

State of North Carolina  
1998-1999 Annual State Employee Survey



Sponsored By  
The Office of State personnel  
November 1999

## Survey Summary

Approximately 5% of the government employees covered by North Carolina's State Personnel Act were selected by a simple random sample to participate in the 1998-1999 Annual State Employee Survey. Survey packets were mailed directly to the homes of 4318 state employees. Nearly one third (1306) of those employees took the opportunity to complete and return a survey. Only thirty-three survey packets were returned as undeliverable.

In Part 1 of the survey employees were asked to rank order seven job factors generally known to influence employee job satisfaction:

- ♣ pay
- ♣ meaningful work
- ♣ fair treatment
- ♣ good benefits
- ♣ job security
- ♣ flexible work schedule
- ♣ being rewarded for good performance

Based upon these seven options, employees selected "pay" as the "most important" job factor in determining their sense of job satisfaction.

**Pay, job security, and fair treatment are important motivators for state employees.**

"Job security" and "fair treatment" followed in the voting as "most important" ingredients involved in determining job satisfaction for state employees. A "flexible work schedule" was identified as the "least important" factor.

See Table 1: Importance of Selected Job Factors To State Employees for complete table of results.

In Part 2 of the survey employees were asked to respond to thirty-five questions concerning various aspects of their current employment experience in state

**Morale for state employees needs a boost.**

government. Responses to those questions reveal that employees are generally satisfied with their work, but they suffer from low morale. This can be partially explained by the fact that employees feel their efforts are not appreciated. Employees have the opinion that North Carolina's citizens have a very poor opinion of state workers, and they feel that senior management does not value their work.

State employees believe their performance is accurately evaluated, but they have virtually no hope that improved performance will be rewarded, especially with an increase in compensation. Once again, they express the opinion that poor performance and superior performance receive the same rewards.

Most employees enjoy a positive working relationship with their immediate supervisor; and most employees are equally satisfied with their involvement in work-related problem solving activities. Employees, especially those in lower pay grades, indicate a growing concern about their ability to purchase health care insurance for their families. Fair practices and fair treatment remain high on the list of improvement recommendations from employees in North Carolina state government.

**State employees want to see superior performance rewarded and poor performance corrected.**

In Part 3 of the survey employees were given the opportunity to express personal comments and to identify issues they felt needed attention. Approximately 82% of the 1306 survey respondents took the time to add their written comments in this section.

In their written responses, **pay**, once again, topped the list of concerns highlighted for improvement by employees in North Carolina state government. Approximately 47% of all comments received involved something about compensation. State employees believe they deserve to be paid at a rate that is comparable with employees in the private sector doing the same work. State employees want to see compensation linked more closely with job performance and suggest that a merit pay system be funded in state government. State employees want to see a more equitable distribution of money allocated for employee compensation by the General Assembly. The perception of special treatment for special interest groups continues to stir feelings of unfairness in many state employees.

**Employee benefits** was the second most important concern mentioned in the survey comment section. About 21% of the comments focused on some aspect of employee benefits. Increasing “out of pocket” health care expenses for employees and reduced health care coverage were, by far, the most important benefit concerns expressed by employees. **Fairness** and **fair treatment** ranked as the third most important concern for employees. Approximately 18% of all comments involved some aspect of fair treatment. A significant majority of these comments addressed issues related to compensation and hiring practices.

See Table 2: Suggested Employment Improvements.

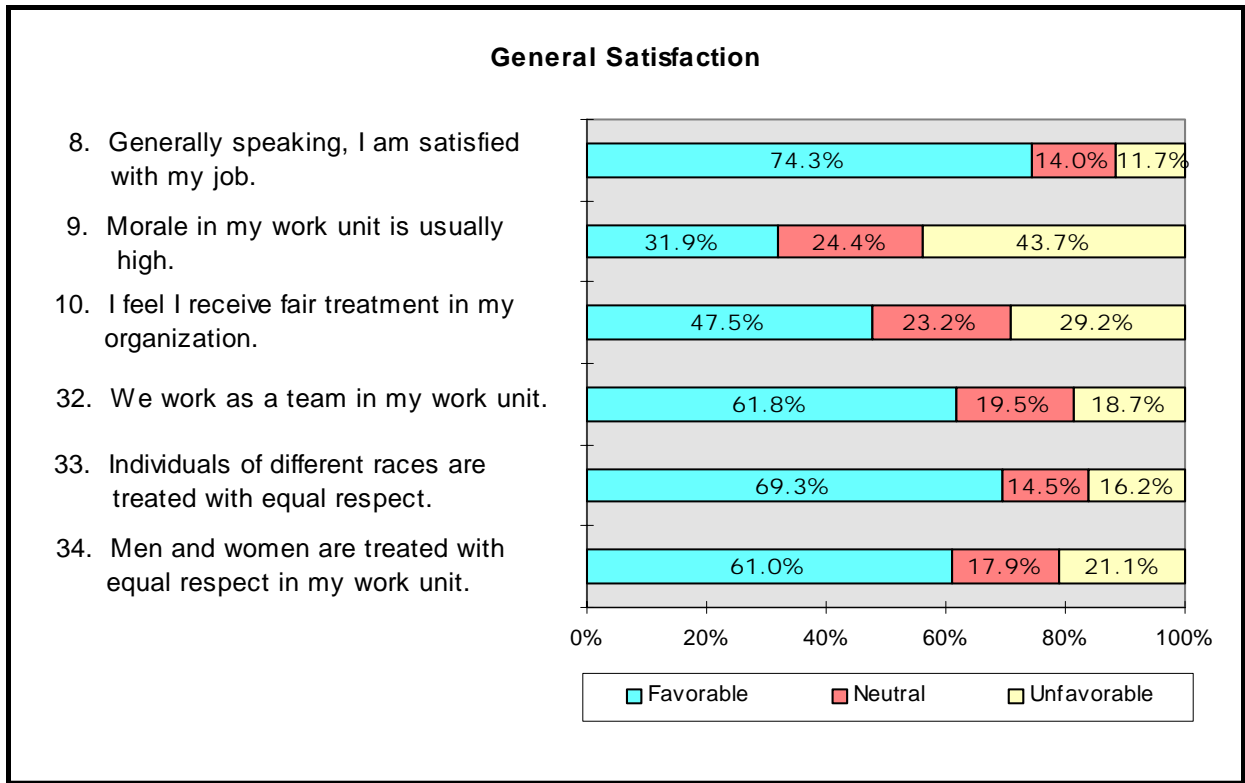
Table 1: Importance Of Selected Job Factors To State Employees  
 In Table 1 the first column lists the seven job factors that employees were asked to rank according to their importance for determining job satisfaction. The top row of Table 1 lists the levels of importance employees were given to rank each job factor.

Job Factor	Most Important	More Important	Moderately Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Slightly Important	Least Important
	Number of votes for the importance of each job factor						
pay	587	404	196	48	46	13	10
meaningful work	394	309	165	104	141	116	75
fair treatment	441	257	151	176	158	94	25
good benefits	344	337	242	174	131	60	16
reward for good job	315	241	155	145	177	169	98
job security	449	197	149	101	165	180	63
flexible schedule	170	171	144	103	112	130	474

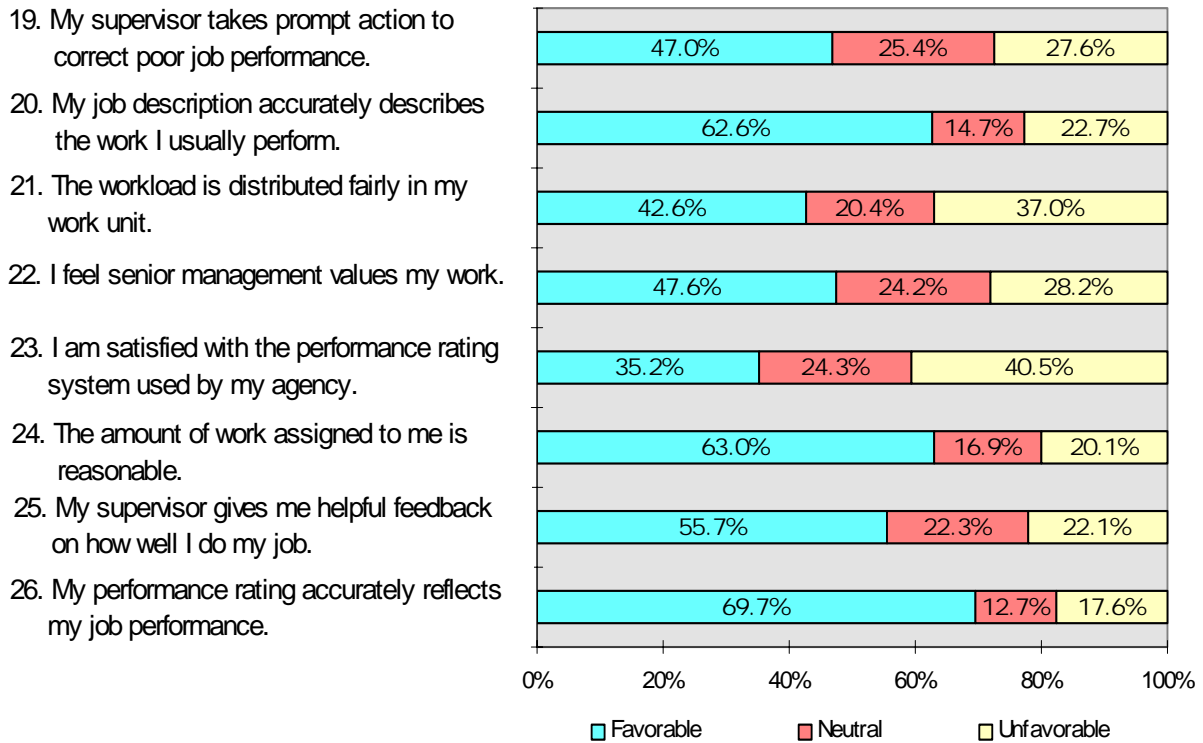
Table 2: Tabulation of Suggestions From The Survey Comment Section

Suggested Improvement	Significant Comments	Number of Comments	Percent of Comments
Compensation	Higher pay for state employees	642	46.9%
	Implement a funded merit pay system		
	Eliminate special interest pay		
Benefits	Maintain current health care benefits	287	21.0%
	Lower health care premiums		
	Free dental and eye care		
Performance Management	Improve the evaluation process	84	6.1%
	Get rid of poor performers		
Recruitment & Selection	Improve the process	76	5.6%
	Hire the most qualified		
Training	Improve employee training	58	4.2%
Career Advancement	Increase advancement opportunities	51	3.7%
Facilities	Improve work environment	47	3.4%
Politics	Reduce negative political influence	43	3.1%
Flexible Work Schedule		36	2.6%
Employee Image	Improve employee image	16	1.2%
Employee Recognition	Improve recognition process	15	1.1%
Reduce Turnover		13	0.9%
Communication	Improve communication	1	0.1%
TOTAL		1369	100%
Comments related to issues of fairness from the 1369 comments listed above.			
Fairness	Equitable distribution of funds for salary	244	17.8%
	Hire the most qualified applicants		
	Minimize political influence in hiring		

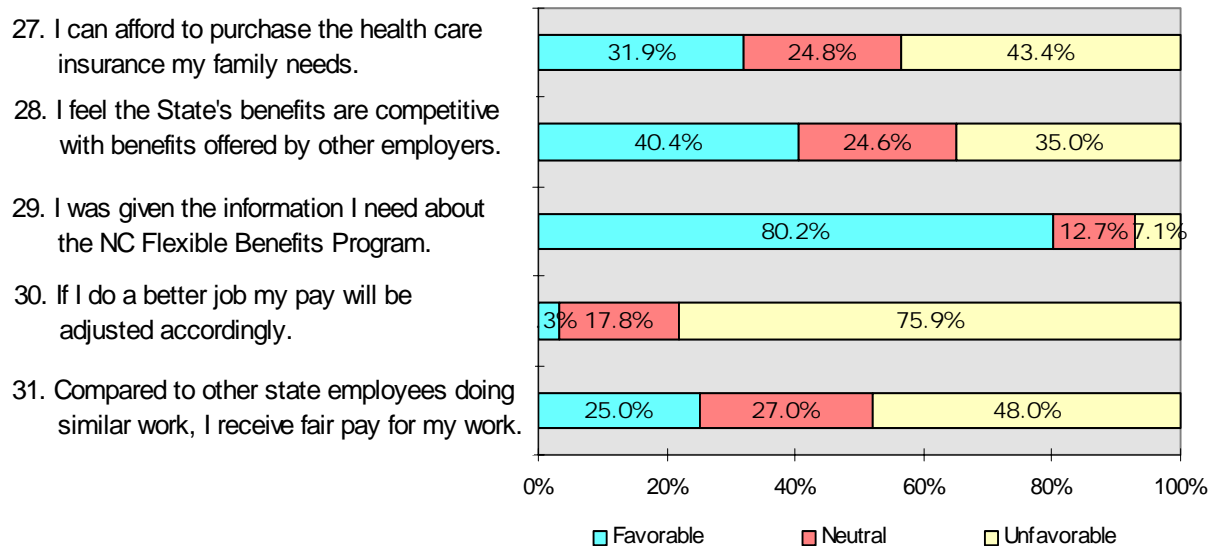
Pages 5-7 chart employee responses to the thirty-five survey questions in Part 2 of the survey. Favorable responses are charted in blue.

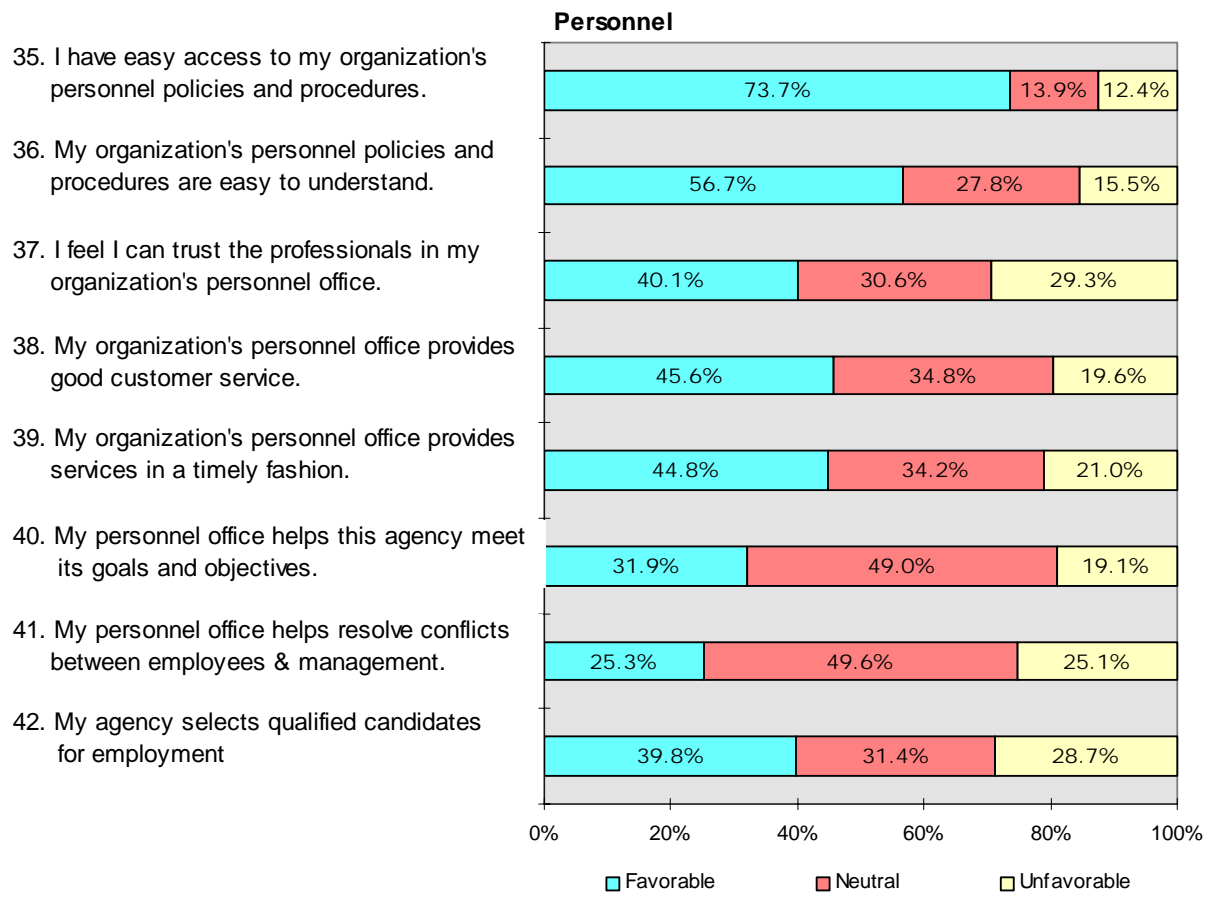


### Performance Management



### Compensation & Benefits





Part 2 of the survey was made up of thirty-five questions from five broad categories: General Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction, Performance Management, Compensation & Benefits, and Personnel. The following charts present employee agreement with each survey question (%) and indicate any significant variations in responses according to demographic categories. Favorable responses represent employee agreement with the question.

GENERAL SATISFACTION

Opinion Differences Between State Employee Populations								
Ethnicity								
Gender								
Age								
Pay Grade								
Educational Level								
Years Of State Service								
Supervisory Status								
% Employee Agreement								
8. Generally speaking, I am satisfied with my job.	<b>74%</b> 14% neutral or don't know						Favorable responses increase with age	
9. Morale in my work unit is usually high.	<b>40%</b> 24% neutral or don't know		<2 and >30 years 11% more favorable	PhD level 10% less favorable	Pay grade 80 & up 11% more favorable	Age 60-69 13% more favorable		
10. I feel that I receive fair treatment in my organization.	<b>48%</b> 23% neutral or don't know		<2 years 16% more favorable		Pay grade 75 & up much more favorable	Age 60-69 10% more favorable		White 14% more favorable than Black
32. We work as a team in my work unit.	<b>62%</b> 20% neutral or don't know							
33. Individuals of different races are treated with equal respect in my organization.	<b>69%</b> 15% neutral or don't know	Supervisors are 10% more favorable		Favorable responses increase with education	Pay grade 70 & up are 15% more favorable	Favorable responses increase with age		White 35% more favorable than Black
34. Men and women are treated with equal respect in my organization.	<b>61%</b> 18% neutral or don't know		< 2 and > 30 years 10% more favorable	Favorable responses increase with education	Pay grade 70 & up are 20% more favorable	Favorable responses increase with age	Men are 10% more favorable than women	White 26% more favorable than Black

JOB SATISFACTION

Opinion Differences Between State Employee Populations								
Ethnicity								
Gender								
Age								
Pay Grade								
Educational Level								
Years Of State Service								
Supervisory Status								
% Employee Agreement								
11. I am satisfied with the quality of supervision I receive.	<b>61%</b> 16% neutral or don't know		<2 and >30 years 11% more favorable	< High School 9% more favorable				
12. My organization makes employee safety an important priority.	<b>67%</b> 20% neutral or don't know		>30 years 12% more favorable		Pay grade 80 & up are 28% less favorable	Favorable responses increase with age		
13. I am encouraged to help find solutions for work-related problems on my job.	<b>63%</b> 19% neutral or don't know	S'visors are 15% more favorable	>30 years much more favorable	Higher education tends to be more favorable	Pay grade 70 & up are 15% more favorable	Favorable responses increase slightly with age		
14. NC citizens have a positive opinion of state government employees.	<b>18%</b> 34% neutral or don't know		Favorable responses decrease with years of service		Pay grade 80 & up are much less favorable			Black 9% more favorable than White
15. My organization provides me with the training I need to do a good job.	<b>61%</b> 20% neutral or don't know		>30 years 10% more favorable.					
16. I have an equal opportunity for promotion in my organization.	<b>35%</b> 24% neutral or don't know		<2 years 16% more favorable	< High School 16% more favorable	Pay grade 75 & up are 13% more favorable	Age 60-69 10% more favorable		
17. My organization offers me opportunity to assume more responsibility.	<b>57%</b> 22% neutral or don't know	S'visors are 19% more favorable	>30 years 10% more favorable		Pay grade 75 & up are 10% more favorable			
18. My agency does all it can to retain good employees.	<b>24%</b> 24% neutral or don't know		>30 years 10% more favorable	Favorable responses decrease with education	Pay grade 80 & up 10% more favorable	Age 60-69 18% more favorable		

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Opinion Differences Between State Employee Populations								
Ethnicity								
Gender								
Age								
Pay Grade								
Educational Level								
Years Of State Service								
Supervisory Status								
% Employee Agreement								
19. My supervisor takes prompt action to correct poor performance.	<b>47%</b> 25% neutral or don't know		<2 and >30 are 10% more positive					
20. My job description accurately describes the work I usually perform.	<b>63%</b> 15% neutral or don't know		<2 and >30 are 10% more positive		Grade 75-79 11% more favorable			
21. The workload is distributed fairly in my work unit.	<b>43%</b> 20% neutral or don't know				Pay grade 75 & up are 10% more favorable			
22. I feel senior management values my work.	<b>48%</b> 24% neutral or don't know	S'visors are 11% more favorable	<2 and >30 are 10% more positive	PhD levels are 16% less favorable	Pay grade 75 & up are 10% more favorable			
23. I am satisfied with the performance rating system used by my organization.	<b>35%</b> 24% neutral or don't know		<2 and >30 are 12% more positive	< High School 10% more favorable				
24. The amount of work assigned to me is reasonable.	<b>63%</b> 17% neutral or don't know		<2 and >30 are 13% more positive	PhD levels 17% less favorable				
25. My supervisor gives me helpful feedback on how well I do my job.	<b>56%</b> 22% neutral or don't know							
26. My performance rating accurately reflects my job performance.	<b>70%</b> 13% neutral or don't know		<2 and >30 are 18% more positive					

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Opinion Differences Between State Employee Populations								
Ethnicity								
Gender								
Age								
Pay Grade								
Educational Level								
Years Of State Service								
Supervisory Status								
% Employee Agreement								
27. I can afford to purchase the health care insurance my family needs.	<b>32%</b> 25% neutral or don't know			Favorable responses increase with education	Favorable responses increase with pay grade	Age 60-69 14% more favorable		
28. I feel the State's benefits are competitive with other employers.	<b>40%</b> 25% neutral or don't know			< High School least favorable		Age 60-69 20% more favorable		
29. I was given the information I need about the NC Flexible Benefits Program.	<b>80%</b> 13% neutral or don't know							
30. If I do a better job my pay will be adjusted accordingly.	<b>6%</b> 18% neutral or don't know							
31. Compared to state employees doing the same work I am paid fairly.	<b>25%</b> 27% neutral or don't know		>30 years 23% more favorable		Pay grade 75 & up are 20% more favorable	Age 60-69 10% more favorable		

PERSONNEL

Opinion Differences Between State Employee Populations								
Ethnicity								
Gender								
Age								
Pay Grade								
Educational Level								
Years Of State Service								
Supervisory Status								
% Employee Agreement								
35. I have easy access to my organization's personnel policies.	<b>74%</b> 14% neutral or don't know			< High School 10% less favorable	Grade 50-54 less favorable			
36. My organization's personnel policies are easy to understand.	<b>57%</b> 28% neutral or don't know							
37. I feel I can trust the professionals in my organization's personnel office.	<b>40%</b> 31% neutral or don't know				Pay grades 80 & up are 14% more favorable	Age 60-69 10% more favorable		White 11% more favorable than Black
38. My organization's personnel office provides good customer service.	<b>46%</b> 35% neutral or don't know			< High School 10% more favorable	Grades 65-74 are 14% less favorable	Age 60-69 13% more favorable		
39. My organization's personnel office provides services in a timely fashion.	<b>45%</b> 34% neutral or don't know			< High School 22% more favorable	Grades 65-74 are 14% less favorable	Age 60-69 20% more favorable		
40. The personnel office helps this organization meet its goals and objectives.	<b>32%</b> 49% neutral or don't know			< High School 30% more favorable	Grades 80 and up are most favorable	Age 60-69 12% more favorable		
41. My personnel office helps resolve conflict between employees & management.	<b>25%</b> 50% neutral or don't know			Favorable responses decrease with education				
42. My organization hires qualified candidates for employment.	<b>40%</b> 31% neutral or don't know	Supervisors are 14% more favorable		Master Degree 15% more favorable	Favorable responses increase with pay grade			

The Office of State Personnel is once again indebted to those faithful state employees who gave of their time to respond to this survey. The results are already being used in decision-making that will improve the employment experience in state government. There is, however, much more to achieve as we labor together to improve state government. Thank you once again for your cooperation.