Survey Findings

The Great Recession and the State and Local Government Workforce

January 2010
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An electronic survey was conducted by the Center for State and Local Government Excellence [www.slge.org](http://www.slge.org) among members of the International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR)¹ and the National Association of State Personnel Executives (NASPE)² from November 18, 2009, to December 14, 2009. Three hundred and ninety-six (396) members took part in the survey.

**Participants**

1) You work for... \((N = 335)\)\(^{iii}\)

![Circle graph showing distribution of participants among local, state, federal, and other sectors.]

2) Which of the following workforce changes has the current economic climate caused your government to implement? \((N = 396)\)

![Bar graph showing distribution of workforce changes.]

3) If your government has implemented **furloughs**, have the estimated savings been achieved? \((N = 117)\)

4) What **positions**, if any, do you continue to have a hard time filling throughout the current economic climate? \((N = 188)\)

- Engineers (all types)
- Environmental, chemical, forensic, credentialed professionals
- Water treatment plant operators
- Most skilled trades
- Trained mechanics
- Information technology professionals
- Nurses
- Physicians
- Paramedics
- Health Instructors
- Social service case workers
- Finance
- Acquisition specialists

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¹ 8,378 members
² 110 members
³ \(N = \) number of respondents to each question

*Note: “Other” workforce changes offered were: no cost of living adjustments; elimination of vacant positions; centralized position review to determine if vacant positions should be filled; voluntary furloughs; delaying wage adjustment decisions; in exchange for pay cuts, reducing the number of hours and days to be worked during the week; position consolidation and elimination; performance pay freezes.
• Correctional officers
• Animal control officers
• Police officers
• Police/emergency radio operators
• Top management
• Department heads

Postponed Retirements

5) What changes, if any, have your retirement-eligible employees made regarding their plans for retirement? (N = 395)

- 46.3% Postponed their retirement
- 23.0% Accelerated their retirement date
- 11.1% Don’t know
- 12.7% None
- 6.8% Other*

*Note: “Other” respondents also noted that some employees have shifted their employment status to part-time or contract work.

Employee Saving

6) Please indicate which of the following your government has instituted to encourage employee saving:

- 0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40%
- Financial literacy workshops, courses
- Financial literacy materials, web sites
- Auto-Enrollment in a deferred compensation plan
- Endorsement of savings product
- College savings options
- Don’t know

- 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%
- No changes
- Other*
- Higher employee contribution
- Increased years required to vest in pension
- Replaced a defined benefit plan with a defined contribution plan
- Don’t know

*Note: “Other” initiatives related to encouraging employee saving were: access to health-related savings accounts; information about the health of financial institutions with which employees may have accounts; information and access to IRAs, savings bonds, and other savings products; publicized access to credit union.

Retirement Plan Changes

7) Has your government made any changes to the retirement plans you offer to your employees, since the beginning of the recession?

- 77.3% Yes
- 21.4% No
- 1.3% Don’t know

8) If your government has made changes to the retirement plans, has your government made any of the following changes to retirement benefits for new hires?

- 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70%
- No changes
- Other*
- Higher employee contribution
- Increased years required to vest in pension
- Replaced a defined benefit plan with a defined contribution plan

*Note: “Other” changes to the retirement plans for new hires offered were: increased years to vest for retiree health benefits; elimination of retiree health care; older retirement without penalty; decreased benefits across the board; formula changes.
9) If your government has made changes to the retirement plans, has your government taken any of the following actions to address pension funding for current workers?

- Increased the employer contribution to pension plan
- Required workers to contribute more to their pension plan
- Increased the employer contribution to pension plan
- Other*

*Note: “Other” changes to the retirement plans for current workers offered were: increased cost sharing for retiree health care; decreased employer contribution to deferred compensation pension plans.

11) If your government has made changes to the health care plans, what changes?

- Increased employee contributions
- Other*
- Reduced benefits
- Tiered benefits
- Decreased employer contributions

*Note: “Other” changes to the health care plans offered were: added other types of health plans; made employee cost adjustments to plans based on weight and smoking status; increasing use of wellness, on-site clinics, and 24-hour nurse line; added an option where the employee can receive a payout if they use another health care plan they have access to elsewhere; increased the years needed to vest for retiree health care.

Health Care Plan Changes

10) Has your government made any changes to the health care plans you offer to your employees and retirees since the beginning of the recession?

- Yes 50.4%
- No 46.3%
- Don’t know 3.3%
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