

# Fall 2024 COM Employee Engagement Survey

## Survey Methodology

In Fall 2024, COM's office of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness (PRIE) conducted a employee engagement survey in accordance with the College's EEO plan activities and to inform development of Plan 2030, the next 5-year educational master plan and strategic plan. The survey was administered to all eligible COM employees employed as of October 1, 2024 (n=673). An invitation to complete the survey online was sent to all employees via their myCOM email. In addition, the survey QR code was shared at several campus events attended by staff and faculty. Employees were required to sign in via their myCOM portal to verify eligibility. The survey was confidential and no personally identifying information was linked to survey responses. A total of 291 employees completed the survey, for a response rate of 43%.

Response rates by subgroup are shown in Appendix A. Response rates by subgroup ranged from 24% to 83%. Oneway ANOVA analysis shows that compared to other groups, response rates were significantly lower among employees with less than one year of service with the district, males, part-time faculty, and Black/African-American employees. These groups are therefore underrepresented in the aggregate results compared to their peers. For example, part-time faculty comprised 36% of enrolled students in fall 2024, and 23% of the survey sample; female employees were 58% of employees and 63% of the survey sample; and employees with less than one year of service with the district were 11% of employees, and 7% of the survey sample (see "Representation in Survey Sample by Subgroup," Appendix A). The confidence intervals for proportions shown in the disaggregated results are also slightly larger for groups with lower response rates.

Descriptive findings for all survey questions are described in the "Survey Results" section of this report. Subgroup differences for employee classification, years of service with the district, race/ethnicity, gender, and age group were analyzed using oneway ANOVA and chi square statistics. Differences within subgroups are described only where they are statistically significant. Open-ended survey items were coded and summarized. Results of that analysis are provided in the "Summary of Responses to Open-ended Survey Items" section.

To ensure accessibility for all readers, charts for all quantitative survey questions are displayed in a Tableau dashboard, linked below. Figures referenced in this report are linked to views for specific survey topics/questions and disaggregations in the dashboard.

[COM Employee Engagement Survey Dashboard](#)

## Key Findings

The survey results reflect an overall positive work environment, with employees valuing their roles and feeling supported by colleagues and supervisors. However, targeted improvements in workload, leadership communication, and support for career growth may further enhance employee satisfaction and retention.

Top concerns expressed in open-ended comments included transparency in decision-making, employee accountability, and communication among various areas of the college.

Highlighted results from quantitative survey items are as follows:

#### Job Satisfaction:

- A majority of employees are satisfied with their roles, with eight in ten agreeing that COM is a good place to work and expressing happiness at their jobs.
- Most employees feel their contributions are recognized (75%) and their work supports the College's mission (95%).
- Challenges exist for certain groups; MSC employees and full-time faculty report lower satisfaction with workload and work-life balance compared to classified staff and part-time faculty.

#### Intention to Remain at COM:

- More than half of employees (57%) say they're "very likely" to remain at the College in two years, though fewer than half among MSC (48%) and part-time faculty (42%). Retirement, growth opportunities, and job satisfaction are the primary reasons for considering leaving.

#### Working Conditions:

- Employees report generally favorable working conditions, with four in five agreeing they have the resources needed for productivity.
- Areas for improvement include receiving necessary information to do their jobs (37 percent strongly agree) and clarity of processes (35 percent strongly agree).

#### Supervisory Support & Leadership:

- Most employees feel supported by their supervisors (85 percent feel treated with respect, 84 percent feel supported in professional development), though fewer (71%) feel their supervisors provide helpful feedback.
- COM's executive leadership<sup>1</sup> receives mixed reviews, with fewer than half (48%) agreeing that the executive leadership team holds all employees to the same standards and just over half agreeing that the executive team communicates openly and honestly about changes/decisions that affect employees (56%).
- Full-time faculty were more concerned than other employee groups about various aspects of the executive leadership team's performance, including prioritizing employee well-being, taking accountability for student success, being honest and ethical, and providing the campus community with opportunities to share feelings of concern.

#### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI):

- COM is seen as an inclusive environment for employees, with over 90 percent agreeing it is welcoming regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, or immigration status; 89 percent agree regarding racial or ethnic identity.

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<sup>1</sup> The survey question was worded as follows: "Please answer the following regarding COM's current executive leadership team." No definition of "executive leadership team" was provided.

- Employees were less likely to agree COM is inclusive of employees with different job classifications (74%) and varying political beliefs (79%).

#### Campus Climate & Discrimination:

- In the past year, 20 percent of employees say they've experienced discrimination at COM due to their age, 14 percent due to gender, and 14 percent to due racial or ethnic identity.
- While 29 percent say racial tension is a problem at COM, most employees feel encouraged to approach work with equity-mindedness (78%).

#### Quality of Life:

- Half of employees agreed that housing costs and cost of living significantly impact their quality of life.
- Commute time significantly impacts quality of life for four in ten employees, with 39 percent commuting 45 minutes or more to campus.

#### Professional Development:

- One in three COM employees feel they are growing professionally, and 72 percent say the College provides sufficient training opportunities. However, only four in ten employees agree there is a clear path for their advancement within the College.

## Survey Results

### Job Satisfaction

Overall, employees responded positively to questions about their satisfaction with their jobs at COM. Strong majorities “strongly” or “somewhat” agree that:

- their contributions are recognized (75%);
- they feel professionally fulfilled (73%);
- their skills are being utilized effectively in their role (75%);
- their work is important for COM to fulfill its mission (95%);
- their workload is manageable (69%);
- they're satisfied with their work/life balance (75%);
- they're happy at their job (78%);
- COM is a good place to work (81%); and
- they feel they belong at COM (77%).

Managers, supervisors, and confidential (MSC) employees and full-time faculty are less likely than classified employees and part-time faculty to agree their workload is manageable or that they're satisfied with their work/life balance. Part-time faculty are the most likely to say they are happy at their job at COM. Multiracial employees are least likely to agree they feel professionally fulfilled in their position. White employees are least likely to agree their job is important to achieve COM's

mission. Hispanic/Latino employees are the most likely to agree that their workload is manageable and they're satisfied with their work/life balance.

[Figure 1: Job Satisfaction Questions-All Responses](#)

[Figure 2: Job Satisfaction Questions by Employee Type](#)

[Figure 3: Job Satisfaction Questions by Race/Ethnicity](#)

## Intention to Remain Employed at COM

More than half (57%) of COM employees say they are “very likely” to remain employed at COM two years from now. Fewer than half of MSC (48%) and part time faculty (42%) say they're “very likely” to remain at COM, compared to 77 percent of full-time faculty and 65 percent of classified staff.

Of the 16 percent who say they are somewhat or very unlikely to remain at COM, retirement is the most cited reason (50%), followed by opportunities for growth (43%) and job satisfaction (38%).

[Figure 4: Intention to Remain Employed at COM-All Responses](#)

[Figure 5: Intention to Remain Employed at COM by Employee Type](#)

## Working Conditions

Overall, COM employees rate their working conditions favorably. Most employees “strongly” or “somewhat” agreed that they:

- consistently receive the information needed to do their job (80%);
- have the resources, materials and equipment needed (81%);
- there are clear processes in place to get their job done (80%);
- working conditions allow them to be productive (81%); and
- are familiar with their collective bargaining agreement (89%).

Of all the items describing working conditions, employees are least likely to “strongly agree” that they receive the necessary information (37%) or have clear processes in place (35%) to do their job.

Part-time faculty are less likely than other employees to agree they have the resources, materials and equipment needed to do their job. Full-time faculty most strongly agree that there are clear processes in place for them to get their job done.

[Figure 6: Working Conditions-All Responses](#)

[Figure 7: Working Conditions by Employee Type](#)

## Supervisorial Support and Communication

Overall employees report that their managers/supervisors treat them well, but agreement is less strong on items regarding supervisorial communication. Most employees “strongly” or “somewhat” agree that their manager/supervisor:

- helps them achieve their best work (75%);
- provides helpful feedback on their performance (71%);
- encourages them to be innovative (76%);
- listens to their suggestions and concerns (78%);
- treats them fairly (82%);
- treats them with respect (85%);
- supports their professional development (84%).

MSC employees agree most strongly that their supervisors encourage them to be innovative.

[Figure 8: Supervisorial Support and Communication-All respondents](#)

[Figure 9: Supervisorial Support and Communication by Employee Type](#)

## Executive Leadership

Employee response to items about executive leadership performance was mixed; a majority feel executive leadership is leading the College in the right direction, but agreement is weaker regarding transparency in decision-making, holding employees accountable, and holding all employees to the same standards. The following “strongly” or “somewhat” agree that executive leadership:

- prioritizes employee well-being (73%);
- communicates honestly and openly about changes/decisions that affect employees (56%);
- is leading the College in the right direction (74%);
- takes accountability for the success of COM’s students (83%);
- is honest and ethical (74%);
- encourages staff to have a public voice and share their ideas openly (70%);
- provides the campus community with opportunities to share feelings about issues of concern (70%);
- holds employees accountable for their performance (65%); and
- holds all employees to the same standards (48%).

Full-time faculty are less likely than other employee groups to agree that executive leadership prioritizes employee well-being, communicates openly about decisions affecting employees, takes accountability for student success, is honest and ethical, provides the campus community with opportunities to share feelings of concern, or holds employees accountable. Classified employees are more likely than faculty or MSC to feel executive leadership holds all employees to the same standards.

[Figure 10: Executive Leadership-All Responses](#)

[Figure 11: Executive Leadership by Employee Type](#)

## Department Work Climate

Responses to items on the work climate within department/offices were mixed. Employees rate collegiality and inclusion of colleagues with diverse identities highly, but are less positive on

inspiration and employee morale, which one-third of respondents describe as “fair” or “poor.” Overall, employees rated as “good” or “excellent:”

- collegiality/mutual respect among colleagues (79%);
- employee morale (66%);
- tolerance of different opinions and beliefs (72%);
- inclusion of colleagues with diverse identities (84%);
- collaboration toward team/department goals (72%);
- inspiration to do our best work (70%).

[Figure 12: Department Work Climate-All Responses](#)

## Employee Inclusivity

Employees broadly agree that COM is a welcoming place for all employees, particularly with regard to immigration status, sexual orientation, and gender identity, though somewhat less welcoming of those with varying political beliefs, and job classification/position. The following “strongly” or “somewhat” agree that COM is a welcoming and inclusive space for all employees regardless of:

- racial or ethnic identity (89%);
- gender identity (94%);
- sexual orientation (96%);
- age (87%);
- physical ability (87%);
- political beliefs (79%);
- religious beliefs/practices (87%);
- immigration status (97%);
- socioeconomic status (89%);
- job classification/position (74%); and
- status as a parent guardian (89%).

Full-time faculty are less likely than other employees to agree that COM is a welcoming place regardless of racial or ethnic identity and political beliefs. Full-time faculty and MSC employees are less likely than classified employees or part-time faculty to agree that COM is welcoming regardless of gender identity. Multiracial employees are less likely than others to agree that COM is welcoming regardless of race, immigration status, or socioeconomic status. Hispanic/Latino employees are more likely to agree that COM is welcoming regardless of political beliefs. Those age 45 and older are less likely than younger employees to agree COM is welcoming of all employees regardless of age. Female employees are less likely than males to agree that COM is welcoming regardless of race/ethnicity, gender identity, or physical ability.

[Figure 13: Employee Inclusivity-All Responses](#)

[Figure 14: Employee Inclusivity by Employee Type](#)

[Figure 15: Employee Inclusivity by Race/Ethnicity](#)

## DEI Efforts at COM

Responses to questions on COM's DEI policies and practices varied. Most employees agree that discussions of racial inequity and injustice are encouraged, though one in three say racial tension is a problem at COM. Employees largely agree that policies to increase faculty and staff diversity at COM are effective, but only around half say policies related to staff and management promotion and advancement are accessible and transparent, or that promotions are given based on employee performance.

The following “strongly” or “somewhat” agree that:

- All employees' perspectives are valued in decision-making processes (60%);
- Racial tension is a problem (29%);
- there are effective policies to increase faculty diversity (83%);
- there are effective policies to increase staff diversity (85%);
- policies related to faculty promotion and tenure accessible and transparent (73%);
- policies related to promotion and advancement are accessible and transparent (47%);
- promotions/tenure are given based on employee performance (55%);
- there's a clear process for investigating workplace discrimination (73%);
- racist incidents are dealt with effectively (81%); and
- discussions of racial inequity and injustice are encouraged (90%).

Most employees say they are encouraged to approach their work responsibilities with equity-mindedness “often” (78%) or “sometimes” (16%); likewise, most say they've been provided with training to approach their work with equity-mindedness “often” (70%) or “sometimes” (25%).

Full-time faculty are less likely than other employees to agree that all employees' perspectives are valued in decision-making processes at COM and that racist incidents are dealt with effectively, but more likely to agree that promotions and tenure are given based on employee performance. Part-time faculty are less likely to agree that there are effective policies to increase faculty diversity or that policies related to promotion and tenure are accessible and transparent. MSC employees are more likely than other groups to agree that there is a clear process for investigating workplace discrimination and that discussions of racial inequity and injustice are encouraged.

[Figure 16: DEI Efforts at COM-All Responses](#)

[Figure 17: DEI Efforts at COM by Employee Type](#)

## Equity-Minded Practices

Seventy-eight percent of employees say they are encouraged to approach their work responsibilities at COM with equity-mindedness, while 70 percent say they have been provided with enough training to do so. Both full-time and part-time faculty are more likely than classified staff to say they've been provided with enough training to approach responsibilities with equity-mindedness.

[Figure 18: Equity-Minded Practices-All Responses](#)

## [Figure 19: Equity-Minded Practices by Employee Type](#)

### Campus Climate

Responses were varied on campus climate questions, regarding employees' experiences over the past year at COM.

- One in five employees say they have “sometimes” or “often” witnessed discrimination against another employee, and 13 percent against a student; however, just 7 percent had reported employee discrimination and 4 percent had reported sexual harassment to a campus authority.
- One in ten have been asked to represent the views of their entire race in meetings, while 14 percent have been viewed as naturally less able than others because of their identity, and 7 percent had witnessed jokes related to their identity that made them feel uncomfortable.
- Employees are far more likely to say they have not received due credit for their work (42%) or that they've felt their ideas were dismissed by their colleagues (40%), microaggressions not necessarily related to their identity.
- One in ten say they've felt unsafe on the COM campus at least sometimes, and two in ten said they've felt emotionally or psychologically unsafe while working at COM either remotely or on campus.

Faculty, both part time and full time, are more likely than classified staff or MSC employees to say they'd witnessed discrimination against another employee. Faculty are more likely than other employees to say they'd been asked to represent the views of their entire race at meetings. MSC employees are less likely than faculty to say they had felt physically unsafe while working at COM. Hispanic/Latino and multiracial employees are more likely than White or Asian employees to say they've witnessed discrimination against another employee, been asked to represent the views of their entire race at meetings, been viewed as naturally less capable because of their identity, and witnessed jokes related their identities that made them uncomfortable. Hispanic/Latino employees are more likely than Asian, multiracial and White employees to have reported an incident of discrimination to a campus authority. Female employees are more likely to have felt physically unsafe while on campus.

[Figure 20: Campus Climate-All Responses](#)

[Figure 21: Campus Climate by Employee Type](#)

[Figure 22: Campus Climate by Race/Ethnicity](#)

[Figure 23: Campus Climate by Gender](#)

### Personal Experiences of Bias/Discrimination

Employees were also asked various questions about personal experiences of discrimination at COM within the past year because of various characteristics and identities. Employees report having experienced discrimination based on the following identities/characteristics at least rarely over the past year:



- Racial or ethnic identity (14%);
- Gender identity (14%);
- Sexual orientation (7%);
- Age (20%);
- Physical ability (10%);
- Political beliefs (15%);
- Religious beliefs/practices (10%);
- Immigration status (4%);
- Socioeconomic status (11%);
- Job classification or position (33%);
- Status as a parent/guardian (10%).

Employees under age 35 (27%) and age 55 or older (20%) are more likely than those 35-54 to say they've been discriminated against because of age. Full-time faculty are least likely to say they've felt discriminated against because of their job classification or position. Hispanic/Latino and multiracial employees are more likely than Asian and White employees to say they've been discriminated against because of their racial or ethnic identity. Females are more likely than males to say they've experienced discrimination because of their gender identity.

[Figure 24: Personal Experience with Bias/Discrimination on Campus-All Responses](#)

[Figure 25: Personal Experience with Bias/Discrimination on Campus by Employee Type](#)

[Figure 26: Personal Experience with Bias/Discrimination on Campus by Race/Ethnicity](#)

## Employee Quality of Life

Overall, employees report housing costs and cost of living as having the greatest impact on their quality of life, and a substantial number are impacted by commute time and costs. The following percentages of employees say these issues have a significant impact on their quality of life:

- Commute time (37%);
- Commute costs (29%);
- Child care costs (21%);
- Housing costs (54%);
- Cost of living other than housing (groceries, utilities, etc.) (49%);
- Family responsibilities (other than financial) (37%);
- Stress from work (30%); and
- Stress from outside work (20%).

Full-time and part-time faculty are less likely than classified employees and MSC employees to say housing costs and cost of living impact their quality of life. MSC employees are more likely than classified or part-time faculty to say stress from work impacts their quality of life.

[Figure 27: Employee Quality of Life Questions-All Responses](#)

[Figure 28: Employee Quality of Life Questions by Employee Type](#)

## Commuting

Overall, one in three employees commute to a COM campus five days a week, and about one-half commute three to four days. The vast majority (98%) commute in their cars at least one day a week; 4 percent carpool, and 3 percent take public transportation.

On average, employees driving their own cars have the shortest commute times, though 39 percent have a commute of 45 minutes or longer. Though few employees take public transportation, 57 percent of those who do commute 45 minutes or more when they come to campus.

MSC employees commute to campus most frequently, with 2 of 3 on campus 5 days a week.

[Figure 29: Days per Week Commuting to COM-All Responses](#)

[Figure 30: Days per Week Commuting to COM by Employee Type](#)

[Figure 31: Commute Time by Transportation Mode-All Responses](#)

## Housing

Forty percent of employees report renting their residence; 58 percent own, and 2 percent live in a another situation. Two-thirds spend between \$1500 and \$4000 a month on rent or mortgage. Full-time faculty are most likely to own their homes.

[Figure 32: Own/Rent Residence by Employee Type](#)

[Figure 33: Monthly Cost of Rent or Mortgage-All Responses](#)

Forty-two percent of employees say they would be “somewhat” or “very” likely to live in below market rate housing within the county if it were offered by the District. Hispanic/Latino respondents are more likely than Asian, White or multiracial respondents to say they would be “somewhat” or “very” likely to live in District subsidized housing.

[Figure 34: Interest in Below Market Rate Housing-All Responses](#)

[Figure 35: Interest in Below Market Rate Housing by Race/Ethnicity](#)

## Household Composition and Financial Circumstances

Half of employees live in households with annual income less than \$125,000. Classified employees and part-time faculty are most likely to live in households with income less than \$125,000.

Twenty-six percent of employees live in households with one or more children. Of these employees, 10 percent live in single-parent/single adult households, and one-third live in households with income less than \$125,000.

Half of employees provide 50 percent or more of living expenses for another adult in their home, and 27 percent provide for one or more adults living outside of their home (such as college students or adults living in care facilities). Nine percent provide living expenses for children living outside their homes. Of those employees living with children in their homes, 89 percent provide 50 percent or more of their living expenses.

[Figure 36: Household Income-All Responses](#)

[Figure 37: Household income by Employee Type](#)

[Figure 38: Adults in the Home-All Responses](#)

[Figure 39: Children in the Home-All Responses](#)

## Professional Development

A majority of employees feel they are growing in their current positions and are provided with enough training opportunities at COM. Though two-thirds say they're interested in promoting to a higher position, just four in ten feel there is a path to advance at COM.

The following percentages of respondents "strongly" or "somewhat" agree that:

- they are growing professionally in their current position (74%);
- COM provides enough training opportunities for them to stay current in knowledge and skills (72%);
- there is a path to advancement in their career at COM (39%);
- are interested in promoting to a higher position at COM (67%);
- have at least one professional mentor at COM they can turn to for guidance (64%); and
- are interested in being a mentor to other employees at COM (79%).

## Summary of Responses to Open-Ended Survey Items

Employees were asked to provide comments on how COM can improve employee satisfaction, the work climate, and their general experience working at COM. Responses to these questions were redacted to omit references to individual employees and shared directly with COM's executive leadership team. Comments were grouped into the categories most frequently mentioned, summarized below.

**Transparency:** Both faculty and staff expressed concerns about the lack of transparency of processes and decision-making, including trust in executive leadership with regard to decision-making and intentions; the process for unit allocation and assignments, and budgeting decisions.

**Accountability:** Employees expressed various concerns about standards of accountability, including complaints of favoritism, distribution of workload fairly among staff, effectiveness of processes to hold employees (particularly managers and classified staff) accountable for their performance, and lack of engagement from managers and leadership.

**Communication/Information:** Many employees described a lack of dissemination and availability of information related to their work; thoughtful inclusion of employees in communications/events; and the need to strengthen communication and collaboration across departments/offices.

**Operational effectiveness/Processes:** Silos; maintenance and building issues; hiring and training; timeliness/efficiency of processes, training and support; course scheduling processes; technology implementation and training

**Employee support:** Suggestions for improving employee support spanned various areas. Several employees suggested improving new hire training and onboarding, citing confusion and lack of clear processes. Some faculty would like more support navigating student mental health needs, accommodations, discipline, and other classroom challenges. employee stress and mental health. Classified staff and faculty suggested offering more support when implementing process or technology changes. A few faculty felt more support could be provided on the program level with additional budget and resources, and among staff, a few would like more general support and engagement from their supervisors.

**DEI concerns:** Several employees described experiencing bias and discrimination at work, including sexism. Others mentioned the need to increase effectiveness of DEI efforts and felt that not all employees are sharing in the work, while others expressed fatigue with the heavy focus on DEI; others praised the progress of the College's DEI progress

**Employee feedback/Decision-making:** Some classified employees remarked on lack of responsiveness to their feedback and suggestions; similarly, others would like to see more involvement of employees in institutional decision-making. There were also concerns that PGS committees' recommendations aren't implemented, or that there are no clear explanations of the reasons why when recommendations aren't implemented.

**Morale/Belonging/Climate:** Many staff made suggestions for improving connections with other employees, including group activities on campus, designing spaces to facilitate employee engagement, and increasing ways to show employee recognition and appreciation. Some would like to see improvement of civility and respect in treatment of and communication among employees, citing negativity, conflict, and poor morale. Others expressed concern about being able to speak openly about negative aspects of the campus climate, including concerns about responding to this survey, fearing retaliation.

**Professional growth and advancement:** Several employees suggested finding ways to increase advancement opportunities at COM, including promotions and pathways from part-time to full-time.

**Politics/Freedom of expression:** Several employees expressed discomfort with political comments made by management and other employees, including fear of repercussions for expressing unpopular viewpoints.

**Positive employee experiences:** Some employees commented on the positive aspects of working at COM, including the College's focus on equity and student success, the sense of caring and community among employees, finding fulfillment from their work at COM, and having supportive managers and leadership.

**Pay/Benefits:** Some employees are concerned about COM's pay scale relative to workload and administrative responsibilities and the delay in completing the classification/compensation study. Other suggested increasing benefits offered, including flexible and remote work schedules.

**Workload/Staffing:** A few employees were concerned that their work is misunderstood by their supervisors/managers and therefore expectations are unrealistic. Several mentioned redistributing workload to existing employees instead of replacing staff after they've left.

## Appendix A: Survey Response Rates

### Response Rates by Subgroup

Employee Type	# Employees	# Completed Survey	Response Rate
Classified	180	107	59%
Faculty-FT/Perm	119	60	50%
Faculty-PT/Temp	240	66	28%
MSC	41	34	83%
Other	93	22	24%

Service	# Employees	# Completed Survey	Response Rate
<1 year	76	20	26%
1 to 4.9 years	150	59	39%
5 to 9.9 years	161	75	47%
10 to 19.9 years	157	73	46%
20+ years	125	58	46%

Ethnicity	# Employees	# Completed Survey	Response Rate
American Indian/Alaska Native	5	2	40%
Asian	50	22	44%
Black/African American	29	7	24%
Hispanic/Latino	73	28	38%
More than one race	50	31	62%
White	381	170	45%
Unreported	83	28	34%

Gender	# Employees	# Completed Survey	Response Rate
Female	391	183	47%
Male	272	104	38%

Age Group	# Employees	# Completed Survey	Response Rate
Under 35	69	33	48%
35-44	107	46	43%
45-54	154	68	44%
55+	339	138	41%

## Representation in Survey Sample by Subgroup

# Employees  
# Completed Survey

