

Background

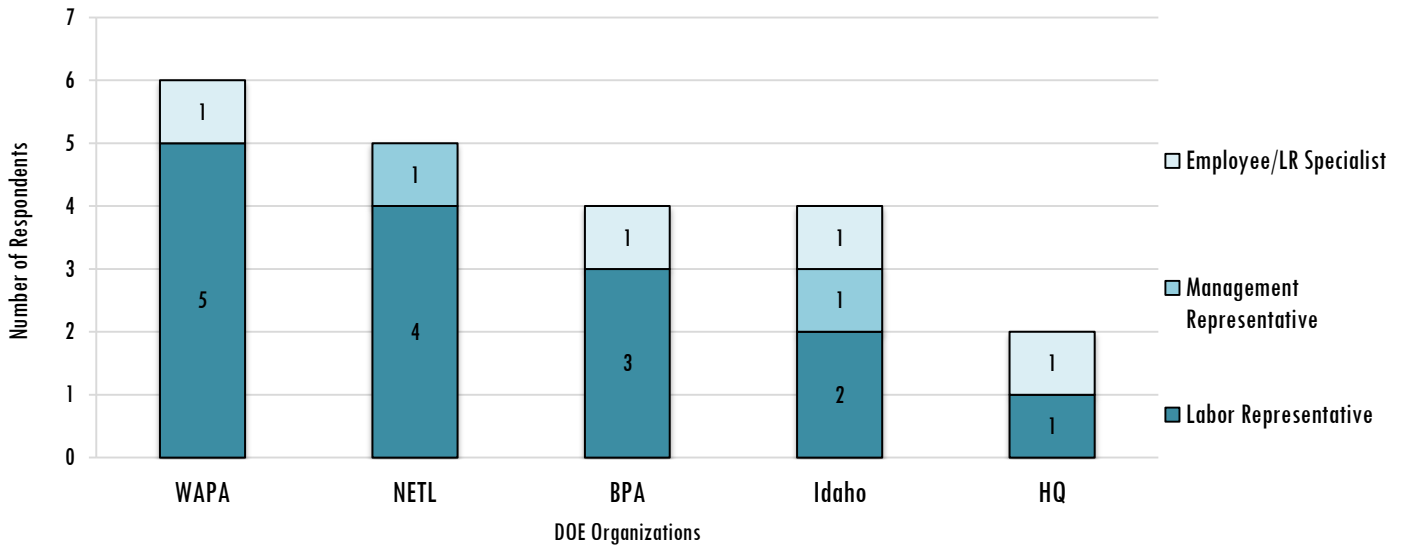
This report contains results and analysis of a survey that was issued to labor-management relations (LMR) personnel among all organizations/unions at the U.S. Department of Energy during August 2013. The goal of the survey is to assess the overall perceived effectiveness of LMR programs and to find potential target areas for improvement.

The survey is comprised of 19 questions. Of these, 12 are subjective with the multiple choice answers: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. 3 questions ask for descriptive answers, such as giving the frequency of LMR meetings during a specific time frame, and the final 4 questions are open-ended. With the exception of the open-ended questions, they are all grouped into one of 4 topic areas: Work Unit, General, Grievance Process, or Negotiations.

Survey Response

Out of 88 surveys issued, there were 24 returned responses (27%). Union Reps account for a majority with 15 (63%) of the responses.

Union Representatives		LMR Managers/Specialists	
IBEW	2	WAPA	1
IFPTE	2	Richland	2
AFGE	8	Idaho	2
NTEU	1	HQ	1
LIUNA	2	BPA	1
		Oakridge	1
		NETL	1



A low response rate may increase the confidence interval of the results. In scoring sections this will be inferred by the margin-of-error, which has been calculated using an alpha of 0.1 (90% accuracy).

List of Survey Questions

- 1 In my work unit, within the last six months, union representatives and management have met to discuss workplace matters.
- 2 The subjects discussed during formal meetings are important to my work unit.
- 3 Agendas are typically set out in advance for each formal meeting.
- 4 I am comfortable voicing opinions or asking questions during the meetings.
- 5 Together labor and management address issues relevant to the organization's business and mission.
- 6 Joint committees or Local Labor Forums are important decision-making bodies.
- 7 I have been provided formal training on collaborative labor relations.
- 8 Management keeps union representatives aware of potential changes to employees' working conditions.
- 9 Open communication between union representatives and management officials exists in my organization.
- 10 A sense of fairness is associated with labor-management dealings.
- 11a In the last year, how many grievances have been filed in your work unit?
- 11b In the last year, how many grievances have reached the last step in the grievance process?
- 11c In the last year, how many grievances have gone to arbitration?
- 12 In general, both parties work cooperatively during the grievance process.
- 13 The grievance process is an efficient way to resolve conflicts.
- 14 Management and union representatives regularly engage in "good faith" negotiations.
- 15 The process for negotiating a collective bargaining agreement is effective.
- 16 In your opinion, what is the current status of labor-management relations?
- 17 What is working as far as labor-management relations?
- 18 What is not working as far as labor-management relations?
- 19 What items do you feel are appropriate topics of discussion at a DOE-wide labor forum?

Summary of Survey Scores

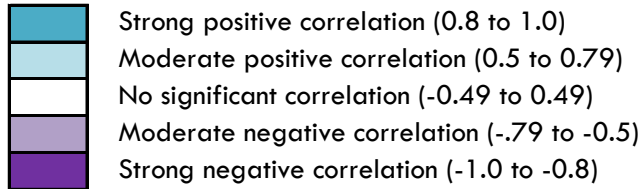
- 1) Each answer for the multiple choice section corresponds to a number ranging 1 to 5. There is no 0 score.
5 = Strongly Agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neutral; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2) Answers marked "I don't know" are treated the same as an omitted answer.
- 3) Parenthesis indicate the number of respondents that provided a valid answer to the corresponding question.
- 4) Benchmarks are calculated by averaging all scores regardless of affiliation.
- 5) ME = margin-of-error
- 6) The colors assigned to the overall scores do not indicate a threshold; it is a scale for ranking.

	Best Score				Worst Score
	Overall/ Benchmarks	ME	Labor Representative	Management Representative	Employee/LR Specialist
Work Unit	3.6	0.4	3.4	3.9	4.1
In my work unit, within the last six months, union representatives and management have met to discuss workplace matters. (22)	2.6	0.6	2.1	3.0	4.0
The subjects discussed during formal meetings are important to my work unit. (20)	4.1	0.3	4.0	4.3	4.3
Agendas are typically set out in advance for each formal meeting. (18)	3.6	0.5	3.5	3.7	3.8
I am comfortable voicing opinions or asking questions during the meetings. (20)	4.2	0.4	4.0	4.7	4.5
General	3.6	0.5	3.5	3.7	4.1
Together labor and management address issues relevant to the organization's business and mission. (24)	3.6	0.3	3.2	4.5	4.2
Joint committees or Local Labor Forums are important decision-making bodies. (24)	3.4	0.5	3.2	4.3	3.6
I have been provided formal training on collaborative labor relations. (24)	3.3	0.6	3.1	3.0	4.0
Management keeps union representatives aware of potential changes to employees' working conditions. (24)	3.3	0.4	2.6	4.0	4.6
Open communication between union representatives and management officials exists in my organization. (24)	3.1	0.5	2.5	4.0	4.4
A sense of fairness is associated with labor-management dealings. (24)	3.5	0.5	2.9	4.3	4.6
Grievance Process	3.0	0.5	2.6	3.8	3.8
In general, both parties work cooperatively during the grievance process. (24)	3.0	0.5	2.3	4.5	4.6
The grievance process is an efficient way to resolve conflicts. (24)	3.0	0.4	2.9	3.3	3.0
Negotiations	3.3	0.4	3.1	3.6	3.9
Management and union representatives regularly engage in "good faith" negotiations. (24)	3.3	0.5	2.9	3.7	4.4
The process for negotiating a collective bargaining agreement is effective. (24)	3.4	0.4	3.4	3.5	3.3

Correlation Analysis

The colors indicate the degree of positive (1.0) or negative correlation (-1.0).

Correlation refers to the tendency of the answer for one question to have an effect on another. A highly positive correlation may indicate that answering "Strongly Agree" for one particular question appears to lead to the same answer for another question. In contrast, as highly negative correlation indicates the tendency for answers to move in opposite directions. Answering "Strongly Agree" for a question may lead to "Strongly Disagree" for another question.



		Question																
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11a	11b	11c	12	13	14	15
Question	1		0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.1	-0.4	-0.2	0.3	0.4	0.1	-0.1
	2	0.2		0.6	0.0	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.3	-0.1	-0.4	-0.2	0.6	0.5	0.2	-0.1
	3	0.3	0.6		0.0	0.5	-0.2	-0.1	0.1	0.3	-0.2	0.0	-0.7	-0.4	0.1	0.5	-0.4	0.0
	4	0.3	0.0	0.0		0.2	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.8	-0.3	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4
	5	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.2		0.0	0.0	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.0	-0.3	-0.2	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.1
	6	0.0	0.2	-0.2	0.4	0.0		-0.3	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.4
	7	0.2	0.0	-0.1	0.3	0.0	-0.3		0.1	0.1	0.2	-0.4	-0.4	-0.2	0.0	-0.2	0.0	-0.3
	8	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.1		0.8	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.4	0.6	0.2
	9	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.8		0.8	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.3
	10	0.3	0.3	-0.2	0.8	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.8	0.8		0.0	0.2	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.7	0.3
	11a	0.1	-0.1	0.0	-0.3	0.0	0.1	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0				0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
	11b	-0.4	-0.4	-0.7	0.2	-0.3	0.5	-0.4	0.0	0.2	0.2				-0.1	-0.1	0.6	0.7
	11c	-0.2	-0.2	-0.4	0.2	-0.2	0.4	-0.2	0.0	0.3	0.3				0.0	-0.1	0.3	0.4
	12	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.1	-0.1	0.0		0.4	0.6	0.0
	13	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.0	-0.2	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.0	-0.1	-0.1	0.4		0.2	0.2
14	0.1	0.2	-0.4	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.2			0.5
15	-0.1	-0.1	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.4	-0.3	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.7	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.5		

Strong positive correlation seems to exist between question 8 and questions 9, 10 & 12.

All four questions pertain to general cooperation, fairness, and communication between union and managers.

Strong positive correlation also seems to exist between question 4 and question 10.

Question 4 refers to the comfortability in voicing opinions at meetings, while 10 refers to a sense of fairness associated with labor-management dealings.

Quick Facts

Subjective Ratings

12 out of 14 ...questions had their lowest summary rating by the union representatives.

16 (67%) ...the largest percentage of 'Strongly Agree'/'Agree' answers given to a single question. (Q4: I am comfortable voicing opinions or asking questions during the meetings;
Q5: Together labor and management address issues relevant to the organization's business and mission.)

7 (29%) ...the largest percentage of 'Neutral' answers given to a single question. (Q15: Management and union representatives regularly engage in "good faith" negotiations.)

12 (50%) ...the largest percentage of 'Strongly Disagree'/'Disagree' answers given to a single question. (Q12: In the last year, how many grievances have gone to arbitration?;
Q13: In general, both parties work cooperatively during the grievance process.)

Training

40% ...of union representatives have had formal LMR training within the last 5 years.

56% ...of DOE LMR employees have had formal LMR training within the last 5 years.

35% ...have had no formal LMR training.

Communication & Collaboration

41% ...of all respondents claim to have met with their counterparts 7 or more times in the past 6 months.

23% ...of all respondents claim to have met with their counterparts 0 times in the past 6 months.

Grievances

35% ...the average percentage of filed grievances that reached the last step in the process in the last year.

14% ...the average percentage of filed grievances that reached arbitration in the last year.

What Union Representatives Are Saying...

...about the current status of labor-management relations.

"...the relationship has become strained." "Very poor..." "...the worst that it has ever been."
"I have had to threaten grievances... just to get information out of them."
"...fight us on every issue." "I don't find my labor relations manager very helpful."
"...a thin thread conversation which is only political..." "Hostile environment."

A majority of union representatives feel that the labor-management relationship is in need of dramatic improvement, with most making it clear that most managers do not respect the union's role. The relationship is **adversarial** with barriers to communication, collaboration, and knowledge sharing.

"Congenial." "Excellent." "Some areas good..."

Only 20% of union representatives made a favorable comment about the current status, although brief and non-descript.

...about what is working as far as labor-management relations.

Only two items of any significance are mentioned as working: **meetings** and **relationships with managers**.

"Meetings between HR and the Union." "...holding monthly... Partnership Council meetings."
"...monthly partnership face to face meeting... keeps some lines of communication open."
"We have had regular LMF meetings." "Only our Partnership Council meetings..."

The facilitation of regular meetings between the unions and management is the most cited topic as "working," however, nearly all mentions of the meetings are strictly in regard to the fact that they manage to take place. Most add the caveat that ultimately the meetings are of no real substance.

"Managers who are respected get good results... they do not make agreements to break agreements."
"I have a number of managers that I work well with." "Some managers work well with the union."
"Relationships with some managers who value the union's input... will work with the union..."

The overall sentiment of union representatives appears to be that a working relationship is highly dependent on having access to, and collaboration with, a skilled LR manager that has respect for the union. All other facets of a labor-management relationship is likely undermined by the perception of unskilled or uncaring/inattentive management. Only 26% of union representatives mention that they have such a relationship.

"Frankly, I cannot point to something specific to say 'that works'." "DOE needs to clean up its act."
"Nothing."

26% of union reps either explicitly mention that nothing is working or do not cite anything that works.

What Union Representatives Are Saying...

...about what is not working as far as labor-management relations.

"Better communication is needed... Involving labor prior to making decisions"

"Management... ignorant or dismissive of their responsibilities to consult... negotiate with the union."

"Management seems to think that PDI is encroaching on their right to make decisions."

"Pre-decisional involvement does not exist." "No pre-decisional involvement."

"We cannot seem to get to PDI." "We are more and more likely to hear 'that is not negotiable'..."

By far, the most prevalent topic considered to be not working is pre-decisional involvement (PDI), with 40% mentioning it explicitly. The concerns are uniformly expressed as a lack of management initiating or agreeing to any facilitation of PDI from a fundamental standpoint; management not even accepting union input so that they may actually have the chance to give it any consideration. In particular, representatives working with BPA cite the prohibited practice of having any kind of discussion with management representatives renders their input non-existent. Retaliation by management is feared if any contact is made.

"Dealing with managers who do not know/follow the rules." "Personal issues, kingdom building."

"Problems created by violations of OPM regulations by some members of management."

"Viewing labor as a nuisance..." "LR frequently violates the spirit of the CBA..."

"Everyone seems to be working in secret." "Feels like they got together and developed a script."

A majority also makes references to the organizational culture of management that breaks rules, encourages group think, and dismisses the importance of a working union relationship to their jobs.

"Leadership skills are not practiced nor are personnel held accountable."

"Upper management is reluctant to discipline lower level management..."

"Top management can't even get their own managers in agreement."

"... underlying problems in line leadership skills undermines the outcomes."

The leadership and decision-making skills of managers are being called into question as union representatives are either exposed to mixed messages or indecisiveness that further escalates problems. This is also complicated by the seeming lack of accountability amongst managers.

"...haven't had an LR Manager for 2 years... they don't have authority to make managerial decisions."

"...without LRO for some time now there is NO energy..." "LR is spread too thin."

"...current person is acting - and they do not want the job..." "They are maxed out, and it shows."

"A staff of 4 is now 2 people trying to deal with 3 unions representing ~2,500 individuals."

"...no senior manager on the LMF with the authority to make a commitment."

Staffing is a concern. Several representatives have expressed frustration with the lack of permanent managers or adequate staffing to handle LR issues.

What DOE Management & LMR Specialists Are Saying...

...about the current status of labor-management relations.

"Management and the union have a good relationship." "... cooperative relationship."
"...relationship is good, open minded and generally productive." "comfortable... level of trust"
"...day-to-day union issues can be resolved informally." "...better since the advent of the LMF..."
"Management's general respect for union rights... collaboration with the unions... is productive."

The sentiment among organization management and LMR staff is overwhelmingly positive with 78% giving a favorable comment, calling the relationship 'good'.

"Mixed, while there are some areas of trust and collaboration, there are some inconsistencies."
"There is room for improvement."

These two comments are the most critical of the current labor-management relationship status. They are not nearly as negative as the comments given by the union representatives.

...about what is working as far as labor-management relations.

"Excellent communications." "Open communication..."
"...genuine cooperation to seek the most equitable decisions..."

33% mention general communication and collaboration.

"One on one monthly discussions and the Local Management Forum."
"The LMF has seemed to make an improvement in labor management relations."

The LMF is given two mentions as a working improvement to labor-management relations.

"...Labor Relations Officer... facilitates early intervention to resolve union problems and concerns."

The role of the LRO is cited as beneficial.

...about what is not working as far as labor-management relations.

"...reluctance on the part of particular senior managers to engage with the union."
"...cannot come to an agreement on what issues and how pre-decisional issues are discussed."
"Some managers don't believe in PDI...don't really think of bargaining unit members as human beings."
"Inconsistent communication and inconsistent working relationship."
"Not able to always resolve issues at lowest level."

While there are really no singular issues among management, they are more self-critical, citing some of their organization's own shortcomings.

"...friction between management and the union usually stems from the union's representational role."
"...managers have had to hold employees accountable... union is seen as an impediment..."
"...few of the bargaining unit... seem to live to be disruptive."

A few comments lend credence to similar comments made by union representatives about the management's reluctant, dismissive view of the unions.

On Appropriate Topics of Discussion at DOE-wide Labor Forums...

Topic	Mentions by Union	Mentions by Management & Staff
Pre-decisional Involvement (PDI)	10	1
Work/Life Programs	8	0
Undervaluing Federal Experience (Fed vs. Contractor hiring)	7	0
Career Path/Advancement Opportunities	5	0
Job Reclassification & Grade Reduction	4	1
PII Breach	4	0
DOE Policy Changes	1	2
Improving Communication	2	0
Employee Compensation (salary freeze, incentives)	1	1
Performance Management	1	1
Sequestration	1	0
Bullying by Managers	1	0
Budget Issues	0	1
Labor-Management Training	0	1
Labor-Management Success Stories/Best Practices	0	1