

Job Satisfaction of Local Government Employees in Mississippi

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Local governments in Mississippi face several obstacles in attracting and motivating high quality employees. Administrators have encountered increased competition from the private sector, fewer resources, and higher demands from constituents. In addition, a significant percentage of the public sector workforce is moving closer to retirement, and there is a declining interest in younger generations seeking government work. While it is often assumed that pay is the key factor in a worker's job choices, studies have shown that money matters less and non-pecuniary benefits matter more to public employees. Good social relationships with coworkers and supervisors, professional development and promotion opportunities, and participatory management strategies have been shown to influence job satisfaction turnover intentions. Employees exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction and turnover intentions when the characteristics of their work environment satisfy these needs. Thus understanding those factors that are most important to an individual in fulfilling their personal goals and needs is of fundamental importance to the management of employees.

STUDY OVERVIEW

Recently, The Stennis Institute completed a survey of 927 local government employees from ten municipalities across the state of Mississippi. Responses from these





individuals provided a wealth of information regarding the importance of factors including job security, high income, chance for promotion, work that is important, and a job that is useful to society to these individuals and the influence that these factors had on their choice to work for their government employer. This study also evaluated local government employee job satisfaction and turnover intention. Cities participating in this study included Biloxi, Greenville, Gulfport, Hernando, McComb, Meridian, Natchez, Pascagoula, Starkville, and Tupelo. This report details some of the highlights from this research.

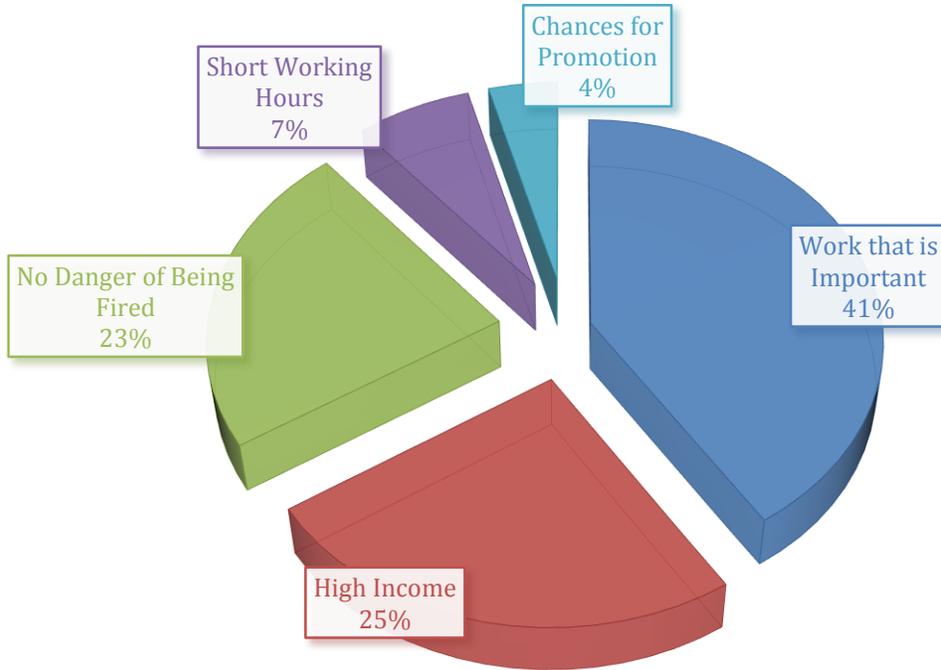
FINDINGS

- 61% of individuals have been employed 10 years or less.
- 59% of employees have been in their current position 5 years or less.
- Work that is important is the highest ranked job characteristic for individuals completing the survey.
- 98% also consider job security as an important personal need.
- Short working hours and the chance for a promotion are less important than work that is important and no danger of being fired.
- 17% of individuals indicate they will not be employed in their position one year from today and 49% do not anticipate being employed in their same position 5 years from today.
- Most individuals anticipate a change in position due to promotion.
- Almost 25% of employees plan to retire within the next 5 years.
- 35% plan to leave within the year due to dissatisfaction with pay.





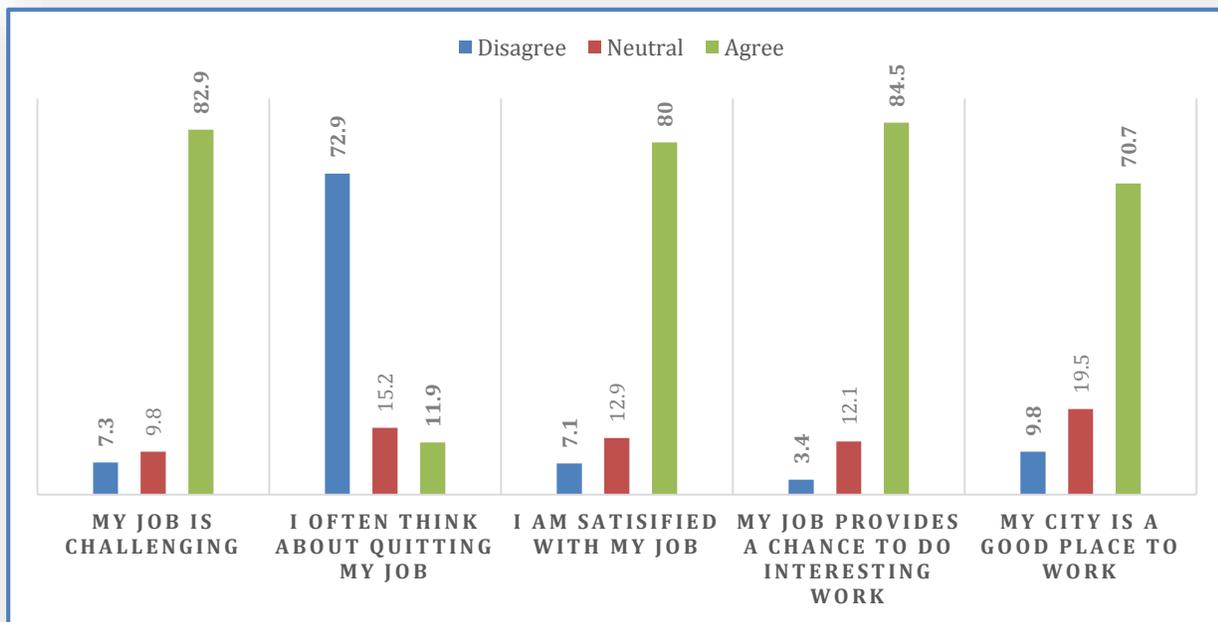
MOST IMPORTANT JOB CHARACTERISTIC



When employees in this study were questioned about their job satisfaction and working conditions, responses yielded the following information:

- 83% of local government workers consider their job challenging.
- 92% consider the work they do on their job to be meaningful.
- 81% consider what happens to the city to be of personal importance and 71% feel their city is a good place to work.
- 80% note the work performed by their department provides the public a worthwhile return on tax dollars.
- Only one-third of respondents are satisfied with their current pay.
- Only 36% feel their pay compares fairly with the pay of individuals doing similar work in their municipality and only 22% feel their compensation compares fairly with individuals doing similar work in other cities.





IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The findings from this study suggest a large majority of local government employees in Mississippi value the contribution their work makes to society and the personal fulfillment that they derive from their work. However, similar to many individuals regardless to employment sector, most feel that they are under paid. This sentiment can certainly impact recruitment and retention efforts as municipalities continue to compete with the private sector for talented and skilled workers to fill vacant positions. Government officials can often counter by emphasizing certain attributes of their work beyond pay including autonomy, working conditions, accomplishment, fulfillment, and prestige.

