



U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board 2021 Merit Principles Survey Fact Sheet for Federal Employees

What is the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board? The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) is an independent, quasi-judicial agency in the Executive branch that serves as the guardian of Federal merit systems. In that role, MSPB adjudicates employee appeals of certain personnel actions and conducts studies of merit systems in the Executive branch.

What is the Merit Principles Survey? The Merit Principles Survey (MPS) is a Governmentwide survey of Federal civilian employees that measures the health of Federal merit systems and progress in achieving a workplace free of prohibited personnel practices. MSPB has conducted the survey periodically since 1983.

Why is my participation important? The survey provides a unique opportunity for Federal employees to voice their opinions and concerns about workforce issues and inform Federal Government human resources policies and practices. Your response will help MSPB provide the President and Congress with a balanced perspective on the state of the civil service and how well the Federal workforce is being managed.

How will MSPB use survey results? MSPB uses the survey to obtain employee views on issues such as workplace fairness, personnel practices, and the work environment. Survey results are presented, in summary form, in MSPB publications addressed to the President, Congress, and other Federal policy-makers and stakeholders.

Are my responses confidential? Yes. Results will only be reported in summary form, such as by agency or for large groups (e.g., supervisors and non-supervisors). MSPB does **not** maintain personally identifiable information such as name or email address as part of your survey response, or publicize results in a way that enables anyone to associate you with your survey responses.

How does the MPS relate to OPM's Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS)? The Merit Principles Survey differs from the FEVS in several respects, including (1) a focus on merit system principles and HR policy and practice; (2) a smaller sample; and (3) administration every few years instead of annually.

Is agency participation in the MPS mandatory? Yes. MSPB selected 25 major departments and agencies for the survey. Their cooperation is required under 5 U.S.C. § 1204(e)(3), which authorizes MSPB to obtain agency support and records needed to conduct special studies of the Federal civil service.

Who is asked to complete the MPS? Approximately 100,000 full-time permanent employees and managers from across the Federal Government will be invited to complete the MPS. Employees were selected randomly using a sample designed to produce a statistically sound measure of employee opinion. We have notified major Federal employee unions of the survey and asked them to support their members' participation.

What will be asked on the survey? The MPS includes questions concerning the merit system principles, the prohibited personnel practices, and selected aspects of the work experience and human resources management. Information on MPS topics and questions will be available on MSPB's website, www.mspb.gov, in December 2020.

When will the survey be administered? January–March 2021. The survey will be open for approximately four weeks in each participating agency.

How will the survey be administered? The survey will be secure and web-based. Participants will receive an advance notification and an invitation through their work (official) email with a link to the survey.

How long will it take to complete the survey? Approximately 30 minutes. MSPB has asked participating agencies to instruct supervisors to allow employees work time to complete the survey.

Is my participation voluntary? Yes. If you have been selected for the MPS, we hope you choose to participate, because your views are important. However, you may choose not to respond.