

2008 Ethics Quiz and Survey Executive Summary

2008 ETHICS QUIZ AND SURVEY – DESCRIPTION

The Board of Ethics conducted the fifth annual on-line ethics quiz and survey from October 6 through 24, 2008. 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 about employee opinions on ethics education and training in King County

DISTRIBUTION METHOD AND RESPONSE RATE

Executive Sims announced the quiz on October 6 via a countywide email voicing his support and inviting participation; a reminder followed October 14. The survey remained open for completion for three weeks until October 24. Approximately 20% of 12,000 county employees with computer access took the quiz, a 2% increase over last year.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Generally, the number of respondents per department matched the department's relative employee population within county government. Approximately 24% identified as supervisors.

RESPONDENT KNOWLEDGE TO QUIZ

Employees responded correctly to six of the eight questions between 80% and 100% of the time; employees responded correctly to two of the eight questions between 70% and 73% of the time.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTIONS ON ETHICS EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- My ethics session included information on the county's commitment to ethics in the workplace: 91%
- My ethics session covered practical examples of real-life situations that individuals may encounter on the job: 88%
- My ethics session provided me with enough information so that I know how to resolve an ethical dilemma or situation: 84%
- The training I received helped me resolve an ethical dilemma in my workplace: 40% (an additional 32% had not encountered any appropriate situations and 25% had no opinion)
- I think my agency would benefit from an ethics presentation: 65%

CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

- The high number of employees voluntarily taking part in the ethics quiz indicates that employees have a continuing interest in workplace ethics; comments about the quiz indicate employees enjoy and learn from the quiz and that it should be continued.
- Employees have a solid, basic understanding of the King County Code of Ethics demonstrated by the percentage of correct responses to questions; however, employees could benefit from additional education about discussing future work with consultants over whom they have responsibilities, and about soliciting goods and services from county businesses for workplace initiatives. In both prohibited situations; 30% of county employees mistakenly thought such actions were acceptable.
- Education and training content and practical application delivered by ethics staff received high marks.
- Two-thirds of responding employees would welcome additional ethics education.