

BIDS Well-Being Survey Report 2022¹

In mid-July 2022, the BIDS Well-Being Committee sent a survey link by email to every employee in the agency (about 189 people). There were 28 questions on the survey, all directed at well-being and retention issues. Employees were given about two weeks to complete the survey. The survey was given about 2 week later than normal this year, which was done deliberately so that the answers would appropriately reflect morale looking forward after the new BIDS pay scale went into effect on July 1st.

Employees answered the survey anonymously. In 2020 and 2021, the survey contained questions about the impact of Covid-19. This year those questions were replaced by questions about communication (both from individual office leadership and from the BIDS Administrative Office) and pay (both pay-to-workload ratio and whether BIDS employees required second jobs to support themselves and their families). The only remaining Covid-related question asked employees if there were any positive workplace changes that came about as a result of the pandemic that should be retained. Otherwise the questions were identical to the surveys given in prior years, except for small phrasing changes as noted. The questions were largely multiple choice, but, where logical, questions gave employees an “other” choice to write in an answer if the pre-selected choices did not fit with their experiences.

For some questions, employees were allowed to pick as many selections as applied, but for others they were only allowed to pick three selections or one selection in an attempt to identify which issues should be prioritized. Two questions allowed for narrative answers.

There were 115 responses (about 61% of the agency), including 65 attorneys (57% of responses), 15 investigators (13% of responses), and 35 other support staff (30% of responses). Of those 115 responses:

- 33% came from employees who have worked for BIDS 3 years or less
- 14% came from employees who have worked for BIDS 3-5 years
- 17% came from employees who have worked for BIDS 5-10 years
- 12% came from employees who have worked for BIDS 10-20 years
- 24% came from employees who have worked for BIDS 20 years or more

The 2021 Well-Being Committee specifically requested that, in 2022, the survey be given in such a way that this report could distinguish between categories

¹ Compiled by Meryl Carver-Allmond, BIDS Training Director. Presented to the Director and Board of Indigents' Defense Services on August 12, 2022, by Kelly Driscoll, Deputy Public Defender, and Eric Gares, Investigator.

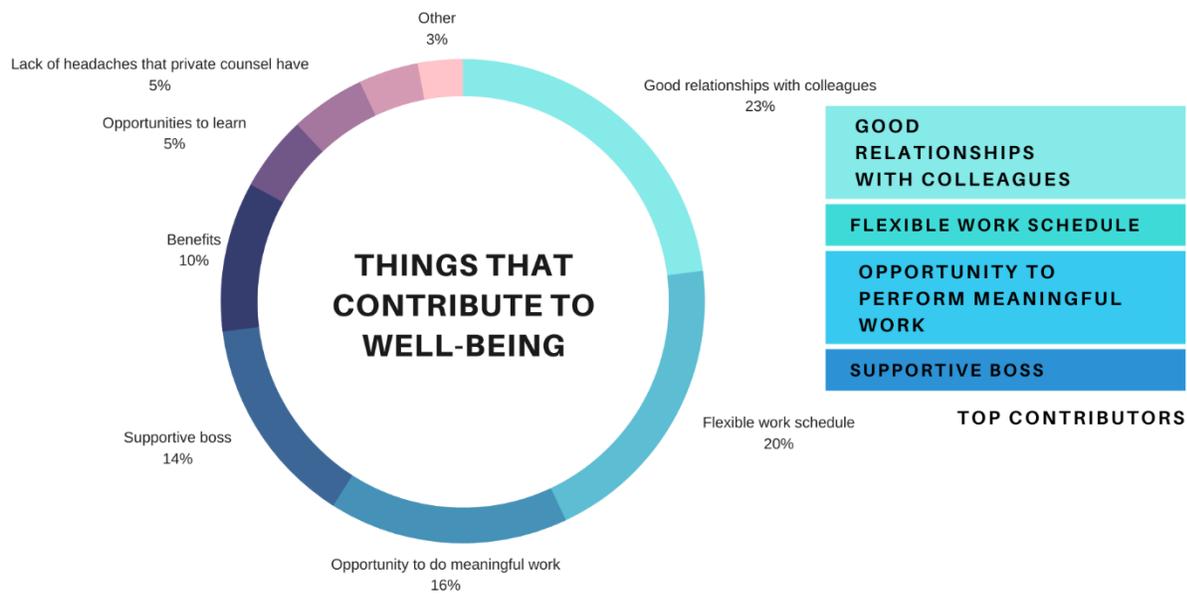
of employees and employees who have worked for BIDS for differing lengths of time. While that data was collected (see above), because of the shortened time period to compile this year's survey report, it is not reflected in this report. Should the Director or Board want more specific information about any particular category or length of service (e.g. "What resources do investigators specifically need?" or "Are attorneys who have worked for BIDS for 3 years or less satisfied with their pay?") the Well-Being Committee would be happy to provide that information in a supplemental report at a later date.

POSITIVE IMPACTS ON WELL-BEING

Positive impacts were discussed in three questions. The first two questions focused on the employee's personal well-being and on impacts on colleagues' well-being that the employee had observed.

Employees were allowed to choose the three top contributors, which resulted in 658 answers total. The percentages below are percentages of those 658 answers.

Overall, good relationships with colleagues (23%), flexible schedules (20%), and the opportunity to perform meaningful work (16%) were the top contributors to BIDS employees' well-being. The answers to this question and how those answers were ranked has remained consistent since 2020.



(Note: The question gave “health insurance and retirement” as examples of benefits. It gave “recruiting clients and billing hours” as examples of headaches that private attorneys have that BIDS attorneys do not.)

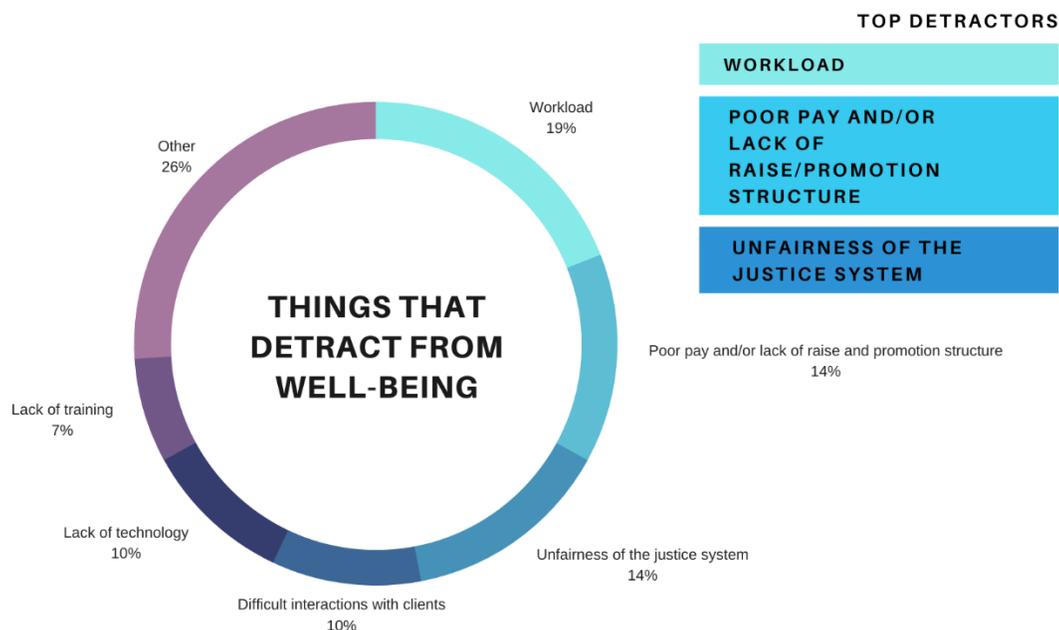
A third question asked what positive workplace changes have come about as a result of Covid-19. Employees were allowed to give a narrative answer. The answers have been attached to this report as Appendix A, but the overwhelming majority discuss enjoying more flexibility to work remotely.

NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON WELL-BEING

Negative impacts were also discussed in two questions. One question was focused on the employee’s personal well-being, and one was focused on impacts on colleagues’ well-being that the employee had observed.

Employees were allowed to choose the three top contributors, which resulted in 628 answers total. The percentages below are percentages of those 628 answers.

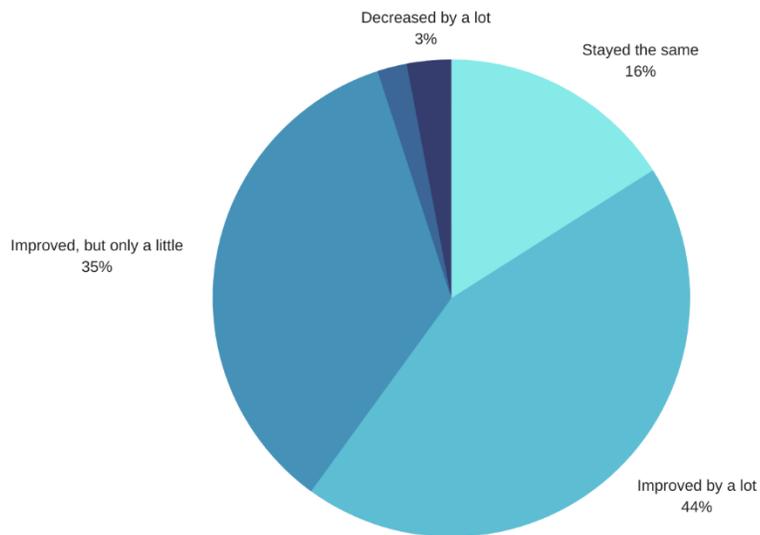
Workload remains a significant impact on employee well-being, holding steady between about 17-20% since 2020. But poor pay and/or lack of a raise and promotion structure was cited significantly less this year as a negative. In 2021, it comprised 25% of responses, while this year it was down to 14% of responses. The other answers in this category have remained relatively the same since 2020.



CHANGES IN WELL-BEING IN THE LAST YEAR

For the first time in 2021, BIDS employees were asked to rate how their well-being had changed in the last year. That question was repeated this year. In 2021, about 40% said their well-being improved (either a little or a lot), but this year 79% said their well-being improved (either a little or a lot).

LOOKING AT THE TOTALITY OF YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES, SINCE THIS TIME LAST YEAR HAS YOUR WELL-BEING AS IT RELATES TO WORK:

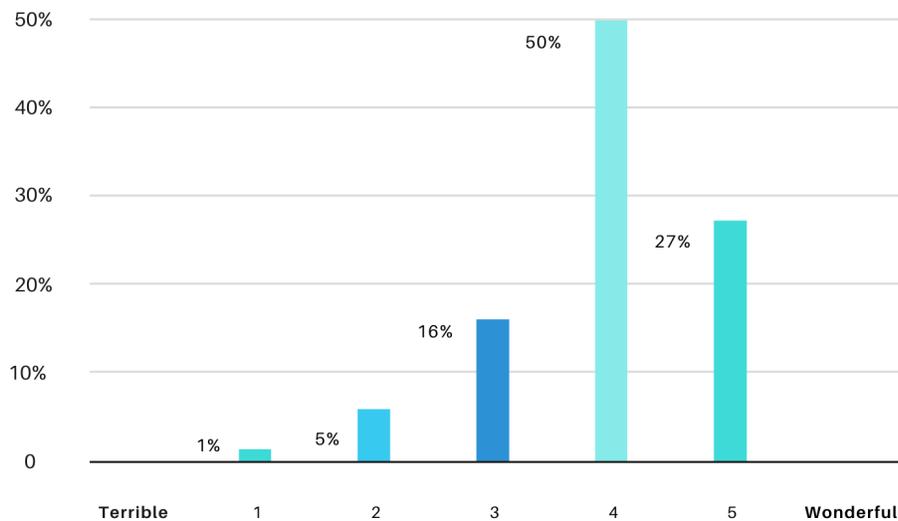


OFFICE CULTURE

Two questions were asked about office culture.

The first asked employees to rate their office culture on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being “terrible” and 5 being “wonderful”).

Overall, about 77% of BIDS employees scored their office culture positively (as a 4 or 5), which is an improvement from last year (72%). About 6% scored their office culture negatively (as a 1 or 2), which is consistent with 2021.

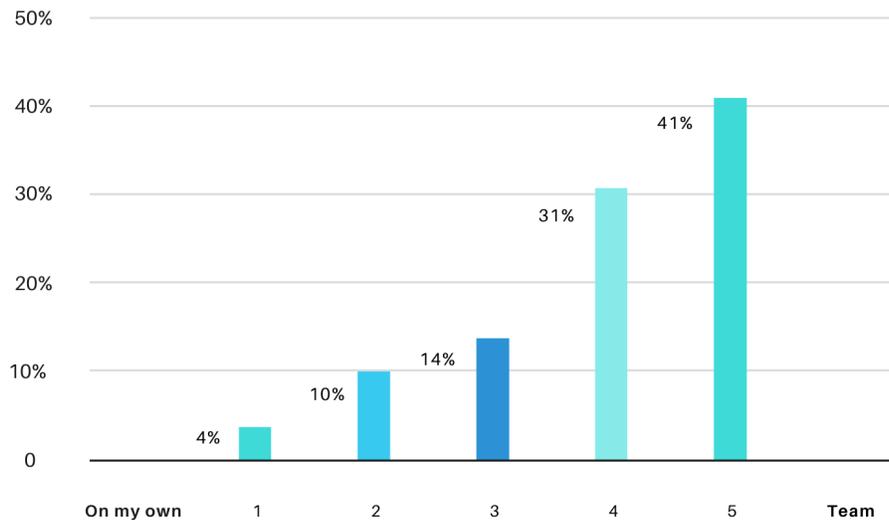


OFFICE CULTURE

How would you describe your office culture?

The second question asked employees to rate on a scale of 1-5 whether they felt like they were part of a team or on their own (with 1 being “on my own” and 5 being “part of a team”).

On teamwork, about 72% of employees scored their office positively (as a 4 or 5). About 14% scored their office negatively (as a 1 or 2). This is largely consistent with 2021.



TEAMWORK

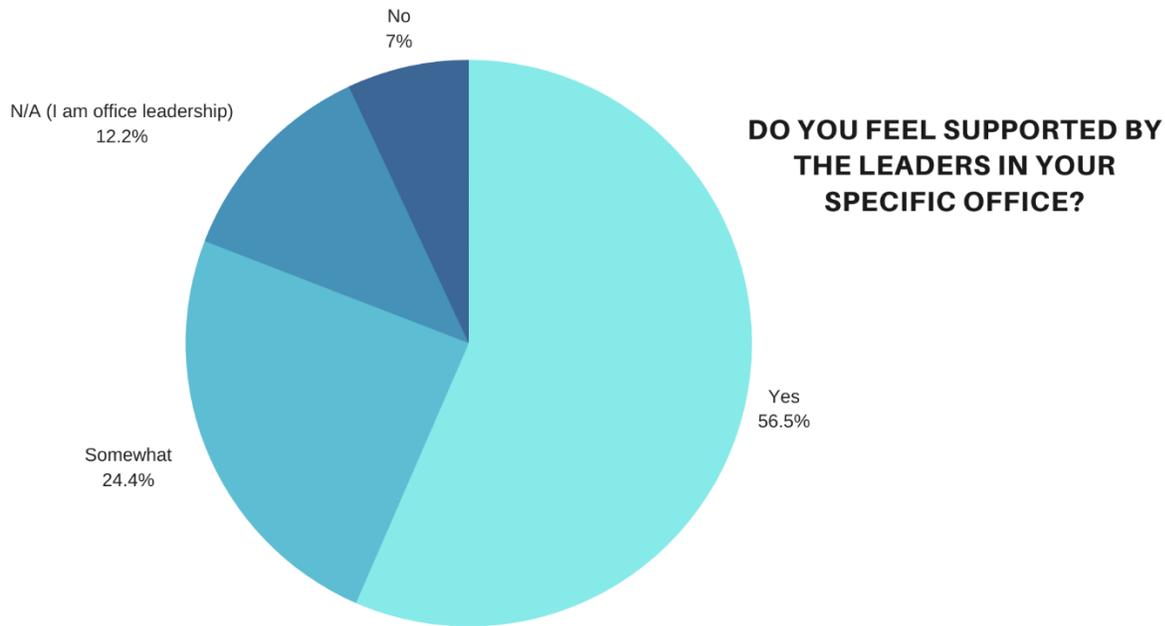
Do you feel like you're part of a team? Or on your own?

SUPPORT AND COMMUNICATION FROM LEADERSHIP

Two questions were asked about whether employees felt supported by leadership. In years past, these questions have given employees the option to answer “Not in the past, but I do now,” and “Yes in the past, but I don’t now.” Feedback from last year was that these options were confusing, so they were removed for 2022. Additionally, four new questions were asked this year about communication from leadership (both individual office leaders and the BIDS Administrative Office leaders).

The first group of questions asked employees about their specific office leaders.

Overall, about 56% of employees currently feel supported by their office leadership, about 24% feel “somewhat” supported, and 7% do not currently feel supported. Taking into account the caveat above about changing the options slightly this year, these numbers have remained reasonably consistent for all three years of the survey.

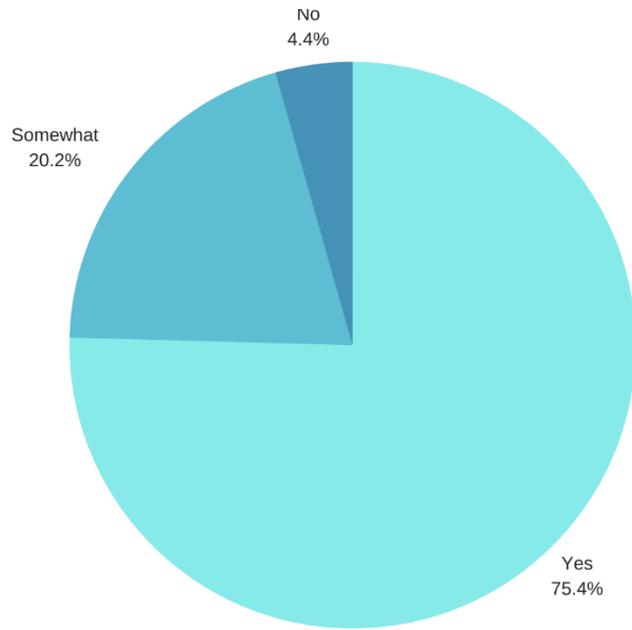


Employees were also asked if they felt like communication from their office leadership is adequate. Of 111 employees who answered the question, 59% ranked their office leaders communication at 4 or 5 (with 5 being the best), and about 16% ranked it at a 1 or 2. The most common method of communication noted by employees was office-wide emails (about 57%), but office leaders also utilized weekly office meetings (38%) to communicate.

The second group of questions asked employees about the BIDS administration.

Overall, 75.5% of employees currently feel supported by BIDS administration, about 20% feel “somewhat” supported, and 4.5% do not currently feel supported. Even given the changing in phrasing of the answers, this is a big increase in feelings of support from 2021, when only about 54% opined that they felt unequivocal support.

**DO YOU FEEL SUPPORTED BY
THE OVERARCHING BIDS
ADMINISTRATION?**



Employees were also asked if they felt like communication from the overarching BIDS Administration is adequate. Of 113 employees who answered the question, 72% ranked that communication at 4 or 5 (with 5 being the best), and about 10% ranked it at a 1 or 2. The most preferred method of communication was emails (83%), followed by The Rap Sheet (61%), Zoom meetings and Town Halls (58%), and face-to-face visits (44%).

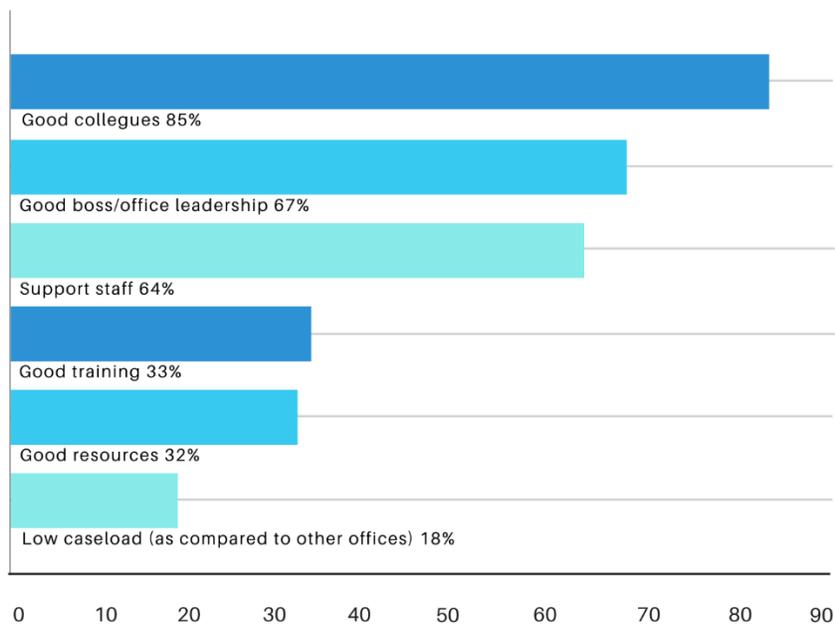
GENERAL OFFICE SUPPORTS

Two questions were asked about general supports within the employee's office.

The first question asked employees what supports are present now.

For this question, employees were allowed to check each answer that applied. Percentages reflected are a percentage of the 114 answering employees who selected a given answer.

Overall, about 85% reported having good colleagues, about 67% reported a good boss or other office leadership, and about 64% reported good support staff. The top three supports have remained relatively consistent since 2020. Significantly this year, training was mentioned as a support by 33% of employees (up from 19% in 2021), but caseload (as a positive support) is the lowest it's ever been at 18% (it was 28% in 2021).



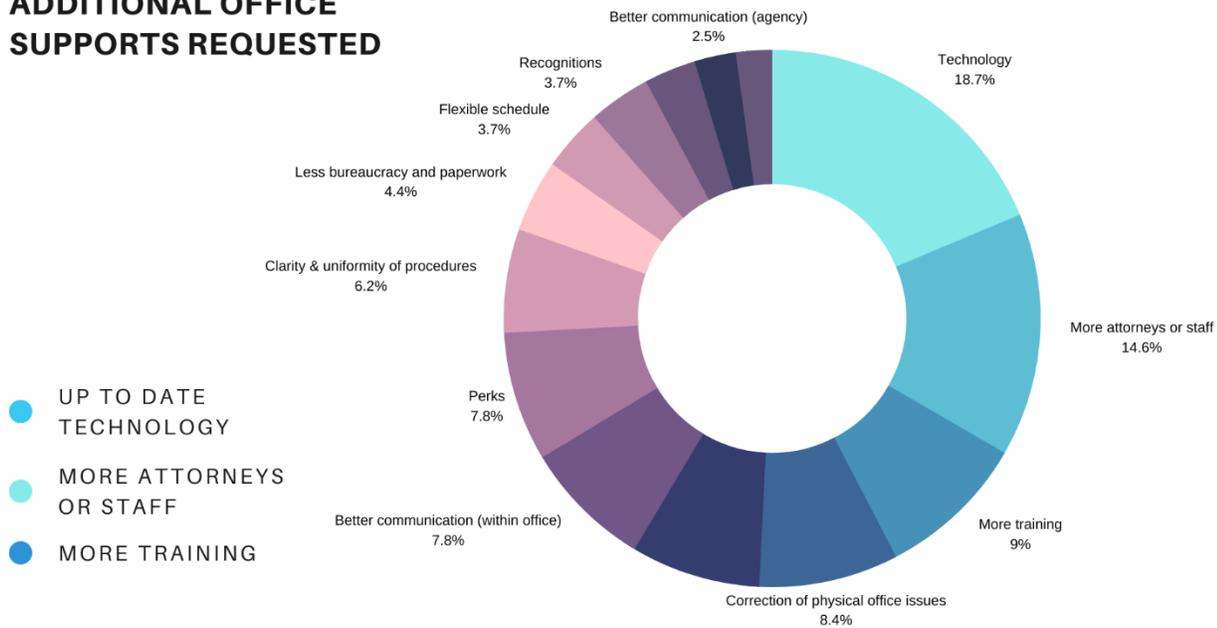
**What
general
supports
do you
have in
your
office
now?**

(Note: "Supplies, access to experts, technology, etc." were listed as examples of good resources.)

The second question in this category asked employees what additional supports they would like to have.

For this question, employees were allowed to choose the three top contributors, which resulted in 321 answers total. The percentages below are percentages of those 321 answers. The top answers were up-to-date technology (almost 19%), more attorneys or staff (about 15%), more training (9%), and correction of physical office issues (about 8%). Most of these issues are ranking very close to prior years, with the exception of perks (like gym memberships), which has jumped up by about 4%. One interpretation of that increase could be that, as employees other concerns (such as pay) are beginning to be addressed, employees are becoming more interested in other, less mission-critical supports.

ADDITIONAL OFFICE SUPPORTS REQUESTED



(Note: Training included training on “substantive legal issues and/or trauma and stress”. “Gym memberships and massages” were listed as examples of perks. “Poor office furniture or dirty office” were given as examples of correction of physical office issues.)

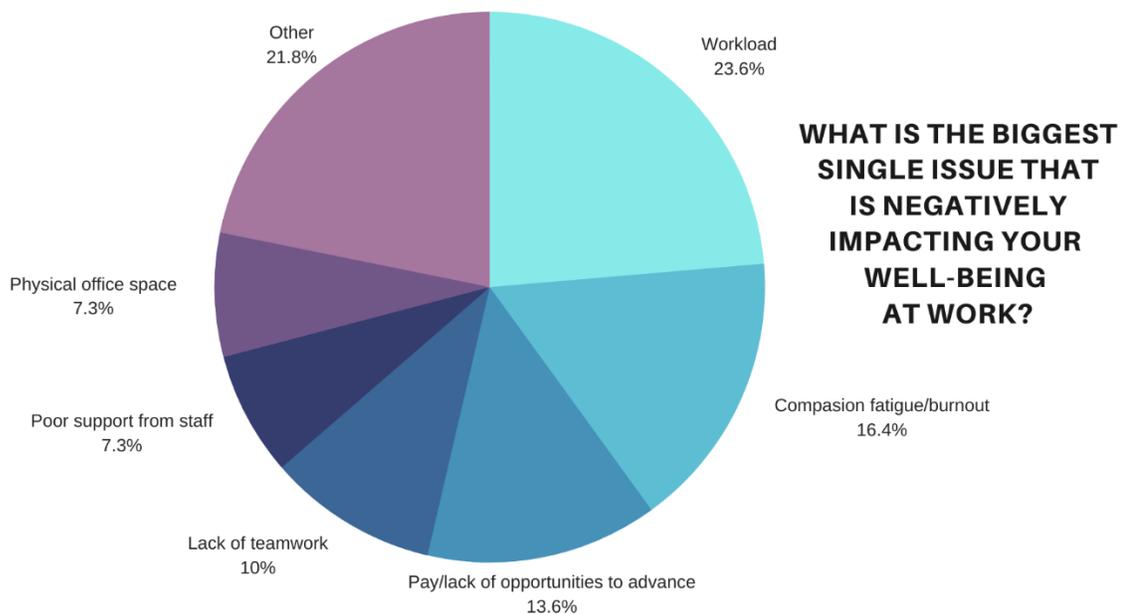
SETTING WELL-BEING PRIORITIES

In an attempt to ask employees to help focus agency priorities, employees were asked two final questions with regard to well-being.

First, they were asked “What is the biggest single issue that is negatively impacting your well-being at work?” They were required to pick only one answer.

In 2021, pay and lack of opportunities to advance were BIDS employees biggest negative concern by a significant percentage (about 45%), with workload second (17.5%), and burnout coming in third (about 11%). With the recent pay transition to the new pay scale, those priorities have shifted in 2022.

As you can see below, workload (about 24%) and compassion fatigue/burnout (about 16%) now top the list. Pay as a negative (now at about 14%) is the lowest it has ever been, and has decreased 31% since last year.



Second, employees were asked, “What is one low or no-cost thing that could be done immediately that would improve moral in your office?” Employees were allowed to give a narrative answer. The answers have been attached to this report as Appendix B, but some general themes can be drawn including that employees would like better communication from their office leadership, more flexible schedules, updates to office facilities, and more teamwork.

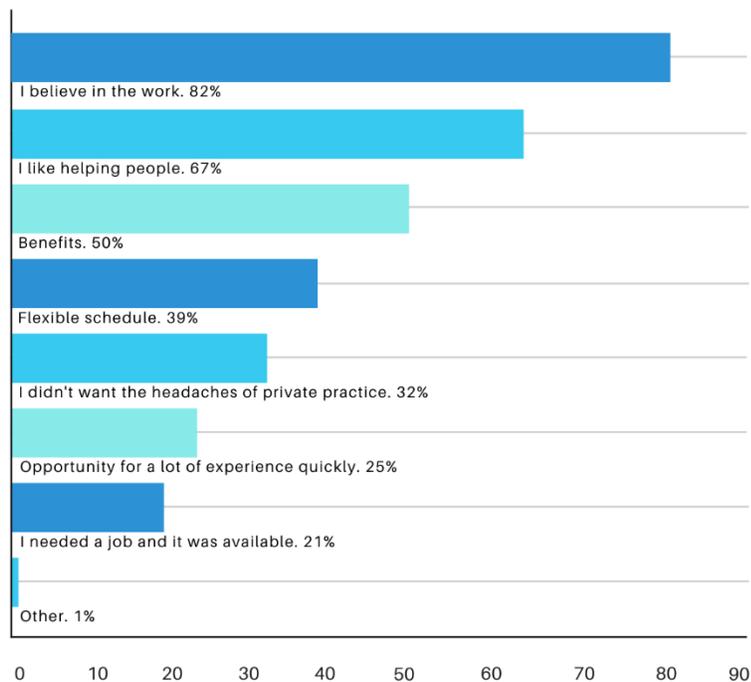
EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Five questions were asked regarding employee retention issues.

The first question asked why the employee chose to work in a public defender office.

For this question, employees were allowed to check each answer that applied. Percentages reflected are a percentage of the 114 answering employees who selected a given answer.

As in 2020 and 2021, a large percentage of employees listed either “I believe in the work” or “I like helping people” as reasons they began work in a public defender office (about 82% and 67% respectively). Benefits (listed as being things like health insurance and retirement) were down in 2021, but have rebounded this year to about where they were in 2020 (50%). Flexibility of schedule was also up again this year (39%, up from 31% in 2021).



Why did you choose to work in a public defender office?

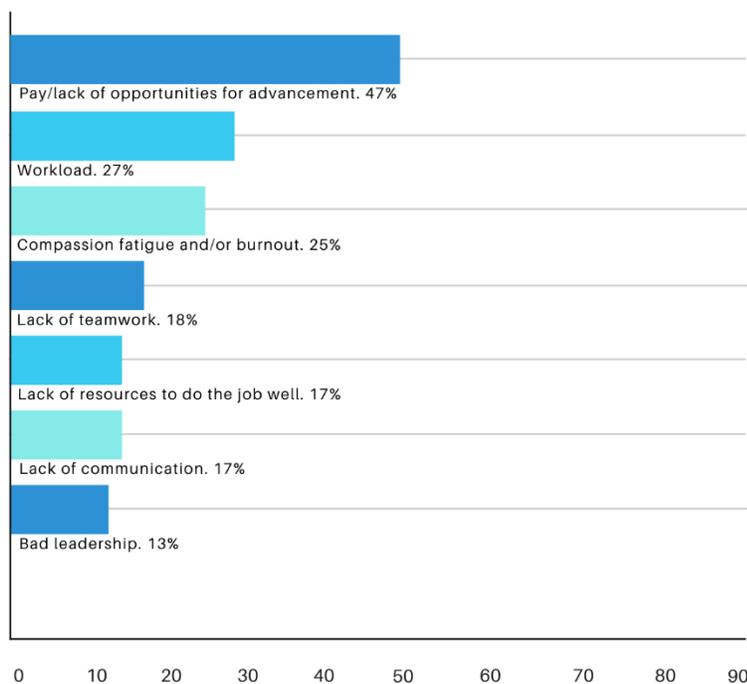
(Note: “Billing hours and recruiting clients” were given as examples of headaches that come with being a private attorney or working for a private attorney.)

The second and third questions in this category asked employees if they've thought about leaving the public defender office in the last year, and, if so, why.

There were 115 responses to this question. *Fifty-three percent* of employees who responded (about 61 employees) reported that they *have* considered leaving the public defender office in the past year. *Forty-seven percent* of the employees who responded (about 54 employees) reported that they *have not* considered leaving the public defender office in the past year. This represents about a 9% positive change from employee answers in 2021.

The 61 employees who reported that they had considered leaving were asked the follow-up question: "Why were you considering leaving?" There were 61 responses to this question.

Employees were allowed to check each answer that applied. Percentages reflected are a percentage of the 61 answering employees who selected a given answer.



Why were you thinking about leaving the public defender officer?

(Note: "Office supplies, experts, etc." were listed as examples of lack of resources to do the job well.)

While pay/lack of opportunities for advancement remains the top reason employees were considering leaving, it is down about 8% from last year. (Also, because pay raises came late in the reporting year for this survey, it would not be inconsistent for an employee to have considered leaving because of pay, but also be satisfied with their pay now.) As with the past two years, workload and compassion fatigue/burnout came in second and third, at similar rates.

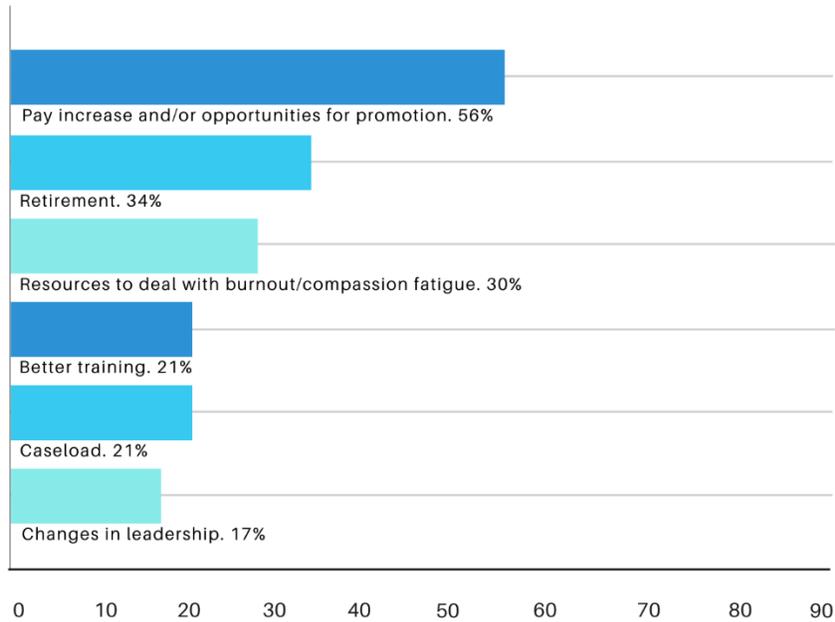
The fourth and fifth questions in this category asked employees if they see themselves working in a Kansas public defender office in 10 years, and, if not, why.

There were 114 responses to this question. *Nineteen percent* of employees who responded (about 22 employees) reported that they *do not* see themselves working in a Kansas public defender office in 10 years. *Thirty-five percent* of employees who responded (about 40 employees) reported that they *do* see themselves working in a Kansas public defender office in 10 years. *Forty-six percent* of employees who responded (about 52 employees) reported that they were *unsure* if they see themselves working in a Kansas public defender office in 10 years. This represents a big improvement from last year, with 15% of employees moving from “no” or “unsure” to “yes”.

The 74 employees who reported either that they could not see themselves working at a Kansas public defender office in 10 years, or they were unsure, were asked the follow-up question: “What would have to change to make you want to stay?” There were 71 responses to this question.

Employees were allowed to check each answer that applied. Percentages reflected are a percentage of the 71 answering employees who selected a given answer. This chart only lists answers that were given by more than 10% of this group.

Overall, “pay increases and/or opportunities for promotion” (56%) was ahead of anything else in factors that would make employees want to stay (down from 65% last year). Retirement has jumped up to second place (34%), which may merit attention. While, in 2021, better training (26%), caseload decrease (24%) and resources to deal with burnout/compassion fatigue (21%) were all roughly tied for second place, this year resources to deal with burnout/compassion fatigue has jumped ahead to 30%.



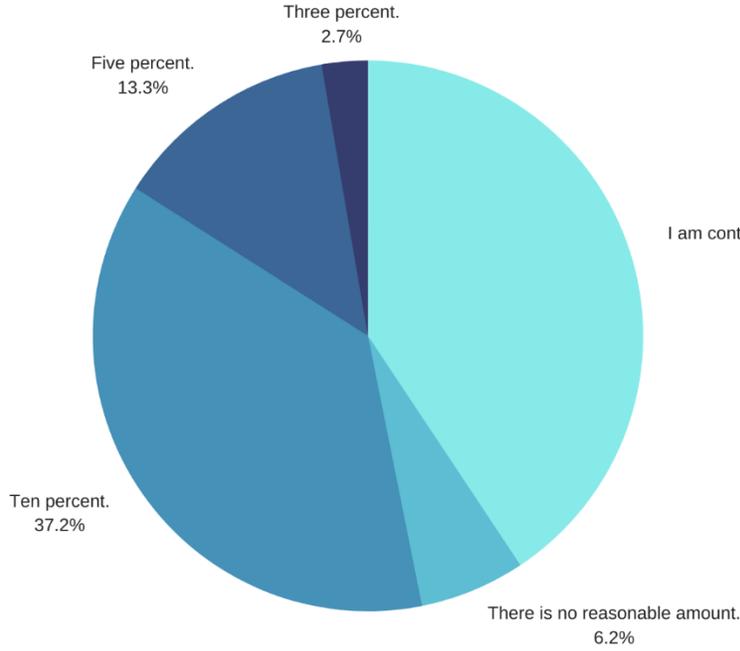
**What
would
have to
change to
make you
want to
stay?**

PAY

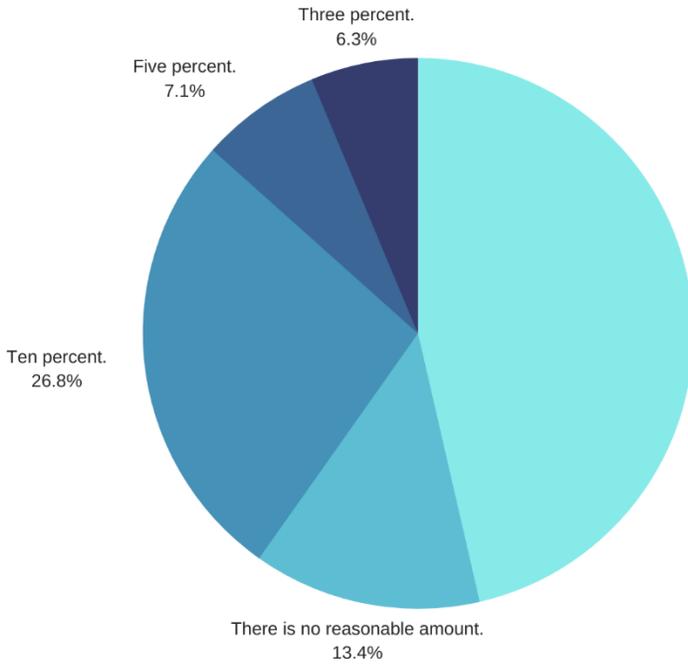
As part of the feedback from the Well-Being Committee from last year, two questions were asked this year to help establish how BIDS employees feel about their pay to workload ratio. The questions were:

- How much would your current *salary* have to *increase* for you to be content with your current *workload*?
- How much would your current *workload* have to *decrease* for you to be content with your current *salary*?

Each question had a similar number of responses (113 and 112, respectively). As one might expect, the answers to these questions were similar, but they were not identical.



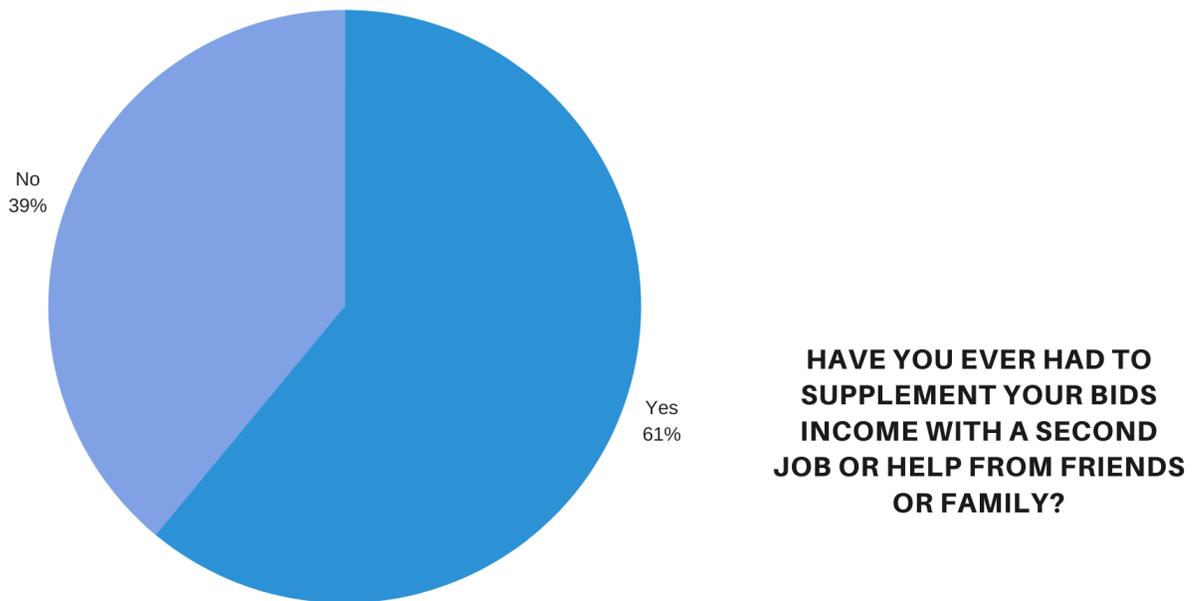
HOW MUCH WOULD YOUR CURRENT SALARY HAVE TO INCREASE FOR YOU TO BE CONTENT WITH YOUR CURRENT WORKLOAD?



HOW MUCH WOULD YOUR CURRENT WORKLOAD HAVE TO DECREASE FOR YOU TO BE CONTENT WITH YOUR CURRENT SALARY?

A third question was also asked about pay: Have you ever had to supplement your BIDS income with other sources of income?

Sixty-one percent of BIDS employees reported that they have had to supplement their income with a second job or help from friends or family. This question should be asked again next year with a more limited time frame (*i.e.*, “In the past 12 months, have you had to supplement your BIDS income...”) to see if the recent pay scale adjustments make a difference in the answers to this question.



CONCLUSIONS

In summary, consistently from year to year, the positives are that BIDS employees are extremely mission driven and like their colleagues. There is also a positive trend this year in employees that feel supported by leadership. While concerns about pay are still present, they are much-lessened from this time in 2021, which is not surprising given the recent implementation of the new pay scale.

Nonetheless, in addition to continuing to work on pay, there are still other issues for the Director and Board to focus on, including workload, adequate staffing, and access to technology and other resources needed for BIDS employees to do their jobs well.

APPENDIX A

Narrative answers to the question: “Are there any positive workplace changes that came about as a result of Covid-19 that you wish would continue?”

(Reprinted as direct quotes with all original language and punctuation.)

no

Remote work

No

More flexibility in working remotely

N/A doesn't impact office staff

Flexible in-office schedule

I like the flexibility of being able to work from home a few days a week if I choose to.

Working from home.

We appreciate each other more.

More flexible work schedule, more ability to work from home when possible
video visits with clients in the jail

Ability to work from home some of the time. Maybe 1 -2 days per week.

Zoom meetings and trainings have been easy to attend.

I believe a remote work policy for staff should be encouraged but with limitations.

I wish we had more flexibility to work from home. I love coming into the office and brainstorming with other attorneys, and normally prefer to be here 5 days a week, but I live 25 miles away and the commute takes a toll when gas is \$5/gallon and it puts miles on my vehicle that I cannot afford to replace. I would love to have one or

two optional work from home days a week. That would help my mental health and give me some additional breathing room finance wise.

Also, I wish the state would consider putting sick time and vacation time into one bucket and calling it PTO (paid time off). When I worked in corporate America we were given 20 PTO days to use for either sick OR vacation. This made a huge difference in morale and people never needed to call in sick just to get a mental health day. I think the State of Kansas should do the same. It would make a huge difference for those of us with less than 5 years of experience to be able to enjoy some vacation time without needing to be sick.

Work from home

Flexibility with working from home time to time.

Seeing that working from home is a viable option and should be used as a selling point for future hires.

Work from home opportunities

We got a good director - best director since I worked at BIDS.

Having zoom as an option when travel to the office or court is an issue

Really love the flexibility to work from home. Working from home saves me an hour of drive time and at least \$20 in gas and tolls each day

use of Zoom technology

Zoom meetings, option to work from home and avoid commute time and high gas prices

Especially with the current price of fuel, it was nice to be able to work from home a few days a week.

flexible workload, zoom options for training and weekly meetings

We didn't change much as a result of Covid-19, although it would be nice to be able to work from home again, especially on days when we don't have court.

I wasn't here before COVID, but I think it's good that we don't have an open door office with clients and loved ones coming by whenever and expecting to speak to or meet with an attorney.

No, I believe Covid-19 negatively impacted our office. It undid the cohesiveness of the office.

virtual CLE/training

Work Remotely

Meetings and Court by Video/Zoom

None, COVID-19 has actually made some work more hard to do.

N/A - hired after worst parts Covid-19

Telework? I am not sure as I just started approximately 6 months ago.

Ability to work remotely if needed dependent upon office needs.

Online CLE's, training, and meetings with admin

Push to improve technology in the offices. Laptops were a tremendous help, and I hope every office can get them. A state-provided smartphone would also be a real asset.

I like the commitment to refurbishing and re-securing office areas, and I hope that continues as well. As a wishlist item on that front, I'd like some kind of keycard access uniform to all the entry doors in the office so we don't have to carry three or four physical keys.

Greater ability and support for working from home. Ability to have more meetings via Zoom.

Being able to work from home.

flexibility in schedule, use of phones/zoom for client meetings

Flexibility

webinar/videoconferencing capabilities have improved

Conducting court via Zoom on scheduling matters

The laptop computers, some working from home

Working from home on a hybrid schedule

We had some technological issues that absolutely needed to be addressed and they were during that time. It makes my job possible now, and it was impossible, the way it was set up before (poor to good internet speeds, etc.)

Opportunity to work remotely part-time

Keep dropping off mail to inmates at the Sheriff's administration office in the court building vs physically taking the mail to the jail administration office.

Closed lobby , less direct contact with people just showing up

being able to work from home

Flexibility to work from home when needed

NO

KEEPING THE FRONT DOOR LOCKED UNLESS WE HAVE A CLIENT COMING IN.

Flexibility to work at home when no court appearances are scheduled

Being able to work from home with flexibility was very helpful. Remote hearings and remote access to clients helped a lot.

Flexibility of work from home.

working from home. zoom hearings

Zoom for minor hearings so clients don't have to travel

Yes. Work from home is good. Office presence is good too though. I think BIDS should permit a hybrid approach in which work from home is permitted one day per week. The DA's Office permits work from home four days per month--why not have a similar policy?

More work from home opportunities

More flexibility to work from home. COVID isn't over yet.

Ability to work remotely more often

Remote working

I like having the option to do Zoom court hearings, particularly when nothing substantive is happening, and even meeting with clients via Zoom.

Work from home flexibility

Virtual CLEs and meetings, flexible schedules, more intentional written communication of expectations

The ability to work from home is a huge positive. Being able to bring several discs of evidence home and then sitting and watching/reading/listening to the evidence is a huge benefit. Knowing I can work from home (when I don't have court) is a huge benefit and allows me the time to just be comfortable and completely involved in the cases.

Zoom Meetings and Remote CLES from BIDS

Flexible work schedule

APPENDIX B

Narrative answers to the question: “What is one low or no-cost thing that could be done immediately that would improve morale in your office?”

(Reprinted as direct quotes with all original language and punctuation.)

Better intra-office communication tools, such as Slack

Hmm not sure.

Decrease workload.

Morale in my office is higher than it's ever been. We've got a good leader.

cleaning service

i don't know

We have a new Chief. I believe we are on the right track to improve everything in our office. My answers are based on the last few years with the prior Chief.

I don't know.

I can't think of anything low or no-cost ... I am feeling pretty good these days and hopefully others are as well...

Taco Tuesday!

Working from home once or twice a week and PTO rather than sick or vacation time.

work from home

Obtain/implement the modern case management software/system that has already been budgeted for. Create more opportunities for BIDS employees to network/collaborate with other offices, including in-person events.

Pizza party! (I have no idea...)

Group lunches at least once a month

Increasing communication, potentially through routine office-wide meetings

popcorn machine

Gym memberships

we could use a petty cash fund for filing expenses/certified mailing expenses

move office closer to others in team. currently in separate buildings

Facilitate better communication. Our office doesn't get any information from the Chief or Deputies and when we ask for information, we aren't provided it. It causes low morale and feelings of uncertainty in the office. On a scale of 1-10, I'd rate the communication from the leadership in the office as a 2. That is unacceptable.

Recognition/celebration programs or strategies.

We have funding for an additional attorney but are provided with no additional office space, so the position remains unfilled.

Create a pay scale so we have something to look forward to. Without a pay scale who knows when the next raise will come. It could be 3 or more years from now.

caseload limits

Office manager could learn to treat her staff with respect and be more professional.

Comp time

Opportunities for advancement/promotion and recognition of achievements and tenure.

N/A

Office chair

Some clarity on what a career track looks like with BIDS. Right now, everything still looks like it's being made up as we go along, which is not conducive to long-term planning.

Literally, more consistent communication from leadership.

Listening to ideas and complaints of all support staff members. And less favoritism.

Regular occurring breakfast meeting

I currently work in a wonderful office.

More people in the office daily

Bosses that don't take the job for the money/prestige/obligation. Bosses/supervisors that WANT to do the admin/supervisory things. Bosses that put the office over personal caseload. Bosses that don't "disappear" for weeks at a time in "trial prep" mode. Bosses that don't characterize celebrating birthdays/social opportunities within the office as stupid and unnecessary. Bosses that WANT to interact with their subordinates, to lead, to develop a supportive environment instead of relying on paperwork and forms and impersonal cold ideals.

More attorneys

Regular meetings with a supervising attorney

one-day Office Retreat

Respect

Better communication

N/a

Purchasing a watercooler.

Communication

We need a new refrigerator so I'm not wondering if my food that I bring from home will go bad if I leave it overnight. Also, we could do some more celebrative activities together, and I think we are working on that, and that's nothing that Topeka needs to be involved with, necessarily. I think overall, our support from Topeka and our overall morale has improved substantially over the last year (the pay increase really helped the incentive to not go out actively seeing what else is out there, occupation-wise. It takes a lot of stress off, as does the interaction and effort we have seen from people like Meryl Craver).

Morale is already getting better; we'll see

Uniformity is procedures

Unsure

More communication from upper management

Refrigerator

A supplied office lunch to show appreciation and support

Require the chiefs to do actual casework instead of micromanaging

JOKING WITH EACH OTHER, AS WE DO.

Once a quarter to have an "office afternoon off" to do something together!

Pizza

Firing toxic colleagues

There is nothing but more office space and more personnel

closer parking to the courthouse

gift cards for employees to use at businesses in their city with BIDS offices, not just Topeka

Vacation accommodations/coverage plan so I could feel like I could take time off without drowning in work before/after.

Nothing

A live music performance by a washed-out musician who otherwise performs at sketchy casinos and the like.

Allow more work from home opportunities flex scheduling say one day off per pay period. 8 days at 9 hours 9th day at 8 hours for 80 hours

New decor within the main parts of the offices seen by clients and witnesses. It's very outdated with old 1980's pictures and could use some fresh paint.

Reduction in caseload.

More flexibility to work from home on a PERMANENT basis!

More recognition of accomplishments and appreciation of good work. Actually have my work, like my court appearances or writing or skilled plea negotiation email chains , looked at by my bosses.

Clear communication of expectations

Consistently keeping an investigator on board would improve my morale.

Clearly communicate roles and expectations of office attorneys, staff, leadership, etc.

I think the morale in my office is very great and very high.

BIDS leadership promoting outside trainings through NITA, NCDC, and other advocacy trainings. Clarification as to what the new "PD II" and "PD III" positions are supposed to do in relation to attorneys still in "PD I" specifically within my individual office.

Housekeeping Services