



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Actions Taken Based on Federal Employee Viewpoint
Survey (FEVS) Employee Feedback

Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)

BEA employees' dedication to collaboration and innovation is a huge part of how they make BEA a better place to work. BEA convenes Change Committees and councils, comprised of employees at all levels of the organization, to solicit additional input and to make recommendations to shape the future of OneBEA. In addition, BEA often conducts follow-up surveys, focus groups, and town hall-style events to foster collaborative management and employee engagement. Frequent messaging to staff keeps them informed of bureau happenings and contributes to an atmosphere of sharing and partnership.

Recent initiatives have focused on encouraging bureau-wide collaboration, including the offering of a OneBEA Training Program, a series of interactive sessions devoted to the roles played by each part of the bureau in meeting BEA's mission. In 2019, BEA introduced a new Individual Development Plan and conducted a Training Needs Assessment designed to identify employees' aspirations and to empower staff to take charge of their career paths and professional development. The new Diversity & Inclusion Council celebrates staff's diverse backgrounds and promotes a more inclusive work environment.

Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)

In response to FEVS results, BIS continues to focus on education efforts during FY19. BIS is solidifying training sessions in Diversity & Inclusion, Micro Triggers, and Empowerment for all employees and supervisors. BIS continues to seek employee involvement in process improvement efforts to include Tiger Teams, which are organized around major policy driven goals. These teams are comprised of BIS staff, drawn from Export Administration and Export Enforcement, who work with and report directly to the Under Secretary on these important issues. The goal is to provide direct staff input to the Under Secretary on major policy initiatives and to create team-driven synergies across BIS' entire talent base.

BIS also scheduled performance management training for supervisors and employees to help address comments regarding recognition and performance. BIS will ensure that performance plans incorporate individual development plans as part of performance plan development to ensure all employees' training needs are met. Lastly, BIS is considering inviting diversity speakers for general sessions.

Bureau of the Census (CENSUS)

In 2019, CENSUS created the Office of Employee Engagement (OEE). The OEE serves as the bureau's internal organizational development consultant, internal facilitators, and internal coaches. Additionally, OEE works with division on their FEVS results to improve overall engagement, morale, and performance. Some of the divisions OEE has worked with have established employee engagement teams and/or developed an overall proposal/strategy to improve future FEVS scores.

Economic Development Administration (EDA)

EDA finalized and announced its core organizational values: **Strategic, Engaged, Responsive, Visible in the Community, Empowering, Service Focused = SERVES**. This project was employee-driven, completed through focus groups and surveys. Everyone had the opportunity to have a voice in the selection of the values. EDA also completed an organizational health assessment, relying on FEVS results plus data from other sources. The assessment is a representation of the overall health and well-being of the organization and its workforce; it will be updated annually or when appropriate to measure progress. In addition, EDA established its Organizational Health Model of Bureau – People – Culture. Using the assessment and the model, EDA is crafting comprehensive organizational development strategies to address weaknesses, risks, and maximize strengths.



International Trade Administration (ITA)

ITA has incorporated employee feedback from the FEVS Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework to develop its Talent Management Plan. The goal of the Plan is maximizing employee performance and thereby strengthening ITA's workforce as aligned with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) priority of expanding employee development opportunities. As part of the Plan, ITA is implementing a comprehensive training needs assessment to inform priority developmental initiatives. Below are two of the opportunities for continuous professional growth and skill development under the Talent Management Plan that were the result of prior organizational assessments.

In FY 2017 and 2018, ITA successfully implemented a comprehensive leadership program and has trained over fifty GS-13 to GS-15 level leaders across ITA. In FY 2019, ITA continues to expand and improve the program to provide employees the opportunity to develop their leadership skills, in areas such as strategic planning and change management. The leadership development program includes leadership assessments, coaching, classroom and virtual training, individual development plans, and self-directed learning activities.

In the past year, ITA trained more than 20 employees under a new Internal Coach Development Program. The cadre of coaches has provided over 1,000 hours of professional coaching to more than 150 employees and will coach over 250 employees by the end of FY 2019. Due to its success, the program which began as a pilot for GS-13s has expanded to GS-5 to GS-15. The coaching focuses on developing skill-sets that can help boost employee performance, satisfaction, and career development.

Additionally, ITA has instituted consistent, monthly events to foster ITA-wide communication, collaboration, and recognition of employee accomplishments.

Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)

MBDA created an employee-led committee which reviewed and analyzed FEVS results for the last three years. The committee developed recommendations to management based on the results and trends of previous FEVS surveys. These recommendations were reviewed and supported by management. The committee proposed ideas for sustaining and enhancing employee engagement. One of the actions taken this year is the establishment of a new "Employee Pulse Survey" which is a quick and short survey that is sent to employees twice a year to monitor organizational health and satisfaction.

Additionally, MBDA created internal opportunities for details within the bureau, increased telework flexibilities, training opportunities, communication regarding agency goals and objectives, and increased accountability for staff and managers. The National Director also established monthly meetings with staff without managers to increase feedback and allow employees to be heard directly by the bureau head on a regular basis. Finally, management has also increased employee performance recognition through greater use of on the spot awards which include gift cards and time off.

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

NIST values the employee feedback received through the FEVS and is taking active steps to increase response rates across divisions. For example, the Engineering Laboratory (EL) Associate Director explained how EL uses FEVS data. For the past four years, EL has conducted extensive analysis on their data and has focused on employee engagement and other indices at the division levels. One of the challenges with the data at the division level is that there is a margin of error between 8% and 18% due

to the relatively small number in the pool of potential respondents. The more employees who complete the survey, the lower the margin of error. Therefore, getting actionable data at the division level is completely dependent on a high percentage of respondents.

One of the initiatives that EL senior management undertook was to interview every EL employee. The EL Deputy Director and Associate Director conducted a deep dive and spoke to every EL federal employee, and associates that were interested in talking to them. These discussions lasted between 15 minutes and 3 ½ hours. During the open-discussion, employees were asked:

- What's going well?
- What challenges do you have?
- What one thing would you change if you were 'Director for a Day'?

Because of this effort, the number of survey responses in EL have increased, and each division has a specific change implementation plan.

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

To enhance and improve work/life balance flexibilities, NTIA convened a team of employees and a team of supervisors to analyze existing and potential issues with NTIA's Telework Program. The teams were tasked with developing best practices recommendations for NTIA's senior management. The recommendations were approved and implemented, strengthening NTIA's Telework Program, and improving recruitment and retention efforts within NTIA. In addition, NTIA began efforts on updating the NTIA work schedule policy, which includes revisions to flex and compressed work schedules.

NTIA instituted a new Onboarding Guide which assists new NTIA employees and their supervisors with the onboarding process. The guide is intended to improve the overall onboarding experience and encourage employee retention and job satisfaction. The NTIA Diversity & Inclusion Council hosted informational sessions for employees to educate and increase awareness of diversity and inclusion topics. NTIA also provided training to its supervisors and managers on veteran employment and disabled veterans hiring using the various hiring authorities. This training emphasized the importance of knowing the different policies and employment rules for Veterans and other persons with disabilities.

As a result of feedback received from FEVS, FirstNet developed business unit action plans; increased communications across unit regarding various initiatives; developed a core and leadership competency model and guide; delivered leader/supervisor training and employee training; developed succession plans for the organization; and offered the Professional Development Employee Training Series composed of nine customized training courses scheduled to be offered twice throughout FY19.

Office of the Secretary (OS)

Acknowledging the importance of employee engagement, OS Office of Human Resources Management developed an Employee Engagement (EE) Team to develop and implement employee engagement strategies to motivate, inspire, and retain OS OHRM employees. Activities/initiatives include monthly celebrations to recognize birthdays, farewells, and Federal service milestones; monthly Peer Recognition Awards Program recognizing employees nominated by their peers for going above and beyond; "Employee of the Quarter" and "Employee of the Year" awards; and individual development sessions (i.e. Toastmasters presentation) to name a few. The EE Team has received a lot of positive feedback from OS OHRM employees including ideas on how to improve the program, which will be considered as future strategies are developed.

Over the last year, OS Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has taken several positive steps to address the FEVS 2017 and 2018 results. One example is the adoption of a team member's idea to launch a survey that would enable all team members to electronically recommend initiatives aimed at addressing FEVS items with the lowest positive perception scores. Staff voted on all the submissions and the five with the highest votes were implemented. One initiative was a team offsite where OCR staff re-affirmed the office's mission statement and established core values. Subsequently, OCR staff started utilizing an automated tool available on the WIN Insights website, to help measure and ensure staff's behaviors are aligned with OCR's core values.

Further, in February 2019, OCR developed a plan to address five of the lowest scoring questions for OCFO/ASA, OCR's parent organization. OCR Staff are currently developing practical strategies to improve the scores related to these questions, as well as explore ways to improve OCR staff participation in the FEVS. For example, one strategy that has moved forward is to re-invigorate the use of Individual Development Plans (IDPs) in OCR. IDPs will be promoted as a way to engage employee/supervisor discussions relating to assessing training needs. This directly relates to FEVS question 18. OCR staff will continue to implement, document and monitor additional strategies to address the five FEVS questions over the next several months.

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)

The FEVS is one survey among the many tools that USPTO utilizes to seek employee insight. Some successful initiatives as a result of employee feedback, include: bringing more than 700 remotely located patent examiners to headquarters to network with colleagues and supervisors face-to-face during Patents Training at Headquarters (PaTH) events; establishing single sign-on for the new Learning Center; the new Trademarks Engage! SharePoint site, featuring information on career development, USPTO community events, and agency communications; and the 2016 Innovation Challenge.

Most recently, USPTO held a lunch-and-learn session on student debt as a direct result of employee feedback gathered from tools like the FEVS. A representative from the Department of Education spoke to approximately 300 USPTO employees about a variety of federal student loan repayment and forgiveness programs. USPTO also responded to employee feedback by arranging to have food trucks visit the Alexandria campus every Wednesday from June to October. A different group of trucks comes to campus each week; employees can check a dedicated Twitter handle or the USPTO intranet page for updates.