

**2023**



# King County Nonprofit Employee Engagement Survey Report

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## **PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST**



**PREPARED BY: 501 Commons**



**King County**

**Veterans, Seniors & Human Services Levy**

# About 501 Commons

501 Commons is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that amplifies the strengths of nonprofits, so ALL people and communities flourish in the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

People turn to 501 Commons for learning, consulting, and ongoing operational support, including:

- Technology services, cybersecurity, and data solutions.
- Finance, HR, and management consulting services.
- Next Level for CBOs (Community-based Organizations).
- Leadership coaching and executive advising.
- Training for board members, staff, and volunteers.
- Our deep reservoir of information, tools, and recommended practices, including free advice and referrals to recommended consultants and specialists.
- Washington Gives, an online fundraising platform that hosts the GivingTuesday and GiveBIG campaigns.

## Report Authors

We appreciate the work of the report's primary authors, Shawn Aebi, Peg Hunt, and Linda Mangone. They provided their expertise in research, human resources, and data analysis to this project as members of the 501 Commons Executive Service Corps.

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# Acknowledgments

## King County Veterans, Seniors & Human Services Levy



**King County**

**Veterans, Seniors & Human Services Levy**

501 Commons is grateful that the King County Veterans, Seniors & Human Services Levy (VSHSL) funded the 2023 King County Nonprofit Employment Survey project. 501 Commons and VSHSL have a shared interest in seeing a thriving nonprofit sector where nonprofits can recruit, retain, and promote highly talented and motivated people.

VSHSL is a property tax levy, recently renewed by King County voters, which supports veterans and military servicemembers and their respective families, seniors and their caregivers, and resilient communities to promote:

- Healthy Living
- Housing Stability
- Financial Stability
- Social Engagement
- Service System Access and Improvement

The guiding principle of the VSHSL is to build healthy relationships, improve connections, and increase community support—among the communities the levy serves and among the people and organizations that provide the levy's services. For more information about the VSHSL, visit [kingcounty.gov/VSHSL](http://kingcounty.gov/VSHSL).

## Nonprofit Community of King County

We are grateful to the 1,233 employees in nonprofit organizations serving King County who responded to the 2023 survey. This survey was first administered in 2021. Please visit the [501 Commons website](#) to stay updated on all survey-related information and activities.

Contact: [info@501commons.org](mailto:info@501commons.org), Subject: "Employee Engagement Survey" for more information.

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# Statements from King County Leadership

Letter from Leo Flor, Director, King County Department of Community and Human Services

To our community,

**It takes people to care for people.** To help them recover. To help them find housing. To run senior centers. To support survivors of gender-based violence. In King County and across Washington, these are people who do some of the most vital work in our communities at local nonprofits.

**Nonprofit service providers must be able to afford to do their work.** While we ask nonprofit agencies to solve some of our society's most pressing issues, we don't yet make it possible for those agencies to fully compensate the people who do the work. We must support nonprofit workers so that they can afford to stay in their jobs long enough to attain mastery, maintain their clients' trust, and make this a community in which *every* person can thrive.

**This survey deepens our understanding of the nonprofit sector's wage inadequacy.** Decades in the making, today's wage inadequacy limits the ability to attract and retain staff long enough to develop the mastery and grow relationships that are necessary for effective human service delivery. Results from this Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL)-funded King County Nonprofit Wage & Benefits Survey illustrate the underinvestment in the nonprofit workforce and lack of sustainable wages in the nonprofit sector. A [recent University of Washington study](#) contributed further to understanding this issue.

**But we must do more than understand. We must act.** King County's Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) is committed to addressing funding practices that have inconsistently accounted for rising costs year over year. We are working to convert our good intentions into good outcomes.

The inaugural VSHSL-funded King County Nonprofit Wage & Benefits Survey in 2021 informed several actions taken by King County, including:

- Retention and hiring grants through the VSHSL to deliver emergency support to our nonprofit partners by funding 675 bonuses to 55 agencies with an emphasis on employee retention and hiring.
- Adjusted contracts to better promote equitable workforce salaries and benefits, and account for inflation. The goal is to set contract outcomes based on what King County is paying and not on arbitrary requirements.
- Strategies that will inform the proposed Implementation Plans for the VSHSL and the Crisis Care Centers levy to specifically and substantially fund nonprofit workforce investments.

We can and will do more. Reversing decades-long undervaluing and underinvesting in the nonprofit workforce doesn't happen overnight, and this is not something King County can do alone. We at King County will meet this challenge, and we seek shared understanding and action from our federal, city, and philanthropic funding partners.

In a sector where funders ask providers to formulate and implement theories of change to yield results, we as funders must subject ourselves to the same expectations of rigor. It takes people to care for people. We can and must build upon these findings to bring forth the funding practices that will support nonprofit workers to do the critical work that we ask of them.

Thank you to the nonprofit organizations and employees who participated in the Nonprofit Wage and Benefits Survey and the accompanying Employee Engagement Survey. We are taking steps as a community to solve this issue of underinvestment in the nonprofit workforce, and your survey participation contributes to that. **Let's move from a theory of change to changed funding practices—our community is counting on us.**

Sincerely,

Leo Flor

Director, King County Department of Community and Human Services

## **Letter from Leon Richardson, Director of the King County Department of Community and Human Services Adult Services Division**

To our community,

Our region's vibrancy requires an effective and sustainable nonprofit human services workforce that adequately invests in their employees so human services in King County are accessible, effective, and equitable.

Years of underfunding have hollowed out the critical workforce that helps make our communities whole. The inequities in salary are causing people to leave the field in search of better professional opportunities, higher pay, and better benefits. We must compensate nonprofit employees so they can afford the work that they do, allowing employees to gain expertise, build trust with clients, and ultimately sustain a career that strengthens our communities.

Results from the Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy (VSHSL)-funded King County Nonprofit Wage & Benefits Survey and Nonprofit Employee Engagement Survey, administered by 501 Commons in 2023, help us understand the underinvestment in human services in our region. Data from these survey reports and an accompanying online compensation tracker will inform analyses and decisions about how to best support the nonprofit sector. This report and accompanying online compensation tracker make data on nonprofit employee compensation freely and widely available.

Two hundred thirty-five (235) nonprofit organizations representing more than 20,000 nonprofit workers participated in the Wage & Benefits Survey. The resulting report underscores findings from the first survey in 2021 – many nonprofit employees working in critical services like housing and homelessness response, community behavioral health, and case management continue to make wages at levels that make it difficult to sustain a career doing community-based work in our region. The Nonprofit Employee Engagement Survey shows that while nonprofit employees responded positively to questions around job satisfaction, noting flexibility and the belief that one's work is helping improve lives as major positive factors of their jobs, there remain deep concerns about compensation levels, pay equity, and transparency.

The survey results demand our attention and action. It took years to reach this level of wage inequity and it will take time to reverse course. King County is committed to addressing these gaps alongside our partners in government, philanthropy, and nonprofit organizations. At King County we are acting now by adjusting funding practices, setting new standards, and investing in wage boosts.

The support we all want to see in our communities depends on a strong, expert, and fortified workforce. Thank you to everyone who participated in the Nonprofit Wage & Benefits Survey and the accompanying Employee Engagement Survey. Your participation is valuable. I look forward to working together to ensure our nonprofit workforce is strong and our community is one that invests in the people who help our communities thrive.

Sincerely,

Leon Richardson

King County Department of Community and Human Services Adult Services Division Director

# Why Employee Engagement Matters

## First, the Good News

When the first King County Nonprofit Employee Engagement Survey was sent out in the spring of 2021, the nonprofit sector – like all businesses, organizations, governments, and families – had navigated a year of changing processes, communication challenges, coping with loss, and constant uncertainty. Yet the survey results were positive across all five dimensions (shown in order of positive results):

- Client Services
- Job
- Supervisor
- Workplace Culture
- Compensation and Benefits

The positive results were anchored in the Client Services dimension. People felt they and their organization were doing good for people and communities. They were proud of their work – and deservedly so.

What is impressive is that the results are still very positive two years later. The responses to all the statements in the survey from 1,233 participants were 84% favorable (compared to 86% in 2021). In 2023 we increased the dimensions to six, adding Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IDEA).

As shown on [page 15](#), the ranking of positive results is the same as in 2021, with IDEA coming in fourth out of six dimensions. Compensation still has the least favorable responses at 77% favorable. This does not mean people do not want higher pay. Many statements focus on fairness within organizations and when compared to similar nonprofits.

These strengths were frequently reported:

- Employees are proud of their work and feel they have a positive impact.
- They feel they are treated with respect.
- Supervisors provide flexibility during the workday.



## High Engagement Creates Impact

Nonprofit employees are often involved in the most challenging work a person can do, influencing the decisions and behaviors of people and complex systems. They impact problems like substance use, homelessness, climate change, and student success. This work requires highly developed skills, expertise, constant learning, and adaptability.

While the survey participants reported high satisfaction on most standards, it is essential to understand the sector's vulnerabilities. The services nonprofits provide to the public are more effective if employee turnover is low. Employees gain efficacy over time, which increases when they are highly engaged and find their work rewarding.

Noncompetitive pay/benefits and a lack of transparency in decision-making and compensation cause dissatisfaction. Formalizing and communicating your compensation structure and conducting an internal salary audit can help ensure staff members believe they are treated fairly.

Many employees feel their employer and supervisor are not supporting their professional development. Nonprofits can provide Employee Assistance programs and wellness resources, provide employees with a professional development pathway, career advancement support, and resources. However, 74% of Washington nonprofits reported in a survey by the [Council of Nonprofits](#) that lack of funds is a barrier to retaining and recruiting staff. Providing funds to support retention would be a high-impact investment for government and foundations.

# Attracting & Keeping the Workers We Need

## A Tight Labor Market

Every part of our economy is struggling with a lack of available workers. Only 3.4% of the workforce in the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue area is unemployed as of June 2023. The national unemployment level is 3.6%.

Washington has 0.9 of an unemployed person for every job available. This is much better than in states like Kansas, where there is just 0.3 of an unemployed person for each job. In May 2023, there were nearly 200,000 active job openings in Washington State, with most in King County. Job seekers must be motivated to choose a nonprofit job and accept the reality of lower wages and benefits.

In King County, wages and salaries across all sectors increased 5.4 percent over the 12 months ending June 2023. Nationwide wages and salaries rose 4.6 percent over the same period. [See the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.](#) Donations are contracting. Foundation giving has retrenched from the 2020-2021 highs. Government contract adjustments are below wage inflation. How can nonprofits compete in a tight labor market?

## The Cost of Turnover

Since there are more jobs than job seekers, this is the ideal time for nonprofit employees to jump ship and go to other sectors. Inflation is 37% higher in King County compared to the rest of the U.S., nudging employees out of the sector even if they love their work and organization. They face few barriers when switching sectors, given that 80% are college graduates, compared to 54% of the general workforce.

When asked why they might leave the sector, 71% of participants said they might leave for greater pay, up from 60% in 2021. 35% would consider leaving for better benefits, up 16% from 2021.

The 2023 King County Nonprofit Wage & Benefits Report found that voluntary turnover averaged 20% in the last

year, with an additional 4% of involuntary turnover. The combined level climbed to 27% for organizations with 41 to 100 employees.

Organizations are carrying high recruitment costs and finding it challenging to deliver services when they are chronically understaffed. In the August 2023 Council of Nonprofits report titled [“Nonprofit Workforce Shortage Crisis.”](#) 68% of Washington organizations had job vacancies, and more than half had waiting lists for services.

[“State of Nonprofits in 2023: What Funders Need to Know,”](#) by the Center for Effective Philanthropy, tells us, *“Issues related to staff — including burnout, filling staff positions, and retaining staff — are the top challenge facing nonprofit leaders.”*



## WORKFORCE SHORTAGES

Burnout and caseload issues negatively impact service quality and continuity. In the Employee Engagement Survey, participants reported burnout and heavy workloads:

- 56% reported they might leave because of burnout, compassion fatigue, or general fatigue (54% in 2021).
- 27% said they might leave because their workload was too high, up from 21% in 2021.

Nonprofits need resources to help retain and recruit employees and stabilize and streamline internal systems to retain operational knowledge despite high turnover.



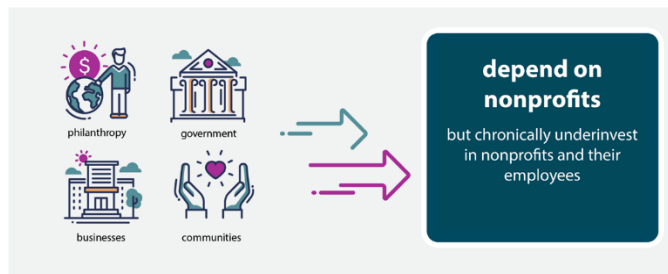
# Four Challenges

We have reached an inflection point for the nonprofit sector. Unless we make significant changes in how nonprofits operate and are funded, we will lose services and capabilities that positively impact the lives of millions of people. Four systemic factors are at work:

- Employees are leaving the sector for better compensation, even though they are overall very satisfied with their employer, proud of their organization, and feel they are making a positive impact.
- Operating costs are rising rapidly, particularly for insurance, data, technology, and compliance costs.
- Volunteerism is down. 85% of nonprofits in Washington have no paid employees, even when they deliver essential community services. During 2020-2022, 11% of volunteer organizations ceased operations.
- Fewer people donate, and nearly 40% of donations go into donor-advised funds and foundations. For a somber glimpse into the fundraising future, read the Nonprofit Quarterly article [“New Data Tells Us Where Donor-Advised Fund Dollars Go – And Don’t Go.”](#)

Why do nonprofits rely on volunteers, and why are their employees generally paid less than those working for businesses or in the unionized parts of the nonprofit sector – government, education, and healthcare?

Nonprofits have little bargaining power given their low unionization rate and small scale ([92% with budgets below \\$1 million](#)). Insufficient resources are provided by the “purchasers” of nonprofit services, including government, foundations, clients, association members, and donors. Funders incentivize the proliferation of nonprofits by giving small grants to many organizations. This improves geographic and access to culturally appropriate service but results in a sector that lacks the scale, stability, and infrastructure needed to face the employment and operational challenges ahead of us.



## No More “More with Less”

As nonprofits face these challenges, the unspoken assumption is that they need to do *more with less*. This is an unrealistic remedy. The workforce is thin. Government contracts and foundation grants are unreliable. Costs are going up. Volunteers are harder to find. Donations are falling. While some government funders are changing their practices, grant/contract rates are often not adjusted.

Nonprofits do more with less as a standard business practice. That practice has reached its limit. When there is a crisis in other sectors, the producers and the purchasers need to come together to find funding solutions. This cannot be done only on a service-by-service level (childcare, mental health, etc.). The sector has grown to meet thousands of community needs. Not all of them group into large fields. If we do not show leadership, we will continue quietly losing essential community resources.

## Changing the Perception of Nonprofit Employees

At the root of the structural inequities impacting the nonprofit sector are unquestioned biases about nonprofits, their services, and their employees. As Oren Cass asserts in “The Labor-Shortage Myth” in *The Atlantic*, June 2, 2023:

“Wages are influenced by judgments about what a given job should be worth and thus whether a purported shortage should be remedied by policymakers. Although it’s tempting to say that the market has decided that software development pays \$61 an hour while picking lettuce pays \$16, that observation falters on the fact that farm owners can’t actually find workers at that low wage. “

The nonprofit sector was primarily built by women’s free labor. In King County, women make up 70% of the nonprofit workforce (67% of the survey participants were female, with 10% not reporting and 6% identifying as non-binary or other).

As Leo Flor, Director of King County Department of Community and Human Services, states, we must reverse “decades-long undervaluing and underinvesting in the nonprofit workforce.” We have to stop being tethered to a past, where it somehow makes sense that wages in community-based nonprofits lag behind those in related fields like government, education, healthcare, and philanthropy. Are nonprofit employees also paid less compared to similar positions in business? The [University of Washington Pay Equity Analysis](#), conducted for the Seattle Human Services Coalition and funded by the City of Seattle, answered this question: “Yes.”



“...nonprofit human services workers make 37% less than other workers with identical skill sets working in other sectors of the economy. It will take a wage increase of 43-59% to correct the gap...”

As further evidence of the “judgments” impacting wage levels, the study showed the negative impact on pay of working in a care-providing role (traditionally women’s work) in any industry.

Nonprofits need the support of our partners in government and philanthropy to change the perceptions of people who work in nonprofits. Most nonprofit workers

have had the experience of being stereotyped as less capable when interacting with donors and people in government, philanthropy, and business. Like any bias, it takes diligence for people who are targets of this behavior and perpetrators or observers to call out and change deleterious stereotyping.

## Changing How Services are Purchased

Change in the ways foundations, businesses, and governments work with nonprofits is needed to ensure that we have a geographically distributed and culturally diverse delivery system for health, housing and human services, arts and culture, employment services, and other nonprofit missions.

When governments, foundations, or businesses want to buy services or expertise from a for-profit company, they use bidding and contracting processes that assume the purchaser will pay for all the contractor’s costs, including indirect and overhead, and that the contractor will make a reasonable profit. They don’t expect the contractor to find someone else to pay part of the cost or volunteers to deliver the service. They would never consider restricting how the contractor can use their payments.

Since 1945, Washington State has ensured that employees working on publicly funded projects receive a fair wage. Federal, state, and local governments pay prevailing wages based on collectively bargained wage agreements and salary surveys. They do this to ensure that government purchasing does not drive down wages.

Philanthropy and federal, state, and other local governments can join with King County to achieve this result. A key strategy is to address the way contracting practices contribute to the four challenges:

- Simplify applications and provide application assistance.
- Ask for budgets that include all direct, indirect, overhead costs so you can be sure the organization understands the full cost of the services they are contracting to deliver.
- Provide contracts/grants for more than one year.
- Build in payment escalators to allow for salary increases needed to keep employees at median wage or better.

- Adjust the annual payment for expenses like insurance, health benefits, and compliance costs that often increase more rapidly than the overall cost of living.
- Reduce burdensome reporting requirements not directly related to services volume/quality.

Government agencies can attempt to align their practices to the [recommendations](#) of the Nonprofit Government Contracting Coalition organized by the Nonprofit Association of Washington. Many of these recommendations are already used by government when contracting with for-profit businesses.

## Increasing Funding for Community Needs

We are grateful to the King County Veterans, Seniors & Human Services Levy for having the awareness and the foresight to commission this study and the King County Nonprofit Wage & Benefits Survey.

As stated by Leon Richardson, King County Department of Community and Human Services Adult Services Division Director, we need to work together to ensure that the “nonprofit workforce is strong and our community is one that invests in the people who help our communities thrive.”

King County has made direct investments that support community-based nonprofits and has gained voter approval of large initiatives, including Best Starts for Kids and the Veterans, Seniors, and Human Services Levy, which is supporting this research. These initiatives have made a big difference in services available to the community, but additional investment is needed to bring nonprofit salaries in line with those in related fields like education, healthcare, philanthropy, and government.

These five proposals could increase nonprofit funding:

1. Establish a revolving loan fund to “float” reimbursed contracts. Many capable smaller organizations do not have the reserves to wait 2-6 months for payment.
2. Increase public budgets with the explicit goal of improving nonprofit salaries/benefits and maintaining services.

3. Businesses and foundations can advocate for additional taxes that support nonprofit services.
4. Businesses can increase donations, discounts, and in-kind support for nonprofits.
5. The federal government can require higher payouts from foundations and require donor-advised funds to be paid out within 15 years.

In 2022, the 50 top philanthropists in the US gave [78% of their \\$25 billion in charitable gifts](#) to foundations or donor advised funds. This demonstrates the “charity double-whammy” impacting nonprofits. The federal government lost billions in taxes that would have been paid on this wealth and could have been used for community needs. At the same time, the actual community benefit of these donations is dramatically reduced since most of the funds were tied up in foundations which have a 5% payout requirement and donor-advised funds which are not required to ever be paid out.



## What Nonprofits Can Do

Nonprofits need to take action when they can to respond to the feedback in this report from survey participants. Most require management focus but are not costly to implement.

If your organization has at least five survey participants, you will receive a customized report showing the results for your organization.

Read through the report for more insight into each of these dimensions:

- Client Services
- Job
- Supervisor
- Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA)
- Workplace Culture
- Compensation and Benefits

Consider the following “top ten” recommendations:

1. Make [the living wage](#) your minimum wage.
2. Provide each employee with a total rewards statement that includes the value of all their benefits and paid time off.
3. Ensure that every employee has an annual review that discusses their professional development. Provide opportunities to learn new skills or expand their role.
4. Post jobs internally before posting externally.
5. Discuss your challenges with staff recruitment and retention and managing workloads in every conversation with funders, elected officials, business leaders, and donors.

6. When seeking funding from the government, foundations, and donors, show the total cost of services, including overhead, program administration, and benefit costs.
7. Be more intentional in communications with employees so each person understands how they directly contribute toward the mission, how their pay is benchmarked, and what the organization is doing to improve pay and working conditions.
8. Remote work and social distancing have frayed organizational cultures. Find ways to ensure that employees experience a strong sense of belonging.
9. Retaining staff requires focusing on relationships. A strong relationship with coworkers or a supervisor can support employee retention.
10. The easiest way to fill a position is to constantly “re-recruit” the person in the job.

Read [The Great Resignations Impact on Nonprofits and What To Do About It](#) by Stephen King, President and CEO of Growthforce.

For more information on compensation and human resources practices, visit [Putting People First](#) on the 501 Commons website. This page links to this report, the King County Nonprofit Wage & Benefits Report, the online 501 Compensation Tracker, resources on human resources topics, and 501 Commons’ Learning Connections Catalog and Career Resources.

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# I. SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS



# I. Survey Highlights

King County partnered with 501 Commons to conduct the 2023 King County Employee Engagement Survey in conjunction with a nonprofit Wage & Benefits Survey. These surveys were first administered in 2021. The 2023 Employee Engagement Survey results are surprisingly similar to the 2021 results. However, we will point out interesting and potentially actionable trends.

Investopedia defines engagement as the

**“level of enthusiasm and dedication a worker feels toward their job.”**

The King County Nonprofit Employee Engagement Survey seeks to understand how people feel about their jobs and how likely they are to remain with their organizations despite the abundant options within and outside the nonprofit sector. An engaged employee brings enthusiasm and dedication to their job and organization. Increasing employee engagement will help build a culture of belonging and motivate people to put extra effort into their work.

501 Commons has provided engagement surveys, called “climate surveys,” to individual organizations for many years. Thanks to our partnership with the King County Veterans, Seniors & Human Services Levy, we could offer the survey and this report for free to all King County nonprofits.

The survey identifies factors linked to high employee engagement, attracting and retaining staff, and producing robust client services. The 2023 survey is almost identical to the one used in 2021 – the only significant change was the addition of more statements regarding Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA).

This report is a companion to the [2023 King County Nonprofit Wage & Benefits Report](#). By reviewing the results of both reports, you can identify management and compensation strategies that can increase employee engagement and staff retention.

The [Glossary of Terms](#) defines specialized and technical terms in this report.

## 1,233 Employees Participated

We want to thank the 1,233 people, representing a minimum of 263 organizations, who participated in the 2023 survey. This is a 5% increase over the 2021 survey.

The 2023 King County Nonprofit Employee Engagement Survey was open to anyone who works for a nonprofit organization located in or serving people in King County. During a four-month campaign, we directly contacted 9,787 nonprofit staff members. The survey link was available online and shared through 501 Commons and King County newsletters, listservs, targeted emails, blog posts, and social media. Information about the survey was shared with coalitions, associations, funders, and businesses that provide services to nonprofits.

While survey participants are from nonprofits with a broad array of missions and sizes, care should be taken to avoid assuming that the survey results represent all the sentiments of every King County nonprofit employee.

- The 1,233 survey participants represent organizations ranging from fewer than five employees to more than a thousand from various fields of service. A third of the participants (33%) are from organizations with 100–999 employees. Less than a third (28%) are from smaller organizations with 6–25 employees.

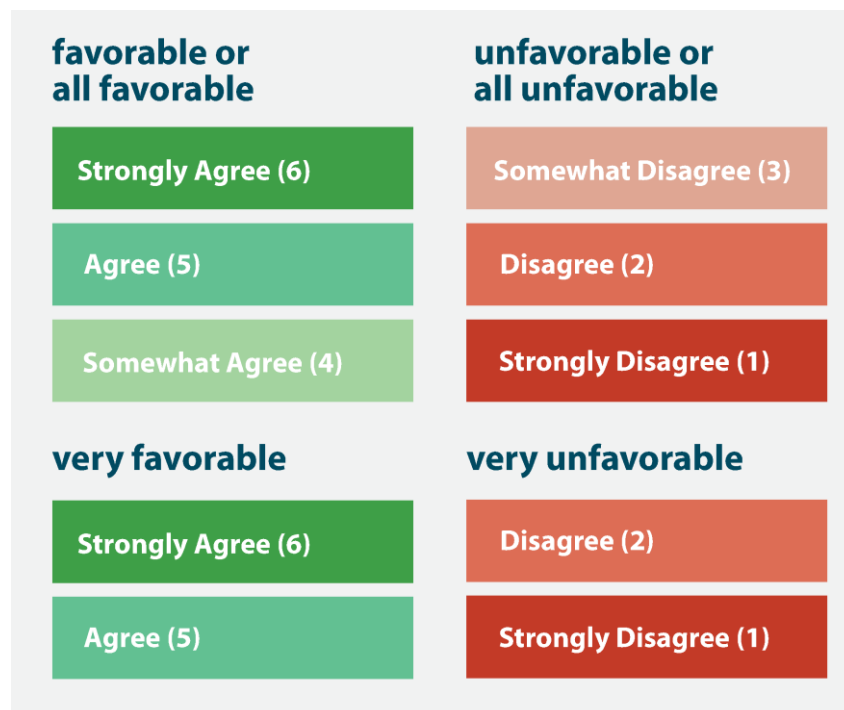
- The demographic makeup of the survey participants is similar to 2021. For example:
  - 67% identify as female (72% in 2021)
  - 19% identify as male (also 19% in 2021)
  - 4% identify as non-binary (5% in 2021)
- 56% of participants identify as heterosexual or straight (58% in 2021). 25% recorded their sexual orientation as LGBTQ (24% in 2021). Notably, a high percentage of participants (19%) preferred not to say or did not answer the sexual orientation question in 2023.
- The racial makeup of participants aligns with the 2020 census figures for King County. American Indian/Alaska Native comprise 2%, Asian Americans comprise 13%, Black/African Americans comprise 7%, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders comprise 1%, and 57% are white. More than 5% of participants indicate two or more races. See [Appendix B](#) for more on the demographic makeup of the survey participants.

When the number of participants sharing a demographic characteristic reached 10%, a demographic analysis of the survey data was performed to identify any significant differences.

## How to Read the Survey Results

Participants responded to the statements in the survey on a 6-point Likert Scale of Favorability. While participants selected options on a scale from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, this report often uses a numerical scale to refer to the favorability ratings. Most survey scores were positive (4, 5, or 6). The 6-point Likert Scale of Favorability is particularly effective when the responses are overwhelmingly positive because it allows you to see the strength of the positive responses (see [Appendix A](#) for more information on methodology).

Given the highly favorable responses overall, organizations should identify opportunities to move people who responded with “somewhat agree” (4) to “agree” and “strongly agree” (5 or 6).



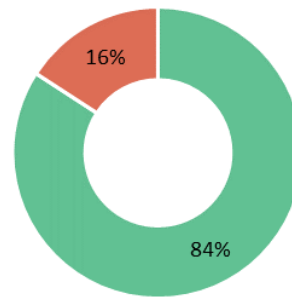
## Employees are Generally Positive

As was the case in 2021, participants rate their experience working at their nonprofit as overwhelmingly positive, with 84% favorable responses (compared to 86% in 2021).

This means when the responses to all statements are taken into consideration, participants answered “Somewhat Agree” (4), “Agree” (5), or “Strongly Agree” (6) 84% of the time. Compared to similar engagement surveys, this is a very positive outcome.

The infographic below lists factors that lead to positive employee feedback and practices that make employees dissatisfied with their jobs.

Overall Favorability  
(All Questions)



■ All Favorable (4,5,6) ■ All Unfavorable (1,2,3)

### FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SATISFACTION & DISSATISFACTION



#### satisfied employees

- » Proud of their work
- » Positive impact
- » Respected
- » Flexible work day
- » Empowered to make decisions



#### dissatisfied employees

- » Low pay, for some below the living wage
- » Uneven availability of health care and sick leave
- » Low or no contribution to retirement
- » Limited opportunities for advancement
- » Lack of clear career ladders

## Request your Organization's Report

If your organization had five or more survey participants, request your nonprofit's results by contacting [info@501commons.org](mailto:info@501commons.org). Subject: "Employee Engagement Survey."

You will be able to compare the responses of your staff with the full King County results.



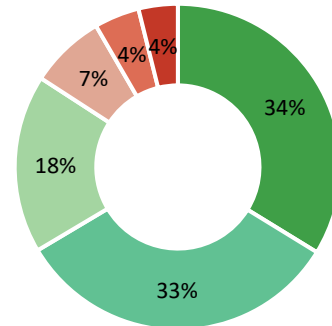
## Detailed Responses by Survey Statements

The responses were similar to 2021. The graph shows that:

- Slightly less participants (67%) rate survey statements as Very Favorable (ratings of 5, 6) in 2023. These responses are strongly positive. This result was 69% in 2021.
- We can also see that 18% rate the survey statements as Somewhat Agree (rating of 4). This response suggests some hesitation to fully agree. This number was similar in 2021 (17%).

Nonprofits are encouraged to focus on understanding and strengthening the ‘weak’ positive responses (where there is a high All Favorable rating but a lower Very favorable or Strongly Agree rating). Moving people from Agree to Strongly Agree can result in the successful retention of a valued team member.

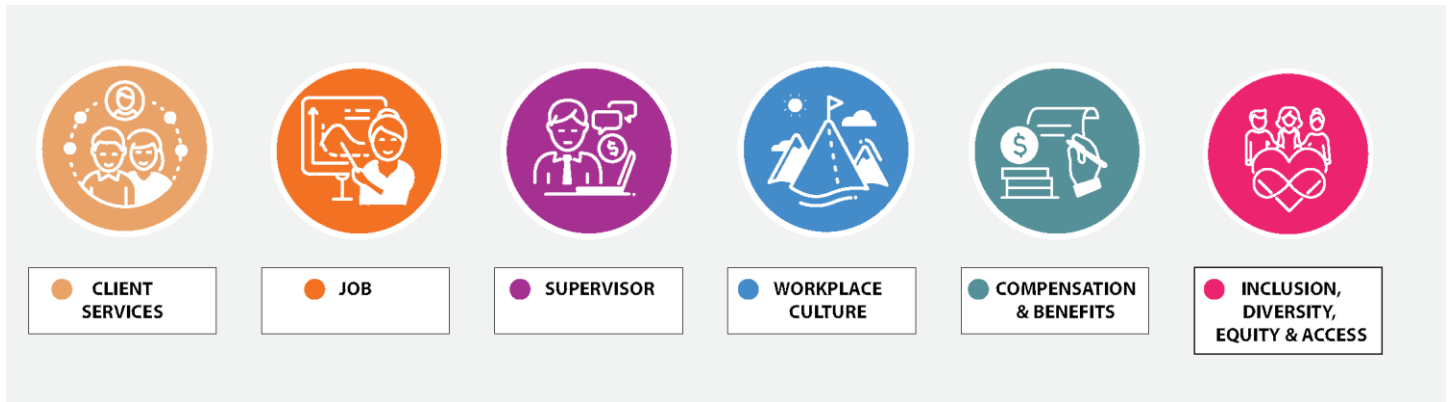
## Detailed Responses for All Statements



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

## The Dimensions of Employee Engagement

The survey results offer insights into the participants’ experiences, opinions, and preferences. Statements were broken down into six dimensions:



## Top 10 Highest-Rated Statements

The chart below shows the difference between employees responding with unambiguously positive responses (Very Favorable) and weaker positive responses (All Favorable) for the ten highest-rated statements. Although we are highlighting the top ten, it is notable that 20 statements received more than 90% All-Favorable Ratings (see the full list in [Appendix C](#)).

Ratings are still relatively high when only viewing the Very Favorable rating and omitting the Somewhat Agree rating.

Top 10 Highest-Rated Statements	Dimension	All Favorable (4,5,6)	Very Favorable (5,6)
51. Clients feel that my organization's/program's services are valuable.	CLIENT SERVICES	97%	84%
8. I am making a positive impact in my community.	JOB	97%	84%
6. I know how my job contributes to the organization's mission.	JOB	96%	89%
21. My supervisor allows flexibility during my workday.	SUPERVISOR	95%	88%
50. My organization's/program's services are consistent with our mission.	CLIENT SERVICES	94%	82%
47. My organization/program responds to the needs of our clients.	CLIENT SERVICES	94%	77%
48. My organization/program delivers high quality services.	CLIENT SERVICES	94%	80%
23. My supervisor treats me with respect.	SUPERVISOR	94%	86%
46. My organization/program understands the needs of our clients.	CLIENT SERVICES	94%	77%
3. I understand my role within the organization.	JOB	94%	81%

Interestingly, nine (9) of the top ten survey statements in 2023 were also in the top ten in 2021. In both years, participants gave positive ratings to statements about the valuable services their organizations offer. That said, the two statements in the top 10 with the lowest *Very Favorable* rating (77%) are related to understanding and responding to clients' needs. Participants gave strong ratings for their work positively impacting the community. This latter result is striking, as "making a difference" is among the primary reasons employees work for and stay with nonprofits.

Organizations know how important it is to share client impact stories with donors and funders. It is more important, perhaps, to share with employees. Wanting to "make a difference" is one of the employees' most powerful motivations for choosing the nonprofit sector. Nonprofits should let their employees know that they are succeeding!

The statement "My supervisor allows flexibility during my workday" has one of the highest *All Favorable* ratings in the survey. This is similar to 2021, when working remotely was the norm, so this flexibility has continued into 2023. Allowing employees flexibility can also contribute to lower employee turnover.

## Top 10 Lowest-Rated Statements

In the 2023 survey, only four of the 10 lowest-rated statements were the same as in 2021. This chart shows the difference in the All Favorable and Very Favorable ratings for the 10 lowest-rated statements. Notably, even the lower-rated statements are still quite positive overall. For example, the lowest-rated statement, “*My organization shares how pay ranges are established, and pay rates are set,*” had favorable ratings of almost 60%.

Ratings drop at least 20 percentage points when looking at the Very Favorable ratings.

Top 10 Lowest-Rated Statements	Dimension	All Favorable (4,5,6)	Very Favorable (5,6)
53. My organization shares how pay ranges are established and pay rates are set.	COMP & BENEFITS	59%	39%
34. My organization’s decision-making structure is clear to me.	CULTURE	67%	45%
45. There is a clear and widely known procedure for employees to report complaints at my workplace.	CULTURE	67%	46%
54. I am being paid equitably, relative to similar jobs in our sector.	COMP & BENEFITS	67%	43%
32. My organization offers opportunities for career advancement.	CULTURE	68%	41%
25. My supervisor discusses opportunities with me for career development.	SUPERVISOR	70%	49%
52. I understand my organization’s pay practices (also known as a compensation philosophy).	COMP & BENEFITS	71%	51%
66. My organization’s leadership team has representation of persons from diverse backgrounds.	IDEA	73%	52%
15. My organization has adequate facilities, equipment, technology, and data systems to perform our work.	JOB	75%	51%
36. Important information is communicated to staff in a timely manner.	CULTURE	75%	52%

Interestingly, about half of these lower-rated statements deal with how information and policies are communicated. For example, “*My organization’s decision-making structure is clear to me*” was rated unfavorably by 33% of participants, and 25% were unfavorable in response to “*Important information is communicated to staff in a timely manner.*”

Nonprofit employers will not be surprised that employees are less satisfied with their wages and benefits, transparency in pay practices, and career advancement.

Low pay in the nonprofit sector is related to structural inequities like ageism, gender bias, classism, and racism. Most nonprofit workers are women, many workers come to the field early in their careers, and many organizations are based in and serving BIPOC communities. Like any structural inequity, the nonprofit sector cannot upend these circumstances on its own. A concerted effort by nonprofits, government, philanthropy, and the business sector will be necessary to ensure we cultivate the nonprofit workforce we need.

### Transparency in pay practices

These lowest-scoring statements include some areas where nonprofit employers can more easily address their employees' dissatisfaction. Concerns about equitable pay can be addressed with clear and transparent pay policies that are communicated widely.

Employees who doubt that they are being paid equitably within the sector may be able to find comparable salary data in the 2023 King County Nonprofit Wage & Benefits Report. The results are also publicly available through the [501 Compensation Tracker](#) on the 501 Commons website.



To address the concerns of people who are not confident that they are being paid equitably relative to comparable jobs in the sector, we encourage employers to have an equitably administered compensation system, audit salaries to ensure everyone is treated fairly, and be transparent about compensation practices.

### Support career advancement and personal growth

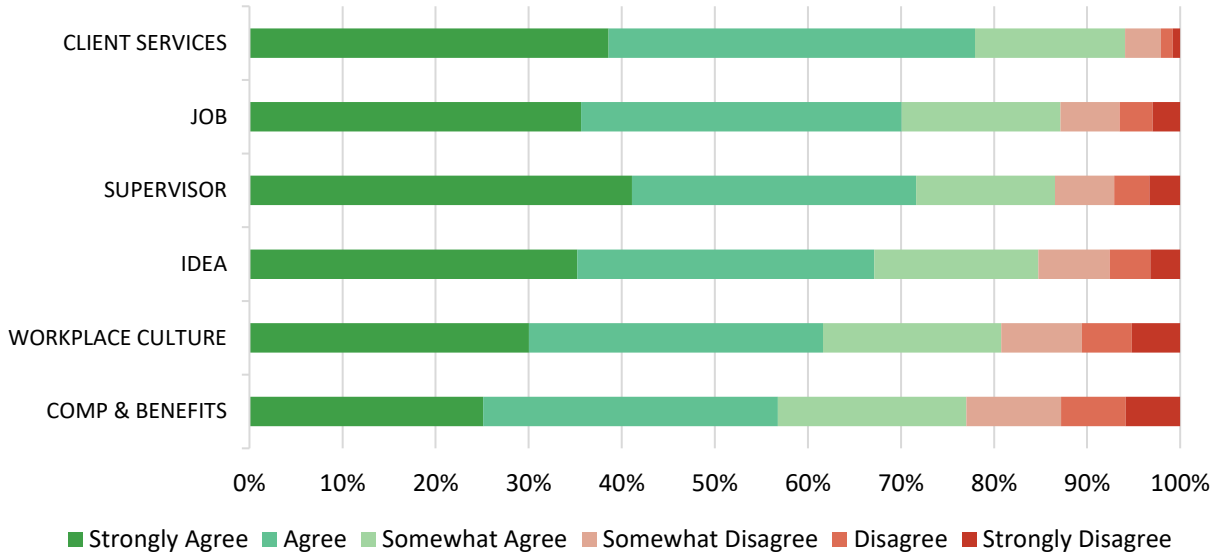
The statement “*My supervisor discusses opportunities with me for career advancement*” was rated as 30% unfavorable, and the statement “*My organization offers opportunities for career advancement*” was rated 32% unfavorable.

Best practices to support employee development are to conduct annual performance reviews that include a discussion of professional development opportunities and pathways for career advancement both within the organization and outside of it. Professional development does not have to be costly. Let your employees know about opportunities by sharing sign-up information and listings from ArtsFund, Nonprofit Association of Washington (NAWA), [501 Commons](#), and [other organizations offering learning opportunities](#). [The Learning Connections Catalog](#) on the 501 Commons website contains listings from organizations and trainers throughout the community and national professional development programs.

## Overall Dimension Scores

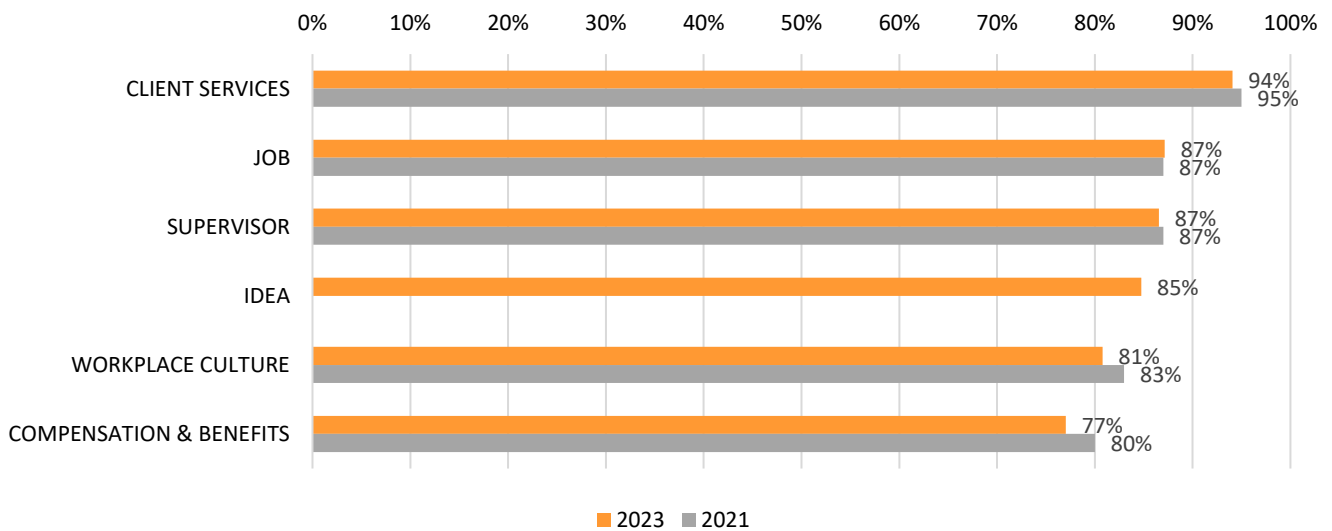
Participants continue to report favorable responses that are unusually high for similar surveys. Reviewing the survey statements for each dimension deepens our understanding of the results.

### Favorability Scores by Dimension 2023

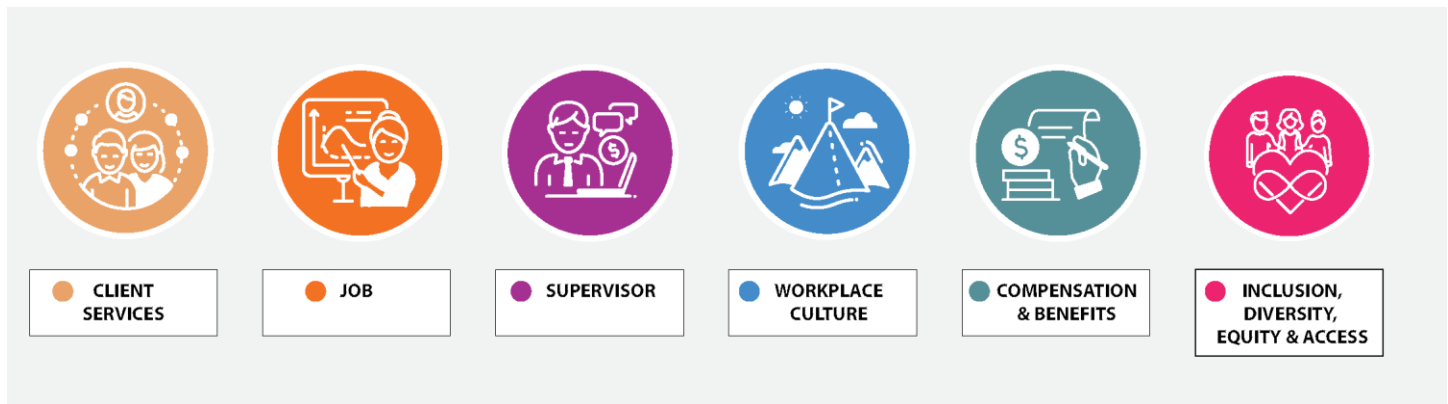


Notably, the dimension results are essentially the same as the 2021 results. Given the increased cost of living since 2021, it is not surprising that the largest decline in favorability is in the Compensation and Benefits dimension. IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access) was added in 2023.

### Favorability by Dimension 2023 vs. 2021



## Highlights by Dimension



### Client Services



The highest-rated dimension is Client Services, with 94% All Favorable ratings (Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Agree). Moreover, the statements in this dimension are rated Very Favorable (Strongly Agree, Agree) by 78% of participants. Participants feel positive about their organization's ability to meet client needs.

Overall ratings indicate that participants believe their organization provides high-quality services consistent with its mission. This is significant because most participants in this survey (and other similar surveys) report joining the nonprofit sector to make a difference in the community. A strong connection to the mission is a crucial factor in retaining employees. These results are aligned with the 2021 results.

### Job

For the Job dimension, participants report that they understand their role in the organization and how their job contributes to the mission. As in 2021, the All Favorable rating for this dimension is 87%. In 2023, the highest-rated statement in Job is *"I am making a positive impact in my community,"* with 97% overall favorable ratings. More than 90% of participants know how their job contributes to the organization's mission and understand their role and what is expected.



All Favorable ratings drop to 75% and 76% for having adequate equipment and technology to do their jobs and having reasonable workloads and caseloads.



### Supervisor

Participants are very positive about their supervisor providing flexibility, showing respect, and supporting a good balance between work and life, with All Favorable ratings of 90% or above by all participants. These results are nearly identical to 2021.

The lowest-rated statement in the Supervisor dimension is, *"My supervisor discusses opportunities with me for career advancement."* This statement received only 70% All Favorable (the Very Favorable ratings were only 49%).

## Workplace Culture

Workplace Culture spans a wide range of topics, from communication, fair treatment, and feeling valued to decision-making and hiring practices. A review of the statements in this dimension revealed that overall favorability ratings fell below 80% on six (6) of the 18 statements.



- *“My organization’s decision-making structure is clear to me”* (67% All Favorable)
- *“There is a clear and widely known procedure for reporting complaints”* (67% All Favorable)
- *“My organization offers opportunities for career advancement”* (68% All Favorable)
- *“Important information is communicated to staff in a timely manner”* (75% All Favorable)
- *“I can freely express my concerns to management at my organization”* (78% All Favorable)
- *“People are treated fairly in my organization”* (78% All Favorable)

Three of these statements highlight opportunities for organizations to increase transparency and better communicate policies and information to staff.

The lower ratings for fair treatment and freely expressing opinions should be explored by supervisors with their employees. There could be generational factors that influence this topic. Positional differences in employee treatment may be regarded as the norm by older employees but seen as unfair by younger employees. Nonprofits can explore ways and norms for expressing opinions or make clear how employees can report complaints.

## Compensation and Benefits



Not surprisingly, the lowest-rated dimension is Compensation and Benefits. While it is typical that this is the lowest rated dimension, 77% of participants rate the statements as All Favorable. This finding results from much more favorable scores for the benefits statements, with equitable pay rated less favorably. These results are nearly identical to 2021.

There is an opportunity to improve employee satisfaction in this area by increasing transparency in how wages are set:

- For the statement *“My organization shares how pay ranges are established,”* more than 40% rate this unfavorably.
- For statements relating to pay, 33% rate the statement, *“I am being paid equitably, relative to similar jobs in our sector,”* as overall Unfavorable.
- 29% rate the statement, *“I understand my organization’s pay practices (also known as pay philosophy),”* as overall Unfavorable.

## Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA)

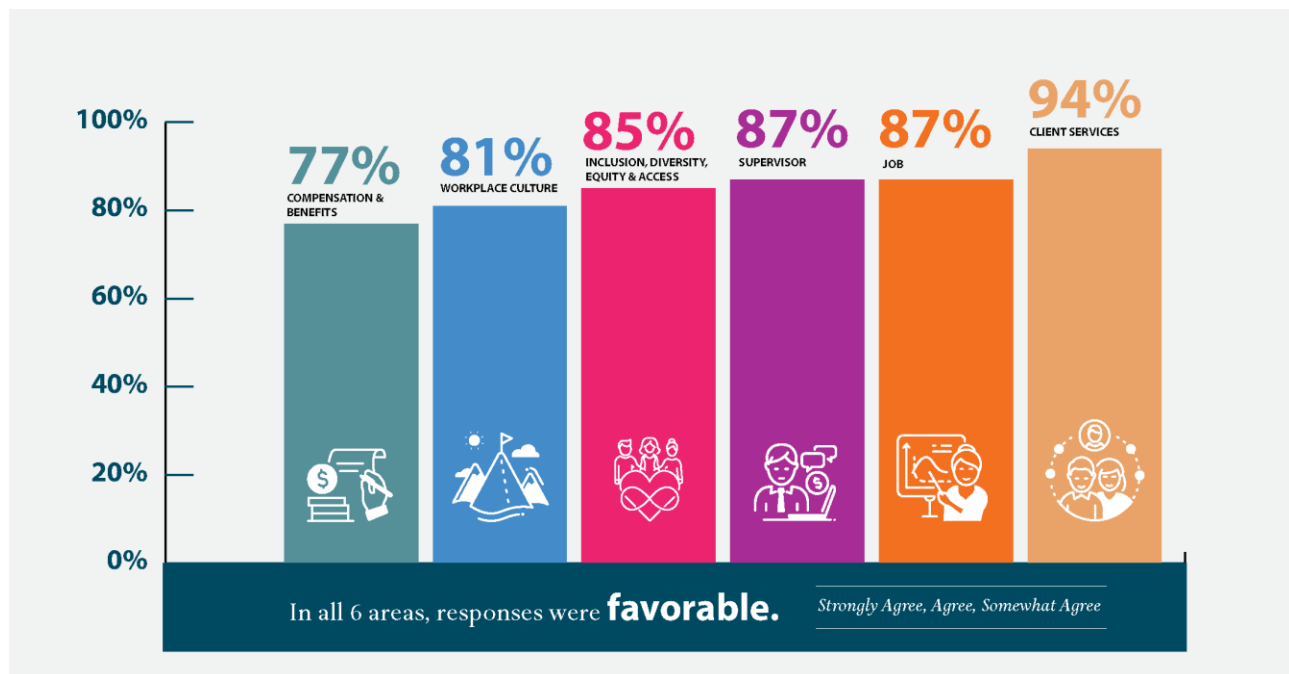
The 2023 survey includes an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) section. While the 2021 survey had some statements related to IDEA, they were scattered among the dimensions. Nonprofits are interested in assessing employee sentiments about IDEA to improve their policies, practices, and ability to provide an inclusive work environment. This dimension is rated 85% favorable, with only 15% unfavorable.



Ninety percent (90%) of participants are favorable in response to *“My organization acknowledges, accepts, and values differences among people,”* and nearly the same (89%) agree that their organization values employees of all ages.

Similarly, participants are 87% favorable that their workplace promotes and welcomes conversations on IDEA issues. Likewise, participants are 87% favorable that their organizations take action to support IDEA initiatives.

The participants are least favorable (73%) that their organization’s leadership team has representation of persons from diverse backgrounds.



## Demographic Differences

About the same number of participants participated in 2023 as in 2021. There are some demographic differences in the results. However, there are no significant differences between majority-minority groups. Because this is a sample of 1,233 participants, many demographic groupings have too few participants to draw valid or reliable conclusions. Many of the demographic categories are represented by fewer than the 10% of participants that the authors established as a reporting threshold. It was possible to report some information for groups where participation was higher:

- Notably, participants who chose “Prefer not to say” or left demographic questions blank make up 10% or more in most categories studied.
- There are few differences between groups on gender when comparing males to females, with 5% higher favorable ratings by men for statements about culture.



- Those who chose not to identify their gender (or didn't answer) are generally less favorable in their ratings of all dimensions.
- The favorability ratings for Black/African American/African participants (82 participants and 7% of the dataset) are within 1–2% of the other participants in all dimensions except **Client Services** (5% less favorable) and **Supervisor** (4% less favorable).
- Those who identified as multi-or-biracial (69 participants or 6%) are less favorable than others. They rate **IDEA** as 9% less favorable and **Workplace Culture** as 6% less favorable.
- The favorability ratings for Asian and Asian Americans (155 participants or 13%) are at least 4% more favorable on all the dimensions, including 11% more favorable on **Workplace Culture** and **IDEA** and 12% more favorable on **Client Services**.
- Participants who selected 'Prefer not to say' on the race question gave 8–11% lower favorable ratings on all dimensions.
- Non-binary participants (54 participants or 4%) rate all dimensions **except Compensation and Benefits** less favorably than other participants. The difference is most significant for **IDEA, Workplace Culture, and Client Services** (11%, 7%, and 7% less favorable, respectively).
- Older participants (50 and above) are more favorable about all dimensions than other participants. Those aged 21–29 are 7% less favorable regarding **Compensation and Benefits**. Those who 'Preferred not to say' on the age question are less positive on all dimensions.

## Size of the Organization

There was a difference in dimension ratings based on the size of the employer organization. This was particularly true for Very Favorable ratings (5 and 6).

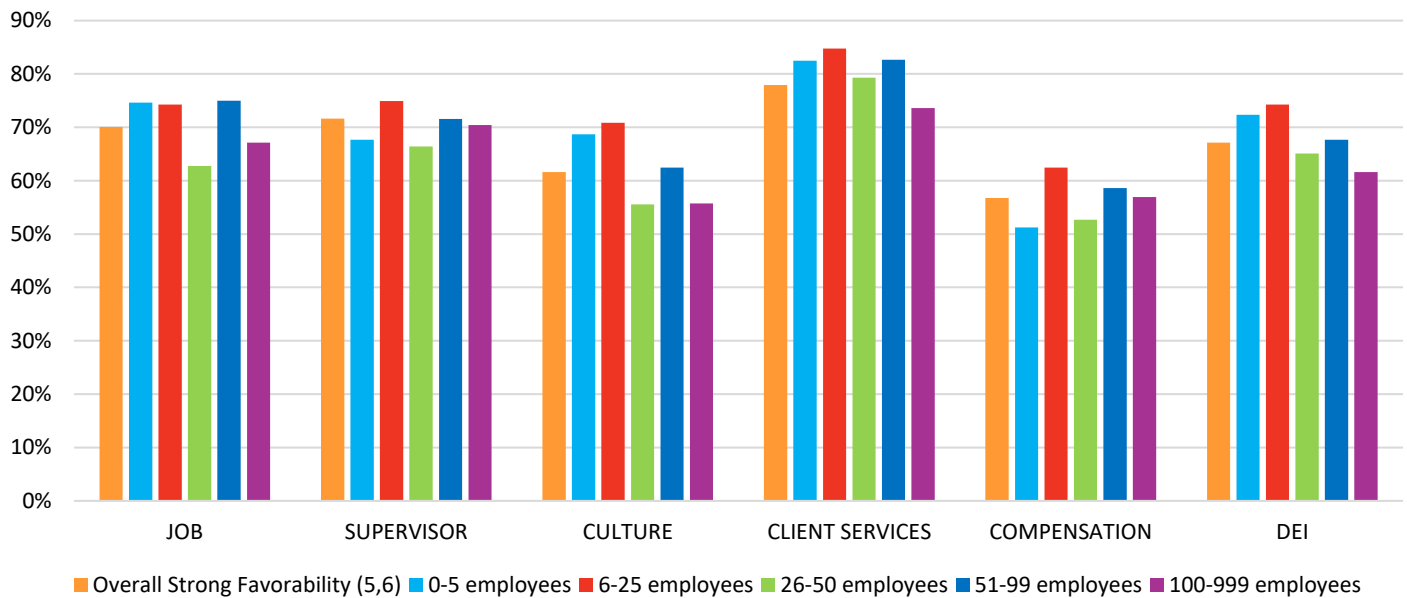
- Organization size between 26 and 50 employees appear least favorable on the dimensions, particularly Job, Culture, and Compensation and Benefits.
- Job, Workplace Culture, Client Services, and IDEA are rated more favorably (4–9 points) by employees in organizations of 25 or fewer employees.
- Those in organizations with between 100–999 employees are less favorable on Workplace Culture (4 points), Client Services (6 points), and IDEA (6 points) but show an average favorability on Compensation and Benefits.
- The largest organizations are least favorable but are less than 4% (43 participants) of the sample, so it is difficult to draw reliable conclusions.

The breakdown in size of the organization where the participants worked is below:

Size of Organization	Percentage of Participants
0–5 employees	5%
6–25 employees	29%
26–50 employees	11%
51–99 employees	10%
100–999 employees	35%
Greater than 1,000 employees	4%
Unsure/Don't know	7%
N=1,180	

As organizations get larger, they need to ensure that processes and procedures are in place so that employees continue to understand how their work is linked to the mission (which is why most people work in nonprofits), particularly for those with 26–50 employees. Organizations of this size cannot rely on informal communication and policies. Still, they may be too small to have the resources to implement more formal processes. It is important to try implementing policies, procedures, and communication channels in place of informal processes that will help staff members see how they are integral to the mission and success of the organization.

Strong Favorability (5,6) per Organization Size Compared to Overall Strong Favorability (5,6)



‘Don’t know’ and ‘Greater than 1,000 employees’ are not included in this visual. ‘Greater than 1,000 employees’ has too few respondents to make valid comparisons.

## Attracting and Retaining Nonprofit Employees

Employees report working in nonprofits to make a difference and support important causes. They enjoy the culture of nonprofit organizations. They also believe it best utilizes their skills, education, training, etc.

Participants report that the top three reasons they work for a nonprofit are: Make a difference/give back to the community (82%); Best utilize my skills, education, training, experience, and abilities (64%); The culture of nonprofit organizations (54%)

As in 2021, commuting has little impact in this context. Almost three-fourths of the participants who commute to work report a reasonable commute time. Employers can help employees see the connections between their work and the impact the organization is having.

- Communicate regularly on how your organization is making a difference in the community. Focus on how employees' work is having an impact. Include metrics that demonstrate tangible success.
- Link performance evaluations and job descriptions to meeting the mission of the organization.
- Work with employees, when possible, to best utilize their skills and experience. Provide avenues for personal growth, skill-building, or pathways for job advancement. Discuss career growth and development with employees regularly.

Creating a culture that allows employees to be authentic at work requires you to cultivate a sense of belonging and support team members to do their best work. The following recommendations highlight ways to attract, engage, and retain staff:

**Client Services:** When hiring staff, ensure candidates have a strong personal connection to the organization's mission. Build that connection by sharing success stories, celebrating program results, and engaging staff in efforts to plan for greater impact. Organizations with committed employees tend to retain staff longer.

**Compensation and Benefits:** Communicate the organization's pay philosophy, pay practices, pay grades, and how pay increases are administered. Organizations can ensure internal pay equity and external competitiveness with regularly scheduled pay audits and by comparing their internal pay structure with similar organizations. The [King County Nonprofit Wage & Benefits Report](#) offers such an opportunity for comparison.

**Supervisor:** An engaging leadership style that encourages positive staff/supervisor interaction is important. Every employee should be able to engage in professional development (e.g., coaching, skill-building, shadowing, and mentoring). Employee engagement and retention increase when employees feel they are learning and advancing their skills.

**Job:** To support employee morale and reduce burnout and turnover, provide adequate tools to do the job, and ensure a reasonable workload. Ask employees for their input on managing their workload (or caseload). Determine what additional tools they might need to be successful.

**Workplace Culture:** A key aspect of a strong culture is ensuring fair treatment for all people. Adopt and communicate a zero-tolerance policy to require swift action to address inappropriate behavior. Employers should have formal and informal processes to address potential issues. For example, a formal dispute resolution process or access to confidential reporting so employees can surface issues. Make sure these issues are followed through to resolution.

## Working from Home

The pandemic has had a major effect on where and how work is done.

For many organizations, the shift to working from home, at least part-time, has provided organizations with a competitive advantage for recruiting and retaining employees. In June 2023, a Forbes Advisor article reported that 98% of workers prefer to work remotely, at least part-time.

The responses to the Working from Home statement show the overall shift to work from home and a lot of variation in the arrangements and benefits within the sector.



- 37% of employees work from home 2–4 days a week, and only 17% report always working from home.
- 64% report all-employee meetings (in person or virtual) to help reduce isolation. 54% provide in-person or online social events. However, only 24% report that their supervisor discusses issues related to isolation or working from home.
- Employers did provide some benefits for those who work from home. 59% have options for hybrid meetings (in-person and online options).
- 58% report that they could work from home or in the office based on employee needs/wants.
- A little over half of participants have flexibility in work hours to accommodate responsibilities outside work (52%), and their employer supports work/life balance by limiting after-hours work (52%).
- Only 11% report that they were reimbursed for purchased services related to working from home, and 9% say that their employer has provided none of the benefits related to working from home.



## II. DETAILED RESULTS BY DIMENSION



## II. Detailed Results by Dimension

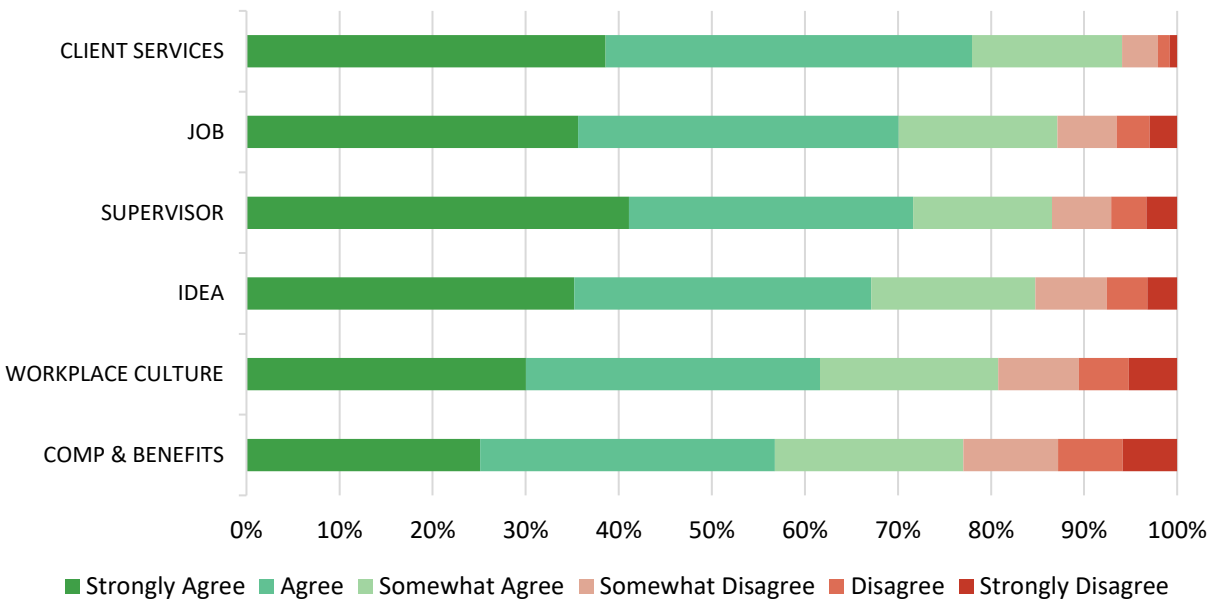
### Highest to Lowest Percentage of Favorable Responses

The results are shown from the highest to lowest percentage of rating favorability. There are two formats: the first chart shows the *overall* favorable and unfavorable ratings; the second chart shows *details* for the ratings in each dimension. The overall ratings are quite positive, with all dimensions rating 77% – 94% favorability.

The results for the dimension Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) are new in 2023. The remaining dimension scores are nearly identical for both 2021 and 2023. Only Compensation and Benefits changed by more than 1%, with the Favorable ratings dropping by 3%.

Dimension	Favorable Ratings (4,5,6)	Unfavorable Ratings (1,2,3)
Client Services	94%	6%
Job	87%	13%
Supervisor	87%	13%
IDEA	85%	15%
Culture	81%	19%
Compensation	77%	23%

Favorability Scores by Dimension





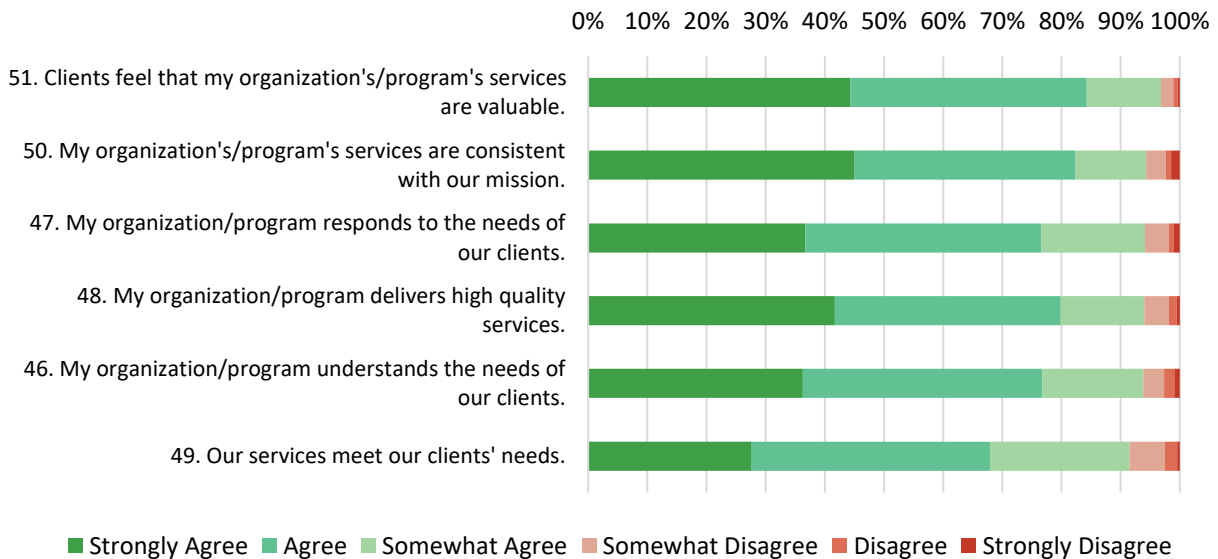
## Client Services

As was the case in 2021, the highest-rated dimension is Client Services, with 94% of participants rating the statements in this category as positive in 2023. The Client Services dimension is rated 7 percentage points higher than any other dimension. Participants are very favorable about client services being valuable and consistent with the organization’s mission. While all statements receive 90% or more overall favorable ratings, the Very Favorable ratings drop by as much as 24 percentage points. The lowest-rated statement is “Our services meet clients’ needs” (92% All Favorable and 68% Very Favorable). The participants who chose “Prefer not to Say” for race are 10 percentage points less favorable of the Client Services category.

Employees who strongly connect to the mission may be more likely to stay with the organization. Hiring people with an attraction to the mission is a key factor in retaining them.

Client Services Statements	All Favorable (4,5,6)	Very Favorable (5,6)
51. Clients feel that my organization’s/program’s services are valuable.	97%	84%
50. My organization’s/program’s services are consistent with our mission.	94%	82%
47. My organization/program responds to the needs of our clients.	94%	77%
48. My organization/program delivers high quality services.	94%	80%
46. My organization/program understands the needs of our clients.	94%	77%
49. Our services meet our clients’ needs.	92%	68%

### Detailed Client Services Dimension Results





## Job

Survey participants report that they are making a positive impact in the community, with 97% favorability. They understand their role and how their job contributes to the mission and gain satisfaction from their job. The statements relating to these factors are rated 90% or greater in favorability.

There are four statements that received favorable ratings in the 70% range:

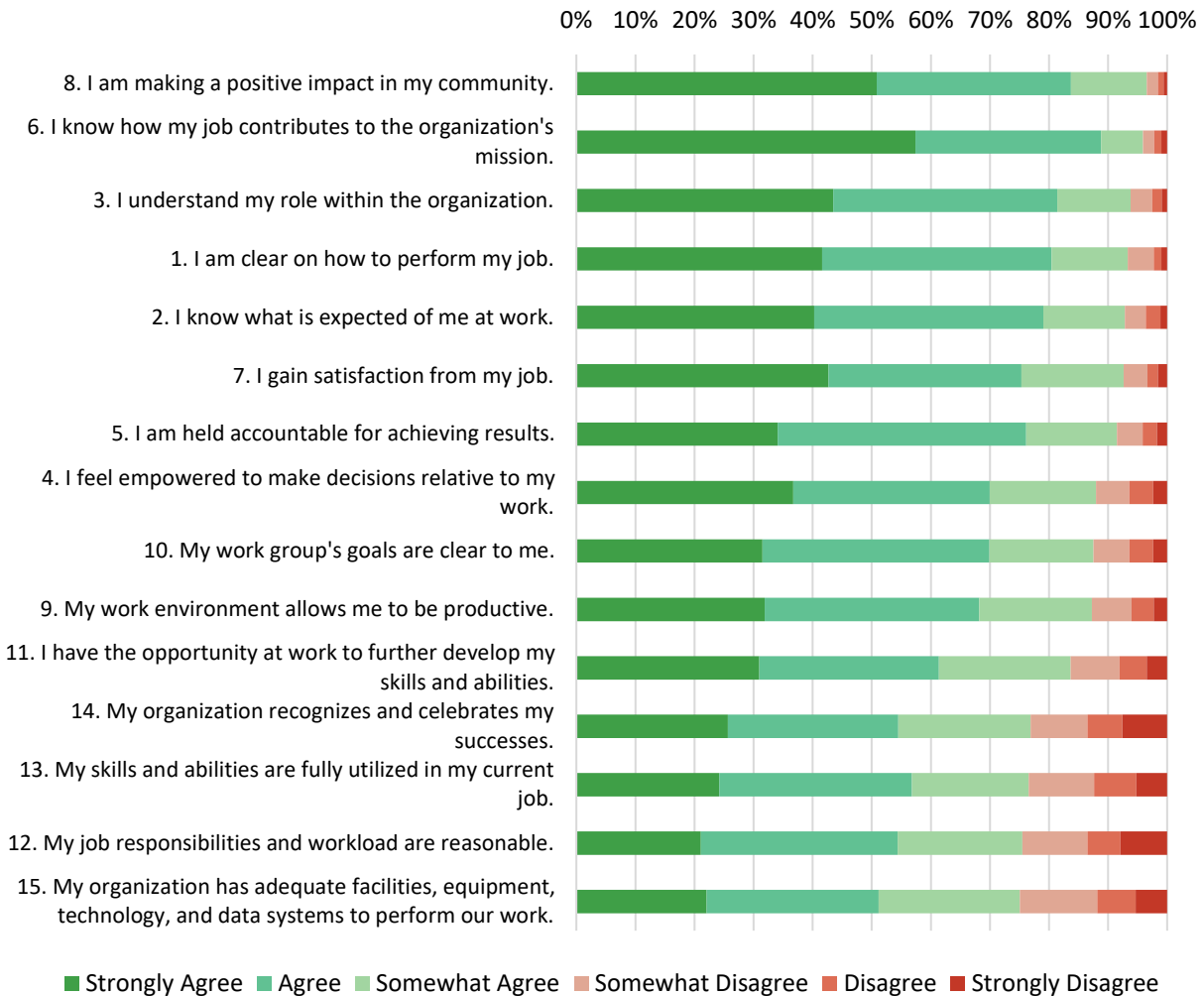
- *“My organization has adequate facilities, equipment, technology, and data systems to perform our work”* (75% All Favorable)
- *“My job responsibilities and workload are reasonable”* (76% All Favorable)
- *“My skills and abilities are fully utilized in my current job”* (77% All Favorable)
- *“My organization recognizes and celebrates my success”* (77% All Favorable)

Notably, the favorable scores drop when Somewhat Agree is omitted. In this case, the scores drop up to 24 percentage points. This indicates employers can improve satisfaction and retention by boosting performance in these areas through greater clarity and attention to the necessary resources. It is important to evaluate job design to ensure that it is reasonable and utilizes the person’s skills and that the employee’s successes are acknowledged. Having a reasonable workload and proper job tools are key retention factors.

Job Statements	All Favorable (4,5,6)	Very Favorable (5,6)
8. I am making a positive impact in my community.	97%	84%
6. I know how my job contributes to the organization’s mission.	96%	89%
3. I understand my role within the organization.	94%	81%
1. I am clear on how to perform my job.	93%	80%
2. I know what is expected of me at work.	93%	79%
7. I gain satisfaction from my job.	93%	75%
5. I am held accountable for achieving results.	91%	76%
4. I feel empowered to make decisions relative to my work.	88%	70%
10. My work group’s goals are clear to me.	88%	70%
9. My work environment allows me to be productive.	87%	68%
11. I have the opportunity at work to further develop my skills and abilities.	84%	61%
14. My organization recognizes and celebrates my successes.	77%	54%
13. My skills and abilities are fully utilized in my current job.	77%	57%
12. My job responsibilities and workload are reasonable.	76%	54%
15. My organization has adequate facilities, equipment, technology, and data systems to perform our work.	75%	51%



## Detailed Job Dimension Results



### Supervisor



Participants are very positive about their supervisor providing flexibility, showing respect, and supporting a good work/life balance. All participants' Favorable ratings for these statements are 90% or above. However, demographically, those who chose "Prefer not to Say" for race are 9 percentage points less favorable.

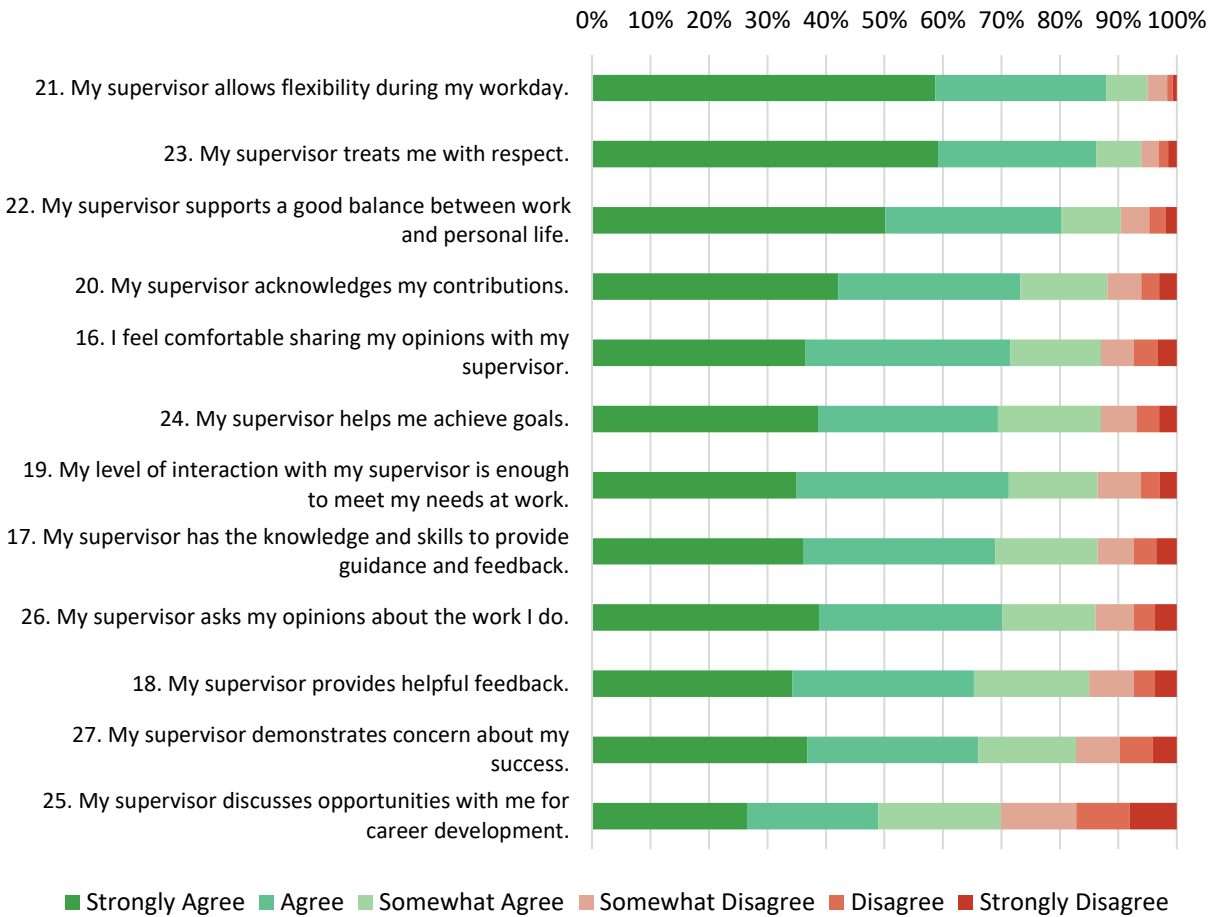
The lowest-rated statement in the Supervisor dimension continues to be "My supervisor discusses opportunities with me for career advancement," with 70% All Favorable (the ratings drop to 49% for the Very Favorable rating). Employees often leave for greater opportunity, spotlighting employee development as a key factor in retaining staff.

While not all nonprofits have robust career ladders, supervisors can provide on-the-job developmental activities, such as creating individual development plans, skill training, coaching, mentoring, developmental assignments, etc. Providing development opportunities to employees is a strong engagement and retention tool.

Below, you can see the percentage of All Favorable and Very Favorable responses for each of the statements. The second table shows you the detailed results, including unfavorable responses.

Supervisor Statements	All Favorable (4,5,6)	Very Favorable (5,6)
21. My supervisor allows flexibility during my workday.	95%	88%
23. My supervisor treats me with respect.	94%	86%
22. My supervisor supports a good balance between work and personal life.	90%	80%
20. My supervisor acknowledges my contributions.	88%	73%
16. I feel comfortable sharing my opinions with my supervisor.	87%	72%
24. My supervisor helps me achieve goals.	87%	69%
19. My level of interaction with my supervisor is enough to meet my needs at work.	86%	71%
17. My supervisor has the knowledge and skills to provide guidance and feedback.	86%	69%
26. My supervisor asks my opinions about the work I do.	86%	70%
18. My supervisor provides helpful feedback.	85%	65%
27. My supervisor demonstrates concern about my success.	83%	66%
25. My supervisor discusses opportunities with me for career development.	70%	49%

## Detailed Supervisor Dimension Results



## Workplace Culture

Workplace Culture spans a wide range of topics, from communication, fair treatment, and feeling valued to decision-making and hiring practices. In this arena, participants are most positive regarding:



- Their connection to the mission.
- Feeling supported by coworkers.

The All Favorable ratings in each of these areas are 90% or above. However, the totals for Agree (5) and Strongly Agree (6) are 16–18 percentage points lower. These ratings point to opportunities to strengthen awareness of the organization’s impact and develop ways for coworkers to provide mutual encouragement and support for the mission.

The remaining statements receive All Favorable ratings of 75% or greater, except for these three statements:

- “My organization offers opportunities for career advancement” (68% All Favorable)
- “There is a clear and widely known procedure for employees to report complaints at my workplace” (67% All Favorable)
- “My organization’s decision-making structure is clear to me” (67% All Favorable)

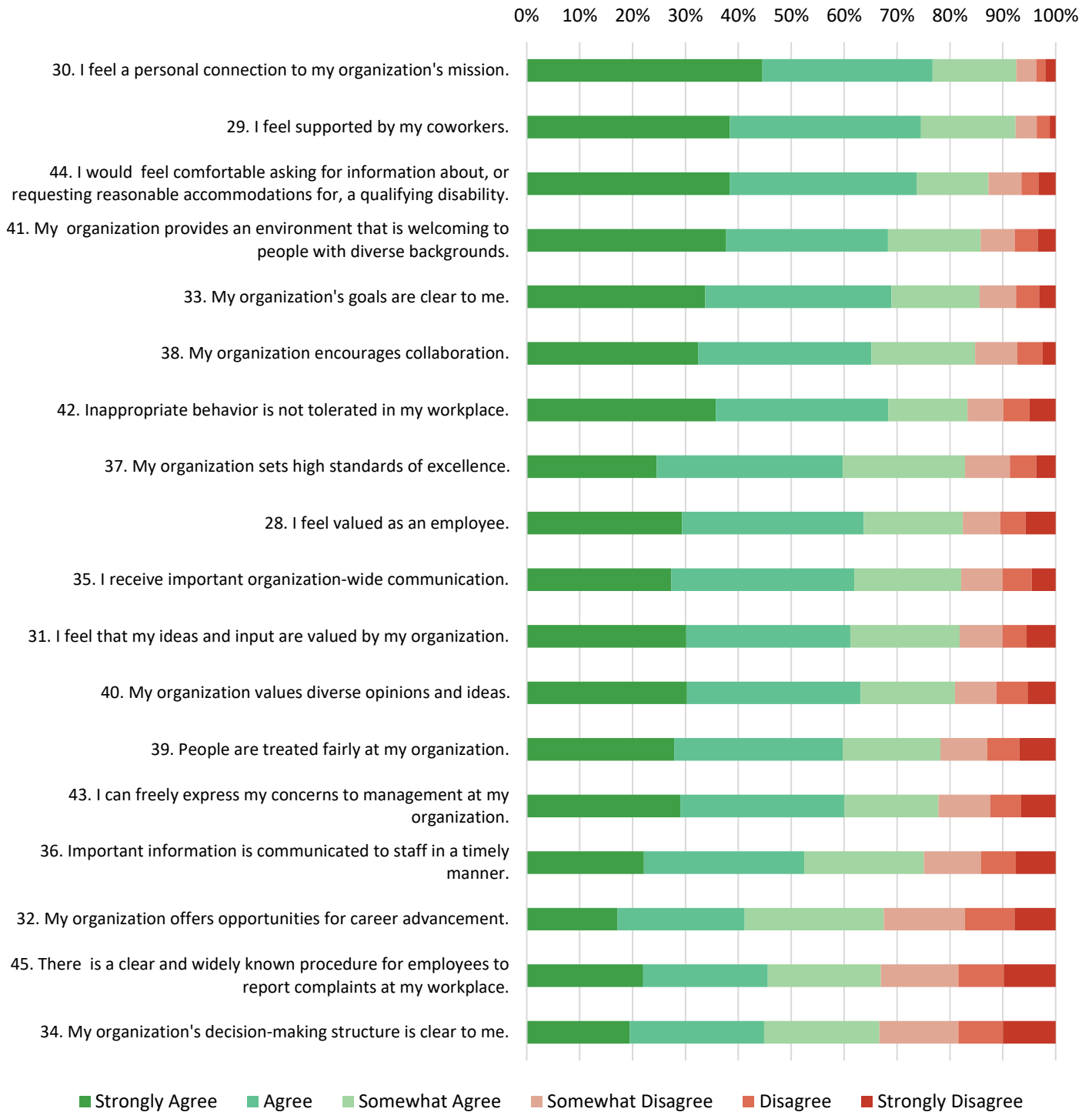
The perception that people are treated fairly is a key factor in employee engagement, productivity, and retention. While the response to the statement “People are treated fairly in my organization” is 78% All Favorable, only 60% of participants rate it as Very Favorable.

This drop in favorability shows some are hesitant to fully agree with the statement. The perception of fairness contributes to morale and is a key retention factor. Providing outlets to surface unfair treatment, such as a formal dispute resolution process or an informal practice of one-on-one discussions, can ensure that issues are surfaced and addressed.



Workplace Culture Statements	All Favorable (4,5,6)	Very Favorable (5,6)
30. I feel a personal connection to my organization’s mission.	93%	77%
29. I feel supported by my coworkers.	92%	75%
44. I would feel comfortable asking for information about or requesting reasonable accommodations for a qualifying disability.	87%	74%
41. My organization provides an environment that is welcoming to people with diverse backgrounds.	86%	68%
33. My organization’s goals are clear to me.	86%	69%
38. My organization encourages collaboration.	85%	65%
42. Inappropriate behavior is not tolerated in my workplace.	83%	68%
37. My organization sets high standards of excellence.	83%	60%
28. I feel valued as an employee.	82%	64%
35. I receive important organization-wide communication.	82%	62%
31. I feel that my ideas and input are valued by my organization.	82%	61%
40. My organization values diverse opinions and ideas.	81%	63%
39. People are treated fairly at my organization.	78%	60%
43. I can freely express my concerns to management at my organization.	78%	60%
36. Important information is communicated to staff in a timely manner.	75%	52%
32. My organization offers opportunities for career advancement.	68%	41%
45. There is a clear and widely known procedure for employees to report complaints at my workplace.	67%	46%
34. My organization’s decision-making structure is clear to me.	67%	45%

## Detailed Workplace Culture Dimension Results

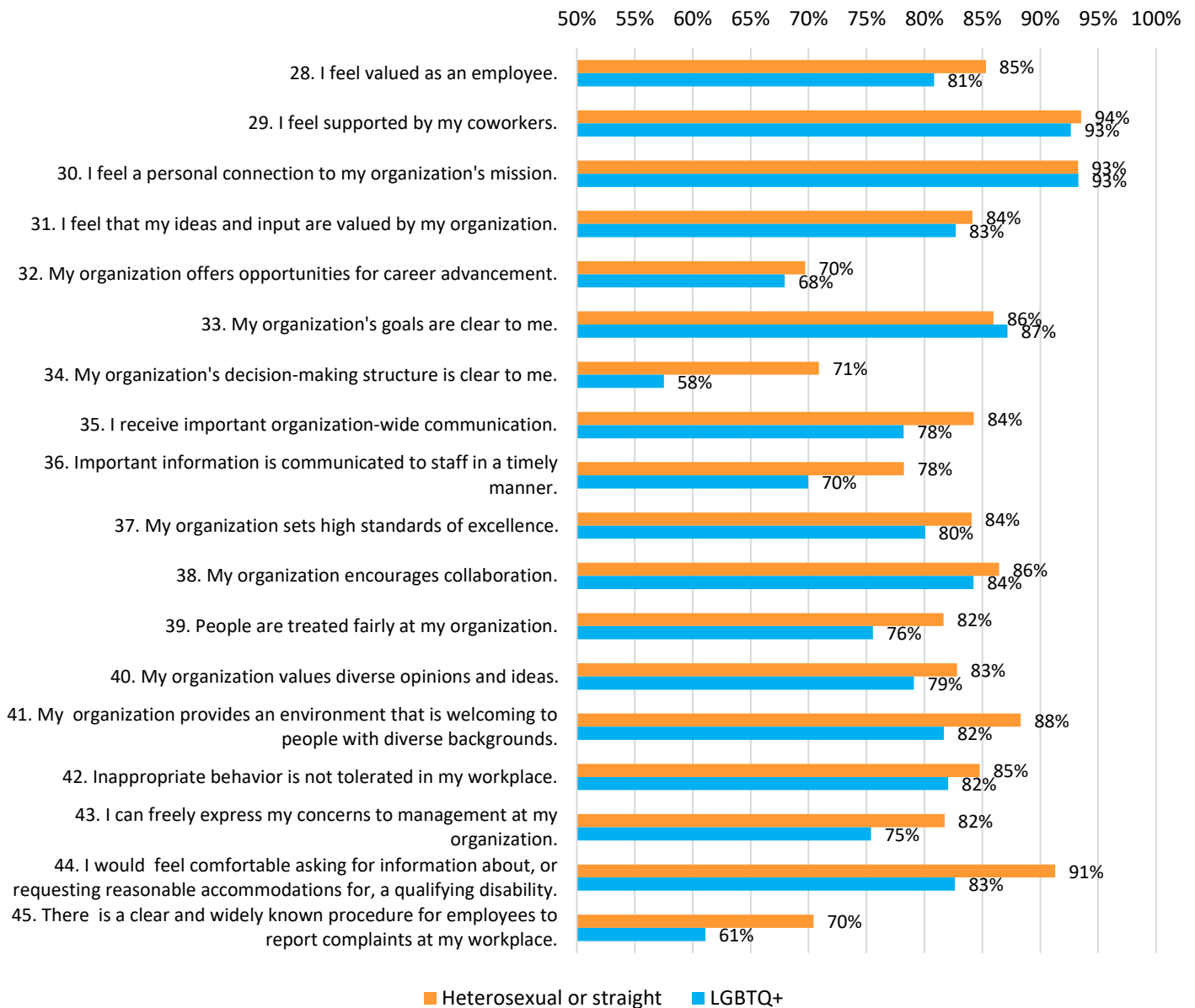


LGBTQ participants generally gave less favorable ratings for Workplace Culture when compared to participants identifying as Heterosexual/straight.

The favorable ratings for the workplace culture statements from these two groups vary by 1%–13%, with less favorable ratings for the LGBTQ participants for all but one of the statements. The most significant difference (13%) is for the statement, “My organization’s decision-making structure is clear to me.” Both groups agree to a great extent (93% and 94% Favorable) that they feel support from their coworkers. This positive factor might help mitigate some of the differences between the groups.

The most resilient factor in workplace culture is very personal – the feeling of a personal connection to the organization’s mission. Organizations that remain at least partially virtual or have added employees in other parts of the state or country will need to work very hard to reclaim the interpersonal elements of workplace culture.

### Workplace Culture All Favorability (4,5,6) Heterosexual vs. LGBTQ+





## Compensation and Benefits

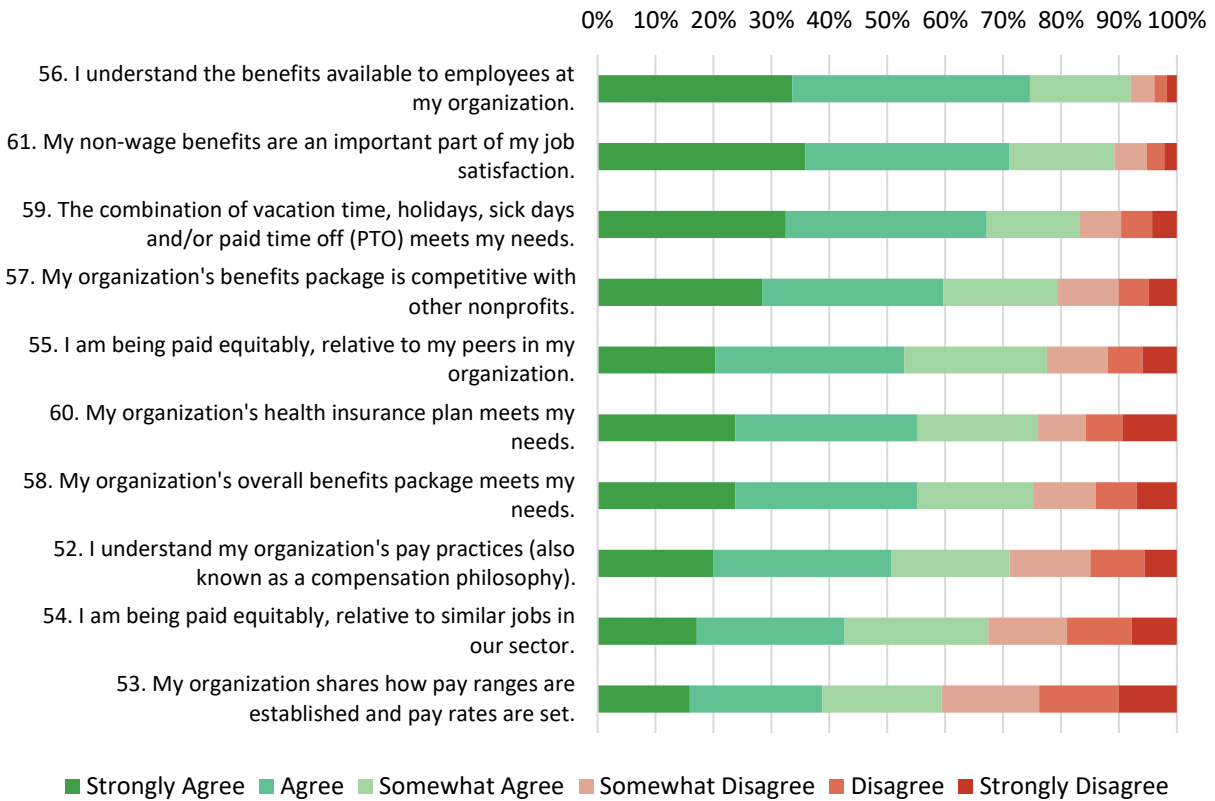
The Compensation and Benefits dimension is often the lowest-rated category in this survey, as well as other employee surveys. While typically the lowest-rated dimension, nearly 80% of participants rate the statements as All Favorable. This finding results from much higher ratings for the benefits statements, with equitable pay (within the organization and compared to other nonprofits) rated less favorably.

It is important to note that the statements are framed in terms of equity relative to other nonprofits jobs only. One-third of participants rate the statement, *“I am being paid equitably, relative to similar jobs in our sector,”* as overall Unfavorable, and 22% rate the statement, *“I am being paid equitably, relative to my peers in my organization”* as overall Unfavorable. Participants from the smaller organizations (0–5 employees) report 6 percentage points less overall favorability for this dimension than others in the sample. Those participants who chose “Prefer not to Say” on race are 9 percentage points less favorable.

While most nonprofits are limited in making significant pay adjustments, organizations can ensure their pay ranges are externally competitive and internally equitable. [The King County Nonprofit Wage & Benefits Survey](#), conducted in tandem with the [King County Nonprofit Employee Engagement Survey](#), is a good reference for comparable pay practices. Conducting an occasional internal salary audit can ensure internal equity. Communicate the results of compensation audits and the organization’s compensation philosophy and compensation practices to employees.

Compensation & Benefits Statements	All Favorable (4,5,6)	Very Favorable (5,6)
56. I understand the benefits available to employees at my organization.	92%	75%
61. My non-wage benefits are an important part of my job satisfaction.	89%	71%
59. The combination of vacation time, holidays, sick days and/or paid time off (PTO) meets my needs.	83%	67%
57. My organization’s benefits package is competitive with other nonprofits.	79%	60%
55. I am being paid equitably, relative to my peers in my organization.	78%	53%
60. My organization’s health insurance plan meets my needs.	76%	55%
58. My organization’s overall benefits package meets my needs.	75%	55%
52. I understand my organization’s pay practices (also known as a compensation philosophy).	71%	51%
54. I am being paid equitably, relative to similar jobs in our sector.	67%	43%
53. My organization shares how pay ranges are established and pay rates are set.	59%	39%

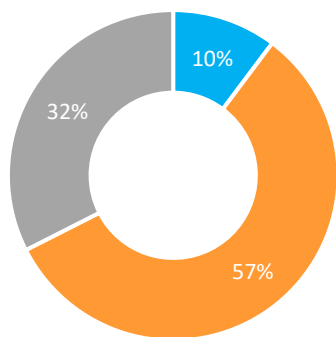
## Detailed Compensation and Benefits Dimension Results



### Compensation Changes in 2023

The Washington State overtime rules increased the minimum wage to \$15.74/hour and the exempt thresholds to \$57,293.60/year for small employers and \$65,478.40/year for larger employers at the beginning of 2023. These thresholds require employers to pay overtime if a position is below a specific wage (threshold), even if the position's duties meet the definition of an exempt position.

#### Impacted by Minimum Wage Threshold Law



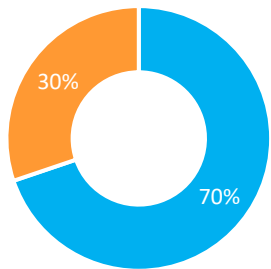
■ Yes ■ No ■ I don't know

Participants were asked, "Has your job or pay been impacted by the recent increased minimum wage and exempt thresholds?" The results show that only 10% of participants have been affected by this change.

For those who noted an impact, 70% say their salary was increased to keep it above the threshold; 30% note that they now receive overtime pay.



## How Impacted by Minimum Wage Threshold Change



- My salary was increased to keep it above the threshold
- I now receive overtime pay

- “The pay inequity at my organization increased significantly.”
- “Yes, other staff can no longer be exempt and requires more processes and oversight for timekeeping records for payroll and bookkeeping purposes.”
- “The overall workload of the organization has not changed, and the remaining exempt employees face additional workload stresses to help complete work from nonexempt teammates who have run out of hours for the week. Limited overtime is approved.”

### Neutral impact examples:

- “I was moved from exempt to non-exempt since many of my coworkers in the same position do not meet the salary threshold.”
- “Other than lack of funds for more employees, there are none that I am aware of.”
- “I was moved from salaried to hourly due in part to these changes.”

### Positive impact examples:

- “I was on salary when I was hired, regardless of hours worked. Now if there are 90 hours on a paycheck, I get that. I love it.”
- “I am so grateful for getting moved to hourly. I do not work overtime, but I am compensated for the hours I work.”
- “Living cost is way high now days, but this has helped a little.”

## Benefits Available to Participants

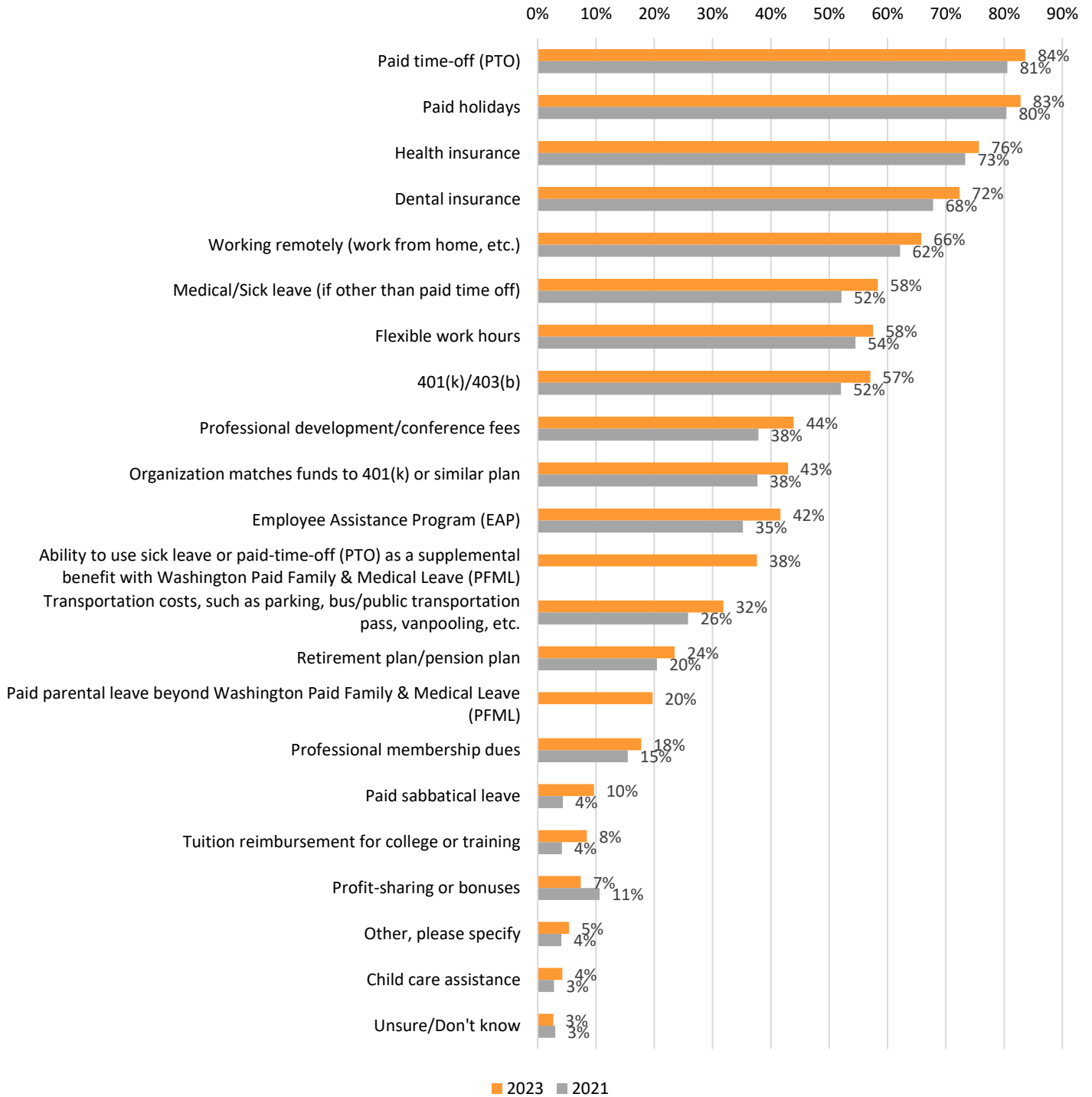
The highest-rated statements in this dimension are for benefits. The chart on the following page represents the benefits those who participated in the 2023 survey know they can access. Some employees may not be aware of all the benefits their employers offer. Making benefit information, a total compensation report, and employee handbooks readily available to new and long-term employees can increase employee awareness of benefit offerings.

Participants whose job or pay had been impacted were also asked, “Were there other impacts on your job as a result of this rule?” Only 27 participants answered this question.

These are some of the examples of the negative impacts.

- “I am no longer salaried. They will not pay overtime, and it is extremely difficult to work only 40 hours, and now if I work over 40 hours, I run the risk of being fired. At least salaried, I did not have to be concerned about losing my job for doing my job.”
- “Seems like this change that forced our org to pay us an equitable wage is being used to justify not doing merit increases this year.”

## Benefits Offered (Compared to 2021)



Based on the benefits reported by employees in the 2023 survey, 50% or more of their employers offer the following benefits:

Benefit	% Organizations Offering
Paid time off (PTO)	84%
Paid holidays	83%
Health insurance	76%
Dental insurance	72%
Working remotely	66%
Medical/Sick leave	58%
Flexible work hours	58%
401(k)/403(b)	57%

### Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Access

The 2023 survey includes a section on Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Access (IDEA). While the 2021 survey included some statements related to IDEA, they were scattered among the dimensions. Nonprofits are interested in assessing employee sentiments about IDEA to ensure a better understanding of how to improve. This dimension is rated 85% favorable, with only 15% unfavorable.

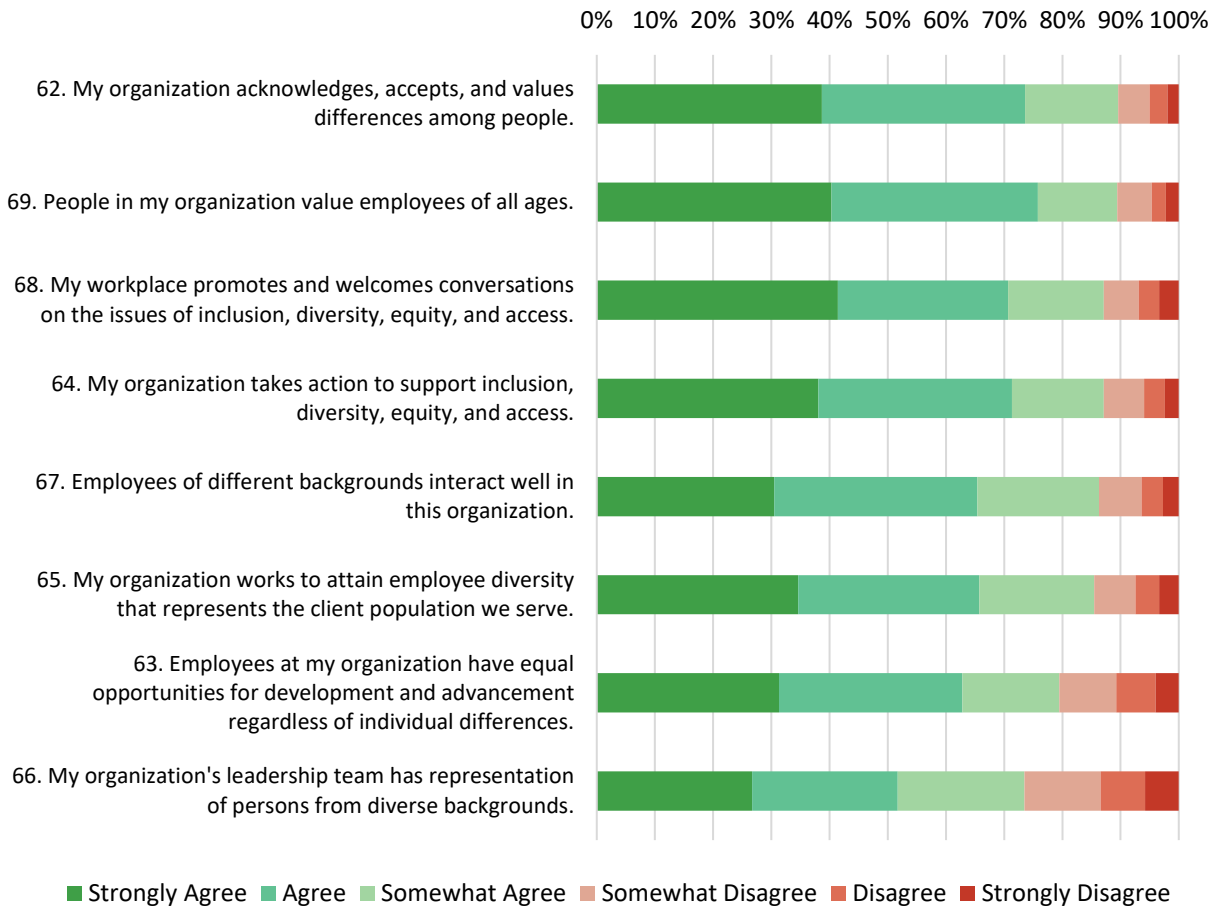


- More than 90% of participants are favorable in response to “*My organization acknowledges, accepts, and values differences among people.*” And nearly the same (89%) agree that their organization values employees of all ages.
- Participants are 87% favorable that their workplace promotes and welcomes conversations on the issues of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access. Likewise, participants are 87% favorable that their organizations take action to support inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.
- The participants are least favorable (73%) that their organization’s leadership team has representation of persons from diverse backgrounds.
- Those who chose “Prefer not to Say” regarding race are 8 percentage points less favorable of the IDEA category.
- Non-binary participants are 11 percentage points less favorable.
- Those who identify as Queer are 7 percentage points less favorable.



IDEA Statements	All Favorable (4,5,6)	Very Favorable (5,6)
62. My organization acknowledges, accepts, and values differences among people.	90%	74%
69. People in my organization value employees of all ages.	89%	76%
68. My workplace promotes and welcomes conversations on the issues of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.	87%	71%
64. My organization takes action to support inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.	87%	71%
67. Employees of different backgrounds interact well in this organization.	86%	65%
65. My organization works to attain employee diversity that represents the client population we serve.	85%	66%
63. Employees at my organization have equal opportunities for development and advancement regardless of individual differences.	79%	63%
66. My organization’s leadership team has representation of persons from diverse backgrounds.	73%	52%

## Detailed IDEA Dimension Results





# III. RESULTS FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT WORKING FROM HOME

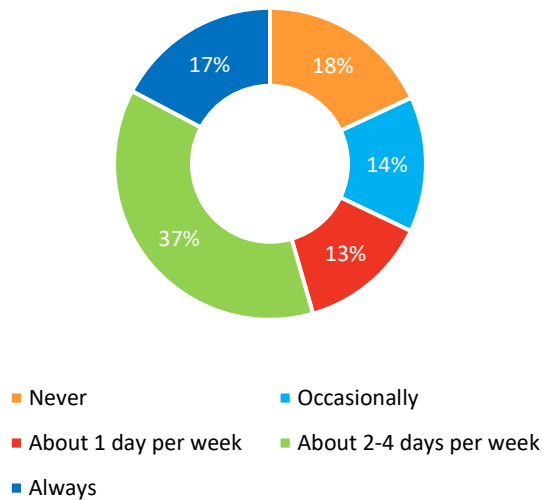


# III. Results for Working from Home

## Working from Home

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, as expected, many employees reported that they were working from home. In fact, more than 45% worked from home every day (compared to less than 10% before the pandemic). In 2023, only 17% work from home daily, but 37% work from home about 2-4 days per week.

Working Remotely



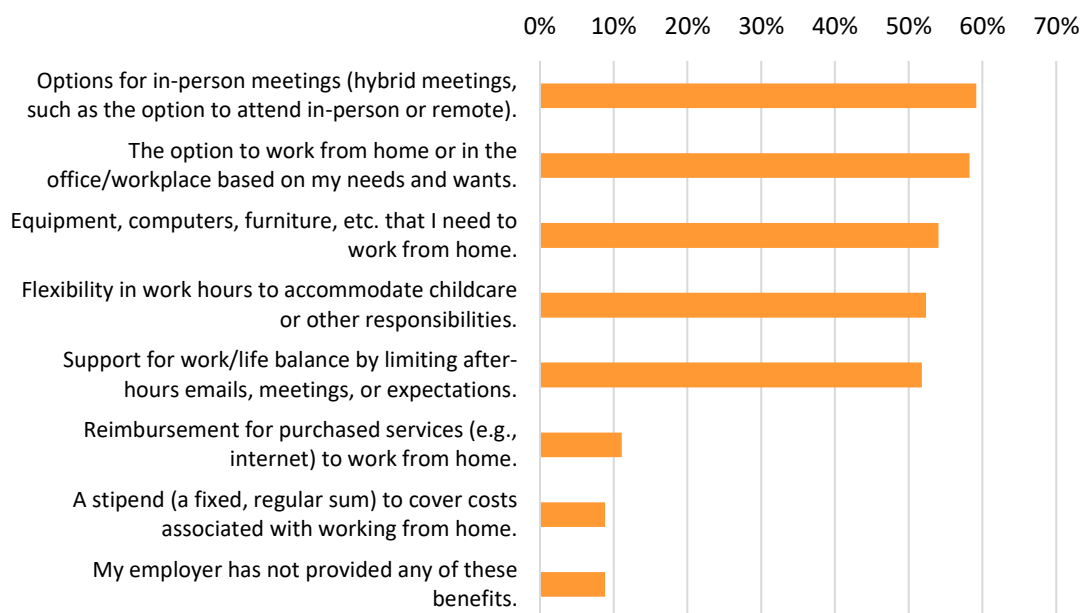
## Benefits Provided by Employers

Participants were asked to identify benefits provided to employees that make it easier to work from home. Nearly 60% are offered options for in-person or remote meeting attendance. Nearly as many have the “Option to work from home or in the office/workplace based upon their needs or wants” (58%).

More than half of the participants (54%) are provided with equipment to work from home. Most participants also have an employer who provides work-hour flexibility (52%) and limits after-hours expectations (52%).

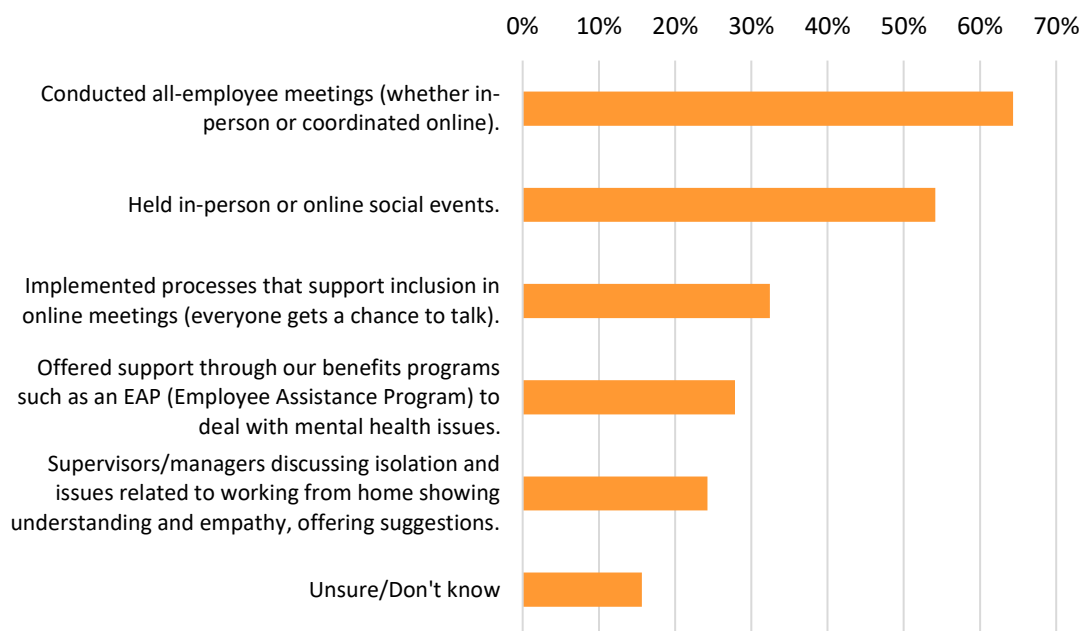


## Benefits Provided for Working Remotely



Employees were asked, “What has your employer done to reduce isolation?” The most frequently selected items are “Conducting all employee meetings” (64%), and a little over half (54%) held in-person or online social events.

## Reducing Isolation





## Reducing Isolation and Expressing Gratitude

Isolation impacted employees' lives during the COVID-19 pandemic. Employers continue to try to reduce their employees' isolation. In addition, fewer employees are exclusively working from home. Fortunately, there are many actions that employers can take to reduce a sense of isolation. Many organizations have become creative in engaging employees with non-work-related virtual team building or recreation.

Naming and talking about isolation can help reduce some of the negative consequences. However, only 24% of supervisors discussed this. Express gratitude regularly in specific ways that relate to the organization's mission. Tell employees they are valued and ask if they feel cared for by colleagues. Be ready to act on their feedback.

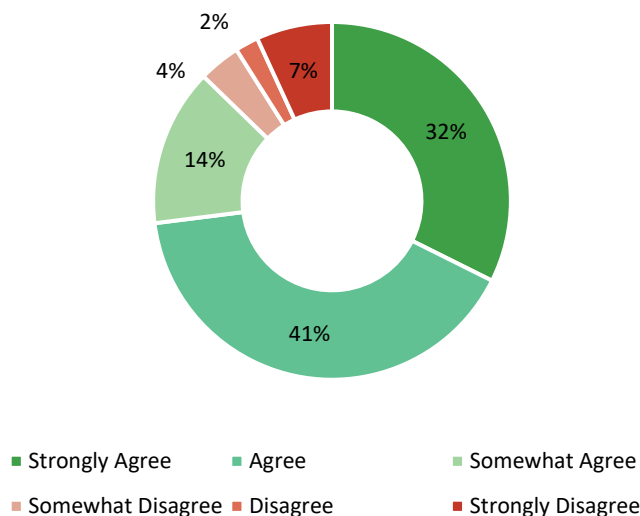
[Business Group on Health](#) reports strategies leaders can use to deepen connections with colleagues. Many of these ideas were inspired by U.S. Surgeon General [Vivek Murthy's work on building relationships in the workplace](#):

- Assess the current state by asking employees if they feel valued and cared for by colleagues and understood beyond their role at work. Be ready to act on their feedback.
- Model giving and receiving help, both of which build connection.
- Create opportunities for employees to learn about each other beyond work roles to deepen connections (e.g., by sharing something about themselves). Practice inclusion to avoid inadvertently excluding colleagues from virtual social events, committee meetings, or chats.
- Prioritize check-ins at the start of meetings, greet and acknowledge co-workers, value small acts of kindness, and strive to make others feel seen and heard.
- 92% of participants feel supported by their co-workers, but only 82% feel valued as an employee.

## Health and Safety Protocols

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated many new health and safety protocols. In 2023, participants were asked to rate whether their organization had general health and safety protocols for employees and clients. Overall, 87% rate the statement favorably.

Health and Safety Protocols in Place





# **IV. RESULTS BY FACTORS ATTRACTING & RETAINING EMPLOYEES**

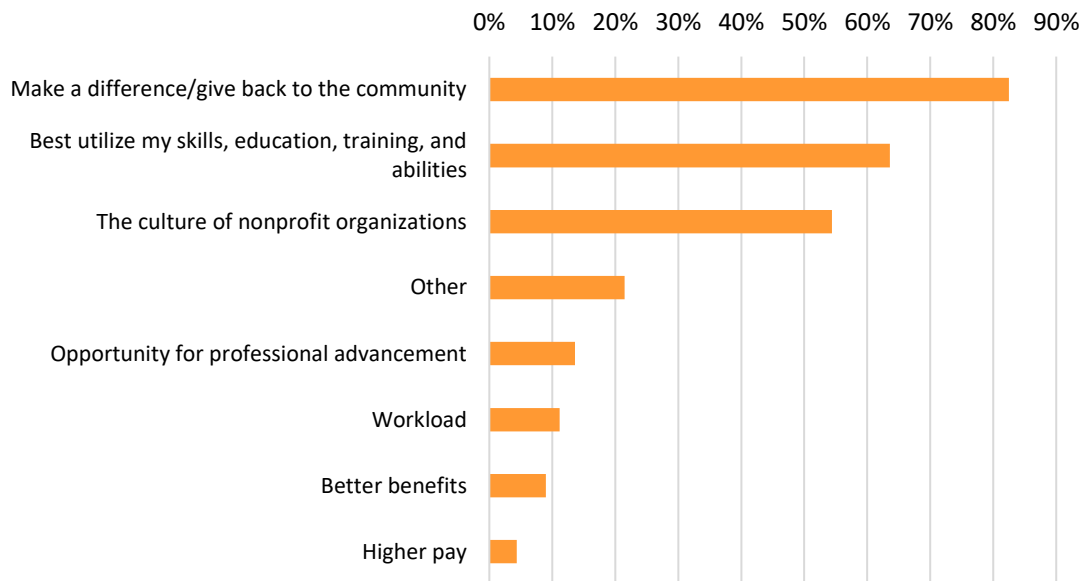


# IV. Attracting & Retaining Employees

## Why Employees Work for Nonprofits

Participants were asked to rank the top three reasons they work in the nonprofit sector. Not surprisingly, more than 80% of participants want to make a difference or give back to the community. 64% say a nonprofit best uses their skills, education, training, experience, and abilities. More than half (54%) say the culture of nonprofit organizations is why they work in the sector.

**Top Reasons People Work in Nonprofit Sector**  
(Respondents chose up to 3 categories)



What actions can employers take to ensure employees stay connected with what is important to them?

- Communicate how your organization is making a difference in the community. Management can regularly report to staff on how their work makes a difference or supports an important cause. Share metrics that demonstrate success to employees.
- Link performance evaluations and job descriptions to meeting the organization’s mission to better connect employees to the importance of their work.
- When possible, supervisors and managers can work with employees to identify ways to best utilize their skills and background and provide avenues for growth or pathways for development. Supervisors must recognize and celebrate what employees bring to the organization and discuss career growth and development.

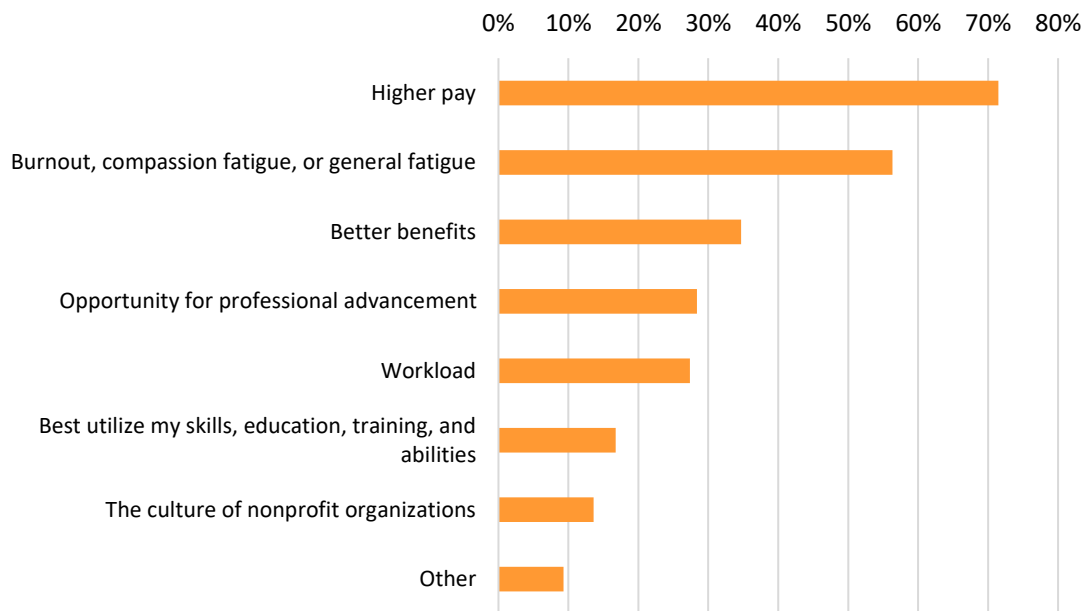
There can be generational differences in communication styles, values, expectations, etc., that can cause friction in the workplace. However, there were few differences in why people work in nonprofits between different age groups. Finding common ground helps reduce conflict. The survey results show that employees of all ages are motivated to make a difference in the community and support an important cause.

## Why Employees Might Consider Leaving the Nonprofit Sector

Participants were asked the top three reasons they might consider leaving the nonprofit sector. Understanding these factors can help reduce turnover and increase job satisfaction.

- 71% of participants say they might leave for greater pay, up from 60% in 2021.
- 56% report they might leave because of burnout, compassion fatigue, or general fatigue (54% in 2021).
- 35% would consider leaving for better benefits, up from 16% in 2021.
- 28% say they would leave for an opportunity for professional advancement (26% in 2021).
- 27% say they would leave because their workload was too high, up from 21% in 2021.

**Top Reasons People Would Leave the Nonprofit Sector**  
(Respondents chose up to 3 categories)



Providing pay comparable to business or government is a challenge for most nonprofits. It is important to explain to staff how the organization is working to provide equitable salaries. When possible, conduct salary audits using comparative data for similar organizations. Create a transparent pay policy and pathways for development and growth. Always communicate pay policies or salary audits to the whole organization, laying the groundwork for employees to see that a fair and equitable system is in place.

There are a few generational differences in participants' reasons for leaving a nonprofit:

- Younger participants (21-29) are 14 percentage points more likely than the whole population to mention compensation as a factor.
- Those 60 or older are 15 percentage points less likely to mention pay.
- The oldest participants are 9 percentage points less likely to name burnout or compassion fatigue as a reason to leave (up from 11 percentage points in 2021).

## Why Employees Might Consider Leaving

A new question was added in 2023 to determine why people might leave their current position. Having data on the factors that might cause someone to leave their position versus leaving the nonprofit sector helps to better understand how to recruit and retain employees. The results of this question do not mean that an employee plans to leave, just the factors that could impact their consideration to leave.

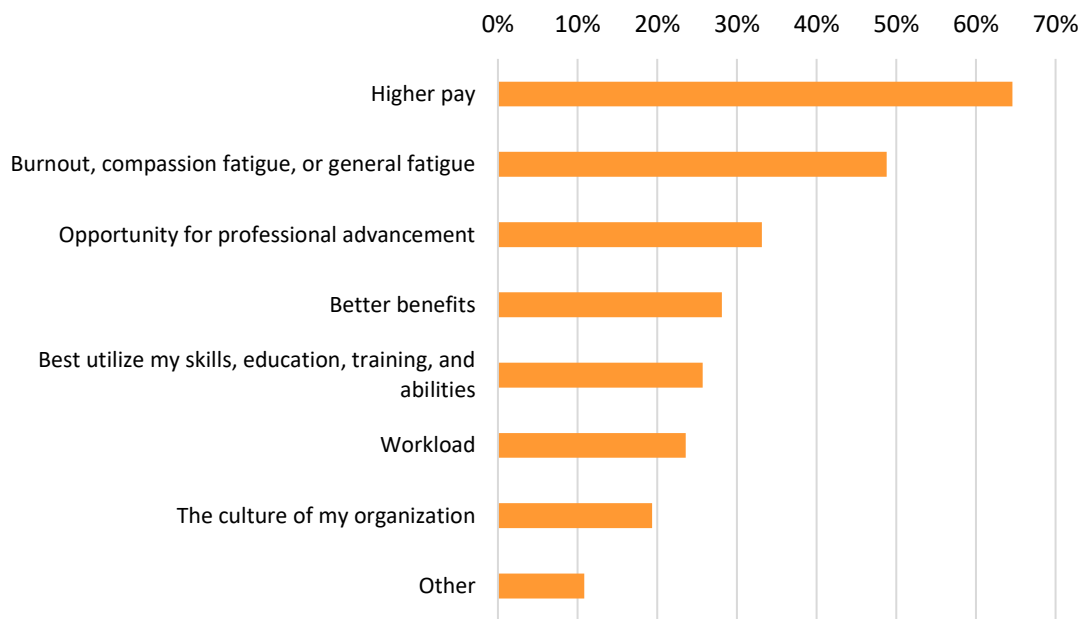
Interestingly, the outcome for this question is similar to why people might leave the nonprofit sector. The first two factors are the same as reasons to leave the nonprofit sector, though leaving a current job for pay is slightly lower (71% for the sector; 65% for leaving the current position).

The following two highest cited reasons switched places: Opportunity for advancement is now third, and better benefits is fourth.



### Top Reasons People Would Leave Their Position

(Respondents chose up to 3 categories)



## Why Participants Would Leave by Age Group

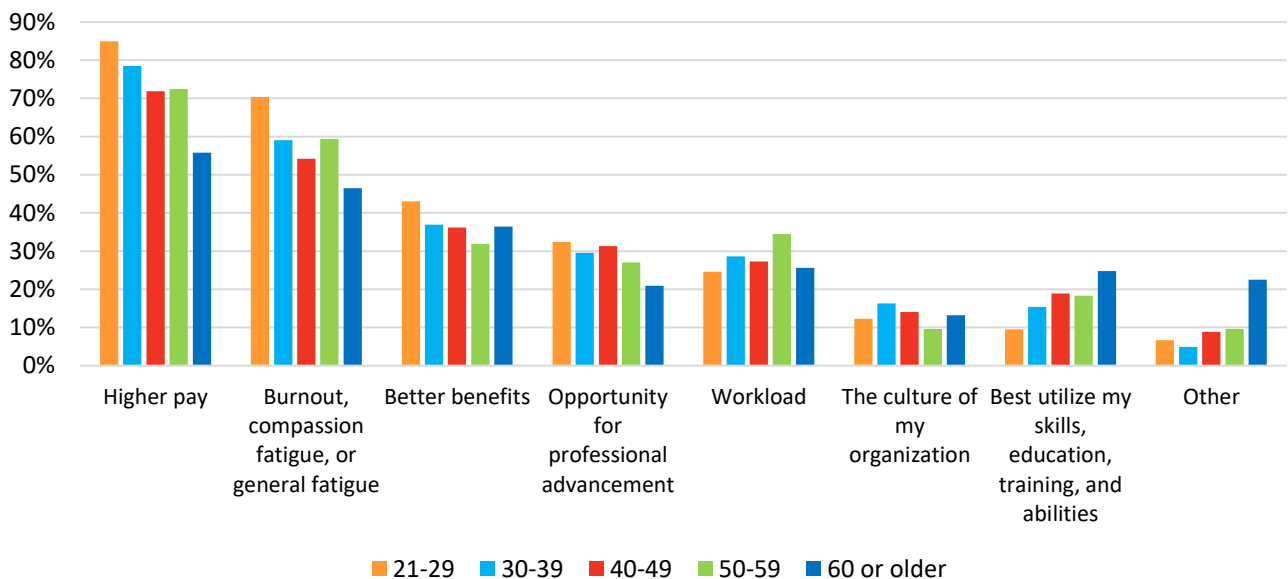
As expected, younger workers are much more likely than older workers to indicate that they would leave their position for pay reasons. 85% of participants in their 20s select pay as a reason to leave, compared to only 58% of those 60 or older. This is also true for burnout, where 70% of those in their 20s selected this option versus 56% of those over the age of 60.

Across all groups, higher pay and burnout were selected as the top reasons employees would leave their position. As workers age, they are more likely to leave a position to better utilize their skills, education, and training. While organizations may find it more challenging to increase pay, they can address burnout in the workplace. In 2022, [McKinsey](#) did a global study on burnout in the workplace. They conclude:

Burnout is experienced by individuals, but the most powerful drivers of burnout are systemic organizational imbalances across job demands and job resources. So, employers can and should view high rates of burnout as a powerful warning sign that the organization—not the individuals in the workforce—needs to undergo meaningful systematic change.

They suggest that a systematic approach should address toxic workplace behavior and redesign work to be inclusive, sustainable, and supportive of individual learning and growth, including employee adaptability skills.

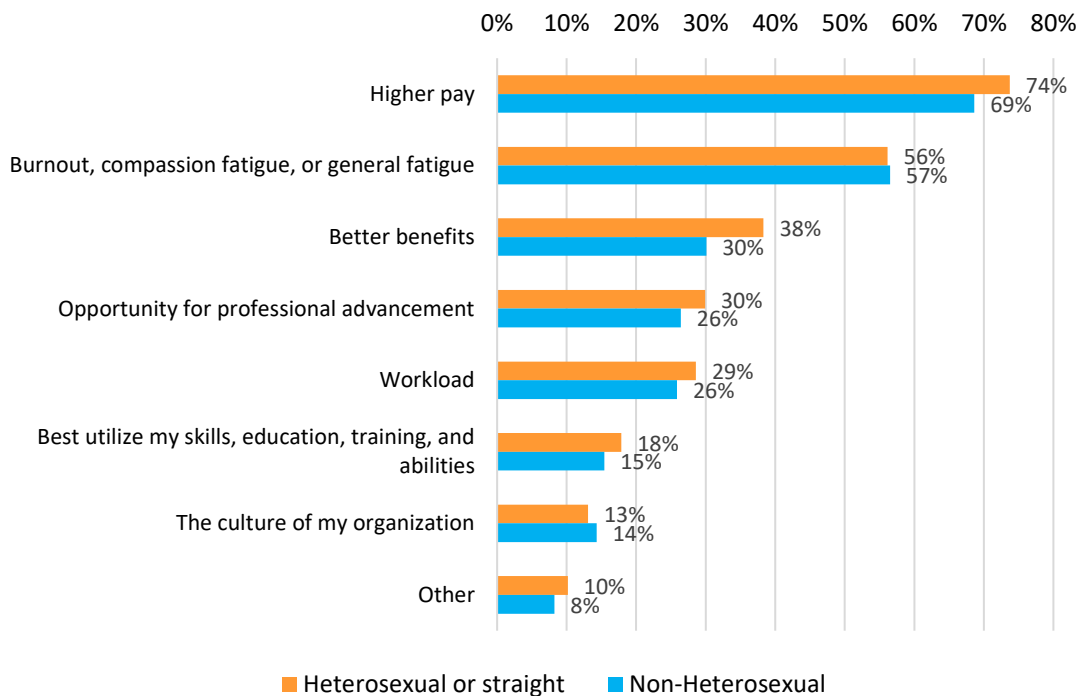
### Reasons People Would Leave Their Position by Age



## Why Participants Would Leave by Sexual Orientation

The table below compares responses by LGBTQ+ participants to responses by Heterosexual/Straight participants on the statement about reasons for leaving their current position. Most striking is that there are no significant differences between these groups except that straight respondents are more likely to say they would leave for more pay (74% compared to 68%) and better benefits (38% compared to 30%).

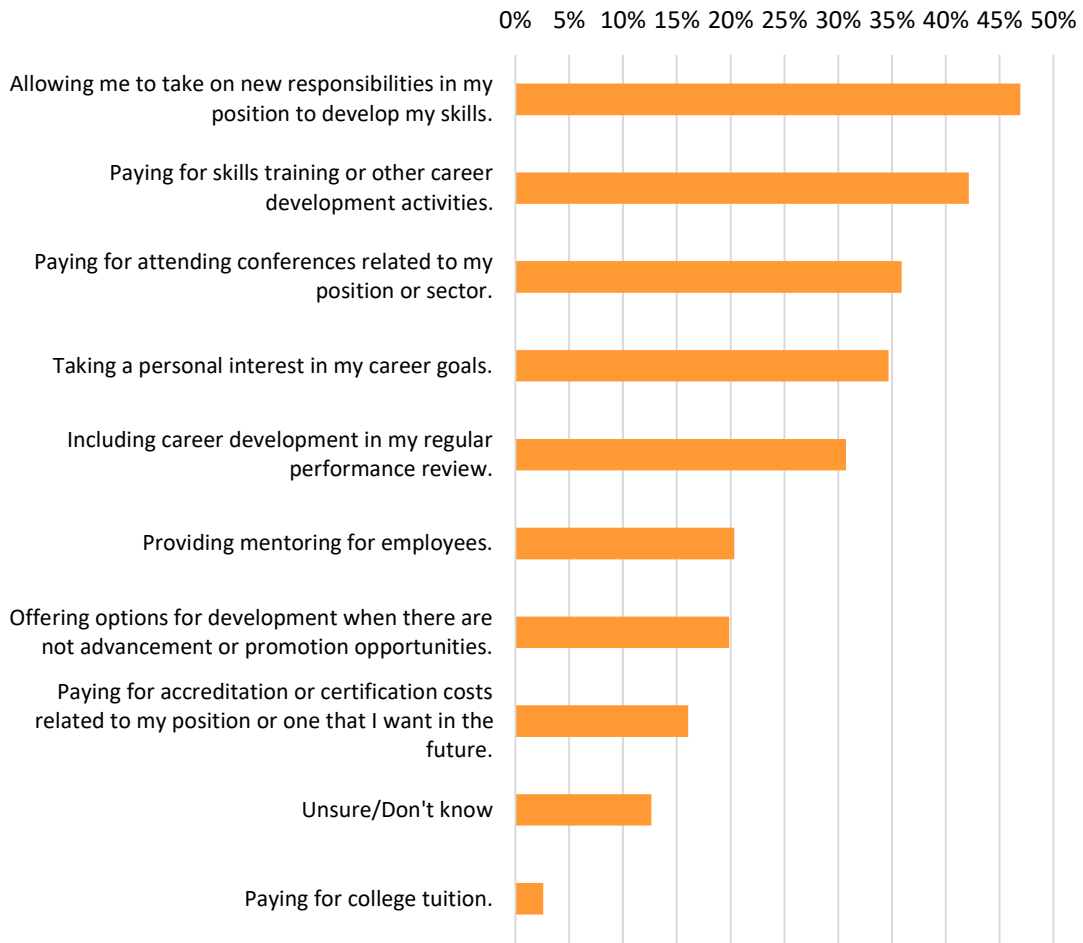
Top Reasons People Would Leave Their Position:  
Heterosexual vs. Non-Heterosexual



## Professional and Career Development

Professional development is an essential part of employee retention. In 2023, participants were asked how their organization supports their career development. Nearly half (47%) report being allowed to take on more responsibilities, and 42% are paid for skills training or other career enhancement. A third (36%) are paid to attend conferences. About the same percentage (35%) report that their organization takes a personal interest in employee career goals. However, less than a third report that career development is included in their annual performance reviews.

## Career Development Actions





## Impact of Commuting

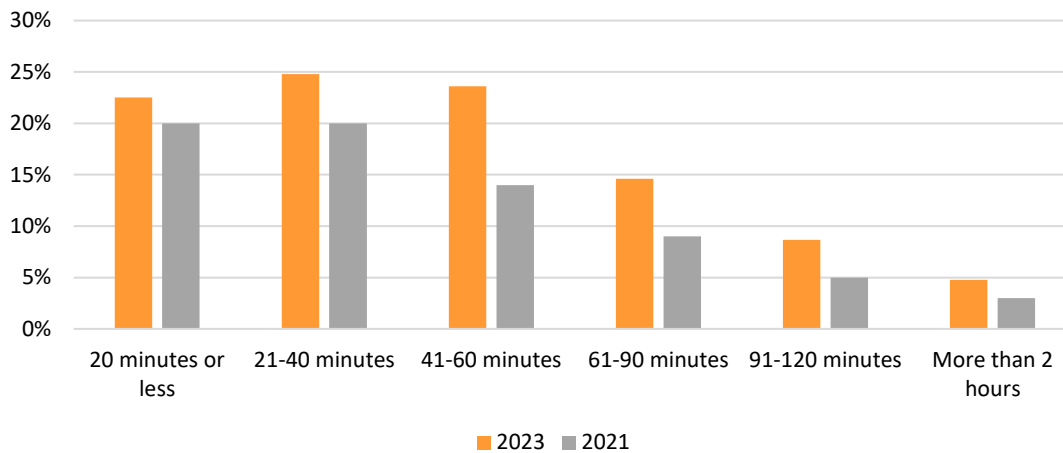
Commuting was hypothesized to be a factor in turnover in nonprofits because of the cost of living and traffic congestion in the Puget Sound region. However, because of the pandemic, many people were working from home. As in 2021, most participants do not find their commute too negative. In this year's report, 17% always work from home and do not commute (compared to 47% in 2021).

Findings include:

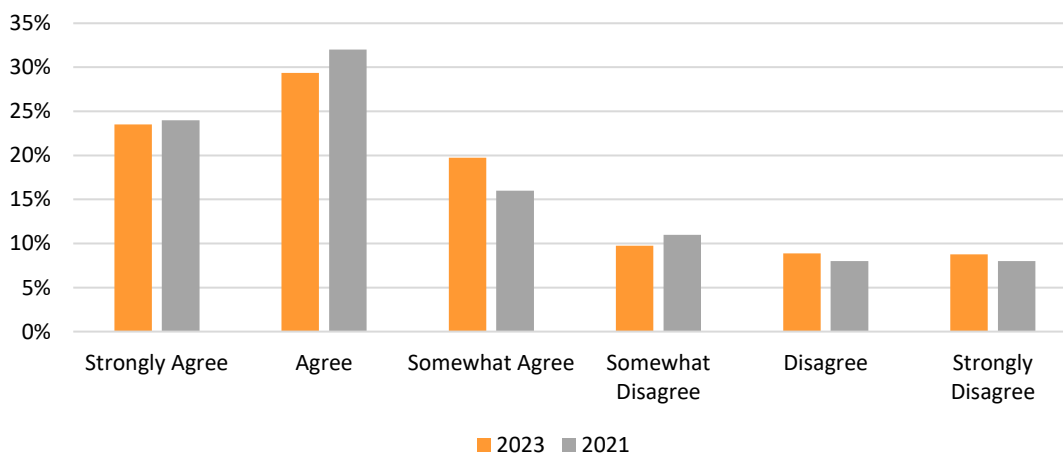
- Almost three-quarters (72%) of those who commute have a commute time (round trip) of fewer than 60 minutes.
- Almost half (47%) have a commute time of fewer than 40 minutes.



**Commute Length**  
(Round trip; 2021 vs. 2023)



**My Commute Time is Reasonable**  
(Only those who commute were asked)





# APPENDIX A: ENGAGEMENT SURVEY METHODOLOGY



# Appendix A: Engagement Survey Methodology

The King County Nonprofit Employee Engagement Survey was available to nonprofit agencies and their employees serving King County residents or located in King County.

The survey was widely communicated:

- King County sent information about the survey and an invitation to participate to Veterans, Seniors & Human Services Levy (VSHSL) grantees and other King County Department of Community and Human Services grantees. Information and the survey link were posted on the VSHSL website and their newsletter. Additional communication and an invitation to participate were provided by King County employees to their nonprofit grantees.
- 501 Commons sent information about the survey to all King County nonprofits in their database for whom an email was available. Informational emails were also sent to all King County nonprofit employees in their database. In total, these efforts meant that 9,787 contacts at King County nonprofits were emailed an invitation to participate in the survey. Information about the survey was also posted on 501 Commons' website and social media channels.
- 501 Commons staff members also spoke on the phone with employees to encourage them to complete the survey.
- 501 Commons reached out before and during the survey period to funders, people associated with coalitions, professional associations, capacity-building organizations, and businesses that work with nonprofits to ask them to promote participation. An estimated 340 influencers were contacted.
- The survey was fielded from March 15 to June 15, 2023. The survey was made available using a confidential online survey (Alchemer) via a live link.

The survey participants were asked to provide input on a variety of topics:

- The level of agreement with 69 statements, grouped into six (6) different Dimensions:
  - Client Services
  - Job
  - Supervisor
  - Workplace Culture
  - Compensation and Benefits
  - Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Access (IDEA)
- The non-wage benefits provided by their organization.
- The participants' commuting experience.
- Why people work in nonprofits and why they might leave, which may help with attracting and retaining employees.
- The participants' demographic data, used to assist in providing insight into the results of the survey.

All 69 statements are worded positively so that higher scores indicate greater agreement. The statements are rated using a six-point scale, with 6=Strongly Agree, 5=Agree, 4=Somewhat Agree, 3=Somewhat Disagree, 2=Disagree, and 1=Strongly Disagree. Using a six-point scale encourages each survey participant to choose between a positive or negative.

501 Commons consultants processed the data, analyzed the results, identified findings and recommendations, and authored the report. Oversight and input were provided by 501 Commons' staff leads for the project and by leadership.

Survey results are reported using the following terms:

- **Favorable or All Favorable:** Those who answered Somewhat Agree (4), Agree (5), and Strongly Agree (6)
- **Very Favorable:** Those who answered Agree (5) and Strongly Agree (6)
- **Unfavorable or All Unfavorable:** Those who answered Somewhat Disagree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).
- **Very Unfavorable:** Those who answered Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1).



# APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS



## Appendix B: Participant Demographics

The following tables represent responses to each demographic question by count and percentage. Participants had the option not to provide an answer or in some cases, select “prefer not to answer.” The ‘N’ represents the total count of participants (generally including those who did not answer).

### Organizations Funded by King County Veterans, Seniors & Human Services Levy (VSHSL)

*My organization is funded by King County Veterans, Seniors & Human Services Levy (VSHSL):*

Funded by King County VSHSL	Count	Percentage of Participants
Don't Know/Unsure	592	48%
No	303	25%
Yes	222	18%
Blank	116	9%
N=1,233		

### Race

*Which of the following best represents your race? (Select one)*

Race	Count	Percentage of Participants	2022 King County Population-based upon Census Data
White*	701	57%	64%
Asian/Asian-American	155	13%	22%
Prefer Not to Say	92	7%	-
Black/African American	82	7%	7%
Biracial or multiracial	69	6%	6%
Other	50	4%	-
American Indian/Alaska Native	24	2%	1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	8	1%	1%
Blank (did not answer)	52	4%	-
N=1,233			

Participants could only make one choice.

\*White alone, not Hispanic/Latinx, is 54% of the sample (55% in King County census data).

## Ethnicity

Do you identify ethnically as Hispanic or Latino/a/x?

Ethnicity	Count	Percentage of Participants	2019 King County Population-based Upon Census Data
Non-Hispanic/non-Latinx	1,012	82%	89%
Hispanic/Latinx	95	8%	11%
Prefer not to say	65	5%	-
Blank	61	5%	-
N=1,233			

## Gender

What gender do you identify as? (Select one)

Gender	Count	Percentage of Participants
Female	820	67%
Male	229	19%
Prefer Not to Say	64	5%
Non-Binary	54	4%
Other	9	1%
Blank	57	5%
N=1,233		

## Identify as Transgender

Do you identify as transgender?

Identify as Transgender	Count	Percentage of Participants
No	1,066	86%
Prefer not to say	61	5%
Yes	41	3%
Blank	65	5%
N=1,233		

## Sexual Orientation

Do you identify as: (Select one)

Sexual Orientation	Count	Percentage of Participants
Heterosexual or straight	689	56%
Prefer not to say	147	12%
Bisexual	123	10%
Queer	100	8%
Gay or lesbian	65	5%
Other	25	2%
Blank	84	7%
N=1,233		

Sexual Orientation	Count	Percentage Participants
Heterosexual or straight	689	56%
LGBTQ	313	25%
Blank/Prefer Not to Say	231	19%
N=1,233		

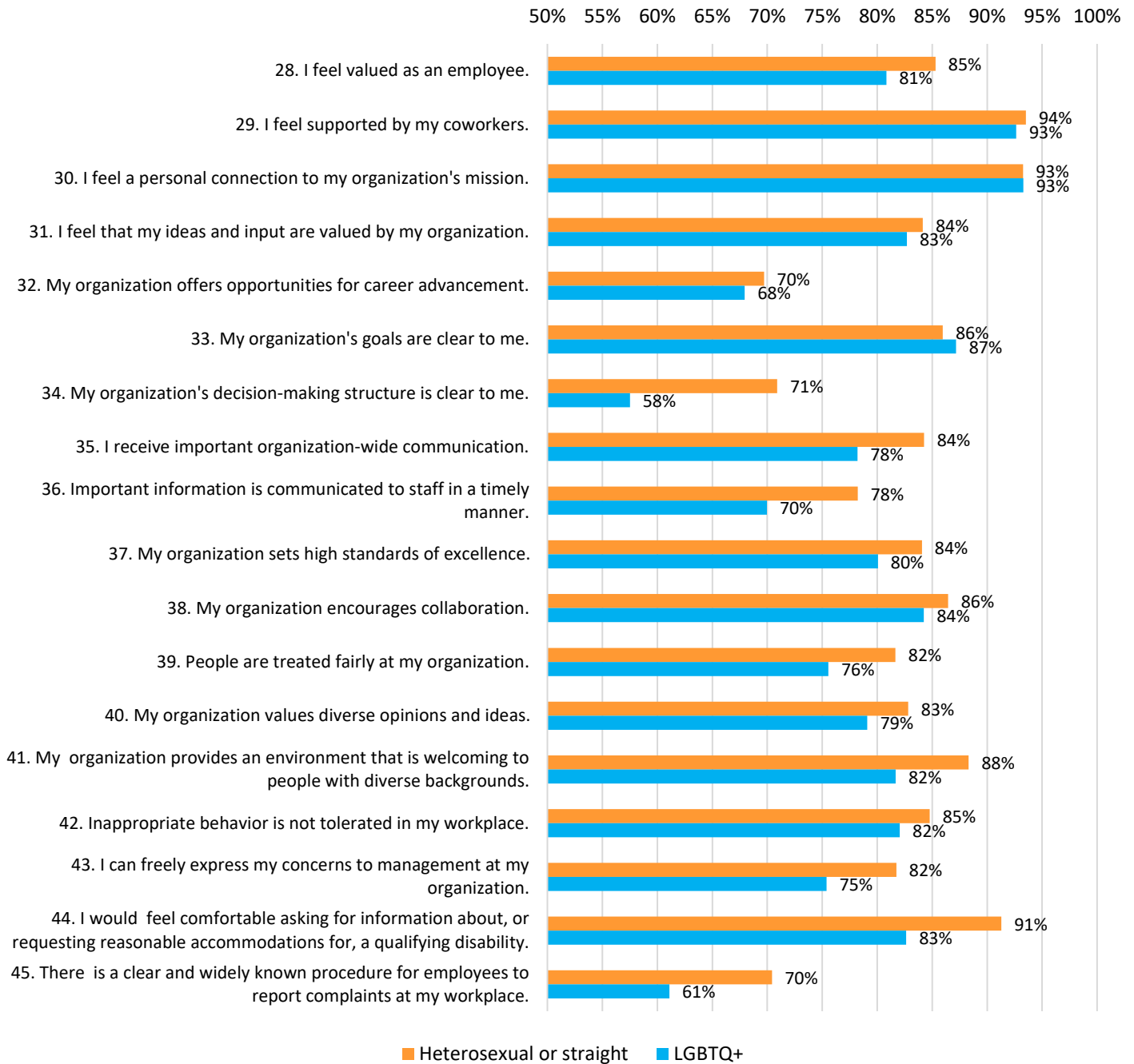
Participants were asked to identify their sexual orientation. A demographic analysis of the various categories in the above table revealed few differences in ratings for the Workplace Culture survey statements. However, after combining the individual categories to show Heterosexual/straight and LGBTQ+ ratings, there are some differences. Compared with 2021, there are **fewer** differences between these groups this year. Only four statements have a difference greater than 8 points. Most differences are just a few points.

Worth noting is the few differences between these groups on whether they feel supported by coworkers and that ideas and input are valued. There are **no** differences between groups on whether they feel connected to the organization's mission.

### Highlights in the data:

- LGBTQ+ participants are less favorable about the organization's clear decision-making process, with the LGBTQ+ favorability rating 13 points lower (58% vs 71% favorability).
- Participants who identified as LGBTQ+ are 9 points less favorable about there being a "Clear and widely known procedure for employees to report complaints in the workplace" (61% vs. 70% favorability) and about being "Comfortable asking for information regarding disability accommodations" (83% vs. 91%).
- LGBTQ+ participants are 8 points less favorable about "Important information is provided in a timely manner" (70% vs. 78%).

## Workplace Culture All Favorability (4,5,6) Heterosexual vs. LGBTQ+





## Age

Which of the following best describes your age?

Age	Count	Percentage of Participants
30-39	325	26%
40-49	249	20%
50-59	229	19%
21-29	179	15%
60 or older	129	10%
Prefer not to say	67	5%
Blank	53	4%
N=1,231		

Age (by Age)	Count	Percentage of Participants
21-29	179	15%
30-39	325	26%
40-49	249	20%
50-59	229	19%
60 or older	129	10%
Prefer not to say	67	5%
Blank	53	4%
N=1,231		

## Education Levels

What is your highest level of education?

Highest Education Level	Count	Percentage of Participants
Bachelor's degree	492	40%
Graduate degree	416	34%
High school diploma/GED	127	10%
Associate degree	94	8%
Prefer not to say	49	4%
Blank	52	4%
N=1,230		

## Size of Organization

The size of my organization is approximately:

Size	Count	Percentage of Participants
100–999 employees	412	33%
6–25 employees	346	28%
26–50 employees	128	10%
51–99 employees	115	9%
Unsure/Don't Know/No Answer	82	7%
0–5 employees	54	4%
Greater than 1,000 employees	43	3%
Blank	53	4%
N=1,233		

Size (by Size)	Count	Percentage of Participants
0–5 employees	54	4%
6–25 employees	346	28%
26–50 employees	128	10%
51–99 employees	115	9%
100–999 employees	412	33%
Greater than 1,000 employees	43	3%
Unsure/Don't Know/No Answer	82	7%
Blank	53	4%
N=1,233		

## Occupation

What occupation area best describes where you spend **most** of your work time at your organization? (Select one)

Occupation Category	Count	Percentage of Participants
Provider Services	404	33%
Administration	338	27%
Management and Leadership	288	23%
Other	92	7%
Research and Advocacy	44	4%
Operations and Maintenance	27	2%
Blank	40	3%
N=1,233		

## Full-Time Work Status

*Do you work full-time or part-time?*

FTE Status	Count	Percentage of Participants
Full-Time	1,043	85%
Part-Time	155	13%
Blank	35	3%
N=1,233		

## Supervisory Position

*Do you supervise staff?*

Supervisory Status	Count	Percentage of Participants
No	747	61%
Yes	443	36%
Blank	43	3%
N=1,233		

## Tenure in Nonprofit Sector

*How long have you worked in the nonprofit sector?*

Tenure in Nonprofit Sector	Count	Percentage of Participants
More than 10 years	442	36%
7 to 10 years	193	16%
5 to 6 years	163	13%
3 to 4 years	150	12%
1 to 2 years	147	12%
Less than one year	94	8%
Blank	44	4%
N=1,233		

## Tenure in Organization

*How long have you been with the organization?*

Tenure in Organization	Count	Percentage of Participants
1 to 2 years	294	24%
Less than one year	226	18%
3 to 4 years	211	17%
More than 10 years	180	15%
5 to 6 years	145	12%
7 to 10 years	127	10%
Blank	50	4%
N=1,233		

Tenure in Organization (by Tenure)	Count	Percentage of Participants
More than 10 years	180	15%
7 to 10 years	127	10%
5 to 6 years	145	12%
3 to 4 years	211	17%
1 to 2 years	294	24%
Less than one year	226	18%
Blank	50	4%
N=1,233		

## Tenure in Current Position

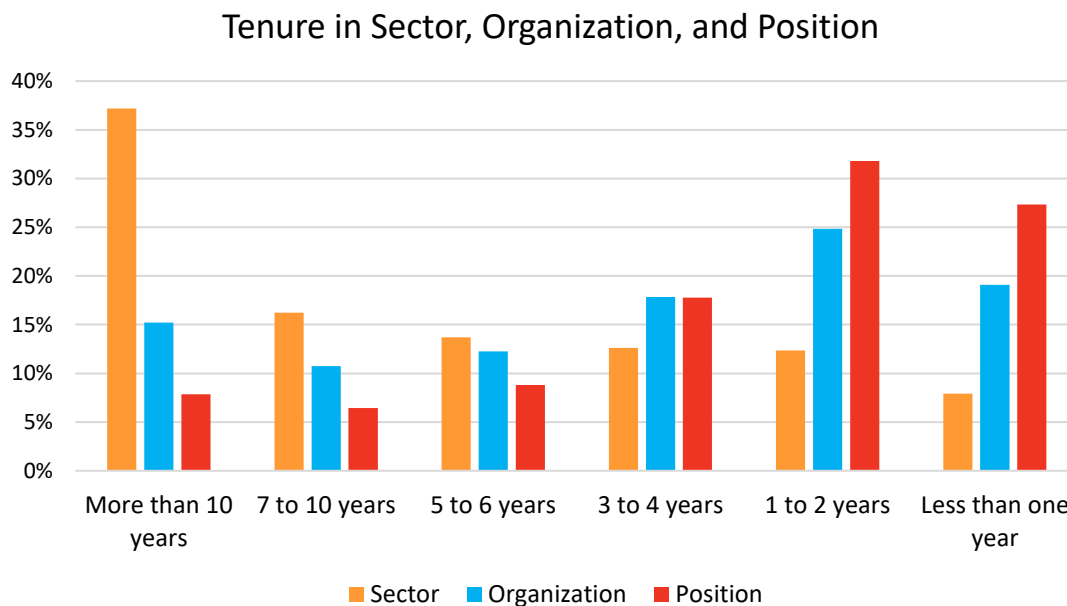
*How long have you been in your current position with this organization?*

Tenure in Current Position	Count	Percentage of Participants
1 to 2 years	376	30%
Less than one year	323	26%
3 to 4 years	210	17%
5 to 6 years	104	8%
More than 10 years	93	8%
7 to 10 years	76	6%
Blank	51	4%
N=1,233		

Tenure in Current Position (by Tenure)	Count	Percentage of Participants
More than 10 years	93	8%
7 to 10 years	76	6%
5 to 6 years	104	8%
3 to 4 years	210	17%
1 to 2 years	376	30%
Less than one year	323	26%
Blank	51	4%
N=1,233		

## Tenure in Nonprofits, Organization, and Position

The bar chart combines three questions and shows that more than half of the respondents have been in the sector for more than 7 years.



## Impact of New Wage Thresholds for Exempt Employees

This year, participants were asked if they were affected by the new minimum wage threshold law for exempt employees in effect in 2023 in Washington State.\*

Impacted by Minimum Wage Threshold Law	Count	Percentage of Participants
No	688	57%
Don't Know	390	32%
Yes	123	10%
N=1,201		

How Impacted by Minimum Wage Threshold Change	Count	Percentage of Participants
My salary was increased to keep above the threshold.	74	70%
I now receive overtime pay	32	30%
N=106		

\*State salary thresholds for exempt employees are now a multiplier of the state minimum wage. Small employers (1–50 employees) will have to pay at least 1.75 times the state minimum wage (\$1,101.80 a week), and large employers (51 or more employees) will pay at least 2 times the minimum wage (\$1,259.20 a week).

## Certification Status

I have a license or certification from a government or professional organization appropriate to my field.

License/Certification Status	Count	Percentage of Participants
No – none exist for my field	555	45%
Yes	363	29%
I don't have the license or certification that is available in my field.	269	22%
Blank	46	4%
N=1,233		

## Hearing, Vision, Physical, and Cognitive Difficulties

The most common difficulty/disability is cognitive (7%), followed by physical (4%). About 1% of the participants indicate vision or hearing difficulty.

*Are you deaf or have serious difficulty hearing?*

Hearing Difficulty	Count	Percentage of Participants
No	1,139	92%
Prefer not to answer	22	2%
Yes	18	1%
Blank	54	4%
N=1,233		

*Are you blind/Blind or have serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses?*

Vision Difficulty	Count	Percentage of Participants
No	1,143	93%
Prefer not to answer	18	1%
Yes	17	1%
Blank	55	4%
N=1,233		

*Do you have serious difficulty performing physical activities?*

Physical Difficulty	Count	Percentage of Participants
No	1,091	88%
Yes	51	4%
Prefer not to answer	30	2%
Blank	61	5%
N=1,172		

*Do you have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions?*

Cognitive Difficulty	Count	Percentage of Participants
No	1,043	85%
Yes	84	7%
Prefer not to answer	45	4%
Blank	61	5%
N=1,233		

*If you have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions, is this due to: (Select all that apply)*

Reason for Cognitive Difficulty	Count	Percentage of Participants
An emotional, psychological, or mental health disability.	58	5%
An intellectual disability, autism, epilepsy, or brain injury.	29	2%
Another disability (such as chronic pain, difficulty sleeping, medication side effects, or other).	25	2%
Prefer not to answer	7	1%
Difficulty reading, writing, or communicating.	5	<1%
Unknown	5	<1%
N=129		

## Military Service

*Have you ever served, or do you currently serve, as either an active duty or reservist member in any of the armed forces recognized by the United States Department of Defense?*

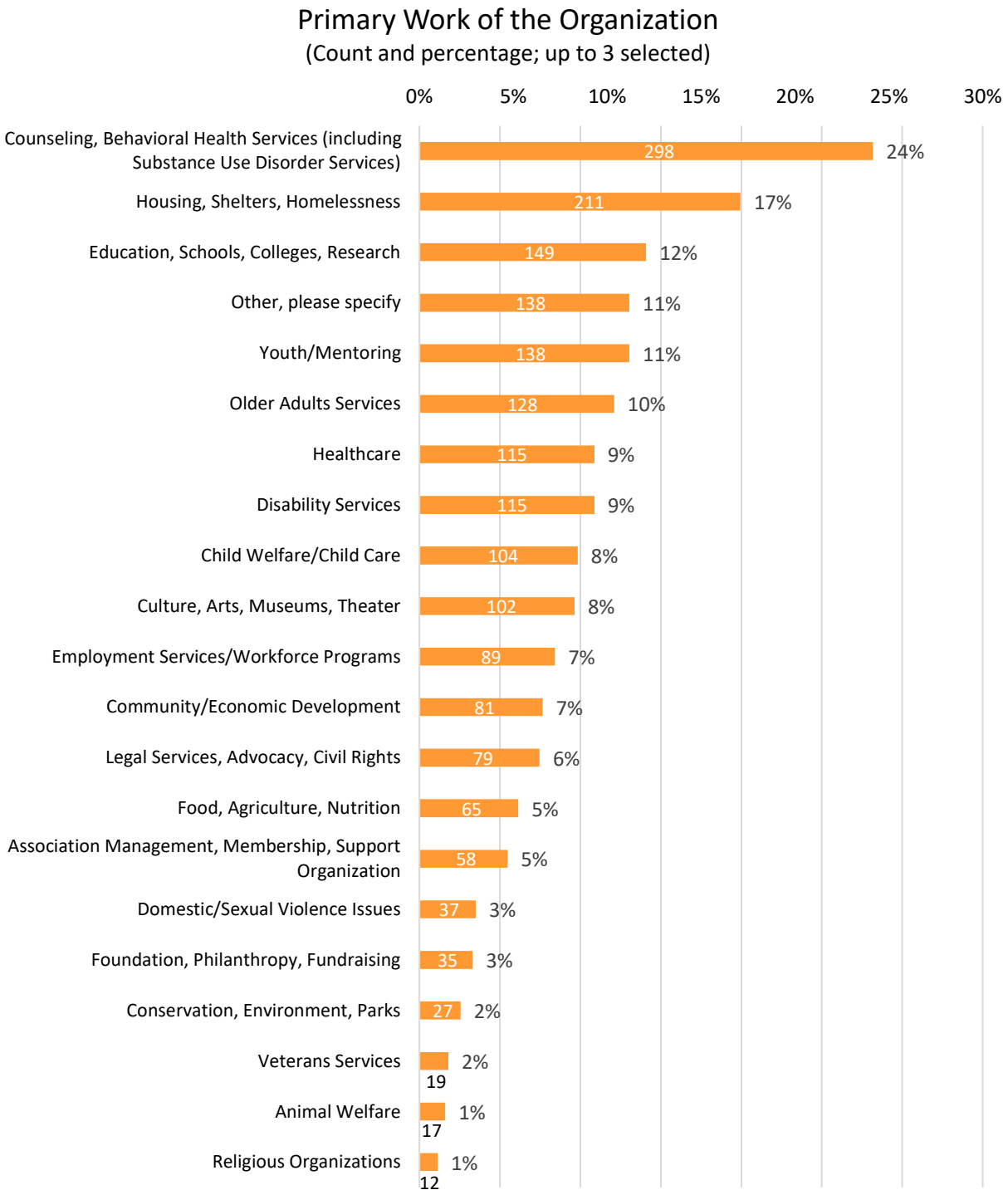
Military Service	Count	Percentage Participants
No	1,141	93%
Yes	22	2%
Prefer not to say	20	2%
Blank	50	4%
N=1,233		



## Primary Work of Organization/Sector

Participants could choose more than one option.

Please check the field of service in the list below that most accurately reflects your organization's mission:





# **APPENDIX C: ALL STATEMENTS FROM HIGHEST TO LOWEST % FAVORABLE**



# Appendix C: All Statements from Highest to Lowest Favorability

Statement	Dimension	All Favorable (4,5,6)
51. Clients feel that my organization's/program's services are valuable.	CLIENT SERVICES	97%
8. I am making a positive impact in my community.	JOB	97%
6. I know how my job contributes to the organization's mission.	JOB	96%
21. My supervisor allows flexibility during my workday.	SUPERVISOR	95%
50. My organization's/program's services are consistent with our mission.	CLIENT SERVICES	94%
47. My organization/program responds to the needs of our clients.	CLIENT SERVICES	94%
48. My organization/program delivers high quality services.	CLIENT SERVICES	94%
23. My supervisor treats me with respect.	SUPERVISOR	94%
46. My organization/program understands the needs of our clients.	CLIENT SERVICES	94%
3. I understand my role within the organization.	JOB	94%
1. I am clear on how to perform my job.	JOB	93%
2. I know what is expected of me at work.	JOB	93%
7. I gain satisfaction from my job.	JOB	93%
30. I feel a personal connection to my organization's mission.	CULTURE	93%
29. I feel supported by my coworkers.	CULTURE	92%
56. I understand the benefits available to employees at my organization.	COMP & BENEFITS	92%
49. Our services meet our clients' needs.	CLIENT SERVICES	92%
5. I am held accountable for achieving results.	JOB	91%
22. My supervisor supports a good balance between work and personal life.	SUPERVISOR	90%
62. My organization acknowledges, accepts, and values differences among people.	IDEA	90%
69. People in my organization value employees of all ages.	IDEA	89%
61. My non-wage benefits are an important part of my job satisfaction.	COMP & BENEFITS	89%
20. My supervisor acknowledges my contributions.	SUPERVISOR	88%
4. I feel empowered to make decisions relative to my work.	JOB	88%
10. My work group's goals are clear to me.	JOB	88%
9. My work environment allows me to be productive.	JOB	87%
44. I would feel comfortable asking for information about, or requesting reasonable accommodations for, a qualifying disability.	CULTURE	87%

Statement	Dimension	All Favorable (4,5,6)
68. My workplace promotes and welcomes conversations on the issues of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.	IDEA	87%
64. My organization takes action to support inclusion, diversity, equity, and access.	IDEA	87%
16. I feel comfortable sharing my opinions with my supervisor.	SUPERVISOR	87%
24. My supervisor helps me achieve goals.	SUPERVISOR	87%
19. My level of interaction with my supervisor is enough to meet my needs at work.	SUPERVISOR	86%
17. My supervisor has the knowledge and skills to provide guidance and feedback.	SUPERVISOR	86%
67. Employees of different backgrounds interact well in this organization.	IDEA	86%
26. My supervisor asks my opinions about the work I do.	SUPERVISOR	86%
41. My organization provides an environment that is welcoming to people with diverse backgrounds.	CULTURE	86%
33. My organization's goals are clear to me.	CULTURE	86%
65. My organization works to attain employee diversity that represents the client population we serve.	IDEA	85%
18. My supervisor provides helpful feedback.	SUPERVISOR	85%
38. My organization encourages collaboration.	CULTURE	85%
11. I have the opportunity at work to further develop my skills and abilities.	JOB	84%
42. Inappropriate behavior is not tolerated in my workplace.	CULTURE	83%
59. The combination of vacation time, holidays, sick days and/or paid time off (PTO) meets my needs.	COMP & BENEFITS	83%
37. My organization sets high standards of excellence.	CULTURE	83%
27. My supervisor demonstrates concern about my success.	SUPERVISOR	83%
28. I feel valued as an employee.	CULTURE	82%
35. I receive important organization-wide communication.	CULTURE	82%
31. I feel that my ideas and input are valued by my organization.	CULTURE	82%
40. My organization values diverse opinions and ideas.	CULTURE	81%
63. Employees at my organization have equal opportunities for development and advancement regardless of individual differences.	IDEA	79%
57. My organization's benefits package is competitive with other nonprofits.	COMP & BENEFITS	79%
39. People are treated fairly at my organization.	CULTURE	78%
43. I can freely express my concerns to management at my organization.	CULTURE	78%
55. I am being paid equitably, relative to my peers in my organization.	COMP & BENEFITS	78%

Statement	Dimension	All Favorable (4,5,6)
14. My organization recognizes and celebrates my successes.	JOB	77%
13. My skills and abilities are fully utilized in my current job.	JOB	77%
60. My organization's health insurance plan meets my needs.	COMP & BENEFITS	76%
12. My job responsibilities and workload are reasonable.	JOB	76%
58. My organization's overall benefits package meets my needs.	COMP & BENEFITS	75%
36. Important information is communicated to staff in a timely manner.	CULTURE	75%
15. My organization has adequate facilities, equipment, technology, and data systems to perform our work.	JOB	75%
66. My organization's leadership team has representation of persons from diverse backgrounds.	IDEA	73%
52. I understand my organization's pay practices (also known as a compensation philosophy).	COMP & BENEFITS	71%
25. My supervisor discusses opportunities with me for career development.	SUPERVISOR	70%
32. My organization offers opportunities for career advancement.	CULTURE	68%
54. I am being paid equitably, relative to similar jobs in our sector.	COMP & BENEFITS	67%
45. There is a clear and widely known procedure for employees to report complaints at my workplace.	CULTURE	67%
34. My organization's decision-making structure is clear to me.	CULTURE	67%
53. My organization shares how pay ranges are established and pay rates are set.	COMP & BENEFITS	59%



# APPENDIX D: GLOSSARY OF TERMS



# Appendix D: Glossary of Terms

**Participants:** Those whose responses are included in the survey results.

**Dimensions:** The survey design looks at six aspects of an employee's relationship with their employer: The level of agreement with 69 statements, grouped into six (6) different Dimensions:

- Client Services
- Job
- Supervisor
- Workplace Culture
- Compensation and Benefits
- Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Access

**Organizations:** Those nonprofit organizations for whom the participants work. These are organizations based in King County or organizations serving King County residents.

Responses to the Employee Engagement Survey were on a six-point Likert Scale of Favorability:

- **Favorable or All Favorable:** Those who answered *Somewhat Agree (4)*, *Agree (5)*, and *Strongly Agree (6)*
- **Very Favorable:** Those who answered *Agree (5)* and *Strongly Agree (6)*
- **Unfavorable or All Unfavorable:** Those who answered *Somewhat Disagree (3)*, *Disagree (2)*, and *Strongly Disagree (1)*
- **Very Unfavorable:** Those who answered *Disagree (2)* and *Strongly Disagree (1)*



# APPENDIX E: PROJECT TEAM





# Appendix E: Project Team

**Shawn Aebi** worked for Microsoft for 27 years, most recently as General Manager, where he focused on crisis management and security. Before joining Microsoft, he was an IT Analyst for the U.S. government. Since leaving Microsoft, Shawn has completed many IT-focused and data analysis projects with 501 Commons. He has served on many boards, especially in the arts sector. He has a Master of Science in Mathematics from Georgia Institute of Technology and is a Power BI Black Belt.

**Peggy 'Peg' Hunt** is an organizational psychologist with an emphasis on coaching and management effectiveness. She was a principal research scientist at Battelle Human Affairs Research Centers in Seattle. She worked with clients such as PACCAR, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Metro Transit, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Centers for Disease Control, and Kansai Electric Power Company in Japan, improving organizational performance.

She designed and administered leadership and teamwork training, assessed total quality programs, and consulted in conflict resolution. She also designed and consulted on employee satisfaction surveys and was a part of the Battelle Leadership Institute. Peggy was the Human Resources Director at Pacific Systems Corporation (now part of Rockwell).

She has a master's degree in industrial & Organizational Psychology from San Diego State University and a BS in Psychology from the University of Washington.

**Nancy Long**, Executive Director, worked in healthcare before joining 501 Commons. As Director of Marketing & Community Services at Pacific Medical, she oversaw uncompensated care and community clinic partnerships. She led the effort to create the Cross-Cultural Health Care Program, which has done breakthrough work on culturally and linguistically accessible care.

Nancy served as policy staff to the Washington Health Services Commission and as the Director of Marketing for the Basic Health Plan. She did groundbreaking research to promote health insurance to diverse communities and implemented community-based outreach that resulted in unprecedented diverse enrollment. As the Director of Quality for the Washington State Hospital Association, she represented hospitals on regulatory matters and led a quality-of-care research project with rural hospitals. She then served as the Vice President of Strategy and Organizational Development at Group Health Cooperative.

Nancy has a BA in social psychology (University of Texas) and a master's degree from the Evans School (University of Washington). She was a lecturer at the Evans School, teaching nonprofit leadership and management.

**Jenny Lundqvist**, Project and Systems Manager, holds a Bachelor of Science in Economics from Lund University in Sweden. At 501 Commons, she serves as a project manager for database and research projects. She oversees the client engagement process and provides training and support to 501 Commons Salesforce users. She has a background in quantitative and market research. Before entering the nonprofit field, she spent five years as a client-facing project manager in market research with Survey Sampling International.

**Linda Mangone** is an experienced and versatile Human Resources leader specializing in Organization Development. Her unique combination of education and experience has created both a strategic mindset and the capability to operate tactically. Linda was most recently employed at Group Health, where she was Director, Strategy Development/Implementation, assigned to the HR department.

She has held a variety of other senior Human Resources, Learning, and Organization Development positions that have benefited from her ability to combine strategy with implementation, process with performance, and systems with a focus on people. She has successfully adapted HR practices to the unique needs of large to small organizations. This range of experience allows her to provide sound counsel to leaders and identify unique solutions to business issues.

Linda has a Master of Science in Organizational Development from Pepperdine University and received her bachelor's degree in applied Sociology and Cultural Anthropology from the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is a Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR).

**Tim Takechi** is the Communications Manager at 501 Commons. He is responsible for newsletters, promotional resources, social media, and website management. In addition to being a member of the Employment Survey team, he plays a key role as a member of the 501 Commons GiveBIG team. He was previously the Marketing and Communications Coordinator at Millionair Club Charity (now Uplift Northwest). He has a BA in Journalism and Mass Communication and a minor in theater from Whitworth University. He remains active in the theater arts and currently serves on the board of directors at Centerstage Theatre.

This research was supported by:



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