



Report Highlights

Child Welfare Job Satisfaction Survey

Department of Children and Family Services

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Audit Control #40220023
Performance Audit Services • December 2022

Why We Compiled This Informational Report

Recent events related to the handling of cases by child welfare (CW) staff within the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the subsequent testimonies during legislative committee meetings resulted in a legislative request to survey the job satisfaction of CW staff. To assess job satisfaction, identify barriers to job performance, and evaluate employee perspectives on leadership and accountability, we conducted a survey of all CW staff in October 2022. To provide information on DCFS activities and initiatives to improve job satisfaction, job performance, and leadership we reviewed documentation provided by DCFS to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare.

What We Found

We found the following:

- Survey respondents indicated that the most important issues that need to be addressed at DCFS include pay, caseload and unrealistic expectations, and a lack of support and respect from supervisors and managers.
- Survey results show that 88.8% of respondents are passionate about the work they do, but only 54.1% are satisfied with their job. Respondents in some regions – such as Lake Charles and Lafayette – and some work areas – such as Home Development, Adoption, and Family Services – are more satisfied than others. In addition, survey respondents are generally more satisfied with the way they are treated by their immediate supervisor than by managers and supervisors in general or CW leadership. The exhibit below shows CW employee responses to various job satisfaction questions.

Job Satisfaction Responses (784 responses)				
Question	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Total
I feel passionate about the work I do.	88.8%	6.9%	4.3%	100%
Overall, I am satisfied with my job.	54.1%	22.3%	23.6%	100%
A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my unit/program.	67.6%	13.9%	18.5%	100%
I am satisfied with my total compensation package (pay, benefits, vacation, etc.).	24.5%	17.9%	57.6%	100%

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from October 2022 survey of DCFS CW employees.

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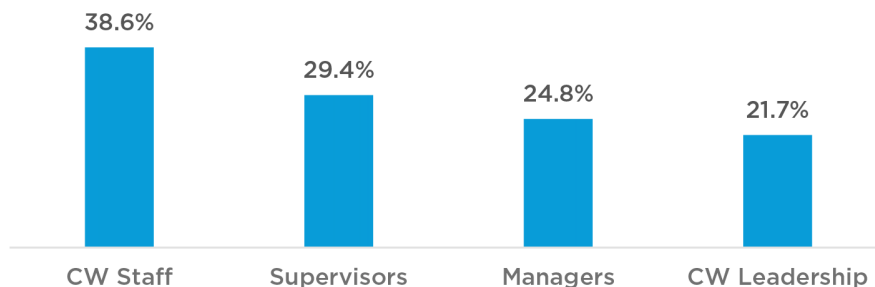
What We Found (Cont.)

- According to our survey, respondents are concerned that high caseloads and limited resources prevent them from providing quality services to children and families. Other barriers that affect respondents' ability to do their job include lack of support from supervisors and managers and a lack of transportation.
- Generally, half of respondents agree that individuals in leadership positions in CW model qualities such as accountability, respect, and empathy. Examples of concerns with leadership positions include promotions that are not based on achievement and performance, CW employees not being held accountable when they behave inappropriately, and the belief that issues will not be addressed. The exhibit below shows survey responses related to accountability by position.

"They keep piling more work on us to make it look like they're doing 'something,' but none of those new policies actually address the issue leadership had a knee-jerk reaction to. People leave DCFS because leadership constantly makes our jobs even harder to do without ever listening to us. Certain offices have notoriously high turnover because no one is ever willing to address when a person is a bad supervisor or manager either."

Source: October 2022 LLA survey of DCFS CW employees

"CW staff, managers, supervisors, and leadership are held accountable when they behave inappropriately?"
Percent of Survey Respondents who **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**
(770 responses)



Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from October 2022 survey of DCFS CW employees.

- DCFS has proposed and already begun work on a range of initiatives to address issues with job satisfaction, job performance, and leadership. Examples of initiatives include establishing a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Unit and Council to ensure employees have a direct line to and voice with agency leadership; developing a 24/7 coverage model to allow more work/life balance; hosting hiring fairs; streamlining the hiring process; adjusting pay structures; creating a Leadership Professional Development Program; and contracting for an Employee Assistance Program to help mitigate the level of stress, anxiety, and secondary traumatic stress that CW staff experience.

Informational reports are intended to provide more timely information than standards-based performance audits. While these informational reports do not follow Government Auditing Standards, we conduct quality assurance activities to ensure the information presented is accurate. We met with DCFS and incorporated its feedback throughout this informational report.

View the full report, including management's response, at www.la.gov.