

The background of the entire page is a photograph of the Texas State Capitol building in Austin, Texas. The building is a large, classical-style structure with a prominent central dome topped by a statue. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The building's facade is light-colored, and there are some green trees visible in the foreground and to the sides.

THE STATE

OF

STATE EMPLOYEES

Survey Helps Provide TPEA Direction for the Future

By Andy Homer,
Director of Government Relations

It's customary for organizations to perform periodic analyses of how they're performing, and then use this assessment to establish organizational priorities and chart a course for the future. The President of the United States delivers a State of the Union address every year. In Texas, the Governor addresses a joint meeting of the Texas House and Senate every other year when the legislature convenes and lays out his or her priorities in the State of the State speech.

In similar fashion the leadership of TPEA is attempting to take stock of how we've been performing and what we can do to improve our efforts as the premier advocacy group for active and retired Texas state employees. TPEA recently completed a major online survey of state employees to gauge opinion on a variety of issues and help guide the TPEA Board of Directors and staff in establishing organizational priorities and providing direction for our legislative advocacy efforts.

Large Scale Survey

To allow for the broadest possible input, TPEA created an online survey and sent an email to most active state employees, requesting their participation. In total, close to 90,000 employees were asked to participate, with over 18,500 employees opening the email and nearly 16,700 fully completing the 24 question survey. This response far exceeded our expectations.

Our analysis of the survey results suggests that respondents were broadly representative of the state workforce, with a few notable

Fig. 1 - In which agency do you work? (Top 5 Agencies)

Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)		16.9%
Department of Transportation (TXDOT)		15.3%
Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)		12.1%
Department of Public Safety (TXDPS)		7.3%
Department of State Health Services (DSHS)		6.9%

exceptions. Almost all large state agencies were well represented among respondents (see Figure 1), with the exception of the Comptroller of Public Accounts and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). Despite being the largest state agency, a much smaller proportion of TDCJ employees have email addresses than at other state agencies. Employees at all salary levels responded to the survey, with 64 percent of respondents earning between \$20,000 and \$45,000 annually (see Figure 2). Seventy-seven percent of respondents were

non-supervisory personnel (see Figure 3), and slightly more than 50 percent had a Bachelors degree or higher educational attainment. Slightly more than 60 percent were "baby boomers" (born between 1947 and 1964) and an additional 34 percent were members of "Generation X" (born between 1965 and 1985) (see Figure 4 - on page 8).

Employees at all salary levels responded to the survey, with 64 percent of respondents earning between \$20,000 and \$45,000 annually.

Fig 2 - What is your annual gross salary (before taxes, deductions, garnishments, etc)?

Less than \$15,000		0.3%
\$15,000 - \$20,000		2.1%
\$20,001 - \$25,000		9.6%
\$25,001 - \$35,000		27.7%
\$35,001 - \$45,000		25.5%
\$45,001 - \$55,000		16.7%
\$55,001 - \$65,000		9.1%
\$65,001 or over		8.9%

In three other respects the pool of respondents was less reflective of the state workforce. First, women were over-represented, since almost 63 percent of respondents were female (see Figure 5 - on page 8), and the state workforce is between 54 and 55 percent female. Secondly, respondents were more likely to be Anglo, as 64 percent of respondents were Anglo, as compared to 54 percent of the overall state employee population (see Figure 6 - on page 8). Finally, respondents had a greater length of tenure with the state than is the case with the workforce generally, with over 55 percent of respondents having more than 10 years service with the state, significantly higher than average.

Survey Results

There is a great deal of information contained in the survey results, more than can be discussed in this article. Consequently, TPEA will

Fig 3 - Is your position supervisory?

Yes		23.2%
No		76.9%

TPEA was rated more than twice as high as the next closest advocacy group in its performance in keeping state employees informed about the organization's legislative objectives.

be posting survey results on our website at www.tpea.org. Analyzing responses is also probably more art than science. Nevertheless, there are some clear lessons to be learned from the results, both in terms of employee satisfaction with different benefits, as well as the degree to which employees believe TPEA is doing its job effectively.

Benefits--Pay, Health Insurance and Retirement

Among the most interesting findings were those that show levels of satisfaction among employees regarding the three primary benefits in the state's compensation package—retirement, health insurance and salaries (See *Figure 7 - on page 9*). Respondents are least dissatisfied and most satisfied with retirement. Health insurance is rated in the middle. And employees are most dissatisfied and least satisfied

Fig 4 - In which generation were you born?

Traditionalist - Prior to 1946		5.4%
Baby Boomers - 1947 to 1964		60.5%
Generation X - 1965 to 1985		33.9%
Generation Y - 1986 to 2001		0.2%

with salary. Only 10 percent of respondents are very or somewhat unsatisfied with retirement benefits, while 67 percent are very or somewhat satisfied. With regard to health insurance, a quarter of respondents are very or somewhat unsatisfied, while 64 percent are very or somewhat satisfied. Almost 45 percent of survey participants are very or somewhat unsatisfied with their salary, while slightly less than 40 percent are very or somewhat satisfied.

Some of the other characteristics that state employees viewed positively about their jobs include the 40 hour work week, paid time off, casual dress code, challenging work, and job security. Conversely, some aspects of the job that are viewed more negatively and which employees are less satisfied with are non-monetary recognition, opportunity for advancement, and telecommuting.

In general, these results bear out TPEA's recent legislative approach

Fig 5 - What is your gender?

Male		37.2%
Female		62.8%

to employee benefit issues, which has had a primary emphasis on increasing employee pay, while simultaneously seeking to maintain current health and retirement benefits. It's also important to analyze these responses in light of the increasingly competitive job market the state will face as the Baby Boomer generation retires.

Assessing TPEA's Performance

Other questions in the survey were intended to help TPEA assess its performance in the eyes of employees. *Figure 8*, shows how employees rated TPEA and other advocacy groups on how well they keep employees informed about their organizational objectives. With nearly 48 percent of respondents finding TPEA very or somewhat informative, TPEA was rated more than twice as high as the next closest group with 23 percent.

Similarly, *Figure 9*, shows that TPEA is rated much higher in terms of its ability to achieve its legislative objectives. With over 40 percent of respondents rating TPEA very or somewhat effective, TPEA was again rated more than twice as effective as the next organization.

The results of both these questions are especially significant given that, when asked what the single most important feature or benefit of an advocacy group when considering joining, over 57 percent of respondents cited effectiveness in the legislative process, followed by nearly 16 percent for keeping employees informed about issues affecting them.

While it is gratifying that TPEA's performance is rated significantly higher than other advocacy groups, there is also substantial room

Fig 6 - What is your ethnic origin?

White		64.9%
Black		11.5%
Hispanic		19.9%
Asian/Pacific Islander		1.2%
Native American/Alaskan		0.8%
Other		1.8%

Fig 7 - Generally, how would you rate various characteristics of your current job/career with the state?

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied	N/A	Rating Average
40-hour work week	60.7%	20.6%	9.9%	4.3%	3.1%	1.5%	1.67
Access to current technology	26.1%	38.7%	16.0%	12.3%	6.6%	0.3%	2.34
Casual dress code	47.5%	25.9%	16.5%	4.3%	2.8%	3.0%	1.86
Challenging work	39.1%	34.3%	16.0%	6.6%	3.8%	0.2%	2.01
Desire to make a difference	37.6%	32.6%	17.7%	6.8%	4.7%	0.7%	2.08
Flexible work schedule	37.7%	26.6%	16.4%	8.0%	7.4%	3.9%	2.17
Fun working environment	19.8%	28.5%	23.9%	13.5%	13.2%	1.1%	2.71
Health insurance	25.7%	38.1%	12.3%	15.6%	7.6%	0.6%	2.41
Independent work	36.1%	35.5%	17.7%	5.7%	3.5%	1.6%	2.04
Job security	38.7%	34.8%	14.9%	6.6%	4.5%	0.5%	2.03
Opportunity for advancement	14.4%	25.1%	20.9%	19.0%	19.3%	1.2%	3.04
Paid time off	50.5%	32.5%	10.6%	3.1%	2.4%	0.9%	1.73
Recognition - non-monetary	11.2%	21.6%	27.7%	18.0%	19.6%	1.8%	3.14
Retirement pension	26.0%	41.3%	20.4%	7.7%	3.2%	1.4%	2.20
Salary	10.7%	28.7%	15.1%	24.6%	20.2%	0.8%	3.15
Supportive work environment	19.1%	31.3%	19.1%	15.7%	14.1%	0.7%	2.74
Team work	21.0%	33.7%	19.3%	13.9%	11.4%	0.7%	2.61
Tele-commuting	7.9%	14.1%	34.1%	9.4%	13.9%	20.6%	3.09
Training opportunities/ professional development	15.7%	31.2%	23.5%	15.4%	12.6%	1.6%	2.78
Working relationship with supervisor	41.3%	28.5%	13.5%	7.7%	8.4%	0.6%	2.13
The clientele/public I interact with or serve	28.8%	37.3%	23.8%	4.3%	2.7%	3.0%	2.12

Fig 8 - How would you characterize each organization's efforts to communicate their overall organizational objectives?

	Very informative	Somewhat informative	Neutral	Somewhat uninformative	Not at all informative	Do not know	Rating Average
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)	1.3%	4.2%	19.3%	4.4%	14.6%	56.3%	4.96
Texas Public Employees Association (TPEA)	21.3%	26.3%	15.6%	6.1%	6.1%	24.6%	3.23
Texas State Employees Union (TSEU)	8.1%	14.5%	19.9%	5.9%	11.0%	40.7%	4.19

for improvement. A significant portion of respondents were either neutral in their rating of TPEA or simply did not know enough to rate. For example, half of respondents to the question regarding legislative effectiveness were either neutral or did not know enough to rate TPEA.

Looking Forward to 2009

The Board of Directors and staff of TPEA will use the survey results to help guide our decisions as we develop TPEA's Legislative Agenda for the 81st Texas Legislature, which convenes in less than a year. Although the State's likely fiscal condition is not yet clear, there is no doubt that it will be a major challenge to win approval of additional funding for pay raises, maintaining health insurance, and enabling ERS to grant a long overdue benefit increase for state retirees. TPEA Executive Director Gary Anderson said "I have no doubt our legislative agenda will again focus on pay raises in both years of the next biennium, on winning approval of a 13th check for retirees, and on maintaining health insurance benefits for active and retired employees. As usual, competition for limited funds will be intense at the Capitol, so TPEA

has its work cut out for it."

Survey for Retirees

TPEA would like to do a survey of state retirees to get the same sort of feedback as we received from active employees. However, TPEA will need to collect and build a database of state retiree email addresses, for both TPEA members and non-members. While TPEA is able to access work email addresses for active employees through Public Information Act requests, there is no comparable way to request email addresses for retirees. So we will need to solicit retirees in a variety of ways to collect email addresses before we can proceed with a survey.

Retirees can help TPEA to begin this process by signing up for TPEA's legislative updates on the TPEA web site. Simply go to www.tpea.org and enter your email address and other information in the box at the top left of the web site, we are reconfiguring this to allow enrollees to designate whether they are retired or not.

Fig 9 - How would you characterize each organization's efforts to achieve their legislative objectives?

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Neutral	Somewhat not effective	Not at all effective	Do not know	Rating Average
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)	1.1%	4.9%	19.5%	3.3%	5.5%	65.8%	5.05
Texas Public Employees Association (TPEA)	11.4%	28.7%	16.1%	5.2%	4.5%	34.1%	3.65
Texas State Employees Union (TSEU)	4.9%	14.9%	18.7%	4.5%	6.0%	51.0%	4.45