

ABOUT THE SURVEY ON THE FUTURE OF GOVERNMENT SERVICE

The *Survey on the Future of Government Service* is a collaborative scholarly project conducted by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions at Vanderbilt University in cooperation with Princeton University and the Volcker Alliance. The Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions funded the study.

Sample Construction

We obtained contact information for the target population (i.e., mailing address, email address, and telephone number) from the *Leadership Federal Government Premium* database, an online directory that is used to create the *Federal Yellow Book*, both of which are published by Leadership Directories, Inc. The Princeton Survey Research Center fielded the survey from August 14, 2014 to December 15, 2014. Respondents were sent invitations to take the survey by regular mail and email when available. Email addresses were obtained for 79 percent of the target population. The database was also used to identify appointee status (presidential appointee with Senate confirmation, appointee without Senate confirmation, non-career member of the Senior Executive Service, career member of the Senior Executive Service, Schedule C appointee, member of the Senior Foreign Service, or career civil servant). We define “Career Executives” as career members of the Senior Executive Service, members of the Senior Foreign Service, and career civil servants. Others are labeled “Political Appointees.”

We targeted instrumentalities of the United States government that were headed by Senate-confirmed appointees and whose functions were not exclusively advisory in nature. This includes bureaus and offices within the fifteen executive departments, agencies within the Executive Office of the President, and 66 federal agencies outside the executive departments. We used the *Sourcebook of United States Executive Agencies* to create our list of workplaces.¹ Agencies in the Executive Office of the President were identified using Table 1. We excluded the Executive Residence, Office of Administration, and White House Office. Prominent bureaus and agencies within executive departments were identified using Table 2. The research team made limited adjustments to this list based on which agencies and bureaus the team wanted to be able to analyze separately from the executive department as a whole. Agencies outside the executive departments were identified using Table 5. Scholarship agencies, regional agencies, and non-profits and cooperatives were excluded. Other limited adjustments were made by the research team.²

¹Lewis, David E., and Jennifer L. Selin. 2012. *Sourcebook of United States Executive Agencies*. *Administrative Conference of the United States*. url: <https://www.acus.gov/publication/sourcebook-united-states-executive-agencies>

² Document was updated 02/14/2017 to remove the word “all” from the first sentence of the paragraph.

Our target population is political appointees career members of the Senior Executive Service, U.S.-based members of the Senior Foreign Service, and other high level career executives (e.g., at the GS-14 or GS-15 level) that ran agencies and programs. The Senior Executive Service is a layer of managers right below Senate-confirmed presidential appointees that is a mix of career and non-career executives. Up to 10 percent may be drawn from outside the civil service, but it is comprised primarily of career executives that have applied for it.

Using the *Federal Government Premium* database we selected all political appointees, career members of the Senior Executive Service, and U.S.-based members of the Senior Foreign Service listed in the database. We used “job functions” defined by Leadership Directories to target other high level executives. We selected all individuals identified as “Federal Administrators” defined by Leadership Directories as “... key government officials who are leaders of the departments and independent agencies, as well as their large sub-agencies. This tag is also applied to the department or agency’s Chief of Staff, [Chief Financial Officer], [Chief Information Officer], Inspector General, and General Counsel.” To capture high-level federal executives not identified by the criteria above, we selected persons in the database with a job title that contained the word “Director” and that had one or more of the following job functions listed in Table 1. These criteria were used to target career executives at the GS-15 or GS-14 level with policymaking and management authority while keeping the target population of sufficient size that the survey could be completed within budget. We randomly selected 300 Assistant U.S. Attorneys from the database to include in our sample. Members of federal advisory boards that are presidential appointees were excluded because they are generally part-time employees whose primary occupation is not public service; therefore, they are not part of the target population of the survey. Individuals with a mailing address not in the United States were excluded. Our sample can be considered a census of individuals that meet these criteria.

Table 1: Job Functions

Budget	Government Affairs, Lobbying
Government Regulation, Regulatory Oversight, Enforcement	Grants
Policy, Planning	Public Policy
Purchasing, Procurement	Regulatory Affairs, Compliance

This initial sample was then stratified by the bureaus and agencies we targeted. Additions were made to any targeted bureau or agency with less than 40 individuals by selecting senior individuals in the relevant organization charts listed in the online database. This was done to increase the sample size for these agencies and bureaus to improve our ability to make valid statistical inferences and to correct for any cases for which the senior management of an entity is not well represented by our initial sampling procedure.

Response Rate, Timeline, and Calculation of Survey Weights

The response rate was 24 percent (3,551 of 14,698). The response rate among appointees was 18 percent (429 of 2,444) compared to 25 percent among careerists (3,122 of 12,254). The survey was offered online and on paper. Of the 3,551 respondents, 586 chose the paper survey.³

Survey Timeline:

1. August 14 – Initial invitation letter mailed.
2. August 27 – Invitation email sent.
3. September 21 – Reminder postcard mailed to those with valid mailing address, but no email address.
4. September 23 – Addition made to target population, invitation letter mailed with invitation email following ten days later.
5. September 30 – Email reminder sent.
6. October 6-17 – Telephone campaign to encourage participation.
7. October 22 – Paper surveys mailed to people that had not yet responded.
8. October 31 – Reminder postcards mailed.
9. November 17 – Reminder email sent.
10. November 18 – Email message targeting people that had started but not completed the online survey.
11. December 5 – Final email reminder sent.
12. December 15 – Field period ends.

All statistical estimates we report are weighted to reduce non-response and non-coverage bias. Post-stratification weights were created using a process referred to as sample-balance or raking. The population we constructed from the online database was used as the target population. The characteristics used for weighting were:

1. Whether a respondent worked in the DC area (defined as the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia).
2. Appointee status defined as presidential appointee with Senate confirmation, presidential appointee without Senate confirmation, Schedule C appointee, non-career member of the SES, career member of the SES, member of the Senior Foreign Service, and career civil servant.
3. Workplace by each executive department and agencies outside the executive departments.

³ Nineteen respondents submitted both the online and paper surveys. We took the earlier completed response in these cases. These cases are not counted in the 586 respondents that chose the paper survey.

Weights were examined for excessive size to prevent any single response from unduly influencing the final results. Fifty-one individuals in our sample drawn from the online directory, including four respondents to the survey, did not have a mailing address and therefore have no state listed. Our weighted sample excludes these individuals. The weighted margin of error for the full sample is $\pm 1.8\%$. The weighted margin of error for both random half samples is $\pm 2.6\%$.

We used the following formulas to calculate the weighted margin of error. The composite design effect for a sample of size n with each case having a weight, w_i , is:

$$def = \frac{n \sum_{i=1}^n w_i^2}{(\sum_{i=1}^n w_i)^2}$$

Then the weighted margin of error is:

$$\pm \left(\sqrt{def} \times 1.96 \sqrt{\frac{\hat{p}(1-\hat{p})}{n}} \right), \text{ where we set } \hat{p} = 0.5.$$