County Ethical Culture Survey Results
About the survey

- First ethics survey issued November 2016
- Most recent survey issued November 2018
- 2,417 employees took the survey (about 40% of workforce)
- Some changes made to most recent survey

Why we conducted the survey

- Mission: Government is efficient, effective, equitable, transparent, and fully accountable to all who live in our county
- Provide board members, leadership, and staff with information about the County’s ethical culture
Methodology

• Google Forms – County-wide access
• Email to all staff
• Included ethical scenarios
• Included open end questions and comment boxes

Messaging to encourage participation

• Email from new County Auditor to all staff
• Used County-wide communication channel, The Wednesday Wire
• Released the survey with a message from the County Auditor
• Follow-up email to ask employees to participate
Our ethical culture is generally strong.

I am expected to treat all members of the public equally regardless of their personal or political connections.

- **Disagree and Strongly Disagree**: 13%
- **Agree and Strongly Agree**: 84%
- **Don’t Know**: 1%

Source: Multnomah County Auditor’s Ethical Culture Survey issued 2018. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.
Quotes from survey respondents

“We are definitely going in the correct direction.”

“In the past we were really encouraged to have conversations about this and recently it seems to be more welcome. There were a few years that seemed very bleak but I feel it is getting better.”

“The opinions and expertise of line staff is not appreciated or respected.”
County elected officials have opportunities to strengthen our ethical culture.

Our current elected County officials communicate to County employees that they expect us to uphold high standards of ethical conduct.

- **Disagree and Strongly Disagree**: 10%
- **Agree and Strongly Agree**: 76%
- **Don’t Know**: 13%

Source: Multnomah County Auditor’s Ethical Culture Survey issued 2018. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.
County elected officials have opportunities to strengthen our ethical culture.

“I am not familiar with the elected officials enough to say with any certainty either way.”

“There is wide variation amongst elected officials - while most deserve high marks, not all do.”
Some employees expressed the sense that different political views are not tolerated.

“The county has made it very clear that only a highly "progressive" worldview will be tolerated. Openly insulting conservative and/or religious leaders is not only permitted but applauded even in direct violation of county policy.”

“I feel we are told what our ethic should be based on the political climate in the county. If my upbringing doesn't match what the county tells me, I am told I still have to 'think' the way the county tells me to. That isn't tolerance of differences.”
Employees largely agree that their direct supervisors are ethical.

My current supervisor does not ask me to do things that violate our ethical standards, policies, or the law.

- Disagree and Strongly Disagree: 5%
- Agree and Strongly Agree: 92%
- Don’t Know: 2%

Source: Multnomah County Auditor’s Ethical Culture Survey issued 2018. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.
Employees generally agree that their department directors and managers are ethical, but more can be done to make employees comfortable raising ethical concerns.

Department directors and managers do not ask me to do things that violate our ethical standards, policies, or the law.

Don’t Know
Disagree and Strongly Disagree
Agree and Strongly Agree

6%
9%
85%

Source: Multnomah County Auditor’s Ethical Culture Survey issued 2018. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.
Employees generally agree that their department directors and managers are ethical, but more can be done to make employees comfortable raising ethical concerns.

“More contact between upper level management and front line staff might create more safe environments where employees feel comfortable.”

“There is no transparency in how managers/senior managers are held accountable when ethical violations have been reported.”
The Department of Community Justice

MULTONOMAH WEEK

The Agency That Mo Is Riven by Allegation
An independent investigator finds employees with too much time spats over controversial flags

by Alex Zielinski • Aug 27, 2018 at 3:25 pm

MULTONOMAH WEEK

Multnomah's Community Justice Director Steps Down After 4 Months

by Alex Zielinski • Aug 27, 2018 at 3:25 pm

TIES WITH OF INTEREST

Ties With Of Interest

Investigating reports of racism and community justice.

Multnomah County Auditor's Office
Department of Community Justice staff voiced the most concerns.

Percent of survey respondents answering "Strongly Agree" or "Agree"

- I think Multnomah County fosters an ethical environment: 79% (County Overall) vs. 55% (DCJ)
- I feel respected in my position as a County employee: 73% (County Overall) vs. 52% (DCJ)
- Department directors and managers create an environment in which staff are comfortable raising ethical concerns: 60% (County Overall) vs. 33% (DCJ)

Source: Multnomah County Auditor’s Ethical Culture Survey issued 2018.
Employees expressed concerns related to reporting and retaliation.

- Do you feel that if you were to report unethical behavior, action would be taken to correct the behavior?
  - No: 21%
  - Yes: 37%
  - Don’t Know: 42%

- Do you feel you can report unethical behavior without fear of retaliation?
  - No: 30%
  - Yes: 37%
  - Don’t Know: 33%

Source: Multnomah County Auditor’s Ethical Culture Survey issued 2018. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.
Employees expressed concerns related to reporting and retaliation.

“I may not be as familiar with where to find information about ethical behavior or reporting of unethical behavior because I have not felt the need to use it.”

“Retaliation is a serious problem where I work. Throughout the county it is stated that retaliation is not tolerated, BUT IT IS!!”
We did not ask questions about workforce equity, but many employees gave feedback about this.

“I work in a department where an employee said a blatantly racist comment and there were no repercussions.”

“The rhetoric that Multnomah County has fostered is that, as a white person, I no longer have merits, just white privilege.”
More employees now know about the Good Government Hotline than before, but there is still room for improvement.

I know that the County has a hotline to report employee concerns and fraud, waste, or abuse of government resources (Good Government Hotline).

- **No**: 25%
- **Yes**: 75%
- **Don’t Know**: --

Source: Multnomah County Auditor’s Ethical Culture Survey issued 2018. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.
The Code of Ethics should be stronger, particularly related to hiring and promotion practices.

Survey statement:
You recently served on a County hiring panel and were pleased when the panel got to select the new hire - your niece! You did not disclose to anyone on the panel that you were related to the selected candidate.

The County Code says this is allowable, but 78% of employees think otherwise.
Questions?