



Federal Worker Survey Results

In October 2009, a poll of the Federal employees who attended the Out & Equal Annual Summit was conducted. The survey was sent out to over 60 registrants. The following are the results of that survey.

Executive Overview

A survey on October 2, 2009 was emailed to the state and federal government employees who had registered for the 2009 Out & Equal Annual Workplace Summit. Twenty one (21) responses were received and were presented at the Featured Panel: *The Feds: A Different Kind of Workplace* on Friday, October 9 during Session 5. The comments and stories included in this report indicate a wide range of federal employees at all levels of government and from many agencies. Ninety (90%) of LGBT federal employees in the survey are out to someone at work but only 57.9% feel safe about being out in the workplace. This report indicates a commonality of experience for federal employees and a desire for equality in the workplace in terms of recruiting, retention, advancement and recognition. It highlights the successes and the challenges facing LGBT employees. Federal employees are expressing their own perception of the organizations they work for and do not represent agency policies or positions.

1. Job Titles (20 responses)

- Physical Scientist/collateral duty title GLBT Program Manager
- Executive Secretary
- Environmental Engineer
- Environmental Engineer
- Diversity Program Manager
- EEO LGBT Group Manager
- Foreign Service Officer (Diplomat)
- HR Compensation Program Administrator
- Diversity Program Manager
- Equal Employment Opportunity Assistant
- Senior Program Officer; Policy Director of my ERG, Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies (GLIFAA)
- EEO Director
- Human Resources Specialist
- National Program Leader-Public Policy
- OIG Investigator
- Management Analyst
- Agricultural Economist
- Payroll Accounting and Control Chief, Supervisory Accountant
- Environmental Protection Specialist
- Environmental Scientist/Diversity Program Manager

2. Government Agencies or Organization (20 responses)

- US Department of Energy
- Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) (2)
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- U.S. Department of State (2)
- SALT LAKE CITY CORPORATION
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- NASA Goddard Space Flight Center



Federal Worker Survey Results

- I'm part of the national advisory council for EPA.
 - We follow the news and I am a member of a national EPA Federal workgroup that follows these issues
 - Internet and networking
 - Yes to all items in number 6. The computer is not taking my check offs. From the Office of Diversity and Inclusion in Central Office and I find a lot of it and share it with 49 nationwide employees who are interested in the topic who are LGBT or supporters.
 - Through either our collective bargaining organization (similar to a union), our LGBT ERG, GLIFAA, or through Department notices that are distributed through E-mail or electronic telegram.
 - I am directly involved and provide direct input as an employee of the human resource department.
 - Internet, email, info via Supervisor
 - GLIFAA
 - Through a network of people I know working the issues. Nothing at an organized and strategic level.
 - OPM, FedGLOBE, other VAs
 - Gay and Lesbians Employees Advisory Council (GLEAC)
 - The newspaper, Agency ERG, The Intelligence Community's LGBT Affinity Group, O&E, & informal discussions with colleagues from other agencies.
 - Some supportive policies and some not.
 - There are three main mechanisms: 1) the USDA departmental Office of Civil Rights has a GLBT program coordinator for the department; 2) employee organizations such as GLIFAA (Gays and Lesbians in Foreign Affairs Agencies) and Federal GLOBE (Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual Employees); 3) the own agency's Office of Civil Rights.
 - Through agency wide announcements.
 - News, Google Alerts
 - Networking, other Diversity managers, gay web sites
 - FedGLOBE
11. **What have been successes in your agency regarding LGBT workplace equality? (20 responses)**
- Diversity and EEO policy is supported by the highest level on management where I work. we are recognized as one of 8 special emphasis programs where I work working on adding transgender anti-discrimination language to Dept's EEO policy
 - The setting up of an affinity group, but not much is happening with it.
 - We have a national council. Our Agency has taken some leadership (at our urging) to send requests to the Office of Personnel Management to adopt GLBT supportive policies, where they have that option (i.e., where it's not literally an act of Congress). We have GLBT representatives in 9 of our 10 regional offices and in many offices in our DC HQ. Sexual orientation is included in our EEO policy, in the non-discrimination language in all of our job announcements. We're still not there w/ respect to gender expression and identity.
 - We've gone as far as federal regulations allow. Congressional action is needed now.
 - Inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in policy statements Gay pride Proclamation
 - We started the second ever LGBT employees group that yet has to be allowed to call itself an EEO Committee we are a group..."groupies".....:) But for a quasi military yet civilian agency it is a major step forward to be visible and out.
 - US citizen domestic partners are now given the same benefits as spouses, with the exception of any Federal program specifically prohibited by DOMA. The State Department includes sexual orientation under its EEO policy.
 - We have gained support for creation of the first-ever employee resource group; which happens



Federal Worker Survey Results

to be for LGBT employees and Allies. The City has previously incorporated LGBT protections in its policies, including leave benefits (not including FMLA), and provides domestic partners (and partners' dependents) with benefits coverage.

- I have been directly involved with efforts to host recognition events for our Federal employees during Lesbian and Gay History Month (Gay Pride). In June 2009 I coordinated a special emphasis event featuring author, speaker and activist Dr. Mary Ann Humphrey-Keever who spoke on the topic of "Gays in the Military" (she is author of "My Country, My Right to Serve").
 - I'll speak about this on the panel.
 - - Recognition of Pride month - Incorporation of GLBT affinity group at the same level as women, minorities and people with disabilities affinity groups - Efforts to create a GLBT Program Manager - GLBT affinity group rep as part of EO Council and Diversity Council - Clarification of sick leave use for same sex partners - Support for GLBT training, such as Out and Equal
 - Forming the LGBT committee.
 - The hiring of John Berry and the proposed implementation of GLBT Special Emphasis Managers.
 - The creation of an official LGBT ERG. Inclusion of sexual orientation in the Agency's public non-discrimination policy. Assistance, via an agency "Member of Household" letter, in obtaining long-term visitor visas for the same-sex domestic partners of agency employees posted abroad. Defining as "family" same-sex domestic partners of agency employees in the context of Family Friendly Sick Leave use (can use sick leave to care for partner). Inclusion of same-sex partners at agency family events.
 - Relative equity with other ERGs but not really accepted at the table; Agency wide recognition of a Pride event in June but not much in the way of participation (The red headed step child of Diversity Management).
 - U.S. citizen domestic partners of foreign service officers in my agency have been able to piggyback onto the new bundles of rights that this group got at the State Department; there is with the Obama Administration, a renewed commitment to workplace equality and that is seen at the agency and department levels in actual terms, such as budget commitments, and having the GLBT program manager raised to the same level as special program emphasis managers for women and other minorities.
 - The department has been very pro-active on developing program to support the LGBT community.
 - Holding annual educational events on LGBT people, recognizing important dates/events of the LGBT community, supportive management
 - Still working on this.
 - I believe this is the first year that my Agency has ever sent an employee to attend the Out & Equal summit!
12. **What have been challenges in your agency regarding LGBT workplace equality? (16 responses)**
- Getting GLBT folks to participate in the program at work. It's a pretty conservative place and most folks have security clearances. The clearance issue is still an issue for most people regarding being out.
 - Getting our HQ to acknowledge bisexuality and transgender issues.
 - Implementation of a parallel complaints process
 - Clarifying yet to this day if EEO can say they support LGBT folks as a minority...yet when you have the African American, Asian Pacific, Native American programs that are not mandated by law, and knowing your history understand that they were once seen as minorities by enlightened government officials who supported EEO SEP's, why can LGBT Americans not be embraced as an EEO SE Program given that we are in all minority and dominant cultures. We need full time SEP's to do the work adequately as now it's a collateral duty position that often



Federal Worker Survey Results

is not easily supported in the face of full time job demands or one has to choose to work late pro bono to get the LGBT diversity work done.

- Security Clearances; Hostile Work Environments; Working in Countries where LGBT persons are unprotected or where the lifestyle is unlawful; Any DOMA prohibited benefit; Until recently, no formal recognition of relationships when officers were posted abroad (these implications were many).
- Getting people to believe that LGBT concerns are mainstream and part of our Agency's mission. I'm told always it's not career enhancing and not relevant.
- - Lack of workplace benefits for same sex partners. - Lack of meaningful avenue for redress for sexual orientation claims of discrimination.
- Getting the committee members to get involved.
- Not nearly enough protection from discrimination. For some employees USDA is not a safe environment to be out and open especially for lower grade employees.
- "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and otherwise conservative DoD environment has a chilling effect on LGBT workplace equality and "coming out - even for civilians. Some military members feel emboldened to harass and "joke" about LGBTs. Lack of legislative mandate to compile "No FEAR Act"-type statistics on LGBTs makes it difficult to compile metrics on discrimination, harassment, and % of the workforce that is LGBT. Lack of appropriate questions in climate/exit surveys which would help identify obstacles to LGBT recruitment & retention. Metrics help build the business case for greater inclusion!
- Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management has been an impediment. Historically, some Administrations have not been completely supportive.
- There are still employees concerned about coming out in the workplace and the potential adverse effect that might have on their career. There is still a great deal of ignorance in the workplace at large about the concerns of the GLBT community. Amongst GLBT employees in my agency, there is little interest in activism or in becoming more visible. It appears that there is an attitude of "Let the GLBT program manager do it."
- No, the agency seems to doing what it can within the intent of current law.
- Open dialogue/communication, hesitance of LGBT community to become involved or out at work and to participate in the LGBT employee group
- Being treated as equals with other underrepresented groups; continuing discrimination in recruiting, hiring, promotion; no disciplinary action on managers who harass GLBT employees; DOMA
- A large proportion of our staff is former military, so there is a "don't ask, don't tell" kind of culture here (even though I work in the civil service).

13. Additional comments or suggestions: (5 responses)

- Thanks for including the feds!
- We will be discussing these issues at our workshop on Wednesday afternoon, the Only Gay in the Government.
- Can out and Equal work with other organizations to have the Healthcare Equality Index applied to Federal Healthcare agencies and can the Equality Index for jobs also be applied to Federal, State and Local employment so that the dichotomy between private for profit sector and government can be blurred and such surveys can look at....THE WORKPLACE period!!!!???
- I am not an employee of either the federal or state government, but rather city government.
- We welcome the new Administration and intend to work to insure its success in fulfilling its promises of equal treatment of all Federal employees!