



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

**STATEMENT OF
VERONICA VILLALOBOS
PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR EMPLOYEE SERVICES
AND
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS COUNCIL
U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT**

before the

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

on

THE BEST AND WORST PLACES TO WORK IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

April 6, 2017

Chairman Meadows, Ranking Member Connolly, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) and employee engagement. Since 2002, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has administered the FEVS, previously called the Federal Human Capital Survey. The FEVS provides a snapshot of Federal employees' perceptions of whether, and to what extent, conditions that characterize successful organizations are present in their agencies. The survey is designed to provide agencies with valuable information on employee satisfaction, commitment, engagement, and, ultimately, retention needed for driving change within an organization. The FEVS is a confidential web-based survey of full-time and part-time, permanent, non-seasonal employees across the Federal government.

FEVS results

OPM is committed to working with agencies to provide tools they can use to improve employee satisfaction and engagement. Having an engaged workforce is critical to each agency's ability to achieve its mission of providing excellent service to the American people. To assist agencies, OPM provides results from the FEVS in several ways. The FEVS Government-wide Management Report provides an overview of survey results and highlights notable agency

Statement of Veronica Villalobos
U.S. Office of Personnel Management

April 6, 2017

achievements. The Management Report contains scores from indices such as Employee Engagement, Global Satisfaction, and the New Inclusion Quotient (New IQ). These three indices, created from survey questions, are metrics that agencies can use to assess engagement, satisfaction, and inclusion. In addition to the Management Report, OPM provides agency-specific FEVS reports to leadership in government agencies. FEVS results also are made available on our public website and through UnlockTalent.gov, a comprehensive dashboard used to help agency leadership make data-driven decisions and design initiatives to improve Federal agencies. UnlockTalent.gov also allows users to view FEVS scores across government for two major indices, Employee Engagement and Global Satisfaction. The dashboard is customized to each agency and Federal managers are able to access personalized pages for their departments and agencies. This powerful online tool assists agencies in better analyzing and understanding the data in order to creatively use the information in their engagement strategies.

In 2016, OPM surveyed approximately 889,000 employees from 80 agencies and over 407,000 employees responded, resulting in a 46 percent response rate. The 2016 scores on employee engagement continue to increase steadily across government with 65 percent of all respondents expressing positive views on the Employee Engagement Index, which is a one percent increase over the 2015 results. The 2016 Global Satisfaction Index results revealed that 61 percent of respondents reported satisfaction with aspects related to their work, including their job, their pay, their organization, and whether they would recommend their organization as a good place to work. This was an increase from 60 percent in 2015. The New IQ identifies behaviors that help to create an inclusive workplace. The 2016 New IQ overall index score increased one percentage point, from 57 percent to 58 percent, since 2015.

For the 2016 Management Report, OPM incorporated a comparison of agencies by size. Because of the different challenges or opportunities agencies face based on their size, these categories were created to further aid interagency communication and sharing of promising practices. In addition, the 2016 Management Report featured the key drivers of employee engagement that are beneficial to agencies in building and supporting employee engagement and performance improvement efforts. The key drivers identified for employee engagement included Performance Feedback, Collaborative/Cooperative Management, Merit System Principles, Employee Training & Development, and Work/Life Balance. By focusing on these factors, agencies are able to target resources to build and support employee engagement. Finally, the 2016 Management Report highlighted promising practices on employee engagement, which provided practical advice on what works to help agencies improve engagement and performance.

Improving the FEVS

While the FEVS has been a useful tool for agencies and stakeholders, the full potential as a strategically responsive instrument has been limited by the restrictions of having over half of the core survey items prescribed in regulation. Because core items were in regulation, 45 such items have not been updated since 2007, limiting the ability of our professional personnel research psychologists, statisticians, and survey methodologists to adjust items and make common-sense changes based on experience and lessons learned. Periodically, multiple stakeholders and survey

Statement of Veronica Villalobos
U.S. Office of Personnel Management

April 6, 2017

professionals have suggested a survey refresh with the inclusion of timely topics that reflect contemporary and evolving workplace environments and conditions.

To address these suggestions, OPM initiated a revision of the regulation. Overall, the revised regulation permitted OPM to modernize the survey by identifying questions that exhibit appropriate psychometric properties that better align to the topics cited in the underlying statute. Specifically, the effect of the revision was to: (1) reduce the number of prescribed survey items from 45 to 16; and (2) remove the definitions of leadership levels from regulation. In the process of revising the regulation, OPM presented plans for updates to multiple stakeholder groups, including the Chief Human Capital Officers Council, agency Senior Accountable Officials, FEVS data users, and outside interested parties. In addition, OPM's proposed revisions to streamline the items in regulation were subject to three different review periods with opportunities provided for both agency and public comments. The final regulation allows OPM's professional survey experts and research psychologists to improve the survey, gathering additional useful information in the service of agency effectiveness, while maintaining agencies' abilities to monitor progress and analyze trends. Agencies still maintain the flexibility to expand their own surveys and add agency-specific questions as appropriate to their specific needs.

Modernizing the FEVS will ultimately improve the strategic responsiveness of the survey and, importantly, the data provided to agency leadership. OPM does not intend to make changes to the FEVS questionnaire for the 2017 survey. We understand the reliance stakeholders and agencies have on the survey results. Any future updates and modernization of the FEVS will again be done with input from stakeholders, as well as OPM's experts, along with survey testing to preserve quality and trending.

Conclusion

As we prepare to release the next survey, OPM will continue its efforts to support agencies with meaningful improvements to FEVS in order to assist agency leadership with improving employee engagement and performance. I want to thank you for this opportunity to testify, and I am happy to address any questions you may have.



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

VERONICA VILLALOBOS

PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR EMPLOYEE SERVICES

AND

ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS COUNCIL

Veronica Villalobos is Principal Deputy Associate Director for the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Employee Services division and Acting Executive Director, Chief Human Capital Officer's Council. Ms. Villalobos' responsibilities include formulating and implementing human capital management strategies and policies to support Federal agencies in meeting their missions. She also oversees the division's performance on key strategic goals. She has been a member of the Senior Executive Service since October 2010.

Prior to her current position, Ms. Villalobos served as the first Director of OPM's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Managing OPM's Government-wide diversity effort, she helped develop, drive, and monitor strategies and initiatives designed to create a more diverse and inclusive Federal workforce.

Before joining OPM, Ms. Villalobos worked at the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), as one of the agency's first Honor Program Attorneys. From 2008 to 2010, she served as the Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity where she was responsible for EEOC's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Complaint Processing and Affirmative Employment Programs. In spring 2010, Ms. Villalobos was detailed to OPM as Special Counsel to Christine Griffin, OPM's Deputy Director and Chair of the Inter-Agency Work Group on Diversity (Work Group). She coordinated the Work Group's efforts to develop a Government-wide Strategic Plan to create a Federal workplace that represents all segments of society.

In 2008, Ms. Villalobos served as the chair of the Federal Hispanic Work Group. From 2000 to 2008, Ms. Villalobos was assigned to the EEOC's Office of Federal Operations where she issued decisions in cases covering the entire spectrum of alleged discrimination, including race, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, religion, and reprisal. In 2006 and 2008, Ms. Villalobos also served as a supervisory attorney and was responsible for reviewing the appellate decisions drafted by attorneys on appeals from agency and EEOC Administrative Judge decisions issued on Federal sector discrimination complaints.

In 2002, Ms. Villalobos was detailed to the EEOC's Office of Legal Counsel, where she litigated EEO and Merit System Protection Board cases on behalf of the EEOC and provided legal advice to the chair and commissioners regarding complex disability cases, as well as administrative and union matters. In 2003, she was detailed to the National Labor Relations Board, where she worked in both the chairman's office, drafting Board decisions, and the General Counsel's Contempt Litigation Division.

Ms. Villalobos was born and raised in El Paso, Texas. She graduated from Saint Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana, in 1996 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and psychology. After graduation, Ms. Villalobos received the Telecommunications Fellowship with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, during which she gained hands-on experience at the non-profit Public Technology, Inc.