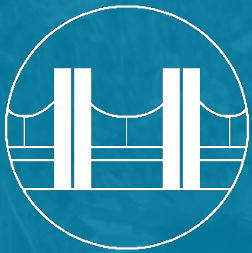
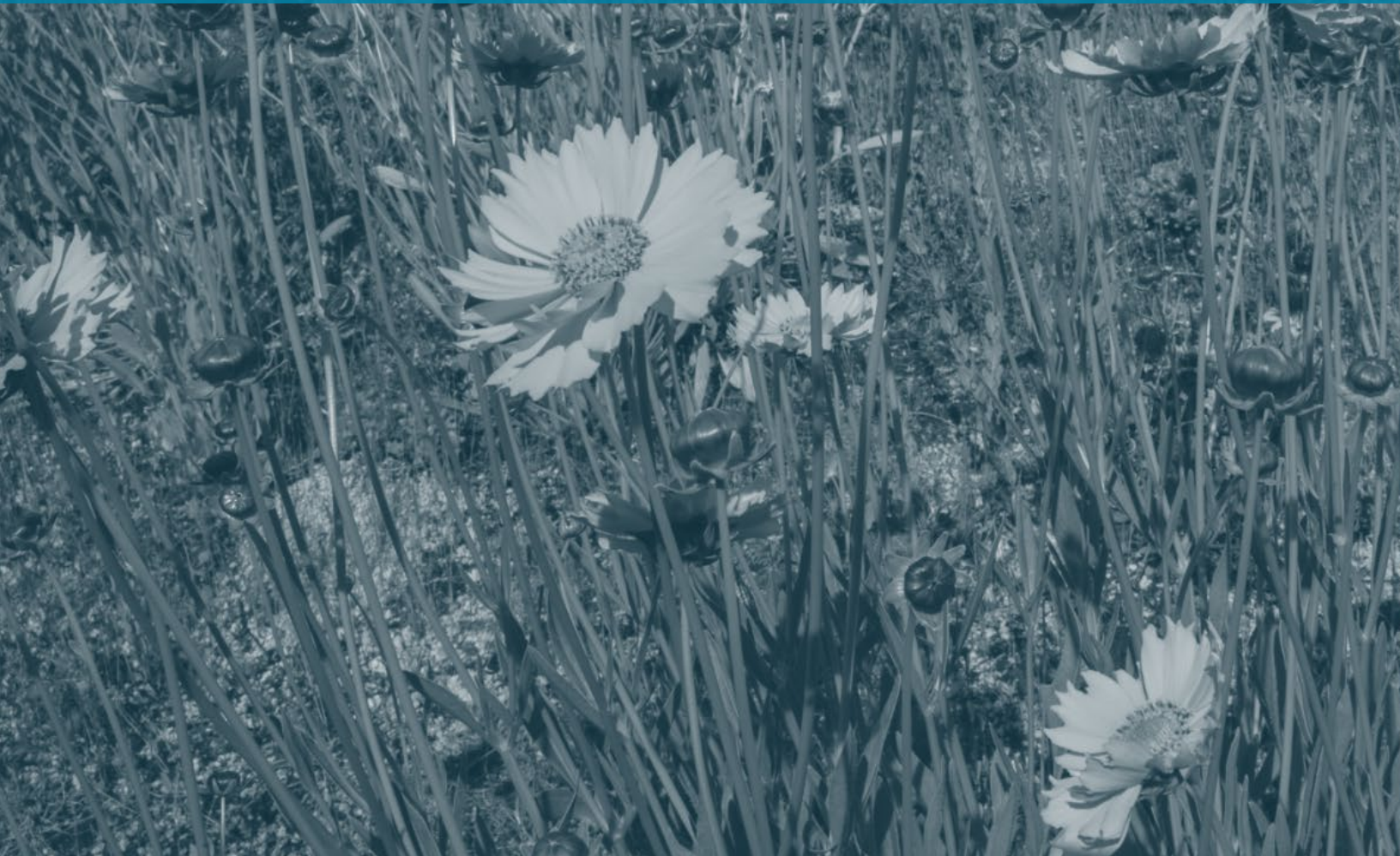


# 2024 Ethical Culture Survey

Employees said they feel the rules don't apply to everyone equally, worry about retaliation for speaking up, and need more guidance on how to report unethical behavior.



Multnomah County Auditor's Office  
Jennifer McGuirk, County Auditor  
March 2025

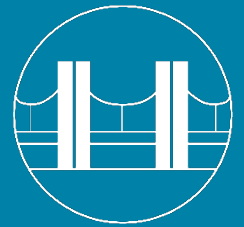


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# Report Highlights

Employees feel the rules don't apply to everyone equally, worry about retaliation for speaking up, and need more guidance on how to report unethical behavior.



Multnomah County  
Auditor's Office

## What We Found



**Accountability:** Over 40% of employees believe that the rules at the county don't apply to everyone equally.



**Speak-up Culture:** Nearly a quarter of employees feel they would face retaliation for reporting unethical behavior.



**Pressure:** Compared to our 2022 survey, fewer employees reported observing the bending or breaking of rules, policies, or laws at the county in the prior 12 months.



**Awareness:** Knowledge about how to report misconduct has declined since our last survey in 2022.



We found statistically significant differences in the way employees experienced the ethical culture depending on race and ethnicity, gender, and transgender identification.

## Why This is Important

Morale and ethical standards erode when the standards don't apply to everyone equally.

Fear of retaliation can have a chilling effect, where employees do not feel free to report unethical behavior or misconduct.

Observed misconduct is the most fundamental indicator of the state the ethical culture in the workplace.

A lack of awareness of how to report misconduct can indicate ineffective communication about the program.

These results appear to indicate distrust in the equitable application of ethical culture standards at the county, and if not corrected may further erode trust among employees.

# Introduction

## Survey purpose and description

The mission of the Multnomah County Auditor's Office is to promote accountable and equitable county government. One way we work toward this mission is by supporting an ethical culture in the workplace. We conducted the survey to learn how county employees perceive the county's ethical culture. Our findings provide board members, county leadership, and staff with information on our collective understanding of the county's ethical culture.

In 2024, the Auditor's Office conducted our fourth survey of the county's ethical culture, eight years after our first survey in 2016. We also conducted the survey in 2018, originally intending to conduct the survey every two years. However, we did not conduct the ethical culture survey in 2020. That year, we conducted a survey focused on employee needs and county functions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the 2022 ethical culture survey, we made some changes to the survey we conducted in 2024 to better align with the survey's purpose of assessing ethical culture at the county. Like the 2018 ethical culture survey, this 2024 survey did not ask questions about workforce equity, but we identified comments that reflect county employee concerns related to equity and ethics.

## Thank you to participants

The Auditor's Office received responses from 3,173 employees, about 46% of the county workforce. This compares to 3,001 responses in 2022, which was also about 46% of the county workforce. We read and analyzed all 1,744 comments from employees. We incorporated selected comments throughout the report to highlight findings and provide insights into employee perceptions, and we took great care to ensure that the included comments were representative of employee perceptions.

Thank you to all the county employees who participated in the 2024 ethical culture survey. We appreciate their time and effort in sharing their perspectives and concerns.

## How we analyzed responses to survey questions

We evaluated the responses to each question and compared them to the results from prior ethical culture surveys. To better analyze the survey and develop findings, we placed questions and responses into one of the following four categories:

**Accountability:** Employees are constantly watching leaders for cues about ethical behavior. Questions in this category surveyed county employees on their perceptions of consequences for violating workplace ethics standards, and the extent to which employees at varying levels of the organization are perceived to be held to the same standards. Lack of accountability for misconduct can indicate a program that only looks good on paper and is not integrated into the everyday work environment.

**Speak-up Culture:** Questions in this category helped assess the presence of a “speak-up culture,” where employees feel comfortable speaking up about unethical behavior. Concern about retaliation or a lack of confidence in reporting observed misconduct are indicators of a deficient speak-up culture.

**Pressure:** Questions in this category surveyed county employees on the pressure they feel to violate workplace ethical standards. Pressure to compromise standards is a warning sign of future workplace misconduct.

**Awareness and Effectiveness:** Questions in this category surveyed employees' ability to identify and respond to difficult situations in the workplace. A lack of awareness of the formal ethics and compliance program can indicate management's insufficient investment in the program and ineffective communication from management about the program.

## Survey Results

In evaluating survey responses to certain questions, we looked for variations in response that were statistically significant on the basis of racial or ethnic identity, gender, or transgender identification. We found that in response to many of the survey questions we asked, there were statistically significant differences in the way that employees experienced the ethical culture, depending on race and ethnicity, gender, and transgender identification. We noted these differences for each question, if they were statistically significant. These results appeared to indicate distrust in the equitable application of ethical culture standards at the county, and if not corrected may further erode trust among employees.

As with the 2022 survey, the perception of ethical culture was lowest in the categories of Accountability and Speak-up Culture:

- Less than half of employees who responded to the survey said they believed the county will fully investigate concerns of unethical behavior or follow through with discipline for unethical behavior.
- Less than a third of employees who responded to the survey believed the rules are the same for everyone at the county.
- Less than half of respondents who responded to the survey said they felt they could report unethical behavior without fear of retaliation.

The results in the categories of Awareness and Effectiveness and Pressure were more mixed:

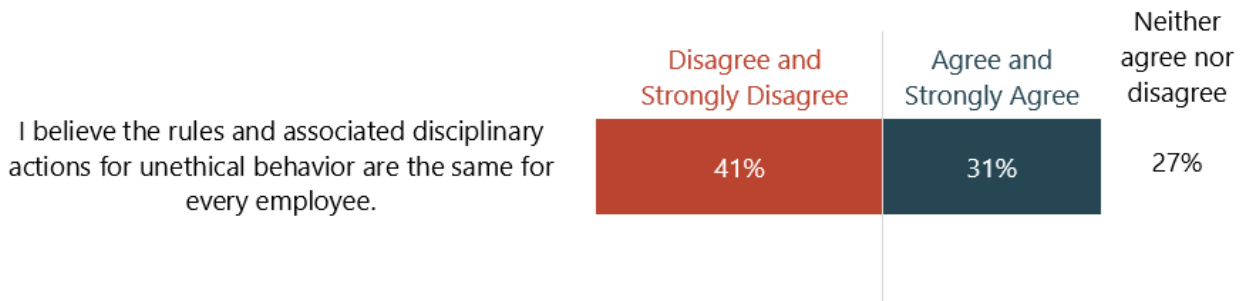
- About a quarter of respondents said they had witnessed unethical behavior at work in the prior 12 months.
- Over three-quarters of employees who responded to the survey said they would be willing to report unethical behavior if they observed it.
- Only 72% of those who responded said they knew how to report unethical behavior, and only 68% of respondents said they knew how to make a report to the Good Government Hotline.

Out of 1,744 total comments, only 35 comments were largely positive. In these comments, employees expressed appreciation for their colleagues, their employment at the county, and for the opportunity to complete the survey. Some employees commented on the high ethical standards of their teams, and several spoke positively

about how the county handles ethics violations. However, these comments were far outnumbered by those from employees with negative views on the county's ethical culture.

## Accountability: Employee responses indicated concern that the rules aren't the same for everyone and cynicism about county investigations

Only 31% of employees felt that the county's rules and ethical standards apply equally to everyone, a decline of 3% from the 2022 survey



Source: Multnomah County Auditor's Ethical Culture Survey issued 2024. Of 3,173 people that completed the survey, 2,982 people answered this question. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.

As noted earlier in this report, we found statistically significant differences in the way that employees experienced the ethical culture, depending on race and ethnicity, gender, and transgender identification. We will note these differences for each question, if they were statistically significant.

In this case, agreement was lower among those who identified as Black or African American, or multiracial, than for those identifying as White.

Regardless of race or ethnicity, agreement was much lower among those who identified as transgender than among those who did not identify as transgender. Among women, there was lower agreement than among men.

On a department level, two departments stood out for low agreement on this question. Agreement among employees of the Joint Office of Homeless Services (Homeless Services) was 16%, falling from 34% in our prior survey. Agreement among employees in the Department of Community Justice (DCJ) was 22%, which was the same as in the 2022 survey.



We received over 100 employee comments related to inconsistent or unequal treatment in how the county addresses ethical concerns or employee misconduct. Based on comments we received, employees believed that managers in particular are not held to the same standards as frontline-level employees. Some examples include:

“Represented staff are held to a higher ethical standard than exempt supervisors and managers.”

“While I believe the rules for unethical behavior are the same for every employee, disciplinary actions are applied differently. Supervisors do not receive the same amount of scrutiny nor disciplinary actions as line staff.”

“I think how things are handled for managers and staff are different. And I say that as a manager.”

“It often seems that individuals in management can overlook rules or policies without facing consequences, while employees are held to a different standard and face disciplinary action for their mistakes.”

“I feel like allegations about management's unethical behavior are ignored or swept under the rug, while represented staff are definitely investigated.”

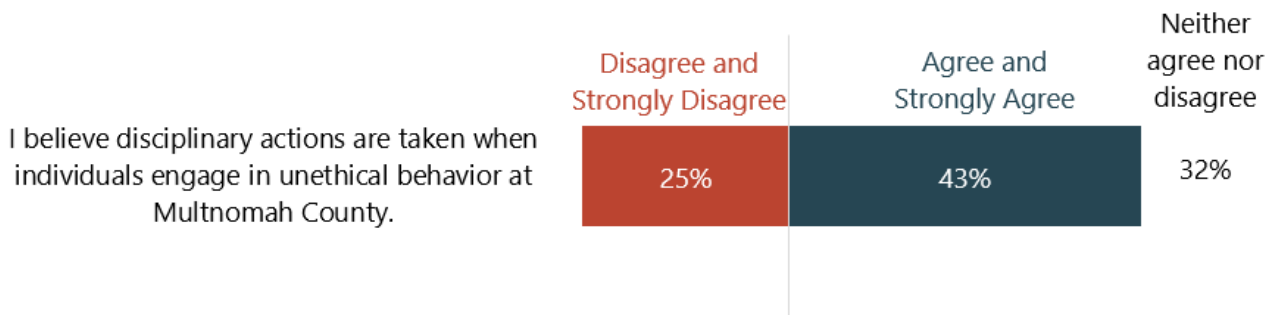
In at least 35 comments, employees indicated that they have experienced or observed racial disparities in the county's response to ethical concerns. Some examples include:

“I believe there is a racial component to whether disciplinary action is taken or not. Being a person of color, I have experienced being gaslighted when pointing out a concern.”

“My observations lead me to believe that privilege still affords non BIPOC employees leniency in unethical behavior. In other words, I believe staff and employees of color are held accountable extensively compared to their white colleagues.”

“I believe the county could do so much better with disciplinary processes applying to both dominant culture folks and BIPOC the same. If I can be honest, I don't believe that happens. County still seems to have processes, and actions that reflect white supremacy, and the number of BIPOC leaving county says a lot. I believe more authoritative actions are made toward BIPOC folks than white. That is just the reality.”

Only 43% of employees agreed that disciplinary actions are taken when individuals engage in unethical behavior at work, a 3% decline from the 2022 survey



Source: Multnomah County Auditor’s Ethical Culture Survey issued 2024. Of 3,173 people that completed the survey, 2,982 people answered this question. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Survey responses indicated lower agreement among those who identified as Black or African American, and those who identified as multiracial, than for those who identified as White.

Regardless of race or ethnicity, among those who identified as transgender, agreement was much lower in response to the question. Among women and those who identified as gender-expansive, there was lower agreement than among men.

On a department level, again, Homeless Services and DCJ employees indicated the lowest agreement. Agreement was 31% among Homeless Services employees, and 33% among DCJ employees.

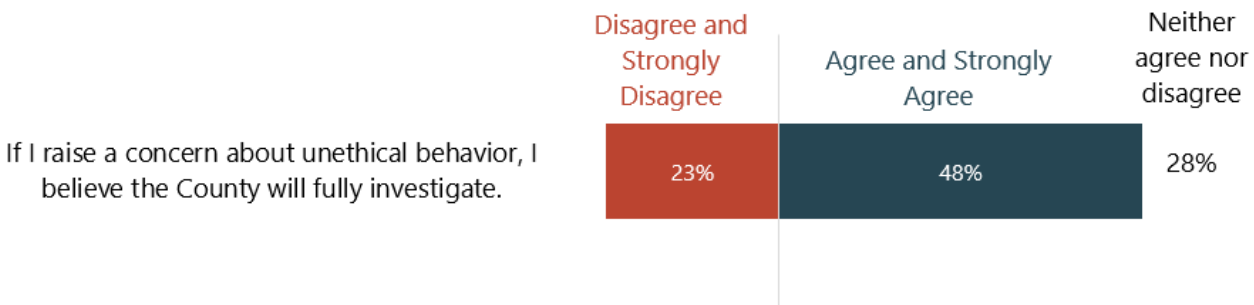
One hundred employees commented on the lack of accountability, in particular, for managers. Some examples include:

“The county does not investigate allegations of unethical behavior. There have been numerous instances of unethical conduct among department managers and supervisors, yet no action has been taken to address these issues.”

“I believe there are unethical behaviors and practices happening constantly at the county, but since they are often at the highest levels of the organization (people with the most power, authority, and influence) they are not reported, investigated, or disciplined.”

“Staff have many examples of manager actions that are unethical, some examples are reported. Most examples of manager misconduct are not reported due to fear of retaliation, lack of follow up to previous reports, and the implied acceptance of unethical behaviors by managers when reports are made but managers do not face consequences.”

Almost half of employees agreed that if they raised a concern about unethical behavior, that the county would fully investigate, a 5% decline from the 2022 survey



Source: Multnomah County Auditor’s Ethical Culture Survey issued 2024. Of 3,173 people that completed the survey, 2,980 people answered this question. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Among those who identified as Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or multiracial, agreement with this question was lower than for those who identified as White.

Regardless of race or ethnicity, among those who identified as transgender, agreement was much lower in response to the question. Among women and those who identified as gender-expansive, there was lower agreement than among men.

On a department level, again, Homeless Services and DCJ employees indicated the lowest agreement. Agreement was 39% among Homeless Services employees, and 38% among DCJ employees.

In at least 126 comments, employees expressed a belief that the county's ethical policies are not effective. Some examples include:

"The County is more concerned with risk aversion rather than ethics or its values. When employees raise concerns about this, leadership will 'listen', but they won't make any changes. Ethics feels like a joke."

"My experiences throughout my over 11 years at the County is that when employees who cause harm to other employees and/or clients are reported, they not only do not have any type of discipline or accountability, but rather things are swept under the rug and go unaddressed and the harm continues."

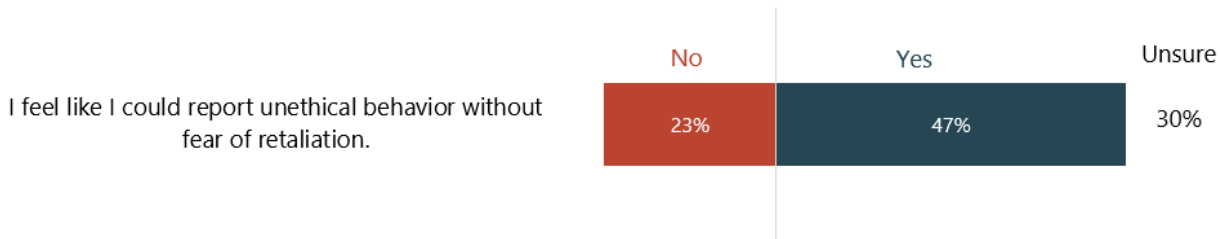
"The county says a lot in its policy and public comments. It does not follow through with what it says much of the time."

"The County might investigate, but nothing changes and no one is held accountable."

"I have lost faith that reporting unethical behavior will affect any change in the county. It seems to me that reporting is designed to create the illusion of accountability, rather than actually hold anyone in power accountable."

## Speak-up culture: Over three-quarters of employees who took the survey said they would be willing to report unethical behavior, but less than half said they felt they could do so without fear of retaliation

Nearly a quarter of employees said they felt they would fear retaliation for reporting unethical behavior



Source: Multnomah County Auditor’s Ethical Culture Survey issued 2024. Of 3,173 people that completed the survey, 2,870 people answered this question. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.

In response to this question, our survey found much lower agreement among those who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native or multiracial, and lower agreement among those who identified as Black or African American or Latino, compared to those who identified as White.

Regardless of race or ethnicity, for those who identified as transgender, survey responses indicated much lower agreement. Among women and those who identified as gender-expansive, agreement was lower than among men.

On a department level, again, Homeless Services employees and DCJ employees indicated the lowest agreement. Agreement was 41% among Homeless Services employees, and 38% among DCJ employees.

We received at least 145 comments on the survey related to retaliation. Employees said that they had witnessed or experienced retaliation for speaking up, and for some employees, this would discourage them from reporting unethical conduct in the future. Some examples include:

“I constantly have to balance my responsibility to speak up with my fear of retaliation.”

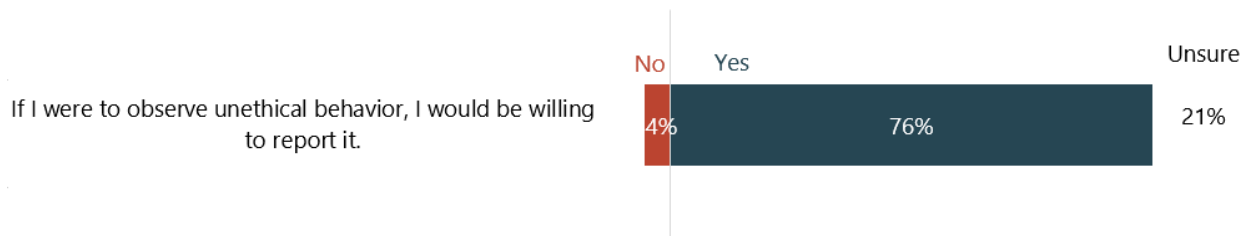
“I have observed retaliation personally and do not feel comfortable reporting things to my supervisor as they clearly have people they favor.”

“I have experienced that anyone that speaks up is punished. I have lost out on promotions for speaking up and I have never seen anyone, especially managers disciplined for their behavior.”

“I have reported and will continue to report unethical behavior, but I always fear retaliation, and mostly in a more covert/insidious way. I feel like those of us [who] speak out a lot against unethical behavior at the County end up having a target on our backs and we're labeled as problem employees and dismissed. This continues a culture of not feeling safe reporting unethical behavior.”

“The county is not totally in a place where people, particularly BIPOC people feel safe, trust or a sense of belonging; therefore they may be afraid to report unethical behavior of folks that are part of the dominant culture/white.”

Seventy-six percent of respondents said they would be willing to report unethical behavior if they observed it, a 6% increase from the 2022 survey



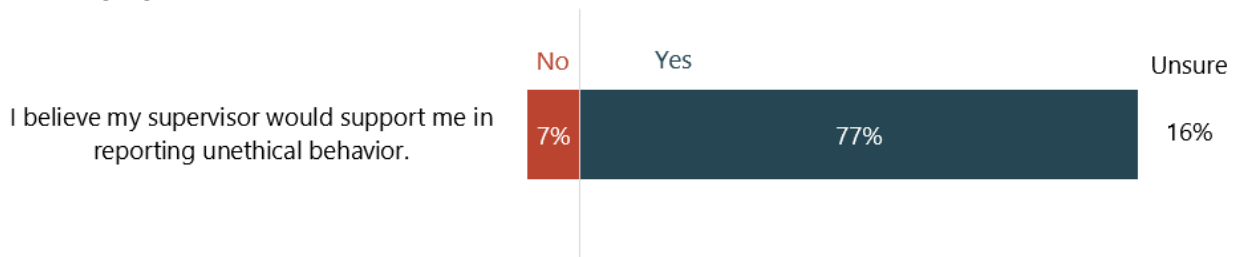
Source: Multnomah County Auditor’s Ethical Culture Survey issued 2024. Of 3,173 people that completed the survey, 2,872 people answered this question. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Respondents who identified as multiracial indicated lower agreement than those who identified as White.

Regardless of race or ethnicity, among those who identified as transgender, survey responses indicated lower agreement.

About 4 out of 5 respondents said their supervisor would support them in reporting unethical behavior.

However, some employees commented that reporting concerns about supervisors or managers is challenging.



Source: Multnomah County Auditor’s Ethical Culture Survey issued 2024. Of 3,173 people that completed the survey, 2,864 people answered this question. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Agreement with this statement was lower among those who identified as Black or African American, or multiracial, than those who identified as White.

On a department level, employees of the Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office (Sheriff’s Office) and Homeless Services indicated the lowest agreement that their supervisor would support them in reporting unethical behavior.

In several comments, employees described specific challenges related to reporting ethical concerns about managers and supervisors. Some examples include:

“I know how to report ethical concerns, however it has felt like even very serious concerns are not taken seriously when reported. I have also felt at risk of retaliation for reporting ethical concerns, especially if my concerns are about management.”

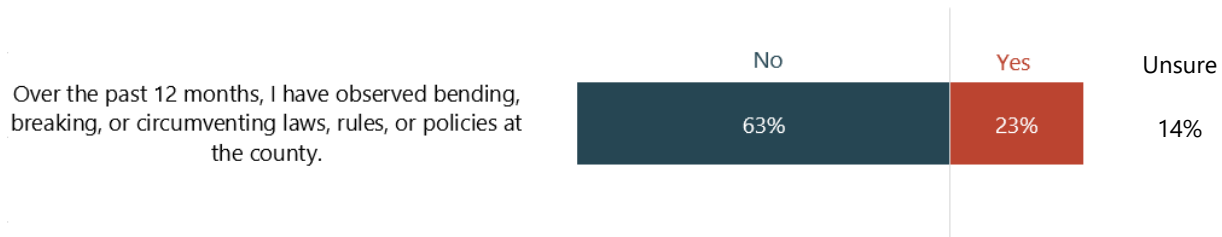
“Due to the re-traumatization I experienced going through the complaint process, along with the inaction or inappropriate action, I'm unsure whether I would file a report again. I was retaliated against by a former manager. There is no way not to fear retaliation when supervisors and managers are also interviewed and know they are being investigated. They may not know who filed the complaint, but usually it's obvious.”

“Filing a complaint, especially if leadership is the issue can be hard.”



## Pressure: About a quarter of employees reported observing unethical behavior in the prior 12 months and some felt pressure to bend or break rules

Twenty-three percent of respondents reported observing the bending, breaking, or circumventing of laws, rules or policies in the prior 12 months, compared to 27% who said so in the 2022 survey



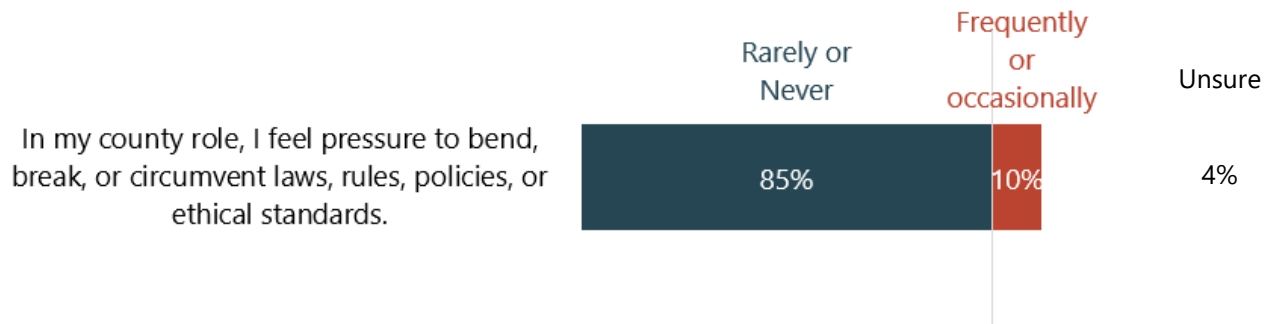
Source: Multnomah County Auditor’s Ethical Culture Survey issued 2024. Of 3,173 people that completed the survey, 2,904 people answered this question. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.

We did not identify any statistically significant differences in response to this question based on race or ethnicity.

Regardless of race or ethnicity, for those who identified as transgender, survey responses indicated they were more likely to have observed unethical conduct in the prior 12 months. Among women, agreement that they had observed unethical conduct was higher than among men. And among those who identified as gender-expansive, agreement that they had observed unethical conduct was much higher than among men.

On a department level, 31% of DCJ employees and 26% of MCSO employees who responded to the survey indicated that they had observed the bending, breaking, or circumventing of laws, rules, or policies in the prior 12 months.

One out of 10 employees reported feeling pressure to bend, break or circumvent rules, about the same as the 2022 survey

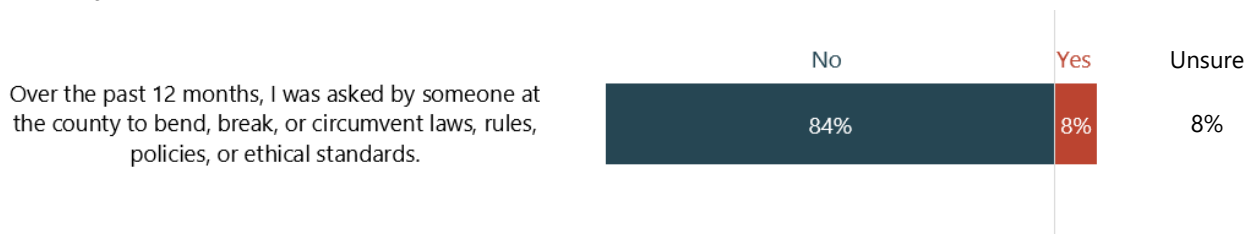


Source: Multnomah County Auditor’s Ethical Culture Survey issued 2024. Of 3,173 people that completed the survey, 2,910 people answered this question. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Those who identified as multiracial indicated much higher agreement that they felt pressure to bend, break, or circumvent rules.

There is reason for concern that pressure is increasing in some departments. On a department level, 17% of Homeless Services employees who responded to the survey reported feeling pressure to bend, break, or circumvent rules, compared to 11% in the 2022 survey. Fifteen percent of DCJ employees who responded to the survey reported feeling pressure to bend, break, or circumvent rules, compared to 8% in the 2022 survey.

Less than 10% of employees reported being asked by someone at the county to bend, break or circumvent rules, the same percentage as the 2022 survey



Source: Multnomah County Auditor’s Ethical Culture Survey issued 2024. Of 3,173 people that completed the survey, 2,904 people answered this question. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Those who identified as Black or African American were much more likely than those who identified as White to say that they were asked to bend, break, or circumvent laws, rules, policies, or ethical standards. However, agreement with this statement was fairly low

overall, resulting in a relatively small sample from which to assess differences by racial identity.

Regardless of race or ethnicity, for those who identified as transgender, survey responses indicated much higher agreement that they were asked to bend, break, or circumvent laws, rules, policies, or ethical standards. Among those who identified as gender-expansive, agreement was much higher than among men.

On a department level, there was not much variation in terms of agreement to the question. However, employees of the Department of County Management indicated the highest agreement, with only 11% of respondents responding that they were asked by someone at the county to bend, break, or circumvent rules.

A number of employees commented on how difficult feeling pressure to break rules made their job. In several comments, respondents described pressure specifically from county leaders to bend, break or circumvent procurement, contracting or financial rules. Some examples include:

"I've reported ethical concerns a number of times and nothing seems to change. My managers pressure me to do unethical things in my role and, when I refuse, they just go to someone else who will do it, saying, 'it's the boss - we do what they tell us to do.' It is beyond frustrating and demoralizing to work this way."

"I transferred to a different division 13 months ago, prior to that I witnessed and was pressured to participate in unethical practices."

"I associate the frequent request of 'exceptions' to County FIN policy, especially by management and Commissioner's/Chair's teams, to be circumventing policies. It is abuse of public funds, and I feel pressured to accept it because of politics."

"I feel that [redacted] may feel pressure at times with the elected or non departments to circumvent procurement laws in order to fund projects/ideas that help elected look "good" to the public and it makes our work more challenging when the elected are not familiar with state laws around procurement, ideally I would require elected as part of onboarding and continuing education to be

required to know the fundamentals of purchasing law and procurement regulations so that the rest of the county doesn't feel so much pressure from them to bend rules, seek exemptions, work with suppliers or vendors the elected want to personally support without the due process."

## Awareness and effectiveness: Employees need more training and guidance on ethical expectations and how to report unethical behavior

Only 68% of respondents indicated they knew how to make a report to the Good Government Hotline, a 10% percent decline in awareness from the 2022 survey\*



\*The language for this question was changed slightly for the 2024 survey. The 2022 survey language was: I know that the county has a hotline to report fraud, waste, or abuse of government resources (Good Government Hotline).

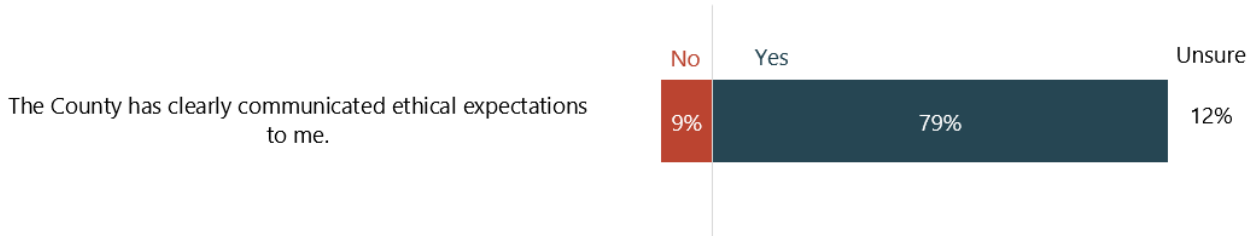
Source: Multnomah County Auditor's Ethical Culture Survey issued 2024. Of 3,173 people that completed the survey, 3,152 people answered this question. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.

The Auditor's Office plans to take steps to increase awareness of how to make a report, including introducing an employee training in Workday.

Those who identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander were much less likely than those who identified as White to say that they knew how to make a report to the hotline. Those who identified as Black or African American or Latino or Hispanic were less likely than those who identified as White to say that they knew how to make a report to the hotline.

From a county department perspective, the lowest awareness in terms of how to make a report to the hotline was from employees of the Sheriff's Office. Just 57% of Sheriff's Office employees said they knew how to make a report to the hotline.

Seventy-nine percent of employees reported that the county has clearly communicated ethical expectations to them, a 6% decline from the 2022 survey



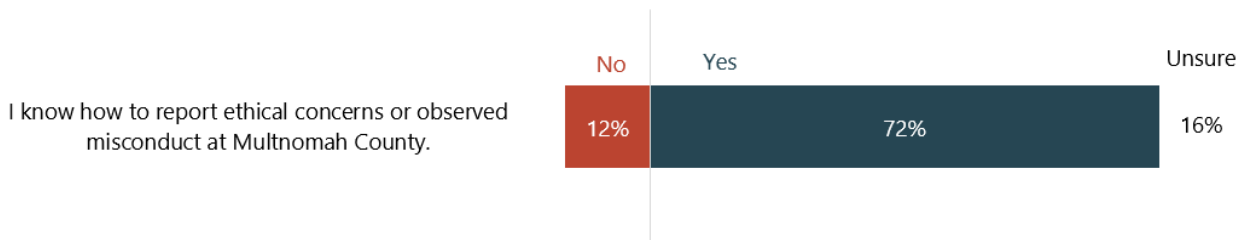
Source: Multnomah County Auditor’s Ethical Culture Survey issued 2024. Of 3,173 people that completed the survey, 3,156 people answered this question. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Those who identified as Black or African American, Latino or Hispanic, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or multiracial were less likely than those who identified as White to say that that the county has clearly communicated ethical expectations.

Regardless of race or ethnicity, for those who identified as transgender, survey responses indicated lower agreement on this question. Among those who identified as gender-expansive, agreement was lower than among men.

On a department level, employees in Homeless Services and the Health Department were least likely to say the county has clearly communicated ethical expectations. Compared to the overall average of 79% agreement, 75% of Homeless Services employees and 76% of Health Department employees agreed that the county has clearly communicated ethical expectations.

Seventy-two percent of respondents said that they knew how to report ethical concerns or observed misconduct, a 4% decline from the 2022 survey



Source: Multnomah County Auditor’s Ethical Culture Survey issued 2024. Of 3,173 people that completed the survey, 3,146 people answered this question. Some results may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Those who identified as African or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander were much less likely than those who identified as White to say that they knew how to report ethical concerns or misconduct. Those who identified as Black or African American or Latino or Hispanic were less likely than those who identified as White to say that they knew how to report ethical concerns or misconduct.

On a department level, there was not a lot of variation around the agreement percentage of 72%. However, Non-Departmental employees saw their agreement with this statement drop by 14%, from 86% to 72%, since the 2022 survey.

Some employees indicated in comments that they have not received adequate training on ethical expectations and reporting. Some examples include:

“As a new employee this was not discussed as part of my training. I was informed that if I have any questions to look it up in Commons.”

“This information should be a part of the new hire onboarding process. I don't think employees are well versed on where to report unethical behaviors and rarely is there any follow-up by HR or CIU.”

“The county could do a better job with training. It's tough to find things on the Commons and when you do, it's old, outdated, or simply confusing. Handbooks should be developed with the staff they support to ensure clarity, and should be reviewed annually for edits based on feedback and experience.”

“I have worked for the county for 12+ years and have never been in a staff meeting where ethical behavior was discussed.”

“I joined the county during COVID. I've never experienced an employer who provided less onboarding and specific policies (beyond required virtual trainings); also experience mixed messages that I think touch on ethics.”

## Appendix A: Methodology

To obtain information on county employee perceptions of the county's ethical culture, we developed a survey instrument based on guidance from the Ethics and Compliance Initiative and our own prior ethical culture surveys. In 2022, we requested feedback on the survey from members of the Survey Advisory Group, to improve the survey's effectiveness and inclusiveness. The 2024 survey was slightly modified from the 2022 survey.

We issued the survey to all county employees on October 1, 2024 using SurveyMonkey. We downloaded survey responses from SurveyMonkey for analysis, and conducted the majority of analyses in Excel. To encourage participation, we made the survey anonymous and did not obtain respondent email addresses. We also publicized the survey in the Wednesday Wire and sent out several reminder emails to all county employees. We closed the survey at the end of the day on November 1, 2024.

As part of qualitative analysis of the survey results, the audit team analyzed every comment and identified themes from those comments.

We conducted statistical data analysis to learn whether there was a statistically significant relationship between survey respondents' stated race and ethnicity, gender, or transgender identification, and their responses to the survey questions.



# Appendix B: Results of the Ethical Culture Survey by Department

## Accountability

Key for color-coding	
	Higher than county average
	Lower than county average

Percent of respondents answering "Strongly Agree" or "Agree"

	Survey Year	DA	DCA	DCHS	DCJ	DCM	DCS	HD	JOHS	Library	MCSO	Non-D	Overall
I believe disciplinary actions are taken when individuals engage in unethical behavior at Multnomah County.	2022	45.5%	59.4%	46.5%	35.9%	53.3%	47.0%	43.5%	37.1%	41.3%	60.3%	64.7%	45.6%
	2024	46.1%	54.4%	44.8%	33.5%	51.1%	51.4%	40.6%	31.3%	43.6%	49.2%	44.6%	42.9%
	Change '22 to '24	0.6%	-5.0%	-1.7%	-2.4%	-2.2%	4.4%	-2.9%	-5.9%	2.3%	-11.2%	-20.1%	-2.8%

Percent of respondents answering "Strongly Agree" or "Agree"

	Survey Year	DA	DCA	DCHS	DCJ	DCM	DCS	HD	JOHS	Library	MCSO	Non-D	Overall
I believe the rules and associated disciplinary actions for unethical behavior are the same for every employee.	2022	47.4%	51.5%	38.4%	22.3%	41.2%	38.5%	34.2%	34.3%	22.7%	37.3%	47.1%	34.1%
	2024	43.1%	44.7%	32.6%	22.2%	36.9%	34.3%	33.8%	15.9%	29.8%	33.2%	29.2%	31.4%
	Change '22 to '24	-4.2%	-6.8%	-5.7%	-0.2%	-4.3%	-4.2%	-0.5%	-18.4%	7.2%	-4.1%	-17.8%	-2.7%

Percent of respondents answering "Strongly Agree" or "Agree"

	Survey Year	DA	DCA	DCHS	DCJ	DCM	DCS	HD	JOHS	Library	MCSO	Non-D	Overall
If I raise a concern about unethical behavior, I believe the County will fully investigate.	2022	58.4%	66.5%	59.2%	42.9%	71.2%	51.3%	49.3%	62.9%	44.4%	57.0%	74.5%	52.8%
	2024	55.9%	64.0%	48.9%	38.1%	66.4%	51.4%	48.4%	39.1%	48.5%	51.6%	63.1%	48.5%
	Change '22 to '24	-2.6%	-2.5%	-10.3%	-4.8%	-4.8%	0.1%	-0.9%	-23.8%	4.1%	-5.4%	-11.4%	-4.3%

## Speak-up culture

Key for color-coding	
	Higher than county average
	Lower than county average

Percent of respondents answering "Yes"

	Survey Year	DA	DCA	DCHS	DCJ	DCM	DCS	HD	JOHS	Library	MCSO	Non-D	Overall
If I were to observe unethical behavior, I would be willing to report it.	2022	83.1%	80.3%	75.3%	68.4%	73.9%	68.1%	69.4%	82.9%	61.7%	73.7%	74.5%	69.9%
	2024	77.5%	81.6%	78.0%	76.4%	83.2%	80.0%	76.5%	78.1%	70.6%	78.3%	76.9%	75.5%
	Change '22 to '24	-5.7%	1.3%	2.7%	8.0%	9.4%	11.9%	7.1%	-4.7%	8.9%	4.5%	2.4%	5.6%

Percent of respondents answering "Yes"

	DA	DCA	DCHS	DCJ	DCM	DCS	HD	JOHS	Library	MCSO	Non-D	Overall
I believe my supervisor would support me in reporting unethical behavior.*	84.2%	86.4%	80.9%	74.5%	81.1%	76.2%	77.7%	73.4%	75.1%	72.7%	80.0%	76.9%
I feel like I could report unethical behavior without fear of retaliation.*	54.9%	56.1%	50.1%	37.7%	56.6%	53.8%	48.0%	40.6%	46.1%	51.1%	56.9%	47.2%

\*This question did not have a comparable question from the 2022 survey.

## Pressure

Key for color-coding	
	Higher than county average
	Lower than county average

Percent of respondents answering "Frequently" or "Occasionally"

	Survey Year	DA	DCA	DCHS	DCJ	DCM	DCS	HD	JOHS	Library	MCSO	Non-D	Overall
In my county role, I feel pressure to bend, break, or circumvent laws, rules, policies, or ethical standards.	2022	3.9%	5.6%	10.0%	8.2%	7.2%	12.8%	14.8%	11.4%	9.3%	10.1%	3.9%	10.8%
	2024	5.9%	5.3%	10.2%	14.6%	8.5%	6.7%	11.8%	17.2%	9.1%	12.0%	1.5%	10.4%
	Change '22 to '24	2.0%	-0.3%	0.2%	6.4%	1.2%	-6.2%	-3.0%	5.8%	-0.2%	1.8%	-2.4%	-0.3%

Percent of respondents answering "Yes"

	Survey Year	DA	DCA	DCHS	DCJ	DCM	DCS	HD	JOHS	Library	MCSO	Non-D	Overall
Over the past 12 months, I was asked by someone at the county to bend, break, or circumvent laws, rules, policies, or ethical standards.	2022	0.0%	4.0%	7.1%	6.8%	7.2%	8.6%	11.0%	0.0%	5.6%	10.6%	3.9%	7.5%
	2024	4.9%	4.8%	6.8%	7.5%	11.3%	9.5%	8.3%	7.9%	7.1%	8.2%	7.7%	7.8%
	Change '22 to '24	4.9%	0.8%	-0.3%	0.8%	4.1%	0.9%	-2.7%	7.9%	1.5%	-2.5%	3.8%	0.3%

Percent of respondents answering "Yes"

	Survey Year	DA	DCA	DCHS	DCJ	DCM	DCS	HD	JOHS	Library	MCSO	Non-D	Overall
Over the past 12 months, I have observed bending, breaking, or circumventing laws, rules, or policies at the county.	2022	13.2%	17.3%	21.9%	32.5%	16.4%	31.0%	28.1%	31.4%	30.8%	33.1%	19.6%	27.2%
	2024	15.7%	16.3%	20.2%	31.1%	13.6%	14.3%	25.0%	21.9%	17.8%	26.1%	23.1%	22.6%
	Change '22 to '24	2.5%	-1.0%	-1.8%	-1.4%	-2.9%	-16.7%	-3.1%	-9.6%	-13.0%	-7.1%	3.5%	-4.6%

## Awareness and effectiveness

Key for color-coding	
	Higher than county average
	Lower than county average

Percent of respondents answering "Yes"

	Survey Year	DA	DCA	DCHS	DCJ	DCM	DCS	HD	JOHS	Library	MCSO	Non-D	County average
The County has clearly communicated ethical expectations to me.	2022	83.1%	90.9%	87.0%	82.6%	93.5%	86.3%	82.5%	85.7%	85.4%	84.9%	94.1%	85.0%
	2024	85.3%	89.0%	80.1%	78.3%	86.6%	80.0%	76.4%	75.0%	84.0%	83.7%	78.5%	79.4%
	Change '22 to '24	2.2%	-1.8%	-6.9%	-4.3%	-6.8%	-6.3%	-6.1%	-10.7%	-1.4%	-1.2%	-15.7%	-5.6%

Percent of respondents answering "Yes"

	Survey Year	DA	DCA	DCHS	DCJ	DCM	DCS	HD	JOHS	Library	MCSO	Non-D	Overall
I know how to report ethical concerns or observed misconduct at Multnomah County.	2022	74.0%	85.2%	75.0%	71.4%	88.9%	76.1%	72.7%	71.4%	73.9%	86.5%	86.3%	76.3%
	2024	77.5%	86.3%	71.6%	68.9%	79.4%	73.3%	70.9%	73.0%	71.1%	77.6%	72.3%	72.4%
	Change '22 to '24	3.4%	1.1%	-3.4%	-2.5%	-9.5%	-2.7%	-1.9%	1.6%	-2.9%	-8.9%	-14.0%	-4.0%

Percent of respondents answering "Yes"

	Survey Year	DA	DCA	DCHS	DCJ	DCM	DCS	HD	JOHS	Library	MCSO	Non-D	Overall
I know how to make a report to the county's fraud, waste, or abuse hotline (Good Government Hotline).*	2022	55.8%	85.3%	82.4%	78.3%	83.0%	76.9%	79.7%	77.1%	80.7%	76.0%	84.3%	77.7%
	2024	60.8%	74.1%	73.5%	62.7%	76.8%	62.9%	72.3%	73.0%	65.8%	57.1%	77.8%	68.0%
	Change '22 to '24	4.9%	-11.2%	-8.9%	-15.5%	-6.2%	-14.1%	-7.4%	-4.1%	-15.0%	-18.9%	-6.5%	-9.8%

\*The language for this question was changed slightly for the 2024 survey. The 2022 survey language was: I know that the county has a hotline to report fraud, waste, or abuse of government resources (Good Government Hotline).

## Appendix C: Survey Instrument

### **A message from County Auditor Jennifer McGuirk**

The Multnomah County Auditor's Office is conducting this survey to better understand our County's ethical culture. The survey provides a way to identify and measure awareness of county ethical culture efforts, assess the perception of the ethical tone at the top, and identify opportunities to strengthen workplace culture. A strong ethical culture helps promote compassion, loyalty, and honesty in how we treat our employees, and the people they serve.

We will use this information to report to all employees on the status of the county's ethical culture. We will publish survey results on the Auditor's website. Your feedback will also help us determine which county operations we need to audit, in order to support a strong ethical culture at the county.

We hope you will take the time to participate, because your perspective matters. The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete.

Please complete the survey before November 1, 2024.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You can complete the survey on county time, during your work hours. Responses to this survey are anonymous, meaning that no one will be able to identify that you participated in the survey. We do not collect your name, employee number, or IP address.

If you have any questions or comments related to the survey, please email the County Auditor at [mult.auditor@multco.us](mailto:mult.auditor@multco.us) or contact our office at 503.988.3320.

Thank you for your participation,  
Jennifer McGuirk, County Auditor

**Awareness and Effectiveness of the County's Ethical Culture Efforts**

Your answers are anonymous. Please choose the response that most closely matches your experience.

Ethical standards are based on well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues.

1. The County has clearly communicated ethical expectations to me.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

2. I know how to report ethical concerns or observed misconduct at Multnomah County.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

3. I know how to make a report to the county's fraud, waste, or abuse hotline (Good Government Hotline).

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

4. Do you have any comments about this section or any of the questions above?

**Accountability**

Your answers are anonymous. Please choose the response that most closely matches your experience.

Ethical standards are based on well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues.

5. I believe disciplinary actions are taken when individuals engage in unethical behavior at Multnomah County.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

6. I believe the rules and associated disciplinary actions for unethical behavior are the same for every employee.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

7. If I raise a concern about unethical behavior, I believe the County will fully investigate.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

8. Do you have any comments about this section or any of the questions above?

**Pressure**

Your answers are anonymous. Please choose the response that most closely matches your experience.

Ethical standards are based on well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues.

9. In my county role, I feel pressure to bend, break, or circumvent laws, rules, policies, or ethical standards.

- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never
- Unsure

10. Over the past 12 months, I was asked by someone at the county to bend, break, or circumvent laws, rules, policies, or ethical standards.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

11. Over the past 12 months, I have observed bending, breaking, or circumventing laws, rules, or policies at the county.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

12. Do you have any comments about this section or any of the questions above?



**Speak-up Culture**

Your answers are anonymous. Please choose the response that most closely matches your experience.

Ethical standards are based on well-founded standards of right and wrong that prescribe what humans ought to do, usually in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, or specific virtues.

13. If I were to observe unethical behavior, I would be willing to report it.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

14. I believe my supervisor would support me in reporting unethical behavior.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

15. I feel like I could report unethical behavior without fear of retaliation.

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

16. Do you have any comments about this section or any of the questions above?

### Demographic Questions

Now we would like to ask you a few questions that give us a general idea of the backgrounds and identities of people who have completed this survey.

Please note that your responses are anonymous - we do not collect your name, employee number, or IP address. The information you put here will only be used for survey analyses, and will be kept confidential. You do not have to answer questions that you do not feel comfortable answering. Summary/aggregate data will not be released for groups that are too small to protect individual confidentiality, and individuals' raw data will only be viewed by Auditor's Office staff.

Demographic categories in the demographic questions reflect recommendations from the Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE), and were selected to allow for comparing trends both over time and to other County data.

17. What is your department?

- DA – District Attorney
- DCA – Department of County Assets
- DCHS - Department of County Human Services
- DCJ - Department of Community Justice
- DCM - Department of County Management
- DCS -Department of Community Services
- Health Department
- JOHS – Joint Office of Homeless Services
- Library
- MCSO - Multnomah County Sheriff's Office
- Non-departmental
- Decline to state
- Other (please specify)

18. What is your Division?

19. What is your employee type?

- Elected Official
- Elected Official Staff
- Limited Duration
- On-Call
- Other (Intern, Volunteer, Contractor)
- Regular Non-Represented
- Regular Represented
- Seasonal
- Temporary (with or without benefits)
- Don't know
- Decline to state

20. What is your job level?

- Non-supervisory/ Frontline staff (Anyone who does not supervise other employees; for example, Office Assistant, Library Clerk, Maintenance Specialist, Case Manager, Economist, etc.)
- Frontline Supervisor (Operations Supervisor, Library Supervisor, Nursing Supervisor, Lieutenant Captain, etc.)
- Middle/ Program Manager (Community Justice Manager, Finance Manager, Health Center/ Clinic Manager, Captain's Chief Deputy, etc.)
- Senior Manager (Deputy Director, Division Director, Chief DDA, Director of Nursing Practice, Undersheriff, Chief Deputy, etc.)
- Department Executive Team, Director, or Elected Official
- Don't know
- Decline to state
- Other (please specify)

21. For the purposes of this survey, a disability is a physical or mental limitation that substantially impacts one or more major life activity and may or may not affect your work. Do you have a disability?

- Yes
- No

- Don't know
- Decline to state

22. Have you ever served, or are you currently serving, in the U.S. military? Please include reserves and both peacetime and wartime service.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Decline to state

23. How do you identify your race or ethnicity? Please select all that apply.

- African
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Latino or Hispanic
- Middle Eastern
- Multiracial
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Slavic
- White
- Don't know
- Decline to state

Other (please specify)

24. To protect confidentiality while analyzing results, we may need to aggregate race/ethnicity responses into broader categories. If you have a primary race or ethnic identity, which of the following best describes that?

- African
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Latino or Hispanic
- Middle Eastern
- Multiracial
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- Slavic
- White
- Other
- Don't know
- Decline to state

25. Which group most closely describes your gender?

- Woman
- Gender expansive (Non-binary, Genderqueer, Gender Fluid, etc.)
- Man
- Questioning
- Two Spirit
- Don't know
- Decline to state
- Other (please specify)

26. Do you identify as transgender?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Decline to state

27. Which group most closely describes your sexual orientation?

- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Gay
- Heterosexual
- Lesbian
- Pansexual
- Queer
- Don't know
- Decline to state
- Other (please specify)

28. Are you an immigrant or refugee/asylee?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Decline to state

29. What is your current telework status?

- On-site/Not teleworking
- Hybrid work schedule
- Full-time/Routine telework
- Decline to state

30. What additional concerns or comments would you like to share?

## **Photo Credits**

Unless noted otherwise, all photos by Motoya Nakamura, Multnomah County Communications Office.

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