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### **FEW Releases Survey Results on OPM Being the “Model” Employer**

(Washington, D.C.) – Federally Employed Women (FEW) recently conducted a survey of its members, following a request from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), who were asked to rate current OPM practices, as well as to provide ideas and suggestions on how OPM could become the “model” employer in our nation. The responses were compiled into an organization Position Paper (<http://few.org/docs/legislative/OPM%20Position%20Paper.pdf>).

The survey encompassed four major areas: diversity, training, awards and performance. Survey respondents were asked to rate how well the federal government was performing in each area, as well as provide suggestions on how to improve these rankings. “The overall ratings show that our members believe the federal government was about average in all four areas,” announced Sue Webster, FEW National President, upon the release of the survey results. “But they also show that there is room to improve in these areas, which will be needed in order for the federal government to compete with the private sector in attracting new workers,” Webster warned.

Several suggestions were provided in each of the four areas. For improved diversity, survey respondents overwhelmingly wrote that in the lower pay grades, the representation of women, minorities and the disabled were quite diverse. However, the diversity is severely askew in the higher pay grades. Among some suggestions: better and more targeted recruiting efforts; total support and funding for Federal Women’s Programs and Special Emphasis Programs; more focused and available mentoring and training opportunities; and better oversight, including the monitoring and collection and race and gender data.

In the area of training, lack of funding was the most cited issue and the majority of respondents expressed the need to make training funding a separate line item in agency budgets and the requirement that this funding could only be used for training. Other suggestions included standardized training schedules and roadmaps for each skill field; requiring Upward Mobility Programs in every federal agency; improved and more accessible virtual learning opportunities; joint training with other agencies; and free OPM training in certain areas.

The primary problem with Awards was the complexity of the process and subjective nature of awarding employees. FEW suggests that the process be revamped so that there is less red tape and that training be given to managers on how to fairly bestow awards. Also suggested was the use of alternative awards such as U.S. Saving Bonds, additional leave and other training courses.

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Finally, the survey covered Performance. FEW had previously released a comprehensive position paper on Pay-for-Performance (<http://few.org/docs/PayforPerformancePositionPaper.pdf>) which provided many more suggestions and problem areas. New items included in this survey were the need for better communication between supervisors and their employees and the need for standardized performance rating systems government-wide.

“We have presented these findings to OPM Director John Berry and have pledged to work closely with him and his staff in moving forward on personnel system reform,” stated Cecelia Davis, FEW’s National Vice President for Congressional Relations. “We know some change is coming down the road and we wanted to ensure that federal employee representative organizations were part of the process,” Davis concluded.

FEW is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1968 after Executive Order 11375 was issued that added sex discrimination to the list of prohibited discrimination in the federal government. FEW has grown into a proactive organization serving more than one million federally employed women – both in the military and civilian workforce.

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