

U.S. Department of Commerce

Actions Taken in Response to the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)

Based on survey feedback and in light of BEA's upcoming relocation to the Suitland Federal Center, the bureau updated their alternative work schedule (AWS) policy. Revisions to the policy included the addition of the 4/10 compressed work schedule and the variable week schedule. The new schedules and other AWS revisions, will contribute to BEA's work/life balance in the new location.

BEA convened a Change Committee to investigate and make recommendations on improving work/life balance and recruitment and retention efforts within the bureau. The Change Committee is investigating telework and AWS needs and potential barriers in order to make recommendations on how to improve work/life flexibilities within the bureau. The Change Committee is also looking at various recruitment and retention efforts in order to ensure BEA is able to attract, recruit, engage, develop, and retain top talent while developing a culture of innovation, engagement, and collaboration.

Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS)

BIS collaborated with the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) office to conduct two brown bag lunch sessions to train and educate managers and first line supervisors about the benefits of using the EAP. The EAP representative discussed services that may assist managers and supervisors with the improvement of staff performance, which could be affected by the employee's personal situations and concerns. The counselor described signs to look for in an employee's productivity, attendance, and conduct that should be addressed, as they may indicate personal issues affecting satisfactory performance. Supervisors and managers were provided EAP pamphlets to share with their staff members that discuss how EAP can help the employee, family member, supervisors, and managers, providing a confidential place to take one's concerns.

Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Council members from BIS selected a contractor to provide D&I training for its leadership and employees. The Under Secretary provided an introduction at the beginning of each session to stress the importance of D&I at BIS. Virtual training was made available for all field office staff. There were two leadership sessions for supervisory participants and 4 general sessions for non-supervisory participants. A total of 197 BIS staff members participated in the six sessions that were offered.

Bureau of the Census (CENSUS)

CENSUS is extending flex-time hours to enable employees who arrive later due to traffic or personal issues the opportunity to work later to make up the time. The bureau is also expanding telework options, where employees will have the option to telework up to four days per week. Employees who are approved to telework four days a week may have to share a desk with another employee.

CENSUS has an extensive leaders lead program that trains managers on numerous topics, including employee engagement. The program provides a standard approach to training leaders so that they can help employees execute individual goals that are aligned with the overall organizational goals; and

ensure they are effectively sharing the responsibility in this endeavor. Managers can make a positive difference in an employee's performance by helping them understand organizational needs and encouraging everyone across the Census Bureau to successfully achieve these goals together.

Economic Development Administration (EDA)

A couple of years ago, EDA established the OPM Executive Core Qualifications as the baseline for all EDA employees. These leadership competencies have been designed into each employee's Professional Development Guide. Last year EDA hired its first Chief Learning Officer who has created a comprehensive leadership development program. As part of this program, EDA has entered into a contract with Gallup to offer its StrengthFinders self-assessment to all EDA employees and provide executive coaching services, including OPM's 360 degree evaluation, to GS-14s and above. A Gallup-led team building workshop will also be offered to all EDA employees immediately prior to EDA's National Conference. Additionally, EDA initiated "True Colors: Keys to Personal and Professional Success Workshops" that unite self-assessment and how employees manage change. The workshop is being presented at Headquarters and to the Regional Offices for all employees as part of a comprehensive Leadership Development strategy to grow leaders at all levels. Follow-up growth activities building on this base are being planned.

EDA has made leading change a strategic focus. Within the past five years, EDA has hired two employees whose primary duties revolve around organizational development and process improvement. Two years ago, EDA contracted with the Partnership for Public Service for guidance through the GE Workout Process to create new models for doing business. As a result, EDA involved a cross-functional team of employees to fundamentally update its grants management process and change the processing cycle. More recently, EDA entered a contract to assess EDA's change readiness; identify barriers and develop methods of overcoming/mitigating challenges; develop an implementation plan; and develop long-term recommendations to sustain a major change in EDA's operational strategy. Identifying that internal communication is a critical element of any change strategy, EDA has hired an internal communications specialist to establish communication practices and protocols and serve as a resource to leadership and others working on projects that have bureau-wide impact.

EDA's six regional offices have identical business lines, yet utilize the same grades and series in different ways. These variations have been raised as concerns at the Labor Management Council, during post-FEVS focus groups and during the aforementioned GE Workout Process. Contributing to these variations have been the bureau's hiring practices and different grant processing models and assignment of duties. To reduce variations and create greater equity across EDA, the regions are now coordinating on hiring documents in order to fill several positions from a single announcement. The Office of Regional Affairs (ORA) reviews and validates or modifies hiring documents to improve standardization. For the recent hiring announcement on new positions established by Headquarters, ORA collaborated with the regional offices to create a standard hiring process. Each region will select the top candidates based on the same competencies, and interviews will be conducted using the identical questions. In addition, standard grant processing organizational models will be implemented across the regions.

Economics and Statistics Administration (ESA)

To mitigate the impacts of the building's renovation on ESA employees, the bureau developed an integration model that best benefits their business processes across ESA while ensuring organizational identity remained intact. The Herbert C. Hoover Building's renovation schedule impacted the relatively small ESA community over three different phases of the renovation plan. By consolidating and upgrading the bureau's office spaces, they were able to limit the impact to a single phase. The new space configuration and employee participation in workstation design, fundamentally improved

employees' office experience, providing employees with an optimal, collaborative work environment that allowed sub-organizations to retain their identity and culture.

Additionally, due to recent events, ESA held all-hands open-discussion forums to understand employee anxiety over perceived physical security shortcomings and to address all employee concerns and fears. Based on the direct employee feedback, ESA arranged for employees to attend physical security training and awareness sessions, organized building tours, and provided sessions with physical security experts.

Lastly, during a period of significant leadership change, ESA maintained open communication, holding regular all-hands information sessions throughout the transition. The staggered approach to leadership change helped minimize operational disruption and reduced negative impact on employees.

International Trade Administration (ITA)

ITA senior leadership held ITAStat sessions using data to drive open conversations about organizational-wide priorities, such as the "Trade and Investment" priority area of the Department's FY 2014-2018 Strategic Plan. ITA's senior leadership team uses the stat session as a tool to communicate transparently about organizational priorities, metrics, and to engage employees in identifying areas of development and key strategies to help drive performance.

ITA continued to utilize the ITA Project Share initiative, a platform that enables employees to participate in a variety of projects throughout the organization. The opportunities allow employees to expand their skillsets and organizational knowledge, to increase collaboration with colleagues throughout ITA, and to enhance their career development.

ITA employees led organizational improvements through three different initiatives. One of the initiatives is ITA's "Be the Change" Council, which was created by employees to empower staff-led improvements in their work environment. The Council addresses issues that ITA employees raise and FEVS results highlight in order to drive employees' achievements of ITA's mission. Council members designed and developed wikITA to serve as an online encyclopedia for administrative topics of interest to ITA employees, enhancing employee access to useful information impacting their day-to-day work.

ITA employees are also undertaking the ITA Vision 2020 Planning. An employee-led group is working to assess ITA's current and potential future operational and organizational strategies by engaging with other ITA employees, customers, and stakeholders about ITA's future direction. The team is conducting a systematic review to help identify the future needs of ITA's customers, ITA's role in the international trading system, and its contribution to US policymaking.

Lastly, an ITA employee-led team is planning and carrying out an annual "ITA Day," a day of learning and engagement for ITA employees. "ITA Day" was created by employees in order to strengthen the organization's commitment to its people, activities, goals, and missions.

Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)

MBDA implemented two Employee Tiger Teams targeted at encouraging high performance and improving motivational leadership. MBDA also held monthly all-hands meetings to improve communications and implemented an agency-wide suggestion box for employee feedback.

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

NIST led an effort to recognize and reward outstanding customer support and innovation from staff in NIST's Management Resources directorate also known as the Director's Recognition for Excellence in Mission Support. NIST also offered the Colleague's Choice Innovations in Measurement Science, an

open innovation ideation effort that allows NIST technical staff to crowdsource projects for NIST's high-risk, high-reward research portfolio. Lastly, through the Director's NIST Fellows Postdoc Program, each Fellow is now endowed with a postdoctoral researcher of their choice to help them take on a new research challenge of the Fellow's choice.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

NOAA's National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS) utilized the 2015 FEVS results in the development of their strategic human capital planning efforts. With leadership support and guidance, NESDIS developed strategic "People Goals" to address specific areas of concern identified in the survey results. The developed goals focused on workforce training and development, workforce management, and collaboration and shared resource culture.

NOAA's Workforce Management Office (WFMO) continued using an internal Tiger Team to address FEVS areas of concern and update WFMO's leadership on the results of actions taken. As a result of the 2015 FEVS survey findings, WFMO began an extensive communications effort, established additional Tiger Teams, and held employee focus groups and retreats to develop action plans to address high priority FEVS areas of concerns.

NOAA's WFMO reviewed the 2015 FEVS results and noticed there are opportunities for improvement to the question *My work unit is able to recruit people with the right skills*. The office developed new methods for assessing applicants, as well as piloting internal promotion processes, to target required skill sets and to provide hiring managers with candidates who are a better fit with the needs of the NOAA mission, while also increasing retention of current employees.

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

NTIA held an off-site for all supervisors focused on meeting 2016 priorities, reinforcing coaching training, identifying barriers to meeting goals, and obtaining personal commitments to improve the bureau. NTIA's senior leadership set up a team to develop recommendations on how to instill a coaching culture throughout the organization.

Additionally, NTIA held monthly brown-bag discussions focusing on different NTIA program areas and activities, and engaging with staff to better define and address issues of creating an environment that rewards creativity and innovation. NTIA also launched a bi-weekly "Inside NTIA" Newsletter to keep staff informed of the important work being performed in the agency and other internal matters.

Moreover, NTIA launched a "Spotlight on NTIA" blog series highlighting the work that NTIA employees are doing to advance NTIA's mission and leadership held quarterly all-hands meetings to increase communication regarding agency goals and activities.

National Technical Information Service (NTIS)

As a way of creating new or different approaches to communication, NTIS has established an Innovation and Communications Committee with at least one non-supervisory staff member representing each office. The Committee serves as a forum for employees to share their ideas, perceptions and recommendations in critical areas regarding NTIS, its operations, and leadership.

NTIS senior leadership began a recognition effort, to show appreciation to the employees, teams, and offices for outstanding performance and achievements. Nominations are open to all employees. Each office submits a nomination for Employee of the Month and, if appropriate, Team/Office of the Month. Senior leaders select and announce those recipients monthly. Certificates, special acts, cash awards, or nominal gifts are presented at all-hands meetings, office events, and social agency gatherings

throughout the year. Employee and Team/Office of the Year are selected annually and certificates are presented at the Employee Recognition Day in October.

Office of Inspector General (OIG)

OIG conducts/provides monthly all-hands meetings, peer-to-peer communication meetings among supervisors, opportunities for cross-teaming, meetings between staff and top leadership, and cross-unit meetings designed to create opportunities to collaborate and foster a greater sense of community. Brown bag gatherings for staff to share information are also conducted.

OIG conducted an additional in-house survey for the lowest scoring 2015 FEVS questions in order to develop an in-depth and useful FY16 action plan. OIG will be implementing a number of activities to address feedback received to include, launching a mechanism to solicit employee solutions, improving help desk ticket / survey technology, improving office recognition for staff implementing new ideas or solutions, and providing additional information on operational processes and points of contact.

OIG is also further involving staff in reviewing internal policies and procedures and will be providing trainings based on key revisions. As part of this process, they will also form a team of OIG staff to research, design, propose, and implement an awards program to better recognize staff.

Office of the Secretary (OS)

The OS Office of Chief Information Office established the OEC to support FEVS efforts. The OEC is a diverse group of non-management employees from all operating units within OCIO. Concrete recommendations are submitted to the OCIO leadership for workforce improvement initiatives and collaborative workplace solutions to address the FEVS results for OCIO employees.

OCIO is conducting action planning workshops through a series of employee listening sessions. Employees are engaged in the decision-making process by gathering together to discuss root causes of the low FEVS scores, brainstorm potential solutions, and provide input into OCIO's workplace improvement plan in targeted areas.

OCIO also established four employee-led improvement teams in the following targeted areas: Employee Rewards and Recognition; Process Improvement; Employee Training and Talent Development; and Leaders Lead.

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO)

The Commissioner of Patents at USPTO created a Patents Employment Engagement Team (PEET) which created a dynamic training video to raise the level of consciousness on the topic of engagement for Patent managers. In addition, placards, entitled "Stay Connected, Stay Engaged" were provided to Patent managers as a daily reminder that Patents managers **CARE (Connect, Achieve, Respect, & Empower)**.

USPTO implemented the Office of the Ombudsman Pilot, a safe, confidential place to raise and address issues, conflicts, and concerns regarding any aspect of the organization's functioning, including those for which there are no relevant guidelines. The Office of the Ombudsman Pilot deals with concerns about fairness in the administration of policies, the enactment of practices, and the conduct of relationship among members of the organization. The pilot is a complement to, not a substitute for, other mechanisms in the organization.