



October 2013

Survey Objective and Response Rate

In 3rd Qtr. 2013, an invitation to complete an online employee satisfaction survey was emailed to all Ottawa County employees to determine current overall job satisfaction and to evaluate the attitudes of employees regarding various aspects of job satisfaction. These results were compared with previous findings to determine how satisfaction and attitudes have changed over time. RDA Group, a private market research and consulting firm, was responsible for collecting and analyzing all survey data.

Of the 913 survey invitations that were emailed in 2013, 599 employees completed a survey, for a response rate of 66%.

Overall Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction among county employees shows a significant increase in 2013, returning to 2009 levels.

- ◆ 62% of Ottawa County employees are completely or very satisfied (vs. 57% in 2011). This represents a 5 percentage point increase from 2011 and a substantial increase (28% pts.) compared to the baseline measurement in 2004.
 - ◇ Supervisors show the largest increase in satisfaction from 2011.
 - ◇ Similar to 2011, employees with less than 2 years tenure continue to have significantly higher levels of satisfaction, while non-supervisory employees and those with 6 – 10 years tenure are least satisfied.
 - ◇ Satisfaction improves vs. 2011 among both Environmental Health and Administration departments, but declines for Juvenile Service; Satisfaction levels are relatively stable in all other departments.
 - ◇ Among county departments, Administration employees have the highest level of satisfaction (100%), followed by the Circuit Court Trial Division (86%) and Health Community Services (83%); Disabled Services, Friend of the Court (FOTC), and Corrections are among the least satisfied departments (42, 45, and 47% respectively).
- ◆ The high level of overall satisfaction among county employees is evidenced in the great pride employees take in working for Ottawa County, as expressed in verbatim comments:

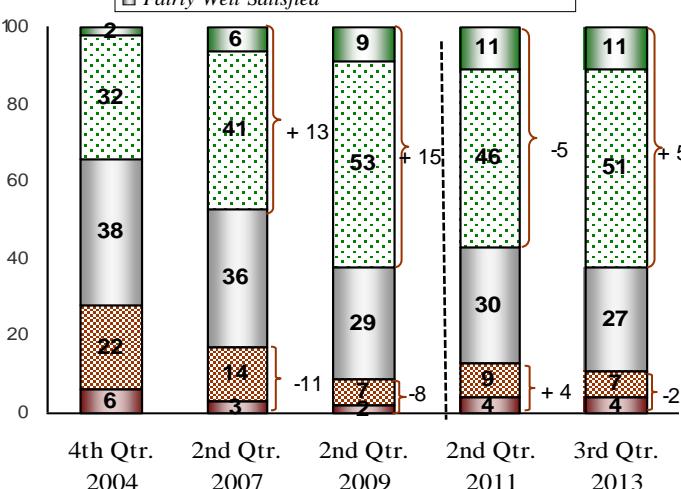
"I enjoy working for Ottawa County and am proud to call myself an Ottawa County employee!" (Non-supervisor, < 2 years)

"Very happy and proud to be an employee of Ottawa County. We are recognized with respect in the community." (Non-supervisor, > 10 years)

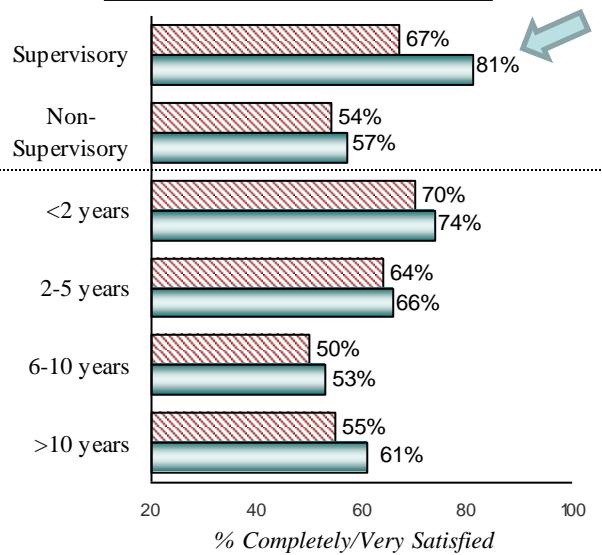
"Ottawa County as a whole has a great reputation, and it's nice to work for an organization that is looked on so well." (Non-supervisor, 2-5 years)

Overall Satisfaction Among Total Sample

Legend:
 Completely Satisfied
 Fairly Well Satisfied
 Very Satisfied
 Somewhat Dissatisfied
 Very Dissatisfied

**Overall Satisfaction by Position and Tenure**

Legend:
 2nd Qtr. 2011
 3rd Qtr. 2013



NOTE: Change from mail to web survey method in 2011

Most Liked Aspects of Job

Compared to 2011, employees are more likely to indicate that what they like most about their job is the work environment, growth opportunities, and teamwork/cooperation, particularly those with ≤ 5 years of service.

- ◆ Co-workers (38%) and benefits (27%) continue to be the top rated job aspects appreciated by employees, followed by management/supervisor support (20%), job duties (17%), and work environment (17%).
- ◆ The work environment is frequently characterized as “friendly” and “welcoming”; many employees relay that they feel valued and appreciate the emphasis on professional development.

“Staff are very welcoming, there is an atmosphere that promotes growth and learning, and I feel like overall the county cares about and values its employees.” (Non-supervisor, < 2 years)

“(It’s a) friendly atmosphere going to work where people love what they do and it’s evident.” (Supervisor, 6-10 years)

“They care about personal development and training for their employees.” (Supervisor, 2-5 years)
- ◆ Employees with 6 – 10 years of service are more likely than in 2011 to say co-workers are one of the most liked aspects of their jobs.

“I have a great leadership team that always thinks about the employee and the customer.” (Non-supervisor, 6-10 years)

Satisfaction with Ottawa County Administration

Similar to 2011, satisfaction with Ottawa County’s Administration shows the strongest improvement, with all measured aspects exhibiting strong gains.

- ◆ Substantial increases are seen in communication of county goals and mission (+ 15% pts.), administration leading the county in the right direction (+ 13% pts.), and treating all departments equitably (+ 10% pts.).
 - ◇ Increases are primarily driven by employees with 6 years or more of tenure;

“I am very appreciative of Al Vanderberg’s openness and honesty, keeping up with brown bag lunches. He is well versed in so many areas and I find listening to his logic and reasoning for changes refreshing.” (Supervisor, > 10 years)

“I appreciate the county looking ahead to trends in economics, population, etc. I believe leadership’s foresight has enabled Ottawa County to remain a strong, viable entity during uncertain times, and it is gratifying to work for such an organization.” (Non-supervisor, 2-5 years)
- ◆ Many employees applaud the culture of continuous improvement that has been instilled by county leadership, the commitment and integrity of leaders, and the fiscal responsibility demonstrated by county administration.
- ◆ Some employees relay a desire to have advance (vs. ‘after-the-fact’) communication regarding changes that directly affect their job so they can provide input and be better prepared to handle them.
- ◆ While ensuring a spirit of trust between departments improves from 2011, it remains an area for focus, as less than half of employees are satisfied.

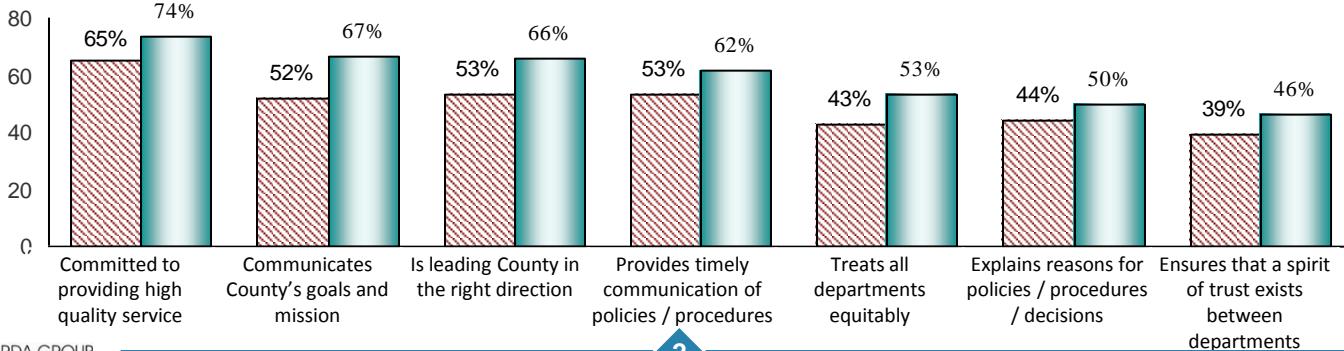
Ways to Improve Satisfaction

Improving compensation/equitable pay remains the most frequently cited way to increase job satisfaction (15%); better management/leadership support and more flexible work schedules are also often mentioned (10% each).

- “(I would like) raises, considering total compensation package, at least commensurate with cost of living increases.” (Non-supervisor, > 10 years)
- “After five years, I no longer receive any pay raises unless the county gives a cost of living wage increase, and with insurance prices always moving, I never see that pay increase in my check.” (Non-supervisor, 6-10 years)
- ◆ Verbatim comments reveal that employees’ desire for schedule flexibility ranges from permanent schedule changes to allowing one-off schedule adjustments.

“I would love a more flexible work day to be able to incorporate more exercise.” (Non-supervisor, > 10 years)

“Having the ability to change my hours, i.e. come in an hour early/late and leave an hour early/late would improve my satisfaction at work.” (Non-supervisor, < 2 years)
- ◆ More employees than in 2011 indicate the need to reduce stress/workload, especially non-supervisors and those with 6-10 years tenure.
- ◆ Compared to 2011, employees are more likely to indicate a need for improved equipment or technology.
 - ◇ With the exception of Wi-Fi in buildings, no single resource is commonly requested.



Satisfaction with Department Leadership & Direct Supervisor Support

Department Leadership (department heads, directors, elected officials, judges, etc.) support has increased influence on employee satisfaction – respect for home/work life balance is a strength, but several areas provide increasing opportunities for improvement.

- ◆ Compared to 2011, gains are seen in department leaders being available when needed and quickly resolving employee concerns.
 - ◇ Increases are primarily due to satisfaction gains among non-supervisors, those with less than 2 years seniority, and employees in the MI Works! Department.

"Management feels 'right there' with me, offering effective guidance, mentoring, and a whole-hearted urge to listen to employee concerns and ideas." (Non-supervisor, 2-5 years)

"There seems to be an open-door policy with administration." (Supervisor, 2-5 years)
- ◆ However, less than one half of Ottawa employees are satisfied with department leadership ensuring that all employees are treated fairly and recognizing employees contributions.
 - ◇ Some verbatim comments relay concern with inequality of workload and lack of accountability regarding less productive workers.

Direct supervisory support continues to be a clear strength for Ottawa County in 2013, particularly on allowing employees autonomy to make decisions, being available and approachable, and showing concern for their well-being.

- ◆ While satisfaction is stable for most employees and departments, those with < 2 years' tenure and those in FOTC see improvement from 2011 on most related measures.
- ◆ Corrections and Facilities Maintenance employees provide the lowest scores on most aspects related to direct supervisor support; Administration, Mentally Ill Adult Services, Community Services, and Juvenile Services report the strongest levels of direct supervisory support.

Satisfaction with Training and Career Development

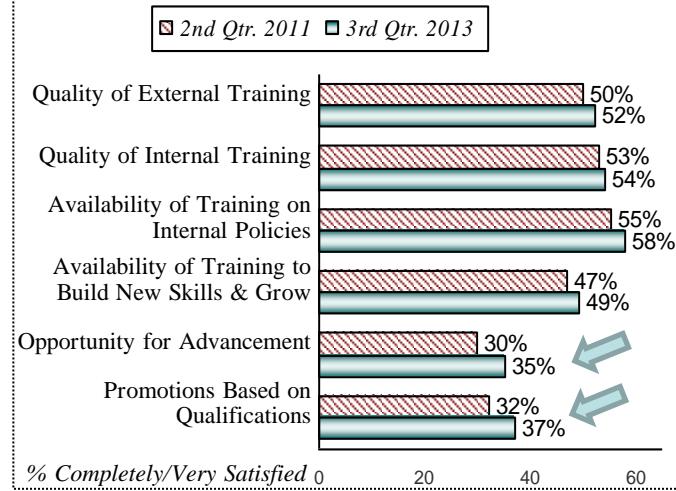
Although opportunity for advancement and qualification-based promotions show gains from 2011, they remain opportunities for improvement, as satisfaction is relatively low and these elements are critical to employee satisfaction.

- ◆ Fewer than a third of employees are completely/very satisfied with these aspects of their job, with satisfaction even lower among those working in Corrections and Clinic Services.

"All people applying for Ottawa County jobs should have the same opportunity to get the position applied for. Do not hire on a buddy system." (Non-supervisor, 6-10 years)
- ◆ Supervisors show the largest gains in satisfaction with opportunity for advancement and promotions awarded based on qualifications.

"I like the) flexibility to grow and develop skills for further advancement." (Supervisor, 6-10 years)

"Opportunities are made available to all employees." (Supervisor, > 10 years)
- ◆ Employees in non-supervisory positions and those in the Corrections department have significantly lower scores on all areas of training and career development.
 - ◇ Some employees relay that training is difficult to attend because classes fill up or conflict with their work schedule.



Satisfaction with Compensation and Benefits

Significant increases are seen in satisfaction with compensation compared to others in similar positions within the county, as well as those in other organizations; an increase in the number of employees dissatisfied with benefits is seen this wave.

- ◆ Compared to 2011, both supervisory and non-supervisory employees, as well as employees with 6-10 years of tenure, are much more satisfied that their compensation is equitable to others in similar positions.
 - ◇ Although improving considerably, satisfaction with compensation remains below that of most other aspects of job satisfaction; employees with > 10 years' tenure and those in the Clinic Services department are least satisfied; Administration has the highest satisfaction.
- ◆ Although benefits was cited as one of the most liked aspects of working for the County, concerns expressed by some related to the perception of declining overall benefit levels (particularly related to health insurance) and a desire to maintain current benefit levels.

"Stop de-valuing employees by reducing benefits continuously." (Non-supervisor, > 10 years)

"It seems like all of the best benefits are going away since I started my position a little over a year ago." (Non-supervisor, < 2 years)
- ◆ Many employees express appreciation for tuition reimbursement and the administration's increased focus on health (e.g., fitness centers); among frequently requested benefits are flexible schedules, combined vacation/sick time (PTO), and extending health insurance to retirees.

"I like the focus on healthy living." (Non-supervisor, > 10 years)

Satisfaction With Job Responsibilities

Satisfaction with support provided by other departments and being made aware of how their role contributes to the county's mission both increase substantially from 2011.

- ◆ Gains in support provided by other departments are highest among employees in MI Works!, Corrections, and Parks and Rec. departments; gains in awareness of how their role contributes to the county's mission are highest among Environmental Health and Parks and Rec. employees.
- ◆ After improving from 2011, the Prosecutors department now has the highest level of satisfaction with workload (80% completely/very satisfied).
- ◆ Compared to 2011, FOTC exhibits a decline in satisfaction with the number of hours worked on a daily basis, making FOTC employees significantly less satisfied than other departments (only 39% completely/very satisfied).
- ◆ Similar to 2011, just under 1 in 5 employees relay that their job responsibilities are what they like best about their job.

"I like the daily challenges that keep my job interesting." (Non-supervisor, 2-5 years)

"The job is diverse, challenging, and there are opportunities to advance and grow professionally." (Non-supervisor, 2-5 years)

Satisfaction with Work Conditions and Atmosphere

Most measures related to work conditions and atmosphere remain stable vs. 2011, with an improved (albeit still relatively low) perception that a climate of trust exists within the organization.

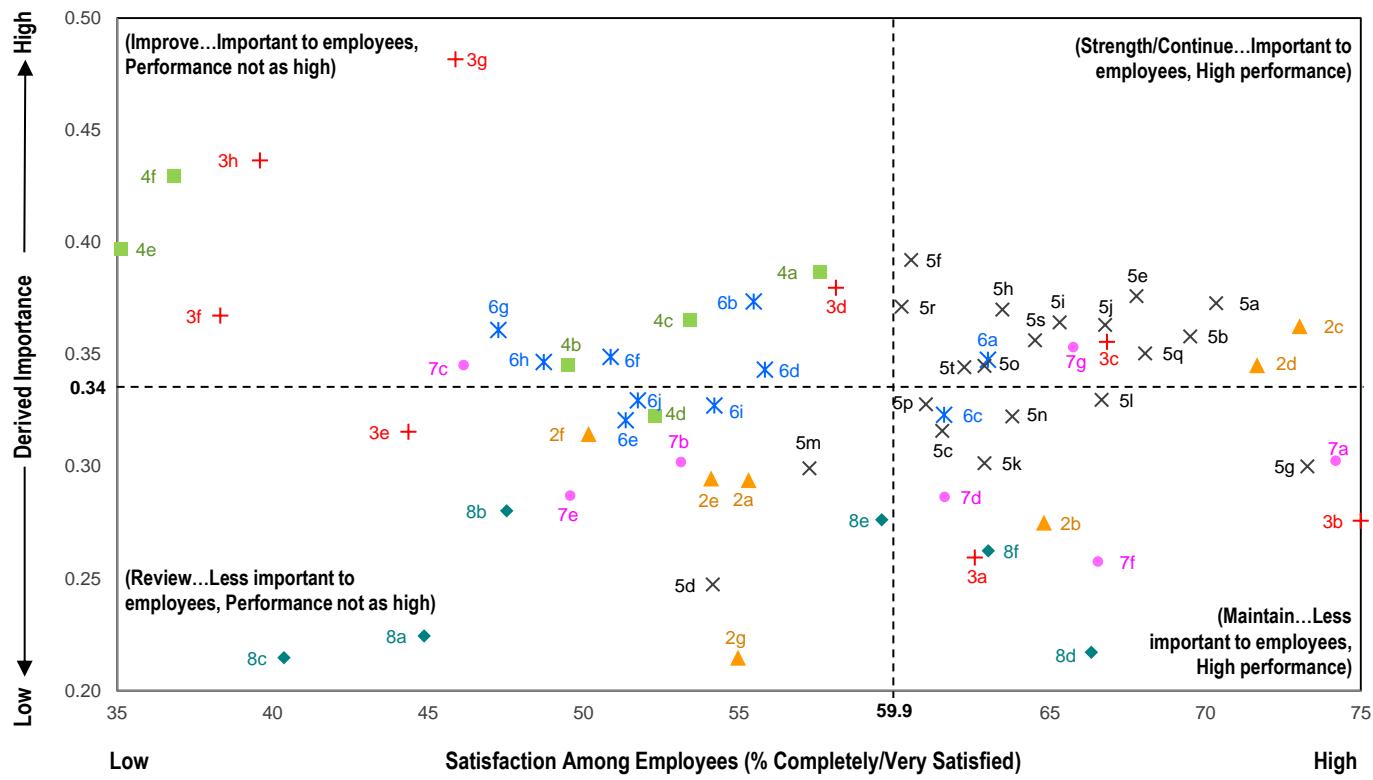
- ◆ Gains in trust are particularly high among Supervisors, those with 6-10 years tenure and those in MI Works!.
- ◆ Verbatim comments indicate that improved communication is a contributing factor to improved trust.
 - "(I like) how transparent our Administrator is." (Supervisor, 2-5 years)*
 - "There seems to be an open-door policy with administration." (Supervisor, 2-5 years)*
 - "(I like) the integrity of the people I work for and with." (Supervisor, 6-10 years)*
 - "(There is) good moral fiber in our administration. Open-door policy of our Sheriff." (Non-Supervisor, > 10 years)*
- ◆ Amount of job stress, contributions being valued, and trust continue to be high importance-lower performing attributes, with only 38% – 46% of employees being completely/very satisfied on these measures.
 - ◆ Satisfaction is particularly low among non-supervisors and those with > 10 years tenure.
 - ◆ Departments having the lowest satisfaction include FOTC, Holland District Court, Law Enforcement Investigations, and Disabled Services.
 - ◆ Compared to 2011, more employees (especially those with 6-10 years' tenure) relay stress or workload issues.
- ◆ Non-supervisory employees and those in the Disabled Services department express the most dissatisfaction with the availability of physical resources, tools and equipment.

Recommendations and Implications

- ◆ Continue to prioritize the communication of county goals, missions, and core values to all employees.
 - ◆ To foster trust, continue to provide multiple channels (formal and informal) for disseminating information.
 - ◆ Provide opportunities to solicit employee input and share plans before new policies or processes are implemented.
 - ◆ Demonstrate how county administration is working to contain health insurance and other benefits costs.
- ◆ Leverage the growing enthusiasm about Ottawa County's culture of continuous improvement that has been reinforced through recent training and development initiatives.
 - ◆ Continue to expand training and professional development initiatives, which are highly appreciated by employees (especially those in non-supervisory positions).
 - ◆ Identify ways to make training equally available to employees with differing work schedules.
- ◆ As business needs allow, consider how additional flexibility can be built into employee work schedules without compromising customer service, as well as the feasibility of implementing combined personal (PTO) time off.
- ◆ Investigate ways to address hours worked and job stress among FOTC and other lower-satisfied employee groups.
- ◆ Considering the growing importance of department leadership (department heads, directors, elected officials, judges, etc.) in influencing employee satisfaction, support department leaders in finding ways to make themselves accessible to employees and recognizing the contributions made by individual employees in achieving department goals; coordinate efforts to ensure that policies and actions are communicated in a context that addresses perceived equity/fairness concerns.
- ◆ Continue to re-survey employees on a bi-annual basis to assess performance related to organizational initiatives and goals.

2013 Ottawa County Employee Satisfaction Survey

- Attribute Map -



Improve

- ✚ Q3d. Sense of teamwork within your department
- ✚ Q3f. Amount of job stress
- ✚ Q3g. The organization valuing your contribution
- ✚ Q3h. A climate of trust existing within the organization
- Q4a. Availability of training on internal policies and procedures to effectively perform your job
- Q4b. Availability of training to build new skills and grow in your career
- Q4c. Quality of internal training
- Q4e. Opportunity for advancement
- Q4f. Promotions being awarded based on qualifications
- ✖ Q5b. Effectively communicates your department's performance on achieving organizational goals
- ✖ Q5d. Encourages free exchange of ideas
- ✖ Q5f. Is generally available when you need him/her
- ✖ Q5g. Ensures that all employees are treated fairly
- ✖ Q5h. Recognizes your contributions
- Q7c. Ensures that a trust exists between departments

Review

- ▲ Q2a. Your workload
- ▲ Q2e. Support provided to you by other Ottawa County departments
- ▲ Q2f. Being made aware of how your role contributes to Ottawa County's mission
- ▲ Q2g. Ability to work a flexible schedule
- ✚ Q3e. Coordination of efforts between different Ottawa County departments
- Q4d. Quality of external training
- ✖ Q5d. Conducts regular formal performance reviews
- ✖ Q5m. Holds employees accountable for their performance
- ✖ Q5n. Quickly resolves employee questions and concerns
- ✖ Q5o. Encourages innovative thinking
- ✖ Q5j. Keeps your department informed regarding important 'happenings' within the organization
- Q7b. Treats all departments equitably
- Q7e. Explains the reasons for implementing organizational policies, procedures, and decisions that impact your department
- ◆ Q8a. Compensation being appropriate given your responsibilities and job performance
- ◆ Q8b. Compensation being comparable to what others in similar positions are paid in other Ottawa County departments
- ◆ Q8c. Compensation being comparable to what others in similar positions are paid at other organizations
- ◆ Q8e. Employee benefits

Strength/Continue

- ▲ Q2c. Opportunity to do interesting work
- ▲ Q2d. Opportunity to do appropriately challenging work
- ✚ Q3c. Availability of physical resources, tools and equipment needed to do your job
- ✖ Q5q. Is generally available when you need him/her
- ✖ Q5s. Allows you autonomy to make necessary decisions within the scope of your job
- ✖ Q5b. Is approachable regarding work concerns
- ✖ Q5e. Shows concern for your personal well-being
- ✖ Q5f. Shows concern for your professional growth
- ✖ Q5h. Has earned your trust
- ✖ Q5i. Is receptive to your ideas
- ✖ Q5j. Encourages innovative thinking
- ✖ Q5o. Effectively coaches you to help you problem-solve
- ✖ Q5r. Treats all employees fairly
- ✖ Q5s. Recognizes your contributions
- ✖ Q5t. Keeps you informed regarding important 'happenings' within the organization
- ✖ Q6a. Respects his/her employees' need to balance their work and personal life
- Q7g. Is leading Ottawa County in the right direction

Maintain

- ▲ Q2b. Number of hours worked on a daily basis to perform your job
- ✚ Q3a. Physical comfort of your work environment
- ✚ Q3b. Safety of working conditions
- ✖ Q5c. Provides constructive informal feedback regarding your job performance
- ✖ Q5g. Allows you to be flexible with your schedule when needed
- ✖ Q5k. Has clearly defined your job responsibilities
- ✖ Q5l. Sets reasonable performance standards
- ✖ Q5n. Provides you with sufficient project background to succeed in your job
- ✖ Q5p. Quickly resolves your questions and concerns
- ✖ Q6c. Gives employees autonomy to make necessary decisions within the scope of their jobs
- Q7a. Is committed to providing high quality service to the residents of Ottawa County
- Q7d. Provides timely communication of policies and procedures
- Q7f. Communicates Ottawa County's goal and mission
- ◆ Q8d. Sick and vacation time allowance
- ◆ Q8f. Communication of changes in benefits and compensation