

## Public Servant Pulse

### 2026 national survey

The following questions make up Public Servant Pulse as it was fielded in 2026 to a national sample of U.S. state and local public servants. Questions appear in order with the exception of some randomization within blocks.

#### Cite the survey:

The People Lab. (2026). Public Servant Pulse. <https://publicservantpulse.hks.harvard.edu>

#### Level of Government

Question	Response options
What level of government do you currently work in?	City government; County government; Other local government; State government; Federal government; I don't currently work in government
<i>(If selected State, County, City, or Other)</i> What state do you currently work in?	Searchable dropdown of U.S. states
<i>(If selected County, City or Other)</i> What [county, city, other] do you currently work in? (type other if you can't find your locality)	Searchable dropdown of U.S. counties, cities, towns, etc.

#### Workplace Satisfaction

Question	Response options	Source
I recommend my organization as a good place to work.	1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Somewhat disagree 4 = Neither agree nor disagree	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2025). <i>Workforce insights from central governments:</i>



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	5 = Somewhat agree 6 = Agree 7 = Strongly agree	<i>Findings of the 2024 OECD/EU Survey of Public Servants.</i> <a href="https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/workforce-insights-from-central-governments-2f9080b1-en">https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/workforce-insights-from-central-governments-2f9080b1-en</a>
Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job?	1 = Very dissatisfied 2 = Dissatisfied 3 = Somewhat dissatisfied 4 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied 5 = Somewhat satisfied 6 = Satisfied 7 = Very satisfied	Partnership for Public Service. (2025). <i>Public Service Viewpoint Survey: Data Dashboard.</i> <a href="https://bestplacestowork.org/data-dashboard/">https://bestplacestowork.org/data-dashboard/</a>  U.S. Office of Personnel Management. (2024). <i>2024 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey: Technical report.</i> <a href="https://www.opm.gov/fevs/reports/technical-reports/technical-report/technical-report/2024/2024-technical-report.pdf">https://www.opm.gov/fevs/reports/technical-reports/technical-report/technical-report/2024/2024-technical-report.pdf</a>
Considering everything, how satisfied are you with your organization?	1-7 Very dissatisfied → Very satisfied	Partnership for Public Service. (2025). <i>Public Service Viewpoint Survey: Data Dashboard.</i> <a href="https://bestplacestowork.org/data-dashboard/">https://bestplacestowork.org/data-dashboard/</a>  U.S. Office of Personnel Management. (2024). <i>2024 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey: Technical report.</i> <a href="https://www.opm.gov/fevs/reports/technical-reports/technical-report/technical-report/2024/2024-technical-report.pdf">https://www.opm.gov/fevs/reports/technical-reports/technical-report/technical-report/2024/2024-technical-report.pdf</a>

## Workplace Experiences

Question	Response options	Source
<b>Burnout</b>		
I am exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work.	1-7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	Adapted from Kristensen, T. S., Borritz, M., Villadsen, E., & Christensen, K. B. (2005). The Copenhagen Burnout Inventory <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/02678370500297720">https://doi.org/10.1080/02678370500297720</a>
I feel disconnected from the work that I do.	1-7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	Adapted from Demerouti, E. (1999). Oldenburg Burnout Inventory [Database record]. APA PsycTests. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1037/t01688-000">https://doi.org/10.1037/t01688-000</a>
Usually, I can manage the demands of my job well.	1-7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	
<b>Employee Engagement</b>		
I find my work to be a positive challenge.	1-7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	Based on Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> , 33(4), 692-724. <a href="https://doi.org/10.2307/256287">https://doi.org/10.2307/256287</a>  Item also in Demerouti, E. (1999). <i>Oldenburg Burnout Inventory</i> [Database record]. APA PsycTests.

		<a href="https://doi.org/10.1037/t01688-001">https://doi.org/10.1037/t01688-001</a>
I am willing to do extra work for my job beyond what is expected of me.	1-7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2025). <i>Workforce insights from central governments: Findings of the 2024 OECD/EU Survey of Public Servants</i> . <a href="https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/workforce-insights-from-central-governments_2f9080b1-en">https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/workforce-insights-from-central-governments_2f9080b1-en</a>
I am motivated to do my best work in my job.	1-7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	Based on Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> , 33(4), 692-724. <a href="https://doi.org/10.2307/256287">https://doi.org/10.2307/256287</a>
<b>Team Cohesion and Belonging</b>		
The people I work with cooperate to get the job done.	1-7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	U.S. Office of Personnel Management. (2024). <i>2024 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey: Technical report</i> . <a href="https://www.opm.gov/fevs/reports/technical-reports/technical-report/technical-report/2024/2024-technical-report.pdf">https://www.opm.gov/fevs/reports/technical-reports/technical-report/technical-report/2024/2024-technical-report.pdf</a>
I feel like I belong at work.	1-7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	Based on Walton, G. M., & Cohen, G. L. (2007). A question of belonging: Race, social fit, and achievement. <i>Journal of Personality and</i>

		<p><i>Social Psychology</i>, 92(1), 82-96.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.92.1.82">https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.92.1.82</a></p>
<b>Psychological Safety</b>		
It is safe to take a risk on my team.	1-7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	<p>Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i>, 44(2), 350-383.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.2307/2666999">https://doi.org/10.2307/2666999</a></p>
<b>Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness</b>		
There is someone at work I can talk to about my day-to-day work problems if I need to.	1-7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	<p>Based on Ryan, R. M., &amp; Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 55(1), 68.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68">https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68</a></p>
I feel competent at my job	1-7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	
I am given a lot of freedom to decide how to do my own work.	1-7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	<p>Based on Ryan, R. M., &amp; Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 55(1), 68.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68">https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68</a></p> <p>Item also in Centers for Disease Control and</p>

		Prevention (2010). <i>Quality of Worklife Questionnaire</i> , <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/stress/worklife-question/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/stress/gwlquest.html">https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/stress/worklife-question/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/stress/gwlquest.html</a>
<b>Organizational Pride</b>		
I am proud when I tell others where I work.	1-7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	Adapted from Mowday, R. T., Steers, R. M., & Porter, L. W. (1979). The measurement of organizational commitment. <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i> , 14(2), 224-247. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(79)90072-1">https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(79)90072-1</a>  Item also in UK Cabinet Office. (2026). <i>Civil Service People Survey 2025: Results</i> . <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-people-survey-2025-results">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-people-survey-2025-results</a>
<b>Public Sector Identification</b>		
The public sector is the best place to work for those who want to make a positive impact.	1-7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	Adapted from Sciepura, B., & Linos, E. (2024). When perceptions of public service harms the public servant: Predictors of burnout and compassion fatigue in government. <i>Review of Public Personnel Administration</i> , 44(1), 116-138. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X221081508">https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X221081508</a>

Red Tape		
There are too many rules and procedures at work for me to do my job well.	1–7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	Developed for this survey
Innovation		
My organization continually encourages me to look for new ways of improving the way things work.	1–7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2025). <i>Workforce insights from central governments: Findings of the 2024 OECD/EU Survey of Public Servants</i> . <a href="https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/workforce-insights-from-central-governments-2f9080b1-enU.S">https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/workforce-insights-from-central-governments-2f9080b1-enU.S</a> .  Similar questions appear in Office of Personnel Management. (2010–2024). <i>Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS)</i> . <a href="https://www.opm.gov/fevs/">https://www.opm.gov/fevs/</a>
My organization commits resources to develop new ideas and innovations (e.g., budget, staff, time, expert support).		

## Supervisor Relationship

Question	Response options	Source
How would you characterize your working relationship with your direct supervisor?	1 = Extremely ineffective 2 = Moderately ineffective 3 = Slightly ineffective 4 = Neither effective nor ineffective 5 = Slightly effective 6 = Moderately effective 7 = Extremely effective	Graen, G. B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. <i>The Leadership</i>

		Quarterly, 6(2), 219–247. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(95)90036-5">https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(95)90036-5</a>
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## Feeling Understood

Question	Response options	Source
<p>How much do you think the following people understand the challenges you face at work every day?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your coworkers</li> <li>• Your direct supervisor</li> <li>• Your department leadership</li> <li>• Your [state, county, or city] leadership</li> <li>• Your family and friends</li> <li>• [State, county, or city] residents</li> </ul>	<p>1 = Not at all 2 = Very little 3 = A little 4 = A fair amount 5 = Quite a bit 6 = A lot 7 = A great deal</p>	Developed for this survey

## Workplace Harassment

Question	Response options	Source
<p>In the past 12 months, have you ever been bullied, threatened, attacked, or harassed in any way while on the job?</p>	<p>Yes, once; Yes, a few times; Yes, about once a month; Yes, about once a week; Yes, daily or almost daily; No; Prefer not to say</p>	<p>Adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2010). <i>Quality of Worklife Questionnaire</i>, <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/stress/worklife-question/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/stress/gwlquest.html">https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/stress/worklife-question/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/stress/gwlquest.html</a></p>

<p><i>(If Yes) Who were the sources of this behavior? (Select all that apply)</i></p>	<p>Coworker; [Level of government] employee from another department; Supervisor; [Level of government] resident; Journalist or media; Other</p>	<p>Developed for this survey</p>
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## Pay Expectation

Respondents will be randomly shown one of the following two questions:

Question	Response options	Source
<p>If you were to leave your current job and take a job requiring similar experience and training in the <i>private sector</i>, do you think you would earn...</p>	<p>1 = A lot less; 2 = Moderately less; 3 = A little less; 4 = About the same; 5 = A little more; 6 = Moderately more; 7 = A lot more; 8 = Don't know</p>	<p>Developed for this survey</p>
<p>Compared to people doing a similar job in the private sector, I feel that I am fairly compensated.</p>	<p>1–7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree; Don't know</p>	<p>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2025). <i>Workforce insights from central governments: Findings of the 2024 OECD/EU Survey of Public Servants</i>. <a href="https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/workforce-insights-from-central-governments_2f9080b1-en">https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/workforce-insights-from-central-governments_2f9080b1-en</a></p>

## Role Conflict

Question	Response options	Source
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: At work, I am often asked to play different roles that conflict with each other.	1-7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree; Don't know	Developed for this survey
<p>People often play different roles in their job that reflect different dimensions of what it means to do the job well. For example, a teacher might see their role as an instructor, a disciplinarian, and/or a mentor.</p> <p>Thinking about your own job, what roles do you need to play to do it well?</p>	Open text	

## Intention to Quit

Question	Response options	Source
Are you considering leaving your job within the next year?	Yes; No; Unsure	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2025). <i>Workforce insights from central governments: Findings of the 2024 OECD/EU Survey of Public Servants</i> . <a href="https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/workforce-insights-from-central-governments_2f9080b1-en">https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/workforce-insights-from-central-governments_2f9080b1-en</a> ,
(If Yes) Why are you considering leaving your job?	To take another job in my [state, county, city, government]; To take another job in the public sector elsewhere; To take another job outside the public sector; To retire; Other (Open text)	

		<p>Partnership for Public Service. (2025). <i>Public Service Viewpoint Survey: Data Dashboard</i>.  <a href="https://bestplacestowork.org/data-dashboard/">https://bestplacestowork.org/data-dashboard/</a>,</p> <p>U.S. Office of Personnel Management. (2024). <i>2024 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey: Technical report</i>.  <a href="https://www.opm.gov/fevs/reports/technical-reports/technical-report/technical-report/2024/2024-technical-report.pdf">https://www.opm.gov/fevs/reports/technical-reports/technical-report/technical-report/2024/2024-technical-report.pdf</a></p>
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## Recruitment and Retention

Respondents will be randomly shown one of the following two questions:

Question	Response options	Source
What motivated you to take a public sector job?	Open text	Developed for this survey
What motivates you to stay in a public sector job?	Open text	

## Perceptions of Residents

Question	Response options	Source
I trust residents in my [state, county, city, community] to do what is right.	1–7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	Adapted from Grimmelikhuijsen, S., & Knies, E. (2017). Validating a scale for citizen trust in government organizations. <i>International Review of</i>

		<p>Administrative Sciences, 83(3), 583–601.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852315585950">https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852315585950</a></p> <p>and American National Election Studies. (2025). ANES 2024 Time Series Study Full Release. University of Michigan and Stanford University.  <a href="https://electionstudies.org/data-center/2024-time-series-study/">https://electionstudies.org/data-center/2024-time-series-study/</a>,</p> <p>Based on Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., &amp; Schoorman, F. D. (1995). An integrative model of organizational trust. <i>Academy of Management Review</i>, 20(3), 709–734.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.2307/258792">https://doi.org/10.2307/258792</a></p>
I trust that residents in my [state, county, city, community] are honest.	1–7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	<p>Adapted from Grimmelikhuijsen, S., &amp; Knies, E. (2017). Validating a scale for citizen trust in government organizations. <i>International Review of Administrative Sciences</i>, 83(3), 583–601.  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852315585950">https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852315585950</a></p> <p>Based on Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., &amp; Schoorman, F. D. (1995). An integrative model of organizational trust. <i>Academy of</i></p>
I trust that residents in my [state, county, city, community] are competent.	1–7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	
The residents my [state, county, city, government] serves share my values and beliefs.	1–7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	

		Management Review, 20(3), 709-734. <a href="https://doi.org/10.2307/258792">https://doi.org/10.2307/258792</a>
When rules are ambiguous, residents my [state, county, city, government] serves often try to take advantage of them.	1-7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	Adapted from Migchelbrink, K., & Raymaekers, P. (2025). Public managers' trust in citizens and their preferences for behavioral policy instruments: evidence from a mixed-methods study. Behavioural Public Policy, 9(2), 386-409. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1017/bpp.2022.21">https://doi.org/10.1017/bpp.2022.21</a>

## Role of Government

Question	Response options	Source
Where would you place your views on the following scale?	1 = People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves...  10 = The government should take more responsibility to ensure everyone is provided for	World Values Survey Wave 1 (1981-1984). World Values Survey Association. <a href="https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org">https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org</a>

## Burden Tolerance

Question	Response options	Source
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: If people want to access	1-7 Strongly disagree → Strongly agree	Developed for this survey

public services, it is only fair that they have to make a significant effort to get them.		
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## Public Sector Work Characteristics

Question	Response options
How many years in total have you worked in the public sector? Round to the nearest whole year.	Open text
How many years have you worked in your current department? Round to the nearest whole year.	Open text
How often do you interact with members of the public as part of your job?	Daily; Weekly; Monthly; A few times a year; About once a year; Never
In your role, approximately how many employees do you directly supervise?	Open text
How would you describe the department you currently work in? (i.e., housing, public works, etc.)	Open text

## Basic Demographics

Question	Response options
Which best describes your	White;



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ethnicity/race? <i>(Select all that apply)</i>	Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Asian; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; American Indian or Alaska Native; Middle Eastern or North African; Other (Open text); Prefer not to say
Which best describes your gender identity?	Male; Female; Other (Open text); Prefer not to say
In what year were you born?	Open text
What is the highest level of education you have completed?	Less than high school; High school graduate; Some college; Two-year associate degree; Bachelor's degree; Postgraduate or professional degree (e.g., MA, MS, PhD, JD); Prefer not to say
There are many political views that people might hold, from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale?	Extremely liberal; Liberal; Slightly liberal; Moderate; Slightly conservative; Conservative; Extremely conservative; Haven't thought much about it; Prefer not to say
Which best describes your party affiliation?	Democrat; Independent; Republican; Other (Open text); Prefer not to say
What is your annual	\$0 - \$19,999;



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household income?	\$20,000 - \$39,999; \$40,000 - \$59,999; \$60,000 - \$79,999; \$80,000 - \$99,999; \$100,000 or more; Prefer not to say
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