Moving women forward into leadership roles

August, 2017
Report background

Purpose
The Governing Institute conducted a survey of female California state and local government officials to gain their perspectives about working in government and issues related to employment.

Respondents were asked about a variety of topics related to working in the public sector, work-life balance, and gender parity in the workplace.

Additional objectives of this survey included identifying topics for discussion at upcoming roundtable events for women in California state leadership positions.

Methodology
The Governing Institute was commissioned to survey 100 respondents. They received 445 responses from state and local female government professionals in the state of California, offering their opinions and experiences about public sector employment.

Survey questions were developed in cooperation with KPMG about workplace and personal issues for women in public sector employment. They asked further questions to determine which subtopics within the overall themes would be most interesting for potential roundtable participants.

Responses were gathered in an online survey fielded to the Governing’s proprietary exchange community in March of 2017.
Participant demographics

n = 445

Organization type

- State
- County
- City/Municipality
- Special District
- Consolidated City-County
Topics for discussion

Respondents chose favorite topics and subtopics
Key findings

**Leadership is the most chosen topic for future learning**

- Respondents would likely respond positively to roundtable sessions that include gendered context

**Soft skills associated with leadership roles were popular topics for discussion**

- Team management
- Mentorship/sponsorship
Q4: Which of the following are you most interested in as a topic for future learning? (Please click and drag to rank, with #1 being the most important to you.)

Top topic areas for future learning

1. Leadership
2. Professional Development
3. Interpersonal and Communication Skills for Managers
4. Women in Government
5. Gender Parity in Government
6. Non-Workforce Related Issues

n = 445
### Top five subtopics

Q5-10: Which of the following topics are most compelling to you …? (Select all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Effective team management</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Encouraging the next generation of female leaders</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Work/life balance</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Framing effective communication in a political environment</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Inspiring greatness</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 445
Top topics and subtopics

- Leadership: 36%
- Professional Development: 25%
- Interpersonal and Communication Skills for Managers: 17%
- Effective team management: 78%
- Encouraging the next generation of female leaders: 77%
- Work/life balance: 75%

n = 445
Q6: Which of the following topics are most compelling to you in the area of leadership? (Select all that apply)

- **Inspiring greatness**: 66%
- **Mediation and negotiation**: 57%
- **Breaking down and understanding the components of leadership**: 53%
- **Confidence-building techniques**: 50%
- **Unlocking networking**: 29%

n = 445
Q5: Which of the following topics are most compelling to you in the area of professional development? (Select all that apply)

- Framing effective communication in a political environment: 67%
- Job skills needed for public sector career advancement: 57%
- An overview of the technology landscape in your state’s government: 37%
- Government finance: 32%
- Other: 6%

n = 445
Q10: Which of the following topics are most compelling to you in the area of interpersonal and communications skills for managers? (Select all that apply)

- Effective team management: 80%
- Framing effective communication in a political environment: 64%
- Strategic planning: 57%
- Working with millennials: 46%

n = 445
Q9: Which of the following topics are most compelling to you in the area of reaching gender parity? (Select all that apply)

- Encouraging the next generation of female leaders: 77%
- Attracting and retaining women employees negotiation: 51%
- Workforce gender issues such as equal representation and recruitment in the public sector: 50%
- Bringing more women into STEM: 33%
- Workplace policy issues such as paid leave: 33%

n = 445
Non-workforce topics

Q8: Which of the following topics are most compelling to you in the area of non-workforce related issues? (Select all that apply)

- Work/life balance 75%
- Coping with stress 56%
- Resources for managing caretaking obligations 29%

n = 445
Work environment

Challenges and satisfaction in public sector work
Key findings

Most respondents have received leadership training or encouragement at some point

— 23% are receiving leadership training or encouragement now

Respondents who are currently receiving leadership training are more likely to recommend careers in the public sector

— Respondents who report facing a glass ceiling are less likely to recommend careers in the public sector
Q13: During which stages of your career have you received encouragement or training to become a leader? (Select all that apply)

- I received encouragement to aspire to leadership roles at the very beginning of my career: 48%
- I received leadership training at the very beginning of my career: 35%
- I received encouragement to aspire to leadership roles as a student: 33%
- I received leadership training in school as a student: 32%
- I am currently receiving encouragement to aspire to leadership roles: 30%
- I am currently receiving leadership training: 23%
- I have not received any encouragement or training to become a leader: 18%

n = 445
Q11: Have you encountered, or do you expect to encounter, a glass ceiling in your career?

- Yes: 50%
- No: 35%
- Do not know: 15%

n = 445
Net promoter score

A Net Promoter Score was used to measure the willingness of government employees to recommend a career in the public sector.

A Net Promoter Score is an index ranging from -100 to 100 and it is used as a proxy for gauging overall satisfaction. A “positive” NPS above 0 is considered “good”, and +50 is “Excellent”. Generally if a Net Promoter Score is below 0, that is an indicator that the organization needs to better understand their employee needs.
Q14: How likely are you to recommend employment in the public sector to others? Please rank on a ten point scale, where 1=not at all, and 10=absolutely will recommend.

Would you recommend public sector work?

Number of Responses

Average = 8.1
Net Promoter Score: +28

n = 445
Q14: How likely are you to recommend employment in the public sector to others? Please rank on a ten point scale, where 1=not at all, and 10=absolutely will recommend.

With or without leadership training

Current recipients of leadership training:
- Average = 8.6
- Net Promoter Score = +49

Never-recipients of leadership training:
- Average = 7.2
- Net Promoter Score = -8

n = 180
Q14: How likely are you to recommend employment in the public sector to others? Please rank on a ten point scale, where 1=not at all, and 10=absolutely will recommend.

Would you recommend public sector work?

Number of Responses

n = 380
On the job

Communication, needed skills, and recruiting for women
Key findings

— Leadership skills are desired by respondents

— Respondents are comfortable talking about work assignments, but there are many topics that respondents don’t feel comfortable discussing with their supervisors

— Work/life balance and gender discrimination issues are emergent topics in open-ended questions
Q15: Which of the following job skills would you most like develop? (Please select all that apply)

- People management and leadership: 62%
- Project management: 47%
- Effective mentorship: 47%
- Communication and interpersonal skills: 45%
- Data analytics and visualizations: 44%
- Understanding public finance/budget management: 38%
- Media relations: 27%
- Hiring/conducting interviews more effectively: 22%
- Computer programming or other IT skills: 20%
- Administrative skills: 14%
- Do not know: 1%
- Other: 1%

n = 445
Q16: Which of the following career accommodations or opportunities would you feel comfortable asking your supervisor/s for? (Please select all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Request</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional training</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment to a special project</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A more flexible schedule</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A new role within my department</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to senior leadership</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An increase to your department or team’s budget</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to work from home</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mentor or sponsor</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A promotion</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid leave</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A raise</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 445
Q18: What strategies do you think public sector employers should use to attract and retain more female employees?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work/life balance</th>
<th>Targeted hiring and promotion</th>
<th>Discrimination and gender issues</th>
<th>Mentorship and networking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The ability to be flexible and work in a supportive atmosphere reduces the stress that is created when the demands are there…”</td>
<td>“Use female leaders to do recruiting – we need to see ourselves.”</td>
<td>“Treat them fairly, give them the same opportunities as male employees, and work with women of color to help them address stereotypes…”</td>
<td>“A designated mentor program where both the mentee and mentor truly have time built into their schedules…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Allow greater flexibility in schedules or leaves to allow mothers to perform familial duties while still maintaining career trajectory. Job-share programs to allow part-time work in leadership roles.”</td>
<td>“Continue to offer training and academies or institutes for leadership, and be inclusive and diverse.”</td>
<td>“Upholding a healthy culture including enforcement of anti-harassment policies across the board.”</td>
<td>“Mentoring by successful female government leaders, managers.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q17: What has been the greatest challenge for you in your career?

**Discrimination and gender issues**
- “The number of years it took to advance to a leadership/executive role compared to males in my same field.”
- “In a male dominated field – you have to prove things before you are taken seriously.”

**Communication and interpersonal issues**
- “Being invited and encouraged to sit at the table and to be heard”
- “Convincing people that my work has value and that I know what I am talking about. As a woman, you are never taken seriously.”

**Work/life balance**
- “Balancing work/home responsibilities; dealing with stress.”
- “Maintaining executive level position and responsibilities while raising young children.”

**Institutional or political culture**
- “Navigating local politics – understanding where the landmines are and how to avoid stepping in them.”
- “Having my work affected, delayed, or interrupted by forces outside of my control, such as budget or bureaucracy.”
Key findings

- Leadership training and the soft skills associated with good leaders are top topics of interest to respondents
  - Respondents are also interested in issues related to women in the workforce

- Leadership training is a critical component in employee perception of the public sector as an employer

- Respondents believe that to retain employees, much more work needs to be done to improve the work environment
Thank you

For more information about the #ITsHerFutureCA program, please contact:
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