



Commonwealth of Virginia

Exit Survey

Frequently Asked Questions

Background

Why is the Commonwealth implementing an exit survey?

In 2013 Governor McDonnell and the General Assembly established a work-group under the direction of the Secretaries of Finance and Administration to conduct a comprehensive review of total compensation, recruitment, retention, and hiring practices for state employees. The workgroup decided to focus on high turnover jobs, or what came to be known as “distressed” roles experiencing extreme recruitment and retention issues. In particular, the workgroup wanted a deeper understanding of the reasons for high turnover and all exits generally. The group’s interim report to the 2014 General Assembly included a recommendation for funding for a centralized state employee exit survey. The recommendations including the exit survey proposal were cancelled because the state did not meet revenue projections. The Commission on Employee Retirement Security and Pension Reform incorporated funding for a statewide exit survey into their December 2016 recommendations and it was approved in the 2017 budget.

When will the statewide exit survey be implemented?

The exit survey is scheduled to be implemented at the beginning of March 2018. Employees who resigned in January and February 2018 will be the first group of former employees who will receive invitations for providing feedback in the survey. This group will receive postcards at their home address inviting them to participate in the exit survey.

What is a typical response rate for exit surveys?

Based on data from the third party vendor administering the exit survey, typical response rates for exit surveys are 25% to 40%.

Who will be invited to participate in the exit survey?

Classified employees in the Executive Branch who are resigning employment with the Commonwealth of Virginia will be invited to provide feedback in the exit survey. Employees who are not classified Executive Branch employees (e.g., wage, faculty, etc.), employees who are transferring to another agency, employees who are involuntarily separated, or employees who are retiring **will not be** invited to participate in the exit survey.

What is the reason for only including classified employees in the Executive Branch who are resigning employment?

The Commission on Employee Retirement Security and Reform identified a need for statewide exit data. They provided funding and requested that the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) create a statewide survey focused on employees resigning employment with the Commonwealth to be able to better understand the reasons for leaving, where they are going, and feedback about their experience as employees of the Commonwealth. Based upon the funding provided and information requested, the survey at this time is limited to classified employees in the Executive Branch who resign employment with the Commonwealth.

Will the exit survey be expanded in the future?

After implementing the survey and better understanding the reasons for employees resigning from the Commonwealth, additional funding may be requested to expand the scope of the exit survey. The

funding provided for the exit survey is based on an anticipated 6,000 – 10,000 voluntary exits from the Executive Branch each year. Expanding the scope of the exit survey will require additional funding to support the expanded scope.

Process

How will former employees be invited to participate in the exit survey?

Executive Branch classified employees who resign from employment with the Commonwealth will be provided with two options for participating in the survey. Agency Human Resources or management staff should ask resigning employees if they prefer to receive the exit survey invitation via their personal email address or via postcard at their home address.

- For employees who prefer receiving the exit survey invitation via their personal email address, agency Human Resources or management staff should collect the personal email address and enter the information into PMIS.
- For employees who prefer to receive a postcard at the home address, agency Human Resources should verify the home address and make any necessary changes in PMIS.
- Emails or postcards will be sent from the third party vendor inviting them to provide feedback in an on-line exit survey after their employment with the Commonwealth has ended.

Receiving the invitation to participate post-employment provides the resigning employee an opportunity to more fully reflect on their experience in providing their feedback. The email will include a direct link to the exit survey and the postcard will include the survey link, passcode and provide a Quick Response Bar Code (QR code) that former employees can use to begin the survey process. The online survey may be completed via computer or mobile device.

What is the purpose of using an option of personal email addresses or postcards to invite participation in the survey?

Offering these options provides employees a choice for what invitation method would work best for their individual situations. Plus not all Commonwealth employees have email addresses or access to a computer depending on the type of job they are in. Providing the invitation post-employment supports the confidential nature of the survey and allows participants to provide feedback outside of the Commonwealth premises. Some employees live in areas that may not support electronic access to the survey. The postcard provides a way for employees to contact the third party vendor to request a paper survey instead.

How was the survey designed?

DHRM staff designed the survey to provide centralized information on key drivers for classified employee voluntary turnover across the Executive Branch. The survey design is based on current practice and research on the intellectual and emotional factors that people consider as they make the decision to leave an organization. The survey content was developed by DHRM staff based on current practice and research, with guidance provided by our third party survey administrator.

How will the exit survey support the confidential nature of exiting employee feedback?

The exit survey provides for the confidential nature of feedback in two primary ways. First, the survey is administered by a third party vendor who will capture the feedback and summarize aggregate feedback for Human Resources and leadership understanding. Second, survey results will only be available when there are at least 5 responses that have been provided.

Should we continue to conduct agency exit surveys or interviews after the statewide exit survey is implemented?

The statewide exit survey will provide agencies with results on several dimensions that are relevant to employees' employment experience and to their decisions for ending employment with the Commonwealth. The statewide exit survey will be provided to all full-time classified employees in the Executive branch who are resigning from employment with the Commonwealth of Virginia. Agencies

using an exit survey may decide to no longer provide the agency exit survey to classified employees resigning employment with the Commonwealth to avoid duplication. However, agencies using an exit survey should determine if they want to continue using the survey for employees who may not be included in the statewide exit survey. Agencies may want to continue conducting exit interviews where important information may be provided to exiting employees. Exit interviews may also continue to provide the opportunity for dialogue about any specific agency topics.

What is the agency role in the exit survey process?

Agency Human Resources staff should alert classified Executive Branch employees who are voluntarily resigning from employment with the Commonwealth about the survey and capture the preference for receiving an invitation to participate in the survey.

- For those that prefer to receive the exit survey via personal email address, the agency should capture and enter the personal email address on the second line of the Agency Note Field in the Resign Transaction. Also, the agency should explain that they will receive an email from Mercer | Sirota at their personal email address inviting them to participate in the survey.
- For those who prefer to receive a postcard at the home address, agency Human Resources staff should verify the home address, explain that they will receive a postcard in the mail from Mercer | Sirota inviting them to complete a confidential online exit survey, and make any changes in PMIS. Please note that all resigning employees without a personal email address entered in the PMIS field noted above will receive a postcard inviting them to participate in the survey.

Employees will receive the email or postcard invitation in the month following the separation. Only summarized results will be provided to the Department of Human Resources Management. Agency Human Resources staff **should not** provide information to employees who are transferring to another agency, who are involuntarily separated, who are retiring, or who are not classified Executive Branch employees because they are not eligible at this time to participate in the exit survey.

Additionally, agency Human Resource staff should be prepared to begin reviewing exit survey results and incorporating information from these results in their workforce planning efforts.

Reporting

- * Reporting FAQs to be provided in the coming months.