Asking the Applicants
What are Local Government Fellows Looking for in a Job?

Rather than guessing what benefits package or work environment is most appealing to newer generations of public servants, MissionSquare Research Institute partnered with Lead for America to survey 102 local government fellowship applicants about what they are looking for in a job. Key findings are below, and the full results appear in: New Career Entrants to Public Service: Lessons for Employers from Fellowship Applicants. (Fellows serve their communities in a paid, full-time capacity, with training and mentorship from local leaders.)

Among the Key Survey Highlights
Meaningful work was identified as the top priority. 81% identify the likelihood of applying for a position to be influenced by personal recommendations. 71% expect to see in an entry-level position for 1-2 years prior to receiving a promotion. 32% found traditional salaries competitive, while 83% found benefits to be competitive. 62% indicate that COVID-19 has made their more interested in employment in a public sector.

Telework is Not the Most Important Benefit
With respondents having a median age of 22, the high percentage identifying paid leave as very important should be considered in the context of a fellowship likely being their first full-time employment that would offer vacation or sick leave.

Among Benefits: Insurance and Retirement Were Considered Lower Priorities
Given a list of eight benefits to public employment, the personal satisfaction the job provides was ranked highest, and life insurance and retirement benefits ranked lowest. For employers looking to make the case for public sector over private sector employment, the fellowship candidates’ low ranking of benefits reinforces the need to communicate the full value of the compensation package.

Work Environment and Professional Development Are Important
77% of respondents prioritize a workplace that is mindful of creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all identities. 64% prioritize a workplace that develops your professional skills. 62% of respondents are more interested in a workplace that is mindful of creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all identities.

Candidates Value Being Part of a Multi-Generational Public Sector Workforce; Look Forward to Moving Up In Their Positions
Overall, candidates do recognize the competitiveness of public sector benefits. 83% said they felt the benefits of the state and local government were competitive with the labor market. 63% said the benefits of the state and local government were competitive with the labor market.

COVID has influenced candidates’ desire to work in public service. 62% are more interested in a public sector position now than they were before COVID-19.

Most expect to be in a job 1-2 years before receiving a promotion. 46% expect to be in a job 1-2 years before receiving a promotion. 31% expect to be in a job 1-2 years before receiving a promotion.

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