

READY TO SERVE: WHAT'S NEXT FOR 6,000+ FEDERAL WORKERS

**A nationwide snapshot of purpose,
mobility, and opportunity in public service.**

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CIVIC match

POWERED BY WORK FOR AMERICA

Civic Match by Work for America is a nonprofit program committed to keeping talented public servants in public service, helping more than 6,000 federal workers find fresh purpose in state and local government. We connect these workers to state and local government jobs across 180+ cities and 47 states, with new roles and geographies added daily.

At a time of widespread federal layoffs and uncertainty, Civic Match offers a practical solution—matching mission-driven professionals with local roles where they can continue making an impact. Too often, government agencies struggle to attract skilled workers, while many jobseekers overlook the stability and purpose public service can offer. **Civic Match bridges that gap, helping governments fill critical positions and helping dedicated workers stay in the work they believe in.**

Our larger mission extends beyond today's challenges. We're working to keep experienced people in government and inspire a new generation of Americans to see public service as a proud, stable career that strengthens families and communities.

THE NEED FOR A SURVEY

To better understand the people behind the headlines, Civic Match conducted the first comprehensive survey of federal workers navigating this moment of uncertainty. Until now, we've heard powerful individual stories—but this is the first time we've gathered data and insights from this population as a whole.

The survey reached more than 5,000 federal workers using our platform, including those recently laid off and others still employed but exploring their next move. While other studies focus on broad government workforce trends, this survey offers a rare, timely look at what federal workers in transition actually want—from relocation and compensation to job structure and long-term commitment to public service.

Their responses paint a compelling picture: despite disruption, many remain deeply committed to serving. By listening to this group at scale for the first time, we can better support their next chapter—and help state and local governments bring in the experienced talent they need now.



SURVEY RESPONDENTS & METHODOLOGY

ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

Civic Match respondents represent a diverse cross-section of federal workers—an important reminder that behind government statistics are people with varied backgrounds and experiences.

The survey includes workers from 228 cities and 43 states, providing a truly national perspective. While 47% live in the DC, Maryland, or Virginia area, the majority (53%) come from communities outside the capital region.

At least 40 federal agencies are represented, with particularly strong representation from USAID (22%) and HHS (15%). This diversity reflects the wide range of expertise and experience within the federal workforce.

Most respondents (56%) are current or former civil service employees. Federal contractors make up 19%, while campaign staff (who were excluded from most analysis in this report) represent 16%. The remaining participants include primarily political appointees and Foreign Service Officers.

We see a large representation of respondents having spent significant time in government, with 59% of respondents having 10 or more years relevant work experience. This is likely representative of the broader population of federal workers and brings a valuable and necessary perspective to our findings. In this report, we provide breakdowns by tenure level for further insights.

It's important to note that these survey respondents are representative of the Civic Match candidate pool overall.

553

Responses

5K+

Federal workers
with active Civic
Match accounts

228

Cities

43

States

40

Federal agencies

22% USAID
15% HHS



56%

Civil service
employees



19%

Federal
contractors



16%

Campaign staff

(who were excluded from
most analysis in this report)

59% 10+ YEARS

of experience, signaling that even the most experienced federal workers are ready to leave their current roles – **but not public service altogether**

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

We distributed the Civic Match survey to over 5,000 federal workers with active email addresses in our database. The survey was conducted over two weeks in March 2025, collecting 703 responses for an approximately 14% response rate. **After removing outliers, incomplete responses, and duplicates, 553 responses comprised the final sample for analysis.**

Unless otherwise noted, campaign staff have been filtered out to focus specifically on those working within the federal workforce.

This methodology allows us to present findings that reflect the real experiences and preferences of federal workers navigating career transitions during this period of significant change in government employment.

FIG. 01

Civic Match candidate pool and survey respondent characteristics

RELEVANT EXPERIENCE	SURVEY RESPONDENTS	CIVIC MATCH CANDIDATE POOL
1-3 YEARS	6%	11%
4-7 YEARS	17%	21%
8-10 YEARS	17%	17%
10+ YEARS	59%	51%

JOB CATEGORY		
CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEE (FEDERAL)	6%	11%
CONTRACTOR FOR FEDERAL AGENCY	17%	21%
POLITICAL APPOINTEE	59%	51%
OTHER	3%	3%
POLITICAL CAMPAIGN	17%	17%

Political campaign staff are excluded from analyses in this report, unless otherwise specified.

GEOGRAPHY

53%

Survey Respondents outside the DMV area

Compared to 41% in overall Civic Match candidate pool

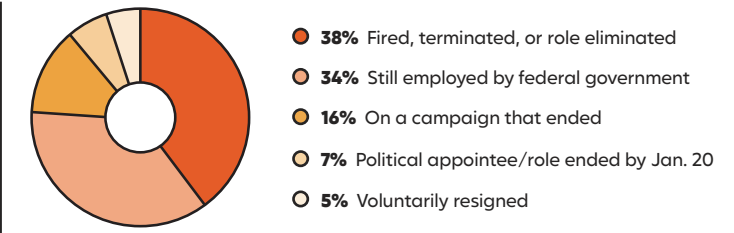
47%

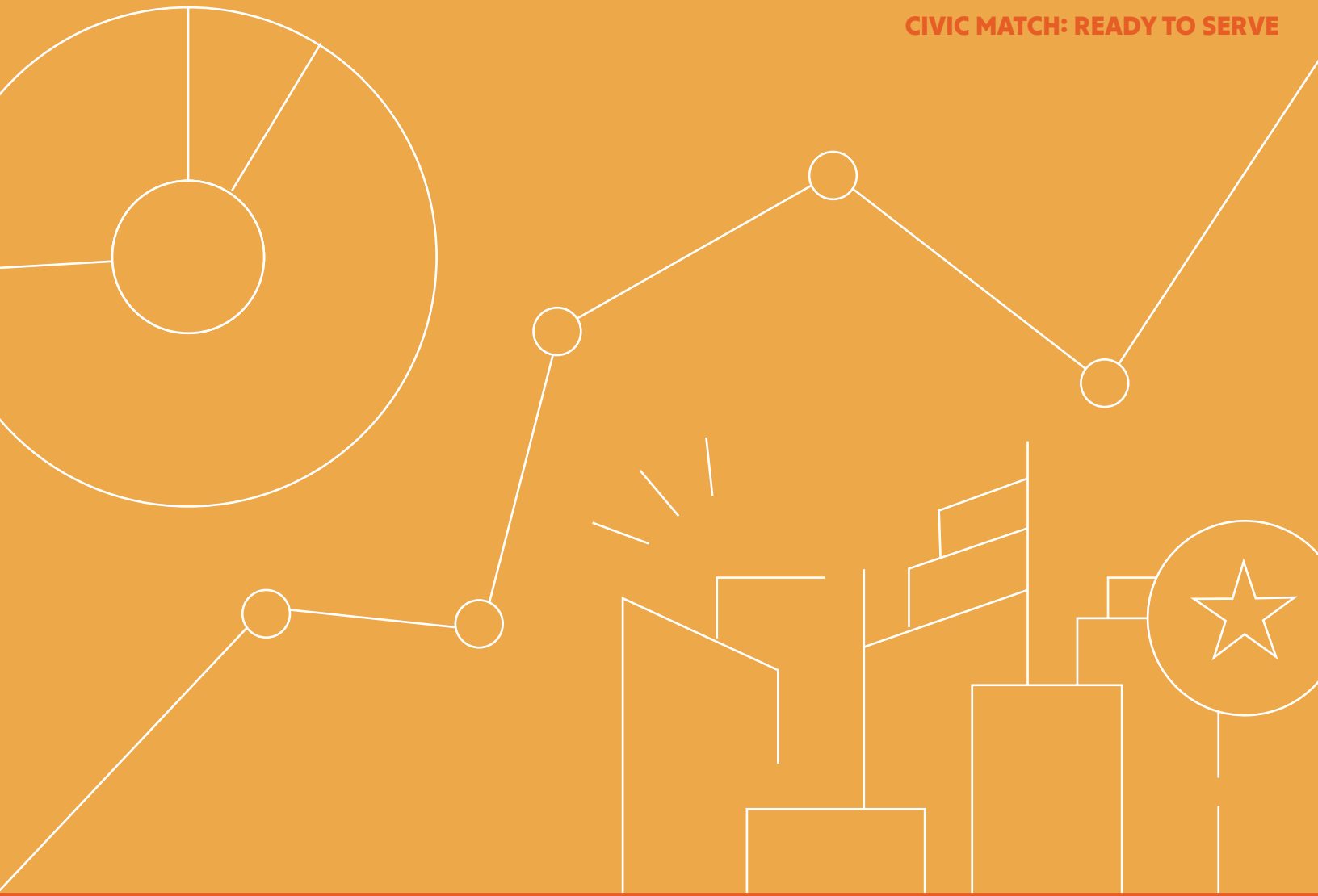
Survey Respondents in the DMV area

Compared to 59% in overall Civic Match candidate pool

FIG. 02

Why Civic Match candidates are job seeking





SURVEY FINDINGS

Our findings reveal that federal workers in communities across the country are responsible for some of the most impactful projects shaping communities today. From reimagining education systems to strengthening support for American farmers to ensuring veterans and their families receive essential healthcare, their commitment to public service fuels progress nationwide. Their work isn't just meaningful – it's indispensable.

Here is what we heard from respondents:

PG. 8 DOWN, BUT NOT OUT →

PG. 11 FLEXIBLE, EAGER JOB SEEKERS →

PG. 13 PURPOSE OVER PARTY →

DOWN, BUT NOT OUT: A COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SERVICE

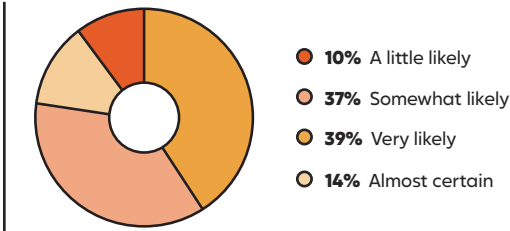
The numbers paint a clear picture: federal workers still believe in public service.

Even as budget cuts and reorganizations create uncertainty for federal employees, their commitment to serving the public hasn't wavered.

Our survey found that more than half (52.4%) of federal workers are either "almost certain" (13.4%) or "very likely" (39.0%) to take a job in state or local government. This suggests their employment isn't just about finding another paycheck—it's about continuing careers built around making a difference in communities.

FIG. 03

How likely are you to take a job in state or local government?



“

After nearly 20 years of working in the public sector for state and nonprofit organizations, I was excited to serve at the federal level for a product team I loved and a program I was in full support of. I'm not sure what I'm going to do next, but I'm still incredibly passionate about public service and hope to continue my career in that space.

Jess from Laramie, WY

Young professionals and those early in their public service careers showed the strongest interest in continuing to serve at the state and local level.

74% of respondents with fewer than three years of experience said they were almost certain or very likely to pursue state and local government opportunities – higher than their more experienced colleagues.

This suggests a critical window of opportunity to keep these dedicated young workers in public service careers. Their enthusiasm today may translate into decades of community impact if they can find meaningful pathways forward.

74%

of workers with 1–3 years of experience are **almost certain** or **very likely** to pursue state and local government opportunities – higher than their more experienced colleagues.

“

WORKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY DREAM. IT'S WHAT I WENT TO COLLEGE AND STARTED LAW SCHOOL FOR.

Beverley from Atlanta, GA

DOWN, BUT NOT OUT: COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SERVICE

This commitment to service extends far beyond Washington, DC.

Respondents outside the DC–Maryland–Virginia (DMV) region (56%) were only slightly more likely than those within it (51%) to express strong interest in state and local government careers.

Most striking? How recent federal changes have strengthened many workers’ interest in continuing their public service careers locally.

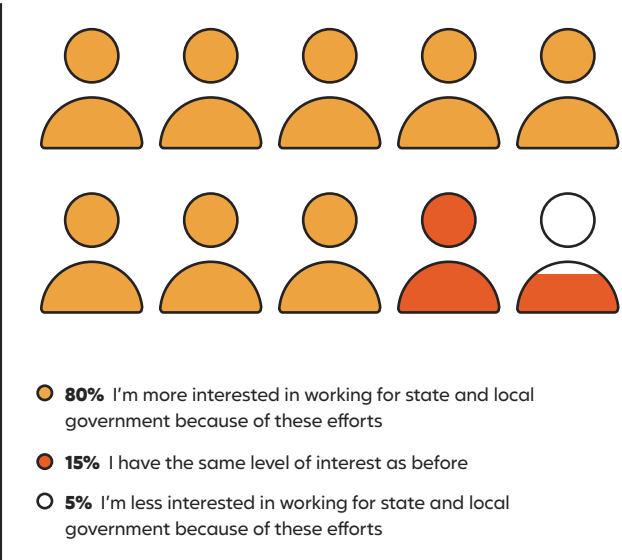
When asked if the federal government’s reorganization efforts had influenced their desire to work for state or local governments:

76% REPORTED BEING MORE INTERESTED IN LOCAL SERVICE, NOT LESS.

Only 6.5% said their interest had decreased.

FIG. 04

Have recent federal actions made you more or less likely to accept a role in state or local government?



DOWN, BUT NOT OUT: COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SERVICE

Civil service employees—those most directly affected by federal workforce reductions—showed the strongest commitment, with 83% reporting increased interest in state and local government roles.

While federal workers based in the DMV region were somewhat more likely (81%) than those elsewhere (72%) to report increased interest in state and local government, the overall pattern is clear: across experience levels and geography, federal workers remain deeply committed to careers in public service.

FIG. 05

How likely are you to take a job in state or local government?

A little likely Somewhat likely Very likely Almost certain

OVERALL				
	10%	37%	39%	14%
RELEVANT EXPERIENCE	A LITTLE LIKELY	SOMEWHAT LIKELY	VERY LIKELY	ALMOST CERTAIN
1–3 YEARS	6%	20%	57%	17%
4–7 YEARS	9%	41%	41%	10%
8–10 YEARS	8%	33%	45%	14%
10+ YEARS	12%	39%	36%	14%
EMPLOYEE CATEGORY	A LITTLE LIKELY	SOMEWHAT LIKELY	VERY LIKELY	ALMOST CERTAIN
CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEE (FEDERAL)	9%	35%	41%	15%
CONTRACTOR FOR FEDERAL AGENCY	15%	41%	36%	9%
POLITICAL APPOINTEE	15%	39%	39%	6%
GEOGRAPHY	A LITTLE LIKELY	SOMEWHAT LIKELY	VERY LIKELY	ALMOST CERTAIN
IN THE DMV AREA	10%	39%	38%	13%
OUTSIDE THE DMV AREA	10%	34%	41%	14%

KEY TAKEAWAY

Federal workers aren't giving up on public service—they're looking for new ways to serve. Even those most affected by uncertainty are more motivated, not less, to find meaningful government work at the state and local level. The challenge isn't convincing them to stay in public service—it's creating clear pathways for them to continue their commitment to community.

FIG. 06

Have recent federal actions made you more or less likely to accept a role in state or local government?

Same likelihood Less likely More likely

OVERALL			
	17%	6%	76%
RELEVANT EXPERIENCE	SAME LIKELIHOOD	LESS LIKELY	MORE LIKELY
1–3 YEARS	22%	13%	65%
4–7 YEARS	14%	6%	80%
8–10 YEARS	16%	4%	80%
10+ YEARS	18%	6%	76%
EMPLOYEE CATEGORY	SAME LIKELIHOOD	LESS LIKELY	MORE LIKELY
CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEE (FEDERAL)	13%	5%	83%
CONTRACTOR FOR FEDERAL AGENCY	17%	6%	77%
POLITICAL APPOINTEE	36%	0%	64%
GEOGRAPHY	SAME LIKELIHOOD	LESS LIKELY	MORE LIKELY
IN THE DMV AREA	14%	5%	81%
OUTSIDE THE DMV AREA	20%	8%	72%

FLEXIBLE, EAGER JOB SEEKERS

Federal workers are willing to make significant life changes to continue their commitment to public service.

When it comes to relocating for the right opportunity, more than half (54%) of respondents said they would pack up their lives and move to a new community. This willingness to uproot shows just how deeply their commitment runs.

Early-career professionals (1–3 years of experience) show the greatest flexibility, with 69% open to relocation. This readiness gradually decreases with career length, with those having 10+ years of service still showing remarkable mobility at 51%.

FIG. 07

Are you willing to relocate?



54% OPEN TO
RELOCATING



77% WOULD CONSIDER
SMALL TO MID-SIZED CITIES
Of those open to relocating

The difference between political appointees and career civil servants is notable—while 76% of political appointees expressed willingness to relocate, 52% of career civil servants would do the same. This likely reflects different expectations about job mobility when entering these paths of government service.

“ I decided to change careers and work for the government because I think it is truly a great honor to serve my country. I relocated from my hometown in Atlanta Georgia, to Kansas City, Missouri for a federal job, and while I’m not sure what the future holds, I’m devoted to continuing working in public service. I have applied to as many local city and state jobs as I can in Kansas City and I am determined not to be defeated and have to return home.

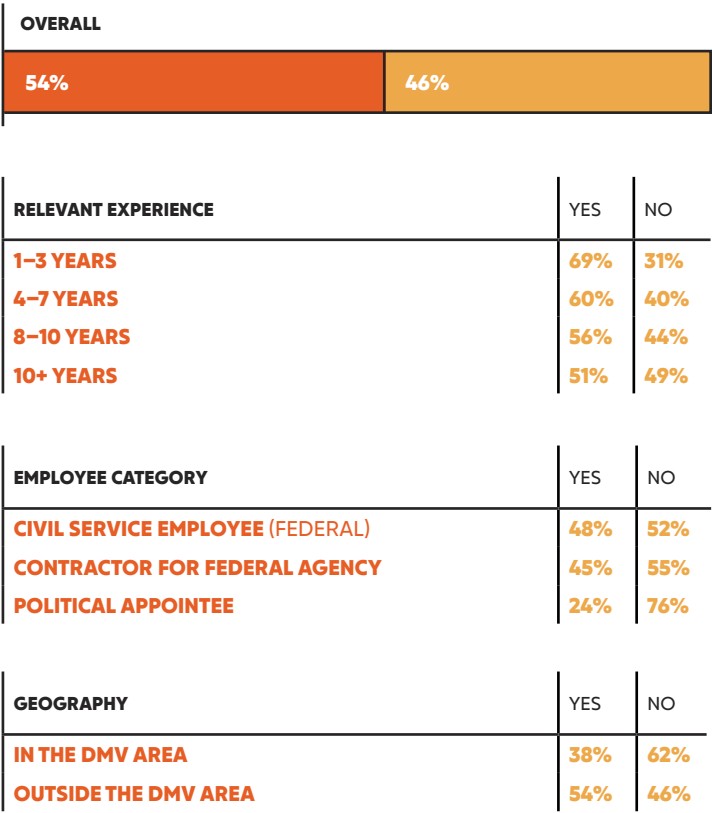
Eva from Kansas, MO

Location also plays a role in relocation readiness. Those currently in the DC–Maryland–Virginia (DMV) region show greater willingness to move (62%) compared to those elsewhere (46%). This might reflect both the concentration of federal jobs in the capital region and the increased competition for remaining positions.

FIG. 08

Are you willing to relocate?

● Yes ● No



FLEXIBLE, EAGER JOB SEEKERS

What about compensation?

Federal workers show surprising flexibility here, too. When asked if they would accept lower salaries for the right state or local government job, only 6% ruled it out completely. About a third (32%) said they would definitely take a pay cut for the right position, while most (62%) would do so if the local cost of living made the lower salary workable.

Interestingly, it's the more experienced workers who show greater salary flexibility. Among those with over 10 years of experience, just 4.4% refused to consider a lower salary. These workers are more likely than any other group to accept lower pay for the right role, regardless of cost-of-living adjustments.

By contrast, newer workers (1–3 years experience) were most likely to hold firm on salary (11% saying no to any reduction), perhaps reflecting entry-level pay scales that already leave little room for further adjustment.

“
I HAVE SPENT 28 YEARS
IN PUBLIC SERVICE, AND
THOUGH I AM LESS THAN
FOUR YEARS AWAY FROM
REACHING RETIREMENT
AGE, I STILL HAVE SO MUCH
KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE
TO OFFER, AND WANT TO
CONTINUE WORKING.

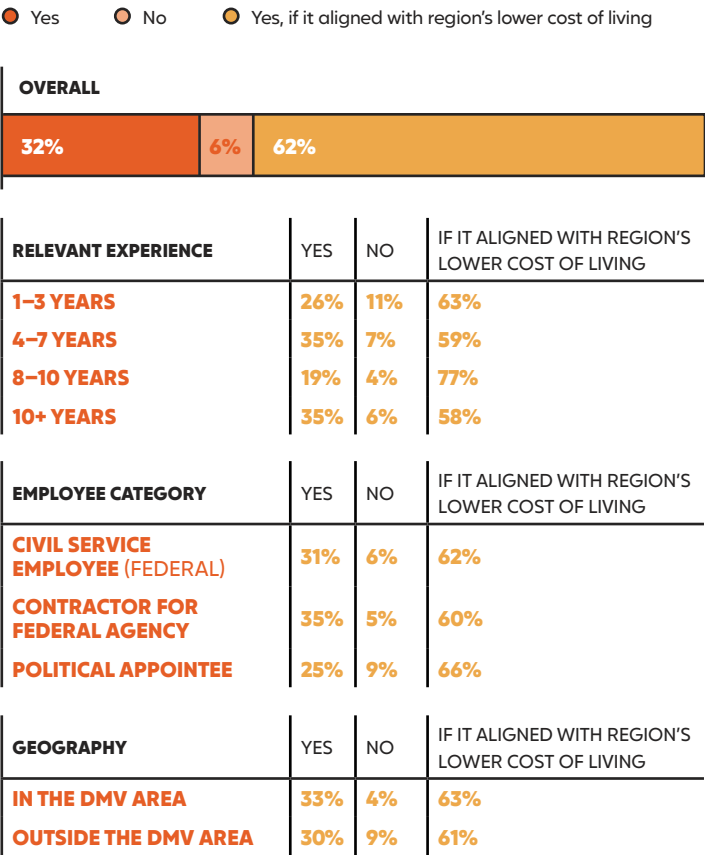
Jay from Raleigh North Carolina

KEY TAKEAWAY

Federal workers are demonstrating remarkable flexibility in their pursuit of continued public service. Most are willing to move, adjust their salary expectations, or both—especially if it means finding meaningful work that serves communities. This dedication to public service over personal convenience reveals a workforce driven more by purpose than by paycheck.

FIG. 09

Would you accept a lower salary?



PURPOSE OVER PARTY

Overall, the survey responses reflect a workforce driven by purpose and service rather than political alignments.

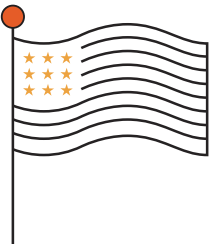
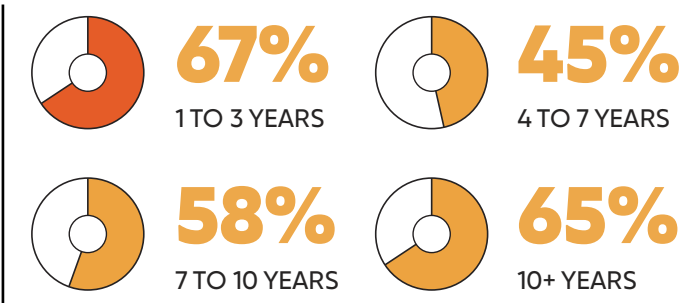
We asked survey respondents if they would be willing to work for a mayoral or gubernatorial administration from the opposing party.

Up to 60% are open to working for a Mayor or Governor from an opposing political party – showing that for the majority of these job seekers, the chance to serve their communities matters more than the politics of a particular leader.

Interestingly, we saw a strong correlation between willingness to work for a leader from the opposing party and years of experience.

FIG. 10

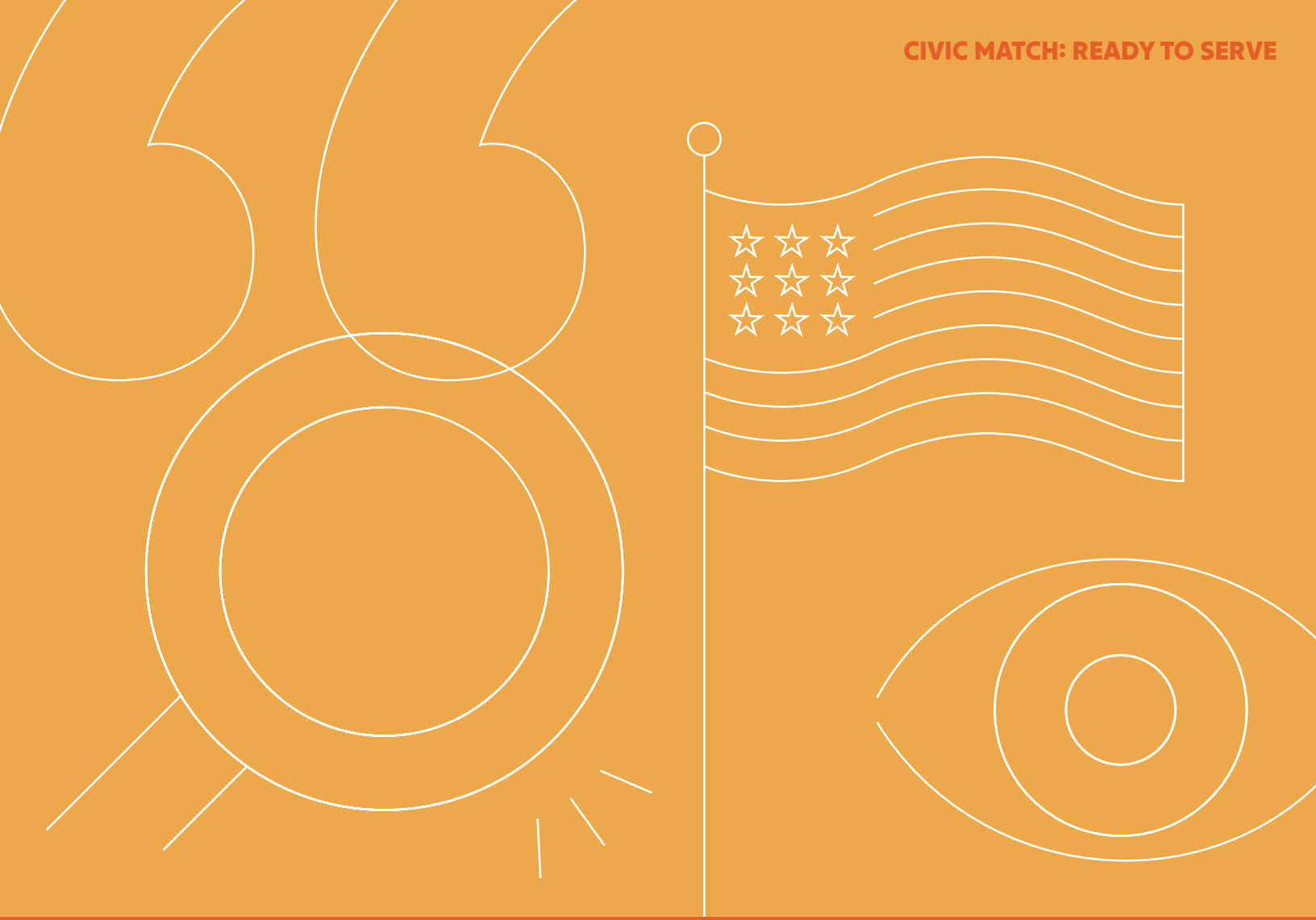
Willingness to work across political lines?



60%

are open to working for a governor or mayor **from an opposing political party.**

Serving their communities matters more than the politics of a particular leader.



KEEPING PUBLIC SERVANTS IN PUBLIC SERVICE

Federal workers have made their priorities clear—they want to continue serving communities, and they're sharing exactly what they need to make that transition work. These insights provide state and local governments with a clear roadmap to attract this skilled talent pool.

WHAT MATTERS MOST IN A NEW ROLE

When we asked what would attract these public servants to state and local government positions, some priorities were consistent across the board:

A positive relationship with their direct manager was important for everyone—from newcomers to seasoned veterans. Close behind was a sense of purpose and civic impact. These workers aren’t just seeking a salary; they want meaningful work under supportive leadership.

Different age groups did emphasize different secondary factors. Workers with less than 10 years experience ranked job stability and security as their top priorities, while those with over 10 years of service emphasized work-life balance.

There were also differences based on worker type. Political appointees uniquely prioritized values alignment with the leader or administration they work for, while career civil servants valued work-life balance and flexibility. Contractors placed high importance on job stability and security.

FIG. 11
What matters most to Civic Match candidates when choosing a job?

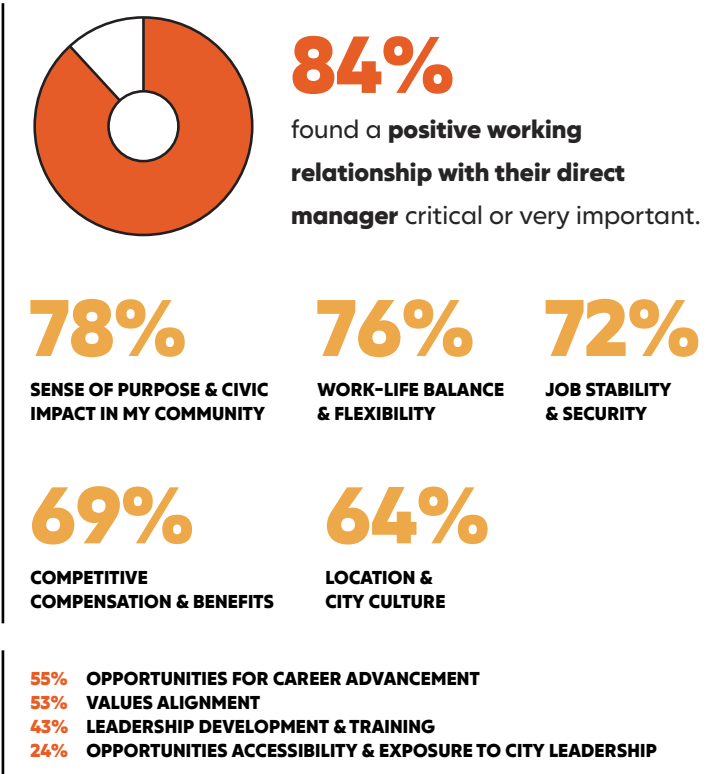
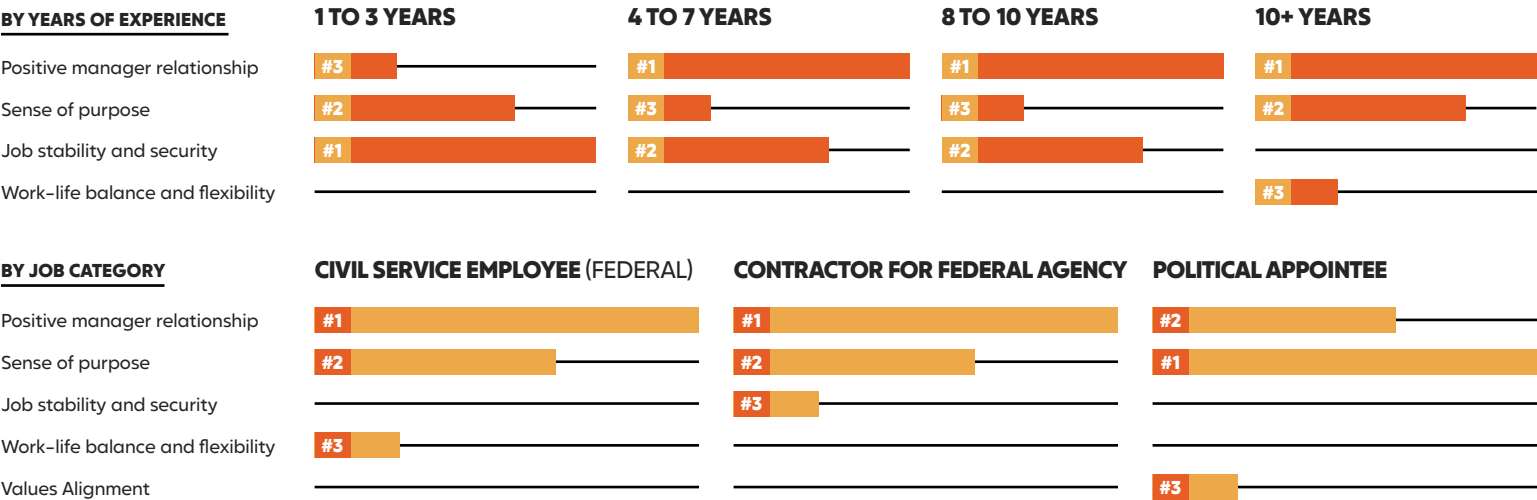


FIG. 12
Top factors for choosing a job



WHAT MAKES RELOCATION POSSIBLE

With more than half of the respondents willing to relocate, we dug deeper into what would make a move feasible.

One factor stood out dramatically: affordability and cost of living. Three out of four respondents called this critical or very important in their decision-making. This practical concern topped the list across almost all groups:

- ✓ Workers at every experience level ranked affordability first
- ✓ Career civil servants and contractors placed it as their top concern
- ✓ Only political appointees ranked it lower (fifth most important)

Following affordability, workers again emphasized purpose and relationships—“sense of civic impact” and “positive working relationship with my direct manager” were essential factors for all groups considering relocation.

FIG. 14

Top factors for choosing a place

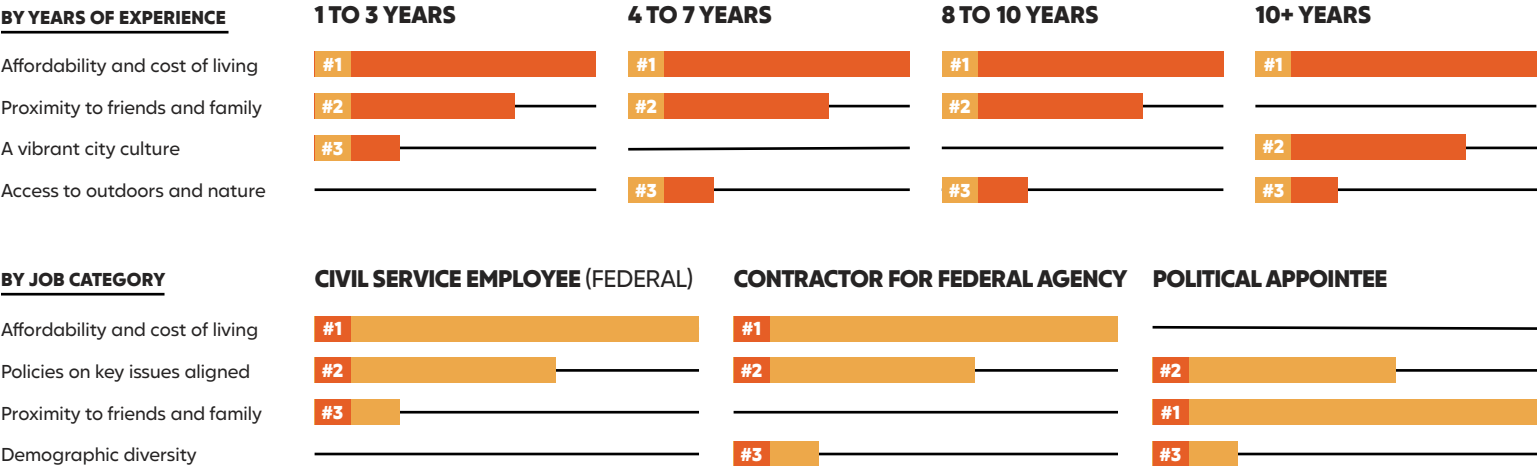


FIG. 13

What attributes matter to Civic Match candidates when choosing to relocate?



GETTING TO "YES": EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

We asked respondents about specific factors that would help them say "yes" to a job offer. The results offer practical guidance for agencies looking to recruit:

The clear winner? Hybrid or remote work opportunities. This topped the list for nearly every group (political appointees were the only exception).

Three other factors also received strong support:

- ✓ **Expedited hiring processes**, suggesting urgency to secure new positions
- ✓ **Sign-on bonuses and relocation assistance**, reflecting immediate financial concerns
- ✓ **Ability to craft their own roles and responsibilities**, especially important to senior workers and political appointees

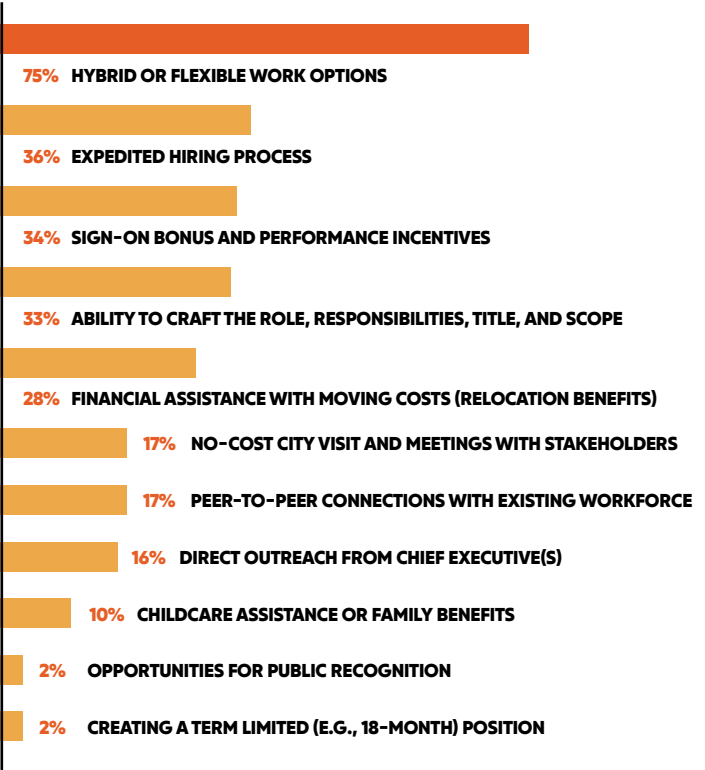
KEY TAKEAWAY

These federal workers are telling us exactly what they need to continue their public service work. They value supportive management, meaningful impact, and practical necessities like affordability and flexibility. State and local governments that address these priorities stand the best chance of bringing this experienced talent home.

FIG. 15

Effective recruitment strategies

% of respondents who ranked a recruitment lever in their top 3 most important factors



THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC SERVICE

The federal workforce changes have disrupted tens of thousands of lives, but the skills, experience, and dedication of these workers remain invaluable—especially for state and local governments facing urgent staffing needs.

Civic Match is working to drive public awareness, foster empathy, and do our part to help these workers access jobs where they can put their talents to work for America.

The following recommendations offer clear, actionable steps to help public servants continue serving where they're needed most.

[PG. 19 REBRANDING PUBLIC SERVICE →](#)

[PG. 19 PRIVATE SECTOR APPROACH →](#)

[PG. 20 MISSION-DRIVEN TALENT →](#)

01 REBRANDING PUBLIC SERVICE: BEYOND BUREAUCRACY

The Civic Match survey revealed a powerful truth: people still believe in public service—even though it's rarely celebrated. Nearly 23 million Americans work in government, yet most of us can't name the people coordinating emergency response, planning safe streets, or delivering clean drinking water. These essential roles keep our communities running, but they're too often branded as bureaucratic, boring, or broken.

This isn't just about recruitment; it's about recognition. For decades, military service has been celebrated as noble and private sector innovation as aspirational, while careers in public administration have faded from the national conversation despite their direct impact on our daily lives. The Civic Match survey found that early-career professionals are especially eager to stay in government. But if we want to attract and retain them—while rebuilding trust in public institutions—**we need to make these jobs visible, compelling, and culturally relevant again.**

That's why Civic Match is investing in storytelling alongside systems change. We're working with governments to shine a light on public service heroes, profile real workers, and lift up cities where great work is happening. We're also helping governments bring in talent who reflect the energy, diversity, and drive this moment demands.

02 BRINGING A PRIVATE SECTOR APPROACH TO HIRING

The Civic Match survey uncovered something powerful: despite layoffs and uncertainty, the vast majority of respondents still want to stay in public service. That's a major opportunity—but only if governments are ready to meet it. Workers are open to new roles, new geographies, and even lower salaries, but they're also making decisions quickly. To compete for this talent, governments must move just as fast.

The old approach to hiring—fragmented job boards, lengthy timelines, and complex applications—won't meet the urgency of this moment or the expectations of today's workforce. This survey provides a roadmap: More than half of respondents said remote or hybrid work is important, and 84% said the direct manager or team dynamic is a major factor in accepting a job. That's actionable intelligence governments can use to modernize how they attract and structure talent.

Civic Match is helping governments do just that. We bring a private sector mindset to public sector hiring—faster, more personal, and data-informed. As the first national, nonpartisan platform actively matching federal and campaign talent to local roles, we curate candidate slates, connect directly with hiring managers, and support the process end to end. **This isn't just about filling vacancies—it's about building the modern infrastructure public service needs now.**

03 LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS THE DESTINATION FOR MISSION-DRIVEN TALENT

The Civic Match survey revealed a striking opportunity: public servants want to stay in the work. Seventy-six percent of respondents said they are now more likely to pursue state or local government jobs, and over half are willing to relocate for the right role. These are not workers stepping away from public service—they're actively seeking their next mission, and increasingly, they're looking to cities and states.

As the federal government scales back, local governments are stepping up. From Kansas City and Maryland to Nashville and Pennsylvania, mayors and governors are moving quickly to absorb top federal and campaign talent—creating new roles in housing, infrastructure, and climate, and assembling the teams needed to meet this moment. This is more than filling gaps. It's a reimagining of what government can be—faster, more responsive, and rooted in communities.

Local governments have always been the frontlines of service delivery. Now, they must become the frontlines of government innovation. But stepping into this role requires action: simplifying hiring, offering flexibility, and telling a stronger story about the impact of local work. Civic Match is here to help. We've built the infrastructure to connect experienced public servants with governments ready to lead. The talent is here. The urgency is real. And the future of public service is being built—one city, county and state at a time.

CONCLUSION

The voices in this survey tell a powerful story about public service in America today. These federal employees are the people who make our government work, though they are often unseen and misunderstood.

In reality, they are parents balancing family budgets, veterans continuing their service in new ways, neighbors coaching Little League on weekends, and grandparents just a few years shy of retirement. They come from all walks of life but share a belief in public service.

Even as federal workers navigate uncertain transitions and very real personal challenges, they remain driven by this belief. We're not facing a shortage of willing talent. The challenge—and opportunity—is creating pathways that connect their expertise with cities and states that need their skills.

By understanding what matters to these professionals, local governments can welcome this experienced talent pool. In doing so, they'll not only help families find stability but also strengthen the services that touch all our lives.

In building these bridges today, we're investing in a stronger civic future and more effective government for years to come.

