



Employee Survey – Understanding the Practice from Practitioners Perspectives

The use of an employee survey presents a wonderful opportunity to get input from the probation staff that conducts the day-to-day activities of the probation department. While there are other structured activities to elicit this group's analysis and recommendations which are discussed in methods following, an employee survey allows for the examination of many different areas of current practice and the anonymous report of opinions, concerns, ideas, and recommendations.

Minimally, it is recommended that an electronic survey of employees include probation officers and their supervisors. The survey can be comprised of closed-ended questions, asking respondents to agree or disagree with statements, followed by open-ended questions. The scale for responding to the closed-ended questions can include a range of responses such as: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and do not know. The RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice has developed a template for the conduct of this survey, but it is important to note that it is easily adaptable to include "the language" of the participant jurisdiction given its fillable PDF format. The foundational survey is organized with the following categories:

- Pre-disposition investigations
- Case supervision
- Departmental Management and Supervision
- Resources and Service Delivery
- Best Practices
- Client Outcomes
- Inter-agency Relationships

The survey also includes open-ended questions that permit respondents to identify particular practice and service areas that could be improved. These areas included delivery of services to probationers, operations of the department, and the work experience of the probation officers. The participants in the survey are not identified with their responses and the open-ended questions are reported in summary manner. The RFK National Resource Center works with each participant jurisdiction to develop the unique survey instrument. An example of one such survey may be found in Appendix C/D of the *Probation Review Guidebook* (retrievable at: http://rfknrcjj.org/images/PDFs/Probation_Review_Guidebook.pdf)