

Alberta Public Service Employee Survey July 2018



Executive Summary

Following are the results, analysis, and key findings from the Alberta Public Service (APS) 2018 Employee Survey, completed by 18,824 managers and employees between June 4-June 22, 2018. These survey insights are presented here to guide Executive decision-making, gauge progress on corporate goals and drive priority workforce changes.

Introduction

In late 2015, the Government of Alberta contracted TalentMap to conduct the 2016 engagement survey, 2017 pulse survey, and the 2018 follow-up comprehensive employee survey, in which the Alberta Public Service permanent and temporary employees expressed their views on their workplace. In the 2018 survey, the level of employee engagement was measured and compared to the previous engagement survey conducted in 2016.

In 2018, the survey also included measurement of diversity and inclusion in the APS workplace, through a series of voluntary questions allowing employees to self-identify their affiliation to various diversity groups, as well as an “Inclusivity Index” to measure the degree to which all employees feel respected, valued and included in the workplace. Additionally, the survey has also measured the degree to which attitudes towards inclusivity have an impact on employee engagement outcomes in the APS. The diversity and inclusion (D&I) data would provide the organization with a baseline for future and would help inform and support D&I initiatives in the Alberta Public Service.

As in 2016, the survey results were also compared to the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) benchmark results, as well as the previous employee survey.

The 2018 survey was deployed to 27,835 Alberta Public Service (APS) employees over the period of June 4th through June 22nd, 2018.

Response Rates

The 2018 Alberta Public Service (APS) survey response rate was 68%. While slightly lower than the 2016 response rate of 72%, TalentMap cautions not to read in too much to this change. **A slight drop in response rate is entirely expected when conducting regular surveys on an annual or bi-annual basis. It would be a mistake to interpret this as a drop-in engagement,** since those who are engaged or highly engaged experience this same phenomenon as much as those who are disengaged.

As with the 2016 survey, there is still minimal chance for significant non-response bias when looking at the entire group of employees who responded. This means that there will only be minimal chance of those who didn't respond having significantly different views than those who did. This has been demonstrated through a comparison of survey respondents to demographic statistics of the entire APS employee population, which show the profiles are almost identical. In other words, TalentMap remains very confident that the responses are an accurate representation of the views of the entire APS.

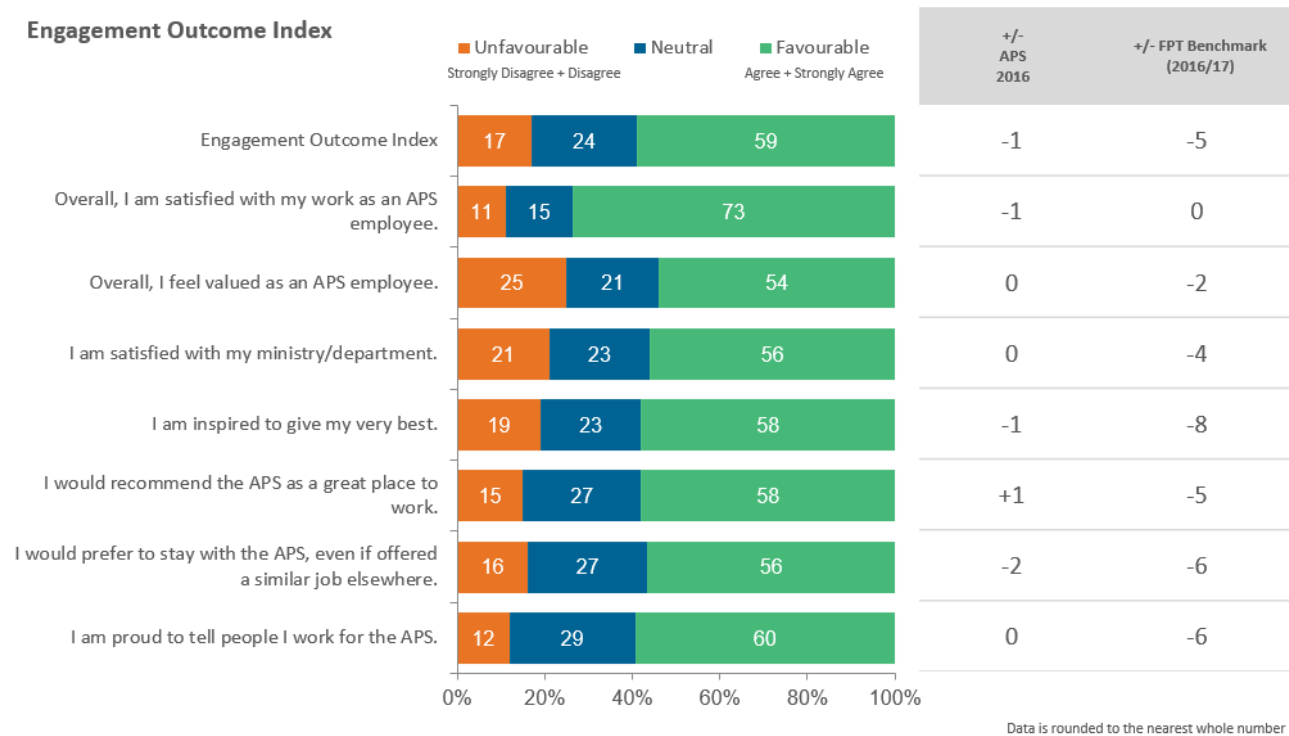
- Secondly, a high response rate is an indicator that, notwithstanding the issues raised, members want to be a “part of the solution”. This is further substantiated by the fact that virtually all respondents provided detailed and thought-provoking verbatim comments.
- Thirdly, it also signals to the APS leadership how much the membership value the opportunity to provide input about their work environment and the organization's leadership.

Employee Engagement Outcomes and Drivers

The overall APS Engagement Outcome Index in 2018 was 59.3%, effectively identical to 2016 survey results (59.7%, difference of 0.4%).

The percentages in the neutral and unfavourable categories have remained the same as in 2016. Almost one in four APS employees (24%) still fall in the neutral category, meaning that the substantial “upside potential” remains. On average, these employees neither agree nor disagree with the engagement outcome statements, meaning that they can be favourably influenced. Finally, seventeen percent (17%) can still be considered “unfavourable”, meaning that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the engagement outcome statements, on average. This group of employees can be considered “disengaged”, and as such, it will prove challenging to change their attitudes.

ENGAGEMENT OUTCOME INDEX



As in 2016, between 54% and 60% of APS employees hold favourable attitudes to all but one of the engagement attitudes. The notable exception is satisfaction with one’s work, where almost one in four (73%) of employees agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with their work as an APS employee.

Finally, the reader will note that the overall engagement index falls below the FPT benchmark, by 5%. This represents an evolution of the benchmark (gradual improvements among the Government of Alberta’s peers, particularly increased engagement in the Federal Government)¹.

¹ 2017 (Federal) Public Service Employee Survey

Engagement Drivers

As for the drivers of engagement, there has also been almost no change since 2016. The top four engagement drivers, in terms of favourability (boxed in green), are still:

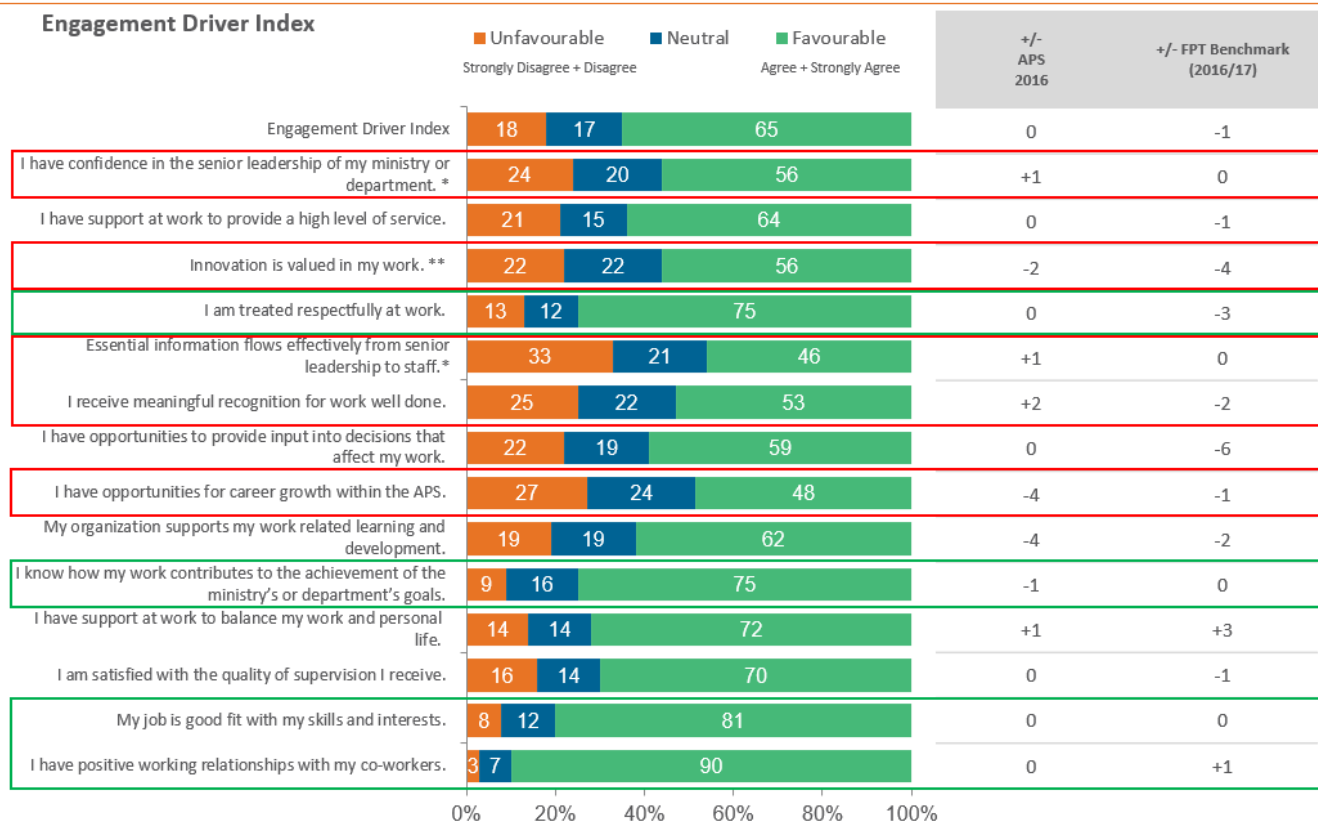
- I have positive relationships with my co-workers (90%);
- My job is a good fit with my skills and interests (81%);
- I know how my work contributes to the achievement of the department's goals. (75%); and
- I am treated respectfully at work (75%).

The bottom five engagement drivers in terms of favourability are (still):

- Essential information flows effectively from senior leadership to staff (46%);
- I receive meaningful recognition for work well done (53% - up 2% since 2016);
- I have opportunities for career growth within the APS (48%); and
- I have confidence in the senior leadership of my ministry or department (56%).
- Innovation is valued in my work (56%).

The one notable change since 2016 are the declines in favourability on the two engagement drivers related to professional growth: opportunities for career growth, and “my organization supports my work-related learning and development”, both having declined by 4%. The significance of this decline is that when combined, these two drivers have a considerable impact on overall engagement, accounting for more than 10% of the engagement index (see page 8).

ENGAGEMENT DRIVER INDEX



* **Senior Leadership** is defined as employees who work at the Deputy Minister, Assistant Deputy Minister, Executive Director, and/or Director level of your department or ministry.

** **Innovation** in the employee engagement context measures the degree to which you feel your ideas to improve the way things are done are fairly considered.

Data is rounded to the nearest whole number

Relative Importance of Engagement Drivers

Using statistical analysis, TalentMap is able to identify which of the engagement drivers have the greatest impact on influencing engagement outcomes. It follows, then, that actioning *these* drivers will be more effective in improving engagement. The chart below shows the result of a “relative weight analysis”. The percentages on the right-hand side can be interpreted in terms of how much of the overall engagement outcome score is “explained” by each engagement driver. For example, the first statement, having confidence in the senior leadership of my department, accounts for 12.9% of the engagement outcome score. The higher employees score this particular driver, the more likely they are to be engaged, as measured by their engagement outcome score. Having support at work to provide a high level of service, and innovation valued in one’s work are the second and third most important drivers in determining engagement outcomes. Opportunities for career growth also remains very important. **Improvements in these areas will have the greatest impact on engagement.**

A comparison to the 2016 results has also been provided, which show, in effect, there has been very little change in either the degree of impact of each driver on the engagement outcome index, or the importance rank.

IMPACT DRIVERS

Questionnaire Items	2018 Relative Weights (Impact on Engagement Outcome)	2016 Relative Weights (Impact on Engagement Outcome)
I have confidence in the senior leadership of my ministry or department.	12.9%	12.8%
I have support at work to provide a high level of service.	9.9%	9.3%
Innovation is valued in my work.	8.4%	8.0%
I have opportunities for career growth within the APS.	8.1%	8.2%
Essential information flows effectively from senior leadership to staff.	7.8%	8.0%
I receive meaningful recognition for work well done.	7.7%	7.6%
I know how my work contributes to the achievement of the ministry’s or department’s goals.	7.0%	7.1%
I am treated respectfully at work.	6.4%	6.2%
I have opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect my work.	6.3%	6.3%
My organization supports my work related learning and development.	6.0%	5.8%
I have support at work to balance my work and personal life.	5.9%	6.1%
My job is good fit with my skills and interests.	5.8%	6.7%
I am satisfied with the quality of supervision I receive.	5.0%	5.1%
I have positive working relationships with my co-workers.	2.7%	2.9%

- ❖ RWA (Relative Weight Analysis) is an approach used to determine the how much influence each of the engagement drivers have on the employee outcome index.
- ❖ RWA is a percentage which represents the relative importance of each driver. It is based on correlation, i.e. how closely the driver moves together (up or down) with employee engagement. The stronger this relationship, the higher the correlation, and subsequently the relative weight.
- ❖ The RWA percentage is calculated based on how much of the movement, up or down, of engagement, depends on each driver. The higher the RWA percentage, the more that employee engagement is explained by that single driver; and the converse is also true: as the score on that driver falls, it will have a stronger negative effect on employee engagement outcomes. RWA analysis also takes into account how each driver moves together with other drivers (e.g. confidence in senior leadership tends to move in a similar way as essential information flows from sr. mgmt. to staff), so the percentage represents the true net impact of that one driver on engagement.

APS-wide priorities to improve overall employee engagement

The chart on the following page plots the perception of each driver (vertical axis) as well as how strong or weak it is as an engagement driver (horizontal axis).

Drivers are shown from top to bottom based on how they are perceived relative to the FPT benchmark (represented by the horizontal line).

The further a driver is positioned to the right-hand side of the chart, the more influence it has in terms of driving engagement.

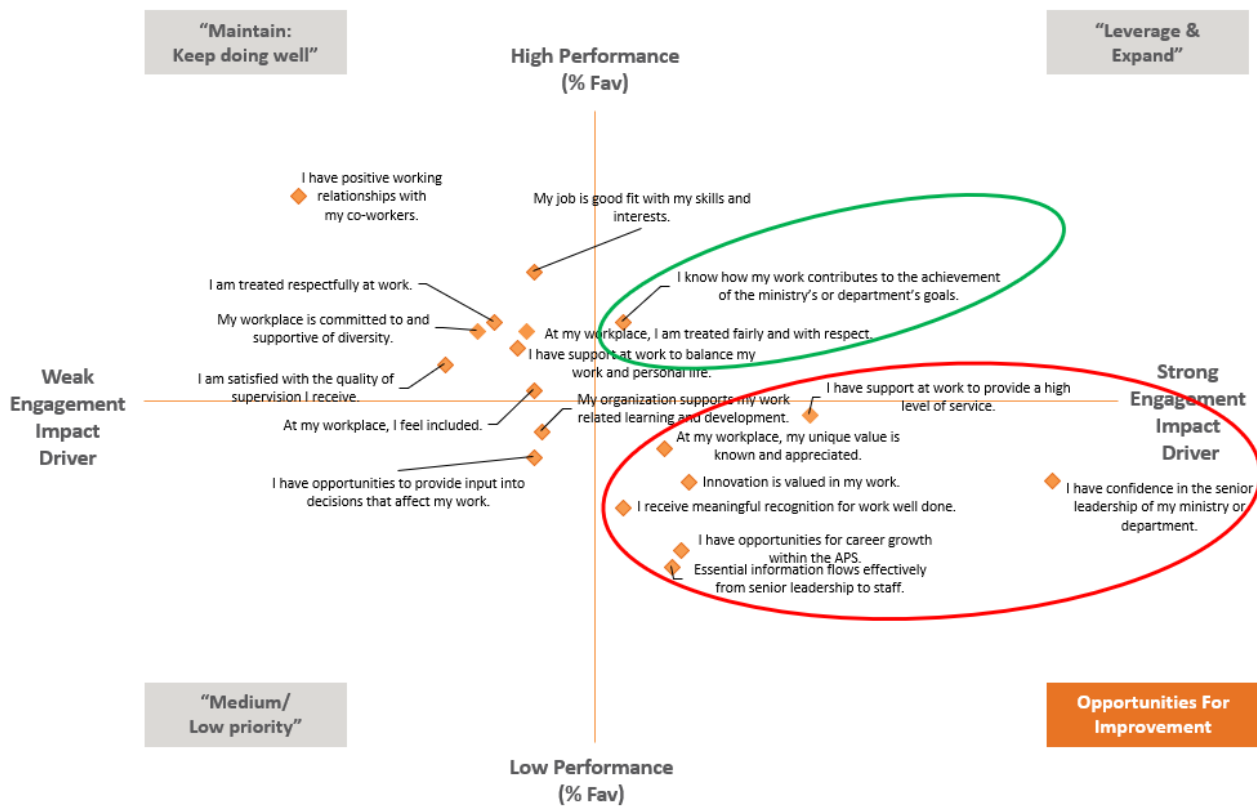
The driver circled in green (*I know how my work contributes to the achievement of the ministry or department's goals*) is relatively well perceived compared to the benchmark *and* has a relatively strong influence on engagement. Efforts to leverage and expand this perception will have a positive impact on engagement.

A look at the bottom right-hand quadrant identifies those drivers that represent key opportunities for improvement; since these have the greatest impact on engagement *and* perceptions of these drivers are relatively lower compared to others at the APS *and* the FPT Benchmark. These drivers are circled in red and are as follows (in order of impact on engagement outcomes):

- I have confidence in the senior leadership of my ministry or department
- I have support at work to provide a high level of service
- Innovation is valued in my work
- I have opportunities for career growth within the APS
- Essential information flows effectively from senior leadership to staff.
- At my workplace, my unique value is known and appreciated.
- I receive meaningful recognition for work well done.

These drivers represent the greatest opportunity for improvement and will also have a meaningful impact on engagement.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT



Diversity and the Inclusivity Index

This year, for the first time, the Government of Alberta asked employees to, voluntarily, self-identify with one or more diversity groups.

Self-Identification with Diversity Groups

Some key results with regard to self-identification to various diversity groups are presented in the table below:

Diversity Group	Declared Identification	Preferred not to answer	Alberta Population ²
Indigenous	5%	12%	7%
Racial/Ethnic identity	Visible Minority: 17%	19%	23%
French language	Fluent: 4% Conversational: 11%	10%	First Official Language: 2% French Language Knowledge: 7%
Disability	5%	12%	12%
Gender identity	Non-binary or another: 1%	13%	N/A
Gender minority³	3%	14%	N/A
Sexual minority⁴	4%	17%	N/A

The Inclusivity Index

As shown in the chart below, the Inclusivity Index is based on the average of favourable responses (agree or strongly agree) for four attitudes dealing with commitment to diversity, fair and respectful treatment, appreciation of one's unique value and feelings of inclusion.

² Sources:

- Stats Canada, 2016 Census Profile

- Prevalence of Disability by Age Group and Sex, Alberta and Canada (2012). Link:

<https://open.alberta.ca/opendata/prevalence-of-disability-by-age-group-and-sex-alberta-and-canada>

* The data for gender and sexually diverse demographics is not available.

³ Gender minority may include people whose gender identities (transgender, gender fluid, non-binary, two-spirit), or whose gender expression do not follow social norms.

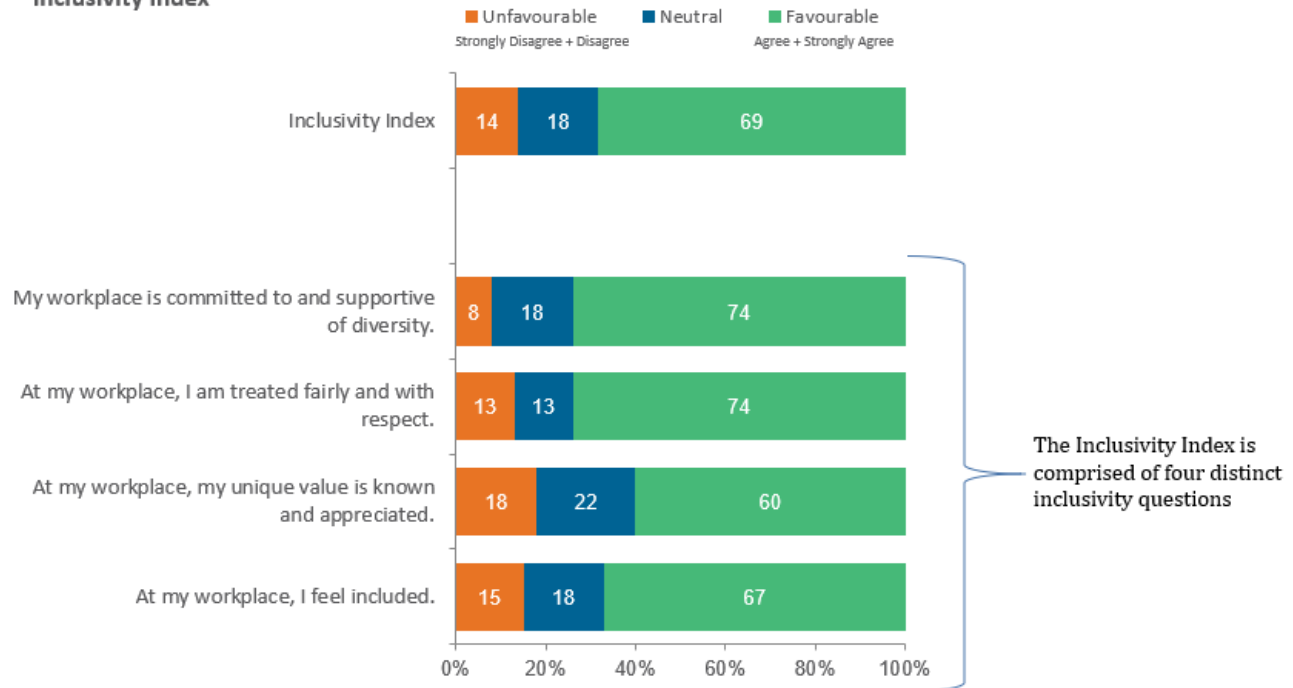
⁴ Sexual minority may include, but are not limited to, people whose sexual orientations may be described as asexual, bisexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirit.

INCLUSIVITY INDEX

Note: New section added in 2018. Previous period comparison not available.

Data is rounded to the nearest whole number

Inclusivity Index

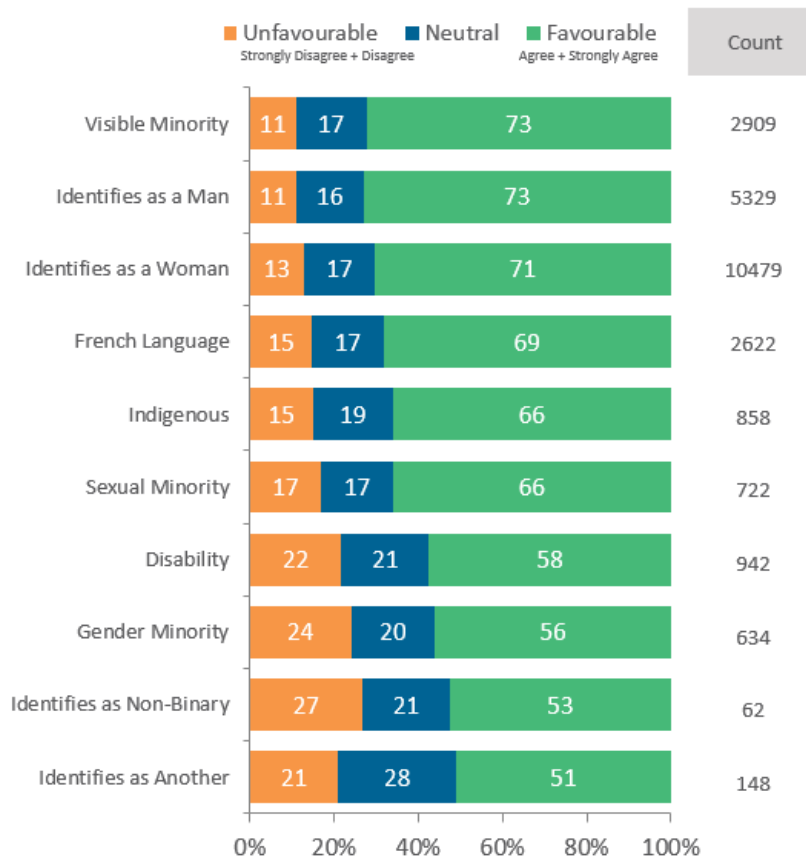


The Inclusivity Index is comprised of four distinct inclusivity questions, and is computed simply based on the average favourable response, shown in green above.

Overall, the 2018 Inclusivity Index stands at 69%, with 18% neutral and 14% unfavourable. As the reader can see, there is a marked difference between attitudes regarding workplace commitment and fair and respectful treatment, with almost three in four (74%) answering favourably, compared to 2/3 who say they feel included, and 60% who feel their unique value is known and appreciated. This can be interpreted to mean that while the large majority of APS employees feel there is commitment and support for diversity, and that they, themselves, are treated with respect; there are significant percentages of employees who do not feel (or question the fact that) their unique value is known or appreciated. As shown in the analysis above, this also has a significant impact on their level of engagement. While an argument can be made that there is room to improve attitudes on all four attributes, it is this latter one (unique value) which will also have the greatest positive impact on engagement.

Results are also shown below by diversity group.

Inclusivity Index by Diversity Group



Note: “Visible Minority” Definition: Members of visible minorities means persons, other than Indigenous peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.

Note: Graph sorted from highest to lowest % favourable score

Data is rounded to the nearest whole number

The graph shows inclusion level by individual diversity characteristics. It does not include intersectionality between different diversity characteristics.

The results show that inclusivity is highest among those who self-identify as visible minorities⁵ or those who identify as a man. Interestingly, women are only slightly less favourable, followed by those declaring that they speak French.

Those who self-identify as Indigenous and/or as sexual minority are slightly less favourable than average, and those who self-identify a disability, gender minority, non-binary or another have the lowest level of favourability. The latter two are also, by far, the smallest groups among those self-identifying.

⁵ Members of visible minorities means persons, other than Indigenous peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. (In line with the Employment Equity Act definition)

IMPACT DRIVERS

Questionnaire Items	Relative Weights (Impact on Engagement Outcome)
I have confidence in the senior leadership of my ministry or department.	11.2%
I have support at work to provide a high level of service.	8.2%
Innovation is valued in my work.	6.7%
I have opportunities for career growth within the APS.	6.6%
Essential information flows effectively from senior leadership to staff.	6.5%
At my workplace, my unique value is known and appreciated.	6.4%
I receive meaningful recognition for work well done.	5.9%
I know how my work contributes to the achievement of the ministry's or department's goals.	5.9%
My organization supports my work related learning and development.	4.9%
I have opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect my work.	4.8%
My job is good fit with my skills and interests.	4.8%
At my workplace, I feel included.	4.8%
At my workplace, I am treated fairly and with respect.	4.7%
I have support at work to balance my work and personal life.	4.6%
I am treated respectfully at work.	4.3%
My workplace is committed to and supportive of diversity.	4.1%
I am satisfied with the quality of supervision I receive.	3.7%
I have positive working relationships with my co-workers.	1.9%

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Summary of Key Insights

Overall, the 2018 employee engagement survey of the Alberta Public Service reveals the following key insights:

- Overall engagement and perception of engagement drivers have remained **virtually unchanged since the 2016 survey**; however, engagement outcomes now fall below the FPT benchmark as a result of improvement among other benchmark members.
- **Job satisfaction remains relatively high**, and is, again, the highest among engagement outcomes measured. The level of **pride** in working for the APS is also relatively high, at 60%, which is the same as 2016 but has dropped 2% since 2013, and 8% since 2012.
- All other engagement outcomes are viewed very similarly and sit between 54% and 56% favourable, with very little change since 2016.
- The fact that there has been little change in the overall engagement outcome index belies some substantial improvements among some departments, but declines among others, including:
 - Public Service Commission (+12%)
 - Economic Development and Trade (+7%)
 - Status of Women (+6%)
 - Executive Council, Advanced Education, Municipal Affairs, and Seniors and Housing (+5% since 2016)
 - Transportation (-8%)
 - Culture and Tourism (-6%)
- Those engagement drivers which have the greatest overall impact on engagement outcomes continue to be:
 - I have confidence in my senior leadership of my ministry or department.
 - I have support at work to provide a high level of service.
 - Innovation is valued in my work.
 - I have opportunities for growth within the APS.
- Those engagement drivers which represent the greatest opportunities for improvement for the overall Alberta Public Service *and* have an important impact on engagement are the above, plus:
 - I receive meaningful recognition for work well done.
 - Essential information flows effectively from senior leadership to staff.
 - At my workplace, my unique value is known and appreciated.
- Together, these top six drivers should continue to form the basis of six key priorities which will provide the greatest potential for improvement, and which will have the greatest impact on employee engagement. Added to these is now a seventh: knowing and respecting one's unique value.