

Alaska Department of  
Public Safety



Commissioned  
Employee  
Engagement  
Survey:  
Results Overview  
December 2017

# Introduction

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## **Survey Purpose:**

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) conducted a Commissioned Employee Engagement Survey (CEES) to:

- Gather data on employee perceptions of the work environment
- Identify job satisfaction levels
- Identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement
- Solicit input on how to improve retention of commissioned staff members

The survey gathered data in the following areas:

- Job satisfaction
- Motivation factors for remaining employed with DPS
- Factors that could cause employees to leave DPS
- Factors that would improve employment at DPS
- Incentives to retain troopers
- Perceptions of the culture and brand of the agency

The survey also requested input for the department's strategic plan and offered an opportunity for respondents to provide ideas and comments.

## **Methodology:**

The CEES was conducted using Survey Monkey to collect web-based survey results. Employees were notified by email of the survey by their Division Director on the day the survey opened. The survey period was October 6 – 22, 2017.

The survey consisted of 22 questions, including 11 multiple choice demographic questions, one Likert scale question, and 10 open-ended questions. Data was compiled by the department's Human Resource office.

## **Response Rate:**

There was a 91% response rate (371 of 406 total commissioned employees). Ten percent (37) of the surveys were started but not fully completed; however, available information from the incomplete surveys was included with the survey results.

## Results Summary

| Employees reporting agree or strongly agree with the statement: <b>“Overall, I am satisfied with my job”</b> | <table border="1"> <caption>Employee Satisfaction Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Satisfaction Level</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Agree</td> <td>48%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neutral</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disagree</td> <td>11%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td>3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>13%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Satisfaction Level | Percentage | Agree | 48% | Neutral | 25% | Disagree | 11% | Strongly Disagree | 3% | Strongly Agree | 13% |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|-------|-----|---------|-----|----------|-----|-------------------|----|----------------|-----|
| Satisfaction Level                                                                                           | Percentage                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                    |            |       |     |         |     |          |     |                   |    |                |     |
| Agree                                                                                                        | 48%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                    |            |       |     |         |     |          |     |                   |    |                |     |
| Neutral                                                                                                      | 25%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                    |            |       |     |         |     |          |     |                   |    |                |     |
| Disagree                                                                                                     | 11%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                    |            |       |     |         |     |          |     |                   |    |                |     |
| Strongly Disagree                                                                                            | 3%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                    |            |       |     |         |     |          |     |                   |    |                |     |
| Strongly Agree                                                                                               | 13%                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                    |            |       |     |         |     |          |     |                   |    |                |     |
| Top reasons for remaining employed with the Department of Public Safety                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job stability/satisfaction</li> <li>• Compensation</li> <li>• Retirement</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                    |            |       |     |         |     |          |     |                   |    |                |     |
| Top factors that would most improve employment with the Department of Public Safety                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve department leadership</li> <li>• More training</li> <li>• Increased staffing</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                    |            |       |     |         |     |          |     |                   |    |                |     |
| Top factors that could cause commissioned employees to leave the Department of Public Safety                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political/reduced funding and staffing</li> <li>• Leadership/department culture</li> <li>• Better pay and benefits at another job</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                    |            |       |     |         |     |          |     |                   |    |                |     |
| Top incentives that would help retain troopers                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return to defined benefit retirement program</li> <li>• Better pay</li> <li>• More training</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                    |            |       |     |         |     |          |     |                   |    |                |     |
| Top three words used to describe the culture of the department                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proud</li> <li>• Stagnant</li> <li>• Overworked</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                    |            |       |     |         |     |          |     |                   |    |                |     |

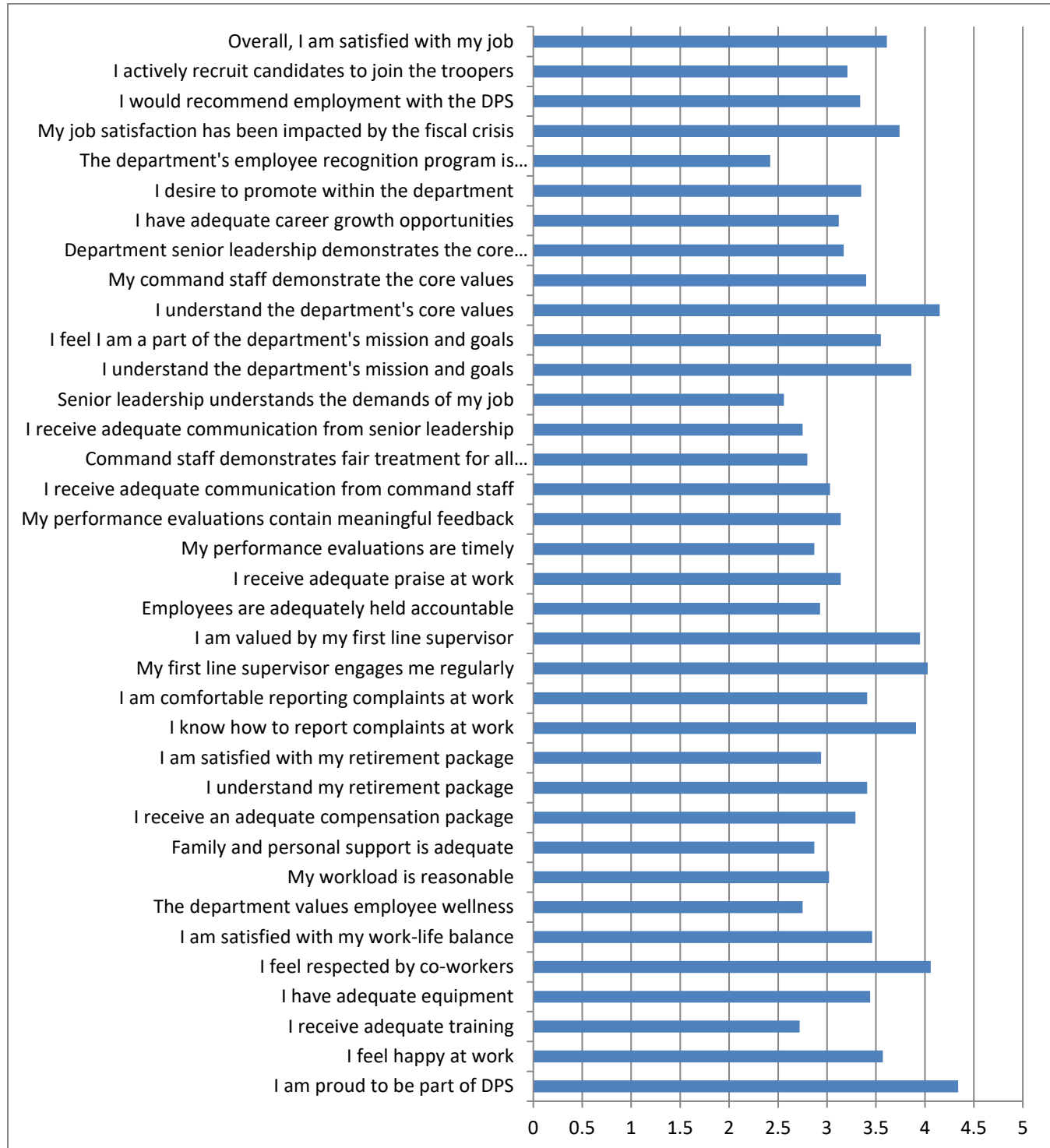
## Respondent Demographics

|                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Age                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21-29</li> <li>• 30-39</li> <li>• 40-49</li> <li>• 50+</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                         | 9.97%<br>33.15%<br>40.97%<br>15.90%                                              |
| Gender                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female</li> <li>• Male</li> <li>• Other/<br/>prefer not to disclose</li> </ul>                                                                                                                            | 5.12%<br>93.53%<br>1.35%                                                         |
| How long have you been a commissioned officer with DPS? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0-4 years</li> <li>• 5-9 years</li> <li>• 10-14 years</li> <li>• 15-19 years</li> <li>• 20-24 years</li> <li>• 25-29 years</li> <li>• 30+ years</li> </ul>                                                | 18.33%<br>21.56%<br>24.80%<br>23.99%<br>9.97%<br>1.08%<br>0.27%                  |
| What is your current rank?                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Court Services Officer</li> <li>• Trooper Recruit</li> <li>• Trooper</li> <li>• Investigator</li> <li>• Corporal</li> <li>• Sergeant</li> <li>• Lieutenant</li> <li>• Captain</li> <li>• Major</li> </ul> | 13.21%<br>1.89%<br>49.60%<br>11.05%<br>1.08%<br>15.9%<br>5.12%<br>1.89%<br>0.27% |
| What is your retirement tier?                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PERS Tier I</li> <li>• PERS Tier II</li> <li>• PERS Tier III</li> <li>• PERS Tier IV</li> <li>• I'm not sure</li> </ul>                                                                                   | 0.81%<br>13.48%<br>43.67%<br>40.70%<br>1.35%                                     |
| What is your current division?                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alaska State Troopers</li> <li>• Alaska Wildlife Troopers</li> <li>• Commissioner's Office/<br/>Academy</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>                                                                       | 77.35%<br>18.87%<br>1.89%<br>1.89%                                               |
| What type of post do you work at?                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban<br/>(Anchorage, Girdwood,<br/>Fairbanks, Juneau,<br/>Kenai/Soldotna,<br/>Palmer/Wasilla)</li> <li>• Remote (all other)</li> </ul>                                                                   | 65.23%<br>34.77%                                                                 |

\*Note: Due to rounding not all categories will total exactly 100%

## Detailed Results

Question 12: Please rate the following statements



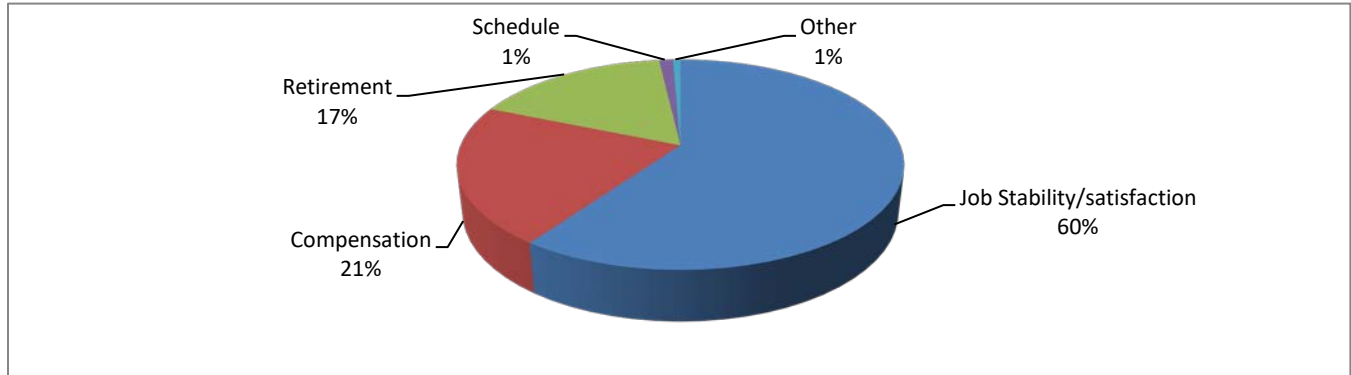
Scale:

1 – Strongly Disagree    2 – Disagree    3 – Neutral    4 – Agree    5 – Strongly Agree

### What are the three most important reasons you continue working for the Department of Public Safety?

Responses to this open-ended question were reviewed and placed in following categories, which broadly represented the majority of answers:

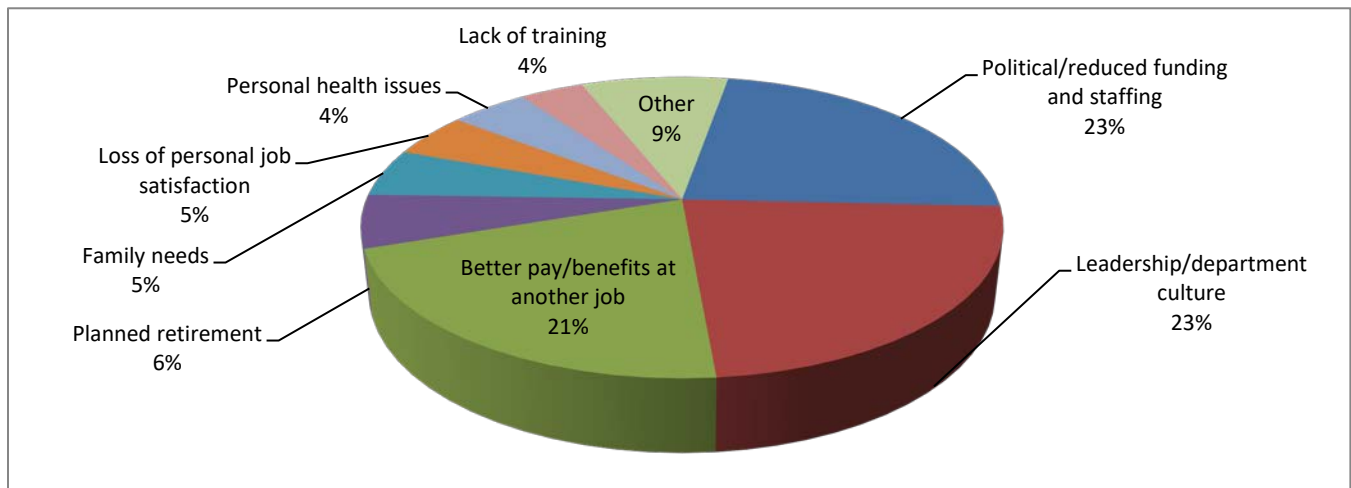
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| <b>Job Stability/satisfaction:</b><br>calling to law enforcement or the department's mission, personal job satisfaction, a desire to serve the public, and loyalty to co-workers | <b>Compensation:</b> the job provides adequate compensation, a need for health insurance | <b>Retirement:</b><br>remaining employed until I can retire or until a planned retirement date | <b>Schedule:</b><br>enjoyment of the flexibility offered by the work schedule | <b>Other:</b> life circumstances, training, good leadership |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|



### What are the top three factors that could cause you to leave the Department of Public Safety?

Responses to this open-ended question were reviewed and placed in following categories, which broadly represented the majority of answers:

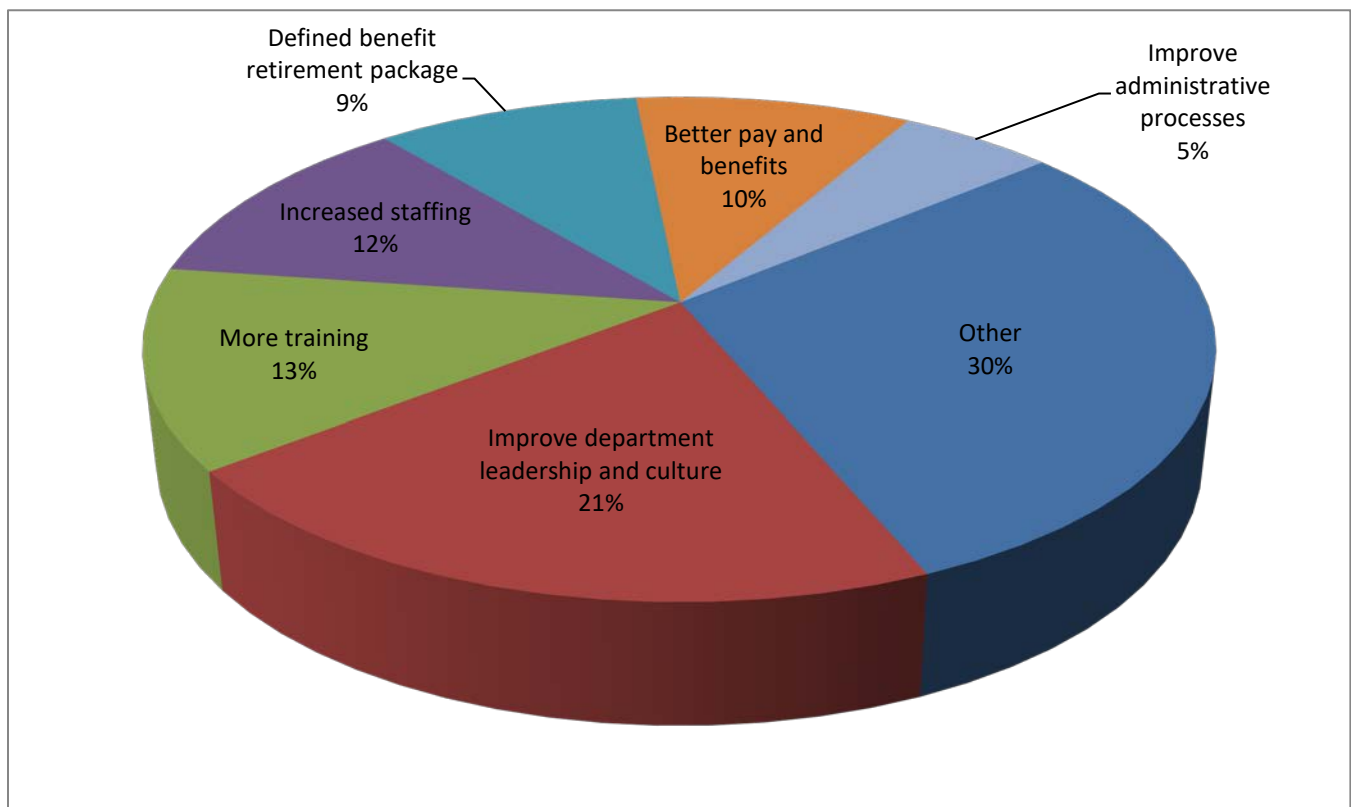
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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Political/reduced funding and staffing:</b> positions eliminated and insufficient staffing, lack of back-up due to positions not being filled, the impacts of SB91, and a lack of support from elected officials | <b>Leadership/department culture:</b> lack of support and direction, lack of integrity in leadership, unfair/inconsistent treatment, and an environment in which troopers do not feel recognized or valued | <b>Better pay/benefits at another job:</b> better pay at other agencies, health care premiums too high, and the lack of a pension offered by the state of Alaska | <b>Planned retirement:</b> eligibility for normal or early retirement | <b>Other:</b> administrative overhead (e.g. ARMS, report writing, stats), dissatisfaction with current assignment, force transfer, leave denials, and lack of career progression |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



## What are three factors that would most improve your employment with the Department of Public Safety?

Responses to this open-ended question were reviewed and placed in following categories, which broadly represented the majority of answers:

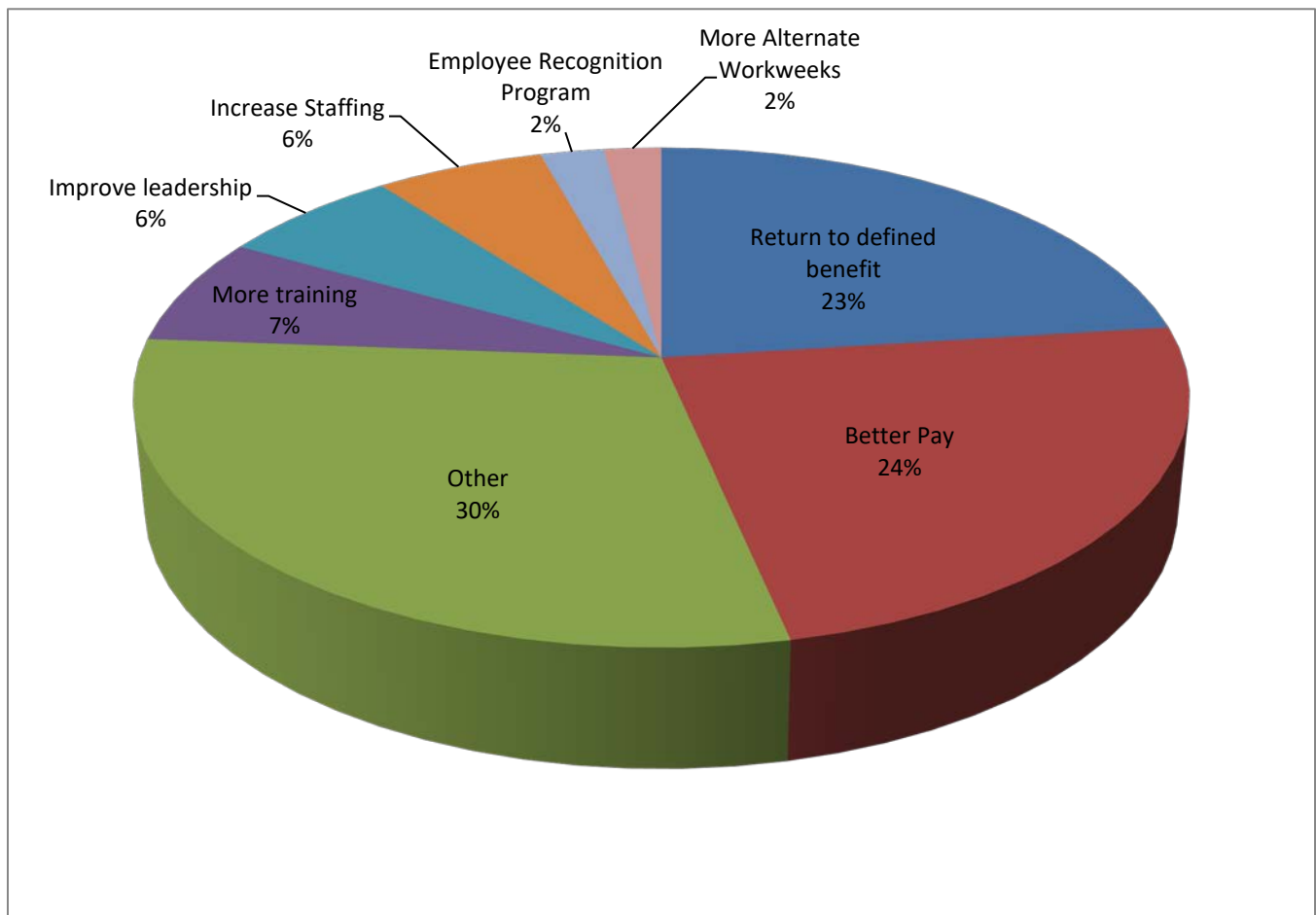
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Improve department leadership:</b> more transparency, direction, and communication, more support and recognition, more command accountability, command demonstrate the core values, more presence in the field, consistent and equitable treatment | <b>More training:</b> increased in service and training for the field, more first line supervisor and management training | <b>Increased staffing:</b> more troopers to reduce individual workload, more troopers so personal leave can be approved and standby requirements reduced to avoid burnout | <b>Better pay and benefits:</b> higher, more competitive pay, more pay for rural troopers, and reduced health care premium costs | <b>Improve administrative processes:</b> improve requirements associated with ARMS, report writing, and statistics | <b>Other:</b> more alternate schedule options, employee recognition program, wellness program/the ability to work out on duty, more opportunities for specialty assignments and promotion |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



### What three incentives do you think would help retain troopers?

Responses to this open-ended question were reviewed and placed in following categories, which broadly represented the majority of answers:

|                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                            |
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| <b>Return to defined benefit:</b> eliminate the current Tier IV defined contribution retirement package | <b>Better pay and benefits:</b> higher salary, more incentives for rural troopers, lower health insurance premiums, monetary incentives at defined benchmarks (e.g. bonuses at 5, 10, 15, & 20 years), and monetary performance incentives | <b>More training:</b> more ongoing, post-academy training | <b>Increase staffing:</b> more troopers in the field to ensure adequate backup, more troopers to allow for approval of time away for leave and training, and more troopers to share the workload and reduce burnout | <b>Improve leadership:</b> more communication and direction from upper management, more command staff presence in the field, less favoritism, and more support and recognition from management | <b>Other:</b> improve technology and equipment, improve state housing, reduced administrative requirements for troopers, education benefits, and eliminate force transfers |
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Respondents were asked to provide up to three answers to this open-ended question. The three most frequently used words were: Proud, Stagnant, and Overworked. The word cloud below represents the range of responses. Larger, more dominant words represent a higher frequency of responses.



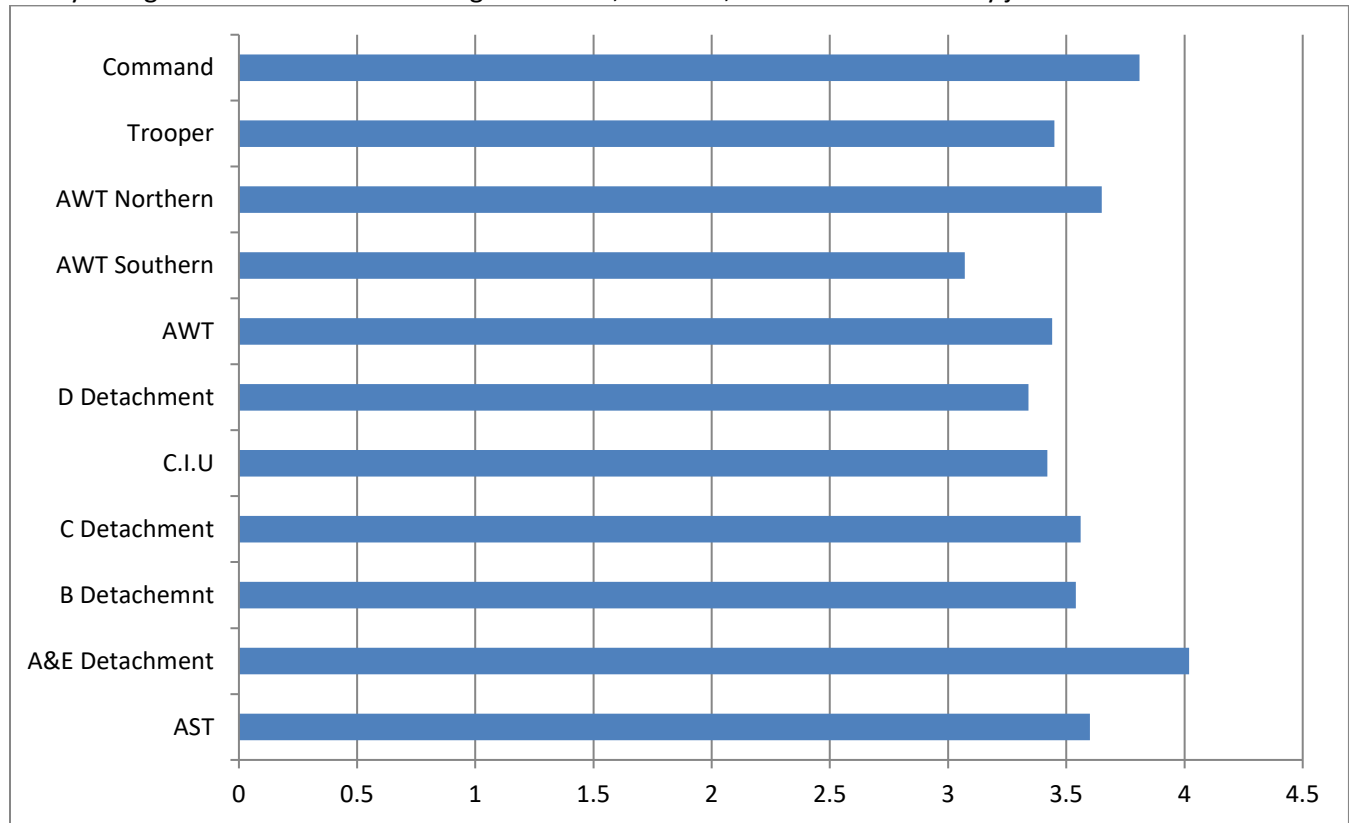
## Analysis of Subgroups

Survey results were analyzed by division and subgroups in the areas of overall job satisfaction ratings and factors that would most improve employment with the department.

### *Overall Job Satisfaction Levels*

The weighted average of responses to the question, “Overall I am satisfied with my job” were assessed by division, detachment, and the subgroups of Trooper (including troopers and investigators) and Command (including lieutenants, captains, and majors). The three groups reporting the highest satisfaction levels included: A&E Detachments, command, and AWT Northern Detachment.

Rate your agreement with the following statement, “Overall, I am satisfied with my job”



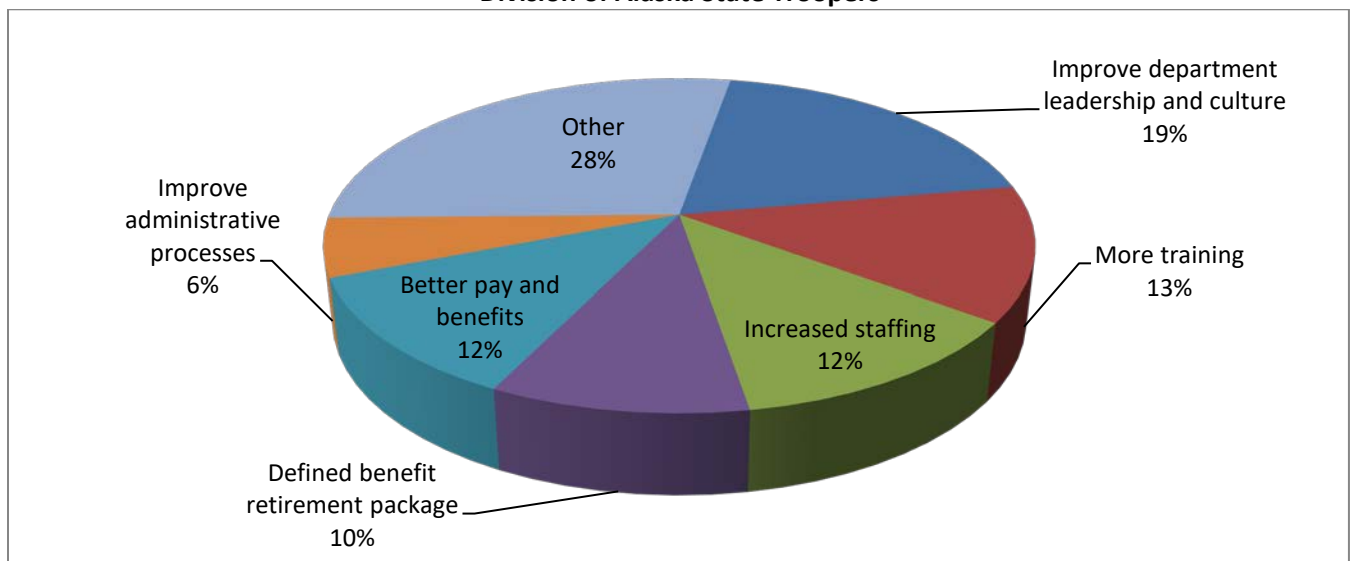
**Scale:**

|                       |              |             |           |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 1 – Strongly Disagree | 2 – Disagree | 3 – Neutral | 4 – Agree | 5 – Strongly Agree |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|

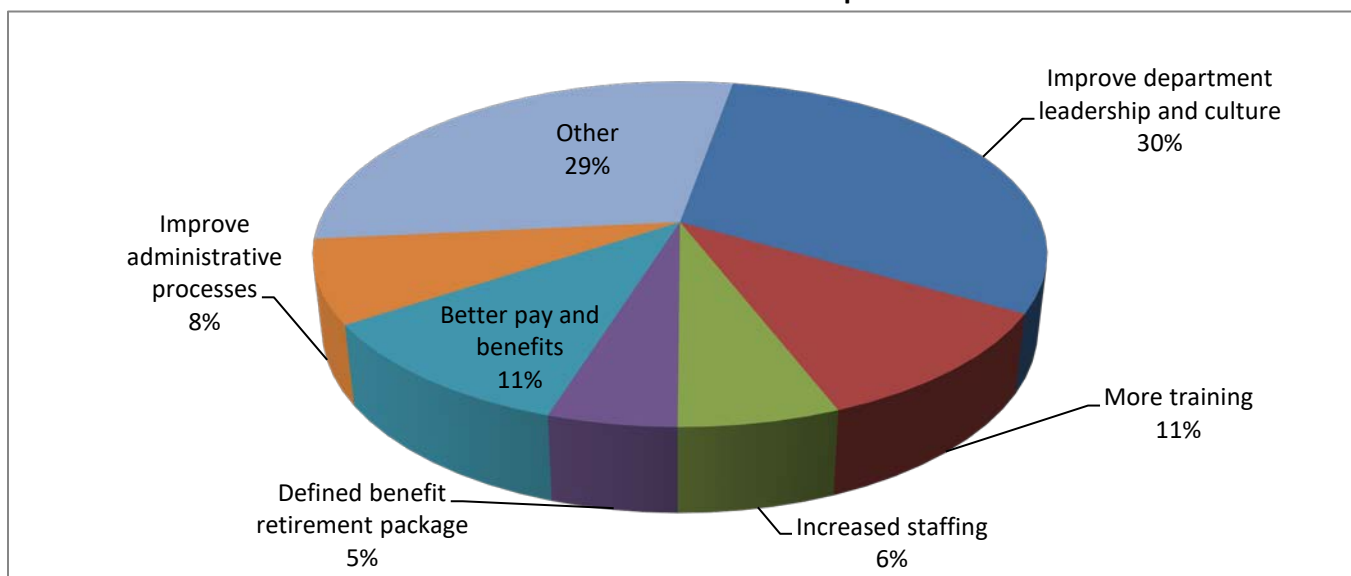
### What are three factors that would most improve your employment with DPS?

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Improve department leadership:</b> more transparency, direction, and communication, more support and recognition, more command accountability, command demonstrate the core values, more presence in the field, consistent and equitable treatment | <b>More training:</b> increased in service and training for the field, more first line supervisor and management training | <b>Increased staffing:</b> more troopers to reduce individual workload, more troopers so personal leave can be approved and standby requirements reduced to avoid burnout | <b>Better pay and benefits:</b> higher, more competitive pay, more pay for rural troopers, and reduced health care premium costs | <b>Other:</b> improve administrative processes, more alternate schedule options, employee recognition program, wellness program/the ability to work out on duty, more opportunities for specialty assignments and promotion |
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#### Division of Alaska State Troopers



#### Division of Alaska Wildlife Troopers



## Conclusion

The Commissioned Employee Engagement Survey indicates that overall, 61% of respondents report they are satisfied with their job.

The top reason respondents reported remaining employed with the Alaska Department of Public Safety is for job stability and satisfaction, largely derived from a calling to serve the public, camaraderie amongst co-workers, and an enjoyment for the variety of work.

The top factor that could improve employment with the department is improving leadership and the support for commissioned employees serving in the field. Employees largely report desiring more communication and positive contact with command staff. Further, returning to a defined benefit retirement system was reported as a key factor in retaining commissioned staff, along with more competitive pay, lower health insurance premiums, and more monetary retention incentives.

The results overview and a comprehensive table of comments provided with the survey will be provided to department senior leadership. Suggestions from the survey will be used to inform the department's recruitment and retention initiatives, as well as a strategic plan.