	0
Compensation + common good+ co-workers/social	0	*	0	0	0	*
No Comment/Refused	1	1	1	1	*	*
Other	1	1	2	1	1	1

Q9 Thinking about your organization's mission, how easily could you describe how your job contributes to your organization's mission—very easily, somewhat easily, not too easily or not easily at all?

	Very easily	Somewhat easily	Not too easily	Not easily at all	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	57	33	7	3	1	0
TOTAL 2001	61	32	5	2	0	0
DOD 2002	66	30	5	*	0	0
DOD 2001	63	31	4	2	0	0
NON-DOD 2002	54	34	8	4	1	0
NON-DOD 2001	61	32	5	2	0	0

Q10 In your opinion, how much do you personally contribute to helping accomplish your organization's mission—a great deal, a fair amount, not too much or nothing at all?

	A great deal	A fair amount	Not too much	Nothing at all	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	45	50	5	1	0	0
TOTAL 2001	56	38	5	1	0	*
DOD 2002	46	48	6	0	0	0
DOD 2001	55	43	2	0	0	*
NON-DOD 2002	45	51	4	1	0	0
NON-DOD 2001	57	36	6	1	0	0

Q10b Now thinking about the layers of supervisors and managers between you and top management in your organization—would you say that there are too many layers of supervisors and managers, too few layers or the right number of layers of supervisors and managers?

	Too many layers	Too few layers	The right number	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	46	3	52	*	0
TOTAL 2001	39	3	56	1	*
DOD 2002	44	2	54	0	0
DOD 2001	34	4	62	0	*
NON-DOD 2002	46	3	51	*	0
NON-DOD 2001	41	3	54	2	0

Q11 To what extent, does your organization have (Insert). Does it always, often, sometimes or rarely have (Insert)?

List items were rotated

a access to the information needed to do its job well

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	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	34	40	21	4	*	*
TOTAL 2001	38	35	23	3	1	0
DOD 2002	41	36	21	2	0	0
DOD 2001	43	39	18	*	*	0
NON-DOD 2002	32	42	21	4	*	*
NON-DOD 2001	36	34	25	4	1	0

b the technological equipment needed to do its job well

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	34	38	24	4	0	0
TOTAL 2001	35	35	24	6	*	0
DOD 2002	39	42	19	1	0	0
DOD 2001	45	38	16	1	0	0
NON-DOD 2002	32	37	25	6	0	0
NON-DOD 2001	31	34	26	8	*	0

c enough employees to do its job well

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	15	29	33	23	*	*
TOTAL 2001	15	24	36	25	1	0
DOD 2002	21	34	35	10	0	0
DOD 2001	17	29	34	19	1	0
NON-DOD 2002	13	27	32	27	*	*
NON-DOD 2001	14	22	37	27	1	0

d access to the training needed to do its job well

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	23	37	33	7	*	0
TOTAL 2001	27	32	31	9	*	0
DOD 2002	26	37	29	8	0	0
DOD 2001	34	30	30	6	*	0
NON-DOD 2002	21	36	35	7	*	0
NON-DOD 2001	25	33	32	10	*	0

Q12 All in all, how good a job does your organization do (Insert)—a very good, somewhat good, not too good or not at all good job?

List items were rotated

a running its programs and services

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	Very good	Somewhat good	Not too good	Not at all good	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	34	56	8	1	1	0
TOTAL 2001	40	50	8	2	*	0
DOD 2002	39	53	6	*	1	0
DOD 2001	44	51	3	1	0	0
NON-DOD 2002	33	56	9	1	*	0
NON-DOD 2001	38	50	10	2	*	0

b helping people

	Very good	Somewhat good	Not too good	Not at all good	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	45	46	6	1	2	*
TOTAL 2001	52	37	8	2	1	*
DOD 2002	46	45	6	1	1	0
DOD 2001	51	36	12	1	*	*
NON-DOD 2002	44	47	6	1	2	*
NON-DOD 2001	53	38	6	2	1	0

c being fair in its decisions

	Very good	Somewhat good	Not too good	Not at all good	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	29	52	15	3	*	*
TOTAL 2001	28	56	13	2	1	*
DOD 2002	29	53	15	3	0	0
DOD 2001	25	58	12	3	1	*
NON-DOD 2002	29	52	15	4	*	*
NON-DOD 2001	29	56	13	2	1	0

d spending its money wisely

	Very good	Somewhat good	Not too good	Not at all good	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	20	49	23	7	2	0
TOTAL 2001	21	44	23	10	2	1
DOD 2002	25	53	15	5	1	0
DOD 2001	23	51	16	8	2	0
NON-DOD 2002	17	48	26	8	2	0
NON-DOD 2001	20	41	26	10	2	1

Q13 Some people feel they accomplish something worthwhile at work, others don't. Do you feel you accomplish something worthwhile, or not?

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	93	7	*	0
TOTAL 2001	93	6	*	0
DOD 2002	96	4	0	0
DOD 2001	98	2	*	0
NON-DOD 2002	92	7	*	0
NON-DOD 2001	92	8	0	0

Q14 When you tell your friends and neighbors where you work, do you feel very proud of the organization you work for, somewhat proud, not too proud or not proud at all?

	Very proud	Somewhat proud	Not too proud	Not proud at all	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	49	42	6	1	1	1
TOTAL 2001	49	43	5	2	*	0
DOD 2002	56	40	3	*	1	0
DOD 2001	53	42	4	*	1	0
NON-DOD 2002	46	43	7	2	1	1
NON-DOD 2001	48	44	6	3	0	0

Q15 Do you trust your organization to do the right thing just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?

	Always	Most of the time	Only some of the time	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	21	49	30	*	0
TOTAL 2001	23	47	30	0	0
DOD 2002	29	45	26	*	0
DOD 2001	25	46	29	0	0
NON-DOD 2002	18	50	31	*	0
NON-DOD 2001	22	48	30	0	0

Q16 In general, if you could choose, would you rather work for government, a for profit business, or a nonprofit organization?

	Government	For profit business	Nonprofit	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	70	15	11	4	*
TOTAL 2001	69	15	11	4	*
DOD 2002	76	14	9	*	*
DOD 2001	76	13	8	3	0
NON-DOD 2002	67	15	11	6	*
NON-DOD 2001	66	16	12	4	*

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Q17 Since the events of September 11th, do you think the people you work with have more of a sense of purpose, less of a sense of purpose or about the same as before?

	More	Less	Same	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	42	1	57	*	*
DOD 2002	63	0	37	0	0
NON-DOD 2002	35	1	63	*	*

Q18 Has the job become more (Insert) since 9/11, less (Insert) or has it stayed about the same?

List items were rotated

a difficult

	More	Less	Stayed about the same	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	27	2	71	*	*
DOD 2002	31	0	69	0	0
NON-DOD 2002	25	2	72	*	*

b stressful

	More	Less	Stayed about the same	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	37	1	62	0	0
DOD 2002	46	0	54	0	0
NON-DOD 2002	34	1	65	0	0

c rewarding

	More	Less	Stayed about the same	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	19	4	77	0	0
DOD 2002	30	2	68	0	0
NON-DOD 2002	15	5	79	0	0

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d challenging

	More	Less	Stayed about the same	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	31	2	68	0	0
DOD 2002	45	*	55	0	0
NON-DOD 2002	26	2	72	0	0

D1 Sex (Observed)

	Male	Female
TOTAL 2002	56	44
DOD 2002	62	38
NON-DOD 2002	54	46

D2 What is your age?

TOTAL 2002	DOD 2002	NON-DOD 2002	
3	2	4	18-29
21	25	20	30-39
34	34	34	40-49
34	36	33	50-59
5	3	6	60-69
*	*	*	70 or older
*	0	*	Don't know
1	*	2	Refused

D5 Are you of Hispanic origin or descent, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban or some other Latino background?

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	4	96	0	1
DOD 2002	2	97	0	1
NON-DOD 2002	4	95	0	*

D6 What is your race? White, African-American or Black, Latino or Hispanic, Asian or some other race?

	White	Black or African-American	Latino or Hispanic	Asian	Other	Don't know	Refused
TOTAL 2002	83	10	1	1	4	*	1
DOD 2002	84	9	1	0	4	0	2
NON-DOD 2002	83	10	1	1	3	*	1

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D7 What was the last grade or class you completed in school?

TOTAL 2002	DOD 2002	NON-DOD 2002	
0	0	0	None, or grade 1-8
0	0	0	High school incomplete (grades 9-11)
21	29	18	High school graduate (grade 12 or GED certificate)
3	4	3	Business, technical or vocational school after high school
26	31	24	Some college, no four-year degree
29	25	31	College graduate
20	11	24	Post-graduate training or professional schooling
*	0	*	Don't know
*	0	*	Refused

D8 What agency or department do you work for?

TOTAL 2002	DOD 2002	NON-DOD 2002	
10	0	14	Department of Agriculture
2	0	2	Department of Commerce
26	100	0	Department of Defense
*	0	*	Department of Education
2	0	2	Department of Energy
2	0	2	Environmental Protection Agency
*	0	*	Federal Emergency Management Agency

6	0	8	Health and Human Services
1	0	1	Housing and Urban Development
5	0	6	Department of the Interior
5	0	6	Department of Justice
2	0	2	Department of Labor
1	0	1	NASA
*	0	*	Small Business Administration
*	0	*	Department of State
4	0	5	Department of Transportation
9	0	13	Department of Treasury
*	0	*	USAID
10	0	14	Department of Veterans Affairs
3	0	4	Social Security Administration
2	0	2	Federal Aviation Administration
1	0	1	General Service Agency
*	0	*	Food and Drug Administration
*	0	*	Office of Personnel Management
*	0	*	Commodities Futures Trading Commission
*	0	*	Consumer Product Safety Commission
*	0	*	Executive branch
*	0	*	Federal Deposit Insurance Co.
*	0	*	Federal Trade Commission
1	0	1	Government Printing Office
*	0	*	Nuclear Regulatory Commission
0	0	0	Securities and Exchange Commission
0	0	0	Tennessee Valley Authority
*	0	*	Federal Labor Relations Authority
*	0	*	Federal Maritime Commission
*	0	*	International Bureau of Broadcasting
*	0	*	National Archives and Records Administration
*	0	*	National Labor Relations Board
0	0	0	National Mediation Board
*	0	*	Peace Corps
*	0	*	Railroad Retirement Board
*	0	*	United States Trade Representative
*	0	*	Voice of America
*	0	*	Federal Communication Commission
*	0	*	Equal Employment Opportunities Commission
*	0	*	National Science Foundation
0	0	0	Smithsonian
*	0	*	National Credit Union Association
0	0	0	Other
0	0	0	Don't know
7	0	9	Refused

D9 Last year, what was your total household income from all sources before taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category.

TOTAL 2002	DOD 2002	NON- DOD 2002	
0	0	0	Less than \$10,000
1	0	1	\$10,000 to under \$20,000
4	3	4	\$20,000 to under \$30,000
8	10	7	\$30,000 to under \$40,000
12	15	10	\$40,000 to under \$50,000
33	32	34	\$50,000 to under \$75,000
18	20	17	\$75,000 to under \$100,000
18	13	20	\$100,000 or more
1	1	1	Don't know
7	6	7	Refused

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