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## Vermont Agency of Human Services Spring 2005 Staff Survey Report

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# **VERMONT AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES**

## **SPRING 2005 STAFF SURVEY REPORT**



**PREPARED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT/  
VERMONT RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP  
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**OCTOBER 2005**

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## **I. Introduction**

In May 2003, the Vermont legislature passed Act 45, which provided a framework to guide the Vermont Agency of Human Services (AHS) reorganization process. One of the clear directives of the reorganization effort is to attend to the organizational climate and human resource development needs of its staff. As outlined in the 2005 Strategic Plan for Re-organization, the AHS Planning Division and the Vermont Research Partnership have worked together to design a survey to gather employee perceptions of job satisfaction and the reorganization initiative itself. The web-based survey was administered to all AHS staff in May and June 2005 by The University of Vermont. Results were collected and reported by a third party to ensure participant anonymity; survey results have been aggregated so individual respondents cannot be identified.

The Spring 2005 AHS Staff Survey is the first-ever Agency-wide effort to assess perceptions of the work environment and employee satisfaction levels, and it took place in the early implementation phase of a complex reorganization effort. As such, the data should be used as a guide to begin a process of discussion and dialogue that can result in improving staff relations and services to consumers. The primary audience for this report is AHS managers and employees, who together can determine how to best use the information. Chapter II of the report provides a few suggestions on how to approach the report in ways that can begin the conversation and support a longer improvement process.

## **II. Using the Report: A Guide for Managers and Employees**

While a high-level summary of key findings is provided in Chapter V, this AHS Staff Survey Report contains a great deal of data which can be a rich source of information for each department/region as it seeks to improve its work environment. Every department/region has its own unique context and workforce, and its own set of special resource challenges. As such, every subgroup will look at its own data from the survey in a different way. Nevertheless, following are some general guidelines to make the best use of this resource.<sup>1</sup> You may want to engage someone from another part of the Agency who knows your area and can help facilitate the discussion.

You might begin the discussion with a more general, Agency-wide review of the purpose of the survey and the process of getting the data. Examine the general trends in the data and note how there is considerable variation in the way that people responded to the questions. Some questions received a generally positive response while others elicited concerns. Some departments and regions showed more or less concern about issues than others did. It is likely that questions asking for demographic information such as department/office affiliation and work location (region and nonregion based subgroups), and perhaps even job type, may have been unclear to

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<sup>1</sup> These guidelines have been adapted from the Federal Human Capital Survey, 2002, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 1900 E St. N.W. Washington, DC, <http://www.fhcs.opm.gov/fhcsIndex.htm>

respondents. Moreover, certain departments/regions bore a heavier survey burden (e.g., lacked direct, easy access to the internet at work) and therefore may be subject to a greater than average sample bias.

***Focus on the results you believe are of particular importance to your department/region.*** There is no formula or statistical model for determining which survey results are most important. Rely on your knowledge of your group's context and the agency's strategic plan to identify the really important findings. You might ask participants in a discussion to identify the "highs and lows" in patterns of response.

***Compare your department/region results to overall survey results.*** Identify whether your group exceeded or fell below the overall survey average for each question. Look for items where the results are either below or above the averages of other subgroups.

***Exercise caution when comparing different department/regions.*** No two departments or regions are alike, and differences in workforce and mission have an important impact on responses to many types of questions.

***When you feel that the time is right to begin the conversation on what changes might be made to improve either employee relations or consumer services, return to the data that indicate the need or concern, and begin the conversation about strategy there.*** Since this is likely to be an ongoing process of improvement, you should be alert to changes in the larger organization that are also being made on an ongoing basis. Probe for what conditions lie behind the survey results. Survey results provide valuable information about what many employees think. But they don't explain why employees respond to questions as they do, and the reasons will not always be clear to you as you analyze the results. That is why survey data should be used with other information when assessing the state of work environment in your department/region. For example, personnel data such as turnover rates or performance rating distributions may also shed light on employee perceptions. You may want to use other methods such as focus groups to better understand what is going on.

### **III. Methodology**

***Survey Instrument*** The AHS Staff Survey was intended to measure employees' perceptions of whether and to what extent conditions which characterize successful organizations are present in the Agency. The Survey was structured around four central domains of employee satisfaction: (1) Supervision and Leadership, (2) Work Environment, (3) Job Supports and Resources, and (4) The Work of AHS. It is comprised of 41 statements. Respondents were instructed to indicate whether they Strongly Agree, Agree, are Neutral, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree with each of the survey items. The survey also included three open-ended questions that ask respondents to describe what they like most about their work at AHS, what they would like to change about their work, and what suggestions they might make to improve services for consumers and/or work conditions for staff over the next six months. The

survey concluded with four demographic questions concerning Department/Office Affiliation, Work Location, Job Type and Length of AHS Employment.

Decisions regarding the selection of subgroups for analysis and reporting were made in collaboration with the AHS Planning Division. All decisions to analyze and report by any subgroup in this study took into careful consideration the balance between providing useful and accurate information while protecting participant anonymity.

The items for this survey were pilot tested in January 2005 by a group of 100 randomly selected AHS staff. These staff were asked to respond to the survey and then comment on the appropriateness of the language and overall item effectiveness. A focus group of AHS staff members in February 2005 served to further refine the survey items. The survey instrument then underwent review by the Workforce Planning and Employment Services Division of the Vermont Department of Human Resources and the Vermont State Employees Association leadership.

Nearly always an issue in questionnaire development and interpretation is the reliability of the items which solicit the opinions of participants. One way reliability is assessed is by examining the internal consistency of items intended to represent the same domain. Perfect reliability would be represented by a consistency coefficient of 1.00. High internal consistency would be represented by a coefficient of .85 to .99. Coefficients in the range of .75 to .99 are considered acceptable indices of reliability. When the data were received from the final survey, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for all items and subscales. Table 7 shows that the survey as a whole had high internal consistency, and individual domains of satisfaction all showed at least satisfactory reliability.

Table 1. Reliability Coefficients for AHS Staff Satisfaction Survey and Subscales

Scale	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Total (41 items)	.94
Leadership and Supervision (12 items)	.92
Work Environment (12 items)	.81
Job Supports and Resources (11 items)	.83
Work of AHS (6 items)	.85

**Survey Administration and Data Collection** The sampling frame for the web-based survey included all 3,245 staff employed at the Vermont Agency of Human Services during the three weeks of survey implementation. Employees were notified of the survey through an email invitation from Secretary Michael Smith. The UVM Survey Research Team sent a follow-up email which contained an active link to the survey's URL. Project staff at UVM administered the survey between May 23 and June 17, 2005. Many employees commented that they were able to finish the survey within 15 minutes.

Of the 3,245 employees, 1,600 employees responded to the survey, resulting in an overall response rate of 49.3%. Collaboratively, AHS and UVM sought to identify and overcome barriers staff might face in completing a web-based survey. Accommodations

were made for employees who had limited or no Internet access at work, or preferred a paper version. The actual numbers of completed and usable records were: 1,562 from the electronic medium and 38 from the paper version. Of the six major departments/offices covered by the survey, four had response rates of over 60 percent.

**Data Analysis of Quantitative Survey Items** The AHS staff survey was created using Perseus Survey Software. It was formatted to save each anonymously submitted survey as a separate line of a text file on a secure server at the University of Vermont. The text files were then imported into the statistical software program SPSS for descriptive analysis and frequency computations. Paper surveys returned to UVM in self-addressed stamped envelopes, were entered by hand by research staff at the University of Vermont.

The original survey instructed respondents to select among one of five categories of response per item (Agree, Strongly Agree, Neutral, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree). In the interest of focusing on broad trends for this Summary Report **results are presented only for the combined “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” responses**. For a more complete breakdown of item responses, readers can consult the reference tables included in the appendixes. These reference tables provide survey results in three categories of responses: “Agree” (the combined “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” survey responses), “Neutral”, and “Disagree” (the combined “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree” survey responses). The appendixes also contain findings from four additional, smaller-sized subgroup analyses. We emphasize that particular caution should be exercised in reviewing the findings from these smaller subgroups. The likelihood of sampling error in any survey increases significantly as the numbers of respondents decrease.

#### **IV. Respondent Groups and Response Rates**

This report presents the survey responses according to six categories of staff characteristics: 1) All AHS Staff, 2) Department Affiliation, 3) Work Location, 4) Regional Affiliation, 5) Job Type, and 6) Length of Employment. Response rates for the six groups are listed in Tables 2 through 7.

Nearly half (49.3%) of all AHS staff members participated in the 2005 Staff Survey. While this is a fairly robust response rate at the Agency level, rates for various subgroups fall well below that percentage, while others exceed it. In some cases, response rates exceed 100%. These variations could be attributed to respondents' uncertainty about changing affiliations during this early phase of reorganization, to their having multiple affiliations, to duplicate survey submissions, and/or to confusion about survey items themselves, particularly in the case of the item on work location. Therefore, readers should note the response rate for every analysis of interest, and exercise special caution when interpreting results where subgroup response rates are lower than the overall Agency's, or exceed 100%.

Table 2. Response Rates: All AHS Staff

All AHS Staff			
Respondent Group	Completed Surveys (#)	AHS Staff (#)	Response Rate (%)
All AHS Staff	1600	3245	49.3%

Table 3. Response Rates: Departmental Affiliation

Department			
Respondent Group	Completed Surveys (#)	AHS Staff (#)	Response Rate (%)
Department of Health (Health)	512	731	70.0%
Department of Children and Families (DCF)	548	903	60.7%
Department of Corrections (DOC)	334	1136	29.4%
Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living (DAIL)	212	262	80.9%
Office of Vermont Health Access (OVHA)	57	40	142.5% <sup>2</sup>
AHS Central Office	88	173	50.9%
Did not identify a department or office	(99)	...	n/a
Total Staff by Department	1501	3245	46.3%

Table 4. Response Rates: Work Locations

Work Locations			
Respondent Group	Completed Surveys (#)	AHS Staff (#)	Response Rate (%)
Region-Based (combined)	929	1223	76%
Central Offices (Waterbury, Burlington, Williston)	518	1042	49.7%
Facilities	146	957	15.2%
Other	105	23	456.5% <sup>2</sup>
Did not identify a Work Location	(97)	...	n/a
Total Staff by Work Location	1698	3245	52.3%

<sup>2</sup> In order to assure anonymity of respondents, staff-identifying information did not accompany their on-line survey submissions. Staff affiliation information was gathered through self-selection of response categories on page 3 of the survey. As such, the response rate percentages may not be accurate due to multiple submissions by staff or incorrect selection of choices on page 3.



Table 5. Response Rates: Regional Affiliation

Region			
Respondent Group	Completed Surveys (#)	AHS Staff (#)	Response Rate (%)
Brattleboro <sup>3</sup>	34	80	42.5%
Barre	72	130	55.4%
Bennington	46	96	47.9%
Burlington	293	255	114.9% <sup>2</sup>
Hartford	28	88	31.8%
Middlebury	35	46	76.1%
Morrisville	33	54	61.1%
Newport	57	62	91.9%
Rutland	95	163	58.3%
Springfield	80	72	111.1% <sup>2</sup>
St. Albans	83	94	88.3%
St. Johnsbury	66	83	79.5%
Not Affiliated with a Region, Other	(671, 7)	...	n/a
Total Region-Based Staff	929	1223	76%

Table 6. Response Rates: Job Type

Job Type			
Respondent Group	Completed Surveys (#)	AHS Staff (#)	Response Rate (%)
Manager/Supervisor	326	556	58.6%
Support Staff	351	537	65.4%
Other Non-Direct Service (Policy, Planning, etc.)	188	551	34.1%
Direct Services	636	1601	39.7%
Did not identify Job Type	(99)	...	n/a

Table 7. Response Rates: Length of Employment

Length of Employment			
Respondent Group	Completed Surveys (#)	AHS Staff (#)	Response Rate (%)
Less than 1 year (< 1 year)	110	341	32.3 %
Between 1 and 2 years (1 to < 2 yrs)	119	266	44.7%
Between 2 and 5 years (2 to < 5 yrs)	233	526	44.3%
Between 5 and 10 years (5 to < 10 yrs)	332	634	52.4%
Between 10 and 20 years (10 to 20 yrs)	405	798	50.8%
More than 20 years (> 20 years)	332	680	48.8%
Did not identify Length of Employment	(69)	...	n/a

<sup>3</sup> For the first 24 hours of the web-based survey administration, "Brattleboro" was inadvertently missing from the list of region choices. After this omission was corrected, an email notice went out to all Brattleboro staff which described a process for resubmitting a survey with a note in the comment section indicating that this was a second, Brattleboro submission to be re-assigned to that region. Despite this effort, it is likely that the response rate for Brattleboro is underestimated.

## **V. Quantitative Survey Items: Summary of Key Findings**

As previously noted, the survey items were clustered into four overarching categories: 1) Supervision and Leadership; 2) Work Environment; 3) Job Supports and Resources; and 4) the Work of AHS. The following highlights some of the key findings in each of these four areas. Chapter VI provides more detail regarding the responses to the 41 quantitative survey items that can be used by individual departments and regions to further explore the perceptions of their staff.

### ***Supervision and Leadership***

Agency-wide, about two thirds (68.9%) of staff agree that they feel respected by their direct supervisor, and that they, themselves, respect and have confidence in this person (66.9%). Compared to these relatively favorable perceptions of the direct supervisory relationship, staff regard for Departmental Leadership is considerably lower. Just two in five employees (39.1%) agree that they respect and have confidence in departmental leadership; believe that it strives to create and maintain a positive work environment (37.2%); and perceive that it demonstrates support for its employees (39.0%).

Employees in central offices were most likely to believe that Departmental leadership creates a positive environment (42.9%) and supports employees (42.9%), and to respect Departmental leadership (43.6%). In contrast, staff in facilities were least likely to express agreement with these items (20.7%, 19.9% and 24.0%, respectively). By region, employees in the Brattleboro District were most positive about leadership (67.6%, 64.7% and 67.6%, respectively), whereas staff in the St. Johnsbury were least positive (26.6%, 25.8% and 26.6%, respectively).

Mirroring the Agency-level response, all department findings indicate greater respect for direct supervisors than for department leadership. This is most notable in Corrections where 59.9% of staff agree with the statement, "I have respect for, and confidence in, my direct supervisor" whereas just 22.0% agree with the item, "I have respect for, and confidence in, departmental leadership." The least discrepancy exists in DAHL, where 76.2% of staff respect their direct supervisor and 69.4% respect the department leadership.

By work location, employees in central offices were notably more likely to respect (70.5%), and feel respected by (73.4%), their direct supervisor, than were employees in facilities, region-based locations, or "other." By region, again staff in the Brattleboro District were most positive on these items (82.4% and 73.5%, respectively), and staff in St. Johnsbury least positive (56.1% and 60.3%, respectively).

By tenure, those employed at AHS fewer than two years are more likely to respect their direct supervisor and Department leadership than those with longer service. The perception that leadership provides a positive, supportive environment also appears to decline with increasing tenure.

Agency-wide, about half of employees agree that they receive an annual performance evaluation (53.5%) and that their direct supervisor gives them useful and timely feedback on their job performance (53.6%). A slightly higher percentage of employees agree that their direct supervisor recognizes them for doing good work (59.6%). By tenure, new hires (less than one year at AHS) are most likely (66%) to receive job performance feedback, whereas only a minority (48-49%) of employees with 10+ years' tenure receive such feedback. Just one in five staff members (20%) – the second lowest level in the entire survey – agrees with the statement, “The merit award system is fair.”

By department, DAIL and Health staff are the most likely to agree that they receive an annual review (68.1% and 62.4%, respectively), and Central Office and Corrections are the least likely to agree that they receive this (37.2% and 42.1%, respectively). Regarding useful feedback, DAIL and DCF staff are more likely to agree that their direct supervisor offers this (70.5% and 54.3%, respectively); Central Office and Corrections staff are less likely to agree that get useful feedback on their job performance (46.6 and 46.7%, respectively). Regionally, Barre District staff were least likely to agree they get useful feedback (44.4%); Brattleboro District staff were most likely to agree (73.5%).

### ***Work Environment***

Across all AHS staff, three in five employees report that their work unit fosters a spirit of mutual respect, teamwork and cooperation (58.7%), where they feel their opinions are listened to and respected (58.8%). Approximately three quarters (73.0%) of AHS staff believe their work unit respects the cultural diversity among staff. Just over half of staff members (52.0%) consider their physical environment to be satisfactory. Two in five staff members (39.2%) agree with the statement, “Employee morale in my work unit is good.”

By work location, staff based in facilities were least likely to agree that team work and cooperation were present in their work environment (38.6%), and were least likely to agree that their opinions are listened to and respected (38.4%). By job type, managers/supervisors were notably more likely than others to perceive a positive atmosphere (respect, cooperation, openness, and high morale) in the workplace. Similarly, new employees (with less than one year of AHS tenure) were more likely than staff with longer tenures to agree with these items.

Regarding respectful environments at the department level, DAIL staff are more likely than other departments to agree that a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation exists in their work unit (71.6%) and that their opinions are listened to and respected (73.0%). Staff in Corrections and OVHA are least likely to agree that mutual respect exists in their work unit (43.6% and 41.1%, respectively) and that their opinions are listened to and respected (43.7% and 55.4%, respectively). Agreement with the statement, “Employee morale is good in my work unit” ranges from a high of 57.6% by DAIL staff, to a low of 26.8% in Corrections. Regarding cultural diversity among staff, DAIL staff are most likely to agree that it is respected (79.3%), and OVHA staff are least likely to agree (60.7%). Satisfaction with the physical work space ranges from lows of 44.0% in

Corrections and 45.5% in Central Office, to highs of 56.8% in Health and 53.6% in DAIL.

By work location, morale is similar across locations, with the exception of facilities, where only one in five staff agreed with the statement, “Employee morale is good in my work unit.” Regionally, morale appears highest in the Brattleboro District (70.6%) and lowest in the Newport (28.1%) and St. Johnsbury (28.8%) Districts.

Agency-wide, just over half of AHS staff (55.6%) report that their work unit uses information from consumers to improve AHS services. Nearly two thirds of employees (62.9%) agree that their work environment supports excellent customer service. Notably, a greater percentage of staff report that their work unit respects cultural diversity among consumers (78.7%) and carefully considers the accommodation needs of consumers with disabilities (73.6%).

Facilities-based staff are least likely (32%) to agree that they provide excellent customer service; two thirds of the staff in regions, central offices and other locations believe they provide excellent customer service. Regarding regional comparisons, employees in the Middlebury (80.0%) and Brattleboro Districts (79.4%) are most likely to agree; St. Johnsbury staff (51.5%) are least likely to agree.

Across departments, DAIL and Health employees (76.2% and 61.6% respectively) are twice as likely as Central Office and Corrections employees (38.6% and 31.8% respectively) to agree that their work unit uses information from consumers to improve services. DAIL staff are most likely (81.8%) and Corrections staff are the least likely (38.6%) to say their work environment supports excellent customer service.

### ***Job Supports and Resources***

Fewer than half of AHS employees (45.3%) agree with the statement, “My workload and responsibilities are reasonable.” By department, Health and DAIL staff are more likely to agree (52.7% and 50.5%, respectively) and OVHA, DCF, and Corrections are less likely to agree (33.3%, 38.8% and 39.0%, respectively) that their workloads are reasonable. Within regions, staff in the Brattleboro District (62%) are nearly twice as likely to agree they have a reasonable workload as those in the Newport District (32%).

By job type, managers/supervisors (40.6%) and direct services staff (40.9%) were least likely to agree that their workloads are reasonable. On the other hand, managers/supervisors were most likely to agree their work is interesting (90.5%), makes good use of their skills (74.2%), and offers opportunities for professional growth (74.2%). By tenure, newer staff are more likely to agree they have a reasonable workload.

Just over half of all AHS staff respondents (54.2%) agree that they have the equipment and resources they need to perform their job. Somewhat fewer report they have the technology support (51.3%) and training (50.8%) that they need.

Across Departments, DAIL staff consistently report the most agreement regarding the availability of equipment and resources (67.6%), technology support (72.5%) and training (66.7%) needed to carry out their work. This is contrasted by Corrections staff, who share the least agreement that they have the equipment and resources (40.2%), technology support (34.6%) and training (38.6%) they need to do their job. Employees in central offices are notably more likely (61%) than others to agree they have adequate equipment and resources.

Three in five AHS employees agree that their jobs give them the opportunity to grow professionally (60.5%) and make good use of their skills and abilities (65.6%). Notably, just half of that percentage (31.8%) see opportunities for promotion and advancement in their current positions.

Health Department staff's responses show the greatest discrepancy between perceived opportunities for professional growth (60.8%) and opportunities for promotion and advancement (25.3%), whereas Corrections staff's responses to these two items were the least discrepant (51.5% and 34.7%, respectively). DAIL staff are the most likely to agree that their job makes good use of their skills and abilities (76.3%), while Corrections staff are least likely to agree this is the case (57.7%).

Within regions, opportunities for job growth are perceived most positively by staff in the Brattleboro District (73.5%) and Middlebury District (71.4%). New staff are also more likely than others to perceive opportunities for professional growth.

By work location, staff that are based in facilities are notably less satisfied than others with salary, benefits, opportunities for professional growth, and work/home balance.

### ***Work of AHS***

Notably, the highest level of agreement among all staff – across the entire survey – relates to the value placed on the importance of their work; 84% of all staff agree with the statement, “My work makes a difference in people’s lives.” Across all departments, this item ranks first or second in agreement. By job type, support staff are least likely to agree their work makes a difference, but still more than 70% believe it does.

The staff survey sheds light on current perceptions of the overall reorganization effort. Agency-wide, just over half of AHS staff members (53.5%) agree that they understand the goals of reorganization, whereas just a third (33.7%) agree that they feel positive about the possibilities for change with reorganization at this time. Notably, the survey’s two highest “neutral” ratings<sup>4</sup> were ascribed to the statements, “I believe the goals of reorganization are achievable in 3-5 years” and “Thinking about the implementation of reorganization so far, I think re-organization has helped to improve consumer services” (46.5% and 46.9%, respectively, see Table A1 in the Appendix).

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<sup>4</sup> Reference tables which include three categories of response, “Agree,” “Neutral” and “Disagree” are included as part of the Appendix to this report. For these particular items, see Table A1 in Appendix.

Employees in region-based locations are somewhat more likely than others to be positive about the reorganization. In contrast, facilities-based staff are least likely to understand and believe in the goals of reorganization. By region, support for reorganization seems highest in the Brattleboro and Bennington Districts, and least positive in the Springfield District. Staff in the Burlington District are notably less optimistic about the benefits the reorganization effort may bring.

By job type, managers/supervisors are most likely to believe in the goals of reorganization, while direct and support services staff are least likely. Understanding of the reorganization's goals increases with job tenure: from only 39% of employees with less than one year of AHS tenure, to 60% of staff employed more than 20 years.

There also is notable variation across departments. Staff who work in DAIL are more likely to agree that they understand the goals of reorganization (69.4%) than are staff members in OVHA (40.4%) and Corrections (43.0%). Fewer than one in four staff, overall, can agree that, so far, reorganization has improved services for consumers. These data may indicate that many staff are reserving judgment at this early stage of the process.

Of course, there are many more interesting comparisons within the detailed data provided in Chapter VI; the reader is encouraged to review these data charts and tables to identify areas of particular interest within his or her own organizational unit. In addition, the numerical data do not themselves tell a complete story. The reader is encouraged to consult the Qualitative Item Analyses (Chapters VII and VIII of this report) for additional information from the written responses of AHS staff members themselves.

## **VI. Quantitative Survey Items: Detailed Findings**

This Chapter presents the combined Agree/Strongly Agree data for each of the survey items, clustered into the four central domains of employee satisfaction: 1) Supervision and Leadership, 2) Work Environment, 3) Job Supports and Resources, and 4) The Work of AHS. Data within each of these four domains are provided for AHS as a Whole, Departmental Affiliation, Work Location, Regional Affiliation, Job Type and Length of Employment. For each of these six areas, findings for each domain are first presented in a bar chart that visually displays the pattern of percent of Agreement Responses for each item. The chart is followed immediately by a table which contains the percent of Agreement Responses for each item in that domain. Where page space permits, the *number* of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with each item is also reported. For easy reference, the numbers on the horizontal axis of each bar graph correspond to the numbered survey items in the table on the same page.

In order to protect the confidentiality of respondents, some data were suppressed. This occurred whenever there were fewer than eight respondents in a given subgroup. In

those cases, findings from that subgroup – plus the next smallest subgroup in the set – have been withheld. The suppression of the second subgroup’s data is necessary so that simple subtraction could not yield values for the missing data. Data suppression is indicated by hatch marks in the data tables.

## ALL AHS STAFF

Figure 1 depicts the percent agreement among All AHS Staff for each of the 12 survey items in the Supervision and Leadership domain. The numbers 1 to 12 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 8.

Figure 1. All AHS Staff Percent Agreement: Supervision and Leadership

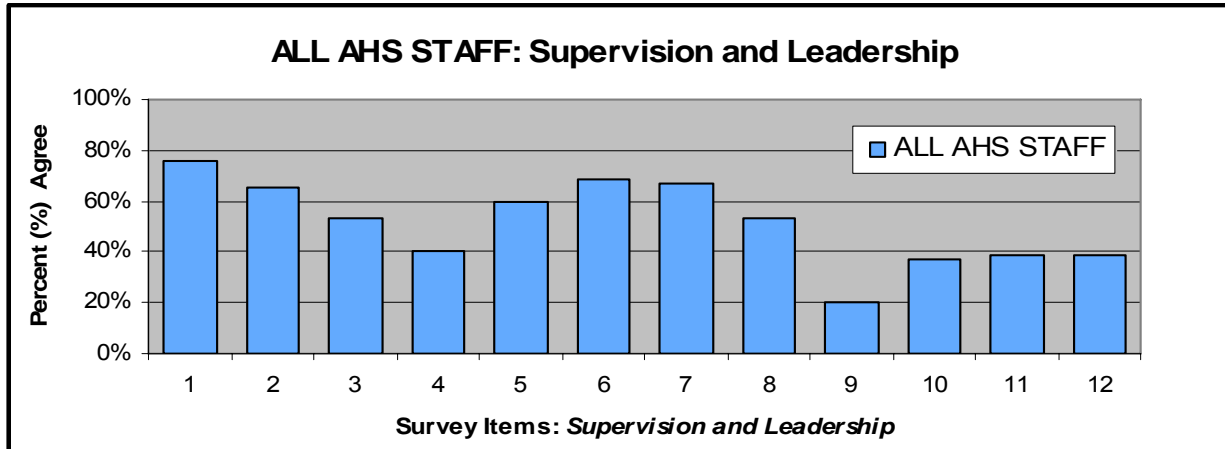


Table 8. All AHS Staff Agreement Responses: Supervision and Leadership

Survey Items: <i>Supervision and Leadership</i>	ALL AHS STAFF	
	# Agree	% Agree
1. My job duties are clear to me.	1214	76.1%
2. The job performance standards are clear to me.	1047	65.6%
3. My direct supervisor gives me useful and timely feedback on my job performance.	852	53.6%
4. Changes in work expectations are timely and clear.	638	40.0%
5. My direct supervisor gives me recognition or praise for good work.	951	59.6%
6. I feel respected by my direct supervisor.	1097	68.9%
7. I have respect for, and confidence in, my direct supervisor.	1065	66.9%
8. I receive an annual performance evaluation each year.	844	53.5%
9. The merit award system is fair.	315	20.0%
10. Department leadership strives to create and maintain a positive work environment.	594	37.2%
11. The leadership of my department demonstrates support for its employees.	623	39.0%
12. I have respect for, and confidence in, departmental leadership.	623	39.1%



Figure 2 depicts the percent agreement among All AHS Staff for each of the 12 survey items in the Work Environment domain. The numbers 13 to 24 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 9.

Figure 2. All AHS Staff Percent Agreement: Work Environment

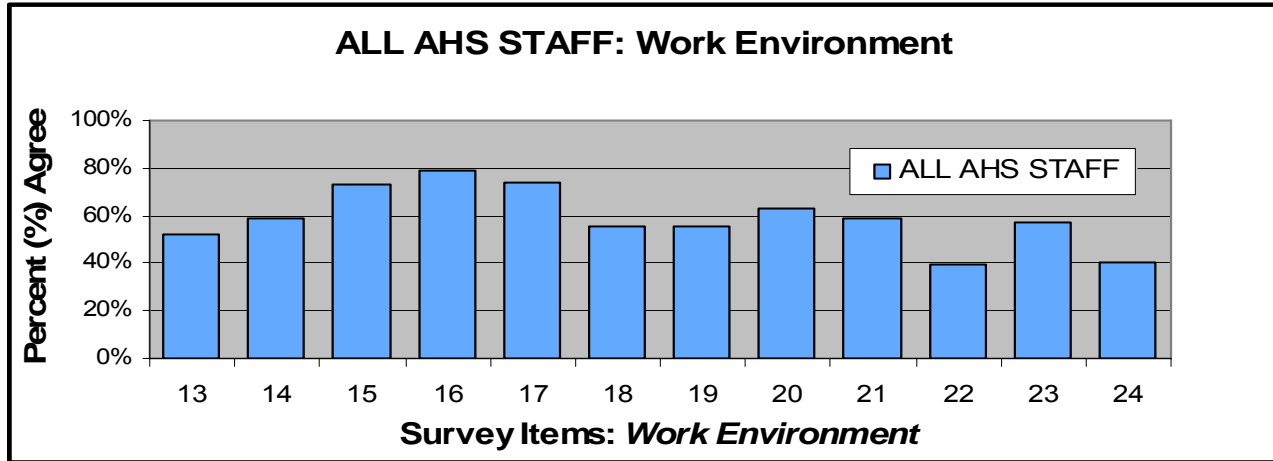


Table 9. All AHS Staff Agreement Responses: Work Environment

Survey Items: <i>Work Environment</i>	ALL AHS STAFF	
	# Agree	% Agree
13. The physical environment of my primary worksite is satisfactory.	827	52.0%
14. A spirit of mutual respect, team work and cooperation exists in my work unit.	935	58.7%
15. My work unit respects cultural diversity among our staff.	1160	73.0%
16. My work unit respects cultural diversity among our consumers.	1248	78.7%
17. My work unit carefully takes into consideration the needs for accommodation for consumers with disabilities.	1172	73.6%
18. My work unit uses information from consumers to improve AHS services.	881	55.6%
19. My work unit has an open atmosphere that encourages new ideas.	887	55.6%
20. My work environment supports excellent customer service.	1000	62.9%
21. At work, my opinions are listened to and respected.	938	58.8%
22. Employee morale in my work unit is good.	623	39.2%
23. Independent decision-making is encouraged in my work unit.	904	56.8%
24. I often think about leaving my job.	641	40.4%

Figure 3 depicts the percent agreement among All AHS Staff for each of the 11 survey items in the Job Supports and Resources domain. The numbers 25 to 35 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 10.

Figure 3. All AHS Staff Percent Agreement: Job Supports and Resources

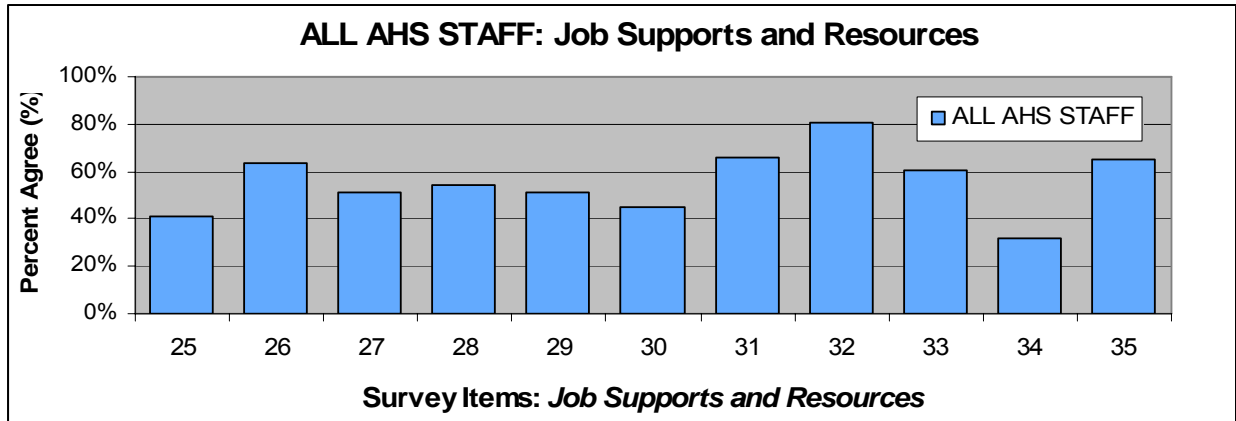


Table 10. All AHS Staff Agreement Responses: Job Supports and Resources

Survey Items: <i>Job Supports and Resources</i>	ALL AHS STAFF	
	# Agree	% Agree
25. My salary is fair considering my duties and responsibilities.	657	<b>41.2%</b>
26. Overall, I am satisfied with the benefits I receive.	1007	<b>63.3%</b>
27. I receive adequate training to perform my job.	810	<b>50.8%</b>
28. I have the equipment and resources I need to perform my job.	863	<b>54.2%</b>
29. I have the technology support I need to perform my job.	818	<b>51.3%</b>
30. My workload and responsibilities are reasonable.	722	<b>45.3%</b>
31. My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.	1048	<b>65.6%</b>
32. My work is interesting.	1293	<b>81.0%</b>
33. My job provides me with the opportunity to learn and grow professionally.	964	<b>60.5%</b>
34. There are opportunities for promotion and advancement.	507	<b>31.8%</b>
35. There is sufficient flexibility in my job to balance work and personal life.	1033	<b>64.8%</b>

Figure 4 depicts the percent agreement among All AHS Staff for each of the six survey items in the Work of AHS domain. The numbers 36 to 41 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 11.

Figure 4. All AHS Staff Percent Agreement: The Work of AHS

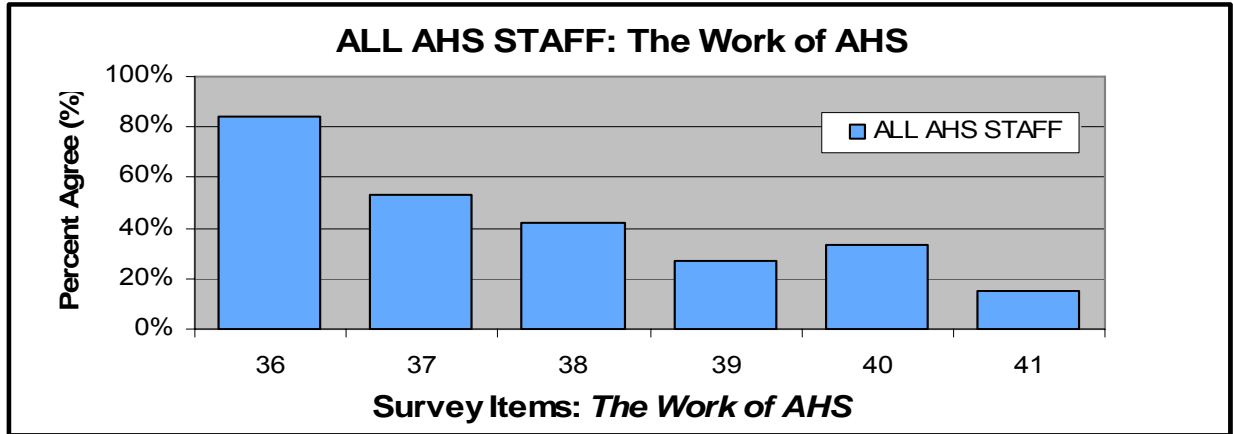


Table 11. All AHS Staff Agreement Responses: The Work of AHS

Survey Items: <i>The Work of AHS</i>	All AHS STAFF	
	# Agree	% Agree
36. My work makes a difference in people's lives.	1340	84.0%
37. I understand the goals of AHS re-organization.	851	53.5%
38. I believe in the goals of AHS re-organization.	665	41.7%
39. I believe the goals of AHS re-organization are achievable within 3 to 5 years.	434	27.3%
40. I feel positive about the possibilities for change with the AHS re-organization.	535	33.7%
41. Thinking about the implementation of re-organization so far, I think re-organization has helped to improve consumer services.	238	15.0%

## DEPARTMENTAL COMPARISONS

Figure 5 depicts the percent agreement by Department for each of the 12 survey items in the Supervision and Leadership domain. The numbers 1 to 12 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 12.

Figure 5. SUPERVISION and LEADERSHIP Percent Agreement by DEPARTMENT

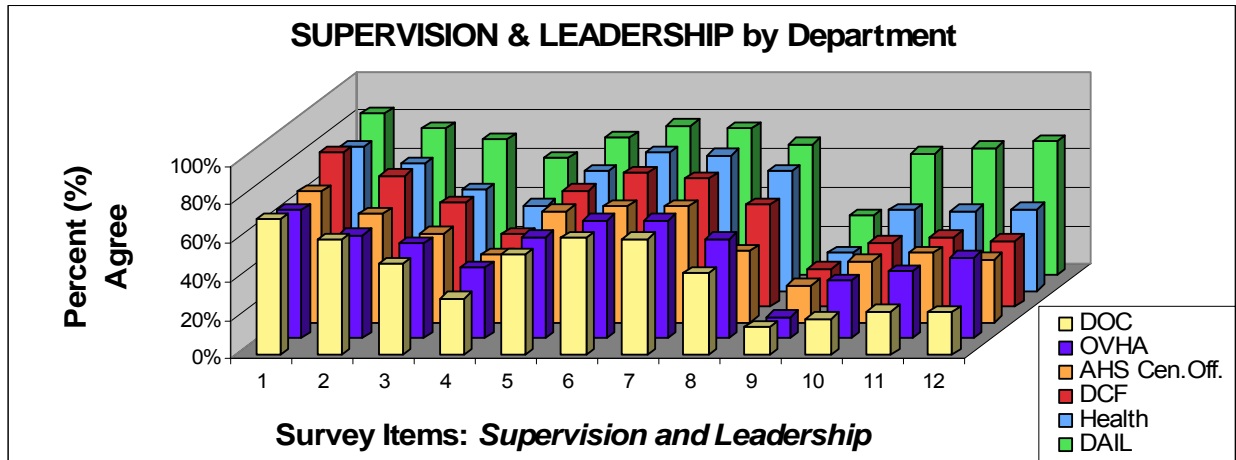


Table 12. SUPERVISION AND LEADERSHIP Agreement Responses by DEPARTMENT

Survey Items: <i>Supervision and Leadership</i>	Health	DCF	DOC	DAIL	OVHA	AHS Central Office
	Percent Agreement (%)					
1. Job duties are clear	74.8%	80.2%	70.0%	84.0%	66.7%	68.2%
2. Performance standards clear	66.1%	67.9%	59.6%	75.9%	53.6%	56.8%
3. Receive feedback on job performance	52.6%	54.3%	46.8%	70.5%	49.1%	46.6%
4. Changes in work expectations are clear and timely	44.6%	37.7%	29.2%	60.7%	36.8%	35.2%
5. Recognition for good work	62.3%	60.5%	51.5%	71.1%	52.6%	58.0%
6. Respected by direct supervisor	71.9%	69.4%	60.5%	77.7%	61.4%	60.2%
7. Respect direct supervisor	70.3%	66.6%	59.9%	76.2%	61.4%	60.2%
8. Receive annual evaluation	62.4%	52.9%	42.1%	68.1%	51.8%	37.2%
9. Merit award system is fair	20.0%	19.7%	14.0%	31.0%	11.1%	19.3%
10. Department leadership strives to create positive environment	42.1%	33.4%	18.7%	63.0%	29.8%	31.8%
11. Department leadership supports employees	41.5%	36.2%	22.4%	65.9%	35.1%	36.4%
12. Respect departmental leadership	42.5%	34.3%	22.0%	69.4%	42.1%	33.0%

Figure 6 depicts the percent agreement by Department for each of the 12 survey items in the Work Environment domain. The numbers 13 to 24 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 13.

Figure 6. WORK ENVIRONMENT Percent Agreement by DEPARTMENT

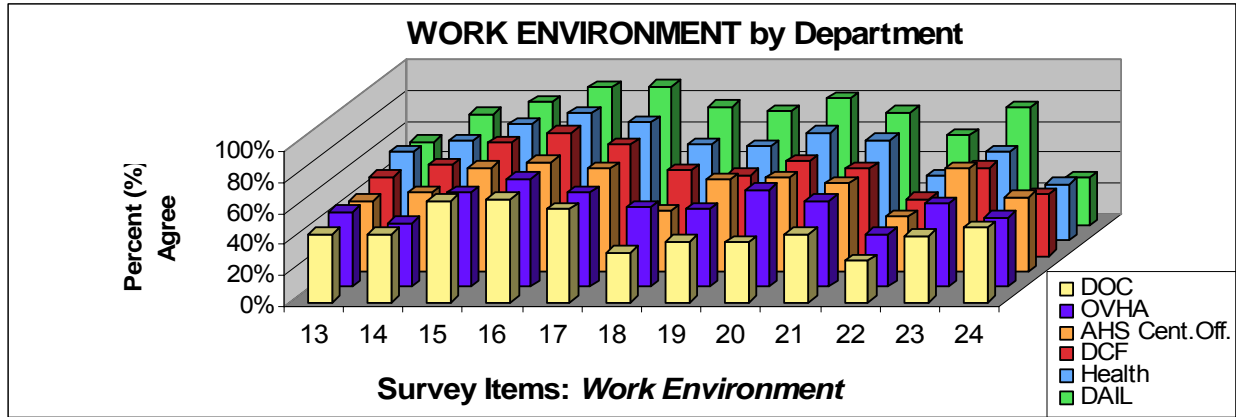


Table 13. WORK ENVIRONMENT Percent Agreement by DEPARTMENT

Survey Items: <i>Work Environment</i>	Health	DCF	DOC	DAIL	OVHA	AHS Central Office
	Percent Agreement (%)					
13. Physical environment is satisfactory	56.8%	51.1%	44.0%	53.6%	48.2%	45.5%
14. Spirit of respect, team work, and cooperation	63.9%	58.8%	43.7%	71.6%	41.1%	51.1%
15. Respect cultural diversity among staff	75.0%	73.2%	65.4%	79.3%	60.7%	67.0%
16. Respect cultural diversity among consumers	82.5%	79.5%	66.5%	88.9%	69.6%	70.5%
17. Accommodate consumers with disabilities	76.1%	72.1%	59.9%	89.5%	60.7%	65.9%
18. Use consumer info. to improve services	61.6%	55.2%	31.8%	76.2%	50.9%	38.6%
19. Atmosphere encourages new ideas	60.5%	52.2%	39.0%	73.5%	50.0%	59.1%
20. Excellent customer service	69.6%	61.3%	38.6%	81.8%	62.5%	60.2%
21. Opinions are listened to and respected	64.8%	56.2%	43.8%	73.0%	55.4%	56.8%
22. Morale is good at work	41.7%	36.6%	26.8%	57.6%	33.9%	35.2%
23. Independent decision-making is encouraged	56.8%	57.0%	42.6%	76.1%	53.6%	65.9%

24. Often think about leaving job	36.4%	39.5%	48.3%	30.3%	44.6%	47.7%
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Figure 7 depicts the percent agreement by Department for each of the 11 survey items in the Job Supports and Resources domain. The numbers 25 to 35 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 14.

Figure 7. JOB SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES Percent Agreement by DEPARTMENT

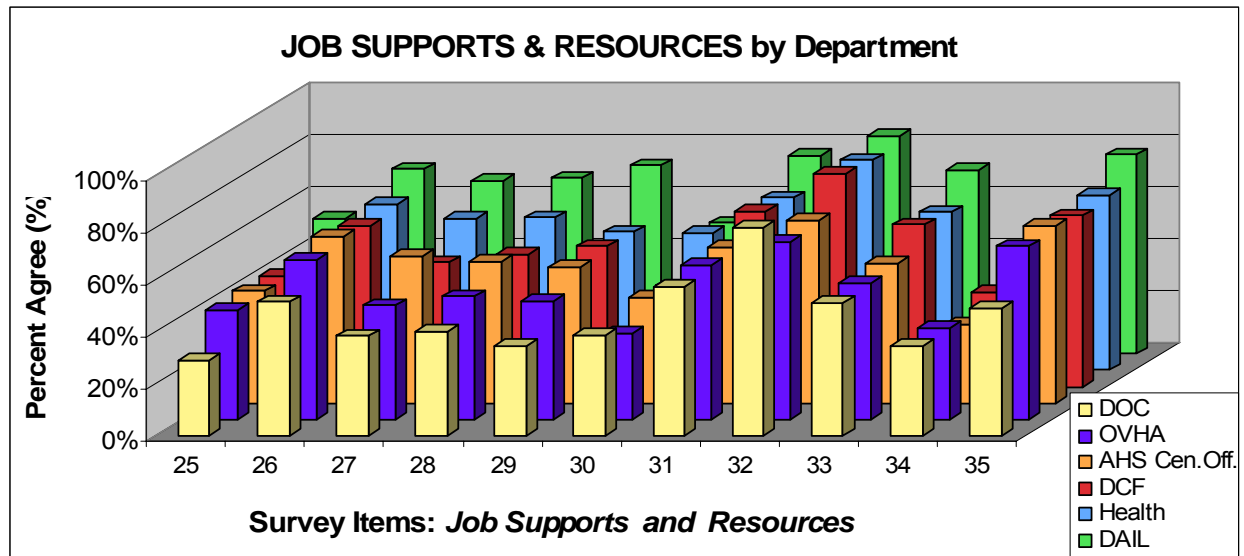


Table 14. JOB SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES Percent Agreement by DEPARTMENT

Survey Items: <i>Job Supports and Resources</i>	Health	DCF	DOC	DAIL	OVHA	AHS Central Office
	Percent Agreement (%)					
25. Salary is fair	39.6%	42.9%	29.2%	52.2%	42.1%	43.2%
26. Satisfied with benefits	64.2%	61.9%	51.8%	71.2%	61.4%	64.4%
27. Training to perform job	58.5%	47.8%	38.6%	66.7%	43.9%	56.8%
28. Have the Equipment and resources I need	58.7%	51.1%	40.2%	67.6%	47.4%	54.5%
29. Tech support I need	53.3%	54.0%	34.6%	72.4%	45.6%	52.3%
30. Reasonable workload	52.7%	38.8%	39.0%	50.5%	33.3%	40.9%
31. Good use of skills and abilities	66.5%	67.4%	57.7%	76.3%	59.6%	60.2%
32. Work is interesting	80.8%	82.1%	80.5%	83.8%	68.4%	70.5%
33. Opportunity for professional growth	60.8%	62.4%	51.5%	70.8%	52.6%	54.0%
34. Opportunity for advancement	25.3%	36.4%	34.7%	34.8%	35.1%	30.2%

35. Job flexibility to balance work and personal life	67.6%	65.8%	49.4%	76.7%	66.7%	68.2%
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Figure 8 depicts the percent agreement by Department for each of the six survey items in the Work of AHS domain. The numbers 36 to 41 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 15.

Figure 8. THE WORK OF AHS Percent Agreement by DEPARTMENT

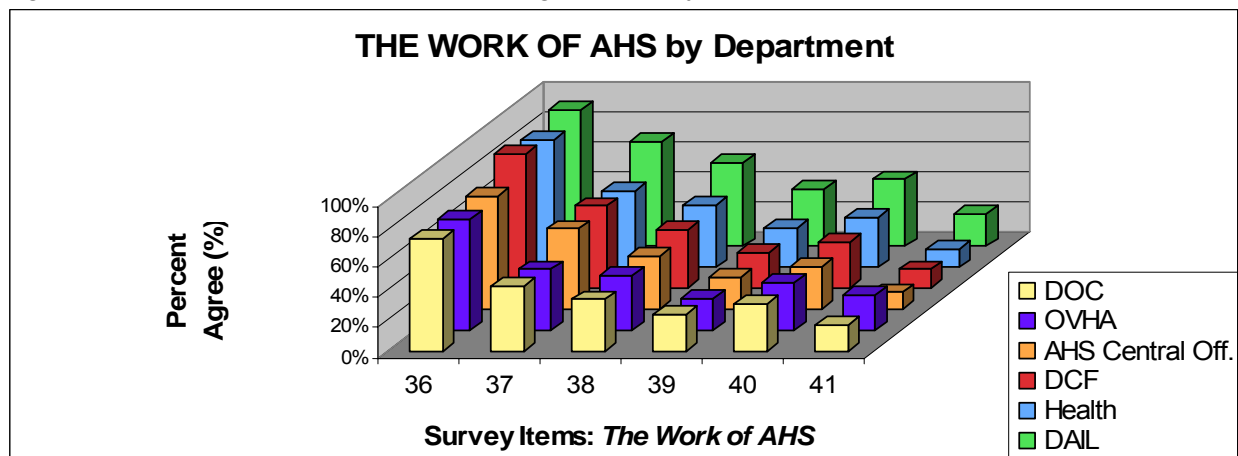


Table 15. THE WORK OF AHS Percent Agreement by DEPARTMENT

Survey Items: <i>Work of AHS</i>	Health	DCF	DOC	DAIL	OVHA	AHS Central Office
	Percent Agreement (%)					
36. Work makes a difference	84.3%	89.0%	74.8%	91.0%	73.7%	75.0%
37. Understand goals of re-org	51.0%	54.6%	43.0%	69.4%	40.4%	53.4%
38. Believe in the goals of re-org	41.1%	38.9%	34.5%	55.7%	36.8%	35.2%
39. Goals of re-org are achievable 3 to 5 yrs.	25.8%	24.2%	24.4%	38.1%	21.1%	21.6%
40. Positive about possibilities for change with re-org	33.1%	31.1%	31.3%	44.5%	32.1%	28.4%
41. Re-org has helped to improve client services	12.4%	12.6%	17.2%	21.9%	23.2%	11.4%

## WORK LOCATION COMPARISONS

Figure 9 depicts the percent agreement by Work Location group for each of the 12 survey items in the Supervision and Leadership domain. The numbers 1 to 12 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 16.

Figure 9. SUPERVISION AND LEADERSHIP Percent Agreement by WORK LOCATION

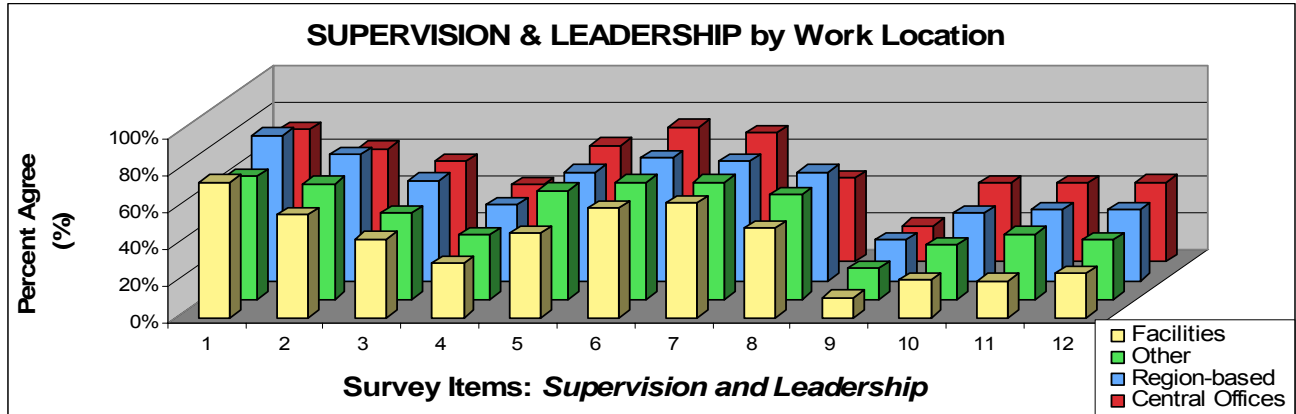


Table 16. SUPERVISION AND LEADERSHIP Agreement Responses by WORK LOCATION

Survey Items: Supervision and Leadership	Region-Based		Central Offices		Facilities		Other	
	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree
1. Job duties are clear	733	79.2%	373	72.1%	108	74.0%	70	66.7%
2. Performance standards clear	635	68.6%	320	61.8%	82	56.2%	66	62.9%
3. Receive feedback on job performance	502	54.4%	283	55.0%	62	42.8%	49	47.1%
4. Changes in work clear and timely	383	41.3%	217	42.1%	43	29.5%	37	35.2%
5. Recognize good work	545	58.9%	328	63.4%	67	45.9%	62	59.0%
6. Feel respected by direct supervisor	619	66.9%	379	73.4%	87	59.6%	67	63.8%
7. Respect direct supervisor	600	64.9%	363	70.5%	91	62.3%	67	63.8%
8. Annual evaluation	543	58.9%	231	45.6%	70	48.6%	60	57.1%
9. Merit award system fair	203	22.1%	100	19.6%	16	11.1%	17	16.5%
10. Department leadership positive environment	338	36.5%	222	42.9%	30	20.7%	31	29.5%
11. Department leadership supports employees	356	38.4%	222	42.9%	29	19.9%	37	35.6%
12. Respect departmental leadership	359	38.8%	224	43.6%	35	24.0%	34	32.4%



Figure 10 depicts the percent agreement by Work Location group for each of the 12 survey items in the Work Environment domain. The numbers 13 to 24 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 17.

Figure 10. WORK ENVIRONMENT Percent Agreement by WORK LOCATION

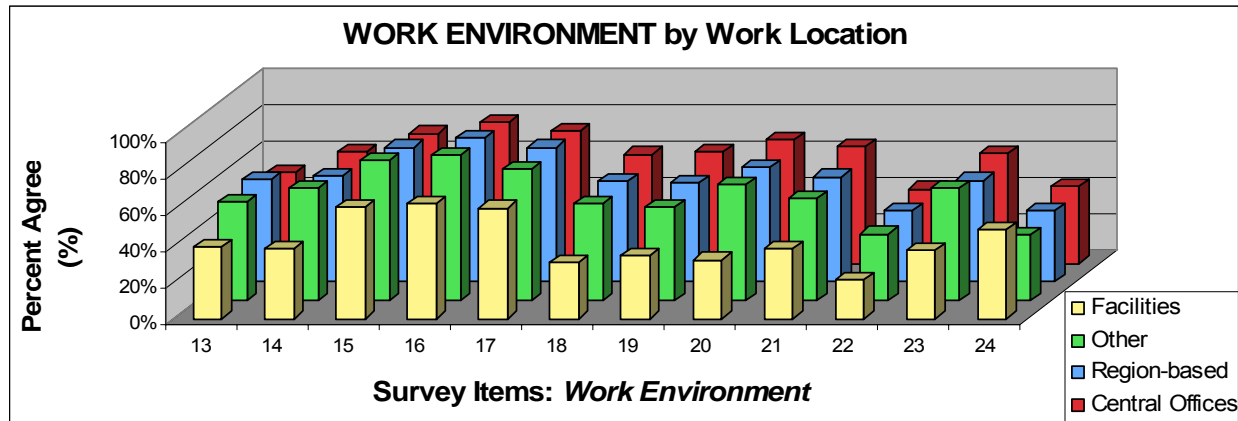


Table 17. WORK ENVIRONMENT Agreement Responses by WORK LOCATION

Survey Items: Work Environment	Region-Based		Central Offices		Facilities		Other	
	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree
13. Physical environment is satisfactory	518	56.2%	258	50.1%	58	39.7%	57	54.3%
14. Spirit of team work and cooperation	538	58.2%	316	61.2%	56	38.6%	65	61.9%
15. Respect cultural diversity of staff	683	73.9%	365	71.4%	90	61.6%	81	77.1%
16. Respect cultural diversity of consumers	727	78.9%	398	77.9%	92	63.0%	84	80.0%
17. Accom. consumers with disabilities	684	74.0%	376	73.2%	89	61.0%	76	72.4%
18. Use consumer info. to improve services	514	55.7%	307	60.1%	45	30.8%	55	52.9%
19. Atmosphere encourages new ideas	501	54.2%	316	61.2%	51	34.9%	54	51.4%
20. Excellent customer service	582	62.9%	347	67.9%	47	32.4%	67	63.8%
21. Opinions are listened to, respected	535	57.9%	330	64.0%	56	38.4%	59	56.2%
22. Morale is good	363	39.4%	211	41.1%	31	21.2%	38	36.5%
23. Decision making	516	55.8%	311	60.5%	55	37.7%	64	61.5%
24. Think about leaving	362	39.3%	217	42.1%	72	49.3%	38	36.2%

Figure 11 depicts the percent agreement by Work Location group for each of the 11 survey items in the Job Supports and Resources domain. The numbers 25 to 35 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 18.

Figure 11. JOB SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES Percent Agreement by WORK LOCATION

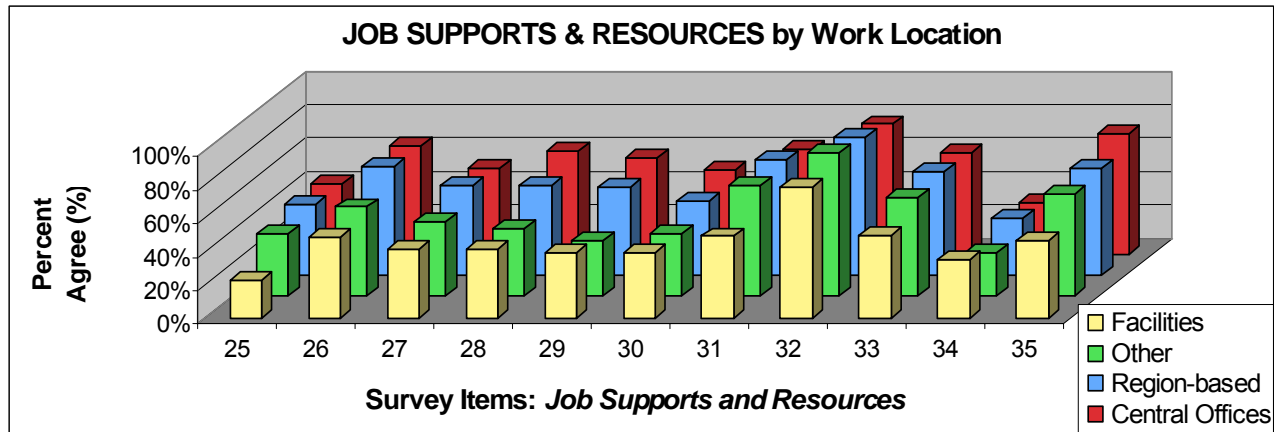


Table 18. JOB SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES Agreement Responses by WORK LOCATION

Survey Items: Job Supports and Resources	Region-Based		Central Offices		Facilities		Other	
	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree
25. Salary is fair	389	42.0%	214	41.6%	32	21.9%	39	37.1%
26. Satisfied with benefits	595	64.3%	332	64.6%	70	47.9%	56	53.3%
27. Training to perform job	490	52.9%	261	50.6%	60	41.1%	47	44.8%
28. Equipment and resources I need	497	53.7%	317	61.4%	59	40.4%	42	40.0%
29. Tech support I need	481	51.9%	293	56.9%	56	38.4%	35	33.3%
30. Workload is reasonable	411	44.4%	257	49.8%	56	38.4%	39	37.1%
31. Good use of skills and abilities	633	68.3%	323	62.6%	71	48.6%	69	65.7%
32. Work is interesting	761	82.0%	398	77.1%	114	78.1%	90	85.7%
33. Opportunity for professional growth	574	61.9%	308	59.9%	72	49.3%	62	59.0%
34. Opportunity for advancement	309	33.4%	157	30.5%	51	34.9%	27	25.7%
35. Flexibility to balance work and personal life	590	63.7%	371	71.9%	67	45.9%	63	60.6%

Figure 12 depicts the percent agreement by Work Location group for each of the six survey items in the Work of AHS domain. The numbers 36 to 41 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 19.

Figure 12. THE WORK OF AHS Percent Agreement by WORK LOCATION

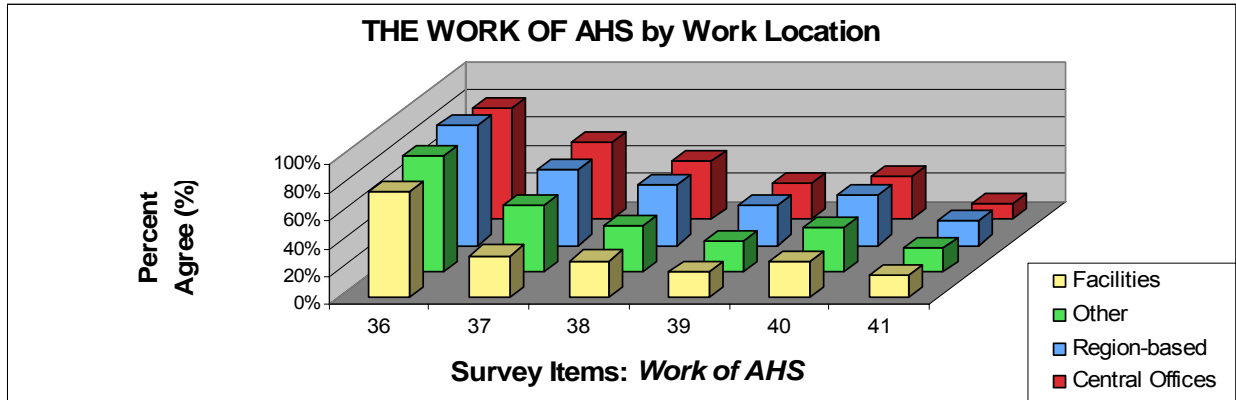


Table 19. THE WORK OF AHS Agreement Responses by WORK LOCATION

Survey Items: The Work of AHS	Region-Based		Central Offices		Facilities		Other	
	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree
36. Work makes a difference	799	86.3%	413	79.9%	110	75.3%	87	82.9%
37. Understand goals of re-org	505	54.5%	283	55.0%	43	29.7%	50	47.6%
38. Believe in the goals of re-org	401	43.3%	213	41.4%	38	26.0%	34	32.4%
39. Goals of re-org are achievable in 3 to 5 yrs.	269	29.0%	133	25.9%	26	17.8%	22	21.2%
40. Feel positive about possibilities for change with re-org	328	35.5%	160	31.2%	37	25.5%	33	31.4%
41. Re-org has helped to improve consumer services	163	17.6%	56	10.9%	23	15.8%	18	17.1%

## REGIONAL COMPARISONS

Figure 13 depicts the percent agreement by Region group for each of the 12 survey items in the Supervision and Leadership domain. The numbers 1 to 12 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 20.

Figure 13. SUPERVISION AND LEADERSHIP Percent Agreement by REGION.

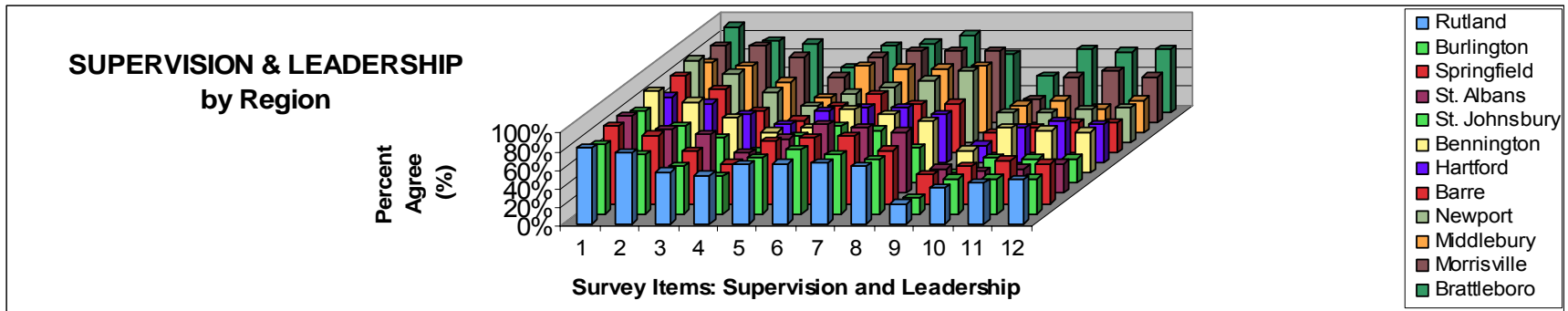


Table 20. SUPERVISION AND LEADERSHIP Percent Agreement by REGION

Survey Items: Supervision and Leadership	Brattle- boro	Barre	Benn- ington	Burl- ington	Hart- ford	Middle -bury	Morris- ville	New- port	Rutland	Spring -field	St. Albans	St. Johns- bury
	% Agree											
1. Job duties are clear	91.2%	81.9%	87.0%	73.3%	70.4%	74.3%	81.8%	87.7%	81.1%	82.5%	81.9%	77.3%
2. Perf. standards clear	76.5%	68.1%	76.1%	62.7%	63.0%	71.4%	81.8%	73.7%	75.8%	72.5%	68.3%	60.6%
3. Feedback on job	73.5%	44.4%	58.7%	50.9%	51.9%	54.3%	69.7%	54.4%	55.3%	55.7%	62.7%	48.5%
4. Changes in work clear	47.1%	34.7%	43.5%	39.9%	40.7%	37.1%	48.5%	38.6%	51.6%	42.5%	43.4%	33.3%
5. Good work recognized	70.6%	50.0%	47.8%	59.0%	55.6%	71.4%	69.7%	52.6%	63.2%	66.3%	58.5%	50.0%
6. Feel respected	73.5%	62.0%	67.4%	67.9%	59.3%	68.6%	75.8%	59.6%	64.2%	70.0%	73.2%	60.6%
7. Respect supervisor	82.4%	52.1%	63.0%	63.1%	59.3%	68.6%	75.8%	66.7%	65.3%	72.2%	69.9%	56.1%
8. Annual evaluation	61.8%	52.8%	55.6%	57.9%	51.9%	71.4%	75.8%	76.8%	61.1%	56.4%	65.1%	37.9%
9. Merit award fair	38.2%	21.4%	23.9%	17.2%	18.5%	29.4%	24.2%	32.1%	21.1%	30.8%	25.9%	10.6%
10. Leadership positive	67.6%	26.4%	47.8%	37.5%	37.0%	34.3%	48.5%	31.6%	37.9%	40.0%	24.1%	26.6%
11. Leadership supportive	64.7%	31.9%	45.7%	37.5%	44.4%	25.7%	54.5%	35.1%	43.2%	46.3%	26.5%	25.8%
12. Respect leadership	67.6%	32.4%	43.5%	37.0%	40.7%	34.3%	48.5%	36.8%	47.4%	42.5%	31.3%	25.8%

Figure 14 depicts the percent agreement by Region group for each of the 12 survey items in the Work Environment domain. The numbers 13 to 24 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 21.

Figure 14. WORK ENVIRONMENT Percent Agreement by REGION

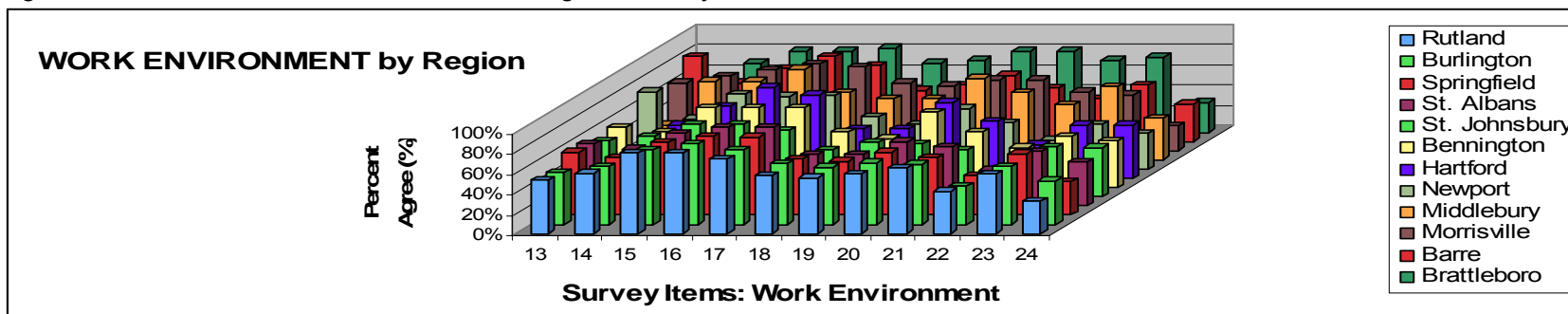


Table 21. WORK ENVIRONMENT Percent Agreement by REGION

Survey Items: Work Environment	Brattle- boro	Barre	Benn- ington	Burl- ington	Hart- ford	Middle- bury	Morris- ville	New- port	Rutland	Spring- field	St. Albans	St. Johns- bury
	% Agree											
13. Physical environment	41.2%	83.1%	58.7%	50.3%	29.6%	34.3%	66.7%	75.4%	52.6%	61.3%	61.0%	54.5%
14. Team work	67.6%	57.7%	54.3%	56.4%	51.9%	77.1%	72.7%	49.1%	58.9%	56.3%	55.4%	59.1%
15. Respect staff diversity	79.4%	71.4%	78.3%	72.9%	70.4%	77.1%	78.8%	73.7%	78.9%	71.3%	71.1%	71.2%
16. Respect consumer diversity	79.4%	83.1%	78.3%	79.0%	88.9%	88.6%	84.8%	71.4%	78.9%	77.2%	77.1%	71.2%
17. Accommodation for consumers w/disabilities	82.4%	74.6%	78.3%	72.5%	81.5%	65.7%	81.8%	71.9%	72.6%	76.3%	77.1%	65.2%
18. Use consumer info.	67.6%	50.0%	54.3%	59.5%	48.1%	60.0%	66.7%	50.9%	56.8%	55.1%	50.6%	45.5%
19. Encourage new ideas	70.6%	54.9%	47.8%	55.7%	48.1%	60.0%	63.6%	43.9%	54.7%	52.5%	50.6%	53.0%
20. Exc. customer service	79.4%	64.8%	73.9%	60.5%	74.1%	80.0%	69.7%	59.6%	57.9%	61.3%	62.7%	51.5%
21. Opinions respected	79.4%	52.1%	54.3%	58.6%	55.6%	65.7%	69.7%	45.6%	64.2%	56.3%	57.8%	45.5%
22. Morale is good	70.6%	42.3%	39.1%	37.2%	33.3%	54.3%	57.6%	28.1%	41.1%	38.8%	34.6%	28.8%
23. Decision-making	73.5%	54.9%	50.0%	56.9%	51.9%	71.4%	54.5%	43.9%	57.9%	60.0%	53.0%	48.5%
24. Think about leaving	29.4%	36.6%	45.7%	42.8%	51.9%	41.2%	24.2%	35.1%	31.6%	32.9%	42.7%	47.7%

Figure 15 depicts the percent agreement by Region group for each of the 11 survey items in the Job Supports and Resources domain. The numbers 25 to 35 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 22.

Figure 15. JOB SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES Percent Agreement by REGION

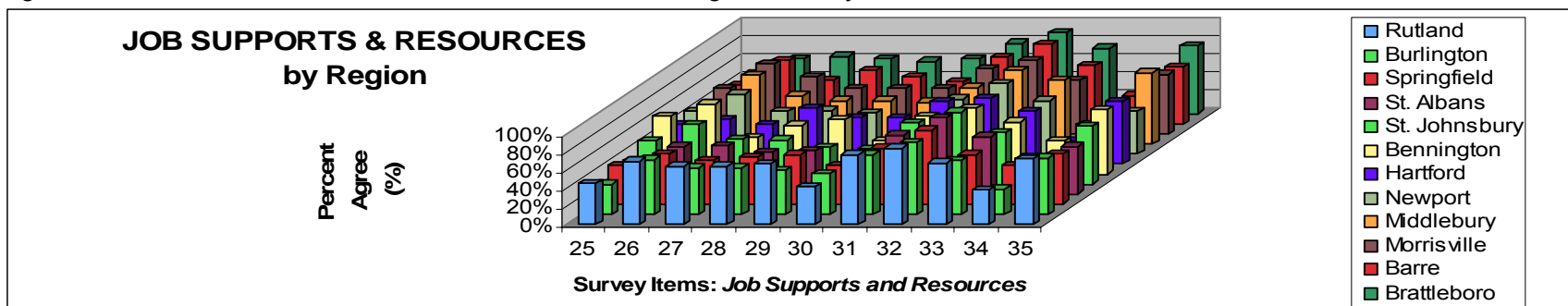


Table 22. JOB SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES Percent Agreement by REGION

JOB SUPPORTS & RESOURCES survey Items	Brattle-boro	Barre	Benn-ington	Burl-ington	Hart-ford	Middle-bury	Morris-ville	New-port	Rutland	Spring-field	St. Albans	St. Johns-bury
	% Agree											
25. Salary is fair	44.1%	43.1%	65.2%	33.2%	44.4%	45.7%	51.5%	47.4%	45.3%	43.8%	37.3%	48.5%
26. Benefits satisfactory	61.8%	70.8%	78.3%	61.0%	50.0%	77.1%	78.8%	66.7%	70.5%	56.3%	53.0%	66.7%
27. Job Training	64.7%	48.6%	41.3%	52.2%	44.4%	54.3%	63.6%	47.4%	65.3%	48.8%	54.2%	50.0%
28. Equipment	61.8%	59.7%	54.3%	52.2%	63.0%	48.6%	51.5%	49.1%	64.9%	52.5%	47.0%	49.2%
29. Tech support	58.8%	52.8%	60.9%	49.1%	51.9%	48.6%	51.5%	45.6%	68.1%	55.0%	48.2%	40.9%
30. Reasonable Wkload.	61.8%	47.2%	37.0%	45.7%	51.9%	47.1%	51.5%	31.6%	42.1%	43.8%	43.4%	39.4%
31. Good use of abilities	79.4%	75.0%	65.2%	66.8%	70.4%	62.9%	72.7%	61.4%	77.9%	62.5%	66.3%	68.2%
32. Work is interesting	91.2%	88.9%	73.9%	79.9%	74.1%	82.9%	81.8%	78.9%	85.3%	82.5%	85.5%	80.3%
33. Professional growth	73.5%	65.3%	58.7%	59.9%	59.3%	71.4%	60.6%	59.6%	68.4%	55.0%	63.9%	57.6%
34. Job advancement	47.1%	31.9%	37.0%	28.0%	25.9%	28.6%	33.3%	33.3%	38.3%	43.8%	40.2%	28.8%
35. Flexibility & balance	76.5%	63.9%	71.7%	63.1%	70.4%	80.0%	66.7%	47.4%	73.4%	56.3%	53.0%	64.6%

Figure 16 depicts the percent agreement by Region group for each of the six survey items in the Work of AHS domain. The numbers 36 to 41 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 23.

Figure 16. THE WORK OF AHS Percent Agreement by REGION

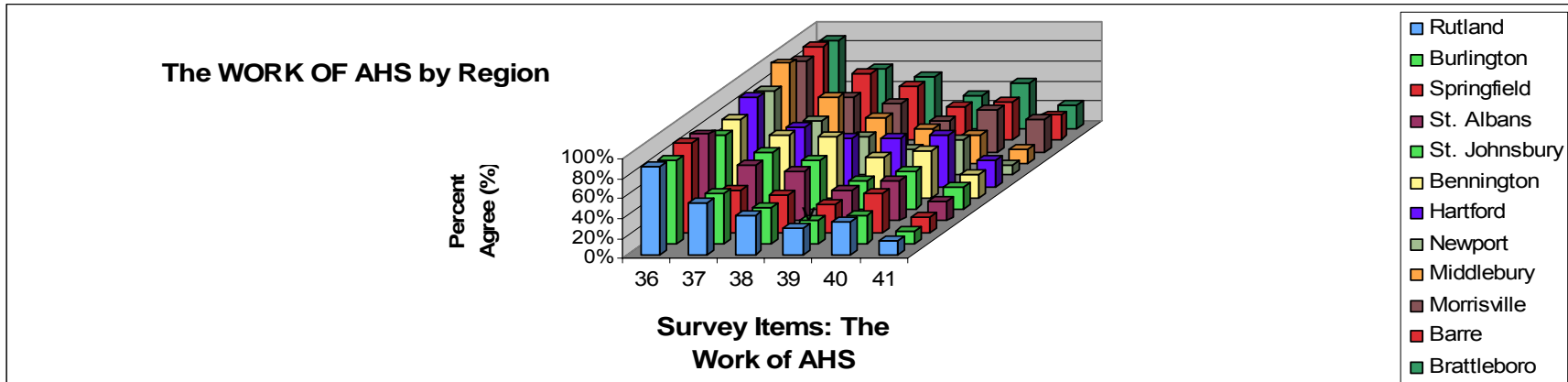


Table 23. THE WORK OF AHS Percent Agreement by REGION

Survey Items: The Work of AHS	Brattle- boro	Barre	Benn- ington	Burl- ington	Hart- ford	Middle- bury	Morris- ville	New- port	Rutland	Spring- field	St. Albans	St. Johns- bury
	% Agree											
36. Makes a difference	87.9%	93.1%	78.3%	84.3%	88.9%	100.0%	90.9%	84.2%	88.4%	90.0%	86.7%	74.2%
37. Understand goals of re-org	60.6%	66.7%	63.0%	51.2%	59.3%	65.7%	54.5%	54.4%	52.1%	42.5%	55.4%	57.6%
38. Believe in goals of re-org	51.5%	54.2%	60.9%	36.2%	48.1%	45.7%	48.5%	38.6%	40.0%	37.5%	49.4%	48.5%
39. Think re-org goals are achievable in 3 to 5 yrs.	33.3%	33.3%	41.3%	23.6%	48.1%	34.3%	30.3%	26.3%	27.4%	28.7%	30.1%	28.8%
40. Feel positive about possibilities for re-org	45.5%	38.9%	47.8%	28.1%	51.9%	28.6%	42.4%	35.7%	33.7%	39.2%	39.8%	37.9%
41. Re-org has helped to improve consumer services	24.2%	25.0%	23.9%	13.3%	25.9%	14.3%	33.3%	10.5%	14.7%	15.0%	19.3%	22.7%

## JOB TYPE COMPARISONS

Figure 17 depicts the percent agreement by Job Type group for each of the 12 survey items in the Supervision and Leadership domain. The numbers 1 to 12 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 24.

Figure 17. SUPERVISION AND LEADERSHIP Percent Agreement by JOB TYPE

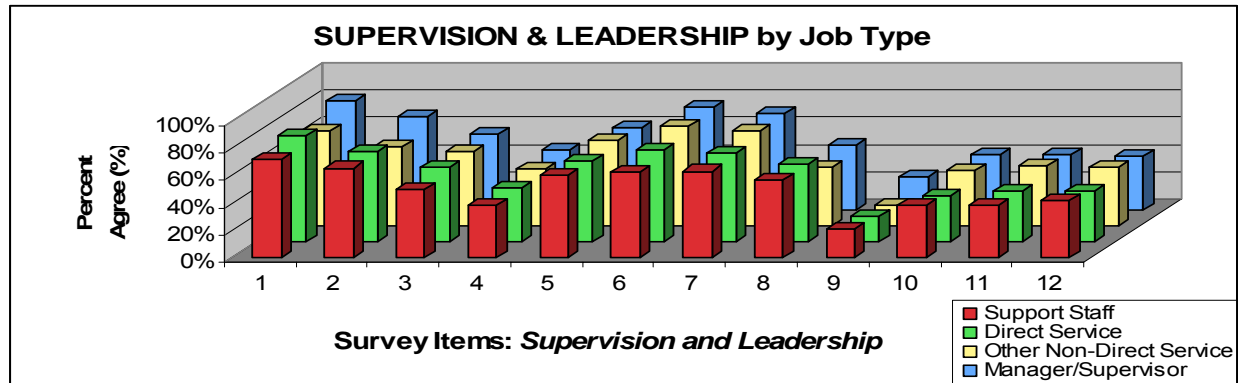


Table 24. SUPERVISION AND LEADERSHIP Agreement Responses by JOB TYPE

Survey Items: Supervision and Leadership	Manager/ Supervisor		Support Staff		Other Non Direct Service		Direct Services	
	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree
1. Job duties are clear	259	79.4%	253	72.5%	130	69.5%	491	77.2%
2. Performance standards clear	221	68.0%	229	65.6%	110	58.5%	423	66.6%
3. Receive feedback on job performance	179	55.4%	174	49.9%	103	54.8%	347	54.9%
4. Changes in work clear and timely	144	44.2%	137	39.1%	79	42.2%	248	39.1%
5. Recognition for good work	196	60.1%	211	60.3%	118	62.8%	374	59.0%
6. Feel respected by direct supervisor	244	74.8%	220	62.9%	138	73.4%	426	67.4%
7. Respect direct supervisor	229	70.2%	221	63.3%	131	69.7%	413	65.3%
8. Receive annual evaluation	154	47.4%	197	57.1%	80	43.5%	357	56.7%
9. Merit award system is fair	80	24.6%	72	20.8%	28	15.2%	120	19.1%
10. Department leadership strives for positive environment	133	40.8%	136	38.9%	76	40.4%	217	34.3%
11. Department leadership supports employees	132	40.6%	136	38.9%	84	44.7%	237	37.3%
12. Respect departmental leadership	129	39.7%	145	41.5%	80	42.8%	233	36.8%



Figure 18 depicts the percent agreement by Job Type group for each of the 12 survey items in the Work Environment domain. The numbers 13 to 24 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 25.

Figure 18. WORK ENVIRONMENT Percent Agreement by JOB TYPE

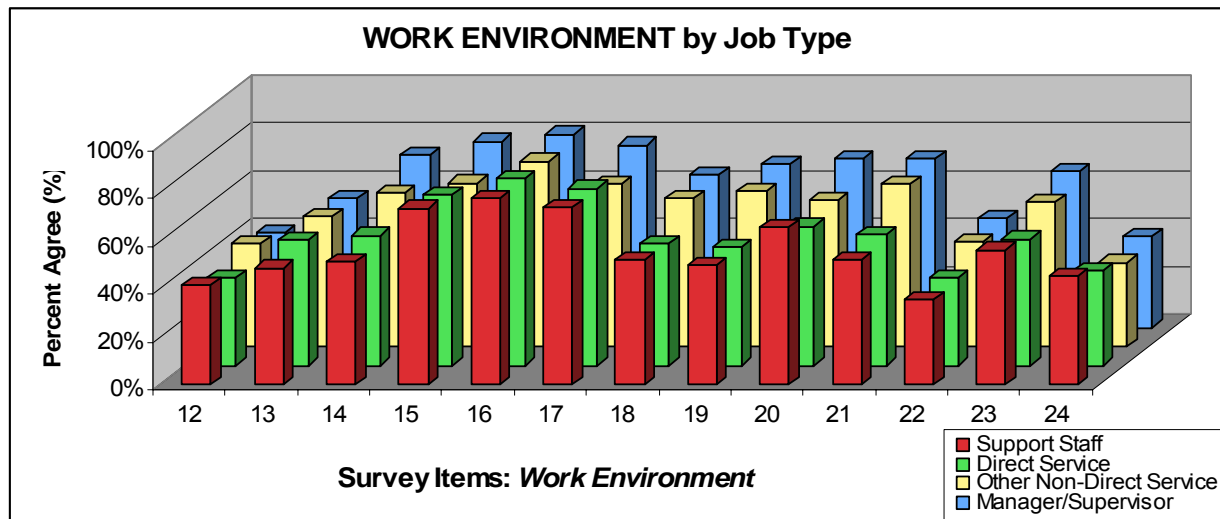


Table 25. WORK ENVIRONMENT Agreement Responses by JOB TYPE

Survey Items: Work Environment	Manager/ Supervisor		Support Staff		Other Non Direct Service		Direct Services	
	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree
13. Satisfactory physical environment	176	54.3%	169	48.6%	102	54.5%	333	52.5%
14. Spirit of respect, cooperation exists	235	72.3%	179	51.4%	121	64.4%	344	54.3%
15. Respect cultural diversity among staff	252	77.8%	256	73.6%	128	68.4%	452	71.4%
16. Respect cultural diversity: consumers	263	80.9%	271	77.9%	144	77.4%	494	78.3%
17. Accommodate consumers with disabilities	248	76.3%	258	74.1%	127	67.9%	469	74.0%
18. Use consumer information	207	63.9%	180	52.3%	116	61.7%	324	51.2%
19. Open atmosphere	223	68.6%	174	50.0%	122	64.9%	315	49.6%
20. Excellent customer service	229	70.5%	228	65.5%	114	61.0%	367	58.1%
21. Opinions respected	229	70.5%	181	52.2%	128	68.1%	347	54.6%
22. Morale is good	148	45.5%	124	35.6%	82	43.6%	232	36.8%
23. Decision-making is encouraged	211	65.1%	195	56.2%	113	60.1%	334	52.8%
24. Often think about leaving job	124	38.4%	158	45.5%	66	35.1%	249	39.4%

Figure 19 depicts the percent agreement by AHS Job Type group for each of the 11 survey items in the Job Supports and Resources domain. The numbers 25 to 35 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 26.

Figure 19. JOB SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES Percent Agreement by JOB TYPE

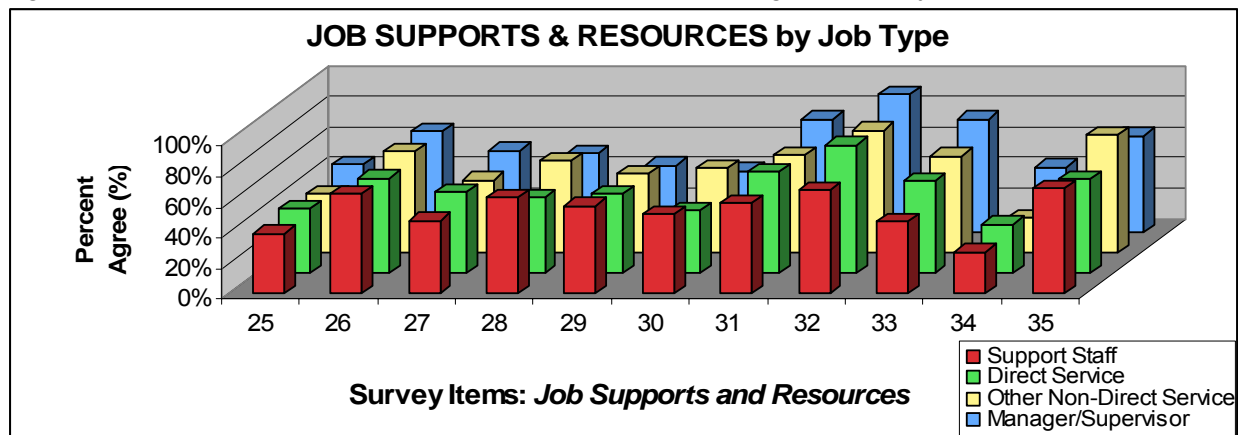


Table 26. JOB SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES Agreement Responses by JOB TYPE

Survey Items: Job Supports and Resources	Manager/Supervisor		Support Staff		Other Non Direct Service		Direct Services	
	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree
25. Salary is fair	145	44.5%	137	39.3%	73	38.8%	266	42.0%
26. Satisfied with benefits	216	66.3%	225	64.7%	125	66.5%	393	62.1%
27. Training to perform job	175	53.7%	166	47.4%	89	47.6%	334	52.7%
28. Equipment and resources I need	169	51.8%	219	62.6%	114	60.6%	311	49.2%
29. Tech support I need	143	43.9%	200	57.3%	98	52.1%	329	52.0%
30. Reasonable workload	132	40.6%	181	51.7%	104	55.3%	260	40.9%
31. Good use of skills and abilities	242	74.2%	206	59.0%	120	63.8%	420	66.1%
32. Work is interesting	294	90.5%	235	67.1%	151	80.3%	531	83.6%
33. Opportunity for professional growth	241	74.2%	164	47.0%	118	63.4%	383	60.4%
34. Opportunity for advancement	138	42.6%	94	26.9%	43	23.0%	202	31.9%
35. Job flexibility to balance work and personal life	206	63.2%	240	68.6%	145	77.1%	387	61.1%

Figure 20 depicts the percent agreement by Job Type group for each of the six survey items in the Work of AHS domain. The numbers 36 to 41 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 27.

Figure 20. WORK OF AHS Percent Agreement by JOB TYPE

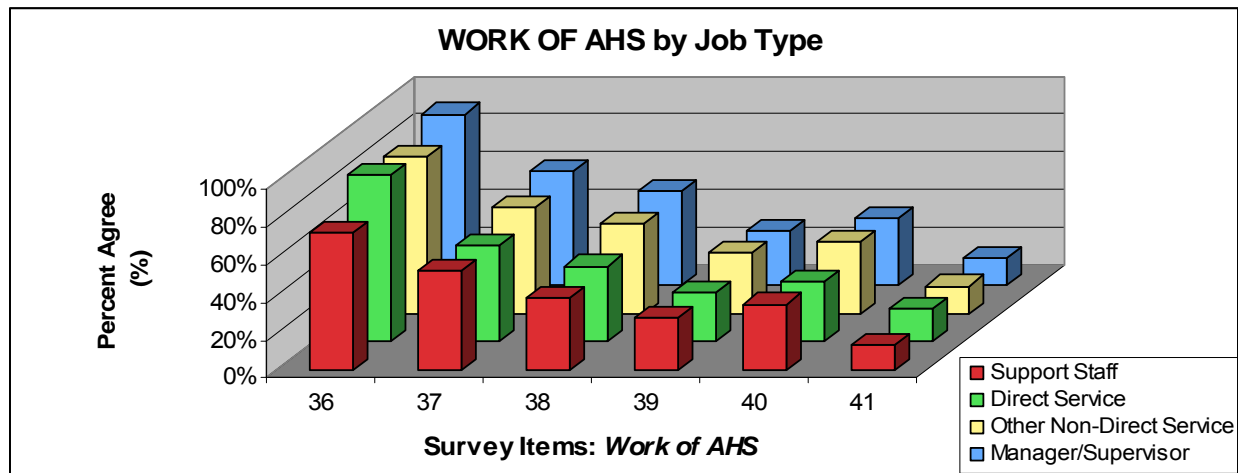


Table 27. THE WORK OF AHS Agreement Responses by JOB TYPE

Survey Items: The Work of AHS	Manager/Supervisor		Support Staff		Other Non Direct Service		Direct Services	
	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree	# Agree	% Agree
36. Work makes a difference	294	90.2%	251	71.9%	155	82.4%	559	88.2%
37. Understand goals of re-org	197	60.4%	181	52.0%	105	55.9%	319	50.5%
38. Believe in the goals of re-org	163	50.0%	131	37.6%	89	47.3%	252	39.7%
39. Goals of re-org are achievable in 3 to 5 years	93	28.7%	95	27.3%	60	31.9%	163	25.8%
40. Positive about possibilities for change with re-org	115	35.5%	120	34.6%	71	37.8%	202	32.0%
41. Re-org has helped to improve consumer services	46	14.1%	46	13.3%	27	14.4%	108	17.1%

## LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT COMPARISONS

Figure 21 depicts the percent agreement by Length of Employment group for each of the 12 survey items in the Supervision and Leadership domain. The numbers 1 to 12 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 28.

Figure 21. SUPERVISION AND LEADERSHIP Percent Agreement by Length of AHS Employment

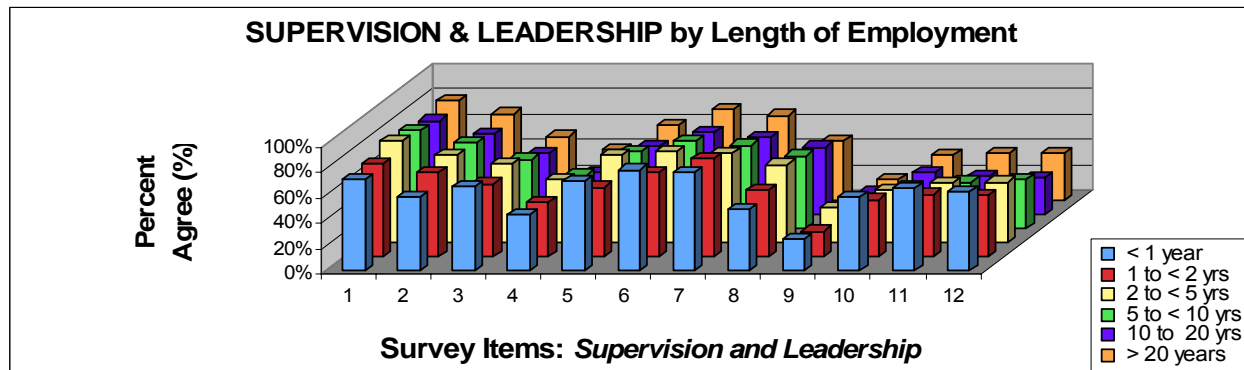


Table 28. SUPERVISION AND LEADERSHIP Percent Agreement by Length of AHS Employment

Survey Items: <i>Supervision and Leadership</i>	< 1 yr	1 to < 2 yrs	2 to < 5 yrs	5 to < 10 yrs	10 to 20 yrs	> 20 yrs
	Percent Agree (%)					
1. Job duties are clear	71.8%	73.1%	79.4%	77.3%	73.4%	77.6%
2. Performance standards clear	57.3%	66.4%	68.7%	66.8%	63.3%	67.6%
3. Receive feedback on job performance	66.4%	57.1%	61.5%	54.0%	47.8%	49.8%
4. Changes in work expectations are clear and timely	44.5%	42.0%	48.9%	41.8%	32.4%	39.0%
5. Recognition for good work	70.0%	54.2%	68.7%	60.7%	53.5%	58.3%
6. Respected by direct supervisor	79.1%	66.1%	71.1%	68.5%	64.1%	70.7%
7. Respect direct supervisor	77.3%	77.3%	69.7%	65.2%	60.0%	66.2%
8. Receive annual evaluation	47.6%	51.7%	61.0%	56.8%	52.7%	46.5%
9. Merit award system is fair	25.0%	19.8%	27.4%	20.7%	17.0%	15.9%
10. Department leadership positive environment	57.3%	44.5%	40.9%	33.1%	32.5%	35.6%
11. Department leadership supports employees	64.5%	48.7%	46.4%	36.3%	29.9%	36.7%
12. Respect departmental leadership	61.8%	47.9%	47.4%	37.8%	28.1%	37.0%

Figure 22 depicts the percent agreement by Length of Employment group for each of the 12 survey items in the Work Environment domain. The numbers 13 to 24 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 29.

Figure 22. WORK ENVIRONMENT Percent Agreement by Length of AHS Employment

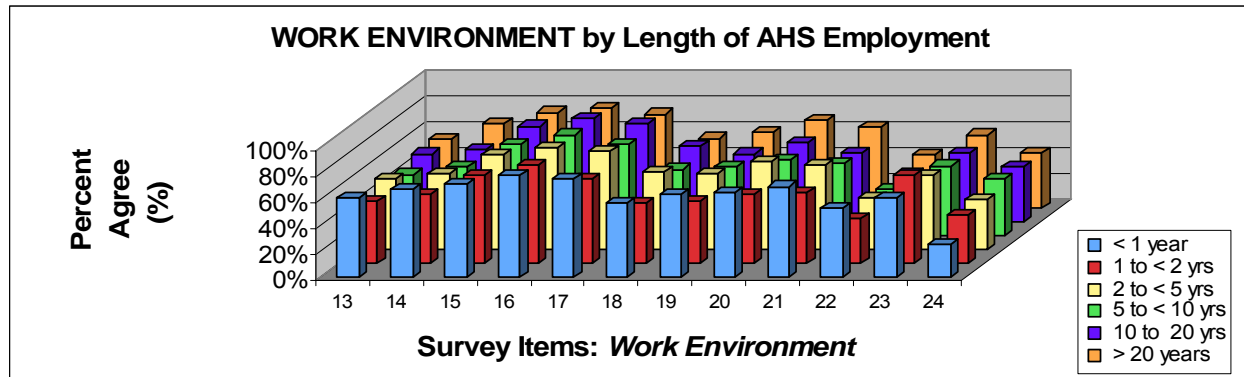


Table 29. WORK ENVIRONMENT Percent Agreement by Length of AHS Employment

Survey Items: <i>Work Environment</i>	< 1 yr	1 to < 2 yrs	2 to < 5 yrs	5 to < 10 yrs	10 to 20 yrs	> 20 yrs
	Percent Agree (%)					
13. Physical environment is satisfactory	60.9%	47.9%	54.7%	47.4%	52.6%	53.8%
14. Spirit of respect, team work, and cooperation	68.2%	53.8%	58.2%	53.3%	56.0%	65.0%
15. Respect cultural diversity among staff	71.8%	67.5%	73.6%	70.8%	74.0%	73.9%
16. Respect cultural diversity among consumers	79.1%	75.9%	78.6%	78.1%	80.2%	77.5%
17. Accommodate consumers with disabilities	75.5%	65.8%	76.3%	70.8%	75.5%	72.8%
18. Use consumer info. to improve services	57.3%	46.5%	60.4%	51.4%	58.8%	54.1%
19. Atmosphere encourages new ideas	63.6%	47.9%	58.6%	52.9%	52.6%	58.9%
20. Excellent customer service	65.5%	53.8%	68.0%	58.8%	61.5%	67.5%
21. Opinions are listened to and respected	70.0%	54.3%	65.1%	56.2%	53.3%	62.8%
22. Morale is good at work	53.6%	34.2%	40.5%	36.0%	36.8%	41.2%
23. Decision-making is encouraged	61.8%	68.4%	57.4%	53.9%	53.6%	56.8%
24. Often think about leaving job	25.5%	37.6%	38.3%	43.9%	42.9%	42.4%

Figure 23 depicts the percent agreement by Length of Employment group for each of the 11 survey items in the Job Supports and Resources domain. The numbers 25 to 35 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 30.

Figure 23. JOB SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES Percent Agreement by Length of AHS Employment

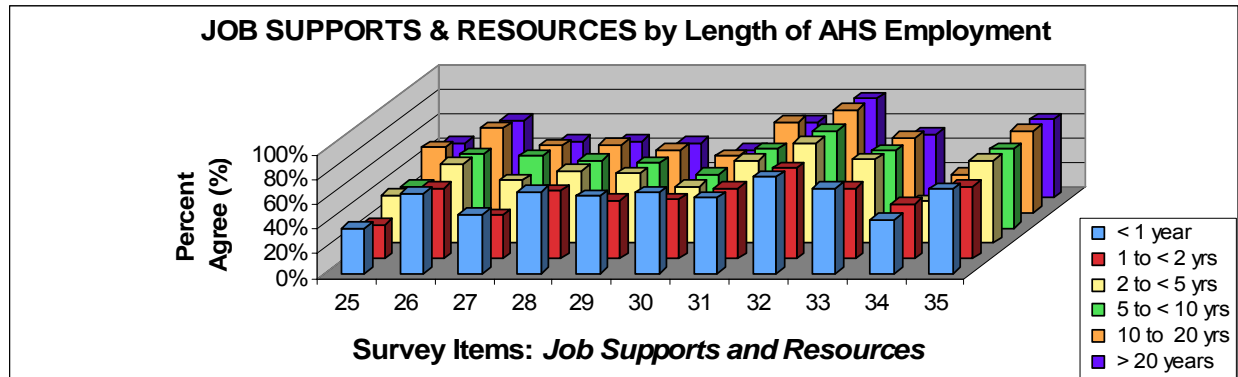


Table 30. JOB SUPPORTS AND REOURCES Percent Agreement by Length of AHS Employment

Survey Items: <i>Job Supports and Resources</i>	< 1 yr	1 to < 2 yrs	2 to < 5 yrs	5 to < 10 yrs	10 to 20 yrs	> 20 yrs
	Percent Agree (%)					
25. Salary is fair	37.3%	27.7%	39.2%	33.8%	44.3%	53.2%
26. Satisfied with benefits	65.5%	57.1%	65.1%	59.8%	62.8%	68.8%
27. Training to perform job	48.2%	35.6%	51.1%	58.9%	46.0%	55.0%
28. Equipment and resources I need	67.0%	55.5%	58.8%	55.0%	45.7%	55.3%
29. Tech support I need	63.3%	47.1%	57.1%	52.9%	44.4%	51.1%
30. Reasonable workload	66.4%	47.9%	46.4%	43.7%	38.6%	46.1%
31. Good use of skills and abilities	61.8%	57.1%	67.8%	64.7%	61.2%	73.7%
32. Work is interesting	79.1%	73.9%	81.9%	79.5%	80.5%	83.7%
33. Opportunity for professional growth	70.0%	57.1%	68.2%	62.7%	51.5%	60.8%
34. Opportunity for advancement	44.5%	44.5%	34.3%	28.0%	27.8%	31.0%
35. Job flexibility to balance work and personal life	69.1%	58.8%	67.4%	64.5%	63.6%	66.7%

Figure 24 depicts the percent agreement by Length of Employment group for each of the six survey items in the Work of AHS domain. The numbers 36 to 41 on the bar chart correspond to the numbered survey items in Table 31.

Figure 24. WORK OF AHS Percent Agreement by Length of AHS Employment

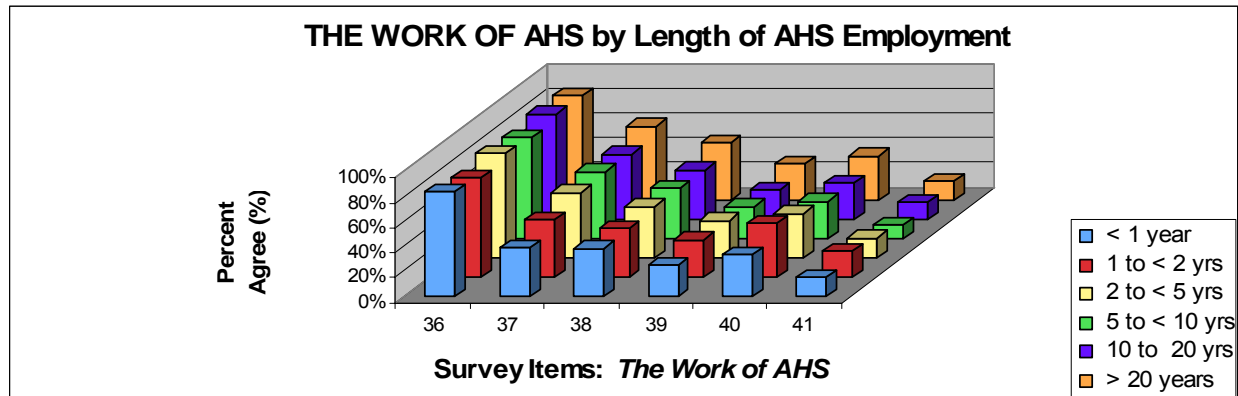


Table 31. WORK OF AHS Percent Agreement by Length of AHS Employment

Survey Items: <i>Work of AHS</i>	< 1 yr	1 to < 2 yrs	2 to <5 yrs	5 to <10 yrs	10 to 20 yrs	> 20 yrs
	Percent Agree (%)					
36. Work makes a difference	84.5%	79.8%	84.5%	81.3%	85.4%	84.6%
37. Understand goals of re-org	39.1%	46.2%	52.6%	54.2%	53.1%	60.1%
38. Believe in the goals of re-org	38.5%	39.5%	41.4%	41.3%	40.3%	46.2%
39. Goals of re-org are achievable 3-5 yrs.	25.7%	30.3%	30.2%	26.2%	24.1%	30.0%
40. Positive about possibilities for change with re-org	33.6%	43.6%	35.9%	30.6%	30.0%	36.0%
41. Re-org has helped to improve consumer services	15.6%	21.2%	16.5%	11.5%	14.1%	15.7%

## VII. Qualitative Survey Items: Overview and All AHS Staff Findings

**Methodology and Findings** In addition to the 41 quantitative survey items, the AHS Staff Satisfaction Survey asked three open-ended questions that gave employees an opportunity to share their thoughts without the constraints of a categorical response. Staff could write one sentence, entire paragraphs, or in some cases an entire page of text. The questions were as follows:

- 1) What do you like best about your work at AHS?
- 2) What would you most like to see changed?
- 3) Thinking about the AHS reorganization over the past 6 months, what could AHS do differently in the next 6 months to improve services for clients and/or work conditions for staff?

Out of 1,600 staff who responded to the survey, 83.6% answered at least one of the open-ended questions. In sum, the three questions generated 3,874 responses, some containing up to seven different ideas. Question #1 elicited 1,338 answers with 1,778 different thematic ideas, mostly what staff appreciated about their work at AHS. Question #2 yielded 1,327 responses with 2,366 different ideas, mostly for change. Question #3 resulted in 1,209 answers describing 2,387 suggestions for organizational improvements over the next six months. In other words, 6,531 ideas were embedded in the 3,874 responses. The extent of responses to these open-ended questions is a testament to staff desire to have input into improving AHS culture and performance.

Each response was individually coded and analyzed for major themes and subthemes. The themes were named based on key words or phrases that came up repeatedly in the data, and that encompassed categories of ideas. How often a theme and subtheme came up in the answers was tallied. This gave some measure of the frequency of the theme across the sample. However, this way of prioritizing themes has its limitations. For example, one comment about environmental conditions jeopardizing human safety could be considered more important than 100 comments in another category.

Out of 1,600 survey respondents, 1,501 designated an office/department affiliation. This chapter (VII) summarizes the findings for all staff respondents, regardless of their department affiliation. The findings are organized by themes under each of the three open-ended questions. The next chapter (VIII) summarizes the findings for each department, organized by four overarching categories that cut across all three of the open-ended questions. Themes and subthemes from Chapter VII have been regrouped under these four overarching categories.

The department summaries in Chapter VIII are presented in the following order: A) Department of Health; B) Department of Children and Families; C) Department of Corrections; D) Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living; E) Office of VT Health Access; and F) AHS Central Office. The department summaries contain direct quotes from the survey responses. The quotes illustrate the themes and highlight the many thoughtful comments that were shared by staff.



**Question #1: What AHS staff like best about their work at AHS...**

When asked, "What do you like best about your work at AHS?" the most frequent staff responses clustered around the following themes (in order of decreasing frequency): 1) the mission of their work; 2) positive and effective work relationships; 3) the structure of their jobs, such as schedules and benefits; 4) direct contact with individuals, families, and children; 5) challenges that keep the work interesting; 6) variety in their tasks; and 7) independence in carrying out their duties. (In the following descriptions of each theme, the number in parentheses indicates the frequency with which that theme or subtheme was mentioned.)

**Descriptions of Themes for Question #1**

***The mission of their work:*** Respondents most often mentioned the mission of their work (823). This included a sense of satisfaction; making a difference; and helping others.

Staff specifically mentioned a sense of satisfaction that comes from providing good service and seeing people grateful for their help (300). Part of this theme included a sense of pride and accomplishment, feeling valuable and knowledgeable, having one's opinions requested and respected, and seeing one's skills, talent, knowledge, and experience well utilized. The satisfaction also came from treating people with fairness and respect and feeling respected by coworkers. Staff gained satisfaction from working in a field and for an agency that provides Vermonters with needed services and improves their lives. Respondents believed in the goals and mission of AHS, its emphasis on public service, and the value of many of the programs offered.

Employees liked knowing that they were making a difference (270) for their clients. Some respondents also felt good about improving working conditions for staff, and several mentioned improving delivery and cost effectiveness of programs. They found it especially rewarding to witness people make changes that improve their lives.

Staff enjoyed knowing they were helping others (253). This included helping those in challenging life situations, those who have general needs, and those in crisis. Respondents enjoyed helping people grow and improve their lives. They liked seeing people achieve their goals and become independent of the human services system.

***Positive and effective work relationships:*** For the staff, positive working relationships made a difference in their job satisfaction (541). Relationships with coworkers were most often mentioned (295). This theme included feeling supported by coworkers as well as admiring their dedication, focus, and giving nature. Coworkers brought a reprieve from the often difficult and challenging work. Staff also valued collaborative relationships within and beyond AHS (77). This involved sharing information across

departments and collaboration with community partners to benefit consumers. Respondents described positive supervisory relationships (56). Most often this meant feeling treated as an equal in the supervisory relationship and witnessing a high degree of professionalism as well as effective leadership. Teamwork (48) and a supportive environment (43) were also noted along with occasional appreciation for leadership and management (22).

***The structure of their jobs, such as schedules and benefits:*** Respondents commented on the structure of their jobs (312), with the most important being flexibility in their schedule (99) and the focus of their work (89). Some appreciated their benefits (38), salary (26), job security (25), schedule (22) and location (13). (The difference between schedule and flexibility is that some people enjoy the schedule they work, while others enjoy the opportunity to exercise flexibility in their schedule and job tasks.)

***Direct contact with individuals, families, and children:*** Direct contact with individuals, families, and children was often mentioned as a source of satisfaction (272). Staff enjoyed the opportunity to interact with interesting and diverse members of the public.

***Challenges that keep the work interesting:*** Staff appreciated the challenges of their jobs (206). Specifically, the challenges prompted them to be creative, solve problems, and develop professional skills. Many enjoyed learning and being given responsibility.

***Variety:*** Variety was often mentioned as another way that the job stayed interesting and the work time passed quickly (145).

***Independence:*** Staff liked a level of independence in carrying out their job duties (88). This included freedom to make decisions and to find effective ways to work with consumers. Staff appreciated when they were not micromanaged.

Overall, there were 82 complaints embedded in the answers to this question which fall under the themes addressed in the following question about preferred changes.

**Question #2: What AHS staff would most like to see changed...**

When asked, “What would you most like to see changed?” the most frequent staff responses clustered around the following themes (in order of decreasing frequency): 1) leadership; 2) work conditions; 3) policies; 4) workload; 5) reorganization; 6) Agency-level issues such as collaboration, decision-making, funding, and structure; 7) coworkers; and 8) benefits. (In the following descriptions of each theme, the number in parentheses indicates the frequency with which that theme or subtheme was mentioned.)

## Descriptions of Themes for Question #2

**Leadership:** Respondents most often wanted improvements in leadership (662 times). This included effective leadership (325), relationship with leadership (157), the actions of leaders (136), and use of information by leaders (29). To define these terms further, effective leadership was described as an effective working relationship for the benefit of the State. Effective leadership entailed a supportive relationship with two way communication and a sense of being understood by leadership. The relationship allowed for regular feedback and disagreement. According to these responses, effective leadership resulted in role clarity and realistic goals and expectations. It created a sense of equality where employees were empowered to effect change.

The desired relationship with leadership was further defined as one of mutual respect. When expressing appreciation for leadership, not only did staff members feel respected, they also felt empowered and recognized. They sensed that the leader cared about their welfare and had confidence in their abilities. The leader made contact with staff and made opportunities for advancement available.

The actions of leaders included accountability of people in leadership positions, as well as good communication and consistency on the part of leaders. Appreciated leaders spent time planning and less time micromanaging. They expressed themselves with clarity and could be counted on for stability. Appreciated leaders gathered and used information from experts before making decisions. They would seek full understanding before taking action.

**Work conditions:** Many respondents wanted improvements in their work conditions (475). Staff identified the following aspects of their work conditions that were important to their ability to effectively accomplish tasks. First, they discussed resources and tools to do the job (196), such as funding and support from state authorities, and technical support such as updated computer systems, and centralized computer applications that eliminate duplication of efforts. Often, staff cited the physical environment (126), including safety issues, building layout, temperature (extreme heat and cold), cleanliness, air quality, windows that open, environmentally friendly buildings, and privacy and confidentiality issues. They wanted more adequate training (105) such as professional development, technical training, new staff orientation, refresher and update training, and training for change. Some people found the bureaucracy difficult to work within (20). Others wanted a change in job focus (16). Several employees discussed a perceived stigma to their work and department that they wished to see change with more cross-departmental education (11).

**Policies:** Staff often mentioned frustrations with policies that affected clients and staff (362). Many were disillusioned with hiring, promotion, discipline, and firing procedures, both formal and informal (98). Staff members were frustrated with a variety of systems (73) and concerned about policies and practices that either neglected client needs or that did not hold consumers accountable for their actions (65). Many wanted better compensation policies, such as systems for merit increases, and the inclusion of

education, responsibility, and experience in employee appointment and review (51). Policies that hindered staff flexibility were cited (35). Others wanted equality in job titles and classification (29).

**Workload:** Many staff wanted changes in their workload (237). Staff expressed strong desire for more hires to share the workload and improve service to clients (127). This included more staff on the frontline, staff dedicated to information technology and to writing procedures, and staff to assist with administrative tasks. Respondents shared concerns about high caseloads with unbalanced staff-to-client ratios (44), and in some cases they mentioned workload inequities (20). Some wanted a decrease in paperwork (10). A few respondents asked for greater consolidation in their job responsibilities (5).

**Reorganization:** The question about desired change elicited feedback on the reorganization (214). Many comments expressed dismay that funding has been used to increase the hierarchy while decreasing needed positions in direct service with clientele (76). Staff suggested better planning and pacing of the implementation of changes (54). Other comments ranged from complaints about reorganization without offering any solutions (28) to specific requests for more communication from leadership about what to expect from reorganization efforts (15). Respondents suggested careful examination of the reorganization and its effect on staff and clientele (14), with special attention to its impact on information technology (11). Some wanted greater input into the decision-making process (5). A few felt that reorganization was on track (5).

**Agency level issues such as collaboration, decision-making, funding, and structure:** The next most frequently discussed topic was Agency-level issues (172). Respondents discussed the desire to increase collaboration and communication across the Agency, especially when serving the needs of clientele who benefit from several departments (70). They wanted to see liaisons for interagency collaboration, and many hoped this would come to fruition in some of the new positions created through reorganization. Others suggested changes in Agency structure, which encompassed department locations, as well as client service and contact points (39). Some comments concerned the general focus of the Agency (32). Staff asked that the Agency decision-making process take time to assess and understand consumer needs and base decisions on clients rather than on political climates (16). Others wanted to see Agency funding allocated to “real needs” rather than to consultants or programs that they did not perceive as effective (15).

**Coworkers:** Respondents to the question on what they would like to see changed next focused on coworkers (138). Staff wanted greater accountability among a few of their coworkers (37), as well as more positive attitudes that were open to change (38). Comments focused on coworker disrespect of clients (27) and other behaviors (21). Staff wished for more communication and collaboration with their coworkers (15).

**Benefits:** Another theme of discussion was benefits (106). Most prominent was a desire for a higher pay scale (75). Staff who responded to this question wanted to see better health coverage that is less expensive for all employees (4) and expanded tuition

benefits such as funding of graduate level internships (4). Several respondents would like better retirement benefits (6), and a more flexible and generous vacation and sick leave benefit, including bereavement leave (5).

A portion of the participants did not find the question applicable (17) and some did not have any changes to suggest (8). One person wanted to see everything change.

**Question #3: Thinking about the AHS reorganization over the past 6 months, what do AHS staff think AHS could do differently in the next 6 months to improve services for clients and/or work conditions for staff?...**

When asked, “Thinking about the AHS reorganization over the past 6 months, what could AHS do differently in the next 6 months to improve services for clients and/or work conditions for staff?” the same themes emerged as in the previous question on desired changes. However, since this question focused on reorganization, more comments fell under the themes of reorganization and Agency-level issues.

The staff responses clustered around the following themes (in order of decreasing frequency): 1) reorganization; 2) Agency-level issues such as collaboration, decision-making, funding, and structure; 3) work conditions; 4) leadership; 5) policies; 6) workload; 7) coworkers; and 8) benefits. (In the following descriptions of each theme, the number in parentheses indicates the frequency with which that theme or subtheme was mentioned.)

### **Descriptions of Themes for Question #3**

**Reorganization:** Most staff comments focused directly on reorganization (833). The most frequent requests were for more direction, communication, and support from leadership regarding the changes (195). There was a desire for better planning and pacing of the implementation of changes (186). Staff wanted to decrease the new upper level positions and add needed positions in direct service with clientele (108). They suggested careful examination of the reorganization and its effect on employees and clientele (108). A portion of comments complained about reorganization without offering any solutions (101). Some asked for greater input into the decision-making process (50). Several respondents felt reorganization was going well (28) and others did not yet sense significant change (22). Information technology was mentioned as an area that needs immediate attention due to consequences of the reorganization process (21).

**Agency-level issues such as collaboration, decision-making, funding, and structure:** Respondents focused on Agency-level issues (276 comments). These issues sometimes dovetailed with reorganization issues, especially in the area of Agency structure, which encompassed changes in department locations, as well as client service and contact points (105). Respondents discussed the desire to increase collaboration and communication across the Agency (66), especially when serving the needs of clientele who benefit from several departments. They wanted to see liaisons

for interagency collaboration, and many hoped this would come to fruition in some of the new positions created through reorganization. Staff wished to see Agency funding allocated to “real needs” rather than to consultants or programs that they did not perceive as effective (39). They asked that the Agency decision-making process take time to assess and understand consumer needs and to base decisions on clients rather than on political climates (35).

**Work conditions:** Respondents suggested improvements in working conditions (255). Most often, staff shared concerns about their physical environment, including safety issues, building layout, adequate space, temperature (extreme heat and cold), cleanliness, air quality, windows that open, environmentally friendly buildings, and privacy and confidentiality issues (108). They asked for better resources and tools to do the job, such as funding and support from state authorities, and technical support such as updated computer systems and centralized computer applications that eliminate duplication of efforts (83). Staff identified training needs such as professional development, training for change, refresher and update training, technical training, and adequate training and orientation for new staff (59). Two employees discussed a perceived stigma to their work and department that they would like to see changed with more cross-departmental education. One person wanted a change in job focus and another found the bureaucracy difficult to work within.

**Leadership:** A portion of the comments suggested ways to improve leadership (149). Themes included effective leadership (88), relationship with leadership (34), and the actions of leaders (27). To define these terms further, effective leadership was described as an effective working relationship for the benefit of the State. Effective leadership entailed a supportive relationship with two-way communication and a sense of being understood by leadership. The relationship allowed for regular feedback and disagreement. According to these responses, effective leadership resulted in role clarity and realistic goals and expectations. It created a sense of equality where employees were empowered to effect change.

The desired relationship with leadership was further defined as one of mutual respect. When expressing appreciation for leadership, not only did staff members feel respected, they also felt empowered and recognized. They sensed that the leader cared about their welfare and had confidence in their abilities. The leader made contact with staff and made opportunities for advancement available. Regarding their actions, effective leaders demonstrated accountability, as well as good communication and consistency. Appreciated leaders spent time planning and less time micromanaging. They expressed themselves with clarity and could be counted on for stability.

**Policies:** Respondents often mentioned frustrations with policies and procedures that negatively affected clientele and staff (105). In some cases they felt policies let some clients “fall through the cracks” while other policies did not hold clients accountable for their actions (33). Staff members were unhappy with policies that hindered their own flexibility (22). They were disillusioned with hiring, promotion, discipline, and firing procedures, both formal and informal (18). Staff wanted more rewarding compensation

policies (6) such as systems for merit increases, and the consideration of education, responsibility, and experience in employee appointment and review. Lastly, they asked for equity in job titles and classification (3).

**Workload:** Respondents suggested improvements to balance the workload (95). Staff expressed strong desire for more staff to share the workload and improve service to clients (68). This included more staff on the frontline, staff dedicated to information technology and to writing procedures, and staff to assist with administrative tasks. Respondents shared concerns about high caseloads and unbalanced staff-to-client ratios (17), and in some cases they mentioned workload inequities (3). A few staff commented on workload generally (3) or indicated that they were unable to attend to reorganization because of their workload (3). One respondent wanted greater consolidation in job responsibilities.

**Coworkers:** A small portion of staff discussed issues related to coworkers (38). Some commented on behaviors of coworkers including disrespect of clients (17). They wanted greater accountability on the part of a few of their coworkers (13). A few wanted more communication and collaboration among coworkers (5) as well as more positive attitudes that were open to change (3).

**Benefits:** Some respondents wanted to see improvements to their benefits (27). They most often mentioned a desire for better pay (16). A few wanted a more flexible and generous vacation and sick leave benefit (4) and better benefits in general (3). Several others asked for better health coverage, expanded tuition benefits such as funding of graduate level internships, disability benefits, better retirement benefits, and child care (1 each).

A portion of the answers to Question #3 fell outside of these categories (125). These included those who did not feel knowledgeable enough to answer (58), those who said, “not applicable” (37), those who felt they had answered in the previous question (26), and those who had no suggestions (4).

This concludes the findings of the qualitative survey items for all AHS staff. The following chapter (VIII) reports the qualitative findings for each department in this order: A) Department of Health; B) Department of Children and Families; C) Department of Corrections; D) Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living; E) Office of VT Health Access; and F) AHS Central Office. The department summaries contain direct quotes from the survey responses. These quotes illustrate the themes and highlight the many thoughtful comments that were shared by staff.

Quotes were carefully chosen from the 3,874 responses. Aside from brevity of the department summaries, criteria for quote selection included thematic content and preservation of respondent anonymity. In some cases, one or more sentences were extracted from a paragraph if it could be done without compromising the essential point. Often, ideas contained within quotes were embedded into the narrative descriptions of the themes and subthemes. In this way, the reports maintain a balance between

narrative explanations and illustrative quotes. Hopefully, the combination of the findings for all staff and for each department does justice to the care and concern expressed by AHS staff respondents.

In the following chapter (VIII), department findings are organized by overarching categories that cut across all three of the open-ended questions. Themes and subthemes from Chapter VII have been regrouped under these four overarching categories. The department summaries of the qualitative survey item findings are designed to be used in conjunction with the qualitative survey item findings for all AHS staff (Chapter VII). Together, these two sections offer insight into the thinking of staff members and provide a reference for Agency decision-making and planning.

## **VIII. Qualitative Survey Items: Department Findings**

### ***A. Qualitative Staff Survey Items: Department of Health Findings***

Out of 512 respondents from the Department of Health, 85% (435) discussed what they liked best about their work at AHS (Question #1); 83.2% (426) suggested changes (Question #2); and 74.2% (380) gave advice on how AHS could improve services for clients and/or work conditions for staff (Question #3). The following department-level summary distills the essence of the open-ended responses from staff, combining answers from each of the three questions into one narrative with quotes to accentuate key points. Themes and subthemes from the qualitative survey item findings for all staff (Chapter VII) have been regrouped under four overarching categories described in the next paragraph. These categories provide the framework for all six department summaries. *Most of the themes and subthemes (in italics throughout the department summary) are described in greater detail in Chapter VII, organized by survey question.*

Staff comments focused on four overarching sources of their job satisfaction: **the people** with whom they work, foremost being leadership, but also coworkers and clientele; **the work** itself, including the mission behind their work, opportunities for training and professional growth, variety, challenge, and benefits; **the environment**, encompassing not only the physical environment but also tools and resources to do the job, workload, and policies; and **the organization**, focusing specifically on Agency priorities and aspects of reorganization. (In the following description of each theme, the number in parentheses indicates the frequency with which that theme or subtheme was mentioned.)

**The People:** Work relationships were prominent in the employee comments (706). Regarding their work relationships, staff most often discussed *leadership* (388) throughout all three questions. They particularly appreciated supervisory relationships that were mutually productive and satisfying, where performance standards were clear, everyone felt respected and understood, there was room for disagreement and independence, and good work was acknowledged and rewarded in ways that were meaningful to the employee. Where this was not happening, they suggested that people



in leadership positions receive training and be held accountable through performance review that includes subordinate feedback.

- *My supervisors are positive, encouraging, respectful and as flexible as they can be within the employee contract constraints.*
- *I supervise a great staff.*
- *My supervisor is a good communicator, well respected and works hard.*
- *I would like to see supervisors set the standard for staff and insist on excellence.*
- *Working for managers and directors that recognize my efforts with positive reinforcement, not with awkward public ceremonies.*
- *Develop relationships more...That all levels, commissioners, managers and employee staff are seen as co-learners, co-teachers, and resources - (not as objects or recipients).*

Staff also discussed coworkers (219). They praised their effective team efforts with committed colleagues and the supportiveness of coworkers. Staff wanted improvement in the accountability, attitudes and behaviors of some coworkers who they felt were not respectful of clientele, who were not working at full capacity, or who were not open to change. Employees valued their direct contact with clientele (99).

- *My colleagues are professional, affable, and supportive. We keep each other sane in a sometimes frustrating work environment. The leaders of my unit support and encourage camaraderie.*
- *The people in my work team are fabulous people who are dedicated to the well-being of the Vermonters we serve. They inspire me.*
- *I enjoy the balance of working directly with clients in combination with working with community partners on systems and communication around access of services for clients.*
- *I enjoy my contact with the individuals I provide my services for. To me this is the most challenging and rewarding part of my job.*

**The Work:** Many staff commented on the nature of their work (614), from levels of satisfaction with the job itself and the material *benefits* received for their labor (155), to the intrinsically rewarding aspects of pursuing a worthwhile *mission* (270) and being *challenged* to grow professionally (73). Respondents appreciated *variety* (57) in their tasks and wanted a career ladder for *professional advancement*. Employees suggested various kinds of *training* (59), such as diverse technical training for a broad base of the workforce, more varied educational opportunities for clerical/intake workers, substance abuse training to raise awareness and reduce bias, safety and emergency response training, new employee orientation and mentoring, a core training related to AHS mission and vision, and an introduction to state government and other departments in AHS, including where to direct phone calls. Competition for access to educational opportunities was an issue for some.

- *I am working on an issue that really matters to me. I feel respected by my co-workers and many of my community partner peers. I love the numerous opportunities for personal growth and professional development afforded through my work.*
- *I have been provided the opportunity to help improve people's lives. I feel proud that if it were not for the steps I took, things would not have happened.*
- *I would like to see my abilities utilized more. I would like to feel I am making a difference and living up to my potential.*

- *There are never any jobs recruited internally here therefore little opportunities for advancement and career growth.*
- *Salaries should increase to reflect cost of living in Vermont and educational background/experience.*
- *My work is usually interesting, and changes somewhat from year to year so it offers some variety and new things to learn...Good job security, good health and dental benefits, good pension plan.*

**The Environment:** Staff articulated environmental factors that interfered with efficiency, service, and respect (412). Respondents pointed to unreasonable *workloads* (73) and inflexible *policies* (154) that prohibited them from effectively serving clients and living balanced lives. Staff asked for flexible funding to handle gaps in service and for greater flexibility and equity in their own work schedules.

- *Some of the "rules and regulations" are too rigid, making it difficult to best meet the needs of families and individuals.*
- *While staff positions go on unfilled or are taken away and reclassified to another area, we are expected to do more with fewer and fewer resources and support staff. The needs of the community exceed the current capacity of my work unit and there is no short-term plan in place to address this issue.*
- *I would like to see all employees treated fairly. Not forced to work seven day stretches, so someone else can have every weekend off.*

Employees recommended *tools and resources* (98) that would enhance their ability to do their jobs. Technology that eliminates duplication of efforts was high on the list of improvements. This included a common on-line system for client information, laptop computers for employees with off-site job responsibilities, enough LCD projectors for presenters, computerized scheduling and common recordkeeping between departments, updated technology for data collection and management, and the ability to report lab results electronically. Staff had serious concerns about the *physical environment* (87), saying that it interfered with respectful service because it was dangerous, inadequate, or lacking in privacy. Concerns included drawbacks of office cubicles (such as lack of privacy when communicating with clientele regarding confidential health information), inadequate parking lots, lack of windows that open, safety and health issues in particular buildings, and insufficient space.

- *My role would be greatly improved if I was able to do more from the field. I could see more of my client base; but when there is a need to be at a specific computer to do a large portion of my job, that becomes tough to do.*
- *The most significant improvement we can make is to improve our information technology. We need to be able to share data and information across the agency (within HIPPA guidelines). We need to provide individuals and families with the ability to access our forms, documents, information, etc., via computer. They should only have to give us their demographic information once and not repeat it depending on which service they access.*
- *The most important thing toward "one-stop shopping" is the need for a management information system and smart cards for clients. This has been done in California for years. Where people are located physically wouldn't matter because the smart card would contain a client's history of use by agency/service. The need for paper and filling out forms would disappear.*

- *The Economic Service system needs to be easier to negotiate. If you get the wrong form you are sunk! My personal experience is that weeks of delays happen because of the system being so challenging to negotiate.*
- *Our building space is limited and not maintained in a clean manner. The following are not done on a consistent basis: bathrooms not cleaned, floors not vacuumed, windows are not wiped down, vents are not cleaned out and trash is occasionally not emptied. Our office space is cramped, with little room for storage. This often makes it difficult to find appropriate space for confidential conversations with clients and/or community partners. These issues are devaluing to staff and clients.*

**The Organization:** Staff focused on various aspects of the organization, including *reorganization* and *Agency-level issues* (403). In reference to reorganization, some comments focused on a perceived increase in *hierarchy* (37) at the expense of front line positions. *Complaints* (64) revealed serious concerns and disappointments about what was perceived as costly and unnecessary spending on office moves, and loss of long time employees due to relocation of offices. These losses were painful for the employees who found it difficult or impossible to relocate. Staff addressed *implementation* (68) of the reorganization, recommending more resources to carry it out successfully, and taking into account the breadth of AHS work. A few respondents wanted the pace to slow down and focus on fewer aspects of change, while others felt it should speed up. Staff at all levels wanted their *input* visibly utilized in decision-making and wanted the impact of reorganization carefully *examined* (56). They also wanted more *communication* so they could properly prepare for changes (55). There were concerns about the impact, on clientele, of shifting job responsibilities from experienced staff to new hires from outside the system. Other concerns focused on *information technology* (18) and consequences of centralizing IT operations away from the department level.

- *I sense we're on the right track in streamlining access to services and providing more employment training/opportunities.*
- *In the short term - develop realistic plans and schedules for implementing changes; communicate these changes, not in statements from the secretary's office but through the existing organizational channels; allocate sufficient resources to make these changes, especially additional resources for planning and training.*
- *I would like to see existing staff become the locus for the implementation of change. This is not accomplished by polling and surveying. It's accomplished by authorizing existing staff to actually make the changes which management intends and providing sufficient resources to do so.*
- *We are quick to hire upper level people without thinking about how work actually is accomplished. If we want to accomplish program goals we need more people to "do" the work.*
- *Some of the centralization of IT and contract support has had a negative effect on our ability to be timely and have proper support to get work done.*
- *How the input from state employees that are dealing with the consumers at a direct level is utilized. It feels like we get the "yes, yes, we hear you", but there is not one direct level employee on any reorganization committee that I am aware.*
- *I think the reorganization has been going smoothly from my perspective.*

A portion of respondents discussed *Agency-level issues* (140) most often expressing a desire for greater *collaboration* (41). They suggested providing incentives for community

services to work together and for collaboration across divisions and departments. Other ideas included eliminating roadblocks to communication between departments, improving coordination of services by instituting one case management plan and a single application system for families, and working toward a more cooperative and respectful relationship between the State and providers of services. Some suggested different *focuses* for the Agency (27) that would empower clients. Respondents discussed elements of *Agency structure*, including contact points with consumers and locations of offices (43). Some suggested a simpler telephone greeting, a different office configuration, reinstatement of the Parent Assistance Line, a better leadership structure in some divisions, and flexible hours to accommodate client schedules. A few mentioned Agency *funding* allocation (17) and *decision-making* (12).

- *In my district office a momentum of greater respect and understanding among departments has built...I would like to see that momentum continue to grow...Perhaps a job shadow effort among the various counterparts within the building would help develop an even greater respect for and appreciation of the work we all do? Improvement to consumer service provision should be enhanced by ongoing learning opportunities for all staff-particularly during this transition phase.*
- *I really enjoy the efforts of community teams that work together on behalf of clients.*
- *Recognize that for a lot of us our consumers are not individuals seeking specific help but all Vermonters who need safe, healthy communities, rapid response to disasters, information to help them lead healthier lives, etc.*
- *In times of economic hardship and need, the State funds should be providing direct services to needy Vermonters, not paying for new offices, moving of staff, new logos and stationary, new managerial positions, etc. I have yet to see enough improvement in services to our clientele to justify all of the disruption, confusion and expense of the reorganization.*
- *I would like to see less politics involved in the decisions we make with regards to providing funds to the community for services to clients....I would like to see legislators educated about programs and funding stream policies first before crafting legislative language that impacts our work and the relationship we have with our community partners and clients.*

## **B. Qualitative Staff Survey Items: Department of Children and Families (DCF) Findings**

Out of 548 respondents from the Department of Children and Families, 86.9% (476) discussed what they liked best about their work at AHS (Question #1); 86.5% (474) suggested changes (Question #2); and 80.8% (443) gave advice on how AHS could improve services for clients and/or work conditions for staff (Question #3). The following department-level summary distills the essence of the open-ended responses from staff, combining answers from each of the three questions into one narrative with quotes to accentuate key points. Themes and subthemes from the qualitative survey item findings for all staff (Chapter VII) have been regrouped under four overarching categories described in the next paragraph. These categories provide the framework for all six department summaries. *Most of the themes and subthemes (in italics throughout the departmental summary) are described in greater detail in Chapter VII, organized by survey question.*

Staff comments focused on four overarching sources of their job satisfaction: **the people** with whom they work, foremost being leadership, but also coworkers and clientele; **the work** itself, including the mission behind their work, opportunities for training and professional growth, variety, challenge, and benefits; **the environment**, encompassing not only the physical environment but also tools and resources to do the job, workload, and policies; and **the organization**, focusing specifically on Agency priorities and aspects of reorganization. (In the following description of each theme, the number in parentheses indicates the frequency with which that theme or subtheme was mentioned.)

**The People:** Work relationships were prominent in the employee comments (747). Regarding their work relationships, staff most often discussed *leadership* (411) throughout all three questions. They particularly appreciated supervisory relationships that were mutually productive and satisfying, where performance standards were clear, everyone felt respected and understood, there was room for disagreement and independence, and good work was acknowledged and rewarded in ways that were meaningful to the employee. Where positive approaches to supervision were not happening, staff suggested that people in leadership positions receive training and be held accountable through performance review that includes subordinate feedback. Respondents wanted more consistency and stability in leadership. They were unhappy with the “top down attitude of management,” that led to decisions that have a negative impact on clientele, often children. Staff wanted to be assured that leaders sought full understanding of all sides of a problem and consulted those with expertise before making decisions (particularly in the area of information technology). They asked leadership to stand up for the realistic needs of the agency and to educate the public, the legislature, and the administration on the cost of doing business.

- *My boss is knowledgeable and easy to talk to....doesn't talk down to employees. Treats us like equals. It's a good learning atmosphere and I feel like we really focus on the work.*
- *I am trusted to do my job and do not have someone looking over my shoulder all the time.*
- *My supervisor encourages me and praises me.*
- *My supervisor and I work well together as a team. Ours is a relationship of mutual respect and support. We work together to make decisions, within the limitations of the law and regulations, that are in the best interests of the individuals whose needs we serve.*
- *I too often see people in supervisory positions ignoring their responsibility for accountability from their staff. Often it is pronounced all the way through the chain of command....*
- *There need to be opportunities for real discussion and problem-solving together. Each person has varied experience and a different perspective, and if these could be combined in the planning process, the product would be richer.*

Staff also discussed *coworkers* (221). They praised their effective team efforts with committed colleagues and the supportiveness of coworkers. Staff wanted improvement in the accountability, attitudes and behaviors of some coworkers who they felt were not respectful of clientele, who were not working at full capacity, or who were not open to change. Employees valued their direct contact with *clientele* (115).

- *I enjoy working with the dedicated employees who are trying to make a difference.*
- *I really like the people I work with. Everyone here is dedicated to their jobs, everyone works very hard and I am proud to work with people like this.*
- *As a team, there is great opportunity to help people. I believe we do this on a daily basis and that is very satisfying.*
- *I often hear my coworkers saying that the folks that we provide services for are "lazy." It is terrible to work in an environment where no one seems to have respect for their clients.*
- *I enjoy the daily interaction with my coworkers and clients.*
- *I enjoy the contact and the impact that I have with people.*

**The Work:** Many staff commented on the nature of their work (614), from satisfaction with the job itself and the material *benefits* received for their labor (130), to the intrinsically rewarding aspects of pursuing a worthwhile *mission* (318) and being *challenged* to grow professionally (70). Respondents appreciated *variety* (48) in their tasks and *flexibility* (25) in completing them. Several staff wanted improvements in pay, vacation and health benefits. Some wanted benefits for long-term temporary positions.

Employees wanted a career ladder for *professional advancement* and suggested various kinds of *training* (66). Specifically, respondents suggested an organized program of training, mentoring, and support, especially when a person first starts. Staff suggested job shadowing, observing employees' strengths and placing them where their skills are needed, and repeated orientations to other divisions. Specific topics include poverty awareness, handling clients in crisis (for front office staff), use of ACCESS and other office systems, typing case notes, and interdepartmental cross training. Several staff asked for updated manuals and guides to use for reference. The concept of customer service training was questioned, since many "customers" come to the agency on a mandatory basis and cannot take their business elsewhere. Some felt training needed more funding support. To save money on professional development, one respondent suggested that trainers travel instead of on-line staff. Some felt training functions should be centralized within the Agency. In addition, a few staff asked for unpaid leave time with benefits to pursue requirements of advanced degrees that would enhance their skills and knowledge.

- *I'm happiest when I see a family make positive changes in their lives.*
- *I feel that our work impacts a lot of lives (adults and children) in a positive way. I have the ability to interact with people from all walks of life and while doing my work, I am able to continue learning and developing.*
- *I like that my skills are tested and used on a regular basis and that I continue to grow and improve in performance.*
- *I am grateful for the many opportunities to attend trainings to expand my knowledge and growth in the work I do.*
- *I think a better system/plan for training and mentoring would benefit the agency in the short and long term.*
- *AHS has never had a well defined career advancement track and I think both it and staff would benefit greatly if one were established.*

**The Environment:** Staff articulated environmental factors that interfered with efficiency, service, and respect (569). Respondents often described unreasonable *workloads* (182) and one of their top suggestions was to hire additional staff to assist with direct service

(60), including front line, clerical, and information technology staff. One suggestion was to hire trained “floaters” who could fill in where needed. Another idea was to make wider use of an appointment system to help staff manage their time. Employees suggested separating the functions of eligibility and case management, reducing paperwork requirements, and increasing equity in job responsibilities. Staff also focused on *policies* (171) with emphasis on making sure policies encourage client accountability and independence. Suggestions included flexible funding for clients who really need it and for one time assistance, with clear boundaries against client misuse of funds. They also asked for transitional assistance for people with temporary difficulties, better food benefits for the elderly, affordable health care benefits, greater fairness in child support laws, and general flexibility around program rules. Respondents were also concerned about the criteria for hiring all staff, including supervisory staff. There were differing viewpoints on whether education, experience, or seniority made a person more qualified for a position.

- *Caseworkers cannot adequately monitor the safety of the children on their case loads due to the number of cases they carry.*
- *Supervisors need to supervise fewer workers - to be able to provide better supervision (both administrative and clinical) and to be able to spend the time to take appropriate personnel action when employees are not adequately fulfilling their responsibilities.*
- *I would like to see a program that would...be able to convert driving offense fines into community service hours so that low income people are able to get their driver licenses back.*
- *Relax some of the policies that conflict from Department to Department and prevent meeting the needs of families*
- *Explain the Federal rules better. It helps us to understand why we have to do some things we don't care for and it also helps us to explain it to our participants.*

Staff also asked for greater flexibility and equity in their own work schedules, including the option to telecommute. Several suggested that flex time would also offer clients more options for appointments. A few staff already had flexible schedules, which they appreciated. Staff shared concerns about personnel policies and practices governing compensation. They wanted to be rewarded monetarily for outstanding work, long hours, experience, and education. They asked for a merit-based reward and compensation system. Some simply asked for a structured pay system and evaluation procedure on a more frequent basis. Frustrating systems (30) such as fleet vehicle use was a source of distress for a number of staff. Employees indicated that they spent too much time “arranging and contemplating reserving cars, picking them up and dropping them off.” Their scheduled pickup times interfered with scheduled appointments, and they questioned safety as well as cost savings over use of personal vehicles.

- *I personally feel I have no flexibility in my job in regards to family, education and personal goals...I would appreciate simple changes that would make my job easier and my demands outside the office more manageable.*
- *I love the flex hours my job allows me.*
- *I would like to see promotions based on skill and commitment, based on talent and creative problem solving.*

- *I do client visits and I have been ordered to use the "company car". The majority of these cars are not safe, they are uncomfortable to be in for long periods of time, they are dirty, and these cars will not get me safely onto the snow covered roads in the back woods of Vermont, but I have been instructed to take them anyway!*

Employees recommended *tools and resources* (121) that would enhance their ability to do their jobs, especially one main electronic data system where data can be shared between departments for better client service, as well as standardization of email systems. They also asked for laptop computers and cell phones. DCF staff wrote about the need for resources to help clientele meet their needs, such as more foster homes, resources for foster parents, placements and services for youth, parent programs, family support groups, grants that match the required needs of living, and affordable housing. One person wondered about the status of a position that was to be created to focus on housing and transportation needs. Some staff asked for tools that would help them find information easily, such as common Agency-wide scheduling software, a centralized intake process, a user-friendly policy and procedures manual, and specific contact information for DCF employees in other districts.

- *More uniformity in verification requirements would save time for all involved in delivery of services. For example, income must be verified for child care, WIC, ESD programs, rent subsidies, etc, but none accept the verification provided to another department.*
- *Have adequate resources in the community so families don't need to lose custody of their children in order to receive services.*

Staff had serious concerns about the *physical environment* (95), saying it interfered with respectful service because it was dangerous, inadequate, or lacking in privacy. Concerns included dangerous parking lots, insufficient space and privacy, lack of windows that open and toilets that flush, and safety and health issues in particular buildings, such as security and air quality.

- *I'd like to see a more confidential feel to the waiting room. One thing in particular is that we ask everyone for their SS#. Anyone in the waiting room could potentially write that # down and raise havoc for that person.*
- *More security put into place. I.D. badges for everyone, locked doors...*
- *My physical surroundings....there is no privacy which is critical with many of our participants who are often in crisis. The air quality is poor and the temperature is hard to regulate.*
- *We have a very bad parking problem. Our lot is small and not very safe. We have had clients and workers fall. Also, water pools in the walkways as well as ice.*
- *Make a utilitarian hospital into a pleasant work environment using color, art, plants and inviting furniture.*

**The Organization:** Staff focused on various aspects of the organization (549), including *reorganization* and *Agency-level issues*. In reference to reorganization, many commented on an increase in *hierarchy* (98) at the expense of front line positions. Many wanted to see the navigator positions implemented and thought the navigator and field service positions needed clearer job descriptions, expectations, and authority. *Complaints* (87) revealed serious concerns and disappointments about what was



perceived as costly and unnecessary spending on office moves, and resignations due to unintended consequences of the reorganization.

- *Workers from the top down need to feel that they have responsibility, independence, support and enough information and decision-making power to be effective. I would like the conversations in the hallway to be of celebration of new ideas, innovative thinking, and flexibility vs. how workers are penalized and are not valued. In order for re-org to work, the changes must come from the bottom up, top down, and both sides.*
- *I believe that AHS has become top heavy and that there needs to be more of a focus on the actual work that is being done by staff in the field. Expecting staff to do more with less but hiring more staff in Central Office is not going to accomplish much other than bitterness.*
- *The Department for Children and Families created through the process of reorganization was forced to face the future understaffed and running in the red financially.... There must be some way to support the remaining staff to a point where they do not feel stuck in a hopeless cycle of missed expectations and disappointments. The backlog grows weekly.*
- *It's difficult, as a supervisor, to ask staff to help reduce spending because of the shortfall in funds and then witness management staff spending thousands of dollars on physically moving people around.*

Staff addressed *implementation* (85) of the reorganization, recommending more resources to support planned changes, letting go of non-reorganization tasks, and taking into account the breadth of AHS work. Opinions differed on the pacing of the changes. Some thought reorganization was on track and moving in the right direction (14). Respondents wanted staff and consumer *input* (19) visibly utilized in decision-making and wanted the impact of reorganization on staff and consumers carefully *examined* (42), with attention to the needs of the elderly and disabled. They also wanted more *communication* so they could properly prepare for changes (68). There were concerns about the impact, on clientele, of shifting job responsibilities from experienced staff to new hires from outside the system. Other concerns focused on *information technology* (6) and consequences of centralizing IT operations away from the department level.

- *I have noticed more camaraderie between the different offices in the building and more of an attempt to bring us together as a group. I think because we are more aware of who the people are that could be working with us to achieve the goals clients have set for themselves we are more apt to refer them to specific people instead of organizations. Sometimes this expedites the process for the client.*
- *Re-evaluate some of the decisions that were made within the context of the reorganization to become more 'consumer focused' and 'cost-efficient'. Decisions that are made don't always result in the intended outcome.*
- *The reorganization has had very little impact on my office, but I strongly believe in the goals the reorganization is trying to achieve and believe they will happen.*
- *Re-organization has not been cost neutral. Changes that were made have not been well supported in terms of having adequate resources to do the work, including consistent and available supervision, adequate program and administrative staff and IT support.*
- *Return direct administrative responsibility of computer operations staff to the departments....Common goals should be approached by Committee work done by departmental representatives.*
- *Follow through on recommendations by the Regional Advisory Councils of consumers.*

A portion of respondents discussed *Agency-level issues* (158) most often expressing a desire for greater *collaboration* (39). They suggested incentives for community services to work together and for collaboration across divisions and departments. One person suggested identifying a staff person with sufficient general knowledge of the entire Agency to identify programmatic links that would help consumers. Some suggested different *focuses* for the Agency (15) that would empower clients. Respondents discussed elements of *Agency structure*, asking for a standardized accounting infrastructure and uniform spending practices, clear lines of authority and responsibility, and user-friendly contact points with consumers such as a brochure and a centralized answering system describing departmental functions and locations of offices. (55) Some suggested a simpler telephone greeting and others were concerned about routing of phone calls to avoid confusion. A few mentioned Agency *funding* allocation (29) and *decision-making* (20).

- *I would like to see more coordination between departments. We are often requiring the population we work with to do activities that clash with what they are required to do for other departments. This sets them up to fail because they cannot do all that is asked of them and be successful.*
- *Sometimes the effort to move two groups of employees closer together serves to move a third group farther away; it seems as if nobody is looking at the big picture. Good communication doesn't require that you reside in the office next to mine; it requires that you and I talk to each other about what we're doing no matter where our offices are located. It requires that I know who you are, what you do, and how I fit into that picture and vice versa.*
- *I would like to see the Field Director positions under the agency instead of DCF. I think there should be connections between the Field Directors and each of the agencies to each Dept....It would insure all parties are at the table and able to fully participate.*
- *I would like our programs and policies to be less dependent upon the political climate. Every administration and every legislative session wants to put its own stamp on the programs. People's needs haven't changed that dramatically but we keep expending our energies towards reconfiguring the programs, which takes away from delivering the services.*
- *Before legislature and administration makes changes get some input from the workers on the front lines who actually work with the clients.*

### **C. Qualitative Staff Survey Items: Department of Corrections Findings**

Out of 334 respondents from the Department of Corrections, 77.8% (260) discussed what they liked best about their work at AHS (Question #1); 80.2% (268) suggested changes (Question #2); and 69.8% (233) gave advice on how AHS could improve services for clients and/or work conditions for staff (Question #3). The following department-level summary distills the essence of the open-ended responses from staff, combining answers from each of the three questions into one narrative with quotes to accentuate key points. Themes and subthemes from the qualitative survey item findings for all staff (Chapter VII) have been regrouped under four overarching categories described in the next paragraph. These categories provide the framework for all six department summaries. *Most of the themes and subthemes (in italics throughout the departmental summary) are described in greater detail in Chapter VII, organized by survey question.*

Staff comments focused on four overarching sources of their job satisfaction: **the people** with whom they work, foremost being leadership, but also coworkers and clientele; **the work** itself, including the mission behind their work, variety, opportunities for training and professional growth, challenge, and benefits; **the environment**, encompassing not only the physical environment but also tools and resources to do the job, workload, and policies; and **the organization**, focusing specifically on Agency priorities and aspects of reorganization. (In the following description of each theme, the number in parentheses indicates the frequency with which that theme or subtheme was mentioned.)

**The People:** Work relationships were prominent in the employee comments (378). Regarding their work relationships, staff most often discussed *leadership* (233) throughout all three questions. They particularly appreciated supervisory relationships that were mutually productive and satisfying, where performance standards were clear, everyone felt respected, valued, and understood, there was room for questions, disagreement, and independence, and good work and sacrifices made for the job were acknowledged and rewarded in ways that were meaningful to the employee. Respondents wanted clarity and consistency of directives from leaders. Employees working night shift hours wanted to feel more connected to leadership and to a team of colleagues. Where effective supervisory relationships were not happening, staff suggested that people in leadership positions receive training and be held accountable through performance review that includes subordinate feedback.

- *I like the fact that I am treated like a human being and respected for my abilities.*
- *The Management works with the crew as a team. They respect our opinions and listen to our ideas.*
- *Supervisor is wonderful.*
- *I highly value the autonomy and flexibility afforded to me in my current role.*
- *Create a more supportive environment for staff - more formal supervision, supportive supervision....job expectations, more positive support and acknowledgement of good qualities.*
- *Better supervision in the big system for the middle managers, how to motivate people with encouragement rather than what they aren't doing right.*
- *The disconnect from the field office, jails and central office is huge and until there is more communication/understanding there will be problems implementing the AHS reorg philosophy.*

Staff also discussed *coworkers* (95). They praised their effective team efforts with committed colleagues and the supportiveness of coworkers. Staff wanted improvement in the accountability, attitudes and behaviors of some coworkers who they felt were not respectful of clientele, who were not working at full capacity, or who were not open to change. Not only did some employees want management held accountable, but they also wanted management to hold employees to the same standards, and to consider hiring correctional staff at a minimum age of 25. Some employees valued their direct contact with *clientele* (50), but several felt disrespected by offenders.

- *The people are wonderful to work with - they are both friendly and talented and they genuinely care about each other.*

- *I like a couple of my coworkers, who have worked with me for many years, and trust them. I like my interactions with law enforcement community and with the victims of crime.*
- *Vermont is a small enough system that one person can have a significant impact. One local area can pull together the necessary resources to take on a task and actually do a good job at it.*
- *I enjoy the people I work with and the team atmosphere.*
- *I'd like DOC to see the difference between low risk offenders and risk-mgt clients. I'd like the DOC to see that compliance with Court orders will happen better, quicker and with less cost, if person are dealt with humanely and with dignity.*
- *I enjoy working with my customers, their families, and community members in the community.*
- *I like that I can interact with offenders, personnel and civilians in trying to do an outstanding job in my field.*

**The Work:** Many staff commented on the nature of their work (345), from satisfaction with the job itself and the material *benefits* received for their labor (145), to the intrinsically rewarding aspects of pursuing a worthwhile *mission* (114) and being *challenged* to grow professionally (31).

- *The job security, relatively decent pay and benefits as well as the opportunity to serve the community and help individuals who truly want to help themselves.*
- *I have an opportunity to see people get back in the driver's seats of their lives.*
- *I enjoy working with the judicial system and to help make better lives for the offenders.*
- *I like the consistent challenges each day brings with the clients I work with.*
- *I like that for some people, I have helped facilitate a change in their life for the positive. Most of all, I like going to bed knowing I did everything I could do to protect the public.*
- *A retirement system for correctional officers comparable to state police. Working in a correctional facility is every bit as stressful as law enforcement on the street. Not too many police officers trading places with us and not too many correctional officers making it to full retirement alive or healthy.*
- *I can work at McDonald's without taking a major pay cut right now. I wouldn't be subject to the physical and mental abuse of the inmates. We should be paid accordingly and that in itself may assist in staff retention with DOC.*

Some respondents appreciated *variety* (25) in their tasks and wanted a career ladder for *professional advancement*. They suggested preparing agency employees for anticipated leadership position openings due to retirements. Employees suggested various kinds of *training* (30). Specifically, corrections staff asked for peer support opportunities among front line staff, orientation to other agencies and how to involve them (as in co-case management), thorough training before receiving a caseload, and function based training for administrative staff. Other topics included leadership development, poverty awareness, confidentiality, safety, and handling emergencies. There was concern about retention of new as well as senior staff and access to educational opportunities. Some wanted a department culture of greater respect for education while others wanted more credence given to experience. Several employees appreciated their work schedule, hours, and location, as well as their pay, benefits, flexibility, and job security. Others wanted better pay, equal pay grades, and more consideration to flexible and part time schedules so they could tend to their personal and professional needs.

- *The job is interesting due to the variety of things we deal with.*
- *I am able to explore areas of the field that interest me.*
- *I have also enjoyed many opportunities for professional growth.*
- *Advancement opportunities and career ladders need to be developed for administrative staff of the Dept of Corrections.*
- *The "hidden messages" e.g., sure attend this training, but don't cost us any money by being late or having to miss your shift.*

**The Environment:** Staff articulated environmental factors that interfered with efficiency, service, and respect (271). Respondents pointed to unreasonable *workloads* (66), citing excessive over time and lack of staff. Some asked for equity in caseloads around the State and more hires to handle the load. Employees wanted *policies* (130) to better aid those who truly needed help and prevent others from abusing the system. Some pointed to how inflexible rules can promote criminal thinking and behavior. They also discussed policies that undermined rehabilitation, for example, returning offenders to the community without transitional housing, or preparing them for work without proper skill-training or support. Regarding policies affecting staff, often noted were hiring, promotion, and discipline policies. Some felt excessive workloads for supervisors got in the way of adequate time for supervision. Staff asked for greater equity in their own work schedules.

- *Give more Correctional Officers to the facilities. Corrections staff are being worked to death in forced overtime.*
- *AHS needs to consider the huge population of illiterates and the dehumanization of these folks each time they are given yet more forms to "take home and fill out".*
- *More opportunities for the inmates to learn a skill so that the chance of them returning to prison is lessened...*
- *I would like to see services more accessible to those who truly need help and support, and less who don't.*
- *This department has a notorious history for promoting employee's who have done something wrong. Some of these behaviors clearly should have lead to dismissal....*
- *I would like to see people promoted on their merits instead of who they know.*
- *The way people are hired for DOC needs to be looked at....We need to broaden the interview panel to more people from a variety of positions in the facility.*
- *An end to the practice of creating a job for a person and appointing the person to it without a full, competitive hiring process*

Employees recommended *tools and resources* (46) that would enhance their ability to do their jobs. Technology that eliminates duplication of efforts was high on the list of improvements, including computers and software that were updated and available in cell blocks as well as other locations. Corrections staff wanted a common on-line system for client information that disseminates information to appropriate locations in the data base and that is accessible across departments and offices in the agency. Some wanted the capability to hold on-line meetings. They also asked for more treatment programs in the facilities. Some corrections staff wanted tools for self defense. Staff had serious concerns about the *physical environment* (29) which was considered dangerous, inadequate, or lacking in privacy. Staff wanted to enhance their own security with metal detectors, security officers in public areas, surveillance cameras in hallways and work areas, vehicles with cages, radios, and cell phones, and

appropriate facilities for temporarily detaining offenders. They asked for better cleanliness, maintenance, pest control, and temperature control in their buildings.

- *I would also like to see technology services expand to a point where we can request information from each organization involved with an offender at the touch of a key on the keyboard.*
- *Every day I have to decide which is priority: doing my paperwork and my data base entries or working with my clients. It would be such a relief to have our data entry and our paperwork streamlined and functional.*
- *I would like to see safety and training issues addressed. The work we do is getting more dangerous...*

**The Organization:** Staff focused on various aspects of the organization, including *reorganization* and *Agency-level issues* (252). In reference to reorganization, some comments focused on a perceived increase in *hierarchy* (22) at the expense of necessary front line positions. *Complaints* (40) revealed disillusionment with what was perceived as costly and unnecessary spending on office moves. There was concern about hiring top management who did not have an understanding of the history and context of the agency. Staff addressed *implementation* (27) of the reorganization, recommending more organized approaches, consistent use of new terms, and time for staff to incorporate new changes before moving on to new ones. Staff at all levels wanted their *input* visibly utilized in decision-making and the impact of reorganization carefully *examined* (37). Not only did they suggest independent audits of work sites, but they also wanted leadership to engage with the field units, attending to internal operations, staffing shortages, high stress, slow response to grievances, morale issues, and mental health issues in the jails. They wanted more *communication* so they could properly prepare for changes (44), and an “awareness that not every employee sits in from of a computer.” There were concerns about the impact, on clientele, of department name changes. A few were pleased with improvements so far (6).

- *Changes are already underway to improve our environment...We have to tell ourselves that "Change is Good!"*
- *When something is wrong we create more upper echelon positions rather than at the site of the problem.*
- *Come talk to us, listen to what we have to say about things that could be changed or bettered, write them down and then actually do something with that information.*
- *Moving Department heads around at random doesn't seem to be a good strategy. Maybe it isn't random - who knows? The point is, we don't. Communication could be improved.*
- *Stay the course but make sure you pay a lot of attention to it and put the proper resources into making it happen. Because of the administrative changes at the top, people are questioning if there is the will to carry through on this reorganization.*
- *The changes I've heard about seem sound, let's get moving and get them in practice.*

A portion of respondents discussed *Agency-level issues* (90), most often expressing a desire for greater *collaboration* (31) between departments while respecting their cultural differences, and a stronger connection with the central office. They suggested Agency-wide policy, procedures, and best practices; liaisons for interagency collaboration at local levels; improved exchange of information between departments; more collaboration with the prison systems and the probation and parole offices, and closer

collaboration with outside organizations to better serve the needs of clients. Of note was a frequent suggestion that corrections be considered a public safety function, rather than an arm of social service. However, others wanted more integration of the Department of Corrections within AHS to help “wean our population off corrections into a more prosocial status.” Some suggested different *focuses* for the agency (9). Respondents discussed elements of *Agency structure*, including contact points with consumers and locations of offices (38). Some suggested a simpler telephone greeting, and the elimination of acronyms on electronic or hard copy correspondence and communications. Others wanted different office configurations and one suggested an autism center with all related resources under one roof to meet a rapidly growing need. A few mentioned agency *funding* allocation (3) and *decision-making* (9).

- *Collaboration has become more positive between agencies within AHS.*
- *Please explain to the other organizations in AHS what corrections is about. I spend most of my time explaining my job to others and dealing with the misconceptions and fears.*
- *I would like to see the stigma of working for DOC diminish over time. We have such an awful reputation to live down....*
- *Our immediate consumers are not the offenders in which we supervise, but rather the public who pays us to perform services to keep their communities safe as well as offering rehabilitation for their neighbors*
- *All too often the media highlights the failures of the Agency; the reality is that we do a lot of work that is highly beneficial to our clients. I love the fact that Corrections has a Community High School of Vermont that is active, effective and utilized effectively.*
- *I believe that the Agency is genuine about trying to help the people of Vermont. I am excited about the possibility of cross department sharing of information within the Agency.*

#### ***D. Qualitative Staff Survey Items: Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) Findings***

Out of 212 respondents from the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, 87.3% (185) discussed what they liked best about their work at AHS (Question #1); 82.1% (174) suggested changes (Question #2); and 82.1% (174) gave advice on how AHS could improve services for clients and/or work conditions for staff (Question #3). The following department-level summary distills the essence of the open-ended responses from staff, combining answers from each of the three questions into one narrative with quotes to accentuate key points. Themes and subthemes from the qualitative survey item findings for all staff (Chapter VII) have been regrouped under four overarching categories described in the next paragraph. These categories provide the framework for all six department summaries. *Most of the themes and subthemes (in italics throughout the departmental summary) are described in greater detail in Chapter VII, organized by survey question.*

Staff comments focused on four overarching sources of their job satisfaction: **the people** with whom they work, foremost being leadership, but also coworkers and clientele; **the work** itself, including the mission behind their work, variety, opportunities for training and professional growth, challenge, and benefits; **the environment**, encompassing not only the physical environment but also tools and resources to do the job, workload, and policies; and **the organization**, focusing specifically on Agency

priorities and aspects of reorganization. (In the following description of each theme, the number in parentheses indicates the frequency with which that theme or subtheme was mentioned.)

**The People:** Work relationships were prominent in the employee comments (290), especially *leadership* (166). Staff appreciated supervisory relationships that were mutually productive and satisfying, where performance standards were clear, everyone felt respected and understood, there was room for disagreement and independence, and good work was acknowledged and rewarded in ways that were meaningful to the employee. Where this was not happening, they suggested that people in leadership positions receive training and be held accountable through performance review that includes subordinate feedback. Some wanted criteria for top leadership positions to include human service background and demonstrated leadership and supervisory success. Staff also discussed *coworkers* (88).

- *I work with a wonderful, bright group of people. Our Division values professional judgment, does not micromanage, has a strong customer focus, and promotes well-being.*
- *I work with a wonderful group of coworkers, and I have a fantastic supervisor who is supportive, encouraging, and understanding.*
- *I would like more upper level managers to have more conversations with those of us who work directly in the field with consumers. I would like the commissioner of our department to know who I am.*
- *I am privileged to work for a department and division that supports and encourages employees to make the decisions that will help consumers progress. There is wonderful support for and amongst employees in my division. This translates into top notch customer service. Being empowered allows us to model and encourage that behavior for our clients.*
- *I like being treated respectfully and supported to do my best work....I like having the trust of my department to make independent decisions using my best judgments. I appreciate being supported and encouraged to grow professionally and I love the emphasis of working as a team with such knowledgeable and committed people.*

Staff praised their effective team efforts with committed colleagues and the supportiveness of coworkers. They wanted improvement in the accountability, attitudes and behaviors of some coworkers within and across departments who they felt were not respectful of clientele, who were not working at full capacity, or who were not open to change. Employees valued their direct contact with *clientele* (36).

- *There is a real attitude of teamwork here - people are much too busy to entertain personality differences, work style differences, or other things that tend to decrease the professionalism.*
- *If AHS instituted a 360 degree performance process in all departments, such as used in VR, the customer focus would change dramatically.*
- *I think the ability to provide a welcoming environment where clients feel respected has to do with something more important than how the waiting room looks. Dictates from above do not produce it either. I believe it comes from employees who themselves feel empowered, welcomed and respected.*
- *I enjoy my colleagues in other parts of AHS, from Corrections to Economic Services who I feel are sharing this responsibility of helping people.*



- *I enjoy the one on one contact with my consumers and the ability to provide direct assistance toward positive changes in their lives.*
- *The ability to work interactively and cooperatively with my consumers in an agency that values consumer empowerment.*

**The Work:** Many staff commented on the nature of their work (252), from satisfaction with the job itself and the material *benefits* received for their labor (51), to the intrinsically rewarding aspects of pursuing a worthwhile *mission* (133) and being *challenged* to grow professionally (32). Respondents appreciated *variety* (18) in their tasks and wanted a career ladder for *professional advancement*, or at least an opportunity for lateral change. Employees suggested various kinds of *training* (18), beginning with an assessment of training needs when employees start or change to new positions, a thorough orientation to the job and to the computer applications used on the job, formal training for “permanent temp” employees, and cross training for all employees to acquire a basic knowledge of services in other departments. Particular topics requested included ethical practices, client benefits, and disability and poverty awareness. Other topics included collaboration, listening skills, and the basics of running interactive meetings. Some staff asked for support to pursue advanced degrees and to participate in out-of-state conferences. Contract staff also wanted to be eligible for continuing education and benefits.

- *For me the thrill is when I have helped a Vermonter reach his or her goals, especially when some of my work has helped to reach a successful outcome. It is even more thrilling when this leads to self-sufficiency.*
- *The consumers I work with are such an inspiration. With so many things against them they continue to strive to make a better place for themselves in this world. I love the challenge of assisting them and the variety I encounter each day.*
- *I like feeling that my work with consumers can make a positive difference in their lives....Everyday in my job is new and a learning experience with the shared goal of excellence.*
- *My work at AHS is extremely interesting and challenging.*
- *I would like to more fully utilize my skills, education and abilities.*
- *I think all state employees are underpaid - in comparison to jobs in the general sector. I also think that we keep getting less for raises and more taken out for health care - we are losing money to work for the state.*
- *I also would like to see merit raises (for everyone) each year based on an individuals work for the prior year - not just step raises and cost of living.*

**The Environment:** Staff articulated environmental factors that interfered with efficiency, service, and respect (173). Respondents pointed to unreasonable *workloads* (51), citing high caseloads, excessive paperwork, inequities in workload across the agency, shortage of secretarial help, pressure to “do more with less,” and praise for working overtime on nights and weekends. Discussion also focused on inflexible *policies* (61) that prohibited them from effectively serving clients and living balanced lives. They wanted improvements in the grants and contracts process, clearer and consistently communicated policies and procedures around financial supports for consumers, better policies and practices relating to vendors and provider agencies, and greater flexibility for immediate responses, especially to the needs of youth. A few were dismayed with hiring, promotion, and compensation policies, and wanted to see greater equity in job

classification. They wanted to see pay raises tied to performance, salary increases for long-time employees who were no longer eligible for step increases, and “more consistency with pay, personnel policies and procedures between different departments within the agency.” Staff wanted greater work/life balance through flexible schedules, telecommuting, job sharing, and reduced overall hours.

- *The Paperwork Reduction Act? What's that?? We are drowning in paperwork.*
- *There needs to be a needs-centered approach to services, rather than diagnosis- based decision-making. Many people don't meet "criteria" or "fall through the cracks" and nothing in reorganization is addressing those issues....A person could be severely disabled, but not meet the specific criteria because their diagnoses don't fit the tradition, or expected, criteria, and consequently they do not receive, or do not receive appropriate, services.*
- *I like best that I have the flexibility to be creative and think outside of the box for what's best for a consumer-and being able to take action when it makes sense quickly, instead of having to go through tons of approvals, and take time to dot the i's and cross the t's.*
- *I believe there is a disconnect between the field and district offices and Central offices. Policies and procedures seem to be created without any knowledge of the consumers and or workers they will have an impact on.*
- *The practice of upgrading field staff to supervisory positions without demonstration of actual supervisory/management skills.*
- *The attitude that any support person is available to take on additional duties at the same pay grade and level but if a professional or manager takes on additional work, they are promoted.*

Employees recommended *tools and resources* (26) that would enhance their ability to do their jobs. Technology that eliminates duplication of efforts was high on the list of improvements. This included encrypted and centralized email, standardized computer hardware, wireless technology, standard database programs, an expanded and simplified cash program, and the ability to share consumer information between departments through an on-line system. Some suggested a single release form that covers all departments to aid information sharing. Staff asked for a directory of acronyms. Some wanted improvements in resources for consumers, such as public transportation, shared living homes for the elderly, and additional funding support for adult protective services.

Staff had serious concerns about the *physical environment* (35), saying it interfered with respectful service because it was dangerous, inadequate, or lacking in privacy. Concerns included lack of private space to meet clients or perform other tasks, lack of windows that open, and the need for functioning equipment, such as water fountains and toilets, and heating and cooling systems. Another issue was compromised confidentiality of records due to the layout of the office and location of computer screens. Comments also focused on problems with air quality, pests in the building, unsafe and unhealthy conditions in particular buildings, lack of help moving heavy office equipment, and insufficient space. Staff wanted better security, such as an effective warning system when there is a potential threat to personal safety. Some asked for a more responsive process for requesting work on facilities and others requested worksite wellness facilities.

- *I would like a private office to meet with clients instead of a cubicle or someone else's office.*
- *Improve confidentiality of paperwork, computer screens, and conversations.*
- *Ensure that employees are being treated consistently in terms of work environment.*
- *Why am I working in a lock down unit??? Lock down units are very disrespectful to everyone.*

**The Organization:** Staff focused on various aspects of the organization, including *reorganization* and *Agency-level issues* (215). In reference to reorganization, some comments focused on perceived increase in *hierarchy* (25) at the expense of front line positions. *Complaints* (19) revealed concerns and disappointments about staff not being included in decision-making, about potential destabilization of services, and about disruption in employees' lives due to office relocations. Staff addressed *implementation* (47) of the reorganization, recommending more resources, a more concise and focused plan, taking into account the breadth of AHS work, and adequate time allotted for transition and training. Opinions differed on the pacing of change.

- *Keep making changes as we see a need for change and proceed slowly....AHS re-organization has set some goals, and I see that with time some of those goals can and will change. That's healthy-it's a breath of fresh air! It's a step into the future for those we serve and we the servers.*
- *Too many queen bees and not enough worker bees. I would really look at the workload of each and balance it out. I would like to take away the top-heavy management and give the workers the support they need to get the job done.*
- *The change is created from the top down, so it hardly matters what I would like.*
- *Frankly, I do not think anything needed to be changed in the department for which I work ....If I'd been in charge, I would have focused on what didn't work in the Agency, and then set about finding the best way to fix it.*
- *I think the re-org is trying to address all the things that weren't up to standard.*

Staff at all levels wanted their *input* visibly utilized in decision-making and wanted the impact of reorganization carefully *examined* (25). They suggested continually monitoring progress via communication with staff and consumers. They also wanted more definite decisions and prompt *communication* about these decisions so they could properly prepare for changes (23). Other concerns focused on *information technology* (6) suggesting more discussion prior to implementing changes, and gathering input from information technology employees as well as the individuals using software applications. Some felt strongly about keeping information technology and business office functions decentralized. Several thought reorganization was proceeding as well as expected (7).

- *Continue moving forward. The long range plan sounds good.*
- *The decision-making process. Instead of pushing forth a 'mandate' after asking for input, how about seriously considering the input received in response to their questions?*
- *I would like to have better communication regarding what is happening with reorganization - as ever, the majority of communication and planning happens at the "higher" levels and those of us on the front line have little if any input or knowledge. I really believe in the power of inclusion in this type of process to bring about a greater sense of commitment.*
- *You are doing the best that can be done.*

A portion of respondents discussed *Agency-level issues* (67) most often expressing a desire for greater *collaboration* (27) to help consumers with multiple needs. They suggested incentives for community services to work together and for collaboration across divisions and departments. Many saw full implementation of the navigator positions and process as essential to this goal. Staff also wanted to preserve the uniqueness of departments in the unification effort. Some suggested different *focuses* for the Agency (11) that would empower clients. Respondents discussed elements of *Agency structure*, including contact points with consumers and locations of offices (16). Many comments focused on the field director positions, wanting greater clarity, autonomy and authority in their roles, and wanting their positions to remain decentralized and close to the day to day operations in the field. Several felt the field director needed adequate resources, such as a budget, to meet the needs of consumers with complex issues. Some questioned whether both navigators and field directors were needed. Other respondents suggested naming departments by their function, a simpler telephone greeting, and consensus on practical considerations such as letterhead, business cards, and websites. A few mentioned *Agency funding allocation* (6) and *decision-making* (7).

- *I would like to see other AHS departments allow their employees to also use their skills and knowledge in more flexible ways. There are still a couple of departments that go strictly by the book and do not allow creative ways of figuring out how to best work as a team.*
- *We also need to look at the different cultures/agendas that need to work together. For example PATH is a mandated program, VR is not. How do we reconcile these two cultures when we have clients in common?*
- *The original idea of having "Navigators" seemed like the most logical piece of the reorganization. I have not heard anything more about this service to consumers.*
- *Instead of this global re-organization, I'd like to see more focus (via multidisciplinary teams) on assisting families that fall through the cracks of publicly-funded services.*
- *Finally, and probably most importantly, I would like to keep politics from taking priority over best practice.*

### **E. Qualitative Staff Survey Items: Office of Health Access (OVHA) Findings**

Out of 57 respondents from the Office of Health Access, 79% (45) discussed what they liked best about their work at AHS (Question #1); 82.5% (47) suggested changes (Question #2); and 73.7% (42) gave advice on how AHS could improve services for clients and/or work conditions for staff (Question #3). The following department-level summary distills the essence of the open-ended responses from staff, combining answers from each of the three questions into one narrative with quotes to accentuate key points. Themes and subthemes from the qualitative survey item findings for all staff (Chapter VII) have been regrouped under four overarching categories described in the next paragraph. These categories provide the framework for all six department summaries. *Most of the themes and subthemes (in italics throughout the departmental summary) are described in greater detail in Chapter VII, organized by survey question.*

Staff comments focused on four overarching sources of their job satisfaction: **the people** with whom they work, foremost being leadership, but also coworkers and clientele; **the work** itself, including the mission behind their work, variety, opportunities for training and professional growth, challenge, and benefits; **the environment**, encompassing not only the physical environment but also tools and resources to do the job, workload, and policies; and **the organization**, focusing specifically on Agency priorities and aspects of reorganization. (In the following description of each theme, the number in parentheses indicates the frequency with which that theme or subtheme was mentioned.)

**The People:** Work relationships were prominent in the employee comments (78). Regarding their work relationships, staff most often discussed *leadership* (50) throughout all three questions. They particularly appreciated supervisory relationships that were mutually productive and satisfying, where performance standards were clear, everyone felt respected and understood, there was room for disagreement and independence, and good work was acknowledged and rewarded in ways that were meaningful to the employee. Where this was not happening, they suggested that people in leadership positions receive training and be held accountable through performance review that includes subordinate feedback. Some particularly suggested “360 reviews.” Staff also discussed *coworkers* (22). They praised their effective team efforts with committed colleagues and the supportiveness of coworkers. Staff wanted improvement in the accountability, attitudes and behaviors of some coworkers who they felt were not respectful of clientele, who were not working at full capacity, or who were not open to change. Employees valued their direct contact with *clientele* (6).

- *I like that I am trusted to do the best I can for my consumers. I like that my supervisor trusts me. I like making my own schedule. I like that my office supports me but does not expect me to agree with everything in a lock-step sort of way.*
- *My coworkers and consumers. For the most part, I work with people who view their job positively, are respectful and caring. I consider myself lucky to be working with such fine folks.*
- *I would like to see upper level management in the field at sites other than headquarters in Burlington/Waterbury, talking with and asking the opinions of employees. Walking an hour or two in another's shoes can make understanding their job and later on a telephone call a lot more productive.*
- *I would love to see people of all areas (Management too) act as though we are all on the same level. Respect.*
- *I never met the branch manager, he or she have never made any efforts to learn about our division.*
- *I like the fact that I can work independently and also work with others in the office when needed. I like the atmosphere that I work in.*

**The Work:** Many staff commented on the nature of their work (58), from satisfaction with the job itself and the material *benefits* received for their labor (22), to the intrinsically rewarding aspects of pursuing a worthwhile *mission* (21) and being *challenged* to grow professionally (6). Staff wanted better salaries and pay incentives. Two respondents appreciated *variety* in their tasks and a few others wanted advancement opportunities. Employees suggested various kinds of *training* (7), such as an orientation to the office and paperwork details, and communication skills training.

- *I like my job....I believe in our mission statements.*
- *Offering individuals and families HOPE.*
- *My work at the AHS makes the best use of some of my talents.*
- *Vermont is a small enough state that we can work together as one community - in education, health care, environmental concerns, etc. - and create a healthier, more comfortable, peaceful place to live.*
- *You can't expect us to survive when the insurance rate added together with the cost of living raise equals a negative number.*

**The Environment:** Staff articulated environmental factors that interfered with efficiency, service, and respect (35). Respondents pointed to unreasonable *workloads* (16) and inflexible *policies* (15) that prohibited them from effectively serving clients and living balanced lives. One believed that a better health care system would solve many problems for consumers. Staff asked for flexible funding to handle gaps in service. They wanted greater work schedule flexibility and equitable compensation. Employees recommended *tools and resources* (9) that would enhance their ability to do their jobs. Reliable computer networks and technology that eliminates duplication of efforts was high on the list of improvements. Some staff members were concerned about adequate outside resources for consumers when they leave AHS. Others asked for a chart describing each department and its location, its staff, and where to direct phone calls. They also asked for an overview of the function of each department, unit, and division. Staff had serious concerns about the *physical environment* (10) which interfered with respectful service because it was dangerous, inadequate, or lacking in privacy. One example was air quality issues in a building resulting in respiratory ailments.

- *There would be a big improvement in our office if there were more workers and smaller case loads*
- *Correct inappropriate, inaccurate and ambiguous policies & procedures.*
- *I would like to see the compensation and promotion structure and culture changed.... Why not update the jobs so that they reflect the current job demands?*
- *There are problems with communication or how information is shared with everyone. Front line staff is the last to know or receive communication concerning an event, situations, protocol, or general information. We do not have the tools, resources, and knowledge to provide good customer service. This is externally and internally.*
- *Listen & respond to staff when they communicate problems with the physical environment and the work load.*

**The Organization:** Staff focused on various aspects of the organization, including *reorganization* and *Agency-level issues* (37). In reference to reorganization, a few comments focused on a perceived increase in *hierarchy* (3) at the expense of front line positions. *Complaints* (5) revealed concerns about waiting periods before moving offices, and increased workload and loss of employees due to reorganization. Staff addressed *implementation* (5) of the reorganization, recommending more resources and taking into account the breadth of AHS work. Comments differed on whether the timeline was too slow or too fast, and a few felt it was on track. A few staff wanted their *input* visibly utilized in decision-making and wanted the impact of reorganization carefully *examined* (3). They also wanted more *communication* so they could properly prepare for changes (5). Other concerns focused on *information technology* (2) and consequences of centralizing IT operations away from the department level.

- *Reorganization is at a slow and steady progress and is the best that can be expected as this takes time to accomplish.*
- *We need more front level staff and less management.*
- *I think the time line is too fast...it seems to throw off consumers and staff alike.*
- *I would like to see an actual plan with realistic goals as well as the staff to accomplish the goals.*
- *I work for computer services. Although I love what I do, the reorganization has done nothing but triple the work load for my work unit. We have lost several staff members because of the reorganization and we're all working much more overtime than we have in the past.*
- *Continue listening to the frontline staff.*
- *Keep moving on the right track, as I feel you are.*

A portion of respondents discussed *Agency-level issues* (15) most often expressing a desire for greater *collaboration* (5). They suggested incentives for community services to work together and for collaboration across and within offices, divisions, and departments. One suggested that commissioners meet to help coordinate job resources with job needs of consumers. They wanted to see a “logical, organized and documented work flow.” Respondents discussed elements of *Agency structure*, including contact points with consumers and locations of offices (8). Some suggested signage with new office names and a central area in the building, ideally on the first floor, for directing consumers to the appropriate office. Two mentioned *decision-making*.

- *I think we should continue to improve accessibility to resources. I like the idea of the Navigator positions where there would be a questionnaire that would be used to screen the customer for what types of needs they may have so that the Navigator would know where to direct them. Or perhaps there would be some type of release the customer would sign and then we could enter their information into some type of data base to the appropriate department/division and then there would be a follow up from that department/division with the customer. Try to streamline the process. Make services more easily accessible for the customer.*
- *Increased coordination of efforts. I do not know of a well publicized or easily accessible forum for State staff to learn about other State staff activities/projects/directives that could interface with their own work. I think the managers may have this type of info, but they do not always relate it to staff.*
- *I would like State employees to have a better reputation - get rid of that "oh they are State workers" attitude.*
- *I feel that the court system needs to be more discriminating about the kind of help the people they send here need. I think the options of where to send whom needs to be addressed.*

## **F. Qualitative Staff Survey Items: AHS Central Office Findings**

Out of 88 respondents from the AHS Central Office, 84.1% (74) discussed what they liked best about their work at AHS (Question #1); 86.4% (76) suggested changes (Question #2); and 80.7% (71) gave advice on how AHS could improve services for clients and/or work conditions for staff (Question #3). The following department-level summary distills the essence of the open-ended responses from staff, combining answers from each of the three questions into one narrative with quotes to accentuate key points. Themes and subthemes from the qualitative survey item findings for all staff

(Chapter VII) have been regrouped under four overarching categories described in the next paragraph. These categories provide the framework for all six department summaries. *Most of the themes and subthemes (in italics throughout the departmental summary) are described in greater detail in Chapter VII, organized by survey question.*

Staff comments focused on four overarching sources of their job satisfaction: **the people** with whom they work, foremost being leadership, but also coworkers and clientele; **the work** itself, including the mission behind their work, variety, opportunities for training and professional growth, challenge, and benefits; **the environment**, encompassing not only the physical environment but also tools and resources to do the job, workload, and policies; and **the organization**, focusing specifically on agency priorities and aspects of reorganization. (In the following description of each theme, the number in parentheses indicates the frequency with which that theme or subtheme was mentioned.)

**The People:** Work relationships were prominent in the employee comments (95). Regarding their work relationships, staff most often discussed *leadership* (59) throughout all three questions. They particularly appreciated supervisory relationships that were mutually productive and satisfying, where performance standards were clear, constructive feedback was regularly given, everyone felt respected and understood, there was room for disagreement and independence, and good work was acknowledged and rewarded in ways that were meaningful to the employee. Where this was not happening, they suggested that people in leadership positions receive training and be held accountable through performance review that includes subordinate feedback.

- *I think I am very fortunate to work in a unit that frowns upon being stagnant and unbending but encourages us to think outside the box. I work in a place where we not only respect one another, but every person we come in contact with. We are encouraged to share our ideas and ideals without ever feeling put down or not listened to. I feel fortunate to have this incredible job.*
- *I would say that my direct supervisor and their supervisor are good supervisors and most of the time we understand each other, our points, and what it is going to take to get the job done.*
- *I would like to see employees empowered to effect positive change. Workers are generally demeaned and undercut by management, sort of a late 19th century management model.*
- *Supervisor personally abuses work schedule but keeps tabs on employees'.*
- *I would also like to see the top administrators familiarize themselves with staff. I would like to see them actually walk around the Waterbury office, at a minimum, and introduce themselves personally. I would like there to be more communication amongst them and staff. I would also like them to recognize that there are many laws that need to be complied with and that there are knowledgeable staff that can be useful in informing them of these requirements.*

Staff also discussed *coworkers* (29). They praised their effective team efforts with committed colleagues and the supportiveness of coworkers. Staff wanted improvement in the accountability, attitudes and behaviors of some coworkers who they felt were not respectful of clientele, who were not working at full capacity, or who were not open to change. Some employees valued their direct contact with *clientele* (7).



- *I like the contact I have with a wide range of AHS employees, especially the giving nature of those employees;*
- *Working with the many wonderful people of AHS.*
- *The people I work with. As stressful as ALL parts of Re-org has been, they take pride in their work and give another day their 100% in as professional a manner as can be.*
- *More emphasis needs to be placed on hiring receptionist/front desk personnel who are friendlier, more concerned and helpful.*
- *My coworkers and consumers. For the most part, I work with people who view their job positively, are respectful and caring. I consider myself lucky to be working with such fine folks.*

**The Work:** Many staff commented on the nature of their work (93), from satisfaction with the job itself and the material *benefits* received for their labor (19), to the intrinsically rewarding aspects of pursuing a worthwhile *mission* (40) and being *challenged* to grow professionally (15). Staff asked for a “better pay scale” and “cheaper health insurance.” Some wanted “compensation for responsibility.” Respondents appreciated *variety* (12) in their tasks and wanted a career ladder for *professional advancement*. Employees suggested increased *training* opportunities focused on job tasks and technology (7).

- *The core mission of providing services to needy Vermonters is important to me. I enjoy working with other people who feel that way.*
- *My work provides me with the opportunity to give AHS staff members tools to better do their job, which in turn should help the people we serve have better access to services.*
- *I believe I can make a difference in the people I serve. I enjoy the challenge of creating solutions to the problems presented.*
- *I would like to see more equality in job titles and...job comparing when doing reclassification.*
- *Other than step increases, there is no professional advancement or promotional opportunities.*

**The Environment:** Staff articulated environmental factors that interfered with efficiency, service, and respect (60). Respondents made suggestions that would help balance *workloads* (20). They discussed *policies* (22), often mentioning those concerning hiring, promotion, and compensation. Employees recommended *tools and resources* (10) that would enhance their ability to do their jobs. Technology that eliminates duplication of efforts was high on the list of improvements. This included regularly updated computer equipment and software. Staff had concerns about the *physical environment* (8) which interfered with respectful service because it was distracting, dangerous, inadequate, or lacking in privacy.

- *I would like: (1) clear delineation of who is to perform what administrative tasks in the AHS central office; (2) assistance for administrative tasks, instead of me performing tasks when it takes up time that could be spent on my job duties (I certainly can perform them but it seems like a waste of AHS dollars).*
- *Support for another position for my unit, which is desperately needed. It's discouraging to see new positions created in the agency, while a part of my unit is under such tremendous and unrealistic pressure.*
- *Putting people in positions for which they have no experience or background may work in large companies but it does not work in human services, where the amounts of money may be the same but the human consequences are much more dire.*

- *A concerted effort to develop a centralized computing facility (server room) to improve resource sharing across all departments. As long as AHS departments maintain separate server rooms scattered across the Waterbury campus it will be difficult to integrate and centralize IT functions. A central location with adequate space, power, and cooling is sorely needed and will make better use of both financial and human resources in the Agency.*
- *We have bats regularly, air quality is very poor, I don't think they ever clean the ceiling fans or get the dead flies out of the light fixtures, too hot in summer, too cold in winter, windows that don't shut tight etc.. It is not uncommon to have snow inside the building during the winter months from these windows.*

**The Organization:** Staff focused on various aspects of the organization, including *reorganization* and *Agency-level issues* (98). In reference to reorganization, some comments focused on a perceived increase in *hierarchy* (16) at the expense of front line positions. *Complaints* (21) revealed serious concerns and disappointments about what was perceived as costly and unnecessary spending on office moves, and loss of employees. Staff addressed *implementation* (15) of the reorganization, recommending more resources. There was a sense that too much change was happening at the same time without thoughtful sequencing and pacing. Some did not like the change in their own positions due to reorganization. Staff wanted their *input* considered and utilized in decision-making. They wanted the impact of reorganization carefully *examined* (11).

- *I believe that we have gone over board on the management level and are really taking away from the number of people who are hands on with the clients/users of AHS services.*
- *I have lost many coworkers from my section due to the Agency reorganization, but the work has increased.*
- *Reorganization was poorly thought out as to its implications and rushed into existence. The funds for the 34 new positions created were not budgeted and now that money has to be taken away from programs that actually help people.*
- *Change is fine, but implement it at a pace that people can accept. Choose priorities. Have the top management consider the timing of the task we were asked to do.*
- *A comprehensive examination by AHS of the systems (manner of performing tasks) that AHS has in place agency-wide and those that would be helpful to have in place.*

Respondents also wanted more *communication* so they could properly prepare for changes (13). Other concerns focused on *information technology* (8) and consequences of centralizing IT operations away from the department level. Two respondents felt reorganization was going okay and one expressed appreciation for the opportunity to provide input on the staff survey.

- *Meet with individual departments with a question and answer session regarding concerns.*
- *I would un-reorg the IT folks....There are many books on how to re-org IT services but apparently nobody bothered to read any of them to make it successful.*
- *So far it really has not been too much of a hassle.*
- *Thank you for doing this. I appreciate the fact that someone is looking at staff concerns and that I had the opportunity to write a narrative rather than just answering multiple choice questions.*

A portion of respondents discussed *Agency-level issues* (22) most often expressing a desire for greater *collaboration* (6) between departments. Some suggested different *focuses* for the agency (5). Respondents discussed elements of *Agency structure*,

including contact points with consumers and locations of offices (8). One mentioned Agency *funding* allocation and two mentioned *decision-making*, wanting more time spent on “understanding and assessing consumer needs.”

- *I feel that there is a lack of communication between the various departments within the Agency. It is important that we work together. We are all one Agency and should perform our work and communicate with that in mind. There is a feeling of the Departments being separate entities from one another and that they are each out for themselves.*
- *Actually make some decisions and have them based on what would be best for our clients, rather than the political climate.*
- *Use the new AHS Field Directors as first line in dealing with consumer complaints re: district issues.*
- *We need to make changes to make it easier for Vermonters to navigate through our many systems/programs in order to get the services they need and without too much hassle.*

## **IX. Reference List of Survey Items**

### **I. Quantitative Items:**

(original response scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

#### **Supervision and Leadership**

1. My job duties are clear to me.
2. The job performance standards are clear to me.
3. My direct supervisor gives me useful and timely feedback on my job performance.
4. Changes in work expectations are timely and clear.
5. My direct supervisor gives me recognition or praise for doing good work.
6. I feel respected by my direct supervisor.
7. I have respect for, and confidence in, my direct supervisor.
8. I receive an annual performance evaluation each year.
9. The merit award system is fair.
10. Department leadership strives to create and maintain a positive work environment.
11. The leadership of my department demonstrates support for its employees.
12. I have respect for and confidence in departmental leadership.

#### **Work Environment**

13. The physical environment of my primary worksite is satisfactory.
14. A spirit of mutual respect, team work and cooperation exists in my work unit.
15. My work unit respects cultural diversity among our staff.
16. My work unit respects cultural diversity among our consumers.
17. My work unit carefully takes into consideration the needs for accommodation for consumers with disabilities.
18. My work unit uses information from consumers to improve AHS services.
19. My work unit has an open atmosphere that encourages new ideas.
20. My work environment supports excellent customer service.
21. At work, my opinions are listened to and respected.
22. Employee morale in my work unit is good.
23. Independent decision-making is encouraged in my work unit.
24. I often think about leaving my job.

#### **Job Supports and Resources**

25. My salary is fair considering my duties and responsibilities.
26. Overall, I am satisfied with the benefits I receive.
27. I receive adequate training to perform my job.
28. I have the equipment and resources I need to perform my job.
29. I have the technology support I need to perform my job.
30. My workload and responsibilities are reasonable.
31. My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.
32. My work is interesting.
33. My job provides me with the opportunity to learn and grow professionally.
34. There are opportunities for promotion and advancement.
35. There is sufficient flexibility in my job to balance work and personal life.

#### **The Work of AHS**

36. My work makes a difference in people's lives.
37. I understand the goals of AHS re-organization.
38. I believe in the goals of AHS re-organization.
39. I believe the goals of AHS re-organization are achievable within 3-5 years.
40. I feel positive about the possibilities for change with the AHS re-organization.
41. Thinking about the implementation of re-organization so far, I think re-organization has helped to improve consumer services.

## II. Qualitative Items:

1. What do you like best about your work at AHS?
2. What would you most like to see changed?
3. Thinking about the AHS reorganization over the past 6 months, what could AHS do differently in the next 6 months to improve services for clients and/or work conditions for staff?

## III. Demographic Items:

Please tell us about your role at AHS and the region in which you work.

This information will be kept confidential by UVM. It will only be used to make statistical comparisons between different groups of respondents; it will not be reported at a level that will enable individual respondents to be identified.

1. AHS Affiliation: Please check the division under the Department/Office in which you work.

### Department of Health

- Community Public Health
- Health Improvement
- Health Surveillance
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- Mental Health
- Other

### Department for Children and Families

- Economic Services
- Child Support
- Child Development
- Family Services
- Field Services
- Other

### Department of Corrections

- Facilities
- Community Services
- Other

### Department of Aging and Independent Living

- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Disability and Aging Services
- DBVI
- Licensing and Protection
- Other

### Office of VT Health Access

- Health Access/Medicaid
- Managed Care
- Other

### AHS Central Office

- IT
- Business
- Rate Setting
- Other

2. AHS Work Location:

A. Primary AHS Region: Please choose your region from the list below if you are assigned to a district office.

- Brattleboro
- Barre
- Bennington
- Burlington
- Hartford
- Middlebury
- Montpelier
- Morrisville
- Newport
- Rutland
- Springfield
- St Albans
- St Johnsbury
- Not Affiliated with a Region

B. No regional affiliation: Please choose a work location from the list below if you are *not* assigned to a specific district office (i.e. Corrections, VSH, Facilities)

- Central Office (Waterbury, Williston, Burlington)
- Facility-based
- Other

3. Type of Job: Choose the job type that most applies to your position.

- Manager / Supervisor
- Support Staff (IT, Business, HR, clerical)
- Non Direct Service (Policy, Planning etc.)
- Direct service/direct care for individuals and/or families

4. Length of AHS Employment (across all jobs within AHS)

- Less than 1 year
- Between 1 and 2 years
- Between 2 and 5 years
- Between 5 and 10 years
- Between 10 and 20 years
- More than 20 years