Senior Executive Service
Exit Survey Results

Spring 2016

Contents

Executive Summary

In mid-2013, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued a new exit survey for standard distribution by all agencies across the Federal Government to departing members of the Senior Executive Service (SES). This SES Exit Survey enables Federal agencies to capture valuable information regarding the circumstances under which their senior executives leave the Federal Government, and to offer an opportunity for executives to provide candid feedback about their work experiences and their perspectives of their agencies. This report covers the period of August 2014 through July 2015, during which a total of 230 executives from 21 different agencies provided survey responses. Additionally, this report compares and examines thematic trends between the most recent SES Exit Survey data and the initial data gathered from April 2013 through July 2014.

These SES Exit Survey results indicate the following:

- **Executives are leaving with intent to continue working, in most cases for higher pay**. A total of 162 executives reported that they are retiring or resigning. Of those retiring and resigning voluntarily, 56% will be working for pay after they leave their agency, or intend to look for employment in the near future. Of those respondents who will be working after they leave their agency, the majority are interested in working full-time (78%), and expect an increase in compensation (60%).

- **Executives are exhibiting less pride for their home agencies and the Senior Executive Service.** While more than half of respondents indicated they would recommend their agency as a good place to work (57%) and would recommend employment in the Senior Executive Service to others (54%), these numbers are lower in comparison to previous survey results (63% and 62% respectively).

- **Formal succession planning is not the norm for senior-level roles.** Only 28% of executives reported formal succession planning efforts in their agencies, a 12 percentage point decrease from the previous report. Similarly, less than half (46%) of executives reported being asked to help prepare their successors, a 7 percentage point decrease from April 2013 through July 2014.

- **Agencies can influence whether or not executives stay in the organization.** Although the majority of executives indicated no effort was made to encourage them to stay (72%), many indicated that their decision might have been changed by an increase in pay (41%), verbal encouragement to stay based on their value to the organization (29%), or an award (26%). Notably, there was a 10 percentage point increase in executives who said they would stay if they had increased autonomy in decision making (31% for August 2014 through July 2015 compared to 21% for April 2013 through July 2014).

- **Work environment issues continue to be the highest contributing factors in an executive's decision to leave.** Respondents were asked the extent to which a variety of reasons contributed to their leaving the agency. Work environment issues contributed the most to the decision (i.e., "senior leadership"—43%; "political environment"—42%; "organizational culture"—37%). Respondents also indicated that a "desire to enjoy life without work commitments" was a contributing factor in deciding to leave (24%).

These findings highlight some of the persistent challenges facing today's Senior Executive Service members. Although the data suggest a decline in enthusiasm for senior-level work, it is important to keep in mind that agencies may have the power to influence whether SES members ultimately choose to leave the organization. By modifying the work environment and organizational culture, and acknowledging and appreciating an executive's value to the organization, agencies may be able to persuade their high-performing senior executives to stay.

Survey Background and Methodology

Purpose

OPM, in partnership with other agencies, designed the SES Exit Survey to capture valuable information regarding the circumstances under which senior executives leave the Federal Government and offer an opportunity for executives to provide candid feedback about their work experiences and their perspectives of their agencies. The information will enable Federal agencies to have increased awareness of the work environments they are providing their executives, and to inform their continued efforts to successfully recruit, manage, and retain their senior leadership workforce. The information will also be helpful to support agency and Governmentwide recruitment, engagement, retention, and succession planning efforts for current and future executives. With many SES members eligible for retirement in the near future, it is imperative for agencies to understand what they can do to engage and retain executives, while mitigating factors that cause executives to leave the Federal Government.

Methodology

Survey Content

The survey contains information related to the following topic areas:

- Future Plans
- Compensation
- Perceptions of the Agency
- Perceptions of the Senior Executive Service
- Succession Planning
- Stay Factors
- Reasons for Leaving
- Executive Core Qualifications
- Performance Management
- Demographics

Who Participated

A total of 230 members of the Senior Executive Service who were in the process of leaving their agencies responded to the survey.

How the Survey Was Administered

Agencies self-administered the on-line survey by sending a web link to each departing executive.

When Were Employees Surveyed

The survey data examined in this report covers the time period between August 2014 and July 2015. Comparisons to April 2013 through July 2014 data are also provided.

Response Rate

The response rate is difficult to calculate because OPM does not directly distribute the individual surveys to departing executives. Based on Enterprise Human Resource Integration data and agency information, OPM calculated a 28 percent response rate.

Data Analysis

In performing statistical analyses for this report, OPM employed a number of grouping procedures to simplify presentations.

Agreement Items: These items requested the respondent to choose an answer on an "agreement" scale comprised of the following options: "Strongly Agree"; "Agree"; "Neither Agree nor Disagree"; "Disagree"; and "Strongly Disagree." The results were then further grouped, as displayed in the table below.

Response Option	Grouped Category
Strongly Agree	Positive
Agree	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	Neutral
Disagree	Negative
Strongly Disagree	

Extent Items: These items asked the respondent to choose an answer on an "extent" scale comprised of the following options: "Not at all"; "To a Small Extent"; "To a Moderate Extent"; "To a Great Extent"; and "To a Very Great Extent." The results were then further grouped. Graphs in this report reflect the grouping of "To a Great Extent/To a Very Great Extent."

"Not Applicable" and "I Prefer Not to Respond" Responses: Responses of "Not Applicable" (N/A) and "I Prefer Not to Respond" were removed before calculation of percentages for Extent and Agreement items.

Percentage Totals: Total percentages for some of the tables in this report may not equal 100% due to rounding; however, all pre-rounded percentages create a total equal to 100%.

Open Responses: Tables for open response items represent data that were content analyzed; coded into positive, negative, and neutral categories; and further grouped into themes. Category tables, sample themes, and sample comments from executives are provided in this report. While not all respondents chose to complete the open response sections, the numbers for each category represent the number of comments that were received in that category.

Statistical Significance: In the "Net Change in % Points" column, numbers that have a corresponding (+) superscript indicate that the net change in percentage points is statistically significant. Statistical differences are between the April 2013 through July 2014 survey data and the August 2014 through July 2015 survey data.

Survey Analysis

Primary Factors

Future Plans

Departing executives were asked to provide information regarding their plans for the future. The majority of the executives who took the survey indicated they were retiring or resigning (73%), with 93% of these individuals reporting they were retiring or resigning voluntarily. Over half of the departing executives indicated they planned to work for pay (56%). Almost a quarter of the departing executives indicated they had not decided whether they were going to work for pay in the future (24%).

Which of the following best describes the circumstances under which you are leaving your agency?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
I am retiring	59%	56%	-3
I am resigning	11%	17%	+6
I am transferring to another Federal agency	12%	16%	+4
I am accepting a non-SES position within a Federal agency	2%	5%	+3
I am leaving involuntarily	1%	1%	0
Other	14%	6%	-8[+]

N=217 *N=224*

+Net change is statistically significant.

I am retiring:	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Voluntarily	97%	93%	-4
Involuntarily (Mandatory Retirement)	2%	5%	+3
Involuntarily for reasons other than Mandatory Retirement	2%	2%	0

N=128 *N=120*

Will you be working for pay after you leave your agency?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Yes	35%	37%	+2
No, but I intend to look for employment in the near future	14%	19%	+5
No	27%	20%	-7
Undecided	24%	24%	0

N=169 *N=160*

The executives who stated their intent to work in the future reported the following: 33% indicated they planned to work for the private sector; 13% planned to work for themselves; and 11% planned to work in the not-for-profit sector. The executives who indicated they intended to work reported the following: 78% indicated they will be working full-time, and 60% for more pay. Compared to previous survey results, there was an 8 percentage point decrease in executives would work for less pay and an 8 percentage point increase for executives would said they would work for the same amount of pay.

Of the executives who stated their intent to work, 63% indicated they intended to work in their agency in some future capacity as an employee or contractor. Compared to previous survey results, there was an 8 percentage point increase in executives who would work for the agency in the future as a full-time contractor, but a 9percentage point decrease in executives who would work in the agency as part of a short-term assignment.

Which of the following best describes the type of organization you will be working for after you leave your agency:	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Government contractor	10%	14%	+4
Private company, not a Government contractor	33%	33%	0
Self-employed	21%	13%	-8
State or local government	6%	8%	+2
Non-profit organization	16%	11%	-5
Work as a reemployed annuitant for a Federal agency	5%	2%	-3
Other	9%	20%	+11[+]
	N=81	N=86	

+Net change is statistically significant.

Will you be working full-time or part-time?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Full-Time	71%	78%	+7
Part-Time	29%	22%	-7
	N=111	N=125	

Will your compensation increase, decrease, or stay the same?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Increase	59%	60%	+1
Decrease	26%	18%	-8
Stay the same	15%	23%	+8
	N=110	N=124	

If possible, would you work for this agency in the future as an employee or contractor?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Yes, part-time	19%	17%	-2
Yes, full-time	21%	29%	+8
Yes, for a short-term assignment	26%	17%	-9$^+$
No	35%	38%	+3

N=168 *N=162*

+Net change is statistically significant.

Perceptions of the Agency and Senior Executive Service

Over half of executives would recommend their agency as a good place to work (57%); however, 27% of executives would not recommend their agency as a good place to work. Notably, compared to previous survey results there was a 6 percentage point decrease in executives who would recommend their agency as a good place to work, and a 4 percentage point increase in those who would not recommend their agency as a good place to work.

I would recommend this agency to others as a good place to work.	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Positive	63%	57%	-6
Neutral	15%	16%	+1
Negative	23%	27%	+4

N=169 *N=163*

Open Response

Executives provided a large number of positive and negative comments, with some neutral comments regarding whether they would recommend their agency as a good place to work.

Positive sample themes include: Positive work environment, great mission, and great people. Sample positive comments include:

> "Our agency does very important, meaningful work that is very satisfying."
> "Important work, supportive environment, outstanding colleagues."
> "Great mission and great people."

Sample negative themes include poor organizational effectiveness, poor senior leadership, and political issues. Sample negative comments include:

> "Agency is nearly dysfunctional."
> "It is very difficult to recommend this agency knowing there are leaders who do not value employees."
> "There is a leadership vacuum and a lack of purpose that inspires"
> "…the political climate and constant upheaval makes it difficult to recommend the agency to others at this point in time."

I would recommend this agency as a good place to work (Please explain your answer).	
Category	# of comments
Positive	39
Neutral	18
Negative	35

The majority of executives provided a variety of positive comments regarding what was positive about working in their agencies. Sample themes include: Challenging work, strong mission, working with good people, and positive impact of the work. Sample comments include:

"Exciting, challenging work. Great support from my bosses."

"Great mission, great people, great challenges."

"The vitality and sense of purpose of employees; they are committed to the mission of the agency."

"Talented leadership. Ability to implement positive change."

What did you like best about working in your agency?	
Category	# of comments
Positive	105
Neutral	4
Negative	1

Over half of executives would also recommend employment in the Senior Executive Service to others (54%); however, 21% of executives would not recommend employment in the Senior Executive Service. Notably, compared to previous survey results there was an 8 percentage point decrease in executives who would recommend employment in the Senior Executive Service to others, and a corresponding 8 percentage point increase in those who would not recommend employment in the Senior Executive Service to others.

I would recommend employment in the Senior Executive Service to others.	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Positive	62%	54%	-8
Neutral	25%	25%	0
Negative	13%	21%	+8[+]
	N=167	N=160	

+Net change is statistically significant.

Open Response

Executives provided a large number of positive and negative comments, with some neutral comments regarding whether they would recommend employment in the Senior Executive Service.

Positive sample themes include: Positive work experience, many professional opportunities, and an honor and privilege to serve. Sample positive comments include:

"It has been an honor to be an SES as the opportunities have been extraordinary."

"It is an honor and privilege to serve with other SESs."

"Service to your country is admirable."

"It is a privilege and honor to serve the American people through leadership in the federal government. It is also personally rewarding in terms of the people we meet, the diverse missions we advance, and the impact we can have on the daily lives of our fellow citizens."

Sample negative themes include poor compensation, political environment, and not feeling valued. Sample negative comments include:

"Not a valued position within government."

"The entire SES corps in this department is under relentless attack, and is completely demoralized."

"Compensation and the way executives are treated is reason enough not to join the ranks of SES."

"The stress, politics, bureaucracy you have to deal with is not worth the small increase in pay over a GS-15…"

I would recommend employment in the Senior Executive Service (Please explain your answer).	
Category	# of comments
Positive	29
Neutral	18
Negative	34

Succession Planning

With over half of the current SES workforce eligible for retirement in the next three to five years, it is critical that agencies have a pipeline of talent ready to take on senior level roles. Agencies currently are already required to develop a comprehensive management succession program (5 CFR 412.201).

Almost three-quarters of the surveyed executives reported no formal succession planning efforts in their agencies (72%), a 12 percentage point increase from April 2013 to July 2014. Forty-six percent of executives did report they had been asked to help prepare their successors, a 7 percentage point decrease from April 2013 through July 2014.

Does your agency have any formal succession planning efforts for executives? (e.g., interviews/debriefs that took place prior to your departure to ensure smooth transition of your duties)	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Yes	40%	28%	-12[+]
No	60%	72%	+12[+]
	N=158	N=146	

+Net change is statistically significant.

Have there been—or were there prior to your leaving—any efforts made to involve you in preparing for your successor?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Yes	53%	46%	-7
No	47%	54%	+7
	N=162	N=144	

Stay Factors

Stay factors are influences that determine what would encourage an executive to stay in their current role. As with the previous survey results, improved compensation and benefits, increased authority/support, and better work-life balance were the most-emphasized stay factor themes reflected in the SES Exit Survey.

Was any effort made to encourage you to stay?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Yes	30%	29%	-1
No	67%	68%	+1
No, I was asked or encouraged to leave	3%	4%	+1

N=195   *N=191*

Open Response

Executives provided a large number of neutral comments, with a few positive and negative comments regarding whether any effort was made to encourage executives to stay. Sample neutral themes include: Asked by senior leadership to stay, requested to stay for certain skills, and offered an incentive to stay. Sample neutral comments include:

"Senior Leadership expressed hope that based on my performance and skills I would reconsider."
"I was asked if increased compensation (retention bonus) would encourage me to stay."
"…my supervisor and colleagues made it very clear that they would like me to stay and regretted my retirement."
"Leadership asked me to stay and what they could do to make that happen."

Was any effort made to encourage you to stay? (Other, please specify)	
Category	# of comments
Positive	4
Neutral	38
Negative	3

Increased pay was the highest rated factor that would have encouraged executives to stay (41%). Other stay factors included: increased autonomy in decision making (31%); verbal encouragement (29%); greater engagement from senior leadership (28%); performance or other awards (26%); better work-life balance (24%); retention incentives (23%), and increased delegation of authority (20%). Most departing executives (72%) reported their agencies made no effort to encourage them to stay, and 24% of executives stated that nothing would have encouraged them to stay.
Notably, there was a 10 percentage point increase in "increased autonomy in decision making" and 5 percentage point increase in "verbal encouragement to stay based on your value to the organization" compared to previous survey results.

Compensation and Benefits
What, if anything, would have encouraged you to stay?
Select all that apply
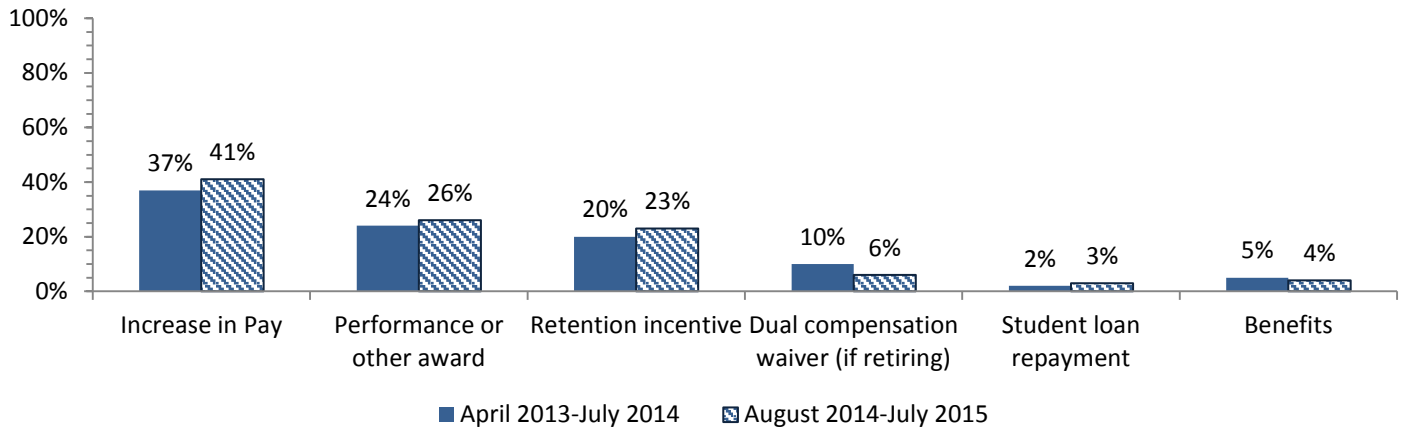
Compensation and Benefits	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage
Increase in Pay	37%	41%
Performance or other award	24%	26%
Retention incentive	20%	23%
Dual compensation waiver (if retiring)	10%	6%
Student loan repayment	2%	3%
Benefits	5%	4%

Increased Authority/Support
What, if anything, would have encouraged you to stay?
Select all that apply
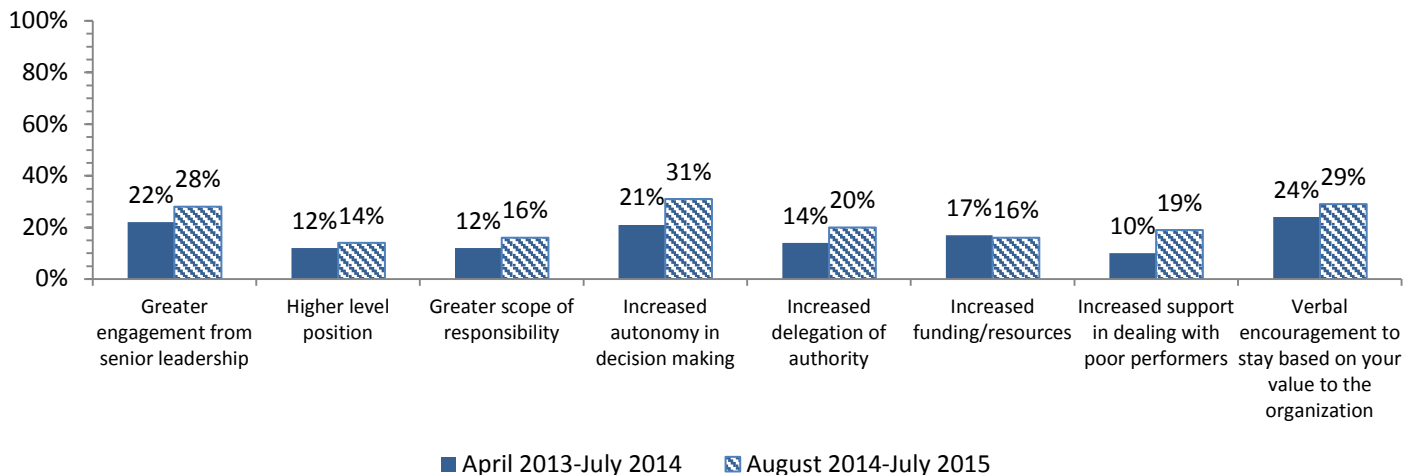
Increased Authority/Support	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage
Greater engagement from senior leadership	22%	28%
Higher level position	12%	14%
Greater scope of responsibility	12%	16%
Increased autonomy in decision making	21%	31%
Increased delegation of authority	14%	20%
Increased funding/resources	17%	16%
Increased support in dealing with poor performers	10%	19%
Verbal encouragement to stay based on your value to the organization	24%	29%

Work-Life Balance
What, if anything, would have encouraged you to stay?
Select all that apply
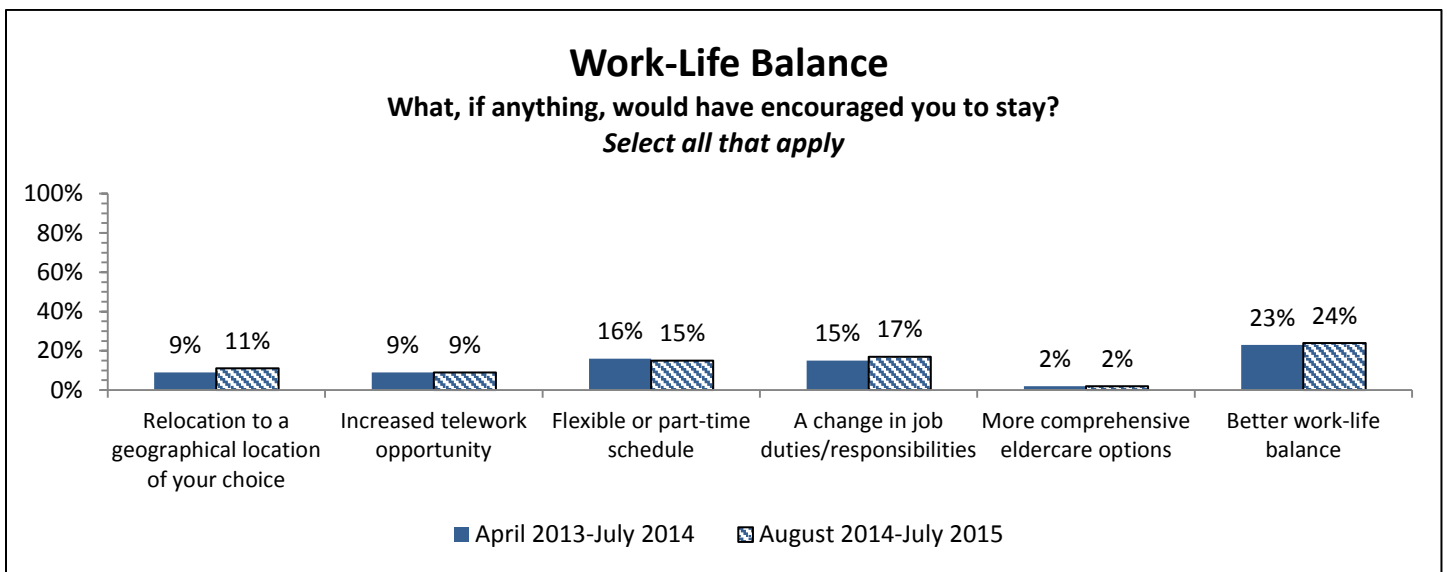
Work-Life Balance	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage
Relocation to a geographical location of your choice	9%	11%
Increased telework opportunity	9%	9%
Flexible or part-time schedule	16%	15%
A change in job duties/responsibilities	15%	17%
More comprehensive eldercare options	2%	2%
Better work-life balance	23%	24%

Developmental Opportunity
What, if anything, would have encouraged you to stay?
Select all that apply
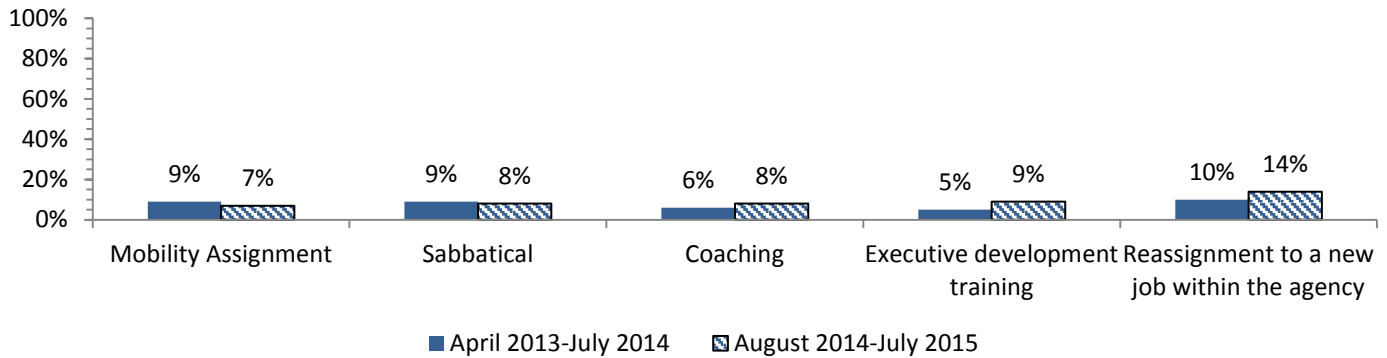
Developmental Opportunity	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage
Mobility assignment	9%	7%
Sabbatical	9%	8%
Coaching	6%	8%
Executive development training	5%	9%
Reassignment to a new job within the agency	10%	14%

Miscellaneous
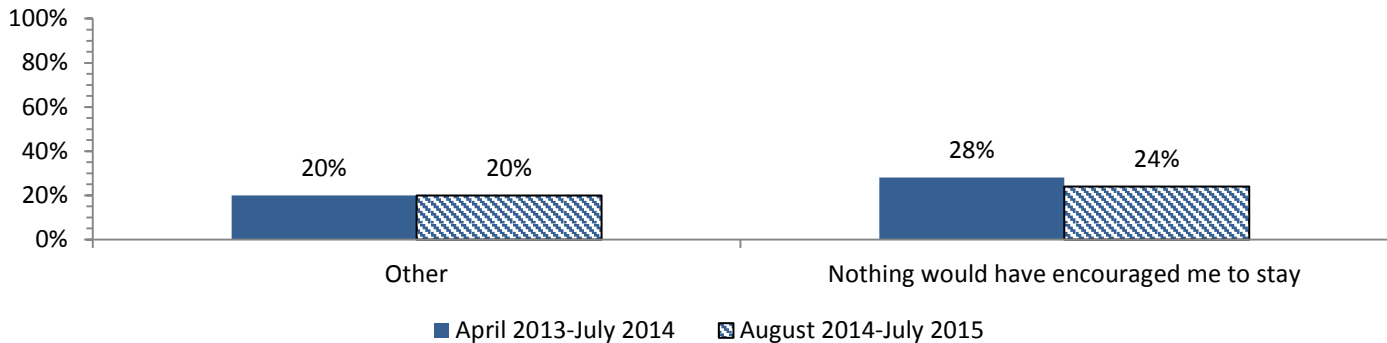### What, if anything, would have encouraged you to stay?
Select all that apply

Miscellaneous	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage
Other	20%	20%
Nothing would have encouraged me to stay	28%	24%

Open Response

Executives provided zero positive comments, with a few neutral and negative comments regarding if anything would have encouraged them to stay.

Sample neutral themes include: Work/life balance and better defense of the SES. Sample neutral comments include:

> "Flexible schedule."
> "More appreciation of need for personal time/not working 80 hours per week."
> "Defense of SES to Congress and the Media by our Secretary and others in the administration."

Sample negative themes include: Senior leadership and lack of appreciation. Sample negative comments include:

> "Senior leaders that will make decisions and follow through on commitments."
> "Treated with respect," "clear leadership action to achieve mission"
> "A feeling…that we are of value"

What, if anything, would have encouraged you to stay? (Other, please specify)	
Category	# of comments
Positive	0
Neutral	18
Negative	14

The majority of comments that were provided were neutral, with a few positive and negative comments regarding that nothing would have encouraged executives to stay.

Sample neutral themes include: Ready to retire and ready to take on new opportunities. Sample neutral comments include: "I am ready to move on to the next phase in my life," "I've decided to pursue another calling that precludes me from employment in the Federal Government," "ready to retire."

What, if anything, would have encouraged you to stay? (Nothing would have encouraged me to stay. Please specify)	
Category	# of comments
Positive	1
Neutral	19
Negative	7

Reasons for Leaving

Consistent with previous survey results, work environment issues were the most commonly-cited factors for leaving, especially the following: senior leadership (43%); the political environment (42%); and organizational culture (37%).

Executives also cited the following factors: lack of recognition for accomplishments (35%); a more attractive job elsewhere (34%); lack of autonomy in decision-making (33%); stress on the job (31%); lack of awards (25%); and performance evaluations (27%). Additionally, executives cited the following factors to somewhat lesser extent: relationship with the supervisor (25%); lack of opportunity for advancement (26%); a desire to enjoy life without work commitments (24%); insufficient pay (21%); and workload (20%).
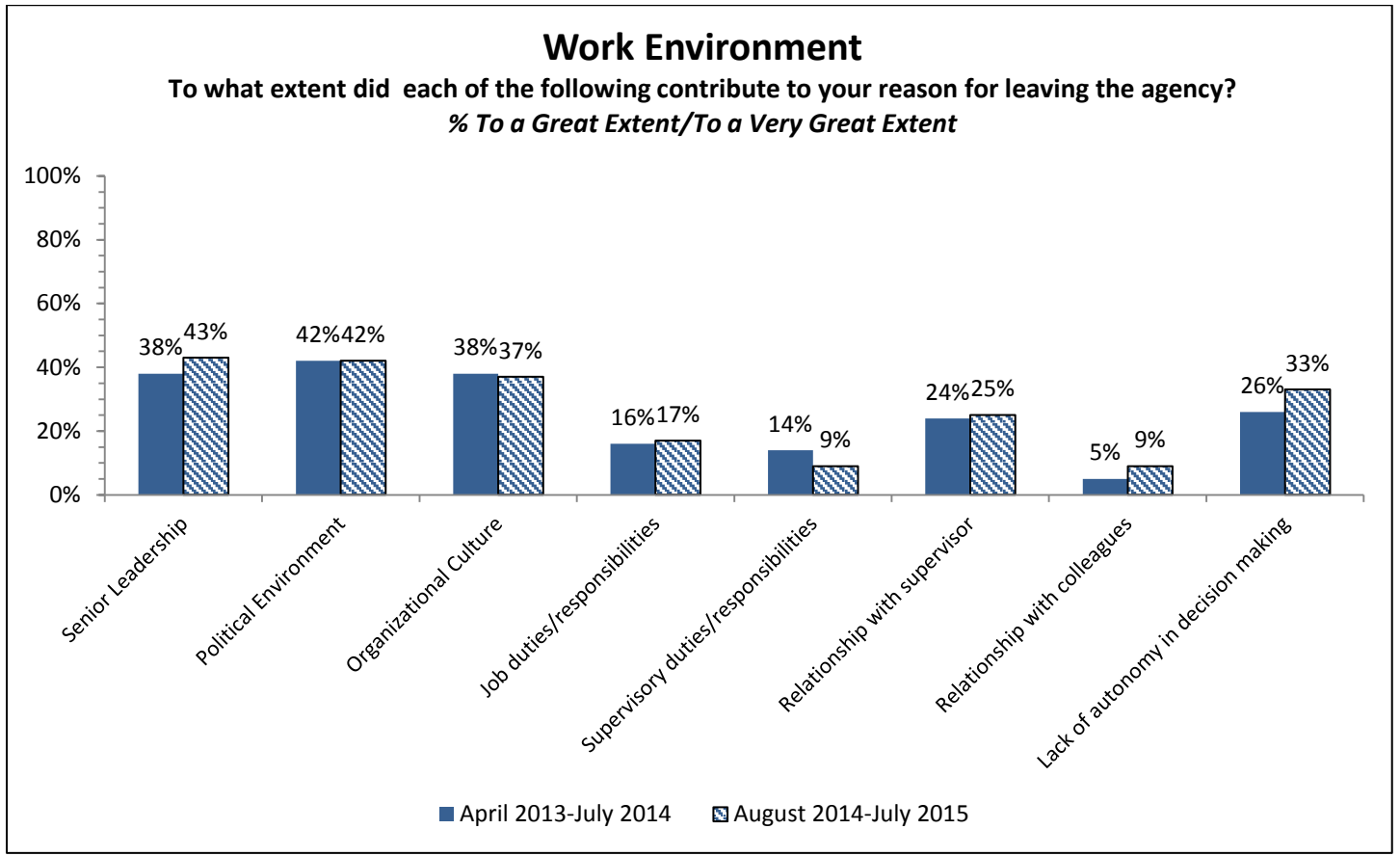
Work Environment
To what extent did each of the following contribute to your reason for leaving the agency?
% To a Great Extent/To a Very Great Extent

■ April 2013-July 2014   ▨ August 2014-July 2015

	To a Great Extent/Very Great Extent	
Work Environment	**Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage**	**Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage**
Senior leadership	38%	43%
Political environment	42%	42%
Organizational culture	38%	37%
Job duties/responsibilities	16%	17%
Supervisory duties/responsibilities	14%	9%
Relationship with supervisor	24%	25%
Relationship with colleagues	5%	9%
Lack of autonomy in decision making	26%	33%

Advancement and Recognition
To what extent did each of the following contribute to your reason for leaving the agency?
% To a Great Extent/To a Very Great Extent
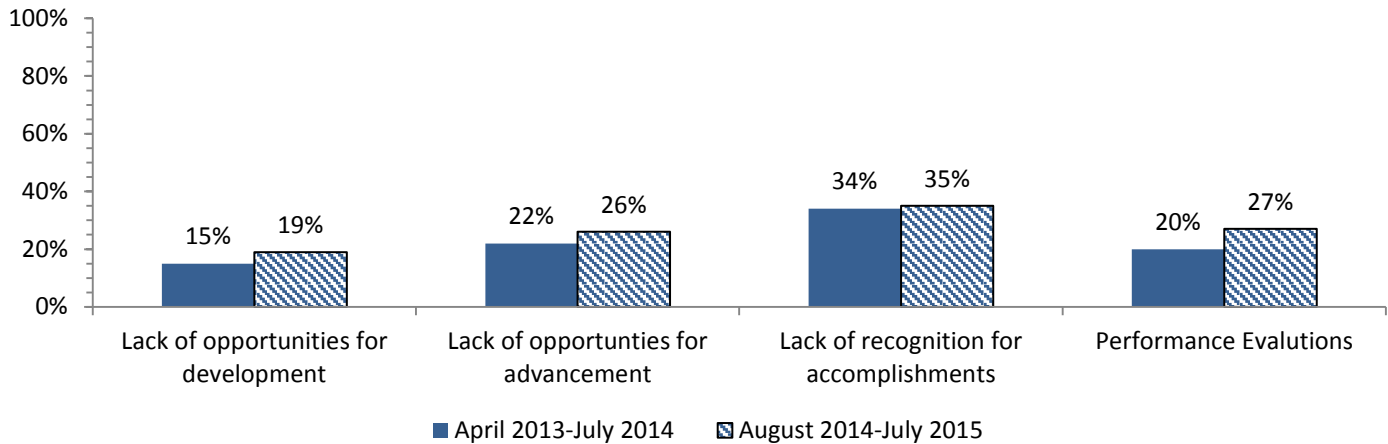
Advancement and Recognition	To a Great Extent/Very Great Extent	
	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage
Lack of opportunities for development	15%	19%
Lack of opportunities for advancement	22%	26%
Lack of recognition for accomplishments	34%	35%
Performance evaluations	20%	27%

Work-Life Balance
To what extent did each of the following contribute to your reason for leaving the agency?
% To a Great Extent/To a Very Great Extent

Work-Life Balance	To a Great Extent/Very Great Extent	
	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage
Geographic reassignment	11%	9%
Long work hours	17%	14%
Work hours not flexible	12%	10%
Workload	17%	20%
Job stress	30%	31%
Commute	17%	13%

Personal Reasons
To what extent did each of the following contribute to your reason for leaving the agency?
% To a Great Extent/To a Very Great Extent

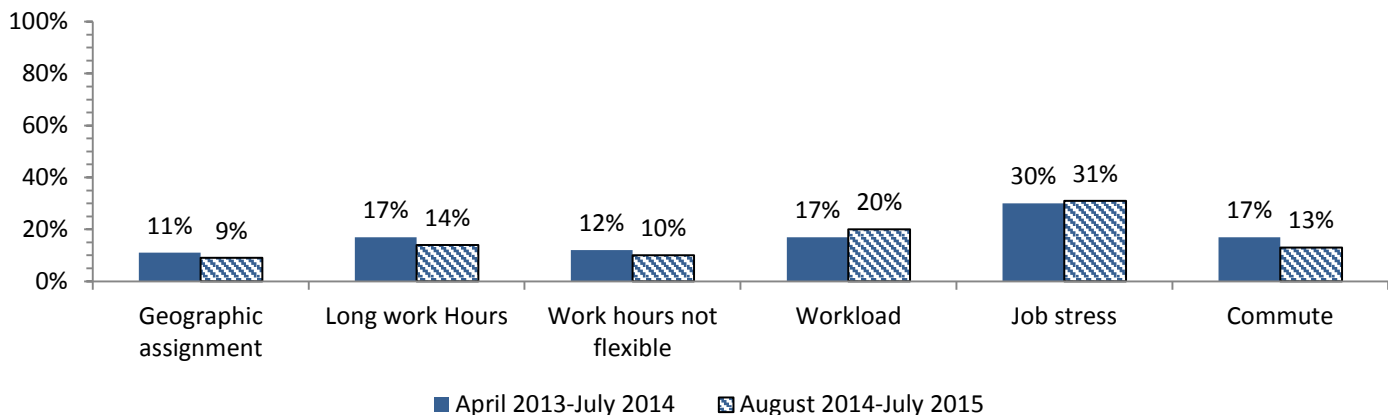| Personal Reasons	To a Great Extent/Very Great Extent	
	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage
More attractive job offer elsewhere	30%	34%
Desire to pursue education	6%	1%
Relocation	20%	14%
Personal health reasons	9%	12%
Care for a family member	13%	8%
Desire to leave the workforce	19%	13%
Desire to enjoy life without work commitments	38%	24%

Compensation and Benefits
To what extent did each of the following contribute to your reason for leaving the agency?
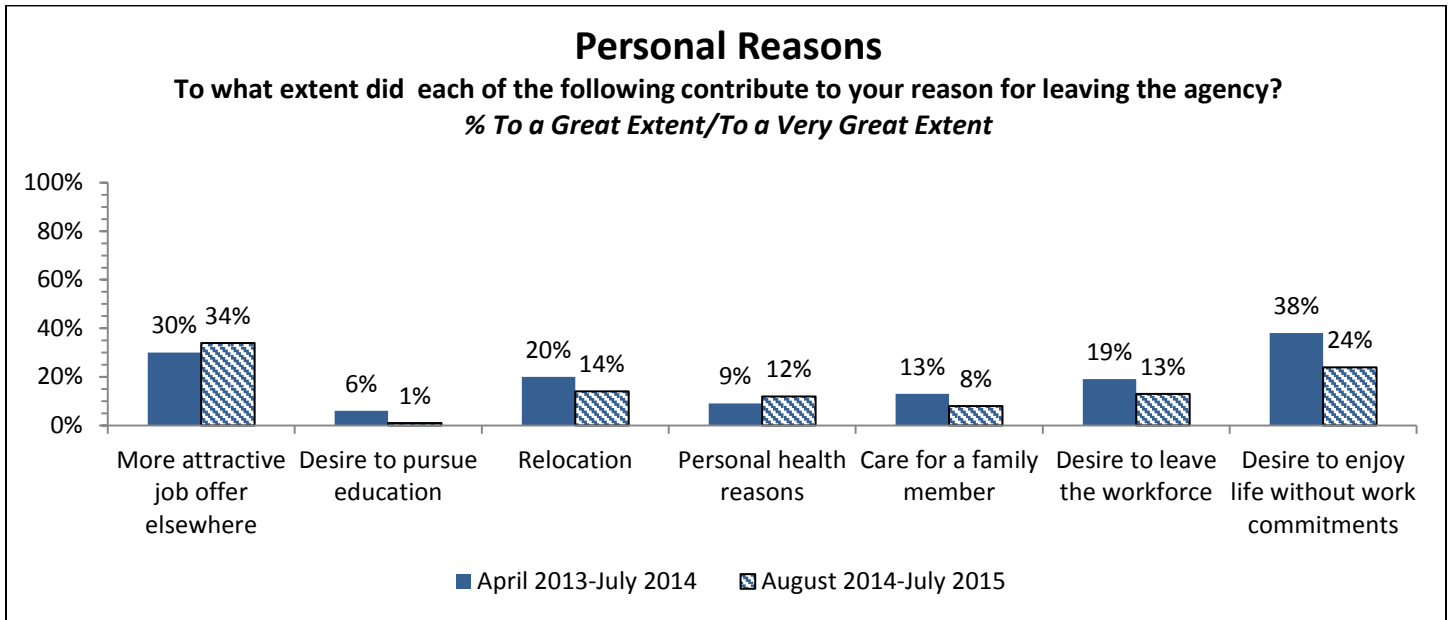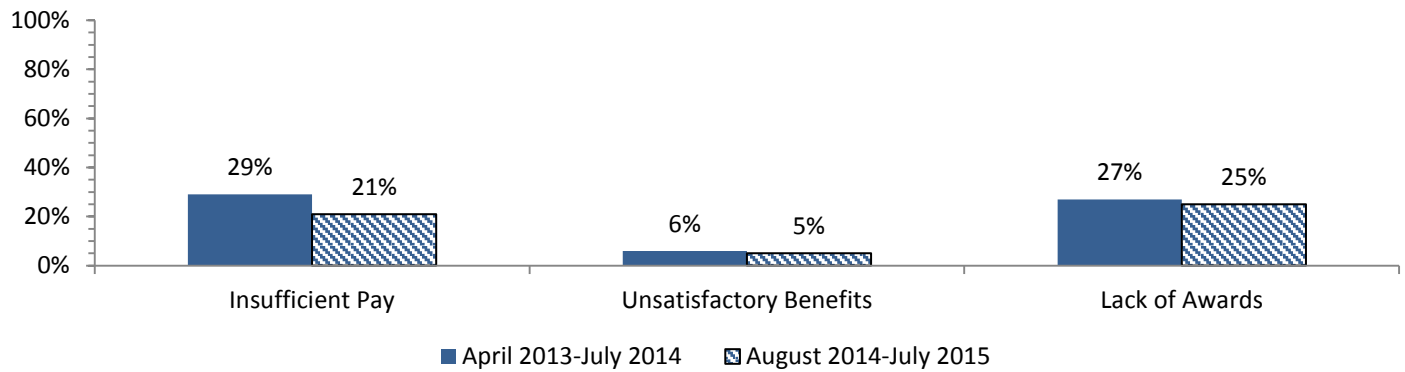*% To a Great Extent/To a Very Great Extent*

Bar chart showing:
- Insufficient Pay: 29% (April 2013-July 2014), 21% (August 2014-July 2015)
- Unsatisfactory Benefits: 6% (April 2013-July 2014), 5% (August 2014-July 2015)
- Lack of Awards: 27% (April 2013-July 2014), 25% (August 2014-July 2015)

Legend: ■ April 2013-July 2014 ▨ August 2014-July 2015

Compensation and benefits	To a Great Extent/Very Great Extent	
	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage
Insufficient Pay	29%	21%
Unsatisfactory benefits	6%	5%
Lack of awards	27%	25%

Open Response

Executives provided a large number of neutral and negative comments, with a few positive comments regarding what was their most important reason for leaving. Sample neutral themes include: Work/Life balance, time to retire, and pursue another opportunity. Sample neutral comments include:

"…relocate to be closer to family and have more time to spend with family"

"I have reached the age to retire and enjoy life"

"My new job is a great opportunity."

Sample negative themes include: Political environment, compensation, work environment, leadership, and lack of appreciation. Sample negative comments include:

"My supervisor operates in a communication vacuum; this makes it difficult to make informed decisions because information is not shared."

"Not respected for what I added to the department. The environment was extremely disrespectful and unfriendly"

"…increasingly difficult leadership environment given the political climate"

"Lack of organizational support."

"Lack of competitive pay."

Please describe your most important reason for leaving.	
Category	**# of comments**

Please describe your most important reason for leaving.	
Positive	6
Neutral	82
Negative	77

Executive Core Qualifications

The Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) are leadership skills designated by OPM to evaluate individuals for entrance into the SES and to evaluate their performance. The five ECQs are:

Leading Change- This core qualification involves the ability to bring about strategic change, both within and outside the organization, to meet organizational goals. Inherent in this ECQ is the ability to establish an organizational vision and to implement it in a continuously changing environment.
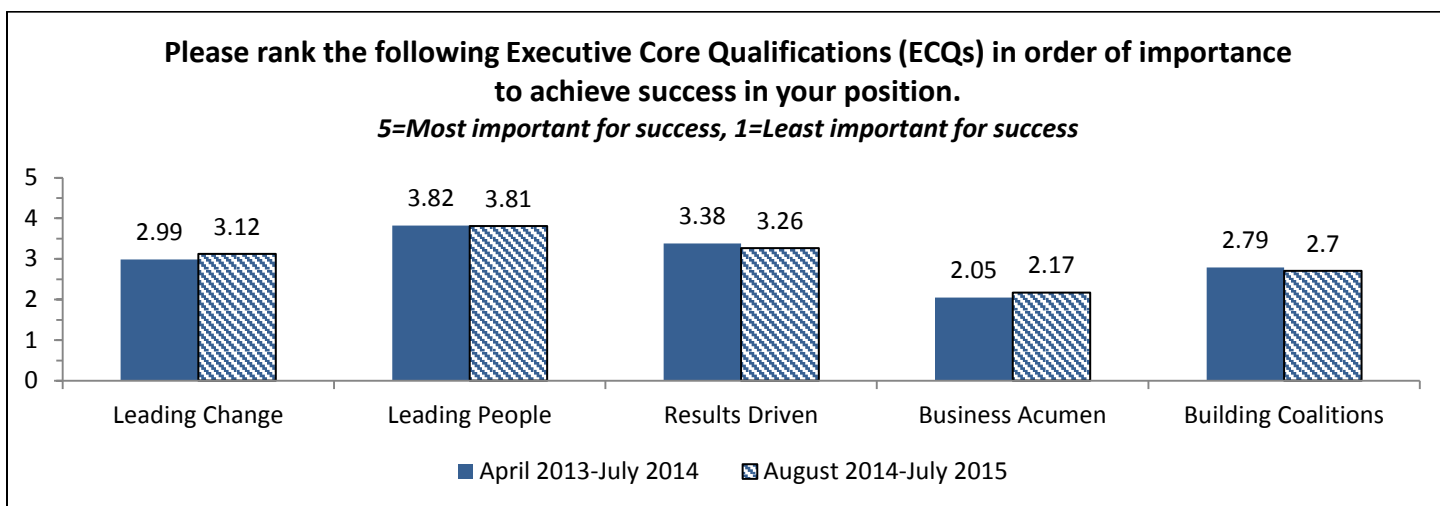
Leading People- This core qualification involves the ability to lead people toward meeting the organization's vision, mission and goals. Inherent in this ECQ is the ability to provide an inclusive workplace that fosters the development of others, facilitates cooperation and teamwork and supports constructive resolution of conflicts.

Results Driven- This core qualification involves the ability to meet organizational goals and customer expectations. Inherent in this ECQ is the ability to make decisions that produce high-quality results by applying technical knowledge, analyzing problems and calculating risks.

Business Acumen- This core qualification involves the ability to manage human, financial and information resources strategically.

Building Coalitions- This core qualification involves the ability to build coalitions internally and with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, nonprofit and private sector organizations, foreign governments, or international organizations to achieve common goals.

The survey asked executives to rank the ECQs in order of importance to achieve success in their position. In the previous and current survey results Leading People received the highest average ranking of the five ECQs. Likewise, Results Driven was identified as the second most important ECQ in the previous and current survey results.

Please rank the following Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) in order of importance to achieve success in your position.

5=Most important for success, 1=Least important for success

	April 2013-July 2014	August 2014-July 2015
Leading Change	2.99	3.12
Leading People	3.82	3.81
Results Driven	3.38	3.26
Business Acumen	2.05	2.17
Building Coalitions	2.79	2.7

Executive Core Qualifications	Apr '13-Jul '14 Average Ranking	Aug '14-Jul '15 Average Ranking
Leading Change	2.99	3.12
Leading People	3.82	3.81
Results Driven	3.38	3.26
Business Acumen	2.05	2.17
Building Coalitions	2.79	2.7

Performance Management

Executive performance is evaluated on a pay-for-performance system where senior executives are rated each year on a combination of demonstrated leadership through the five ECQs as well as measurable results. A majority of executives (77%) indicated they were rated either "Outstanding" or "Exceeds Fully Successful" on their most recent performance appraisal.

About three-fourths (70%) of the executives agreed their rating was a reflection of their performance, while 24% disagreed. Compared to previous survey results, there was a 6 percentage point decrease in executives who agreed that their rating was a reflection of their performance, and a 6 percentage point increase in executives who would strongly disagree that their rating was a reflection of their performance.

What performance rating (or equivalent) did you receive on your last performance appraisal?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Outstanding	45%	43%	-2
Exceeds fully successful	39%	34%	-5
Fully Successful	11%	13%	+2
Minimally satisfactory	0%	2%	+2
Unsatisfactory	0%	1%	+1
I did not receive a performance rating	5%	7%	+2
I prefer not to respond	-	-	-

N=179   *N=175*

To what extent do you agree or disagree that this rating was a reflection of your performance?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Strongly Agree	41%	43%	+2
Agree	33%	27%	-6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	9%	6%	-3
Disagree	9%	10%	+1
Strongly Disagree	8%	14%	+6
I prefer not to respond	-	-	-

N=170   *N=162*

Suggestions for Improvement by Senior Executives

Executives were provided the opportunity to provide comments about what they would have changed in their agency, in the Federal government, or the SES.

Open Response

Executives provided a large number of neutral and negative comments, with a few positive comments regarding if they would have changed anything in their agencies, the Federal Government, or the SES. Sample neutral themes include: Work environment, hiring/recruitment reform, and work/life balance. Sample neutral comments include:

"SES should have more flexibility in terms of work schedules and the ability to telework."

"Allow managers greater flexibility to hire, fire, reward, discipline employees."

"More collaboration and cooperation…to ensure mission success"

"Increased focus on employee engagement and climate issues."

Sample negative themes include: Political environment, hiring, and work environment. Sample negative comments include:

"Significant change in the adverse - politically charged atmosphere."

"…too much 'one size fits all' in the federal government"

"The federal government is too slow and bureaucratic in hiring."

If given the opportunity, what would you have changed at your agency, in the Federal Government, or the SES?	
Category	# of comments
Positive	3
Neutral	70
Negative	24

Demographics

Agency Participation and General Demographics

A diverse group of executives made up the 28% of exiting SES that responded to the August 2014 through July 2015 survey administration. Respondents represented 21 agencies, ranging from large Departments to small, independent agencies. The following are the five agencies with the largest number of respondents to the most recent survey administration: Department of Homeland Security; Department of Veterans Affairs; Department of the Treasury; Department of Defense; and General Services Administration. The agency with the largest increase in response rates was the Department of Homeland Security, with an increase of 12 percentage points over last year.

Most executives have worked with their agencies for at least 11 years (58%) and have been a member of the Senior Executive Service for over 5 years (50%). The majority of SES were career SES (87%) and were appointed to the SES from a Federal service position (76%).

Which agency do you work for?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Department of Agriculture	5%	2%	-3
Department of Commerce	1%	0%	-1
Department of Defense	10%	6%	-4
Department of Education	<1%	0%	-<1
Department of Energy	1%	2%	+1
Department of Health and Human Services	3%	3%	0
Department of Homeland Security	5%	17%	+12
Department of Housing and Urban Development	1%	0%	-1
Department of Justice	0%	2%	+2
Department of Labor	6%	3%	-3
Department of State	2%	1%	-1
Department of the Interior	3%	1%	-2
Department of the Treasury	7%	7%	0
Department of Transportation	<1%	<1%	0
Department of Veterans Affairs	10%	12%	+2
Broadcasting Board of Governors	0%	0%	0
Environmental Protection Agency	4%	0%	-4
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission	0%	<1%	+<1
Federal Communications Commission	0%	<1%	+<1
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	0%	0%	0
Federal Trade Commission	0%	0%	0
General Services Administration	7%	3%	-4
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	0%	0%	0
National Archives and Records Administration	<1%	1%	+<1
National Labor Relations Board	0%	0%	0
National Science Foundation	<1%	0%	-<1
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	5%	2%	-3
Office of Management and Budget	0%	0%	0
Office of Personnel Management	1%	1%	0

Which agency do you work for?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Office of the U.S. Trade Representative	0%	0%	0
Small Business Administration	2%	2%	0
Social Security Administration	0%	0%	0
U.S. Agency for International Development	0%	0%	0
Railroad Retirement Board	<1%	<1%	0
U.S. Office of Government Ethics	<1%	0%	-<1
National Transportation Safety Board	<1%	1%	+<1
No Response	26%	33%	+7

N=221   *N=230*

Do you work in an Office of the Inspector General?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Yes	2%	2%	0
No	98%	98%	0

N=164   *N=158*

Almost half of the respondents (44%) reported they had worked in their agency for more than 20 years; 8% stated they had been a member of the SES for more than 20 years; and slightly more than two-fifths (42%) reported they were age 60 or older.

How long have you worked in this agency?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Less than one year	1%	3%	+2
1-3 years	13%	14%	+1
4-5 years	14%	16%	+2
6-10 years	12%	11%	-1
11-20 years	12%	14%	+2
More than 20 years	47%	44%	-3

N=164   *N=161*

How long have you been a member of the Senior Executive Service?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Less than one year	11%	7%	-4
1-3 years	16%	24%	+8
4-5 years	13%	19%	+6
6-10 years	28%	31%	+3
11-20 years	23%	11%	-12
More than 20 years	9%	8%	-1

N=159   *N=140*

What is your age group?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Under 30	2%	1%	-1
30-39	4%	8%	+4
40-49	9%	16%	+7
50-59	42%	34%	-8

What is your age group?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
60 or older	43%	42%	-1
	N=166	N=159	

A majority of the respondents reported they were career SES (87%), and appointed from a Federal service position (76%). A majority of the respondents indicated their race as White, and 7% of the respondents indicated they were of Hispanic national origin.

What type of appointment do you hold?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Career	88%	87%	-1
Non-Career	10%	10%	0
Limited Term	3%	3%	0
Limited Emergency	0%	0%	0
	N=168	N=156	

From where were you appointed to your senior position?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
From a Federal service position	83%	76%	-7
From the private sector	6%	9%	+3
From state or local government	1%	3%	+2
From military service	2%	6%	+4
From academia	3%	1%	-2
Reinstatement	1%	1%	0
Other	6%	4%	-2
	N=163	N=146	

Please select the racial category or categories with which you most closely identify *select all that apply	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul '15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
American Indian or Alaska Native	2%	3%	+1
Asian	6%	7%	+1
Black or African American	12%	15%	+3
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%	2%	+2
White	82%	79%	-3
	N=162	N=158	

Are you Hispanic or Latino?	Apr '13-Jul '14 Percentage	Aug '14-Jul'15 Percentage	Net Change in % Points
Yes	7%	7%	0
No	93%	94%	+1
	N=162	N=154	

U.S. Office of Personnel Management

Employee Services

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