



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEFENSE CIVILIAN PERSONNEL ADVISORY SERVICE
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22350-1100

FOR: CIVILIAN PERSONNEL POLICY COUNCIL MEMBERS

FROM: Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service Director, Ms. Michelle LoweSolis

SUBJECT: 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

ACTION: Disseminate to Department of Defense (DoD) Human Resources Practitioners

REFERENCE(S):

- a. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) memorandum, "2020 Office of Personnel Management Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey" dated September 9, 2020 (attached)
- b. OPM Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) Agency Communications Guide (attached)
- c. FEVS Poster Newsletter (attached)

BACKGROUND/INTENT: In accordance with reference (a), the OPM 2020 FEVS launch begins September 14, 2020, and will continue rolling out to agencies over the following weeks.

The survey will be emailed to every eligible Federal employee in DoD. Survey dates are: Navy and Marine Corps on September 14th and will close October 26th, Army and Army Corps of Engineers on September 15th and will close on October 27th, Air Force on September 16th and will close on October 28th, and 4th Estate on September 23rd and will close on November 4th.

OPM has developed a series of additional questions for the 2020 FEVS, designed to gather information about COVID-19 effects on the workforce. A weekly reminder will be sent until you complete the survey. The responses are anonymous, strictly confidential, and reported only at an aggregate level – no individual can be identified.

A communications guide (reference b) and FEVS poster (reference c) are provided to assist agencies with supporting this event.

POINT OF CONTACT: Berenice Eberhart FEVS DoD/DCPAS Program Manager,
Berenice.l.eberhart.civ@mail.mil (571) 372-2043; Telework Number: 703-628-3200 .

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2020 U.S. Office of Personnel Management Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

Wednesday, September 9, 2020



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

MEMORANDUM FOR: HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

From: MICHAEL J. RIGAS, ACTING DIRECTOR

Subject: 2020 U.S. Office of Personnel Management Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

Earlier this summer, and in light of the global pandemic, we postponed the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) in order to allow agencies to focus on their mission critical work.

The 2020 OPM FEVS will begin on September 14, 2020. The survey was updated during the summer to achieve our goal of a responsive survey program. Responding to requests from multiple agencies to ease administrative burden, we streamlined the core set of standard items for 2020. As in prior years, the survey will include widely used Employee Engagement and Global Satisfaction indices. Agency participation in the OPM FEVS will continue to satisfy statutory requirements as well through inclusion of the Annual Employee Survey Items in regulation. Maintaining half of the core items from prior OPM FEVS administrations addresses the needs of stakeholders by facilitating transparency through a comparison of survey results across agencies and across time.

New this year will be a comprehensive section addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, with questions that allow identification of ways in which employees continue to achieve missions in the face of an unprecedented pandemic. The addition of the section aligns with Congressional interests and agency requests and will resonate well with respondents.

The OPM FEVS continues to be one of the most powerful platforms for Federal employees to share their opinions and perceptions regarding work experiences influencing productivity. With the addition of the COVID-19 pandemic section, the survey also provides employees an opportunity to participate in data collection with the potential to shape future policies and interagency learning regarding human capital management in the face of an emergency. The OPM FEVS continues to support ongoing priorities including the President's Management Agenda. Specifically, by providing the data necessary to support active management of employee engagement and performance, the data is used to assess progress on Cross-Agency Priority Goal 3. Moreover, by enabling leadership to identify improvements necessary to realize greater workplace effectiveness and efficiencies, survey results support and drive service, mission achievement, and stewardship across the Federal Government.

As for what to expect next, administration of the 2020 OPM FEVS will follow prior practice with invitations to employees sent in two waves, beginning the week of September 14th. Each agency's survey will be open for six weeks. In 2020, every eligible employee will have a voice in the survey and will receive an invitation to participate in the OPM FEVS. OPM will continue to provide component reports at the lowest levels within agencies to drive improvement. The rollout of results reports to agencies will begin in December with most scheduled for release after the first of the year.

When employees hear from leadership that their feedback is valued and used to make a difference in their agencies, they are more likely to provide feedback. The quality of the information your leadership team receives is improved when you support employee participation in the survey.

As we near the 2020 OPM FEVS, please show your employees how you support the survey. If you have not done so yet, a good place to begin is by sharing results of the 2019 survey. Tell employees about steps being taken based on the findings within your agencies and what the outcomes of those efforts have been. In addition to sharing information, providing official time to complete the survey can help increase participation rates. These steps together send a powerful message that leadership values employee opinions.

If you are interested in seeing results from the 2019 OPM FEVS, and supplementary reports using the survey data, you can click on the following link: <https://www.opm.gov/fevs>.

Thank you for your assistance in helping to make the OPM FEVS a success. If you have any questions about the upcoming survey, please contact Dr. Kim Wells, Survey Manager, at Kimberly.Wells@opm.gov or evs.internet@opm.gov.

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCOs), and Deputy CHCOs

OPM Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Communications Guide

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Communication Guide

Overview

Communication plays a very important role in the success of the OPM Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (OPM FEVS). This Communications Package is intended to present ideas for designing communication materials for the OPM FEVS administration. These ideas are offered as a resource and represent a collection of multiple best practices across agencies.

All ideas included in this guide are not official OPM directives. While ideas include good practices to implement, they should be used as starting points only and tailored to meet the unique needs of your own agency.

The following document should be used as a guide for creating communication themes and marketing ideas to maximize employee participation. Effective and continuous communication with employees is critical in ensuring a successful survey effort for your agency. Examples of key efforts include:

- Before the survey: tell employees about the timing of the survey and the value of their feedback
- During the survey: send out reminders and hold activities to increase participation
- After the survey: discuss and share agency results and actions

Remember you cannot over communicate!



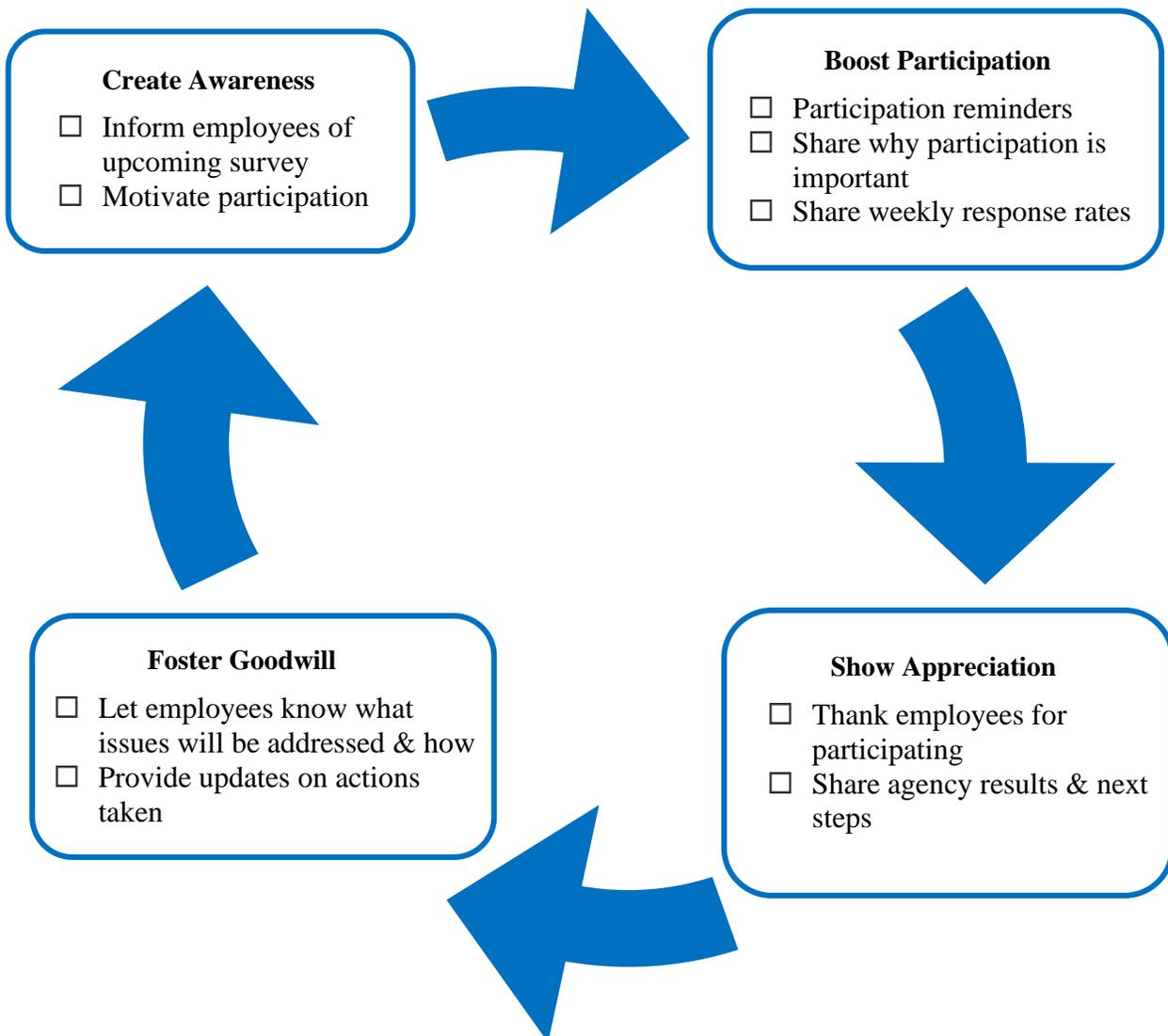
Creating an Agency Communications Plan

There are several key points to remember when creating a communications plan:

- Promoting the OPM FEVS should begin several weeks prior to survey administration.
- Communication must continue throughout and after the survey administration period.
- Multiple modes of transmitting ideas and information should be used to reach the greatest number of people.
- **Communication is an ongoing and interactive process.**

There are multiple points in the administration cycle at which communicating with your employees is particularly critical for an effective survey process. These essential points are outlined in the diagram below (Figure 1) and more detail is provided in Table 1.

Figure 1: Four Major Stages of OPM FEVS Communications



Outlined below are four primary periods of communication related to the OPM FEVS. We recommend using this as a guide for planning your agency’s communication strategies.

Remember:

- Communication about the OPM FEVS should start early and occur often.
- While some specific information comes from OPM, agencies should not wait for this information to inform employees of the upcoming survey and to motivate them to participate.

Table 1: OPM FEVS Campaign Communication Stages

	Create Awareness	Boost Participation	Show Appreciation	Foster Goodwill
Timeline	Pre-Survey/OPM FEVS Kickoff	During OPM FEVS administration	After OPM FEVS closure	Continuous
Opportunity	<p>Create Awareness!</p> <p>Employees must know the survey is coming and leadership supports it.</p>	<p>Provide Motivation!</p> <p>For some employees, the opportunity to provide input is welcomed. For others, increased participation only occurs with additional motivation.</p>	<p>Thank Employees!</p> <p>Employees are taking time out of their workday to offer feedback. It is important that they to know their responses will be used.</p>	<p>Be Transparent!</p> <p>Tell employees about actions taken in response to their feedback. Transparency also builds trust and future participation.</p>
Communication & Key Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide dates survey is available and email address sending the survey <input type="checkbox"/> Describe survey eligibility criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Advise employees to watch for their email invitation <input type="checkbox"/> Explain why participation in the survey matters <input type="checkbox"/> Update and inform employees of agency specific goals related to the OPM FEVS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Remind employees of when the OPM FEVS will close <input type="checkbox"/> Send weekly updates on agency response rate to all staff <input type="checkbox"/> Generate friendly competition by comparing office participation rates <input type="checkbox"/> Reiterate why OPM FEVS participation matters <input type="checkbox"/> Update employees on OPM FEVS related activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Thank staff for responding to the OPM FEVS <input type="checkbox"/> Inform staff when results are available <input type="checkbox"/> Share how OPM FEVS results are used <input type="checkbox"/> Pledge to communicate to employees when results arrive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Share agency and component level data <input type="checkbox"/> Share plans about actions to improve in response to OPM FEVS results <input type="checkbox"/> Notify employees about the outcomes of any actions taken due to the OPM FEVS
Communication Examples	Announcements in the agency’s Intranet site, newsletter, town hall meetings. Posters in common areas	Memo from management encouraging staff. Public progress tracker. Use the FEVS banner in communications.	Send a thank you for participation in an email to all staff.	Publicly post survey results. Share results with all employees.
Key Voices	Senior leadership	Middle management Supervisors	Senior leadership	Senior leadership
Key tools	Email, intranet, signage	Team meetings, email, intranet, word of mouth	Email	Email, town halls, intranet

Connecting Communication to a Communications Plan

Communications and Relationships

Focus communication from those leaders with the most employee contact: mid-level managers and supervisors.

Building multi-level communications leverages your senior leaders' voice but also includes mid-level managers and supervisors. These individuals have a stronger relationship and more personal connection to a larger number of employees. They are also usually more connected to the day-to-day activities in an organization and are in a better position to make changes that employees will experience.

Ways to do this:

Develop a multi-tiered communications approach

- Matrix your messaging to help disseminate your message across multiple communication channels.
- Keep all messaging on a consistent theme.
- Develop a message map that includes specific messages for the various groups in your audience.
- Vary the tone and focus of the messages to the different levels or functions of the people you intend to reach.
 - For example, send a message to your supervisors on how to talk about a subject, while simultaneously sending a message to all staff about a topic that supervisors can build upon.

Include the best voices in the conversation

- Look for non-traditional audiences and influencers – they may not be the heads of their organizations.
 - For example, using special interest groups, peer and functional advisory groups, or training cohorts to communicate to employees about the importance of participating in the OPM FEVS.
- Generating the messaging from multiple sources is an important and effective communication strategy.

You cannot over-communicate

- Just when you think people are tired of the message you are trying to convey, it's just really starting to sink in.
- Substantial effort is needed to saturate an audience with the message you want them to hear.
- Use multiple communication channels to reach your employees about the FEVS such as:
 - Email/Intranet
 - Building signage or posters
 - Video
 - Social media

Create Engaging Content

To help your content stand out, ensure that it is memorable and easy to consume. Incorporate graphics to help your audience remember your message.

Ways to do this:

Plain Language

- More people will understand your message if jargon and specialized language or acronyms are avoided.
- Tips and best practices are available at www.plainlanguage.gov

Plan first, write second

- Create content only after deciding where and how you want to distribute your message.
- Make sure your content is channel appropriate.
 - Your message will be lost if it is too long or too complex for its delivery method.

Move beyond email

- Use a variety of communications tools to add impact. The average office worker is estimated to receive over 120 emails every day.
 - Videos, audio recordings, infographics, and posters are just a few ways to make your message more memorable.

Write content for specific audiences

- Create content strategies around different communication personas
 - Personas are fictional characters created to represent different audiences
 - Consider deepening your understanding of your audience by learning persona descriptors such as job description, location, etc.

Command attention

- Package data and information with visuals that capture attention.
- Think critically about what you want to communicate to achieve more creative solutions.
 - Challenge communications teams by making it commonplace to ask, "Can we create an interesting visual component to complement or replace written text?"

Think from the outside-in

- What is going on in your industry beyond your agency that sparks employees' interest?
 - Relating internal content to external topics can help connect employees to their jobs, their agency's mission, and larger communities.

Helpful Information

OPM FEVS Tagline and Signature Block

The survey tagline “**Empowering Employees. Inspiring Change**” can be used. In your communication plans or marketing efforts, you may want to incorporate this important message of change. The tagline is displayed on the survey, many reports, websites, and other types of OPM FEVS communications.

Adding an icon under a signature block is a great way to promote and increase awareness of the survey, encourage employee participation, and show how important employee feedback is to the agency.

- The survey banner below can be placed under a signature block and used on OPM FEVS related communications distributed throughout the agency.



IT Specifics

To ensure a smooth OPM FEVS administration, coordination with your agency IT is required. Do this early in the cycle to facilitate a successful survey administration. OPM will be forwarding the IP addresses, email address, and subject lines that will be used for the OPM FEVS. In addition to working with IT, inform employees of the email address and subject lines that will be associated with the OPM FEVS so they know the message is legitimate. We have provided some information below that you can use to plan. More detailed information will be coming separately.

The survey links will start with this URL <https://feedback.opm.gov>. Survey links will start with this path and include directories and files.

Subject line:

2020 OPM Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

Important FEVS Information to Know

You may want to include the following information with your communications:

Purpose

- Explain the importance of employee participation to your agency.
- Provide examples of how the agency has used results to make improvements

The survey is voluntary and confidential

- OPM does not provide the agency with individual responses. Results are reported in aggregate form.

A contact at your agency if employees have any questions

Sample versus Census

- If the survey is being administered at your agency as a sample let employees know that not all employees will receive a survey. Communicate that while all employees' opinions are important the survey was sent to a randomly selected number of employees during the current year. Encourage selected employees to participate. Remind all employees they will have an opportunity to participate in future OPM FEVS administrations.

Eligibility

- Full-time or part-time, permanent, non-seasonal employees are eligible to participate in the survey.

Timeline

- Survey launch and close dates provided by OPM

Method

- Web survey
- Employees will receive e-mail invitations to participate from OPM
 - **The email invitation should NOT be forwarded**

Other OPM FEVS FAQs

What is the purpose of this survey?

The OPM Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey measures employees' perceptions of whether, and to what extent, conditions that characterize successful organizations are present in their agencies. The ultimate goal of the survey is to provide agencies with information to build strengths and improve challenge areas.

How long does it take to complete the survey?

Participants should be able to complete the survey in approximately 20-30 minutes.

How do I know that my responses will remain confidential?

Results reported to the agency will not allow the identification of individual responses in any way, and no identifying information will be used to match individual responses to employees or personnel folders. In no way will responses be used against any employee, and all information will be treated confidentially. Any data that could be used to identify specific individuals within a group will not be reported.

May I pass/forward the survey on to someone else to take?

No. Each link to the survey is unique and cannot be used again after the survey has been completed. Please do not forward your link to any individuals or groups, because after the survey has been completed by one person, the link will no longer allow you to access the survey.

Who do I contact if I have any technical issues?

Please contact the OPM FEVS Help Desk by replying to the email invitation you received.

How can I find out the results from previous surveys?

Visit the OPM Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey website: www.opm.gov/fevs

Why does the survey include demographic questions?

The Federal Government is committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace. Given that policy, demographic items are included in the survey. Your responses to these items are voluntary and confidential. Reports provided to your agency contain only data compiled from 10 or more survey respondents. Your responses cannot be uniquely identified nor linked to you personally by anyone in your agency. Your responses are used to enhance Federal Government leaderships' understanding of the diversity of the workforce.

Start Date:
SEPTEMBER 23rd

Take the **FEVS** Survey Your Voice Matters!

Questions about COVID-19 are included.
Seize the opportunity to help improve our organization!

All permanent civilians
Employed before October 31,
2019 will receive the
Federal Employee Viewpoint
Survey (FEVS) this year

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

Empowering Employees. Inspiring Change.

PARTICIPATION IS CONFIDENTIAL!