

# Salt Lake County Employee Engagement Survey

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Salt Lake County (SLCo) provides a wide range of services to thousands of Utah residents each day. Effectively delivering these services is a challenge and the 3,500+ SLCo employees work hard to accomplish the task. The organization is large with several divisions, facilities throughout the county, and a diverse mission. To better understand the strengths of the organization as well as areas of concern, SLCo Human Resources authorized an employee engagement study to be conducted.

Human Resources felt it was important to have an independent party conduct the employee research, and selected the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute at the University of Utah to assist with the project. SLCo had four primary objectives for the study:

1. Establish base-line data regarding the culture and climate of SLCo from employees' perspective,
2. Gauge employee engagement in multiple categories and across demographic groups,
3. Provide Human Resources and SLCo management with information and insights into employee engagement that will enhance decision-making and problem solving, and
4. Gather information that will assist SLCo in developing future strategies for success.

SLCo created an Employee Engagement Project Team to oversee all aspects of the employee research. The team consisted of fourteen individuals from different divisions at SLCo and three researchers from the Policy Institute. This team made decisions on methodology, communication with employees, and the survey questionnaire based on the research objectives. Efforts were made to be transparent throughout the project and involve employees in the process. A general communication plan was created by the county to inform employees of steps in the research.

## Methods

The research process included utilizing employee input to design a questionnaire, collecting survey data, and analyzing the data. To begin formulating the questionnaire, the Project Team determined several areas of emphasis and developed a list of potential questions for each area.

To gather employee input on the questionnaire, five focus groups of employees were held in late August. Participants were selected to provide good representation across divisions and work locations. No one from SLCo management or Human Resources observed the group sessions, nor were any comments or suggestions by individual participants disclosed.

A facilitator from the Policy Institute led the groups through a process of evaluating each area of emphasis and a set of draft questions. Employees were encouraged to add questions, change wording, and remove unnecessary questions. Time was also spent in the groups discussing which demographic questions would provide the data needed to make the results meaningful while allowing respondents to maintain anonymity. The groups considered ways to encourage employee participation and ensure employees were comfortable with measures to keep all responses confidential.

Using suggestions from the five focus groups, the questionnaire was revised by the Policy Institute and presented to the Project Team. After minor adjustments, a final questionnaire was approved by Human Resources Director Michael Ongkiko. The final areas of emphasis for the questionnaire were:

- *New Hire Process / Onboarding* – the new employee experience, including the training and orientation of new employees,
- *Communication* – the effective and efficient means of providing information throughout the organization,
- *Training & Education* – the opportunity to acquire the skills and abilities to perform on the job and further development of employees' careers,
- *Professional Development* – the opportunity for personal growth and/or advancement as an employee of SLCo,
- *Performance and Development Plans & Annual Evaluations* – the quarterly performance and development plan process as well as the annual evaluation,
- *Management & Supervision* – the individuals who control or direct resources and expenditures, and/or have oversight and direction of processes, work, and those who perform the work,

- *Work Environment* – the policies, procedures, processes, equipment, resources, assignments, schedules, transfers, and more,
- *Culture* – the shared sets of values and beliefs that determine patterns of behavior common to groups of people, and
- *Well-being* – satisfaction and positive feelings, supportive and enriching relationships, interest and engagement in activities, purpose, sense of mastery and accomplishment, and feelings of control and autonomy as well as optimism.

The questionnaire was translated into Spanish for those preferring to complete the survey in that language. Lastly, the questionnaire was pretested on a small sample of SLCo employees before being sent to all employees. The final questionnaire contained 87 statements to which employees disagreed or agreed (1-5 scale), five open-ended questions, and nine demographic questions. A copy of the final questionnaire with results is available in Appendix B.

The Policy Institute programmed the questionnaire into Qualtrics, an online survey software platform. The program provided a means to distribute the survey, collect data, and send reminder emails. SLCo provided a complete list of full-time employees' email addresses for survey distribution. Neither employee names nor email addresses are reported in the results. Additionally, details regarding which employees participated in the survey were not given to SLCo nor were they included in any reporting.

An organization-wide email was sent prior to the survey from SLCO administration informing employees that they would be receiving the survey from the University of Utah (Policy Institute). Employees were encouraged to participate in the online study. The Policy Institute then sent each employee a link to access the online survey. Several days later a reminder email was sent to employees who had yet to respond, another reminder was sent a week later, and a final reminder was sent a few days before the deadline. Alternate methods of taking the survey were available, including several on-site open meetings where employees could obtain a paper survey from a Policy Institute staffer, fill out the survey, and submit the survey directly. The data collection period was from September 28 to October 19, 2015. A total of 2,272 employees responded to the survey – a response rate of approximately 60%.<sup>1</sup>

## Strengths of SLCo

Salt Lake County received reasonably good ratings in a number of question areas. The areas where employees give

1. The survey was distributed to 3,585 employees via email and meetings were held to allow employees that did not have easy access to a computer as part of their work duties to fill out paper surveys. Data limitations make it challenging to calculate the number of employees in the sample beyond the 3,585 in the email list. This uncertainty about the true number of total employees eligible to take the survey makes it challenging to determine an exact number of individuals in the sample, so we use an estimate of this population to provide an approximate response rate of 60%.

higher ratings (more agreement with statements) and provide positive comments on most frequently are seen as strengths – areas that are most satisfying to employees.

The survey results show the greatest strengths of the SLCo are: 1) value of work and enjoyment of job duties, 2) coworkers, 3) benefits, 4) flexibility, 5) job security, and 6) supervisors.

A significant strength for SLCo is that employees feel that the work they do makes a difference in the lives of residents (85% agree). Most are dedicated, engaged, and interested in their job duties (87% agree). Many employees comment on the enjoyment they have in their day to day work and serving the public.

The positive relationships employees have with their coworkers at SLCo are another strength with 76% saying people in the office work well together, 75% saying their coworkers are committed to quality work, and 80% saying they are treated with respect by their coworkers. Many say that they enjoy the everyday interactions with their fellow employees and list the positive culture and atmosphere in their office as one of the aspects they like most about their employment at SLCo.

Employees also express satisfaction with their current benefits. Though there were not any questions specifically about pay and benefits, when asked what they like most about working at SLCo *many* employees brought up the benefits component of their compensation. However, for some, this optimism about benefits was tempered by concerns that the benefits have been declining or may decline in the future.<sup>2</sup>

For some employees at SLCo, schedule and flexibility are very positive aspects of their job. This means different things to different employees depending on their circumstances, but the consistent message is that employees appreciate when their supervisors and managers can be sensitive in offering schedules and/or flexibility that work best with individual employees' personal circumstances and needs.

The security of employment offered by SLCo is another strength. Employees appreciate knowing that their job is relatively stable and have the perception that lay-offs are not likely.

Finally, supervisors receive praise from employees in a number of areas. Employees feel their supervisors care about them (74% agree). They say their supervisor provides positive feedback (71% agree) and creates an environment where employees feel comfortable sharing their concerns (71% agree). The open-ended comments echo the importance of supervisors, who have a significant impact on the employee experience.

## Opportunities for Improvement at SLCo

The opportunities for improvement at SLCo include: 1) perception of employees that their feedback will not make a difference, 2) office politics, including the process for selecting individuals for promotion, 3) issues with management and administration, 4) communications, 5) evaluations and development plans, 6) workload issues, and 7) pay. There are also a number of technical and operational improvements that are raised by employees in the focus groups and survey comments.

One of the clearest results from the employee survey came on the final statement – “I feel the results of this survey will make a difference.” This question was suggested by focus groups and clearly resonated with employees where only 2% of responding employees strongly agree and 20% agree. Conversely, 17% of employees strongly disagree and 25% disagree that changes will be made as a result of survey findings. There is certainly an opportunity to improve trust in the organization regarding the value of employee feedback and the desire of those in leadership to respond to employee concerns.

Another area of significant discontent for employees is office politics. Many employees believe promotions and discipline issues are adversely impacted by office politics. More than a third of employees (35%) strongly agree and another quarter (27%) agree with the statement “I feel that advancement at SLCo is often based in office politics (i.e. who you know or are connected to).” And ratings on a related statement “The promotion process at SLCO is fair” reflect similar sentiments, with almost half of employees disagreeing (22% disagree and 21% strongly disagree). Employee comments at the end of the survey echo this perception, with many employees saying they feel they cannot progress in their career at SLCo because the promotion process is unfairly influenced by office politics and/or that promotion decisions are based on factors unrelated to potential success in the position. Similarly, many employees report in the comments that discipline is inconsistent or simply non-existent, and at times this is due to those in management looking the other way when favored employees are violating policies or otherwise engaged in behavior that would require reprimand.

While many employees praise their supervisors, and this is noted as a strength for SLCo, not all employees have such experiences with supervisors and/or management. While many employees rate management moderately well on many of these items, what is striking is the significant number of employees who disagree with the statements. Specifically, 38% say management does not communicate effectively with employees, 36% say management does not work together in a coordinated manner, 31% say management does not

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2. It is important to note the timing of this study in relation to the Total Compensation Study conducted by the Hay Group on behalf of SLCo. The Hay study results were released and discussed prior to the administration of this Employee Engagement Survey, but the Mayor's announcement(s) regarding changes to pay and benefits were released after this study was completed. Employee opinions regarding pay and benefits stated in this report are sometimes a response to the work conducted by the Hay Group, do not take into account reactions of employees following the announcement of actual changes to the structure of pay and benefits.

provide enough support to employees to do their jobs, 31% say management does not care about them as individuals, and 24% of employees say that those in management are not qualified for their positions. A variety of negative complaints about management are given in the open ended comments and are detailed in the management section of the report. It is worth mentioning that while many comments are generically about management or administration, some employees express frustration with the mayor and council in particular – saying they feel disconnected and like these elected officials are not as caring or engaged with employees as previous administration(s).

While the greatest number of negative remarks are about higher levels of management and administration, there are also some negative comments about poor supervisors. Overall, supervisors receive higher marks from employees than the upper levels of management; for example, only 13% of employees say they feel their supervisor does not care about them as individuals compared to the 31% who say this about management. However, while complaints about supervisors are not as widespread, the number of negative responses do indicate that perhaps a greater effort could be made to identify weak supervisors and make plans for improvement.

Though many aspects of communication at the county receive good ratings, a number of employees express a desire for more consistently communicated information and opportunities for feedback/dialogue. Employees request greater transparency in county processes and decision-making with opportunities to voice concerns and suggestions. Survey respondents, particularly those located outside of the government center, experience technical challenges accessing county communications, and employees across the organization say they need tailored, relevant, easy to access, up to date information on county initiatives and services. Survey findings also indicate some issues concerning the SLCo directory, with a quarter of employees saying it is not easy to navigate (25%) and one in five (22%) claiming it is not up to date. A number of employees (27%), say they find it difficult to locate contact information for divisions on the internet/intranet.

Another area of reported concern is evaluations and performance plans. Many employees, including those in supervisory/management positions, would like to see changes to the current evaluation and development plan processes. The current one-size fits all approach, in format and frequency, is a poor fit for many employees and may not appear to be achieving the desired objectives.

Employee responses also indicate that there is some inconsistency in workload across the county. While some employees express that their position at SLCo affords them excellent work-life balance, others state that they are under resourced and overworked. They express a desire to perform

well in providing services to the public, but say that the need to do more with less is contributing to employee burnout and dissatisfaction. While concerns came from a variety of areas, there were a disproportionate number of comments from the Sheriff's Office where employees consistently spoke of high turnover and burdensome workload to the extent that some express concern about their safety on the job.

Finally, though no questions in the survey asked about pay or benefits explicitly, many employees express concern in the open-ended comments over the wages they receive. These employees do not feel that their wages are fair in comparison to the market. Employees understand that some of the wage issues were exacerbated by the recession, but they also feel that the administration has not responded with improvements in employee pay as the economy has recovered. In particular, employees with more tenure at the organization express frustration about pay compression and say they feel their time and experience are not valued. Though not a focus of this study, the frequency with which pay issues were mentioned indicates that this remains at the forefront of the minds of employees.

## Recommendations

In preface to the recommendations, it is important to acknowledge that some results from the employee survey deal with issues that are simpler to address while others will require a more intensive investment of time and resources. Additionally, there is an understanding that while the report refers to SLCo as a whole, in reality many of these issues occur at the agency/department level; these issues may fall under varied management structures and budgetary constraints which will impact the needed actions to implement these recommendations.

First, it is essential that the response to the survey be executed in a way that *builds trust among employees that their voice is heard and that management is taking proactive steps to work with employees on making progress on these issues*. Communications regarding the survey results and next steps should be clear and consistent. Leadership should ensure that employees understand how they can remain involved in the feedback/improvement process as SLCo works to address specific issues. The process should remain as open, transparent, and inclusive as possible.

Second, *build upon the strengths identified in the research*. For example, employees understand the work they do makes a difference in the lives of residents and generally feel a sense of personal accomplishment in their jobs; highlighting and recognizing the work of employees in providing this service may be one way to build on that strength. Additionally, employees who have flexibility in scheduling value this aspect of their job immensely; managers and supervisors can increase employee satisfaction by reviewing current practices and increasing

access to flex time, alternate scheduling, and telecommuting options where possible.

Thirdly, address areas of discontent. (Note: The following recommendations are not presented in order of importance, nor are they meant to be inclusive. There are other areas of concern that may be important for SLCo to address.)

- 1) *More consistently address disciplinary issues – large and small.* Survey comments show that when employees enjoy their coworkers, supervisors, and managers they are more engaged and satisfied in their work. Alternatively, when employees see others who lack work ethic, behave dishonestly, treat others poorly, or otherwise contribute to negative work environment *and* these issues remain unaddressed, it has a significant negative impact on employee morale.
- 2) *Find ways for employees to evaluate and provide feedback on their superiors in a way that employees feel safe from reprisal and assured that their concerns will be addressed.* Identifying and addressing complaints about poor management practices (whether through added supervisory/management training or formal discipline) is crucial to improving the employee experience for many survey respondents. In their comments employees specifically recommend improved ongoing training for management and more careful vetting of potential supervisors/managers. Additionally, survey responses from those in management show that more than a third (35%) feel their management training is currently insufficient, indicating that many are open to additional training. Finally, supervisors and managers who excel could be highlighted and acknowledged; these high performers could also be utilized as a resource to mentor and train others to share best practices.
- 3) The results of this research provide an opportunity for the County to *consider a different approach to existing employee “evaluation” or performance management programming.* SLCo’s current one size fits all approach to annual evaluations and quarterly PDPs is not well received by many employees – including some supervisors/managers. The county employs a diverse workforce with varied needs regarding the content and frequency of evaluations and performance plans. A more nimble and flexible process – with greater focus on qualitative factors – may be a more effective use of time and resources in helping supervisors develop their leadership skills as well as helping people account for their work performance and further their professional development. A bottom-up approach to revising these tools is recommended.
- 4) *Review current promotion practices.* Employees consistently reported impressions of unfair promotion practices including: mandatory qualifications that they felt didn’t

match the actual skills needed for the position, interviewing procedures and questions that don’t adequately assess a candidates potential for success, and a politicized selection process. Many employees also mentioned the slowness of the hiring process, indicating that any revisions to current promotion and hiring processes should also consider ways to shorten the time from new hire request to onboarding. More detailed comments about promotions and hiring are available in the main body of the report and provide more detailed guidance on specific issues to be addressed.

- 5) *Improve communications with employees.* In order to increase transparency and organizational effectiveness there is a need to resolve technical issues, highlight highest priority communications, improve consistency and efficiency, and give greater consideration to the unique communications needs of employees located outside of the government center. Some communications initiatives may take more time to implement, but others (like improving the employee directory) are more straight-forward improvements that could yield great immediate benefits. More detailed feedback is given in the communications section of the report.
- 6) *Systematically review workload issues in the county.* While some employees reported that their job at SLCo affords them excellent work-life balance, many others report unreasonable workloads and unfair distribution of work. Administrators should work to determine areas in greatest need of additional funding and resources to alleviate undue burden on particular employees/teams.
- 7) *Continue open dialogue regarding pay issues at SLCo.* This survey did not specifically address pay issues and so specific recommendations cannot be given, but the frequency and intensity of the comments given regarding pay and benefits indicate that unless employees feel such concerns are being addressed it will be very difficult to improve engagement and retention for a large number of SLCo employees.

Finally, the Policy Institute strongly recommends that employees have active involvement in developing and executing initiatives responding to the employee feedback provided in the survey and detailed in this report. This may be accomplished by forming work groups of employees that are empowered to focus on a particular concern identified in the survey. Working under the direction of a facilitator and with study of the issue, these groups can make recommendations to the appropriate parties within SLCo regarding improvements. Ongoing communication to all employees regarding this process and the eventual outcomes will be essential to building employee trust and ultimately improving employee engagement.

## METHODOLOGY

The Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute at The University of Utah was commissioned by Salt Lake County to conduct a survey of their employees. The study began in June 2015 and concluded in January 2016.

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

There four primary objectives that directed the research are:

1. Establish base-line data regarding the culture and climate of SLCo from employees' perspective,
2. Gauge employee engagement in multiple categories and across demographic groups,
3. Provide Human Resources and SLCo management with information and insights into employee engagement that will enhance decision-making and problem solving, and
4. Gather information that will assist SLCo in developing future strategies for success.

### OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Early in the research process, SLCo created a project team to oversee all aspects of the research. This team, referred to as the Project Team, played an important role in working with the Policy Institute to provide oversight and to determine the best approach to engaging employees in the research. This group is also tasked with providing input on how to use the survey information in problem-solving and future decision-making. The Project Team consisted of:

Megan Hillyard, Administrative Services  
Tammy Pullan, Assessor  
Holly Yocom, Community Services  
Ralph Chamness, District Attorney's Office  
Dorothy Adams, Health Department  
Julio Garcia, HR  
Michael Ongkiko, HR  
Mary Van Buren, HR  
Carolyn Campbell, HR  
Tiffany Erickson, Internal Communications  
Pamela Park, Library  
Stacey Adams, Regional Development  
Stan Moleni, Sherriff's Office  
Scott Olds, Sherriff's Office  
Anna Bergevin, Policy Institute  
Ken Embley, Policy Institute  
Dianne Meppen, Policy Institute

Having a committed and engaged workforce is an integral part of achieving SLCo's mission of building a healthy community. To that end, the Employee Engagement Project is created and designed to be a reflection by employees

of their relationship with the organization, perception of organizational objectives, sense of individual well-being, and professional satisfaction.

Ultimately SLCo envisions a work environment where all employees, regardless of position or division:

- Are empowered and entrusted to do their jobs effectively,
- Have trust and confidence in their management,
- Are informed and aware of the major initiatives that impact them,
- Have opportunity to participate in meaningful dialogue,
- Feel supported in their professional goals and aspirations,
- Have the tools and resources needed to be successful in their jobs,
- See the positive impact their work has on the community,
- Contribute to a culture of accountability and high performance, and
- Embrace change, innovation, and continuous improvements in delivering SLCo services.

To foster employee involvement in the project, the Policy Institute recommended that the questionnaire be developed with extensive input from employees and that focus groups be used as a tool for collecting this employee information. The times and locations of the groups were set by the team. Further details regarding the questionnaire process including focus groups and pretesting are in the Questionnaire section. All full-time, benefitted employees were invited to complete the questionnaire.

### PROCEDURES

Based on recommendations from the Policy Institute and the Project Team, a three-step process was used to complete the survey: 1) questionnaire design with employee input, 2) data collection, and 3) data analysis. A key to the success of this process was establishing a comprehensive communication plan. To ensure transparency of the project and findings, information was distributed to all employees through a number of communication channels, these included emails from Human Resources and leadership, employee newsletters, talking points for managers, and posts on the employee announcement page. The team also created a website to house project information, including a project update blog, project team members, survey details, dates of the survey, Policy Institute contact information, and how the data will be used. Additionally, during the survey window, the team disseminated Employee Engagement posters countywide and installed elevator wraps with information reminding employees to take the survey.

## Questionnaire Design

As a precursor to the focus groups, and under the direction of CPPA representatives, the Project Team determined general categories of question emphasis to be covered in the survey. A number of sample questions were developed under each emphasis area for use in the focus group phase of the project. The emphasis areas and possible questions were reviewed in each focus group session. These areas of survey emphasis are not inclusive of all employee concerns but were considered the most significant.

**Focus Groups** – To gather information from SLCo employees, five focus groups were held. Agency leaders selected 1-2 employees from their divisions to participate in the focus group meetings. In an attempt to have representation from all areas of the department, employees were stratified by work location and division when selected.

Policy Institute researcher Ken Embley facilitated three of the group sessions and Dianne Meppen facilitated the other two sessions. Anna Bergevin also attended, taking notes and assisting as needed. Each participant received an “Employee Engagement” Focus Group Workbook to use during the session. The workbook contained details about the research and lists of questions by emphasis area. Participants were not required to return the workbooks at the end of the meeting.

Groups started with introductions of the Policy Institute team and other group members. The meeting agenda was reviewed as well as the purpose of the project and the importance of Policy Institute involvement. The participants were encouraged to ask questions and voice concerns. Common participant concerns included how management would get employees to participate in the survey, how this research is different than other employee surveys, and why employees should trust that management will do anything with the results.

The most sensitive questions for employees are the demographic questions because they can compromise the anonymity of respondents. Employees were encouraged to consider two positions – the need for researchers and management to have enough detail to act on issues for specific groups and alternately the need to protect employees’ anonymity. Participants spent time discussing which questions and responses would provide the balance needed. How to ask area of employment was one of the most difficult demographic questions for participants to resolve.

In addition to the discussion of the demographic questions, employees were divided into small work groups and assigned to review the individual emphasis areas and sample questions provided by the Project Team. These work groups made changes and reported their ideas back to the entire group who discussed the potential changes and made the final recommendations.

Each of the five focus groups started with the same

basic workbook and each group created a unique workbook incorporating their suggested changes. No individual employee names were attached to comments or suggestions made during group sessions. The information provided by focus group participants assisted the University of Utah team in designing the final survey questions.

Each session lasted approximately three hours.

**Questionnaire Finalization** - When all focus groups were completed, representatives of the Policy Institute combined the changes and suggestions made in the five groups. The most frequently mentioned concerns were incorporated in the questionnaire. Other less frequently mentioned issues were not included in the draft in order to keep the survey length more manageable. Open-ended questions were included at the end of the survey to collect employee input on anything not included on the final questionnaire. The majority of survey questions measure intensity of opinions on a 5-point scale. Each of these questions was a statement to which employees mark their agreement or disagreement. A neutral category was available for those neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement. Emphasis areas of the survey include:

- *New Hire Process / Onboarding* – the new employee experience, including the training and orientation of new employees,
- *Communication* – the effective and efficient means of providing information throughout the organization,
- *Training & Education* – the opportunity to acquire the skills and abilities to perform on the job and further development of employees’ careers,
- *Professional Development* – the opportunity for personal growth and/or advancement as an employee of SLCo,
- *Performance and Development Plans & Annual Evaluations* – the quarterly performance and development plan process as well as the annual evaluation,
- *Management & Supervision* – the individuals who control or direct resources and expenditures, and/or have oversight and direction of processes, work, and those who perform the work,
- *Work Environment* – the policies, procedures, processes, equipment, resources, assignments, schedules, transfers, and more,
- *Culture* – the shared sets of values and beliefs that determine patterns of behavior common to groups of people, and
- *Well-being* – satisfaction and positive feelings, supportive and enriching relationships, interest and engagement in activities, purpose, sense of mastery and accomplishment, and feelings of control and autonomy as well as optimism.

Demographic questions allow results to be reported by subgroup and also give a profile of those responding.

The recommended questionnaire was presented to the Project Team for review and discussion. Project Team gave approval to move forward with preparation of a Spanish version of the questionnaire and a pretest.

**Pretest** - A pretest was conducted prior to the actual data collection. The pretest was used to identify any problems with question clarity and sequence as well as to detect any technical errors in distributing the survey electronically via email. Following the pretest, final approval was given by Project Team lead Michael Ongkiko to begin the data collection with employees.

A copy of the questionnaire and summary results are available in the Appendix B.

## **DATA COLLECTION**

The Policy Institute programmed the questionnaire to an online format using Qualtrics online survey software. Qualtrics provided the means to distribute the survey in two languages, send reminder emails, collect data, and access real-time updates during the fieldwork period. The Qualtrics programming prevented multiple responses from individual employees.

SLCo provided the Policy Institute a list of employees to be surveyed along with their email addresses. This list was used in the data collection phase of the research. Neither employee names nor email addresses are reported in the final data set and results. Additionally, no details regarding which employees participated in the survey was given to SLCo nor is part of any reporting documents.

Shortly before the start of data collection, the Human Resource Department sent a county-wide email informing employees that the survey was coming from the Policy Institute at the University of Utah and encouraging participation. After the communication, the Policy Institute sent each employee a link to access the online survey. Department managers were notified in advance of the project and asked to encourage employee participation. The data collection period was from September 28 to October 19, 2015. Several days after the initial email, a reminder was sent by the Policy Institute to all employees encouraging them to participate. A final reminder was sent to employees approximately 24 hours before the original survey deadline. The deadline was extended several hours by Human Resources to allow additional responses.

To gather responses from employees with limited or no access to the Internet, Human Resources scheduled informal meetings at various locations in the county where these employees could complete a paper version of the questionnaire. These gatherings were administered by Policy Institute staff. A small number of employees with no Internet access and unable

to attend scheduled meetings completed a paper survey and mailed the survey to the Policy Institute. Approximately ten surveys arrived late in the analysis process and are not included in numeric results but their comments were reviewed for the report.

A total of 2,272 employees responded to the survey.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

Key aspects of the data analysis included tallying survey responses, calculating percentages, and creating visualizations of the results. In addition to presenting the main results, responses to survey questions were statistically analyzed to determine whether a variety of employee characteristics are related to employee responses regarding rating job satisfaction. For example, do older employees feel differently about the opportunity for promotions in SLCo than do younger employees?

Tests for statistical significance of associations were conducted by running cross-tabulations and identifying tables whose chi-square tests indicated significant associations between the demographic indicator (gender, age, etc.) and the response. As with all results in the report, cross-tabulations should be interpreted with caution while keeping in mind that non-responders may have different experiences.

Open-ended comments were analyzed using qualitative techniques. Three Policy Institute staffers reviewed responses and created common response categories. A research analyst assigned each employee comment into the appropriate category. Some responses were more extensive and were coded into multiple categories. After the first round of coding was completed by one analyst, a second analyst independently completed their own assessment of proper code assignment. The first and second rounds of coding were compared; where differences of opinion arose, the codes were discussed and adjusted through the consensus of both analysts. Frequency results were run for each category and are reported in this document. To protect the anonymity of employees, a full reporting of individual comments are not included in the report nor are they transmitted to anyone at SLCo. However, some comments or phrases used within a comment are included in the report to illustrate employees' responses and to describe categories. In some cases minor edits to correct spelling or grammar have been made to employee comments.

The appendices contain a demographic profile of respondents, the survey questionnaire with results, and results by demographic.

## RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

There are constraints to all survey research. For this study, some of those limitations include:

- Time: Fieldwork or data collection is conducted in a limited time window; therefore, employees who may not be available during the data collection period were excluded from the sample. Also, the research was conducted at a point in time; changes in SLCo policy or other changes since the survey are not reflected in results.
- Non Response: Though the research has response rate of approximately 60%, there is still more than a third

of employees who did not participate. Whether these employees' attitudes and opinions are different than those of participating employees is unknown. In order to maintain anonymity of employees, no attempt to identify non-responding employees or to get a profile of this group was conducted.<sup>3</sup>

- Length/Content: The questions may not include all areas of concern for SLCo employees or management. Though the most frequently mentioned items were included on the questionnaire, the survey length limited the number of issues that could be addressed in the survey.

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## SURVEY FINDINGS

The survey findings are divided into ten sections. Each section mirrors the sections on the survey questionnaire and includes:

1. New Hire Process/Onboarding
2. Communication
3. Training & Education
4. Professional Development
5. Performance and Development Plans & Annual Evaluations
6. Management & Supervision
7. Work Environment/Operational Functionality
8. Culture
9. Well-Being
10. Open Opportunity for Feedback

For each emphasis area there is a general summary describing the overall results. A graph is included which gives a visual representation of the percentage results by question and also includes the mean score of questions.<sup>4</sup> Some results do not add to 100% due to rounding. To see differences in responses by demographic groups (gender, length of employment, or work location), cross-tabulation tables are included in the appendices.

Employees were encouraged to provide input on several open-ended questions in the survey. These open-ended questions are coded into categories and counts of the number in each category are reported. Examples of comments are included to clarify employee meanings. To maintain employee

anonymity, not all employee comments are included. Comments were selected to illustrate the opinions shared by others, but do not identify an individual. Some employee comments that relate to the quantitative results are outlined in sections 1-9, the remaining comment categories are summarized in the final section "Open Opportunity for Feedback."

Appendix A includes graphs showing the demographic make-up of survey respondents. Appendix B contains the complete questionnaire with results by response category, number responding to each question, and the mean for each question.

The remaining Appendices, C – K, contain cross-tabulation tables. Each set of tables has rows and columns that compare the responses of subgroups in the demographic category (e.g. males and females). Tables that have statistically significant findings (meaning the differences likely didn't happen by chance) are identified.

The nine demographic categories included in the research are:

- Appendix C: ..... Gender
- Appendix D: ..... Minority Status
- Appendix E: ..... Age
- Appendix F: ..... Years at SLCo
- Appendix G: ..... Job Category
- Appendix H: ..... Job Location
- Appendix I: ..... Level of Education
- Appendix J: ..... Career Stage
- Appendix K: ..... Work Area

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3. One component of non-response for this study is the challenge in reaching employees without access to a computer. In some cases the on-site meetings may have yielded a better than average response rate, in other cases we had lower turnout. So one particular source of non-response bias is likely the low response from these type of employees.

4. Mean scores for questions on a Likert scale (from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) reflect the average impression on each question and allow for quick comparison. Strongly disagree is given a score of 1, disagree a score of 2, neither agree nor disagree a score of 3, agree a score of 4, and strongly agree a score of 5. Each employee response can thus be converted to a numerical equivalent and the average can be taken – resulting in a mean score. Higher scores indicate greater agreement, lower scores greater disagreement.

## SECTION 1: New Hire Process/Onboarding

For newer employees one aspect of their engagement is the quality of their new hire process. Employees who have worked for SLCo for less than four years were asked about this new hire (onboarding) process and were given opportunities to rate several different aspects of that process and provide open-ended feedback on the process as a whole. Figure 1 shows the new hire statements from the questionnaire, the frequency results, and the mean score (1-5 scale) for each statement. The results are presented in order of mean score which help identify which statements have higher and lower levels of agreement.

Overall, new SLCo employees are positive or have neutral feelings about their new hire experience. Employees are most satisfied with their ability to ask questions as they transitioned in their new position (83% agreement), though in the comments several employees suggest that they have assigned contact(s) to approach with questions after new hire training (n=14):

*“The new employee should be paired with an experienced mentor who knows how to effectively train someone.”*

Employees are also generally satisfied with the explanations of benefits (77% agreement), but in the open ended comments employees suggest areas for improvement including better explanations of benefits, time cards, pay rates, pay increases, and how promotions are handled (n=16).

Nearly 1 in 5 employees say they feel their new hire experience didn’t prepare them for their new position (18% disagree), indicating that perhaps SLCo could improve position

specific initial training. The open-ended comments mirror this finding (n=35):

*“My onboarding went well, but I think as a division we need to work on better onboarding procedures.”*

*“It is just at the division level that the County is lacking in training and clearly outlined duties for new staff.”*

*“...there was nobody in my department who really had the skills to specifically train another person (although they possessed very good knowledge of the position), I was poorly trained and ran into problems.”*

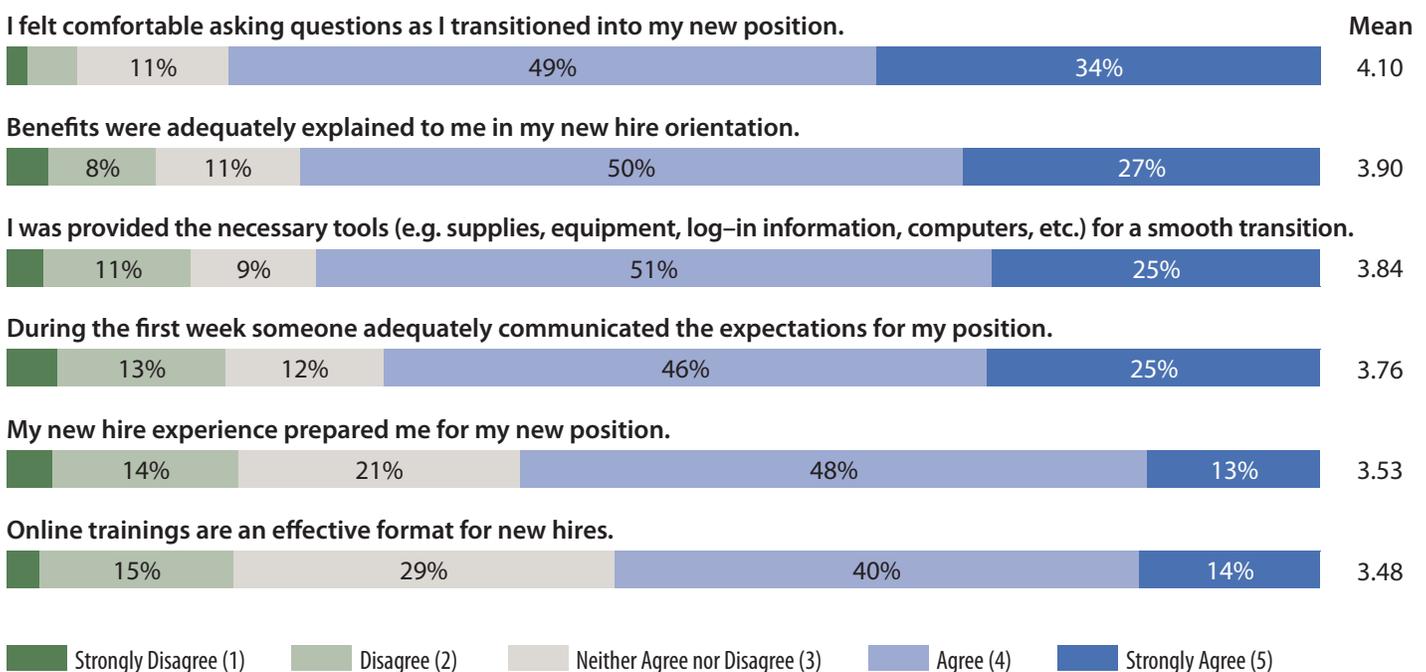
*“A lot of people don’t know a lot of things on the job. Later on we would be in trouble because we are doing things the wrong way and it’s supposed to be another way.”*

Additionally, a significant portion of employees (18%) feel online trainings are not an effective format for new hires – a fact that is reinforced by some of the comments which indicate that for certain employees or certain portions of the onboarding process it would be beneficial to offer an in-person alternative. Still, other employees comment that they liked the online trainings.

The open-ended comments provide additional ideas for improvement to the onboarding process. Several employees indicate that it would be beneficial to have a clearer understanding of what items needed to be completed and how to complete these items, as well as any relevant timelines/

**Figure 1: A comparison of results for statements regarding the new hire process (onboarding).**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Results below 5% are shown but not labeled.



deadlines. A sampling of such suggestions follows (n=12):

*"I don't feel like the onboarding process was clearly outlined, including the steps for me to take, and where to find the videos and other resources."*

*"...it would be nice to have like a checklist or something that all supervisors must go over with their new employees."*

*"A checklist and automated escalation for each department that impacts the new hire process might help."*

*"The new hire process has been very confusing for me, both as an employee and a manager. Too many forms and little guidance on which ones to use and which ones are current."*

A few employees indicate that there were technical / logistical barriers to smoothly transitioning to their new position (n=8):

*"Be prepared for new employees (i.e. work stations, login details, PeopleSoft ready to go)."*

*"Make sure work space is 100% ready to go - It helps a new employee feel valued - This was not the case with me."*

A small number of employees say they encountered difficulties working with the Human Resources Department (n=6):

*"Had difficulty getting questions answered through HR. They didn't seem to want to be bothered."*

*"Some HR folks were more responsive than others, but some failed to return calls altogether."*

Also, some employees feel the new hire process was too slow or took too long (n=5).

While there were many suggestions for improvements and some overall negative comments (n=14), there are several employees who simply said they have no suggestions, that they are already seeing improvements for newer employees, or simply that they generally had a good onboarding experience (n=23):

*"It was good for me."*

*"I really liked the onboarding packet."*

*"I do like that I am seeing the County look for ways to improve and 'update' how employees are trained, onboarded."*

*"No, the process was as smooth as possible."*

All cross-tabulation tables for new hire questions are found in the appendices (questions 1-6). There are some results that, through testing, are identified as significant. In particular, the cross-tabulations by years of experience show that there are differences in the new hire experience between the newest employees (2 years or less at SLCo) and employees with slightly more experience (more than 2 but less than 4 years), indicating that perhaps changes in the new hire process in recent years have resulted in different levels of satisfaction. See the appendices for these breakdowns as well as differences in the new hire experience across other demographic groups.

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## SECTION 2: Communication

Effective communication in a large and diverse organization like SLCo is a challenge. The diverse workforce serves varied functions, are located at sites spread across the county, and work in positions that may or may not have easy access to electronic communications. Throughout the research employees expressed varied experiences with county communications. While overall employees express satisfaction with communications (reflected in the moderate to high mean scores), significant numbers of employees express dissatisfaction with some aspects and provided suggestions for improvement.

In reference to the communications they receive, many employees indicate they find such communications valuable (69%), with a large portion (73%) saying the method by which they receive communications is adequate. Feedback regarding supervisory efforts to keep employees informed is mixed: 65% agree that they are satisfied with their supervisors efforts, but a significant minority (23%) disagree.

In focus group discussions several employees expressed

frustration with locating contact information for other employees in order to conduct SLCo business and direct citizens to access services. Survey results reflect this frustration with 22% of employees saying the SLCo directory is not up to date, 25% saying the directory is not easy to navigate, and 27% of employees saying it is not easy to locate the contact information for divisions. However, a large portion of employees say they know how to direct others to the services and resources provided by SLCo (62%). This indicates that while many employees understand the work that SLCo engages in and which divisions they should contact, locating up to date information is a challenge for most employees – with only 35% of employees agreeing that the SLCo directory is up to date.

Employees were given the opportunity to provide their own suggestions and comments to the question "How could communications be improved?" While the majority of respondents did not give feedback on the question, 519 employees did respond. All comments were read by researchers

and common response categories were created. Each comment was coded in the appropriate response categories. Results are reported in the aggregate. The most frequently mentioned communication issues and improvements are listed below. Requests for improvements to the employee directory are widespread and consistent (n=122):

*"It is very difficult, using the directory, to find the person you're looking for if you know their title or function, but not their name. The web sites of many agencies seem to be designed to keep people from contacting the management of those divisions out of a desire to funnel the public to front line personnel. That leaves internal personnel in the dark about other agencies' organization structure and their management."*

*"The directory (including Cisco phones) is rarely up to date. I also have a hard time finding what I need, when I need it with resources in other divisions."*

*"Contact information for county employees should be easier to access both to employees and the public."*

*"Employee names, division, and title so you know if you have the right person, a lot of the time you do not know the person's name and that is what you are looking for."*

*"Having a very user friendly Directory. The old handwritten booklet passed out was much better. Several times, I wanted to call just the base office (Auditors, Recorder), and could not find any number. I had to go down and start calling multiple employees in that division to have someone answer the phone."*

On a related note, many employees say that the website, including eConnect, needs improvement (n=72):

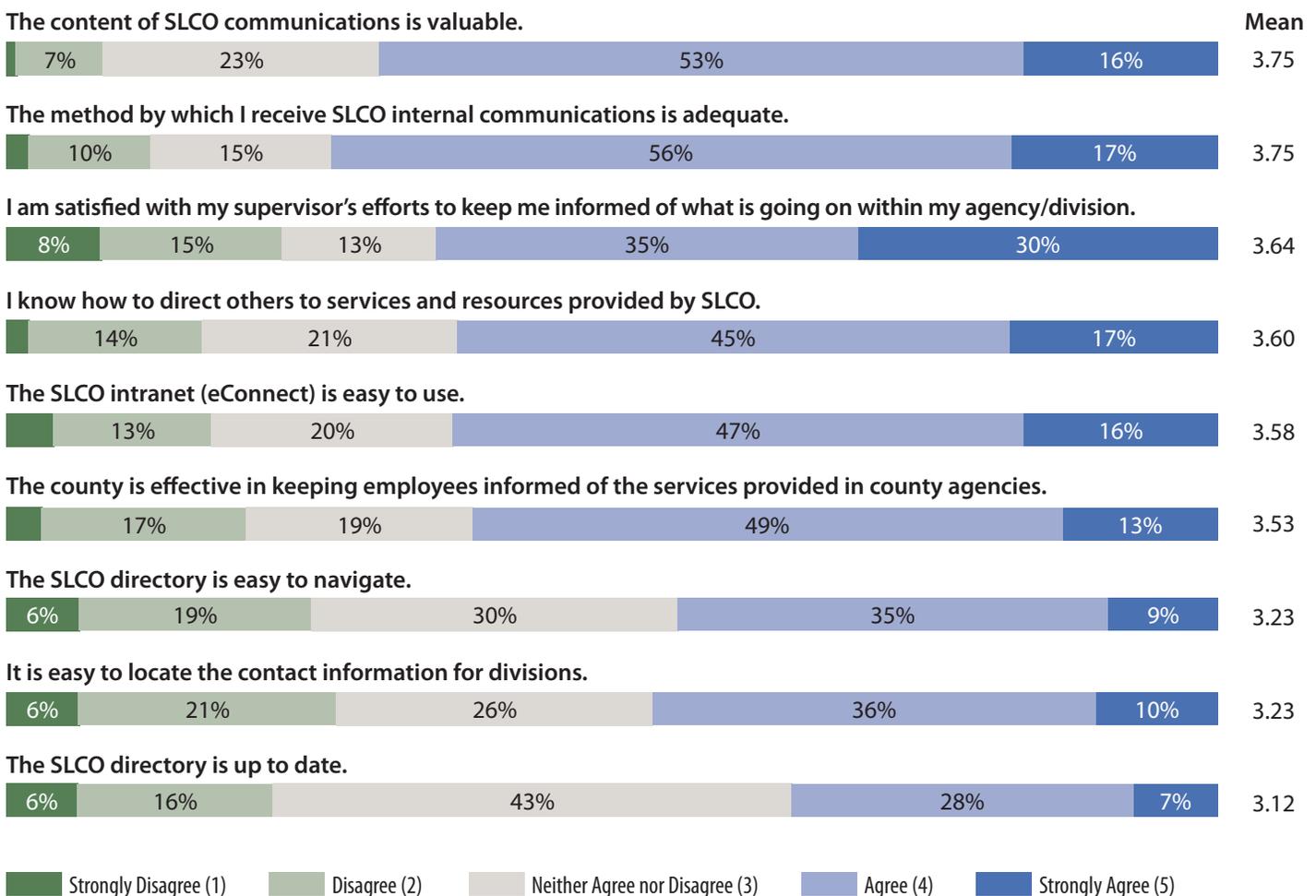
*"eConnect is extremely hard to navigate...The links are cryptic and take you to dead-ends. The website needs to be more user-friendly for all SLCO employees."*

*"It is difficult to locate agencies quickly and services they provide with web services. Searches give you old information."*

*"Better indexing. Many things are hard to find if you don't memorize their location or save as a quicklink. Granted it*

**Figure 2: A comparison of results for communication statements.**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Results below 5% are shown but not labeled.



*is a vast organization but even after being here 25 years I find it difficult or time consuming to find things even those I look up on a regular basis."*

*"If eConnect was easier to navigate and more complete in its information, it would help bridge the gap in (even perceived) communication barriers. For example, the emails sent out with links to eConnect, about 1/3-1/2 of them are dead links. A place needs to be built where it becomes a hub that all county employees know is the first place to go for information (whether that is eConnect or another place)..."*

A number of employees also report a variety of technical issues that impede communications (n=38):

*"We cannot access the intranet so there is no ability to communicate through that medium."<sup>5</sup>*

*"It is frustrating that the directory and outlook does not sync."*

*"Provide an easier way to login to email for those not able to use a county computer on a daily basis."*

*"Better access to computers for field workers."*

A significant number of employees simply request more communications, either indicating that employees in general need more information or that they, in particular, feel they need to be included in more communications (n=66):

*"Add employees to the appropriate broadcast lists. Many employees receive absolutely no information as they are almost never included."*

*"Emails, or direct communication should be used not only to inform us of changes, but of ongoing discussions about the changes; as we will probably hear rumors about it anyway, so keep us informed of any progress before final issues are done."*

*"We need to be more informed of what is going on. I think it would be good to have more frequent emails or more information on the staff portal."*

*"Communication could be improved by actually communicating. There is nothing that gets passed down to working employees."*

Many employees raise concerns about communications failures through the lines of management. They observe inconsistencies across supervisors or failure by managers to pass down information, which leaves employees frustrated. Similarly, some employees simply request that communications come from their supervisors/managers rather than reliance on other forms of communication, though the comments make

it clear that not all managers are currently equally effective at doing so (n=86):

*"Information should be communicated to managers for inclusion into regular staff meetings and communicated to staff verbally."*

*"Depends on supervisor. Some are great at relaying and some are not."*

*"Rather than county workers being part of a team, the information flow follows the "trickle-down theory" with this administration. It's ineffective and disengages employees."*

*"My direct supervisor is great in communicating things with me however, her supervisor is not. We need more top down communication within our divisions."*

Some employees feel that one route to improving communications might lie in increased training (n=34):

*"Have managers trained in effective communication skills, train them in procedures in departments relevant to job assignments."*

*"The supervisors need to be better informed of all communications then disperse them through an email to their staff...Maybe implement new procedures into training so everyone can be somewhat on the same page."*

*"It would have been nice to have training/information on the different programs offered by the county. It is hard to refer the public if you don't know what kind of programs are available."*

Though some employees do express wanting more communications overall, others recommend that communications might be more effective if they were tailored to the right recipients, more efficient, and/or consolidated (n=63):

*"It seems to me that there is lots of communication. But often it is too much of one thing, while lacking in other areas."*

*"There are often too many communications sent to me via e-mail that are not applicable to me in my position. It takes time and causes stress to sift through the many to determine the few that I actually need."*

*"More needs to be done to keep employees apprised of changes that are coming to their areas. Most of the time I feel that the announcements in the employee connect do not apply to me or have information that I may need."*

*"Information seems to be in too many areas. I'd like to see it more organized in one location."*

5. There were many comments expressing that accessing the intranet outside of the government center is either impossible or creates issues where after login employees are redirected and cannot find the page they originally sought to access, even after searching for it. This is a source of frustration for many employees.

A concern for some employees is a need for greater transparency and honesty. While this relates to communications, the issues raised speak more broadly to management styles and operational workflows which, when not transparent, are viewed by employees as a deficit in communications (n=41):

*"Administration is too secretive about everything they do. They make changes and never communicate as to why or how these changes are going into effect."*

*"Better in person and accurate communication. There seems to be too much info shared that is intended to tide us over until we find out that something is not going to work out (candy coated)."*

*"Get rid of the good ole' boys club/keep-the-subordinates-in-the-dark mentality."*

*"Administration could be more transparent. They are not very transparent when it comes to things that really matter."*

The issues of transparency and efficiency were compounded by a feeling that communications need to be timelier. Employees either feel they are intentionally not told in a timely fashion or simply that communications are so delayed as to be irrelevant by the time they are received (n=39):

*"Be more timely. Employees should know about things before they find out on the evening news."*

*"Have Administration personnel be open and honest with the line staff when things apply to that staff. Treat line staff as important workers and give us the information we need in a timely manner."*

*"Often the issue is addressed days or weeks late and time to address it has run out."*

*"The email communications are sent out at a set time and sometimes the things in them are already over with."*

*"There is no reliable source for the most up to date information (for example, new policies may get sent around via email and implemented while the online version of the policies stays out of date for months), and there is a tendency to refrain from directly informing staff of big changes sometimes, with leaders preferring to notify only a few people and then let everyone else find out about it secondhand."*

Employees also express a wish for a more open ongoing dialogue where employee feedback will be incorporated (n=28):

*"It is important to communicate about final decisions but it is equally important to communicate with staff regarding how they can participate before a final decision is made."*

*"There seems to be no effort to understand what we are currently doing before they decide to change things."*

*"Upper management seems to not be concerned with sharing information and being completely transparent, especially when it comes to the individual specific program....We need more transparency, acknowledging that sometimes "We don't know", working as a team... and allowing employees to voice their opinions and frustration (in an appropriate manner) without retaliation, defensiveness, or consequence."*

*"There is no mechanism for employees to give feedback to management about employee concerns. The managers evaluate me, but I am not allowed to evaluate them."*

Many employees outside of the government center express that they face unique issues or feel that communications fail to take into account the diverse workforce that exists beyond the SLCo's central administrative offices (n=33):

*"Emails are great, but when someone works out side of the government center, I feel we are missing out on opportunities that happen at the government center."*

*"It is very hard to access any county specific information from outside of the county building... It communicates the message that only employees at the county building really matter or are "real" county employees."*

*"Everything seems to be geared to employees in the county building. I often feel it is not worth my time to look at the notices they send out."*

These comments are reflected in the cross-tabulation by work location. While 21% of those working at the government center strongly agree that the method by which they receive SLCo communications is adequate, only 15% of those outside of the government center strongly agree.

Some employees feel communications would be more effective if sent directly to all employees rather than distributed through eConnect or relying on management to distribute (n=21):

*"I think more direct communications from Mayor McAdams would help employees feel connected. When Mayor Nancy was in office the only way we knew what was going on was in the news media. With Mayor Corroon employees felt we knew what was happening. Now we're kind of in the middle - we receive some important information but feel a lot of information is not forthcoming."*

*"Council members and the council as a whole make almost zero effort to communicate with an employee body over which they hold so much dominion. Some regular form of communication from them would be helpful in understanding their role in a decision."*

*"It would be wonderful if they mayor actually addressed the people who work for him, rather than always send emails. Mayor Corroon would visit offices, especially around holidays, and thank and acknowledge his workers personally. He would smile at you in the hall, and usually even remembered your name."*

Others feel that because there were too many communication or because communications were distributed in ways that may not reach them regularly, that the organization might benefit from finding a way to highlight priority communications for distribution (n=11):

*"Email blast to county employees for county announcements that are high priority."*

*"When something negative affecting the county occurs, communicate what happened and what you're doing about it immediately, directly and clearly to your employees. I'm referring to the recent security breach affecting workers compensation claims."<sup>6</sup>*

Finally, some employees feel that what is needed is for communications to be more consistent and routine (n=12):

*"I think some things are over communicated while others...are often lost in the shuffle."*

*"More communication and consistency between the supervisors."*

*"By having management/supervisors conduct routine team meetings to review information on a weekly or bi-weekly basis as needed."*

In addition to all the suggestions listed, some employees state that they have no suggestions or that they feel communications are currently adequate (n=33). An additional set of comments didn't fall cleanly into any of the categories above (n=28), for example:

*"On the County level many strides have been made to inform and educate, however at the Division level there is virtually no communications even about what's going on in our Division."*

*"Internal employee emails need a common and consistent signature in the body of the email."*

Difference in responses between employee groups can be seen in cross-tabulation tables (questions 8-16) in the appendices. Tables with significant findings are identified. While there are significant findings in many areas, there are particularly consistent findings in the cross-tabulations by gender, tenure and job location.

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## SECTION 3: Training & Education

Survey questions on training refer to the opportunity for employees to acquire the skills and abilities to perform on the job and include both on-site training as well as formal education outside of the workplace supported by SLCO.

Employees express overall satisfaction with their training experiences, though frustration with some aspects of the Employees' University program and other internal trainings was raised by many in the focus groups and on the survey. Employees appear to, in general, receive enough job specific training to feel they have adequate knowledge about how to do their job (72%) and generally feel that the training they receive is applicable to their position (66%). However, not everyone feels that they and/or their coworkers have received sufficient training:

*"I felt the training was not sufficient for my position; there was not a thorough training and I had to assume I was doing things correctly."*

*"I feel like the budget, allotted to our division, does not reflect a concern for the safety of our employees, or a concern for providing proper equipment and training for our job."*

*"I don't feel like everyone is trained appropriately, [they are] expected to know random things no one ever told them about."*

*"[There is a] lack of training when new technology is introduced."*

*"Policies change with little training about the impact of changes."*

Though negative comments about training are frequent, other employees say they appreciate the opportunities they have to continually learn and grow within their job and through training:

*"I have enjoyed opportunities to continue to grow in my skills and personally."*

*"Able to improve my training both for professional and personal well-being."*

The majority of employees in supervisory or management positions are satisfied with the training they receive relative their duties supervising/managing other employees (63%), but more than 1 in 5 disagree – indicating that a significant portion of employees in these positions would benefit from additional

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6. The issue of this security breach was brought up by several employees as a key communications failure where employees were finding out about their personal data being compromised through the media before they heard about it from their employer.

or improved training. Both managers and their subordinates indicate in the open ended comments that better management training is needed:

*"In most job[s] I have held within the county there has been a lack of training. I would be great to have a better training process for everyone from line staff to management."*

*"...the entire county is being hurt by bad management. Please train the leadership!"*

*"More training for people in leadership roles, even elected officials."*

Over half of employees indicate familiarity with the tuition reimbursement policy (58%), but some employees are not familiar with the policy. A few employees express appreciation for having been able to utilize this benefit:

*"I have been given a lot of opportunity to grow and explore within my job. I took advantage of the tuition reimbursement to get my master's degree, and during that time, my coworkers and supervisors gave me many opportunities to receive mentorship and gain experience in my field."*

Despite the level of familiarity with the policy providing formal financial support for outside education, only 41% of employees agree they feel supported in furthering their education at outside institutions, suggesting that perhaps there are informal barriers to some in accessing this benefit.

Less than half of employees agree that Employee University classes are well promoted (45%) and even fewer feel encouraged to further their education using the Employee University (35%). Employees express frustration at barriers to receiving training currently offered within the organization:

*"The trainings/events are harder to attend since other agency's work schedules are different than the government center."*

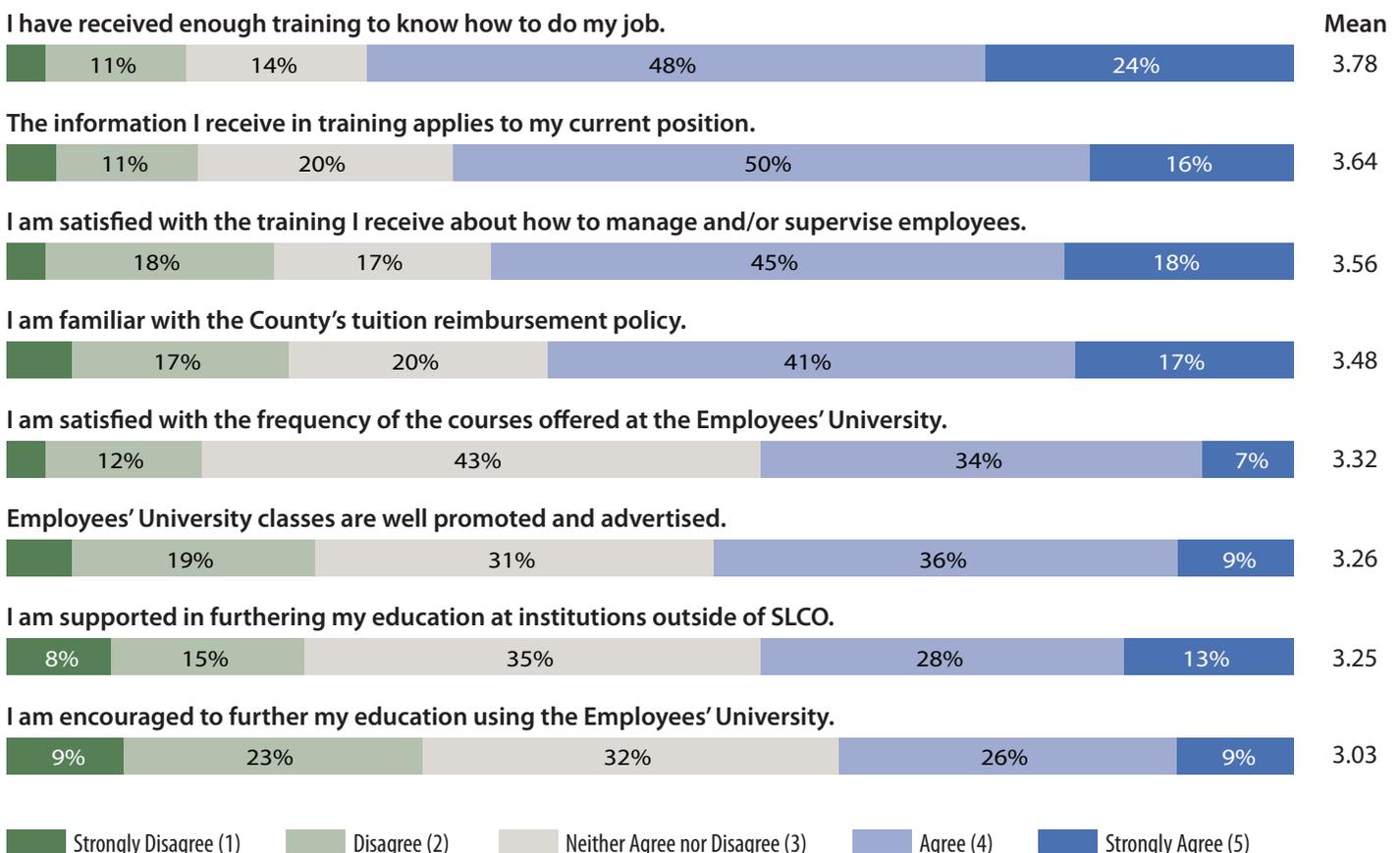
*"Too busy to take training classes..."*

*"Would like to go to classes but upper management always states we are too busy to send people. Only a select few (2 to 3) are allowed to attend classes."*

*"The Division Director hires his friends at a larger salary than people who have been there longer and with more experience and they get the promotions and training."*

**Figure 3: A comparison of results for training & education statements.**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Results below 5% are shown but not labeled. The question about managerial/supervisory training is only reported for those employees who work in leadership positions.



*“Training is not approved very often unless you are certain people. I think everyone should be able to take the classes at the employee’s university and not be denied. We aren’t denied because we’re short on people the supervisor said if it doesn’t pertain to the area then we can’t take it. I thought we were trying to better ourselves so that we can be better employees for the county.”*

All cross-tabulation tables for questions on training (questions 18-25) are found in the appendices. There are questions with significant results. These tables are identified. In particular, there are many significant results for the training questions in the cross-tabulations broken down by job category.

## SECTION 4: Professional Development

Though there are some positive notes regarding employees’ professional development, overall employees are not confident in their ability to advance at SLCo. In fact, the statement “The promotion process at SLCO is fair” is the lowest rated statement on the entire survey and is repeatedly mentioned as source of frustration raised for employees in the open-ended comments.

On a positive note, SLCo is very effective at notifying employees of job openings, with 89% of employees agreeing that they know where to access job openings. A good number of employees also report that they are able to develop professionally by improving their job skills and abilities (58%), though a significant number of employees disagree (24%). Similarly, a majority of employees feel encouraged by their supervisor in their career development (53%), though 25% of employees do not. While some employees feel they have the

opportunity to develop mentoring relationships (46%), many employees do not feel they have such opportunities (28%) – indicating an area where SLCo could improve.

While the negative comments regarding professional development are substantial, a few employees express satisfaction with their own career path at SLCo:

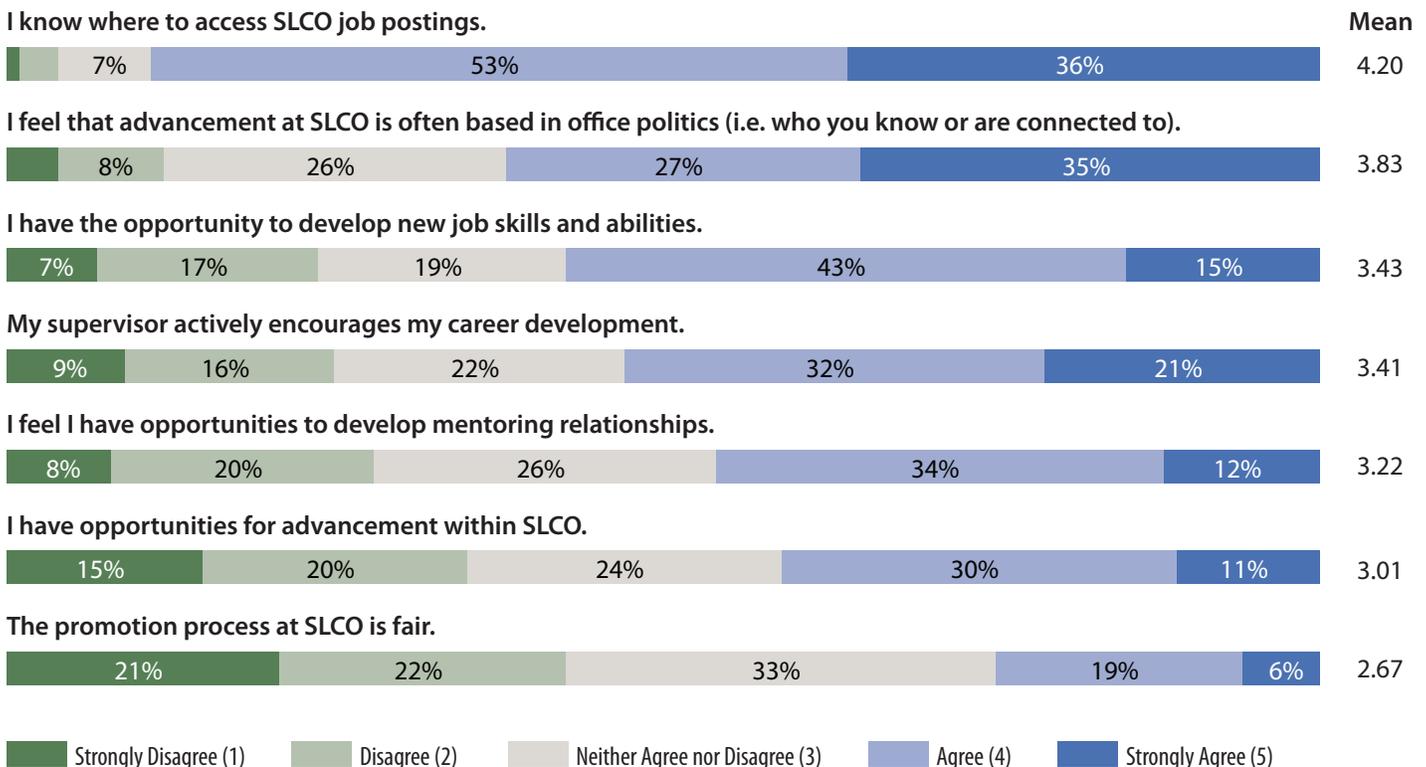
*“There are always opportunities to move up in my career goals.”*

*“I am constantly encouraged to move up in the system and wish to do so.”*

*“I have had many opportunities working for Salt Lake County, different positions in various Departments/ Divisions with new challenges and changes.”*

**Figure 4: A comparison of results for professional development statements.**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Results below 5% are shown but not labeled.



*“Opportunities for growth depends on who you are and in some cases connections, but the opportunities are there.”*

This last comment, while suggesting that opportunities exist, hints at the disparity in the numbers and a divergence in the experiences of employees. Some employees are satisfied with their opportunities for advancement, but they are not a majority. Only 41% agree that they have opportunities for advancement and just a quarter (25%) believe the promotion process at SLCo is fair. Additionally, almost two-thirds of employees (62%) report that they feel advancement at SLCo is based in office politics. A total of 174 employees point to issues surrounding promotions when they were asked what they like least about working for SLCo.

Several employees note that one problem with the current promotion process is the interview itself where they feel the questions being asked do not adequately assess potential for success in the duties of the position:

*“Interview process is more concerned with how well you can answer a series of questions than your qualifications for the position.”*

*“When hiring new employees, especially those who will be in management, I think more emphasis needs to be put on what skills and experience a new employee can bring to the position rather than what will be the easiest and most convenient way to fill the position. My experience is that in our division, many people in management have been promoted to their positions with little or virtually NO prior experience.”*

Others take issue with current practices, saying that there seems to be a preference to hire external candidates rather than promoting from within and developing internal talent:

*“There are zero opportunities to change job roles/ functionality through internships etc. Even after completing a master’s degree in a different field to improve one’s career...jobs are still farmed out to external applicants while merit staff are not allowed to develop the skills and abilities to perform the job.”*

*“Lack of advancement opportunities (not for lack of trying) - though I feel that I have proven myself to be an asset across various levels of the County and have been involved in a variety of cross-agency projects and teams, I have been passed over for multiple advancement opportunities while working with the County. In most cases an outside (the county) candidate has been selected... [This] has made me seriously consider leaving the county as the only means to advance my career.”*

Also, some disagree with how hiring requirements have been structured, saying they make it difficult for many employees to advance within the organization:

*“I also don’t understand why you have to have supervisory experience for low level supervisory positions. The county has just now started mentoring programs that allow for supervisory experience, but they are limited. If an employee shows initiative and has the potential to be a good supervisor, that employee should be allowed to apply for a position if he/she has enough experience and is an exemplary employee.”*

*“[Now] long term employees have to go back to school, regardless of their length of service in the field they are working in, to take specific classes or obtain certain degrees in order to be promoted. Even employees who are currently doing the work are turned away from promotions because their degree is in a different area... Someone right off the street who does not know the County processes, policies or programs, but has a “certain” degree and or has taken classes in the “right” field, can come in and take jobs that loyal employees have worked hard for many years to promote in to.”*

*“The incredible swing from experience being counted in meeting position requirements to education being the only way to meet position requirements had been very disappointing. It seems like the intangibles (leadership, decision making, reliability, accountability, willingness to commit) have been markedly devalued...”*

Others comment that they feel many listed postings are merely a formality and that hiring managers already have in mind the candidate they want to hire:

*“It is always unclear whether opportunities for advancement and promotions are legitimate or if office politics have already dictated who will be promoted.”*

*“The favoritism when it applies to new positions. It’s to the point where you might as well not even apply for open positions because they’ve already got someone in mind for the job before they even hold interviews.”*

*“The way they promote individuals depends on who you know and who will make them “look better.” Not who is best qualified for the job. We know who got the position before they even interview. An outside agency should have to do the interviews so there is never any favoritism.”*

A large number of employees state that office politics and favoritism dominate promotion decisions:

*"I used to really love working for Salt Lake County but after [more than 20] years it has become so political that only employees connected in a political way get promoted or taken care of."*

*"There is absolutely no opportunity for advancement in the County anymore unless you are closely linked to The Mayor, a councilman, or are linked closely to a political party."*

*"For associate directors and higher up, it seems that the candidates being chosen are not methodical, rather hand-picked. This makes it difficult for employees who hope to reach for the top, but may not be able to because they are not a 'favorite.'"*

*"When attempting to move up within my division the process is most often tainted toward the person wanted rather than the person most qualified. It is not what you know, rather it is who you are "friends" with that gets you ahead in the County."*

*"Opportunities for advancement appear to be based on who you know, not years of service and/or experience"*

All cross-tabulation tables for questions on professional development (questions 26-32) are found in the appendices. There are questions with statistically significant results. These tables are identified. While there are significant results in many sections, there are greater numbers of significant findings in the cross-tabulations broken down by gender, age, tenure, job category, level of education, and career stage.

## SECTION 5: Performance And Development Plans & Annual Evaluations

One area of significant frustration identified in employees' focus groups was the established performance plans and evaluations. The survey questions focused both on adherence to the current schedule of plans and evaluations as well as employee satisfaction with the status quo. Survey results indicate that the broader group of employees share similar frustrations as those expressed in the focus groups.

### Performance and Development Plans

Employees are currently supposed to meet with their supervisor quarterly to review performance development plans. However, only two-thirds of employees are currently doing so.

While 58% of employees agree that setting individual work goals is a worthwhile process, employees are divided on

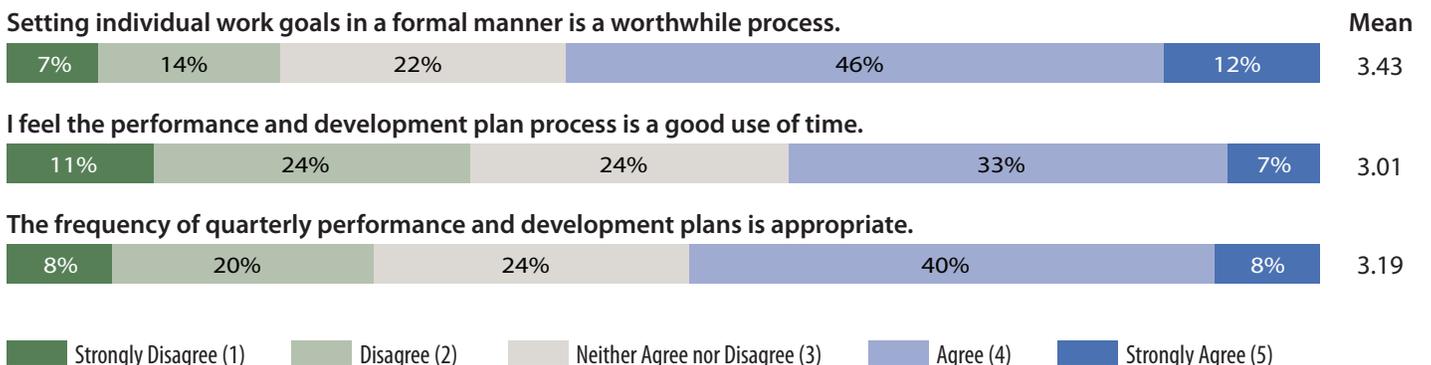
whether they feel the current performance and development plan process is a good use of time (35% disagree while 40% agree). About half of employees (48%) agree that the frequency of these plans is appropriate, but more than a quarter disagree (28%), indicating that if the process is revised, management may want to consult with employees on whether more or less frequent planning would be beneficial. Comments and the frequencies by subgroups suggest that the value of performance planning and the desired frequency may vary across sub-groups and the county may want to explore a more flexible process that accounts for the different needs across agencies and job types. Refer to the appendices for detailed findings by employment area.

**Figure 5: Are you currently meeting with your supervisor for your performance and development plan?**



**Figure 6: A comparison for results on statements about performance and development plans**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.



Legend: Strongly Disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Neither Agree nor Disagree (3) | Agree (4) | Strongly Agree (5)

**Annual Evaluation**

The expectation for evaluations is that supervisors will carry them out annually, and most supervisors are meeting that expectation. A small portion (8%) are not currently being evaluated annually.

About two-thirds of employees feel that their evaluations are an accurate reflection of their work (64%) and the majority feel they have the resources necessary to meet the expectations expressed in the evaluation (59%). However, less than half of employees agree that their evaluation was an effective means to improve their work (48%) and a significant portion (24%) disagree with the statement – indicating that they feel it is not effective.

Employees were also asked whether they receive ongoing feedback from their supervisor outside of these formal processes. A strong majority (61%) agree that they do receive ongoing feedback, while just under a quarter of employees disagree (22%). (Note: this question is not presented in the stacked bar charts above, but full frequency results are available in Appendix B).

Though comments were not solicited on the evaluation / development processes in particular, when asked about what they liked least about working at SLCo, some employees did mention aspects of these processes.

They report that evaluators sometimes restrict employee ability to achieve high scores and employees are frustrated that their evaluation is dependent on the attitude/preferences of their manager:

*“Performance evaluations point scale are 1-5. We are never allowed to get a 5 no matter how great of an employee you are.”*

*“I’m frustrated with the goal setting. It feels like it is set up more for discipline. We were told no one is ever going to get a “5” therefore no increase in pay.”*

*“Often times during my annual review I am told that I cannot attain a certain number because Adm. would frown on it, regardless of whether my work deserves it. They just say ‘I know, but, that is the way it is.’”*

*“I think our evaluations are an improvement from what it was. But, the real issue is management and how they are feeling. This can come from the very top, where a director decides that the managers below him/her can get no higher than a 3, with the idea that no one is perfect. That trickles down to the next level of managers and eventually down to the employees. If people at the top aren’t capable of getting anything higher than a 3, then no one else can get above that score.”*

Some individuals in management think it would be beneficial to have more flexibility in tailoring evaluations and performance plans to individual needs:

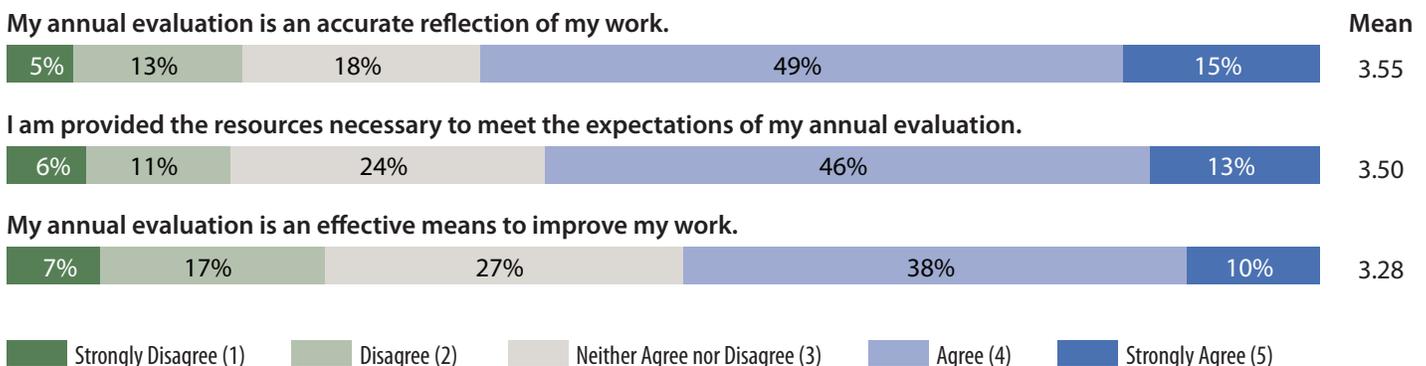
*“As a supervisor given the competencies I bring to my role I would like to utilize a variety of methods in building on team strengths to improve engagement. I feel current system of using PDPs is not effective in this capacity. I think the 5 point evaluation system does not work well and would be better to have pass/fail to remove focus on a score that ranges from 3-5. Employees can become very focused on what they can do to obtain a 5 and this is challenging to fairly grade across, programs/divisions...I feel current evaluation system has constraints and there should be more latitude for supervisors to engage employees beyond this system.”*

**Figure 7: Are you formally evaluated annually?**



**Figure 8: A comparison for results on statements about annual evaluations**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.



*"I know some employees rarely speak to their supervisors and that is why the meet-4-times-a-year evaluation process was put into place. But for those of us who do have daily interaction with our employees and managers I think twice a year is sufficient - my staff always says 'Didn't we just do this?' when I tell them it's time to do the quarterly review."*

*"I feel like the quarterly conversations are pointless. Some of us come and do our jobs and work really hard at it and don't really have any desire to advance, so being forced to work on making goals is a big struggle for some staff."*

In relation to their frustrations with poor management, some employees suggest that subordinates should be included in the evaluation of their supervisors/managers:

*"It would be great if we could evaluate our upper management and supervisors."*

*"I believe that staff should have input into the evaluations of their supervisors and managers that is given significant weight in the annual evaluation/ appraisal score of their supervisor/managers."*

Others note that even positive evaluations do not translate into benefits for employees:

*"Performance is not valued. You are evaluated as adequate or not."*

*"There is nothing that inspires employees to reach beyond 'meets expectations'. Every year for the last 8 years I have received all 4s and 5s on my annual evaluation, but I get the same wage."*

*"It would be nice to receive something for exceeding expectations on our annual evaluations. What's the point of exceeding expectations if you don't get anything for it?"*

Many employees also suggest that the quarterly conversations are just too frequent:

*"I think quarterly conversations come along too often -- maybe twice a year would be better."*

Still, other employees simply dislike the current process:

*"I HATE having to come up with goals for Quarterly Conversations."*

*"The incredibly unnecessary PDP process, which is a complete waste of time."*

*"On employee annual evaluations, I really really hate that my performance is determined by how much better I do than other people in my position...I shouldn't be in competition with my fellow employees. There should be a job description for my position and my annual performance should be based on how I do based on that description, not on what others do."*

All cross tabulation tables for the questions on performance and development plans as well as annual evaluations (question 33-41) are in the appendices. Tables where results are found to be significant are identified. There are significant results in many areas, but particularly in the tables broken down by age, tenure, and career stage.

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## SECTION 6: Management & Supervision

Employees were asked two sets of questions – one regarding their experiences with their direct supervisor and another about management beyond that direct supervisor. Overall employees report greater satisfaction and lower levels of dissatisfaction with their direct supervisor than with higher levels of management.

### SUPERVISION

The highest rating for supervisors came for the statement "My supervisor cares about me as an individual" with 74% agreeing and only 13% disagreeing. Across all supervisor statements there is strong agreement among more than half of responding employees, but for each statement there is still a substantial minority who disagree – indicating that while many of employees are satisfied with their supervision, there is room to improve relationships between some supervisors and their

employees. Results also indicate that there are areas where even good supervisors might improve.

In the open-ended comments there are many comments about supervisors, both positive and negative. The comparison of these sets of comments illustrates the crucial difference supervision makes in employee satisfaction:

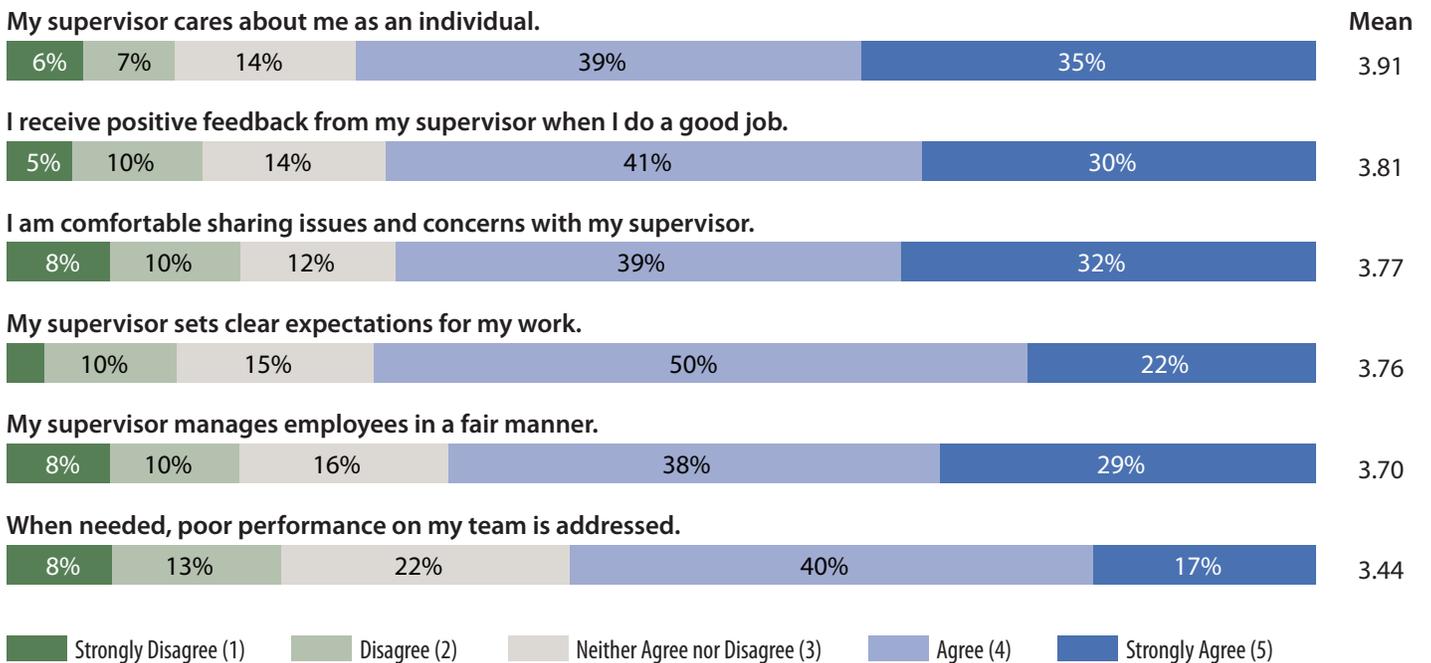
### Positive

*"My direct supervisor provides an enriching mentor-like environment."*

*"I feel incredibly lucky to work with my supervisor, as she is directly responsible for how much I enjoy my job. She is incredibly fair, uniquely flexible, and above and beyond supportive."*

**Figure 9: A comparison of results for supervisor statements.**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Results below 5% are shown but not labeled.



*"I have a great deal of respect for my supervisor. They expect quality work, but also give high praise for achievement, which gives me motivation to improve and help my team achieve their goals."*

*"He is the best supervisor I've worked with in my [30+] year career. He encourages me to think outside the box, and come up with new, innovative processes for the area I work in."*

**Negative**

*"Can be a great work place, have worked in three different divisions. One was awesome, two not so much. All depends on the supervisors and management style."*

*"I am frequently supervised by people who don't really know much about my job, as a result I don't have anyone to ask for help. This means I have to figure things out on my own, which I am able to do but still makes it hard."*

*"Some supervisors...should not be supervising. And I feel that employees don't voice their opinion because they're afraid they might get fired."*

*"We are not able to evaluate our supervisors on their management skills and because of that a lot of problems are not dealt with and continue for long periods of time."*

*"There are some terrible supervisors that treat employees very badly. They talk down on them, disrespect them, and reprimand them in front of their co-workers. When*

*the employees try to move up the chain of command to better the situation they are made out to be the bad guy."*

*"Horrible leadership culture. Poor and discouraging management. Bad managers who are politically connected get protected from the consequences of being a bad leader/manager."*

*"...my supervisor is more concerned about numbers and pleasing the upper management as opposed to serving her employees. I don't feel the upper management listens legitimately to the concerns of our program."*

**MANAGEMENT**

One of the most striking findings is that, in general, there are fewer employees that *strongly* agree with statements about management compared with the number that *strongly* agree with similar statements about their supervisors. Additionally, a much larger portion strongly disagree with the statements on management than disagree on the parallel statements on supervisors – indicating that employees are more satisfied overall with their supervisors than with higher levels of management. In fact, even on the highest rated management statement ("managers are qualified for their positions") just 49% say they agree. In contrast, ratings on all supervisor statements are above 50% with several above 70%. The statement that received the most disagreement was that "management communicates effectively with employees" with

38% disagreeing – reiterating the dissatisfaction of employees with management in comparison to the higher ratings on supervisory statements.

There are many comments about the layers of management above direct supervisors. A few individuals remark on positive interactions and relationships with management that improve their job satisfaction:

*“My direct supervisor is an amazing support and manager. I feel comfortable talking to higher up managers...and that is a lot to be said about the personalities and culture of the library system.”*

*“I like the job stability and having an Executive Director that actually knows all programs in our Division.”*

*“I feel that management has been very receptive to the concerns and needs of the people they supervise.”*

*“I really like my supervisor and the Management/Administrative team in my office. They listen, communicate well and they care about the employees in our office.”*

Unfortunately, there are far more negative comments regarding higher levels of management. Paralleling the result noted above, many state that management does not communicate effectively with employees:

*“I don’t like how the higher up management doesn’t communicate well or even respect the people lower.”*

*“Upper management of my agency is extremely non-communicative and not at all receptive to issues and concerns.”*

*“Some leaders value “form” rather than “substance”. They care more about appearances that make them look*

*good to the upper leadership peers and/or the Mayor, and others rather than the final product, morale, and performance of the employees.”*

*“Some of the people appointed to the Mayor’s Cabinet cannot possibly be the best candidates for those positions. We need to do a better job of finding qualified leaders for these jobs and not just make political appointments or appointments out of desperation.”*

Other employees make comments about feeling upper management is disconnected from and doesn’t care about the needs/opinions of their employees:

*“Division administration seems to have forgotten what it’s like to work on the ‘front-lines’ and implements policies/procedures without input that significantly impede our ability to provide quality services for our community.”*

*“Sometimes feel like upper management does not understand the effect decisions can have on those of us facing the public.”*

*“Upper management cares only for bottom line. Don’t care about offices or people in them.”*

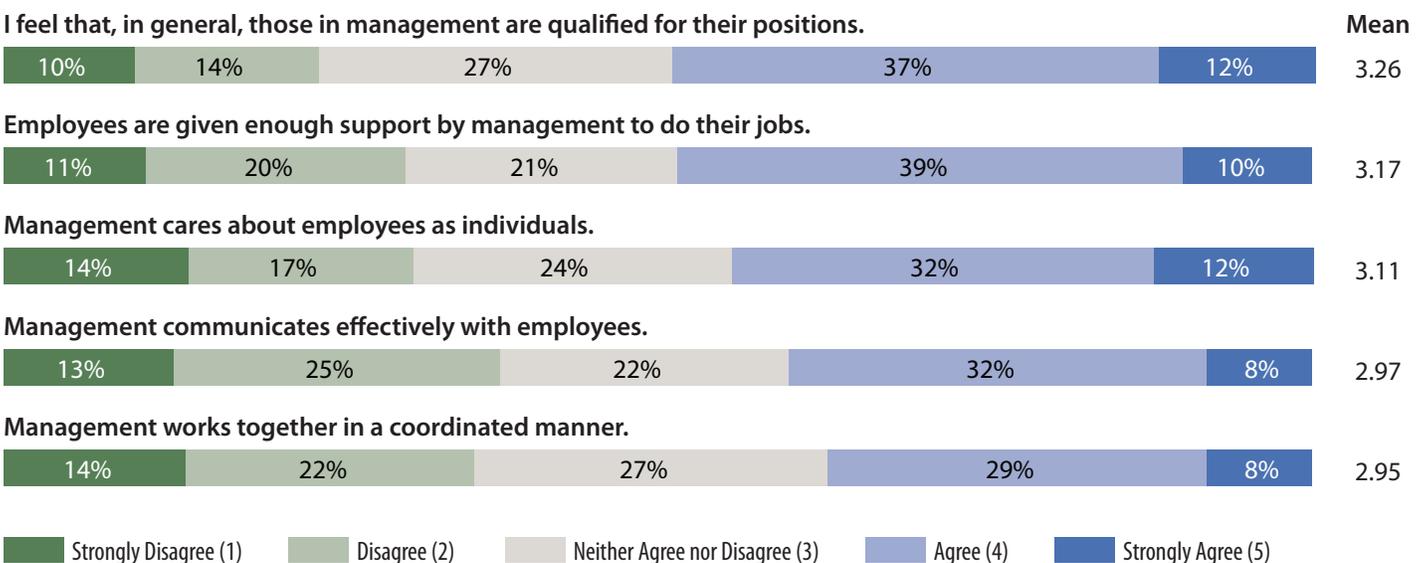
*“My division is great but we get micromanaged by County policies and leadership who don’t understand our goals and purpose.”*

While many comments are more generically about “management,” some employees express more specific dissatisfaction with the Mayor and Council:

*“Instead of setting employees as a top priority, management and the council set other programs and goals as a higher priority.”*

**Figure 10: A comparison of results for management statements.**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Results below 5% are shown but not labeled.



*"The Mayor is disconnected from the staff - appears to maintain a public appearance for future political aspirations. His appointees treat the long term merit staff as if we are unskilled and incapable of doing our jobs. They are dismissive to who we are and what we have accomplished prior to the last election."*

*"I miss a mayor who is connected with the employees. Mayor Corroon used to visit a couple times a year and address us by name. You could tell he genuinely cared about his SLCO employees."*

*"The feeling that the council does not care about the rank and file employees, the compression problem with wages. I love my job and my co-workers but feel frustrated with the Council/Mayor."*

All cross tabulation tables for the questions on managements & supervision (question 42-52) are in the appendices. Tables where results are found to be significant are identified. There are more significant results in the tables broken down by age, tenure, job category, and career stage than some of the other demographic sections.

## SECTION 7: Work Environment/Operational Functionality

A series of questions were asked about work resources, policies and procedures, and human resource issues (unrelated to pay and benefits). The responses given by employees provide an understanding of their perception of the work environment and operations at SLCo.

### ASSIGNMENT CHANGES

Due to the wide variety of work carried out by employees, assignments were defined broadly to include changes to include work tasks, schedules, and/or transfers. While the vast majority of employees say they understand *why* changes occur (73%), fewer employees agree that the process through which changes are made is fair (46%). In fact nearly a quarter of employees (24%) disagree – indicating that they do not think the process for making changes to work assignments is fair.

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Particularly for public employees, policies and procedures can play a big role in an employee's work day. Policies that are perceived as burdensome, inefficient, or unfair can have a negative impact on employee engagement. When asked about policies and procedures, three-fourths of employees (75%) indicate they know where to find the policies and procedures that relate to their job. A smaller portion (58%)

agree that they are easy to understand, with almost one in five (18%) indicating they are not. Additionally, less than half of employees (45%) agree that policies and procedures are enforced in a fair manner, and more than a fourth of employees (28%) say that enforcement is not fair. Employees express the most disagreement (36%) with the statement "Employees have the opportunity to give input on policy/procedures," indicating that perhaps one way to improve engagement might be to seek input on which policies might be improved to increase satisfaction and remove or revise sources of discontent.

Employee comments regarding policies and procedures illustrate the type of issues they face:

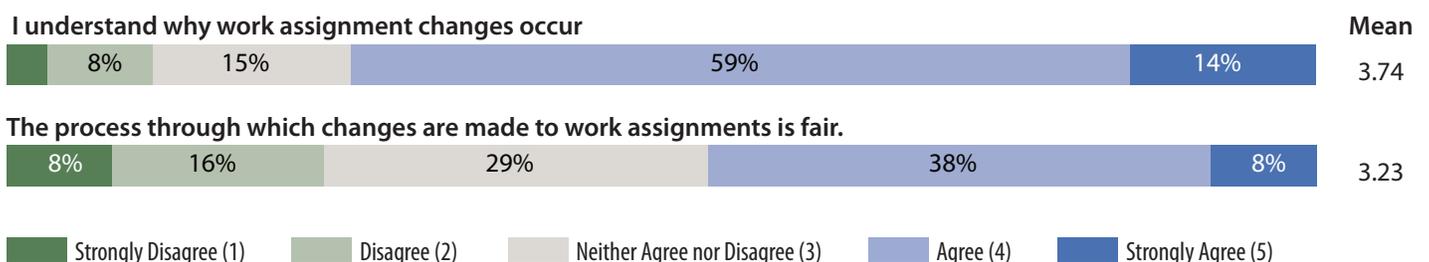
*"We continue to go from one process to another. They tell us the new process will be better more efficient but it never is. It is always more cumbersome, slower, harder to get anything done."*

*"My division is great but we get micromanaged by County policies and leadership who don't understand our goals and purpose."*

*"Occasional county policies that are complicated and hard to understand. It can be easy to make a mistake when you don't know you are."*

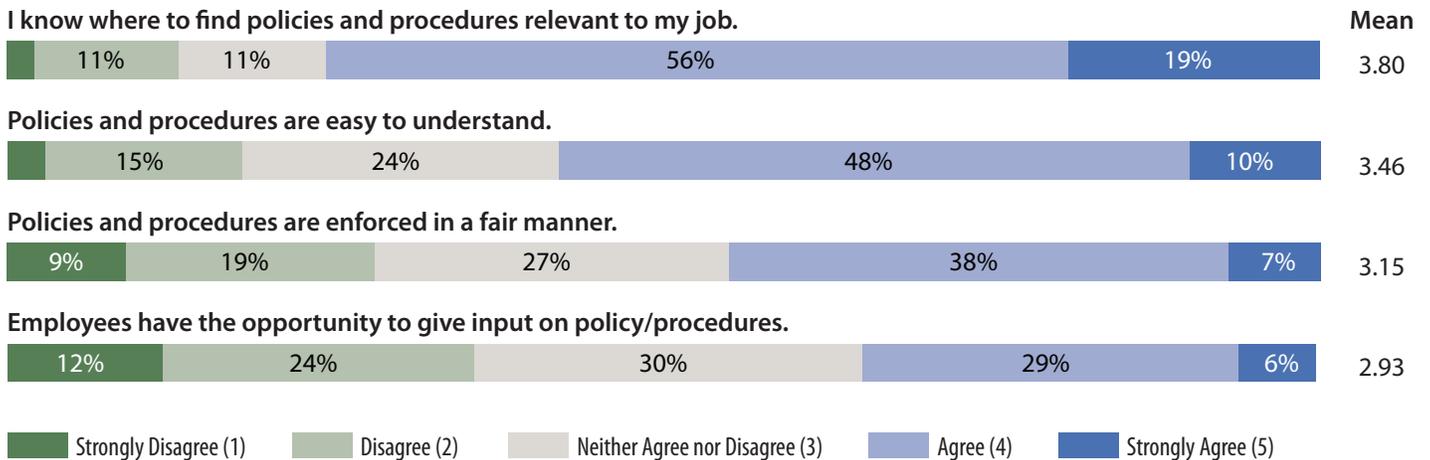
**Figure 11: A comparison of results for assignment changes.**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Results below 5% are shown but not labeled.



**Figure 12: A comparison of results for policies and procedures.**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Results below 5% are shown but not labeled.



*"When they change some of your job, it changes about three times. It would be nice if they got all the kinks solved before they give it to us."*

*"Policies continue to be developed in a manner which conflict each other and the level at which they are enforced is not consistent."*

*"I believe it is important to ask questions to those affected most before changing a process and I find that lacking."*

*concern for providing proper equipment and training for our job."*

*"Lack of funding to run our programs without looking for grants."*

*"The longer I work at SLCo, the more waste of money I see in the Mayor's portfolio."*

*"I do see inefficiencies in use of resources like time that could be tightened up with more efficient organization."*

**OTHER WORK ENVIRONMENT**

In addition to being asked about assignment changes and policies/procedures, employees were asked a variety of other questions related to their work environment. Employees report high levels of satisfaction with their knowledge of who to contact regarding their payroll or human resource related questions. Additionally, many employees say they have sufficient resources to do their job (69%), with a minority disagreeing (15%). Several employees specifically comment on resource limitations and concerns about wasted resources (comments about workload/limited staffing aren't addressed here and are instead covered in the next section):

*"When we ask for supplies we are told we are under budget. How can we operate our facility without proper supplies? Our equipment is so outdated they can't even find the correct parts to fix them."*

*"I think that [the council doesn't] provide the divisions with the proper funding so they can provide the best possible service to the taxpayers."*

*"I feel like the budget, allotted to our division, does not reflect a concern for the safety of our employees, or a*

A majority of employees also report that they have opportunities to learn/adapt to new technology (61%). When asked about reporting harassment and discrimination, there are a couple areas of concern. Only 60% of employees agree that they'd feel comfortable reporting harassment concerns, with 11% strongly disagreeing and another 10% disagreeing. Similar results are seen on the statement regarding the reporting of discrimination concerns. Employee comments reflect some areas of unease:

*"I have felt unsafe reporting unsafe harassment in previous situations. Many people in the division are looking at jobs outside of SLCO just because of the culture including myself."*

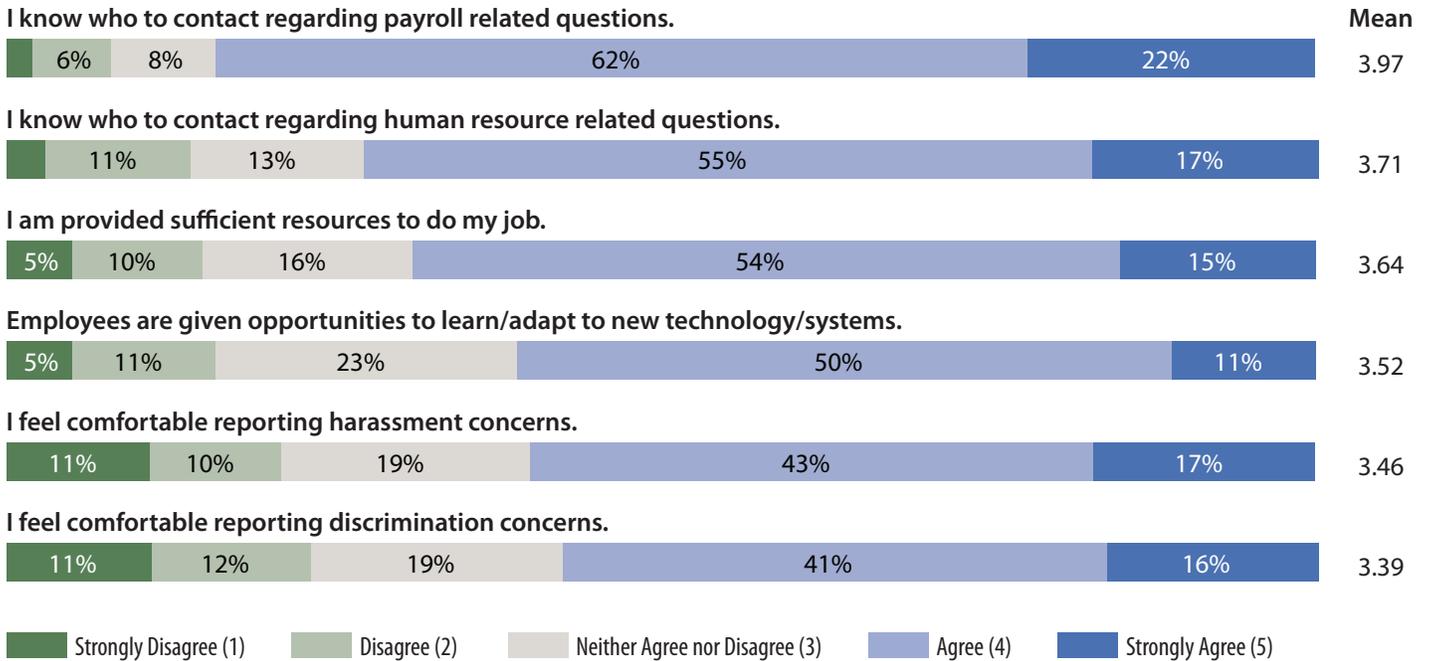
*"I feel like anyone over 45 is not welcome at the County anymore. Like we are not useful. I feel like the current Mayor would like to see us all out of here. It's hard for older employees to get promotions over younger employees who have less years under URS."*

*"There is some serious age and racial discrimination going on."*

*"There still seems to an inequity in salaries between men and women for some positions."*

**Figure 13: A comparison of results for other work environment statements.**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Results below 5% are shown but not labeled.



*"In our office the average woman is paid significantly less than the average man. Last time I looked, there was about a 9-grade difference in pay, even though the level/type of work done was fairly comparable. When women are promoted in our office, job descriptions are changed first - downgraded. When men are promoted, the job descriptions are upgraded."*

*"Salt Lake County should do more to address workplace bullying."*

*"[The director] has bullied people and told people to leave if they cannot get on board which has created a culture*

*of fear for those who have complaints and issues. I am a supervisor and have had several line staff upset and/or crying in my office because of the way she has treated them. Staff are afraid to voice their complaints."*

Results by demographic groups for the work environment questions (questions 53-64) are in the appendices. Significant tables are identified. While there are significant results across the demographic sections, there are a particular number of significant results when analyzed by tenure and job category.

## SECTION 8: Culture

An important aspect of an employee's job satisfaction is the culture in which they work. For this research, culture is defined as a shared set of values and beliefs that determine patterns of behavior common to groups of people. Eight aspects of SLCo culture were measured using an "agree" to "disagree" scale.

The most agreement is found when employees consider the cooperation exhibited in their work area, with 76% of employees indicating there is a spirit of cooperation in getting the job done. Employees also generally evaluate their coworkers positively, with 75% agreeing that their colleagues are committed to quality work and 70% saying that providing services efficiently is part of the culture of SLCo. In the open-ended comments many employees comment that their coworkers are a highlight of their employment, with 437 out of the 1650 employees answering the open ended question saying one of the things they like most about their job is the people they work with:

*"The people I work with - my team and the other team in our suite - are positive, motivated people who really care about our customers. Working with them is a pleasure."*

*"The culture at work is very positive and motivating. The teams there are innovative and work well together, and everyone values the work they do."*

*"I love the department employees I get to work with. They are caring professionals who really want to do a great job for the county residents."*

*"I enjoy most of the people who work in my division."*

A smaller number of people, 90 out of the 1589 answering the open ended question, say that difficult coworkers are one of the greatest sources of dissatisfaction for them at work, and negative comments about coworkers are made in other open ended comments as well:

*"My coworkers do not have the same drive as me so I find myself working more, for the same pay."*

*"Sometimes it is difficult to motivate entrenched employees that aren't engaged in their work."*

**Figure 14: A comparison of results for culture statements.**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Results below 5% are shown but not labeled.



*"I have several co-workers that refuse to perform their duties thus making it difficult to perform our duties to the best of our abilities."*

Many employees also say that there are disciplinary issues at SLCo – with problematic employees allowed to continue without reprimand or termination. Some employees also express that this frustration is compounded by the fact that employees are paid equally regardless of performance. Others mentioned that discipline is uneven, with office politics influencing whether individuals are disciplined or whether superiors look the other way. Sometimes these comments are also associated with the issues raised around harassment and discrimination (covered in the prior section):

*"When employees are not performing, they are moved to another position and not disciplined."*

*"The process for terminating a bad employee takes much too long."*

*"Supervisors tend to favor some individuals. Lazy co-workers don't get reprimanded when they don't do their jobs."*

*"I love my job, but have struggled lately with motivation to do a good job. Others that don't do a good job are treated with the same privileges of those who work ten times harder."*

*"Poor oversight - you have good dedicated employees that are engaged, work hard and make a difference. Then in the same unit you'll have employees that get away with doing as little as possible, taking up space, spending most of their time on personal calls, or visiting and they all get rated the same."*

*"Supervisors who do not use the probationary period or disciplinary process correctly and thereby saddle the county with unacceptable employees."*

*"How some employees are not held accountable for poor work performance; it's frustrating and unfair when I see the same employees get free passes or at least it seems that way. It affects employees who work hard when we*

*see those who come to work for a pay check, but yet don't accomplish anything."*

Collaboration across organizational units appears to be lacking for a large number of employees, with only 61% agreeing that their agency collaborates well with other agencies. When asked about whether their leaders promote positive work culture, more employees agree than disagree (56% versus 24%), but the proportion of those disagreeing was still significant—a result that is unsurprising given the number of employees who comment on issues within management and administration (see Section 6).

Many county employees express a desire for management and administration to listen more to employee feedback. Though a majority of employees state that they feel encouraged to voice ideas, opinions, and concerns (57%), a significant minority disagree (24%). On a related note, only 46% of employees say they feel employee ideas, opinions, and concerns are valued, and a third of employees (33%) disagree. When asked what they dislike most about their job, many employees comment on feeling unheard and/or unvalued:

*"Decisions are made without collaborating with all those who will be impacted or should have input about the decision."*

*"Input or discussion regarding changes is not sought. Implementation of changes happens without full consideration of how to manage the changes with the current workload."*

*"I feel like our suggestions and concerns are not listened to and valued."*

*"You are told your opinions matter, but when you give them or ask questions you are targeted as a trouble maker."*

All cross-tabulation tables for culture questions (questions 65-72) are found in the appendices. Some tables contain significant results and are identified. While all sections contain some significant findings, there are a greater number of such findings in the tables broken down by gender, tenure and level of education.

## SECTION 9: Well-Being

A primary objective of this research is to understand employee engagement. To that end, a series of questions were asked about employee well-being. These questions focus on satisfaction and positive feelings, supportive and enriching relationships, interest and engagement in activities, purpose, a sense of mastery and accomplishment, and feelings of control and autonomy as well as optimism. Figure 15 shows the well-being statements from the questionnaire.

It is perhaps not surprising that SLCo employees overwhelmingly agree that their work improves the lives of SLCo residents (85%). In fact 431 out of 1650 employees responding to the open ended question stated that this was an aspect of the job they liked most:

*"It's a rewarding career and I enjoy making a difference in the lives of the people we serve."*

*"I enjoy working with families and seeing their lives change if they are will to make the change for themselves."*

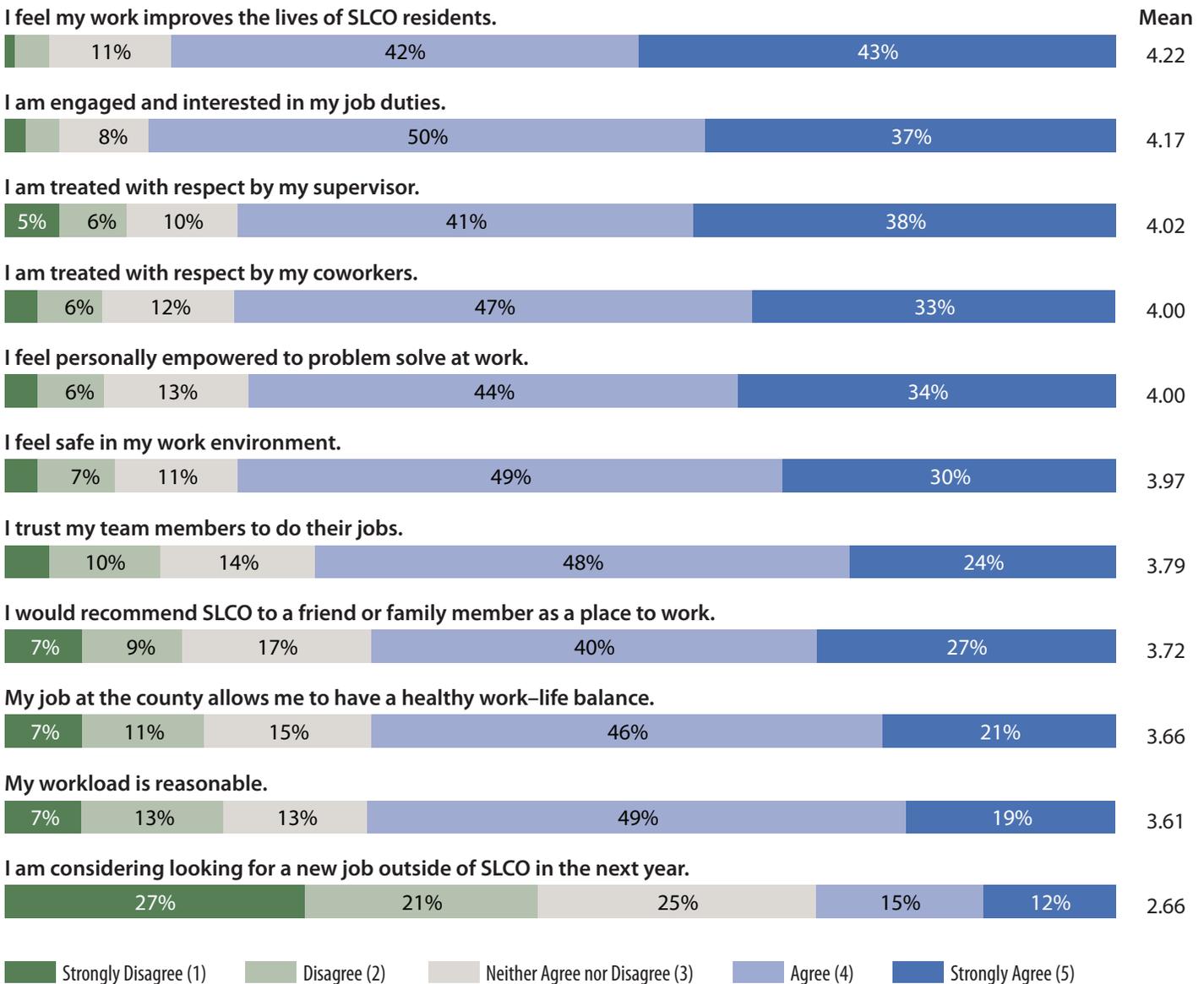
*"I feel what I do matters."*

*"I love feeling like I am making a difference to the community and providing services that lead to a greater quality of life."*

Employees also say that they are engaged and interested in their job (87% agree). Several employees assert that their job duties themselves are one of the best aspects of working at the county:

**Figure 15: A comparison of results for well-being statements.**

Note: Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Results below 5% are shown but not labeled.



*"I love what I get to do every day."*

*"I enjoy my job and my assigned job tasks."*

*"I also really love the work I do, and being able to use my skills."*

*"I enjoy my job duties & feel I do a great job."*

Most employees also agree that they feel respected by their supervisor (79%) as well as their coworkers (80%). More than three-fourths of employees also agree that they feel personally empowered to problem solve at work (78%) and that they feel safe in their work environment (79%). Employees say that they trust their team members to do their jobs (72%). Despite these relatively high ratings on well-being statements, a slightly smaller proportion say they'd recommend SLCo to a friend or family member as a place to work (67%). Though about a third of employees did not indicate that they would recommend SLCo as a place to work, only 27% reported that they were looking for a new job outside of SLCo in the next year – though this question may be a sensitive one where some employees may not feel comfortable indicating their desire to look for new employment. One reason employees may not be referring family and friends may be related to workload – almost one in five (18%) disagree when asked if their job at SLCo allows them to have healthy work life balance and similarly, 20% said their workload was unreasonable. In the open ended comments many employees remark about the burden of their workload:

*"I love the work that I do, but the constant expectation of doing more with less is unrealistic and has contributed to burn out for myself and others throughout the county."*

*"I also dislike that we are being asked to do more tasks... and we are not given more staff or support staff to get all our tasks done. It becomes very overwhelming and I feel like I am not getting to the core of my job -- provide a better place for people to live, work and play."*

*"I feel like I am asked to do more than I am able to accomplish in a 40 hour week."*

*"I feel my workload is too high and I am not supported by team members and supervisors to share the load."*

*"We are constantly threatened with mandatory overtime due to low staffing levels. The low staffing levels are due to all of our new hires and a lot of our veterans leaving to go to other agencies that are willing to pay more."*

In particular, there are a significant number of comments about workload and turnover from employees working in the Sheriff's Office:

*"Opportunities to work outside the county pay more and attract Correctional officers away from the jail. I currently work overtime voluntarily but our staffing levels make it difficult to take vacation and other time off. I feel unsafe that the jail is not sufficiently manned and more officers are leaving than can be successfully hired and retained."*

*"The Sheriff's Office is in a serious need for staff to run this facility. We cannot retain employees due to the new State Retirement changes and lack of a competitive pay scale. Because of the pay freeze we have new officers making the same as 6-7 veterans. Which means we are starting to lose our experienced staff. When working in this environment, experience is very helpful. I no longer feel this is a safe environment to work in with the number of experienced staff we keep losing."*

All cross-tabulation tables for well-being questions (questions 73-83) are found in the appendices. Some tables contain significant results and are identified. While significant results occur across many sections, the greatest number of significant findings are found in the gender, tenure, and level of education sections

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## SECTION 10: Open Opportunity For Feedback

At the end of the survey there were three open-ended questions that allowed employees the opportunity to give feedback in their own words. One question focused on positive aspects of SLCO, another on areas employees said they like least, and the final, a 'catch-all' question, where employees could give any suggestion or comment.

Upon completion of the data collection, all comments were reviewed by staff at the Policy Institute. Common themes or categories for each question were identified. Each question was coded in to the appropriate category. The results to

these questions are reported by category including the actual number of employees commenting.

The comments included here are used to illustrate the types of comments given by employees; no identifying information is included. To maintain employee confidentiality, a full set of verbatim comments is not included. Since some employee quotes have been included in earlier sections of the report, references are made below to where those comments may be located rather than repeating them here.

## What do you like most about working for SLCo?

There were 1,650 employees that offered comments on this question. The analysis below reports the category, number of comments in the category, and some examples of comments.

### Benefits (580 comments) –

The most frequently mentioned positive aspect of working at SLCo was the benefits package. Here, benefits are broadly defined to include insurance benefits, retirement plans, paid time off, and other miscellaneous benefits provided by the county such as wellness programs. The survey was fielded before the administration announced benefit/pay changes in response to the Hay study – results should be viewed in that context:

*“The County has excellent benefits.”*

*“I like the benefits Salt Lake County offers. I hope the benefits remain the same or improve rather than decreasing.”*

*“What I like most about working for Salt Lake County is the pension plan that is offered for retirement.”*

*“I like having a fitness center in the building.”*

*“I also enjoy the...tuition reimbursement program that assist me to build my qualifications and skill sets”*

*“The benefits are amazing and having onsite daycare is invaluable.”*

### Colleagues / Team (437 comments)

In the survey, employees consistently say their relationships with coworkers are positive and rewarding.

*Sample comments about coworkers can be found in Section 8.*

### Helping the Public / Making a Difference (431 comments)

Mentioned nearly as frequently as their fellow colleagues is their belief that their jobs make a difference in people lives. Many county employees express how much they enjoy working with the public or simply knowing that their job helps improve the community.

*Sample comments about helping the public can be found in Section 9.*

### Enjoy Job / Work Itself (217 comments)

Some employees used this opportunity for feedback to express that they simply enjoy their work duties:

*Sample comments about work duties can be found in Section 9.*

### Schedule/Flexibility (184 comments)

Employees who are given the opportunity to have flexible schedules appreciate it. Others simply express that they enjoy the structure or regularity of their scheduled work hours:

*“I have flexible work hours when I need them.”*

*“I am able to telecommute one day a week which is a huge benefit to me.”*

*“I have a lot of flexibility in how I accomplish my work tasks and the hours I work.”*

*“I like working a job that is 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with weekends off.”*

*“Consistent work schedule I can plan my life around.”*

### Work Environment (181 comments)

To a number of employees, the culture and environment of their workplace is a key reason they like their job:

*“The culture at work is very positive and motivating.”*

*“The positive and cooperative work environment.”*

*“Positive, fair and empowered working environment. My co-workers genuinely care for each other. The supervisors are fair and kind. Overall it is respectful, safe, fair and more diverse working environment.”*

### Security / Stability (158 comments)

Many employees value the security of having a stable job:

*“I like the job security.”*

*“I like the stability of working for a government agency.”*

### Supervisors/Managers/Leadership (100 comments)

Positive comments about all levels of management are combined in this category. Many employees offer praise for leadership at SLCo and the impact they have on their job satisfaction. While there appear to be a greater portion of positive comments about supervisors, there are positive comments about individuals at various levels of management.

*Sample comments about supervision and management can be found in Section 6.*

### Work/Life Balance (70 comments)

Several employees express that their job and supervisors at SLCo allow them to have excellent work/life balance:

*“Great work life balance.”*

*“Due to my immediate supervisor, I have a good work life balance. However, this is not the overall culture promoted by SLCO.”*

*“I have time to spend on personal matters after work, and feel that I can leave my work at the office.”*

### **Career & Professional Development** (66 comments)

Having opportunities to progress in their career and develop professional skills is important to many employees, and these employees comment that they feel SLCo was doing an excellent job providing this.

*Sample comments about career advancement and professional development can be found in Sections 3 & 4.*

### **Have a Job / Paycheck / Pay** (57 comments)

Simply having a job is the most positive thing for many SLCo employees. It provides them an income and benefits and they appreciate it. Some employees appear to be stating this less sincerely, that the best they can say is that they have a job, while others are genuinely saying they are happy with their pay:

*"I am happy with my compensation as a public employee."*

*"A paycheck."*

*"I like that I have a job and that is it."*

### **Feeling Valued** (45 comments)

Employees like feeling appreciated and valued by the organization:

*"I know that my work and who I am is valued."*

*"I truly feel my concerns are listened to and acted upon."*

*"My experience and opinion is valued."*

### **Independence** (44 comments)

Some employees say they appreciate the autonomy and independence that are given to complete their work:

*"I feel I have a lot of opportunity to work independently."*

*"I am trusted in my job and given some leniency to be creative."*

*"I enjoy the independence I am given to do my work."*

### **Variety** (38 comments)

Several employees mentioned that variety in their work contributes to their satisfaction:

*"I like working in an environment that is always changing."*

*"I like the diversity in different tasks."*

*"I like the variety and diversity of everyday work. It is not same job every day."*

*"I like working for a large organization and I getting to know a lot of different people."*

### **Location/Commute** (35 comments)

These individuals like their work location and/or have a short commute:

*"Conveniently located and easy to get to work."*

*"Good location, nice building to work in."*

*"It is close to my home."*

### **No positive** (28 comments)

These individuals say they can't think of anything they like most about working at SLCo or only make negative comments even though they are being asked what they liked most about their job. Some employees comment that things used to be better, but have gotten worse in recent years:

*"Not much anymore."*

*"Up until that past 5 years, I have enjoyed working at the job I am at. Things appear to have gone downhill in the past 5 years."*

### **General positive** (25 comments)

Some respondents simply say they generally like working for the county:

*"It's a great place to work for."*

*"I have always enjoyed working for SLCO."*

### **Challenging** (20 comments)

A handful of employees say that they enjoy the challenge and problem solving involved in their work:

*"I love the challenge of the vast variety of issues I get to research / organize / resolve."*

*"My job is challenging and sometimes rewarding."*

*"I have the opportunity to problem solve and make a difference."*

### **Diversity** (16 comments)

A few employees reflect positively on working with a diverse set of people.

*"I love the opportunity to work with individuals from all different cultures."*

*"I like the diversity of the people."*

### **Policies** (10 comments)

A small number of employees note that particular policies, including employee protections are positive aspects of their job:

*"The job protection it offers, benefits and the safety of its policies and procedures."*

### **"Other" Miscellaneous** (17 comments)

Other positive things about working at SLCo are mentioned by employees. A sample of these responses include:

*"Being in the know about what is going on in the County."*

*"Not having to dress up for work."*

## What do you like *least* about working for SLCo?

There were 1,589 employees that provided comments about what they like least. The analysis below reports the category, number of comments in the category, and some examples of comments.

### **Pay and Benefits** (485 comments)

The most frequent responses center on pay and benefit issues. Employees voice concerns about inequity, lack of/inadequate cost of living adjustments, and the perception that management/elected officials place low priority on employee compensation relative to other budgetary items. The survey itself avoided questions about compensation (which had already been thoroughly covered in the recent Hay Study), but the issues clearly remain at the forefront of employees' minds as they are the most frequently mentioned item on this question. The survey was conducted before the administration announced benefit/pay changes in response to the Hay study – results should be viewed in that context:

*"Pay is well below market for my field, with no ability to advance or increase pay based on merit."*

*"Having a comparably low pay scale makes it difficult to retain employees."*

*"Employees get paid the same if they have the same job title, yet one person's work load is sometimes triple of another employee with the same title and pay rate."*

*"The lack of pay, especially for those who have been at the County for a long time. Why do new employees make the same amount as those who have been here for a while?"*

*"The lack of caring and support SLCO has for their employees. They would rather give their employees a pay cut and freeze their raises than look for other ways of saving money."*

### **Office Politics** (282 comments)

A significant number of employees raise concerns about the politics of working at SLCo. This category refers to internal office politics and favoritism rather than the politics of elected officials, which are discussed in another category below:

*"The politics."*

*"How too many things (decisions, goals, processes) are politicized."*

*"I absolutely hate the politics involved in working for the County."*

*"Political in-fighting' reduces opportunities for employees to be innovative for fear of upsetting a person in power."*

*"Too much favoritism...It's not what you know...It's who you know."*

*"Double standards regarding policies and procedures and how employees are treated."*

*Additional sample comments specifically about office politics related to promotion issues can be found in Section 4.*

### **Administration/Upper Management** (196 comments)

Many employees voice frustration with upper management and administration. They refer to the higher levels of leadership (including both upper level administrators as well as the Mayor's Office and Council), saying they view upper management as out of touch, unresponsive, and uncaring.

*Sample comments about administration and upper management can be found in Section 6.*

### **Promotions** (174 comments)

A significant number of employees express dissatisfaction about the handling of promotions. Comments focus on limited opportunities overall and allegations of unfair treatment and even outright discrimination:

*Sample comments about promotions can be found in Section 4.*

### **Direct Manager/Supervisor** (173 comments)

Employees describe negative management practices that range from reports of disconnected and unengaged supervisors/managers to behaviors that rise to the level of issues to be addressed by Human Resources: These comments refer to those that manage employees closely, higher levels of management are addressed in the Upper Management / Administration code.

*Sample comments about management can be found in Sections 3, 5 & 6.*

### **Lack of Recognition / Appreciation / Feeling Unheard** (139 comments) –

In addition to concerns about pay, many employees report feeling unappreciated by management and/or the organization:

*"I feel like those in charge, are quick to discount the value of employees and their contributions to the citizens of the county."*

*"People are not treated with respect or appreciation."*

*"I feel that people do not recognize what I do and how much I do...I would like to be recognized for it and thanked once in a while."*

*Additional sample comments about feeling unappreciated, specifically about feeling opinions and ideas are not heard, can be found in Section 8.*

### **Workload** (111 comments)

Employees express frustration with the amount of and distribution of work duties. These comments relate to comments about staffing and turnover.

*Sample comments about workload can be found in Section 9.*

### **General negative environment** (103 comments)

Beyond the more specific negative comments, this category captures the set of more broad negative comments about work environment and culture:

*"In the many years I have worked for SLCO, I have not seen morale and confidence this low. It is concerning and disappointing."*

*"People are not in any way happy to be here. There is not a feeling of camaraderie here."*

*"Often, it is not a source of pride to say that I work for Salt Lake County, but rather something that is being apologized for."*

*"Negative environment."*

### **Bureaucracy** (96 comments)

Bureaucracy is a major source of frustration for many employees. This includes specific comments about red-tape, slowness to accomplish things, and other bureaucratic hurdles. In addition to the general comments about red-tape and bureaucracy, there were a particular number of comments about slowness in hiring:

*"The stereotypical "government" work environment where things move so slowly and we are often unable to make big changes due to community opposition and slow county government process."*

*"Everything...takes a large amount of time. Approval to hire, replacement of equipment, answers from division on any question."*

*"The red tape that you have to cut through to get things done."*

*"Anything and everything seems to take a ridiculously long time to accomplish."*

### **Coworkers** (90 comments)

Beyond the more general comments regarding environment and culture (see above) some employees explicitly cite difficult coworkers as a source of their own negative experiences at work. Some mention individual employees that generated a great deal of frustration, while others express more general dissatisfaction with their coworkers.

*Sample comments about coworkers can be found in Section 8.*

### **Scheduling** (80 comments)

Just as some employees express that their schedule and flexibility contribute to their satisfaction, for other employees it is a great source of dissatisfaction:

*"Inflexible schedule."*

*"Not being able to flex my time. My work can be completed in 4 days."*

*"Working weekends."*

*"It would be nice to have a little more flexibility to work from home when needed. Especially on days when our daycare is closed or a child is sick."*

*"No telecommuting options are ever considered."*

*"I would like to be on salary instead of hourly in order to truly reflect the seasonal changes of workload."*

### **No comment** (75 comments)

Some respondents say they have no comment, can't think of anything negative, or only have positive things to say about SLCo:

*"I can't think of anything right now; I really like working for SLCo"*

*"Nothing."*

### **Communication/Transparency** (69 comments)

In addition to the open ended feedback on communications (separate question earlier in the survey), some employees report communication issues on this question. They describe poor communication from management and a desire for greater transparency:

*"I feel like divisions that are outside of the government center are forgotten and always out of the loop."*

*"In my division there is a chronic lack of communication, lack of direction, and often a lack of professionalism in upper management."*

*"There is a severe lack of transparency."*

### **Discipline** (67 comments)

Often in relation to their comments on co-workers or poor management, individuals mention either a lack of discipline or that discipline is uneven.

*Sample comments about discipline can be found in Section 8.*

### **Lack of resources** (51 comments)

These comments cover a variety of concerns from poor equipment to technical problems.

*Sample comments about resource constraints can be found in Section 7.*

### **Human Resources** (47 comments)

This set of comments encompasses various comments including complaints about Human Resources generally as well as frustrations with PeopleSoft and other concerns:

*“HR has become incredibly user-unfriendly in the last few years.”*

*“Everything is a process especially with the HR hiring. This can be very burdensome on our ability to do our work when we are always getting held up by those working in HR. They always make up excuses that they are too busy or have so much to do which impacts our departments staffing situations.”*

*“Peoplesoft is still not working.”*

### **Turnover/Retention** (44 comments)

While some employees raise concerns about workload or pay which relate to the turnover/retention issues, this code captures specific comments about rapid turnover and low retention at SLCo:

*“Retention efforts are lacking. I would like to see more done to keep great people in Salt Lake County.”*

*“I’ve been here [more than 25] years, the last 5 -years have been a disaster as far as retention and fair compensation is concerned.”*

*“We are losing our top employees at the fastest rate I have ever seen but no one looks into why this is happening and it definitely isn’t for more money.”*

*“Turnover’s been atrocious, which makes the job even more difficult.”*

### **Training** (42 comments)

These employees express a need for greater training either for themselves, coworkers, or managers.

*Sample comments about training can be found in Section 3.*

### **Policy, Rules, and Procedures** (41 comments)

Frequent changes and overall policy issues are a source of employee dissatisfaction. Employees express that changes are too frequent, not well explained or trained, and fail to incorporate feedback from the employees they affect.

*Sample comments about policy and procedures can be found in Section 7.*

### **Politics of Elected Officials** (27 comments)

While there are more frequent mentions of office politics or generic references to politics at SLCo (which we grouped with the “office politics” category), some employees express that there are significant negative ramifications from working in an organization where leaders are elected and issues related to their elected position affect employees:

*“Every election cycle everything is in turmoil for a year before and after the election while thing get sorted out.”*

*“So many of our decisions are based on how they will be viewed politically, not how they will benefit our customers, participants, etc.”*

*“Constantly changing appointed leadership and the feeling that their direction/goals while appointed may be ‘flash in the pan’ or political rather than practical and the most beneficial to the County as a whole.”*

*“How politics impact decisions even when decisions to be made are minor. Administration will not go ahead because the climate is not “right” at the moment.”*

### **Harassment/Discrimination** (25 comments)

Beyond negative comments about coworkers or management this category captures feedback regarding outright discrimination, harassment, bullying, and hostile work environments.

*Sample comments about harassment and discrimination can be found in Section 7.*

### **Evaluations / Performance Development Plans** (24 comments)

Negative experiences with annual evaluations and quarterly performance development conversations are a source of discontent for some employees.

*Sample comments about evaluation and performance plans can be found in Section 5.*

### **Physical Environment** (21 comments)

A small number of employees pointed to issues with their physical workspace. The comments are quite diverse, but below is a sampling of the type of issues raised:

*“Air temperature in the buildings, too hot or cold, no control.”*

*“Sitting in a cubicle, in the basement with no windows and no fresh air most of the day.”*

### **Total Compensation Project (Hay Study)** (15 comments)

While there are many more generic references to surveys throughout the open ended comments, these employees specifically mentioned the study recently completed by the Hay Group:

*“The Hay Group!!!! The thought among the rank and file is that the Hay group was hired as a way to take some additional skin away from the employees not make ANYTHING better for the employees.”*

*“The Hay Group study was a fiasco. The process was flawed and if the County supports and implements their recommendations, it will be a disaster.”*

*"The new recommendations from Hay Group may work in the private sector, but they are going to send a lot of us packing if they are implemented at the public level."*

*"Right now it is my unease over the Hay Group study and its implementation. I wonder if the results were preordained. I probably won't feel comfortable about it unless and until the actions the County Council take as a result end up seeming fair and consistent, and the employees don't get burned as a result."*

#### **Safety** (15 comments)

Workplace safety is a serious concern for these employees:

*"I do not feel that my safety is taken seriously."*

*"I feel like the budget, allotted to our division, does not reflect a concern for the safety of our employees, or a concern for providing proper equipment and training for our job."*

*"I feel unsafe that the jail is not sufficiently manned and more officers are leaving than can be successfully hired and retained."*

#### **Commute** (14 comments)

Though not within the control of the organization it is still worth noting that for some employees one of the things they like least about their job is the commute:

*"The commute."*

*"Location, it is far from my home."*

#### **Working with the Public** (11 comments)

A few employees simply don't enjoy interfacing with the public in general, while for others these comments focus on working with challenging clients, prisoners or other difficult sub-populations:

*"Confrontation with mad taxpayers. Most generally things can be worked out but there are exceptions."*

*"While I enjoy serving the public, sometimes it is difficult due to misinformed people who expect you to solve all their problems."*

*"Working with prisoners."*

#### **Other** (81 comments)

A large number of comments reported on various other topics that do not fit in the categories above.

## **Other questions, comments or concerns?**

To conclude the survey, employees were given a final opportunity to voice any additional comments that were not captured in their prior responses. There were 592 responses to this question. The vast majority of responses were negative in nature and quite similar to those topics raised in the open-ended questions above. Quotations are included here only if they were needed to expand or clarify beyond what was mentioned in the prior open ended response summaries.

#### **Pay & Benefits** (140 comments)

#### **Management/Supervision** (135 comments)

#### **Generic Positive (Like my job / good place to work)** (81 comments)

#### **No Difference** (58 comments)

Many employees convey their belief that their feedback will not make any difference. Also included here are concerns about motives behind the survey and fears that responses will not be kept confidential.

*"Year after year we have similar surveys and/or expensive consultants and nothing ever changes."*

*"Will anything happen from this? Probably no. Whittling away of benefits seems [to be] the only thing that happens when these kind of surveys come out."*

*"County leadership (Mayor, HR, etc.) promote surveys and spend a lot of time and money to request County employee[s] input and make it appear or 'sound' like they are interested in what employees think or feel regarding their jobs and benefits, then the leaders...go right ahead and implement the very plans they had decided on before asking for our input."*

*"I do hope that this survey is really anonymous."*

#### **Promotion Issues** (57 comments)

#### **Office Politics** (51 comments)

#### **Feeling Unappreciated** (42 comments)

#### **Feedback / Employee Voice** (39 comments)

These comments are similar to those given in the last question and summarized in Section 8 about not feeling heard or wishing there were better avenues for employees to voice opinions and be included in decisions. There are also concerns expressed here about fearing backlash/reprisal for voicing concerns:

*"I feel like we don't have a voice even though there is an 'open door policy' within our management/ agency. I think it would be nice to have something like an online*

*compliment/complaint box that could be viewed publicly, that could help with voicing concerns or praise.”*

*“This is not a safe place to speak your mind. I would voice my opinion on good ideas, and supervisors would ignore them.”*

*“I feel other employees are worried about saying something in fear of losing their job. Employees have raised this issue in the past.”*

**Evaluation / Performance Development Plans** (37 comments)

**Discipline** (35 comments)

**Turnover** (34 comments)

**Workload** (33 comments)

**Training / Education** (31 comments)

**Discrimination/Bullying/Sexual Harassment** (27 comments)

**Coworkers** (24 comments)

**General Negative** (24 comments)

**Communication / Transparency** (22 comments)

**Limited or Misused Resources** (21 comments)

**Total Compensation Project (Hay Study) Comments** (20 comments)

**Hope Things Improve** (18 comments)

Unlike comments above that the employee believes the survey is unlikely to make a difference, these comments are more optimistic saying that they hope their feedback will make a difference:

*“I am pleasantly surprised to experience these survey questions. It makes me hopeful.”*

*“I hope that this survey makes a difference and I sure appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts, but in all honesty, I don’t think that I will see any changes. I sure hope that I am wrong!!!”*

**Schedule** (10 comments)

**Bureaucracy** (7 comments)

**“Other” Miscellaneous** (87 comments)