

FCS Assignments & Services Survey 2007

Results Overview



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Responses: Completes
Filter: No filter applied

Dear Commercial Officers (COs) with the U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service: This is a survey of member opinion, with an emphasis on assignments and services. Please take a few moments to complete your responses. Your suggestions will be instrumental in the shaping of AFSA's priorities, activities, and services in the coming year. We will read each submission personally, and the results will be detailed in an upcoming AFSANET and editions of the VP Voice column in the Foreign Service Journal. Please note that this survey is for active-duty members only. You may also rest assured that all responses are confidential and anonymous. Many thanks, Donald Businger AFSA FCS Vice President Stephen Anderson AFSA FCS Representative

1. Are you currently serving overseas or in a domestic assignment?

Overseas		96	79%
Domestic		26	21%
Total		122	100%

2. Have you served a domestic assignment in a USEAC, HQ or other agency?

USEAC		39	32%
HQ		35	29%
Multilateral Development Bank		3	2%
Never Served Domestic CO Tour		55	46%

3. What is your Foreign Service rank?

FS-4 or below		37	30%
FS-3		22	18%
FS-2		25	20%
FS-1		22	18%
SFS		16	13%
Total		122	100%

4. What would you like to see as AFSA's top priorities? Please rate the following in terms of importance to you.



Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the	Highest priority	Medium priority	Low priority	Should not pursue
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total respondents selecting the option.				
Lobbying for overseas comparability pay.	80 66%	37 31%	3 2%	1 1%
Fighting for fairness in assignment/promotions.	62 51%	50 41%	7 6%	2 2%
Assisting members with individual labor-management problems, concerns, inequities, disciplinary issues, grievances, retirement, etc.	44 37%	57 48%	16 13%	2 2%
Providing services (awards, scholarships, insurance, etc.)	4 3%	31 26%	67 56%	17 14%
Defending the reputation of the U.S. Commercial Service and its role in international trade policy.	36 30%	35 29%	34 28%	17 14%
Opposing directed assignments to war zones.	29 25%	43 36%	23 19%	23 19%
Ensuring equal benefits for all foreign affairs agencies.	66 55%	37 31%	14 12%	3 2%

5. Do you read the Foreign Service Journal regularly?

Yes		92	75%
No		30	25%
Total		122	100%

6. Overseas comparability pay is an important financial benefit that AFSA should pursue vigorously.




Strongly Agree		91	75%
Agree		30	25%
Disagree		0	0%
Strongly Disagree		1	1%
Total		122	100%

7. Please indicate your level of concern over the following additional issues that AFSA has addressed during the past year.

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Slightly concerned	Unconcerned	N/A
Promotion numbers.	46 38%	42 35%	21 17%	10 8%	2 2%

Utility and fairness of the evaluation form.	45 37%	42 35%	25 21%	7 6%	2 2%
Fairness in the assignment system.	51 43%	42 35%	19 16%	7 6%	0 0%
Family-friendliness within the Foreign Service.	46 38%	43 36%	18 15%	12 10%	2 2%
Support for tandem couples.	20 17%	22 18%	35 29%	36 30%	7 6%
Domestic Assignments.	25 21%	19 16%	41 34%	33 28%	2 2%
Freedom to express dissent.	34 29%	34 29%	28 24%	22 18%	1 1%

9. (For those who are currently posted overseas.) How would you characterize your working relationship with the FSN staff at your post?

Excellent		62	61%
Good		35	34%
Fair		5	5%
Poor		0	0%
Total		102	100%

10. How would you rate the services provided by the Office of Foreign Service Human Resources (OFSHR) for each of the following functions?

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Evaluations, Promotions, Selection Boards	13 11%	57 49%	35 30%	11 9%
Commissioning and Tenure	15 13%	58 51%	32 28%	9 8%
Awards and Service Recognition	7 6%	46 41%	50 44%	10 9%
Payroll, Time and Attendance	26 23%	55 48%	23 20%	11 10%
Travel and Benefits	12 10%	43 36%	45 38%	19 16%
39 Responses				

11. How would you rate the services provided by the Career Development and Assignments Staff (CDAS) for each of the following functions?





Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option.	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
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Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.				
Assignments	15 13%	51 44%	34 30%	15 13%
Consultations	10 9%	39 34%	42 37%	23 20%
Recruitment and New Officer Assessment	9 8%	54 50%	30 28%	14 13%
35 Responses				




12. How would you rate the services provided by the Office of Professional Development (OPD) for each of the following functions?

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Training and Professional Development	14 12%	41 36%	47 41%	12 11%
Senior and Junior Commercial Officer Orientation	4 4%	29 29%	51 50%	17 17%
28 Responses				

13. How would you judge current U.S. Commercial Service morale?





Excellent		2	2%
Good		44	41%
Fair		52	48%
Poor		10	9%
Total		108	100%

14. Based on what you know of AFSA's efforts on behalf of Foreign Service members until now, do you believe that AFSA should be MORE vocal and assertive or LESS vocal and assertive in its future dealings with US Commercial Service management and the administration?




MORE vocal and assertive		66	61%
LESS vocal and assertive		2	2%
Stay the same		41	38%
Total		109	100%

15. How would you rate US&FCS efforts to facilitate employment for Eligible Family Members overseas?





		3	3%
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Excellent			
Good		24	24%
Fair		38	38%
Poor		36	36%
Total		101	100%

16. Should the US&FCS do more to accommodate unmarried partners (Members of Household) of Foreign Service employees serving overseas?

Yes		49	44%
Don't know		49	44%
No		14	12%
Total		112	100%





17. How would you rate the job that Director General Israel Hernandez is doing?

Excellent		11	10%
Good		43	38%
Fair		25	22%
Poor		10	9%
Not sure yet		25	22%
Total		114	100%

18. How would you rate the efforts of DG Hernandez when it comes to securing resources for the Agency and its people?



Excellent		7	6%
Good		42	37%
Fair		25	22%
Poor		20	18%
Not sure yet		20	18%
Total		114	100%

19. If the Agency fails to get volunteers for all the positions at our posts in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, how would you react to a decision to begin identifying employees for "directed" assignments?

Strongly support		10	8%
Support		43	36%
Oppose		38	32%
Strongly oppose		29	24%

Total	120	100%
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20. Have you served in any of the following countries? (Choose all that apply.)

Iraq		6	5%
Saudi Arabia		10	8%
Pakistan		1	1%
None of the above		107	88%






21. If you have not already done so, would you be willing to serve in any of the following countries?

Iraq		29	25%
Saudi Arabia		40	34%
Pakistan		39	34%
None of the above		63	54%



22. If you answered "yes" to any of the choices in questions 20 and 21, what were/are the motivating factors? (Check all that apply.)

Patriotism		28	47%
Career enhancement		26	44%
Adventure/challenge		31	53%
Extra pay and benefits		36	61%
Living up to worldwide availability		39	66%
Other, please specify		9	15%




23. If you would NOT choose to volunteer for an assignment in any of the CPC countries, what factors are most important? (Check all that apply.)

Security concerns		65	68%
Separation from family		62	65%
Obstacles to performing assigned duties		27	28%
Disagreement with policy		31	33%
Other, please specify		26	27%

24. Would you resign or retire rather than accept a directed assignment to Iraq, Saudi Arabia, or Pakistan?

Yes		46	38%
No		74	62%
Total		120	100%

25. At the present time, do you believe that the overall conditions of work for the professional Foreign Service are improving, worsening, or remaining the same?

Improving		10	8%
Worsening		80	67%
Remaining the same		30	25%
Total		120	100%




27. Do you feel that Domestic Assignments to USEACs are necessary during the first 7 years of service?





Yes		40	33%
Don't know		26	22%
No		54	45%
Total		120	100%

28. Do you feel that Domestic Assignments to HQ, Multilateral Banks, USEACs or elsewhere are necessary every 15 years of service?







Yes		42	35%
Don't know		29	24%
No		50	41%
Total		121	100%

29. Recently, AFSA has been asked to consider the impact of domestic USEAC assignments on commissioning and tenure. AFSA members are also concerned about negative impacts on promotion and career planning. Do you believe the following concerns apply?

USEAC tours should be necessary to receive tenure.		25	23%
USEAC tours are detrimental to promotion.		46	42%
USEAC tours should not apply to		33	30%

time-in-class (TIC).			
USEAC tours are beneficial to the Service.		52	48%
USEAC tours near Washington are a preferred option.		16	15%
USEAC tours should end.		29	27%
Other, please specify		28	26%



30. What length of tour is optimal for USEAC domestic assignments?

3 years		5	5%
2 years		49	46%
1 year		23	21%
6-12 months		4	4%
3-6 months		7	7%
less than three months (TDY)		28	26%





31. Are you satisfied with AFSA's general efforts on behalf of its members?

Yes		106	90%
No		12	10%
Total		118	100%

32. Are you satisfied with the efforts of FCS AFSA's VP and Representative on behalf of members?



Yes		96	88%
No		13	12%
Total		109	100%

34. By what means do you get information on AFSA activities and efforts? (Check all that apply.)

AFSANET e-mails		97	83%
Foreign Service Journal/AFSA News		96	82%
AFSA website		33	28%
Post AFSA rep		14	12%
Contacts with		22	19%

VP/Representative			
Other, please specify		3	3%

36. Have you provided AFSA with your e-mail address in order to receive updates through our AFSANET e-mail messages?

Yes		105	87%
No		16	13%
Total		121	100%

Thanks for completing the survey! The replies will be very useful in planning our upcoming agenda for 2008. Please spread the word about this survey among your Commercial Officer colleagues.

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