

2009 Ethics Quiz and Survey Executive Summary

2009 ETHICS QUIZ AND SURVEY – DESCRIPTION

The Board of Ethics conducted the sixth annual on-line ethics quiz and survey from October 5 through 23, 2009. The board believes that education is an effective tool for encouraging ethical practices in King County, and understands that knowledge about the ethics code allows employees to follow its road map for fair dealings. The result is public trust and confidence, which are essential to the valuable work performed by all King County employees.

QUIZ/SURVEY OBJECTIVES

- Raise awareness among county employees of the Code of Ethics, the Board of Ethics and its office, and the services they provide.
- Increase and challenge employee knowledge of the ethics code.
- Be informed by employee opinions on the effectiveness of ethics resources in King County.

DISTRIBUTION METHOD AND RESPONSE RATE

Executive Triplett announced the quiz on October 5 via countywide email, voicing his support and inviting participation; a reminder followed on October 16. The survey remained open for completion for three weeks until October 23. Over 2,000 employees voluntarily participated in the quiz, approximately 18% of employees with direct access to computers.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Generally, the number of respondents per department matched the department's relative employee population within county government. Supervisors numbered 26%; non-supervisory participants numbered 74%.

RESPONDENT KNOWLEDGE OF QUIZ

Overall, employees responded correctly to 8 out of 9 questions; the average overall correct response rate was 94% per participant.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTIONS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ETHICS RESOURCES

- The Board of Ethics Web site is helpful in identifying and dealing with ethical issues: 71% agreed; 28% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- I believe the ethics office and board would honor my request for confidentiality: 84% agreed; 13% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- I believe the office and board would help me successfully resolve an ethical issue: 86% agreed; 12% neither agreed nor disagreed.
- I know about the Ethics Help Line that I can call to discuss concerns or report unethical conduct: 63% agreed; 15% neither agreed nor disagreed; 17% had not encountered an appropriate situation.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

- The consistently high number of employees who voluntarily take part in the annual ethics quiz and survey indicates that employees have a significant interest in workplace ethics.
- Employees have a solid, basic understanding of the King County Code of Ethics demonstrated by the high percentage of correct responses to questions.
- Resources provided by the Board of Ethics and its office are helpful to county employees, provide them with a way to discuss concerns or report unethical conduct, honor their confidentiality, and assist them in successfully resolving ethical dilemmas in the workplace.
- The on-going ethics awareness campaign works for employees and serves to prevent violations of the Code of Ethics.