



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

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August 4, 2014

TO: Deputy Directors
Via the Statewide Deputy Director distribution list

FROM: Tracy Guerin
Deputy Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy".

**RE: POLICY CHANGE FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY
RESPONSE GROUPS**

As we study our employee engagement survey data, we sometimes want to know more about the people who answer the survey. What division do they work in? What type of work do they do? Do these things make a difference in their engagement? At the same time, we want employees to feel comfortable answering the survey and we want to make systemic changes that will increase the engagement of as many employees as possible.

To improve how we balance these needs, we are changing several of our survey practices, beginning with the 2014 survey this fall.

- For agencies that add drill-down questions to the survey, such as division, location, or work group, we ask you to ensure that there are 20 or more employees for each group.

Drill-down groups are identified by the combination of agency-specific demographic questions. Low response rates and small sample sizes can increase the risk of focusing on a problem felt only by a small group. At a 50%+ response rate, your groups of 20 or more employees will tend to result in at least 10 responses for the group. If your response rate is less than 50%, you may need to consider even larger drill-down groups.

- State HR will increase the minimum threshold from 5 to 10 responses for all reporting.

These changes will improve the confidentiality and anonymity of survey results to align with best practices and will help to ensure meaningful sample sizes for strategic improvement.

How will this change the survey report I receive?

Larger agencies with no agency-specific demographic questions:

In your agency results report, State HR will continue to provide drill-down results for each group identified by the [standard demographic questions](#).

Reflecting the new threshold, results will be reported if there are 10 or more responses in the group, rather than the 5 response minimum used previously.

Larger agencies that add agency-specific demographic questions:

We will continue to work with your survey contact to identify a breakdown structure that yields a minimum of 10 responses per drill-down group, while still providing actionable data for your agency. After the survey ends, State HR will apply the new 10 response minimum to all standard reports and raw data provided to agencies. If a question or series of questions results in a drill-down group of fewer than 10 responses, State HR will remove the *demographic data* until the individual response is part of a larger group.

Small agencies:

Small agencies' survey responses will continue to be important. Agencies with 10 or more responses will receive a report of their agency results. All responses will be included in the small agency roll-up report.

This fall, State HR will provide a separate survey link for small agencies. Employees will be able to choose whether they answer the demographic questions, such as their agency name, allowing them to maintain their own comfort level with the anonymity of the survey. At the same time, we will know to include their response in the small agency roll-up report.

How did we arrive at this policy change?

We considered statistical significance, response rates, business utility, and anonymity and confidentiality best practices. We also reached out for input from small and large agencies that will be affected by this change.

Please direct questions regarding the survey and reporting to Sherri Hruby at (360) 407-4124.

Thank you.

cc: Glen Christopherson
Franklin Plaistow
Sherri Hruby
Mark Sullivan
Melissa Wideman