

Lake County Employee Survey
Lake Forest Graduate School of Management
November 2018

Executive Summary

The Lake County HR team wants to be more effective at hiring and retaining high quality talent, which in recent years has been increasingly difficult. In an effort to understand factors driving this challenge as well as uncover possible solutions, the Lake County HR team hired Lake Forest Graduate School of Management (LFGSM) to analyze trends and issues with respect to retaining talent in Lake County.

LFGSM recommended a two-pronged approach to gathering the data. The first phase was to conduct a series of focus groups comprised of representative employees from several departments across the County. Each group was asked the same questions. This first phase took place in August and September, 2018, and upon completion of the focus groups, a report summarizing the findings and making specific recommendations based on those findings was submitted to the County HR team. Additionally, the issues identified in those sessions helped inform the questions that became part of phase 2, a general survey for all employees. The following report reflects findings from phase 2: the survey results.

LFGSM constructed the survey using a third party survey partner to ensure confidentiality of the responses. The survey was administered electronically via a link that allowed County employees to respond anonymously. The total number of employees invited to participate in the survey was 2,521. Responses were obtained from 850 employees, or 34%. The margin of error for the survey responses was 2.74, at the 95% confidence level. Below is a table that breaks out the survey response by department:

<i>Department</i>	<i>Employees</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Departmental Response Rate</i>
<i>Chief Assessor Office</i>	27	12	44%
<i>Coroner</i>	12	8	67%
<i>Clerk of Circuit Court</i>	126	57	45%
<i>County Administration</i>	25	16	64%
<i>County Clerk</i>	35	13	37%
<i>Division of Transportation</i>	124	54	44%
<i>Finance and Admin Services</i>	77	29	38%
<i>Health Department</i>	867	280	32%
<i>Human Resources</i>	14	14	100%
<i>Information and Tech</i>	40	25	63%
<i>19th Judicial Circuit</i>	237	106	45%
<i>Lake County ETSB</i>	3	0	0%
<i>Public Defender</i>	42	11	26%
<i>Planning and Dev</i>	41	22	54%
<i>Public Works</i>	85	34	40%
<i>Recorder of Deeds</i>	21	3	14%
<i>Regional Office of Edu</i>	20	16	80%
<i>States Attorney's Office</i>	131	38	29%
<i>Sheriff Merit Commission</i>	1	0	0%
<i>Sheriff's Office</i>	521	81	16%

Stormwater Management	19	10	53%
Swalco	5	2	40%
Treasurer	15	9	60%
Veteran Assistance	5	0	0%
Workforce Development	28	10	36%
GRAND TOTAL	2521	850	

In addition to identifying their department, respondents were also asked to indicate:

- Years worked for Lake County
- Type of position (Administrative, Professional, Attorney, Engineer, Health Professional, Skilled Craft Worker)
- Union membership
- Whether or not they manage others
- Type of previous employer (e.g., in another public sector job, the private sector, etc.)
- Years to retirement

The responses have been graphed and are presented in subsequent pages. Below are some key findings.

Employee Benefits and Retention

- While almost exactly half of the respondents have been with the County for 10 years or more, nearly as many (45%) intend to stay there another 10+ years indicating that the majority of respondents are in mid-career.
- Responses showed that in the next five years, one-third (33%) of County employees intend to leave the County.
- 62% of County employees have looked for another job since starting to work for Lake County. Primary reasons include: salary (71%); opportunities for growth (65%); lack of promotions (44%); and County culture (35%).
- When asked what would make them want to stay at the County, respondents listed
 - a. "More opportunities for career advancement" first,
 - b. "Promotions" second,
 - c. "Training and development for employees" third, and
 - d. "More recognition" fourth.
- When asked what the County should do to become an employer of choice, the top three items respondents listed adopting include
 - a. "Flexible schedules" (25%),
 - b. Expanded medical coverage (15%),
 - c. Additional vacation days (12.5%)
- When asked about the County's incentives programs 48% indicated a positive opinion with a mean average score of 3.31/5.00. When asked if "the rewards are worth the effort?" 34% indicated a positive opinion with a mean average score of 2.99/5.00.
- When asked if benefits are more important than cash, respondents indicated by a small margin that they are not, with a mean average score of 2.94/5.00.

- 83% of respondents said the upcoming merit increase should reward high performance. 47% of respondents thought off-cycle increases should be based on performance only. 47% of respondents thought off-cycle increases should be based on a combination of tenure and performance.

Management Ability and Team Composition

- Managers responded with a mean average score of 3.54/5.00 about the composition of their teams indicating that they are pleased for the most part.
- Managers responded with a mean average score of 3.98/5.00 about their knowledge of County procedures and 4.10/5.00 about their management skills.

NOTE: These results do not match up with focus groups comments that said managers sometimes struggled with explaining benefits and/or managing their people.

How Lake County Employees feel about working at the County

Employees were asked to rate their opinion about working at the County on a 5 point Likert scale. Questions included topics around career development opportunities, communication, respect among colleagues and confidence in management. Overall responses ranged from a low of 2.79 for career development opportunities to a high of 3.81 for co-worker respect.

The report that follows details the responses by department and by tenure category. One observation is that the 0-2 year tenure category responded most positively to all questions related to how they feel about working at the County, and the 10+ year tenure category responded most negatively indicating that employees become less enthusiastic about working at the County as time progresses.

- Areas of strongest negativity among high tenure employees were development opportunities 2.5/5.0; open and honest communication with their manager 2.8/5.0; and the use of their abilities by the County 3.3/5.0.
- When examined by functional area, skilled craft workers rated significantly lower than other groups in all opinion questions. For example, when asked about their ability to thrive in the County culture they responded with 2.5/5.0 whereas the overall mean was 3.1.
- Union workers tended to be less satisfied than non-union workers in every category.
- Managers appear to see more development opportunities than non-managers: 3.25/5.0 compared to 2.7/5.0; more open communication with their managers: 3.2/5.0 compared to 2.75/5.0; and good use of their skills 3.5/5.0 compared to 3.25/5.0. They also give the County a higher Net Promoter Score 3.5/5.0 compared to 3.25/5.0.

In addition to this summary of findings, we have prepared an interactive spreadsheet which will give the County the ability to query the responses in a variety of ways.