Employees Speak Out

2003 DSHS Agency-wide Employee Survey

JANUARY 2005

Q&A

trust
skills
job safety
communications
involvement
satisfaction
management
recognition
participation
diversity
respect

IMPROVMENT

Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

RDA Research & Data
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* **Office of the Secretary** *oversees Internal Quality, Communications and Strategic Partnerships, Loss Prevention and Risk Management, Integration Initiative, Information Services, Legislative Relations, Constituent Services, Financial Management, and Victim/Witness Notification.*

The DSHS Mission

To improve the quality of life for individuals and families in need.

We will help people achieve safe, self-sufficient, healthy and secure lives.

Employee Survey Highlights

It is the employees of DSHS who ultimately make the agency run and provide day-to-day access to services for our clients. I am very proud to stand among you and am pleased to receive – and initiate measures to incorporate – the feedback you have provided through our recent employee survey. We find that in the past four years, we've made progress in:

◢ Providing feedback on work performance *(Up 4%)*

◢ Sharing information, even when news is bad *(Up 3%)*

◢ Coaching our employees so customer service improves *(Up 3%)*

We find – consistent with earlier surveys – we also achieve high scores for:

◢ Employee competence

◢ A positive work environment

◢ Satisfaction with job characteristics

Dennis Braddock
Secretary

– Presenting a DSHS Performance award to Valerie Marshall, Foster Care Recruitment Specialist in Spokane

As in any organization, we still have work to do. The input you've provided suggests we need to work on:

◢ Communication – management communicating to staff and listening to staff concerns

◢ Advancement, hiring and recognition

◢ Perception of senior management

◢ Policies, procedures and resources

◢ Defined goals

◢ Accessible, useful client data

I encourage you to read the information that follows and focus on all of these areas. Maintain a steady course where we're doing well, resolve issues and concerns where we're falling short, and continue to provide feedback as we work throughout the organization to structure the DSHS to come.

DSHS Employee Participation Rate

No Response 36%

Employees Responding 64%

Program Response Rates

Program	Rate
ESA	96%
ODHH	91%
DASA	88%
MSA	87%
DVR	82%
FSA	81%
LTC	76%
EXEC	65%
JRA	57%
DDD	55%
MAA	43%
MHD	42%
CA	37%
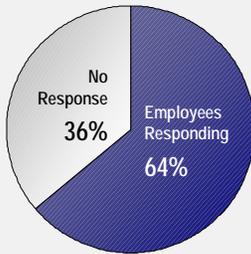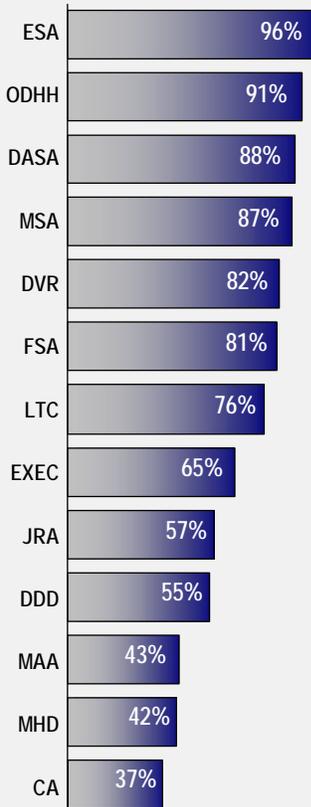
About the Survey

The DSHS Employee Survey was designed to meet both agency-wide needs and the needs of individual programs within DSHS. It consists of a core set of questions based on the widely used Department of Personnel Employee Survey and on key issues from the DSHS Balanced Scorecard. Programs could make further additions to meet their specific needs. The survey was administered to each of the major DSHS programs over a 22-month period. Responses from all programs were combined for this agency-wide report.

Programs were offered the choice of survey sampling methods. Economic Services Administration chose to conduct a random sample survey, and all other programs surveyed all of their employees. The overall response rate for the survey was **64%**; program rates varied across the agency:

▲ Aging and Disability Services Administration – 2,557 responses, **61%** response rate. The Long Term Care portion of ADSA *(884 responses, 76% response rate)* conducted the survey from May through July 2004. The Division of Developmental Disabilities survey *(1,673 responses, 55% response rate)* was conducted from January to March 2003.

▲ Children's Administration – 939 responses, **37%** response rate. Conducted in February 2004.

▲ Economic Services Administration – **96%** response rate from a random sample of 475 employees who were offered the opportunity to respond from May to July 2004 *(responses = 456)*.

▲ Health and Rehabilitative Services Administration – 1,559 responses, **47%** response rate. Each Division within HRSA conducted a separate survey: The Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse *(82 responses, 88% response rate)* in December 2003; the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation *(284 responses, 82% response rate)* in April 2003; the Mental Health Division *(1,183 responses, 42% response rate)* from May to July 2004; and the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing *(10 responses, 91% response rate)* in April and May 2004.

▲ Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration – 702 responses, **57%** response rate in May, June, and July 2004.

▲ Medical Assistance Administration – 397 responses, **43%** response rate in October 2002.

▲ Central Administration – 781 responses, **78%** response rate. Several surveys were conducted for different organizations within Central Administration. Financial Services Administration *(194 responses, 81% response rate)* in December 2003; Management Services Administration *(362 responses, 87% response rate)* in March 2004; and the Executive offices and divisions reporting directly to the Deputy Secretary *(225 responses, 65% response rate)* in April and May 2004.

Overall, **7,391** employees completed surveys. The agency-wide response rate was calculated after weighting the random sample from ESA proportionally with the rest of the agency: 11,393 responses from 17,861 eligible = 64%.

The Research and Data Analysis Division of DSHS conducted most of the surveys. However, the Department of Personnel conducted surveys for DVR and DDD, and MAA conducted their own survey. See Appendix B for more information on survey methods.

Celebrating

DSHS Strengths

THE EMPLOYEE Survey covers a broad spectrum of issues. The first two sections of this report highlight issues that either demonstrate DSHS strengths or present opportunities for improvement. These issues were chosen on the basis of three analysis perspectives: (1) high or low scores on the standard questions, (2) changes from the 2000 employee survey scores, and (3) frequent references in responses to narrative questions. A more detailed look at the data underlying each of these three analysis perspectives starts on page 16.

This first section addresses strengths. With an overwhelming 95 percent reporting that "I 'always' or 'usually' have the skills necessary to do my job," it is obvious that DSHS employees take pride in their competence. Questions about the cooperation and teamwork, respect from co-workers, and job characteristics also generated many positive responses. These and other strengths identified by DSHS employees are reported on the next five pages.

A highly competent workforce

DSHS employees are very confident of their job skills and abilities. More than 90 percent of all employees indicated that have the skills and training necessary to do their job well. Almost no one answered "seldom" or "never."

◢ I have the skills I need to do my job.

Q12

| | Usually 32% | Almost Always or Always 63% |

Always or Usually = **95%**[*]

◢ My skills and training enable me to do the job well. **BSC**

Q53

| | Usually 36% | Almost Always or Always 57% |

Always or Usually = **93%**[*]
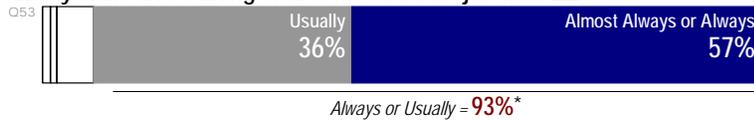
Supervisors were nearly as positive; 88 percent of those who gave an answer other than "Don't Know" reported that they have the needed supervisory skills. Surprisingly, 15 percent answered the question about supervisory skills with a "Don't Know." Although the survey directed respondents to answer this question only if they are supervisors, the high number of "Don't Know" answers suggests that some non-supervisors may have answered the question.

◢ I have the supervisory skills I need to manage well in DSHS. **BSC**

Q54

| Don't Know 15% | | Usually 35% | Almost Always or Always 41% |

Always or Usually = **88%**[*] *(supervisors only)*

NOTE: All results reported in this study are based on weighted data. The answers for each program are weighted so that a specific program's contribution to the overall results reflects the proportion of all DSHS employees in that program. See Appendix B for a more detailed discussion of analysis methods.

BSC = Balanced ScoreCard Measure

[*] Percentage of those who could answer knowledgeably (excludes "Don't Know" responses). This percentage will not always match percentages in the colored bar above. The colored bar shows the percentage of all respondents (includes "Don't Know" responses).

An environment of courtesy, dignity, and respect

Most DSHS employees are satisfied with treatment from fellow employees and from first line supervisors and managers. More than eight out of ten employees say that they are treated with courtesy and respect by co-workers and management staff. The question about courteous, respectful treatment by managers and supervisors was placed in the survey because of its importance to DSHS management. It is one of the key DSHS Balanced ScoreCard (BSC) measures added to the survey in 2000.

Q52 My fellow workers treat me with courtesy and respect. **BSC**

| Usually 33% | Almost Always or Always 58% |

Always or Usually = **91%***

Q51 My manager/supervisor treats me with courtesy and respect. **BSC**

| Usually 21% | Almost Always or Always 64% |

DOWN from 2000 **−3%**

Always or Usually = **85%***
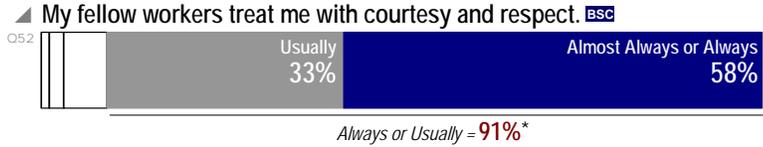
Eight out of ten employees also report that people are treated fairly and that their workgroup values diversity.

Q41 In my workgroup, people are treated fairly, without discrimination.

| Occasion 9% | Usually 26% | Almost Always or Always 53% |

Always or Usually = **80%***

Q40 In my workgroup, we value diversity (opinion, thought, life experiences).

| Occasion 10% | Usually 29% | Almost Always or Always 50% |

Always or Usually = **80%***
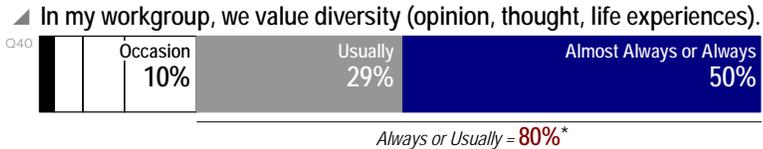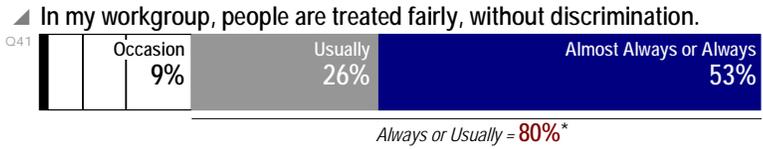
The high percentage of respondents reporting courteous and respectful treatment falls only slightly when word "courtesy" is replaced with "dignity." Nearly eight out of ten report that their manager/supervisor treats them with dignity and respect.
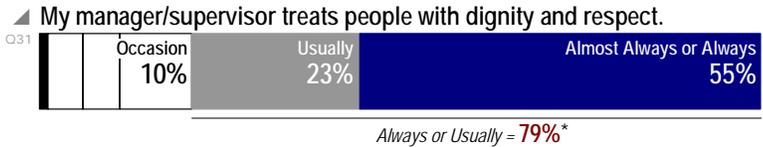
Q31 My manager/supervisor treats people with dignity and respect.

| Occasion 10% | Usually 23% | Almost Always or Always 55% |

Always or Usually = **79%***

BSC = Balanced ScoreCard Measure

* This percentage excludes "Don't Know" responses. The colored bar shows the percentages of all respondents including "Don't Know" responses.

Brita

*"My colleagues and my supervisor are **an excellent team for support and collaboration**."*

*"**Teaming efforts with a multi-disciplinary group** – access to the psychiatrist and psychologist . . . providing very necessary support for children and their families."*

*"I really enjoy working with my **co-workers as a team** to **make a difference** in people's lives."*

*"My co-workers are the **best teammates** a person could have by always being willing to help out with groups, paperwork, or simply having a person to talk to."*

*"The **support of co-workers** in the informal workgroup is **fantastic**."*

*"The people I work with are true; **truly invested** in serving and supporting youth, **truly committed** to go the extra step, truly there to provide opportunities and are truly inspiring! Thank you for my job, it is an honor!"*

*"I feel **extremely supported** in my job and my personal life by the people I work with."*

*"I like the **teamwork approach** my unit has."*

A spirit of cooperation, teamwork and honesty

Most employees were quick to praise the cooperativeness and team spirit of co-workers. Teamwork was a positive theme in both the standard questions and in the narrative responses. About eight out of ten employees responded favorably to the four questions that addressed teamwork and cooperation.

◢ The people in my workgroup cooperate to get the job done.
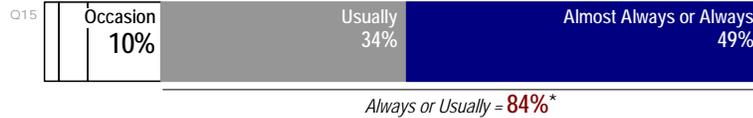
| Q15 | Occasion 10% | Usually 34% | Almost Always or Always 49% |

Always or Usually = **84%***

◢ My manager/supervisor encourages us to work as a team.

| Q17 | Occasion 10% | Usually 23% | Almost Always or Always 56% |

Always or Usually = **80%***
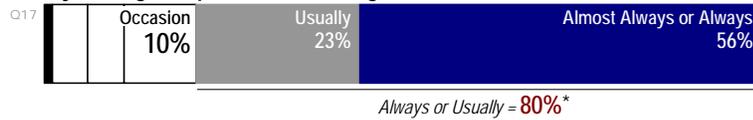
◢ My workgroup cooperates with other workgroups to achieve objectives.

| Q16 | Occasion 14% | Usually 36% | Almost Always or Always 41% |

Always or Usually = **78%***

◢ A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my workgroup.

| Q18 | Seldom 7% | Occasion 14% | Usually 30% | Almost Always or Always 44% |

Always or Usually = **75%***

Seven out of ten respondents also praised another aspect of teamwork. They described their team members as honest and open. Positive responses to this question have increased by 3 percent since 2000.

◢ People in my workgroup speak openly and honestly, even if news is bad.

| Q29 | AN/N 7% | Seldom 9% | Occasion 14% | Usually 33% | Almost Always or Always 36% |

+3% UP from 2000

Always or Usually = **70%***

* This percentage excludes "Don't Know" responses. The colored bar shows the percentages of all respondents including "Don't Know" responses.

Where feedback is provided and found valuable

About six out of ten employees made positive responses to the four questions about management feedback. They appreciate timely, ongoing feedback and coaching. Although these satisfaction rates are not terribly high, feedback is listed in this report as a strength because it is an area of improvement. Positive responses to the first three questions below have increased since the 2000 employee survey.

My manager/supervisor gives ongoing feedback that helps me improve.

Q19

AN/N 8%	Seldom 12%	Occasionally 19%	Usually 29%	Almost Always or Always 31%

+4% UP from 2000

Always or Usually = 61%*

I receive timely feedback on my suggestions for improvement.

Q20

AN/N 9%	Seldom 12%	Occasionally 17%	Usually 29%	Almost Always or Always 30%

+4% UP from 2000

Always or Usually = 61%*

I get coaching from my manager/supervisor to help me improve.

Q11

AN/N 10%	Seldom 12%	Occasionally 18%	Usually 24%	Almost Always or Always 35%

+3% UP from 2000

Always or Usually = 60%*

Nearly six out of ten employees also reported that their last performance evaluation helped them to improve job performance.

My last performance evaluation helped me improve my job performance.

Q22

DK 12%	AN/N 13%	Seldom 11%	Occasion 13%	Usually 23%	Almost Always or Always 28%

Always or Usually = 58%*

"I am recognized for a job well done."

*"My manager is open and **gives and receives input and suggestions**. It's a breath of fresh air for me."*

*"My supervisor is a competent, dedicated person and is **always available for consultation**."*

*"I am pleased with the answers I get when addressing concerns with my **supervisor** and appreciate the time he can give me when issues arise."*

*"**My supervisor is respectful** and informative. Her words and actions have **integrity** and she remains focused on providing the best services we can to support children and families."*

*I currently have a new supervisor/manager and feel that she is truly doing a great job in providing me **with tools and feedback** that are helpful to me in doing my job. She is a very **respectful, honest and enthusiastic** leader."*

*"MAA does an **excellent job of employee recognition** – better than any other administration I know of."*

*"Our supervisor supports us fully, is **honest and open**, lets us vent our frustrations and helps us effectively resolve issues. I have been given **positive feedback and growth opportunities**. I have learned so much and enjoy my work."*

*Have a very supportive supervisor that lets her staff know when they are doing a good job. **Nice to feel appreciated**."*

* This percentage excludes "Don't Know" responses. The colored bar shows the percentages of all respondents including "Don't Know" responses.

Employees like their jobs and helping clients

Some DSHS strengths were revealed in the written responses to narrative questions – even though these areas are not addressed by the standard questions. Written comments made it clear that DSHS employees enjoy their jobs and are proud of their role in helping clients. Three out of four employees wrote favorably about their job characteristics. Half specifically mentioned helping clients.

◢ Three in four who commented were favorable about job characteristics.
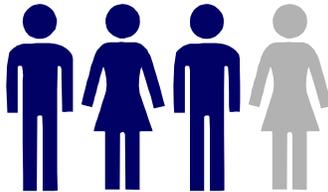
◢ Two in four specifically mentioned helping clients.
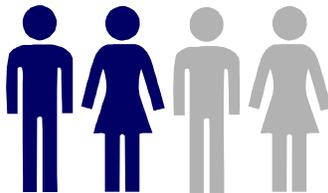
As the survey findings illustrate, job satisfaction is the result of a complex interplay of environmental and personal factors. Satisfaction with job characteristics is only one of the many factors that contribute to overall job satisfaction. In this survey, about three out of four survey respondents said that they were always or usually satisfied with their jobs. This percentage of overall job satisfaction is fairly high, although it has declined by 3 percent since the 2000 survey.

◢ In general, I am satisfied with my job.

| Q44 | | Occasionally 15% | Usually 38% | Almost Always or Always 36% | DOWN from 2000 −3% |

Always or Usually = 74%*
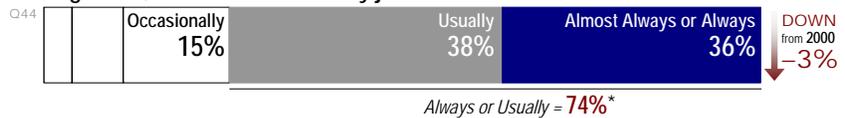
There was no significant correlation between those who made positive comments about job characteristics and those who reported high overall job satisfaction. More than one quarter of those who made positive comments about job characteristics also said that they were satisfied with their jobs "occasionally" or less frequently.

* This percentage excludes "Don't Know" responses. The colored bar shows the percentages of all respondents including "Don't Know" responses.

Ways to Improve

"Everything is a secret or an 'I don't know.' The grapevine outside of DSHS is far more timely and accurate regarding internal activities."

*"More communication. **Folks just don't talk to each other.**"*

*"**Better explanation, preparation, communication when major changes come down** from on high. . . we always seem to be on separate tracks."*

*"When I voice concerns to some of our upper management, I feel that I am **not listened** to or that the concern **gets twisted** around and becomes my fault."*

*"Prompt, clear, consistent guidance and **communication from senior leadership**. We are told we do not communicate clearly with stakeholders. **The responsibility for clear communication begins at the top**."*

*"We (line staff) don't seem to be in the know until **after everything has been** decided."*

*"**When communication is "hidden"** or just not spoken, **gossip and rumors** run wild."*

*"Let **the line staff** have more **input** when there are changes to be made."*

N ADDITION TO the previously mentioned strengths, the survey points out many opportunities for improvement. Communication, hiring and advancement, employee recognition, perception of senior management, defined goals, accessible client data, policies and procedures, and resources are some of the concerns highlighted in the following pages.

Communication

Communication rises to the top of the employee concerns, especially in the standard question portion of the survey. Only about one in three respondents believes that there is an effective communication process in either their program or in DSHS. Another one-third of respondents believe that communication is seldom or never effective.

▲ The communication process within DSHS is effective.

Q32a	DK 4%	Almost Never 13%	Seldom 21%	Occasionally 29%	Usually 25%	AA/A 7%

*Always or Usually = 33%**

▲ The communication process in my program is effective.

Q32b	DK 6%	Almost Never 13%	Seldom 19%	Occasionally 27%	Usually 27%	AA/A 9%

*Always or Usually = 38%**
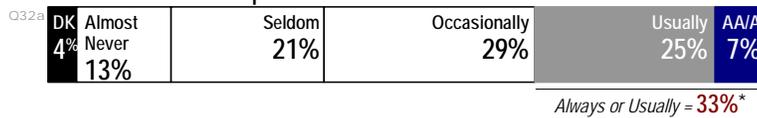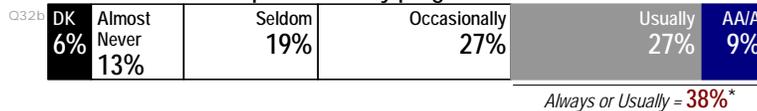
Slightly more than half of employees feel that their manager or supervisor communicates well about DSHS objectives and how well the department is doing – although, in both cases, scores have improved from the 2000 survey.

▲ My manager/supervisor keeps me well informed about how DSHS is doing.
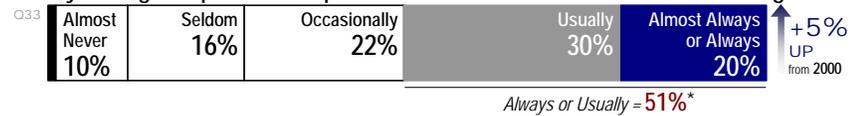
Q33	Almost Never 10%	Seldom 16%	Occasionally 22%	Usually 30%	Almost Always or Always 20%	+5% UP from 2000

*Always or Usually = 51%**

▲ My manager/supervisor communicated DSHS objectives to me.

Q34	Almost Never 10%	Seldom 13%	Occasionally 19%	Usually 31%	Almost Always or Always 25%	+4% UP from 2000

*Always or Usually = 57%**

* This percentage excludes "Don't Know" responses. The colored bar shows the percentages of all respondents including "Don't Know" responses.

Advancement, hiring and recognition

Survey respondents made it very clear that they want to be recognized for a job well done – both through employee recognition and through opportunities for advancement. Personnel policies were an area of concern, surfacing in both the standard questions and the narrative responses. Less than half indicated that advancement is based on merit or that DSHS has an effective hiring process. More than one third believe that advancement is "seldom" or "almost never" based on merit. There has, however, been some positive movement in this area. The percentage feeling that DSHS has an effective process for identifying candidates for open positions has increased by 4 percent since the 2000 survey.

◤ In my workgroup, advancement is based on merit.

Q14	Don't Know 16%	Almost Never 22%	Seldom 15%	Occasion 13%	Usually 19%	Almost Always 15%

Always or Usually = **41%** *
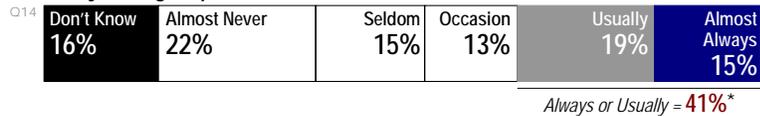
◤ DSHS has effective process for identifying candidates for open positions.

Q42	Don't Know 16%	Almost Never 14%	Seldom 14%	Occasionally 16%	Usually 22%	Almost Always or Always 18%

+4% UP from 2000

Always or Usually = **48%** *
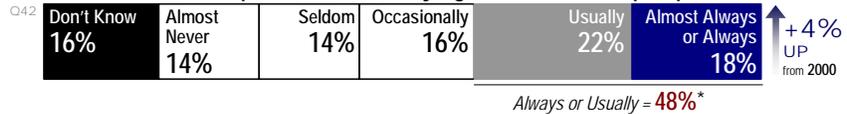
Recognition of accomplishments is one of the Balanced ScoreCard measures included in the employee survey because it is a concern for DSHS management. About half of the respondents felt that their accomplishments and contributions are recognized, while almost one third said that performance improvements are seldom or never recognized.

◤ When I improve my performance, my accomplishments are recognized. **BSC**

Q27	Almost Never 14%	Seldom 16%	Occasionally 20%	Usually 25%	Almost Always or Always 24%

Always or Usually = **50%** *

◤ Manager/supervisor recognizes us for customer satisfaction contribution.

Q28	Almost Never 11%	Seldom 14%	Occasionally 19%	Usually 26%	Almost Always or Always 28%

Always or Usually = **56%** *

BSC = Balanced ScoreCard Measure

* This percentage excludes "Don't Know" responses. The colored bar shows the percentages of all respondents including "Don't Know" responses.

Perception of senior management

The standard management questions, as well as some of the narrative comments, show that some employees feel alienated from senior management. Communication was identified as part of the problem: Only about half of the respondents felt that senior managers clearly communicate goals or explain how they measure success.

◢ Our senior managers explain how they measure the success of DSHS.

Q7	DK 6%	Almost Never 14%	Seldom 17%	Occasionally 23%	Usually 24%	Almost Always or Always 16%

Always or Usually = 42%*

◢ Our senior managers communicate clear goals for DSHS.

Q6	DK 5%	Almost Never 9%	Seldom 13%	Occasionally 22%	Usually 31%	Almost Always or Always 20%	DOWN from 2000 −9%

Always or Usually = 53%*
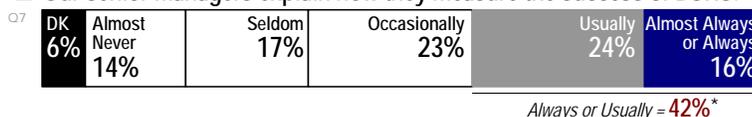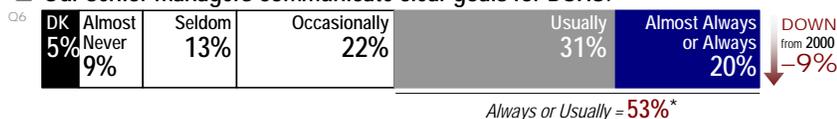
Other perceptions of senior management were more subjective, but may pose greater cause for concern. Less than half of the respondents voiced confidence in senior management decisions. Only slightly more than half felt that senior managers demonstrate DSHS values through their actions, or that senior managers care about the people in DSHS.

◢ I have confidence in the decisions made by our senior management.
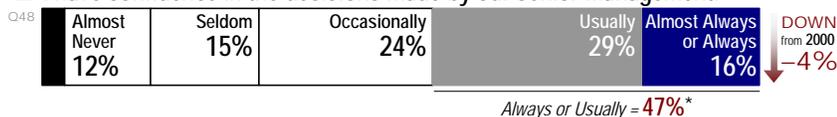
Q48	Almost Never 12%	Seldom 15%	Occasionally 24%	Usually 29%	Almost Always or Always 16%	DOWN from 2000 −4%

Always or Usually = 47%*

◢ Our senior managers demonstrate our values through their actions.

Q8	DK 7%	Almost Never 13%	Seldom 15%	Occasionally 20%	Usually 26%	Almost Always or Always 19%	DOWN from 2000 −7%

Always or Usually = 48%*

◢ Our senior managers care about the people in DSHS.

Q9	DK 9%	Almost Never 13%	Seldom 13%	Occasionally 16%	Usually 24%	Almost Always or Always 26%	DOWN from 2000 −3%

Always or Usually = 54%*
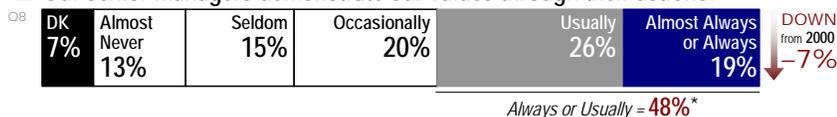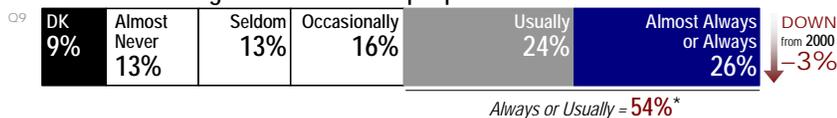
The downward trend in response to questions regarding senior management is also concerning. Ratings went down for four out of five such questions since 2000. However, these negative changes may be partially due to changes in the definition of senior management.**

**Although question wording remained unchanged from the 2000 survey to the current survey, definitions did change. The 2000 DSHS-wide survey listed this very general definition: "Senior Managers – Includes the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of DSHS, the Assistant Secretaries, and the Division Directors." The current survey allowed definitions to be tailored to the structure of individual programs. See Appendix B for further discussion of management definitions.

* This percentage excludes "Don't Know" responses. The colored bar shows the percentages of all respondents including "Don't Know" responses.

Defined goals

Many of the standard questions about DSHS goals resulted in fairly high scores, but showed a down-turn from the previous survey. More than three-quarters of the respondents could explain DSHS direction, and saw links between their work and DSHS goals. However, each of the three questions addressing DSHS goals showed a 4 to 7 percent decrease since the 2000 employee survey.

I can clearly explain to others DSHS' direction (vision, values, mission).

Q1

| Occasional 13% | Usually 35% | Almost Always or Always 39% | DOWN from 2000 −5% |

Always or Usually = 76%*

I can see a clear link between my work and DSHS goals.

Q3

| DK 4% | Occasional 13% | Usually 33% | Almost Always or Always 42% | DOWN from 2000 −7% |

Always or Usually = 78%*

My workgroup's goals are consistent with DSHS goals.

Q2

| DK 5% | Occasion 9% | Usually 32% | Almost Always or Always 48% | DOWN from 2000 −4% |

Always or Usually = 85%*
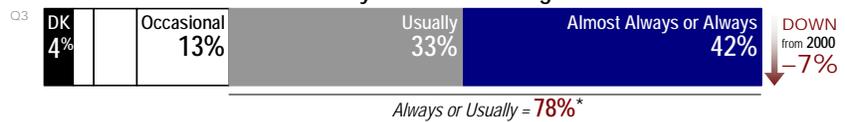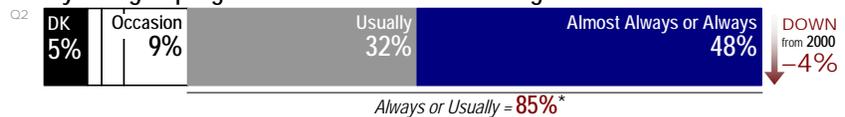
Two questions more specifically address workgroup goals to meet customer needs. Slightly more than half of the respondents reported meetings to discuss customer needs, while about two-thirds said their work group defines goals to meet such needs. More than a quarter said that their manager "seldom" or "never" meets with the workgroup to discuss customer needs. The proportion of employees reporting workplace meetings about customer needs has also decreased since the 2000 survey.

Manager/supervisor meets with us to discuss meeting customers' needs.

Q26

| Almost Never 13% | Seldom 14% | Occasionally 19% | Usually 24% | Almost Always or Always 27% |

Always or Usually = 52%*
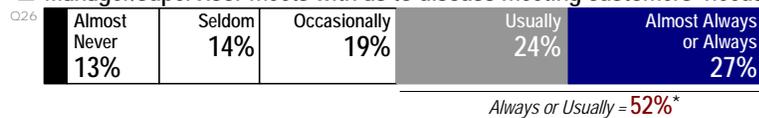
In my workgroup, we define specific goals for meeting customer needs.

Q25

| DK 4% | AN/N 7% | Seldom 10% | Occasionally 16% | Usually 30% | Almost Always or Always 33% | DOWN from 2000 −4% |

Always or Usually = 66%*

* This percentage excludes "Don't Know" responses. The colored bar shows the percentages of all respondents including "Don't Know" responses.

Scott

Accessible, useful client data

Access to and use of customer data is another issue included in the survey because the issue is important in the DSHS Balanced ScoreCard. Slightly more than half of the respondents reported having access to and using customer feedback and other client data. The most concerning finding was a 7 percent drop in the percentage of employees reporting that their workgroup uses data about the impact of services to improve services.

▲ In my workgroup, we actively seek out customer feedback.

Q23	DK 5%	Almost Never 11%	Seldom 15%	Occasionally 21%	Usually 26%	Almost Always or Always 22%

*Always or Usually = 51%**
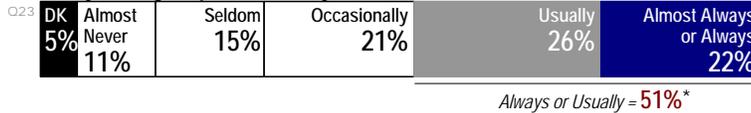
▲ My workgroup uses service impact data to improve client services. **BSC**

Q59	Don't Know 18%	Almost Never 12%	Seldom 12%	Occasionally 16%	Usually 24%	Almost Always or Always 19%

DOWN from 2000 ↓ −**7%**

*Always or Usually = 52%**
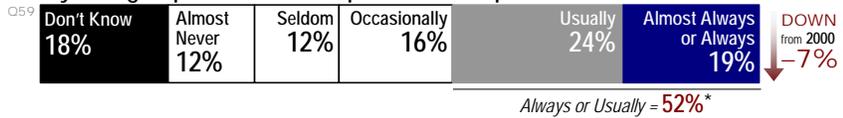
▲ Workgroup has access to data about the impact of services on clients. **BSC**

Q58	Don't Know 16%	Almost Never 10%	Seldom 10%	Occasionally 19%	Usually 26%	Almost Always or Always 20%

*Always or Usually = 54%**

▲ My workgroup uses customer feedback to improve our work processes.

Q24	DK 5%	AN/N 10%	Seldom 13%	Occasionally 20%	Usually 27%	Almost Always or Always 24%

*Always or Usually = 54%**

BSC = Balanced ScoreCard Measure

* This percentage excludes "Don't Know" responses. The colored bar shows the percentages of all respondents including "Don't Know" responses.

Policies, procedures and resources

Once again, the narrative questions revealed some opportunities for improvement that are not covered in the standard questions. One-quarter of the respondents who answered the narrative questions suggested changes to specific work policies and procedures. Most of these suggestions pertained to the individual program, rather than to DSHS as an agency. Most such concerns will be addressed at the program level.

▲ One in four who offered narrative comments suggested changes to specific work policies and procedures.
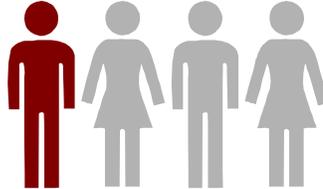
Narrative comments also contained a number of concerns about resources. One-third of the respondents wrote about some resource shortage. The most commonly addressed resources were staff, training, and pay and benefits. Facilities, equipment, and resources for clients were also mentioned.

▲ One in three commented unfavorably on some aspect of resources.

13% Staffing...
9% Training...
8% Benefits & pay...

D'Auna, Tiffany, Tela

Presentations of Survey Findings

The strengths and opportunities for improvement highlighted earlier in this report were chosen after an intensive look at a variety of reports showing the findings from the 62-question employee survey. This section focuses on the three primary perspectives used in sifting out the most important lessons from the rich mine of data.

Three main questions guided the choice to highlight certain groups of questions:

1. What questions generated the most positive and negative responses?
2. Where are the biggest changes from the 2000 employee survey?
3. What are the primary issues in the narrative comments?

Each of the three charts in this section addresses one of these questions. The first shows all 60 standard survey questions ranked from high to low. The second chart presents the biggest changes from the 2000 survey, and the third summarizes the major themes found in the narrative comments.

Additional presentations of survey findings can be found in Appendices A, C, D and E.

Ranking the Survey Questions

The first chart, on the next page, ranks all 60 standard questions from high to low, based on the percentage of employees who answered "Always or Almost Always" or "Usually" in response to each question. The highest ranked question, at the top of the chart, shows that 95 percent of DSHS employees believe they always or usually have the skills necessary for their job. On the low end of the chart, only 33 percent of the respondents indicated that the DSHS communication process is always or usually effective. The average question score* was 66 percent.

* An average of the mean score in each the eleven major question categories.

All survey questions, ranked from high to low*

Q   DSHS ▼ Average = **66%**

Question	Value
Have skills necessary to do job? (12)	95%
Skills and/or training enable me to do job well? (53)	
Co-workers treated with courtesy and respect? (52)	
Have supervisory skills needed to manage well? (Supes Only) (54)	
Manager/supervisor treats me with courtesy, respect? (51)	85%
Workgroup's goals consistent with DSHS goals? (2)	
Workgroup members cooperate to get job done? (15)	
Manager/supervisor committed to safe workplace? (49)	
Workgroup members value diversity? (40)	80%
Manager/supervisor encourages team efforts? (17)	
Workgroup members treated fairly, without discrimination? (41)	
Manager/supervisor demonstrates DSHS values? (4)	
Manager/supervisor treats people with dignity, respect? (31)	
Manager/supervisor's manager supports efforts? (38)	
Manager/supervisor delegates appropriate responsibility? (36)	
Workgroup cooperates to achieve DSHS objectives? (16)	
Have information needed to do job effectively? (35)	
Manager/supervisor supports continuous learning? (10)	
Manager/supervisor clearly expresses expectations? (5)	
Can see clear link between work and DSHS goals? (3)	
Satisfied with amount of challenges job provides? (43)	
Can clearly explain DSHS vision, values, mission? (1)	
Spirit of cooperation and teamwork within workgroup? (18)	75%
Comfortable giving manager/supervisor feedback? (21)	
Generally satisfied with job? (44)	
Manager/supervisor honors commitments? (30)	
Manager/supervisor actively encourages participation? (39)	
Work provides feeling of personal accomplishment? (46)	
Have authority to make process improvements? (37)	
Have confidence in manager/supervisor decisions? (47)	
Workgroup members speak openly and honestly? (29)	70%
Manager/supervisor committed to resolving concerns? (50)	
Workgroup defines specific goals for customer needs? (25)	
Have opportunity to learn and do new things? (13)	
Have enough time to do job? (45)	
Timely feedback on suggestions for improvement? (20)	
Manager/supervisor provides ongoing feedback? (19)	
Receive coaching from manager/supervisor? (11)	60%
Last performance evaluation helped me improve? (22)	
Manager/supervisor communicates DSHS objectives? (34)	
Manager/supervisor recognizes contributions? (28)	
Workgroup has access to data re: client services? (58)	54%
Senior managers care about DSHS employees? (9)	
Workgroup uses customer feedback to improve processes? (24)	
Senior managers communicate DSHS goals clearly? (6)	
Workgroup uses service data to improve client services? (59)	
Manager/supervisor meets with workgroup re: customers' needs? (26)	
Manager/supervisor keeps me well informed? (33)	
Workgroup actively seeks customer feedback? (23)	
Accomplishments recognized when performance improves? (27)	50%
Senior managers demonstrate values in actions? (8)	
Process effective for identifying candidates for open positions? (42)	
Am confident about senior management decisions? (48)	
Senior managers explain how success measured? (7)	
Advancement based on merit? (14)	41%
Program's communication effective? (32b)	
DSHS communication process effective?* (32a)	33%

> **Competence** and **work environment** rise to the top

> **Communication, advancement, hiring** and **recognition** lag behind

* Percent of employees answering "Always or Almost Always" or "Usually" for each standard question. "Don't Know" responses were not included in these calculations.

Comparison to 2000 survey

The results for most questions were quite similar to those from the 2000 employee survey. There were, however, some fairly large changes. The chart below shows the major changes. Interestingly, the two biggest changes in both the positive and negative directions concerned strategic planning and performance measurement. A comparison of results for all questions between the 2000 survey and the current survey can be found in Appendix C.

Changes from 2000 – Percent of Employees Answering "Always" or "Usually"

My manager/supervisor **keeps me well informed** about how DSHS is doing
My manager/supervisor **communicated DSHS objectives** to me
I receive timely feedback on my suggestions for improvement
My manager/supervisor **provides ongoing feedback that helps me improve** my performance
In DSHS, we have an **effective process for identifying candidates** for open positions
People in my workgroup **speak openly and honestly**, even when news is bad
**I get coaching** from my manager/supervisor to help me improve

| 3% | 3% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 4% | 5% |

MOST IMPROVEMENT

GREATEST DECLINE

| -9% | -7% | -7% | -7% | -5% | -4% | -4% | -4% | -4% | -4% | -3% | -3% | -3% | -3% |

In general, I am **satisfied with my job**
Manager/supervisor treats with **courtesy, respect**
Workgroup has **access to service impact data**
Senior managers care about the people in DSHS
My **workgroup defines specific goals** to meet customers' needs
The **communication process** in DSHS is effective
Manager/supervisor **demonstrates values** of DSHS through his/her actions
I have confidence in the **decisions made by our senior management**
My workgroup's goals are consistent with DSHS goals
I can clearly explain to others the direction (vision, values, mission of) DSHS
I can see a **clear link between my work and DSHS goals**
Our **senior managers demonstrate our values** through their actions
Workgroup **uses data** about the impact of our services to improve services to future clients
**Senior managers communicate clear goals** for DSHS

Major Themes from the Narrative Comments

The chart below summarizes the themes found in the narrative comments. Each survey respondent was asked two narrative questions:

- What do you like best about your current job?
- What changes would you like to see in your workplace?

The resulting answers produced 256 pages of comments, a rich and overwhelming tapestry of employee experience and perceptions.

Needs Work		Satisfied
17%	Job Characteristics	73%
14%	Co-Workers	27%
35%	Management	13%
33%	General	8%
35%	Resources	6%
21%	Communication	3%
13%	Personnel Practices	1%
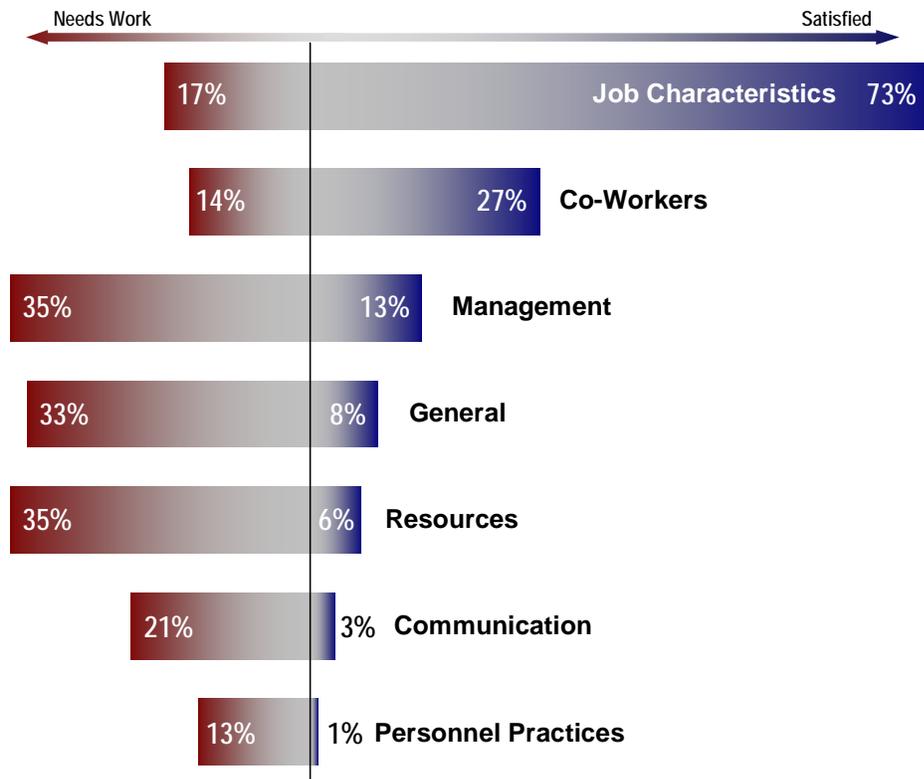
As the chart above shows, the most numerous positive comments concern job characteristics and co-workers. Of the respondents who made comments, almost three out of four (73%) made positive mention of their job characteristics and more than one out of four (27%) spoke positively of co-workers.

On the negative side, about one out of three of respondents made negative comments about management (35%); resources (35%); and general subjects, often policies and procedures (33%). Although communication and personnel practices had very low scores on the standard survey questions, these issues were less frequently mentioned in the narrative comments. Slightly more than one in five (21%) made negative comments about communication, while more than one in ten (13%) criticized personnel practices.

A more detailed summary of narrative themes and coding categories can be found in Appendices E and F.

Is management committed to resolving the concerns identified in this survey?

Most employees think so, though some aren't sure. One in five responded "don't know," but of those who did respond 70 percent said, **"YES!"**
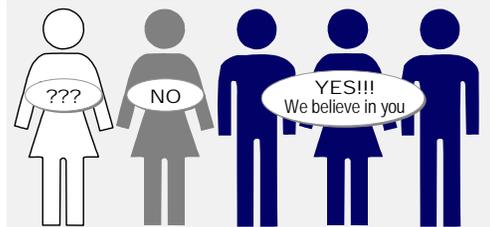
Response to the Survey

Most of the issues identified in this survey are best addressed at the program level. DSHS leaders have asked each program within DSHS do the following:

▲ Review and analyze the results of their survey

▲ Look at other sources of data that may shed further light on employee issues. Examples of other data sources include focus groups, the agency self-assessment survey, other surveys conducted within the agency, and Quality Improvement Team suggestions

▲ Formulate an action plan to address the most important issues

▲ Institute measures to assess the success of the action plan – to include a follow-up employee survey in the next two years

Because the individual program surveys that make up this DSHS Employee Survey were conducted over an extended time period, the various programs are at different stages in this process. Some programs have initiated action plans, while others are still reviewing the initial data.

Beth

Appendices

More detailed information about the survey may be found in the Appendices, listed below.

How to find the appendices:

◢ Appendix A is found on the next two pages of this document.

◢ Appendices B to F can be found online along with this report (Report Number 11.122) on the RDA website: http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/rda

An agency that cares about people . . .

Detailed Results for DSHS 2002-04 Employee Survey

All DSHS Staff (Weighted)

QUESTION	PERCENT OF ALL RESPONSES						Average *	Percent Always or Usually**
	Almost Always or Always	Usually	Occasionally	Seldom	Almost Never or Never	Don't Know		
DIRECTION							**4.14**	**79%**
Q1 I can clearly explain to others the direction (vision, values, mission of) DSHS.	39%	35%	13%	7%	4%	3%	4.00	76%
Q2 My work group's goals are consistent with DSHS goals.	48%	32%	9%	3%	2%	6%	4.29	85%
Q3 I can see a clear link between my work and DSHS goals.	42%	33%	13%	6%	3%	4%	4.10	78%
Q4 My manager/supervisor demonstrates the values of DSHS through his/her actions.	50%	26%	11%	5%	4%	4%	4.18	79%
Q5 My manager/supervisor clearly expresses work expectations to me.	50%	27%	11%	6%	5%	1%	4.13	78%
SENIOR MANAGERS							**3.29**	**50%**
Q6 Our senior managers communicate clear goals for DSHS.	20%	31%	22%	13%	9%	5%	3.41	53%
Q7 Our senior managers explain how they measure the success of DSHS.	16%	24%	23%	17%	14%	6%	3.11	42%
Q8 Our senior managers demonstrate our values through their actions.	19%	26%	20%	15%	13%	7%	3.25	48%
Q9 Our senior managers care about the people in DSHS.	26%	24%	16%	13%	13%	9%	3.40	54%
LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT							**3.80**	**67%**
Q10 My manager/supervisor supports my participation in continuous learning.	51%	25%	11%	6%	5%	2%	4.15	78%
Q11 I get coaching from my manager/supervisor to help me improve.	35%	24%	18%	12%	10%	1%	3.63	60%
Q12 I have the skills I need to do my job.	63%	32%	4%	1%	0%	0%	4.57	95%
Q13 I have the opportunity to learn and do new things in my job.	38%	26%	20%	10%	6%	0%	3.79	64%
Q14 In my work group, advancement is based on merit.	15%	19%	13%	15%	22%	16%	2.88	41%
TEAMWORK							**4.15**	**79%**
Q15 The people in my work group cooperate to get the job done.	49%	34%	10%	4%	2%	0%	4.26	84%
Q16 My work group cooperates with other work groups to achieve DSHS objectives.	41%	36%	14%	5%	2%	2%	4.11	78%
Q17 My manager/supervisor encourages us to work as a team.	56%	23%	10%	5%	5%	1%	4.22	80%
Q18 A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my work group.	44%	30%	14%	7%	5%	1%	4.03	75%
FEEDBACK							**3.68**	**63%**
Q19 My manager/supervisor gives me ongoing feedback that helps me improve my performance.	31%	29%	19%	12%	8%	0%	3.63	61%
Q20 I receive timely feedback on my suggestions for improvement.	30%	29%	17%	12%	9%	3%	3.60	61%
Q21 I am comfortable giving my manager/supervisor feedback.	47%	27%	11%	7%	8%	0%	4.00	74%
Q22 My last performance evaluation helped me to improve my job performance.	28%	23%	13%	11%	13%	12%	3.48	58%
CUSTOMER FOCUS/SERVICE							**3.48**	**56%**
Q23 In my work group, we actively seek out customer feedback.	22%	26%	21%	15%	11%	5%	3.36	51%
Q24 In my work group, we use customer feedback to improve our work processes.	24%	27%	20%	13%	10%	5%	3.44	54%
Q25 In my work group, we define specific goals for meeting the needs of our customers.	33%	30%	16%	10%	7%	4%	3.75	66%
Q26 My manager/supervisor meets with my work group to discuss how well we are meeting our customers' needs.	27%	24%	19%	14%	13%	3%	3.39	52%
RECOGNITION, TRUST & RESPECT							**3.76**	**66%**
Q27 When I improve my performance, my accomplishments are recognized.	24%	25%	20%	16%	14%	2%	3.30	50%
Q28 My manager/supervisor recognizes work groups/employees for their contribution to customer satisfaction.	28%	26%	19%	14%	11%	3%	3.48	56%
Q29 The people in my work group speak openly and honestly, even when the news is bad.	36%	33%	14%	9%	7%	1%	3.83	70%
Q30 I can depend on my manager/supervisor to honor the commitments he/she makes.	43%	30%	12%	7%	7%	2%	3.97	74%
Q31 My manager/supervisor treats people with dignity and respect.	55%	23%	10%	5%	5%	1%	4.19	79%

* Average on scale from 1 (Almost Never or Never) to 5 (Almost Always or Always) of those who gave a definitive answer. Denominator excludes "Don't Know."

** Percent of those who gave a definitive answer. Denominator excludes "Don't Know."

Detailed Results for DSHS 2002-04 Employee Survey

All DSHS Staff (Weighted)

QUESTION	PERCENT OF ALL RESPONSES						Average *	Percent Always or Usually**
	Almost Always or Always	Usually	Occasionally	Seldom	Almost Never or Never	Don't Know		
INFORMATION							**3.45**	**55%**
Q32a The communication process in DSHS is effective.***	7%	25%	29%	21%	13%	4%	2.89	33%
Q32b The communication process in my program is effective.	9%	27%	27%	19%	13%	6%	3.01	38%
Q33 My manager/supervisor keeps me well informed about how DSHS is doing.	20%	30%	22%	16%	10%	1%	3.35	51%
Q34 My manager/supervisor communicated DSHS objectives to me.	25%	31%	19%	13%	10%	2%	3.47	57%
Q35 I have the information I need to do my job effectively.	32%	45%	15%	4%	3%	1%	4.01	78%
PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT							**4.01**	**75%**
Q36 My manager/supervisor delegates the right amount of responsibility to me.	39%	38%	11%	6%	4%	1%	4.04	79%
Q37 I have the authority to make improvements to my work processes.	41%	28%	13%	8%	7%	2%	3.90	71%
Q38 My manager/supervisor's manager supports our efforts to do the right thing for our customers.	48%	29%	11%	5%	4%	3%	4.14	79%
Q39 My manager/supervisor actively encourages our participation in quality improvement activities.	44%	27%	12%	7%	6%	3%	3.97	73%
DIVERSITY							**3.85**	**69%**
Q40 In my work group, we value diversity (opinion, thought, life experiences, etc.).	50%	29%	10%	6%	4%	2%	4.18	80%
Q41 In my work group, people are treated fairly, without discrimination.	53%	26%	9%	6%	5%	1%	4.18	80%
Q42 In DSHS, we have an effective process for identifying candidates for open positions.	18%	22%	16%	14%	14%	16%	3.20	48%
JOB SATISFACTION							**3.82**	**69%**
Q43 I am satisfied with the amount of challenges my job provides.	40%	36%	13%	7%	4%	0%	4.01	76%
Q44 In general, I am satisfied with my job.	36%	38%	15%	7%	4%	0%	3.95	74%
Q45 I am given enough time to do what is expected of me on my job.	26%	35%	15%	13%	10%	0%	3.53	61%
Q46 My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment.	38%	33%	17%	7%	4%	0%	3.95	72%
Q47 I have confidence in the decisions made by my manager/supervisor.	36%	35%	15%	7%	6%	1%	3.87	71%
Q48 I have confidence in the decisions made by our senior management.	16%	29%	24%	15%	12%	3%	3.22	47%
Q49 My manager/supervisor is committed to keeping me safe in the workplace.	54%	24%	8%	5%	5%	4%	4.21	81%
Q50 My manager/supervisor is committed to resolving the concerns identified in this survey.	37%	20%	10%	7%	8%	18%	3.86	70%
WORK ENVIRONMENT							**4.43**	**88%**
Q51 My manager/supervisor treats me with courtesy and respect.	64%	21%	8%	4%	3%	0%	4.40	85%
Q52 My fellow workers treat me with courtesy and respect.	58%	33%	6%	2%	1%	0%	4.46	91%
SKILLS AND TRAINING							**4.39**	**91%**
Q53 My skills and/or training enable me to do my job well.	57%	36%	5%	1%	1%	0%	4.48	93%
Q54 I have the supervisory skills I need to manage well in DSHS. (Supervisors Only)	41%	35%	7%	1%	2%	15%	4.29	88%
OUTCOME DATA							**3.37**	**53%**
Q58 My work group has access to data about the impact our services have on clients.	20%	26%	19%	10%	10%	16%	3.42	54%
Q59 My work group uses data about the impact of our services to improve services to future clients.	19%	24%	16%	12%	12%	18%	3.32	52%
Average of first 11 Major Categories							**3.77**	**66%**

* Average on scale from 1 (Almost Never or Never) to 5 (Almost Always or Always) of those who gave a definitive answer. Denominator excludes "Don't Know."

** Percent of those who gave a definitive answer. Denominator excludes "Don't Know."

*** Q32a does not include MAA and DDD responses. These two programs were only asked 32b.

DSHS
Agency-wide
Employee Survey

Report Number 11.122

For additional
information

Persons with disabilities or special needs may call the **Research and Data Analysis Information Line** and request a hard copy:

1.360.902.0701

This document is also **available electronically** on the RDA web site www1:dshs.wa.gov/rda/

Questions or comments about the survey may be directed to **Nancy Raiha, PhD, Research and Data Analysis** at:

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