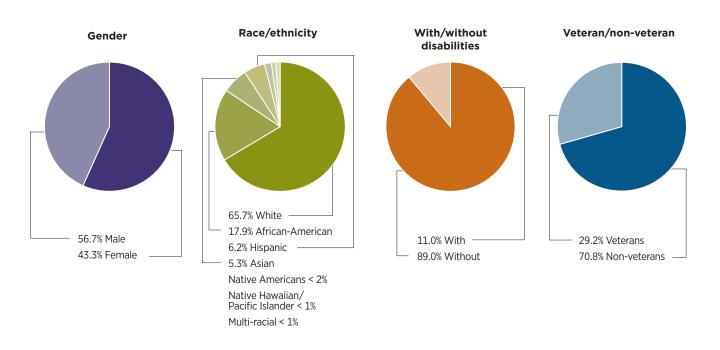BEST PLACES TO WORK IN THE
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT® ANALYSIS

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

U.S. demographics are shifting, with the federal government serving a more diverse population than ever before. For our government to effectively meet the nation's challenges, the workforce must reflect the rich diversity and varied viewpoints of the American people. This necessitates creation of inclusive work environments that welcome and support employees from all backgrounds, a goal that can help agencies promote job satisfaction, improve organizational performance and better achieve their missions.

As part of our *Best Places to Work in the Federal Government®* analysis of 2012 federal employee survey data, the Partnership for Public Service and Deloitte examined how men and women, different racial and ethnic groups, veterans and employees with disabilities perceived the workplace. This analysis focuses on three of 10 workplace categories: effective leadership—the most important factor related to employee satisfaction; support for diversity—an important measure to understand perspectives of demographic groups; and each demographic group's overall satisfaction with their work and organization.

FIGURE 1
Demographics of the federal workforce as of September 2011

Gender

56.7% Male
43.3% Female

Race/ethnicity

65.7% White
17.9% African-American
6.2% Hispanic
5.3% Asian
Native Americans < 2%
Native Hawaiian/
Pacific Islander < 1%
Multi-racial < 1%

**With/without
disabilities**

11.0% With
89.0% Without

Veteran/non-veteran

29.2% Veterans
70.8% Non-veterans

The data provided a number of insights, including showing that women felt less empowered in the workplace than men and that Asian employees had the highest levels of job satisfaction. In addition, we found little difference in the viewpoints of veterans and nonveterans, but employees with disabilities expressed less favorable views of their work environment than their colleagues who did not report a disability.

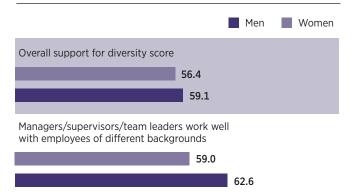## Men Reported Greater Workplace Fairness and Empowerment Than Women

Government-wide, there was little difference between men (64.3 on a scale of 100) and women (63.9) in the overall *Best Places to Work* index in 2012, a rating that is based on three questions from the Office of Personnel Management's Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. The questions explored whether employees would recommend their organization as a good place to work, and how satisfied they are with their job and organization.

However, a look beyond overall scores revealed larger differences in perceptions of men and women regarding some aspects of the workplace, in particular agency leadership effectiveness. The gender gap on views of leadership narrowed in 2011, but grew in 2012. On two of the four topics that comprise the *Best Places to Work* effective leadership category—empowerment and fairness—women scored about four points lower than men (See Appendix A).

The largest male-female gap regarding leadership centered on employee perceptions of fairness. Women, for example, scored five points lower than men when asked if they felt comfortable disclosing violations of laws,

rules or regulations without fear of reprisal. On the issue of whether arbitrary action, personal favoritism and coercion were tolerated, women rated their leaders about four points lower than men did (See Appendix B).

Viewpoints Varied by Agency

At the agency level, the data revealed larger disparities between men and women. For example, women scored nearly four points lower in the *Best Places to Work* index score than men at the Department of Labor and the Department of the Army. In contrast, women scored 13.1 points higher than men at the Federal Election Commission (FEC). However, the job satisfaction scores for both men and women at the FEC were well below those of the federal government overall. At the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Treasury, the differences were negligible.

Men Report Greater Support for Diversity Than Women

When looking at the support for diversity category—which gauges employee views of how well they think their agency does in supporting diversity in the workplace—women were less satisfied than men by 2.7 points (See below or see Appendix A). The largest gender gap on diversity issues centered on the question asking how well employees felt supervisors and managers worked with employees of different backgrounds. Women rated their supervisors and managers 3.6 points lower than did men, indicating some room for managers, team leaders, and supervisors to grow in this area (See Appendix B).

Asian Employees Had Higher Satisfaction Scores Than Other Minorities, Whites

In 2012, Asian employees registered the highest overall satisfaction score (68.8 out of 100) among all racial and ethnic groups, followed by black or African-American, Hispanic or Latino, and white employees, who all registered nearly identical scores that were about four points lower (See Table 1). New to the rankings were Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders, who scored 62.9 or 2.1 points above the government-wide *Best Places to Work* index score of 60.8. Native American and multi-racial employees continued to have overall satisfaction scores below the government-wide mark. They also scored lower on issues of empowerment and fairness in the workplace.

FIGURE 2
2012 scores in support for diversity by gender

■ Men ■ Women

Overall support for diversity score
Women: 56.4
Men: 59.1

Managers/supervisors/team leaders work well with employees of different backgrounds
Women: 59.0
Men: 62.6

TABLE 1

2012 racial/ethnic group scores on Best Places to Work index, effective leadership and support for diversity

	GOVERNMENT-WIDE	ASIAN	BLACK/ AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC/ LATINO	WHITE	HAWAIIAN/ PACIFIC ISLANDER	AMERICAN INDIAN OR NATIVE AMERICAN	MULTI-RACIAL
Best Places to Work Index	60.8	**68.8**	64.9	64.4	64.4	62.9	58.3	**56.9**
Effective Leadership	52.8	**60.9**	55.3	54.5	55.7	53.9	**47.9**	48.5
Empowerment	45.8	**57.0**	50.1	48.2	47.8	49.4	44.4	**40.5**
Fairness	53.0	**58.5**	50.1	52.6	56.0	52.2	**45.2**	**45.2**
Senior Leaders	46.7	**57.7**	51.7	50.1	49.2	49.3	43.5	**42.9**
Supervisors	62.3	**67.4**	64.0	62.9	66.1	61.5	**55.3**	59.6
Support for Diversity	55.5	**61.1**	53.9	55.7	60.1	53.7	**48.4**	51.7

The biggest difference between the highest and the lowest scores for racial and ethnic groups involved the issue of workplace empowerment. On this issue, Asians recorded a score of 57.0 compared to 40.5 for multi-racial employees, almost a 17-point difference.

Disparities also existed regarding how different racial or ethnic groups felt about their agency's support for diversity. Asian employees recorded the highest scores among racial or ethnic groups in support for diversity and scored more than 12 points higher than American Indian or Native American employees (See Table 1). On a question asking if supervisors and team leaders worked well with employees of different backgrounds, almost 64 percent of white employees answered positively. On the other hand, employees in multiple minority groups, including African-Americans, Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, multi-racial and Native Americans rated their supervisors and managers at least eight points lower on this question.

Veterans Nearly as Satisfied as Non-veterans

For the first time since the *Best Places to Work* rankings were issued, we were able to analyze the workforce data comparing veterans with non-veteran employees. The 2012 rankings found that in the aggregate, veterans, who comprise 29.2 percent of the total federal workforce, rated their overall satisfaction about the same as their non-veteran colleagues (See Figure 3). Veterans recorded a score of 63.1 out of 100, while the non-veterans score was 64.7.
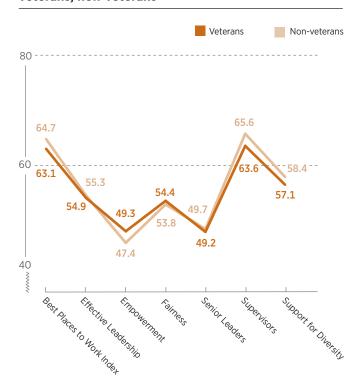
At some agencies, however, veterans expressed lower satisfaction than their non-veteran colleagues. Veterans scored lower by 9.6 points at the Federal Trade Commission, by 9.1 at the Securities and Exchange Commission, by 8.3 at the Federal Communications Commission and

by 7.4 at the Department of Commerce. At the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and a handful of other agencies, veterans scored higher than non-veterans.

On issues dealing with perceptions of leadership and support for diversity, there was little overall difference in satisfaction between veterans and non-veterans. Veterans rated their agencies higher than non-veterans in the areas of empowerment and fairness, while non-veterans rated senior leaders slightly higher than did veterans.

FIGURE 3

2012 Best Places to Work scores for job satisfaction, effective leadership and support for diversity by veterans, non-veterans

The largest gap between the two groups involved their satisfaction with direct supervisors, where non-veterans scored two points higher. Regarding support for diversity, non-veteran employees rated their workplace 1.3 points higher than veterans.

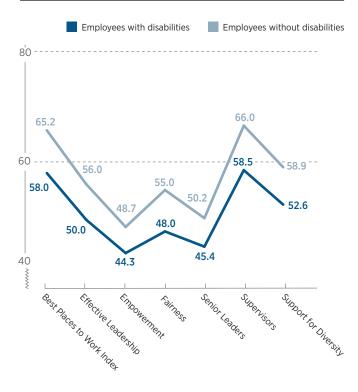## Employees with Disabilites Held More Negative Views of the Workplace Than Their Colleagues

Also new to the *Best Places to Work* rankings is data for employees with disabilities. Federal workers with disabilities were less satisfied overall (58.0) with their workplace than those without disabilities by a 7.2-point margin and their scores were lower regarding their view of leadership and the four leadership subcategories used in our rankings (See Figure 4). On the leadership issues of fairness and satisfaction with supervisors, employees with disabilities had scores that were seven or more points lower than workers without disabilities.

Employees with disabilities also responded less favorably than their colleagues without disabilities when asked about diversity issues (See Table 2). Only a little more than half of employees with disabilities felt their managers worked well with people of different backgrounds,

FIGURE 4

2012 Best Places to Work scores for employees with disabilities and employees without disabilities on job satisfaction, effective leadership and support for diversity

and even fewer (less than 50 percent) felt that policies and programs promoted diversity in the workplace.

There were a number of agencies reflecting the government-wide trend of employees with disabilities scoring lower than employees without disabilities. Those with the biggest gaps were the National Credit Union Administration (-18.3 points), the Department of State (-14.7), the United States Agency for International Development (-14.5) and the Department of Commerce (-14.3).

TABLE 2

2012 percentage of positive responses for employees with disabilities on support for diversity questions

	EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES	EMPLOYEES WITHOUT DISABILITIES
Policies and programs promote diversity in the workplace (for example, recruiting minorities and women, training in awareness of diversity issues, mentoring)	47.7	53.9
My supervisor/team leader is committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society.	55.1	60.6
Managers/supervisors/team leaders work well with employees from different backgrounds	55.0	62.1

Conclusion and Recommendations

The survey data highlighted some variations in how men and women, veterans, employees with disabilities and those from different racial and ethnic groups experience the federal workplace. In addition, we found the perceptions of these groups differed by agency on a range of issues, presenting leaders with a responsibility to explore the survey data and ensure employees work in an environment that values different views and an inclusive organizational culture. In this regard, agencies can take a number of proven steps that draw on leading insights from both the public and private sectors:

Analyze Agency Data and Use It to Drive Decision-making

➡ Analyze agency employee survey data to determine if there are differences in perception among employees based on gender, veterans' status, disability, race and ethnicity. If there are differences, follow up by asking for employee feedback through individual interviews or focus groups. Use this data to determine what activities should be developed and implemented to align and improve employee perceptions across different agency populations. Remember to balance quick wins with longer-term solutions.

Establish a Shared Vision, Shared Values and Practices Among Agency Leaders

➤ Align senior leaders around a common message of diversity and inclusion, and connect its importance to the accomplishment of the agency's mission.

➤ Hold managers accountable for following through on agency diversity and inclusion plans by incorporating specific reference to their responsibilities in their performance standards and ensure that their performance against those standards is reviewed, using the relevant federal employee survey data as one measure of progress over time.

➤ Provide supervisors and managers with additional data, support in conducting localized surveys, and training or coaching on how to build and effectively manage a diverse workforce.

Actively Recruit and Develop a Diverse Workforce

➤ Ensure that all interested employees have an equal opportunity to benefit from mentors, coaching and leadership development.

➤ Actively challenge agency managers to mentor and coach someone new and check-in with them regularly, making it a part of their periodic check-in meetings.

➤ Reach out to highly qualified individuals from underrepresented groups in agency recruitment efforts, particularly when using student internship and fellowship programs.

Build a Culture of Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

➤ Support employee participation in affinity groups or resource groups that offer an opportunity to network, address common issues and concerns and receive support from those who share similar backgrounds, experiences or interests.

➤ Create opportunities that help people identify and celebrate commonalities, such as shared organizational values and commitment to the mission, through townhall meetings and employee recognition programs.

As the federal government continues to serve a more diverse population, it will be increasingly important for agency leaders and managers to foster an inclusive workplace that inspires and rewards diverse views and thinking. Progress will occur when leaders take greater personal responsibility and accountability, when diversity is more fully incorporated in recruiting and hiring, and when employees from diverse backgrounds have increased access to career development opportunities.

Overall Best Places to Work index, effective leadership, and support for diversity scores by gender in 2012, 2011, and 2010

	2012			2011			2010		
SCORES	WOMEN	MEN	GAP	WOMEN	MEN	GAP	WOMEN	MEN	GAP
Best Places to Work Index	63.9	64.3	-0.4	67.1	66.4	0.6	66.1	67.9	-1.8
Effective Leadership	53.8	56.2	-2.4	56.2	57.2	-1.0	54.6	57.1	-2.5
Empowerment	46.0	49.6	-3.6	49.2	51.3	-2.1	48.1	52.5	-4.4
Fairness	51.6	55.8	-4.2	53.2	56.6	-3.4	51.4	56.0	-4.6
Senior Leaders	48.9	50.0	-1.1	52.3	51.2	1.1	50.9	50.6	0.3
Supervisors	63.7	65.8	-2.1	65.2	66.6	-1.4	63.2	66.6	-3.4
Support for Diversity	56.4	59.1	-2.7	58.9	60.6	-1.7	57.3	59.6	-2.3

Percentage of positive responses to empowerment, fairness and support for diversity questions by gender in 2012 and 2011

CATEGORY	QUESTION	2012			2011		
		WOMEN	MEN	GAP	WOMEN	MEN	GAP
Effective Leadership-Empowerment	Employees have a feeling of personal empowerment with respect to work processes	42.2	46.3	-4.1	45.8	48.7	-2.9
	How satisfied are you with your involvement in decisions that affect your work?	49.9	53.0	-3.1	52.5	53.9	-1.4
	I can disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule or regulation without fear of reprisal	56.4	61.2	-4.8	57.9	62.0	-4.1
	Arbitrary action, personal favoritism and coercion for partisan political purposes are not tolerated	46.7	50.4	-3.7	48.5	51.1	-2.7
Support for Diversity	Policies and programs promote diversity in the workplace (for example, recruiting minorities and women, training in awareness of diversity issues, mentoring).	51.3	54.3	-3.0	54.1	56.0	-1.9
	My supervisor/team leader is committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society.	58.9	60.5	-1.6	60.7	61.8	-1.1
	Managers/supervisors/team leaders work well with employees of different backgrounds.	59.0	62.6	-3.6	61.8	64.0	-2.2