

EMPLOYEE SENTIMENT SURVEY

2026 Quarter 2 Update

PERFORMANCE & ANALYTICS DEPT.



This summary document provides insights into employee sentiment at the City of San Diego (City). The purpose of employee experience (EX) surveys is to capture employee sentiment across a range of topics, throughout an employee’s tenure at the City.

The City leverages the Medallia platform to conduct the semi-annual Employee Sentiment Survey and as-needed onboarding and exit surveys. Together, these three surveys inform leaders about employee sentiment regarding all aspects of a team member’s career with the City —from interviewing through separation.

TOP MOTIVATORS FOR WORKING AT THE CITY

1. Job Stability
2. Work/Life Balance
3. Health Care Benefits

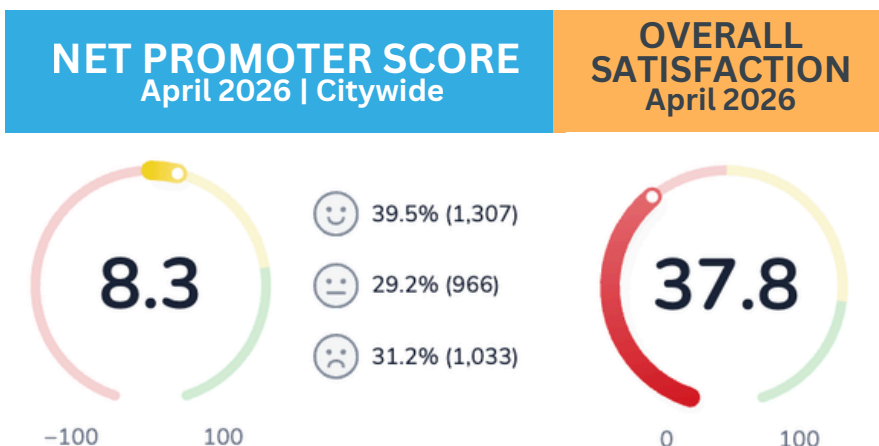
The 2026 Quarter 2 Employee Sentiment Survey (ESS) responses were collected from **April 1-30, 2026**. The City delivered surveys to **12,943** active employees during this period; **3,306 employees** responded to the 2026 Q2 survey (**26% response rate**). This response rate is representative at the Citywide level at a **99% confidence level** and a **2% margin of error**.

Overall Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction is captured with two metrics: **Net Promoter Score (NPS)** and **Overall Satisfaction (OSAT)**. NPS measures the likelihood that an employee would recommend the City as a place to work. It is calculated by subtracting the percentage of employees who scored the question a 0 through 6 (“detractors”) from the percentage of employees who scored the question a 9 or 10 (“promoters”). OSAT asks employees to rate their overall satisfaction with their experience at the City. The metric is calculated by totaling the percentage of 9 and 10 scores reported by employees. ESS questions are on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 10 (*strongly agree*).

The City’s OSAT score *decreased* from **38.3** to **37.8** between the October 2025 and April 2026 survey round. The City’s NPS *decreased* from **15.2** in October 2025 to **8.3** in April 2026.

This survey cycle, the top three motivators for working for the City are: **job stability; work/life balance; and health care benefits**. For the first time since October 2024, “pay” is no longer in the top three motivators (and has fallen to the fourth spot).



Key Driver Metrics

After the top-level satisfaction and Net Promoter questions, the survey asks employees eleven Key Driver questions; these questions are intended to measure sentiment around key themes.

Key Drivers	% Responses Scored 9 or 10		
	Apr. 2025	Oct. 2025	Apr. 2026
Path for Career Advancement	41.2	39.5	↓ 38.6
Feel Inspired to Reach My Full Potential	41.5	40.1	↑ 40.7
Receive Recognition	43.6	41.8	↓ 40.4
Paid Fairly for the Work I Do	36.4	36.1	↓ 33.3
My Team Cares About Me	57.2	55.5	↑ 56.5
My Department Provides High Quality Services	61.5	60.2	↓ 60.0
My Direct Supervisor Actively Listens to Me	65.4	65.2	↑ 65.7
My Dept. Management Sets Clear Goals & Expectations	45.0	43.6	↑ 45.1
Have the Resources to Do My Job Well	39.7	38.7	↓ 37.0
The City Invests in Training and Development	37.4	35.9	↓ 35.5
Satisfied with the Physical Conditions at Workplace	36.3	38.0	↓ 37.9

of survey responses: 2,241 in Apr. 2025; 3,397 in Oct. 2025; 3,306 in Apr. 2026

Key Employee Attributes

This group of sentiment questions is intended to go deeper into each attribute of the employee experience. The attributes are separated into five categories:

Department Management	% Responses Scored 9 or 10		
	Apr. 2025	Oct. 2025	Apr. 2026
My Dept. Management is Available for Support When Needed	45.9	43.7	↑ 45.5
I Trust my Chief to do What's Right	38.6	35.5	↑ 44.9

Career Growth & Mobility	% Responses Scored 9 or 10		
	Apr. 2025	Oct. 2025	Apr. 2026
Opportunities to Learn New Skills	38.7	37.5	↓ 37.1
Aware of the City's Training Opportunities	46.9	43.8	↓ 43.0

Employee Satisfaction	% Responses Scored 9 or 10		
	Apr. 2025	Oct. 2025	Apr. 2026
Personal Accomplishment	66.0	63.2	63.8
Burnout	16.3	18.9	21.1*
Turnover Risk	16.9	17.1	18.2*
Work Relates to Department's Mission	68.2	65.4	65.0
Work Relates to the City's Strategic Plan	54.9	52.5	51.6

Direct Supervisor	% Responses Scored 9 or 10		
	Apr. 2025	Oct. 2025	Apr. 2026
My Direct Supervisor Provides Me with Performance Feedback	59.2	59.9	61.0
My Supervisor Provides Opportunities Fairly to All Employees	60.4	59.1	60.5

Environment & Resources	% Responses Scored 9 or 10		
	Apr. 2025	Oct. 2025	Apr. 2026
Technology in My Department is Up To Date	27.9	27.3	31.0

* Increases in OSAT scores - % responses scored 9 or 10 - are typically good. However, lower scores are better for two metrics ("I feel burned out from work" & "If I received an offer for another job with a similar salary and benefits, I would accept it").

Demographics

- Women are more likely to recommend the City as a place to work compared to men (NPS of 20.8 compared to 11.7, respectively).
- There is a small difference in overall satisfaction (OSAT) between female and male City employees (42.4 and 40.4, respectively).
- Employees who opted to not select a gender had the lowest NPS and OSAT scores (-27.4 and 19.1).
- Employees with fewer than two years of experience with the City were the most satisfied (61.6). Mid-career employees (between 11 and 20 years of experience) showed the lowest levels of overall satisfaction (28.8).
- Employees 23 years and younger had the highest levels of overall satisfaction (60.0), while employees between 24-38 years old reported the lowest overall satisfaction level (33.5).
- When comparing veterans to non-veterans, OSAT for veterans (36.9) is slightly lower than non-veterans (38.8). Veterans are less likely to recommend the City as a place to work (-2.6 NPS) than non-veterans (11.6 NPS).
- Employee OSAT (highest to lowest) by race: Asian (48.5); Hispanic or Latino/a (47.5); Black or African American (43.5); White or Caucasian (37.2); Other (36.4); Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (35.8); those who preferred not to answer (24.0); and Native American or Indigenous (7.9).
- Employee OSAT (highest to lowest) by role type: Management/Executive (46.6); Other (41.5); Office Employee (40.5); Field Employee (37.3); and Supervisor (30.9).