



International City/County Management Association

## Assessing Your Agency's Ethical Culture

**This survey has been designed to assist your agency in gauging its ethical climate.**

**Instructions:** For each row, start by reading the statement at the beginning of each part and then reading the "indicator" column as the rest of the statement. Then consider whether that statement is "usually," "sometimes" or "rarely" the case in your experience, marking the corresponding box that best reflects your experiences and perceptions working for your agency. If you feel you don't know well enough to answer, please check the box on the right.

## 1. IN MY LOCAL GOVERNMENT, I AM...

| Always           | Almost Always     | Sometimes       | Rarely            | Indicator   | Don't Know |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---|------------|
| <i>10 Points</i> | <i>7.5 Points</i> | <i>5 Points</i> | <i>2.5 Points</i> |   |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 1. Encouraged to speak up about any agency practices and policies that are ethically questionable.                                  |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 2. Expected to report questionable ethical behaviors of others.   |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 3. Clear about where to turn to for advice about ethical issues.  |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 4. Expected to follow the <b>spirit</b> as well as letter of the law in my work for the agency.                                     |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 5. Expected to use ethical behaviors in getting results.  |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 6. Expected to tell the complete truth in my work for the agency.   |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 7. Expected to treat everyone who comes before the agency equally, regardless of personal or political connections.                 |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 8. Expected to follow stated policy of the governing body and not the desires of individual elected or appointed officials.         |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 9. Surrounded by co-workers who know the difference between ethical and unethical behaviors, and seem to care about the difference. |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 10. Working with one or more trusted confidantes with whom I can discuss ethical dilemmas at work.                                  |            |

## 2. The Executives in my Local Government...

| Always           | Almost Always     | Sometimes       | Rarely            | Indicator  | Don't Know |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--|------------|
| <i>10 Points</i> | <i>7.5 Points</i> | <i>5 Points</i> | <i>2.5 Points</i> |  |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 1. Create an environment in which staff is comfortable raising ethical concerns.   |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 2. Appreciate staff bringing forward bad news and don't "shoot the messenger" for doing so.  |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 3. Expect staff to use ethical practices in getting results – <b>not</b> "whatever it takes."  |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 4. Gear their decisions to the <b>spirit</b> as well as letter of the law.   |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 5. Treat the public with civility and respect.   |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 6. Use public resources only for agency purposes and not for their own personal or political uses (such as agency supplies, staff time and equipment). |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 7. Appoint and reward people on the basis of performance and contribution to the organization's goals and services.                                    |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 8. Treat all members of the public equally, regardless of who has people "connections."  |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 9. Help elected officials work within their policy role and stay out of day-to-day work of the agency.   |            |
|                  |                   |                 |                   | 10. Refuse to accept gifts and/or special treatment from those with business before the agency.  |            |

### 3. The Elected Officials in my Local Government...

| Always    | Almost Always | Sometimes | Rarely     | Indicator  | Don't Know |
|-----------|---------------|-----------|------------|--|------------|
| 10 Points | 7.5 Points    | 5 Points  | 2.5 Points |  |            |
|           |               |           |            | 1. Create an environment in which staff is comfortable raising ethical concerns.   |            |
|           |               |           |            | 2. Appreciate staff bringing forward bad news and don't "shoot the messenger" for doing so.  |            |
|           |               |           |            | 3. Expect staff to use ethical practices in getting results – <b>not</b> "whatever it takes."  |            |
|           |               |           |            | 4. Gear their decisions to the <b>spirit</b> as well as letter of the law.   |            |
|           |               |           |            | 5. Treat the public with civility and respect.   |            |
|           |               |           |            | 6. Use public resources only for agency purposes and not for their own personal or political uses (such as agency supplies, staff time and equipment). |            |
|           |               |           |            | 7. Allow the staff to handle day-to-day management issues and don't try to get involved.   |            |
|           |               |           |            | 8. Treat all members of the public equally, regardless of who has people or political connections.   |            |
|           |               |           |            | 9. Exclude themselves from decisions when reasonable members of the public might question their ability to make a fair decision.                       |            |
|           |               |           |            | 10. Refuse to accept gifts and/or special treatment from those with business before the agency.  |            |

**Part 4****1. Please indicate in which department you serve (check one):**

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <b>City Attorney's Office</b>            |
|  | <b>Department of Public Works</b>        |
|  | <b>Information Technology Department</b> |
|  | <b>Finance Department</b>                |
|  | <b>Parks &amp; Recreation Department</b> |
|  | <b>Police Department</b>                 |
|  | <b>Library</b>                           |
|  | <b>Fire Department</b>                   |
|  | <b>Human Resources</b>                   |
|  | <b>City Clerk's Office</b>               |
|  | <b>Community Development</b>             |

**2. Please indicate your position in the organization**

Please check one

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Management</b>  |  |
| <b>Supervisory</b> |  |
| <b>Line</b>        |  |

### 3. Please indicate Number of Years in Organization

Please Check One

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 0-1   |  |
| 1-5   |  |
| 5-10  |  |
| 10-15 |  |
| 15-20 |  |
| 20+   |  |

### 4. Please Indicate Approximate Age, Gender, and Ethnicity

Part A.

|          |       |       |       |       |       |      |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
|          | 20-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-59 | 60-69 | 70 + |
| Your Age |       |       |       |       |       |      |

Part B.

|        |      |        |
|--------|------|--------|
|        | Male | Female |
| Gender |      |        |

Part C.

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
|   | Ethnicity |
| White                                     |           |
| Black or African American                 |           |
| American Indian or Alaska Native          |           |
| Asian                                     |           |
| Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander |           |
| Hispanic                                  |           |
| Other                                     |           |

| Scoring: Your Local Government's Ethical Climate                        |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Score   | Rating  | What it Means/Steps to Take   |
| <p>75-100 per part</p> <p>or</p> <p>225-300 for the entire survey</p>   | <p>High</p>  <p><b>GREEN LIGHT</b></p> | <p><b>Congratulations!</b> Your agency has a strong ethical environment. Keep up the good work, including such steps as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Incorporating ethics into the hiring and evaluation process for staff</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conducting regular ethics-related learning opportunities, including examples of ethical dilemmas and ways to resolve them</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Going through specific items on the assessment to identify further opportunities for positive change</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reinforcing the importance of ethical considerations in agency behaviors and decisions</li> </ul>   |
| <p>50-74 per part</p> <p>or</p> <p>150 to 224 for the entire survey</p> | <p>Medium</p>  <p><b>CAUTION</b></p> | <p><b>Take a moment to reflect.</b> Your agency is at a good place but has room to improve by doing the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Evaluating the areas of weakness indicated by the questionnaire and considering targeted remedial actions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Analyzing the messages that staff and others receive and send about ethics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reviewing the agency's policies, including the criteria by which staff are evaluated</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Considering whether having a code of ethics would be helpful for the agency</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Following the best practices indicated in the box above.</li> </ul> |
| <p>0-49 per part</p> <p>or</p> <p>0 or 149 for the entire survey</p>    | <p>Low</p>                           | <p><b>Stop! Your agency's culture needs significant change.</b> Suggested activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identifying the aspects of the agency's culture that foster the problematic behaviors and analyze how to remediate them</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consulting with your agency's attorney about potential violations of laws and agency regulations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Following the best practices indicated in the boxes above</li> </ul>   |