

What areas/topics (if any) do you feel you need additional training and/or support with?



Survey participants were given the opportunity to respond however they wished. The general topic(s) of their responses were assigned to a general category. A brief Summary of what was mentioned for each category is below:

Agriculture/Conservation – having a better basis of Ag for when speaking with farmers. Technician training more ODA/SWCD focused and not just the NRCS workload. Trainings with Soils, Nutrient Managements Plans, CNMPs, and other nutrient related BMPs. Supports/Training that earns certification in things like Nutrient Management and GIS. Getting all technicians up to speed with specifications. Training that is more hands-on and in the field.

Education/Outreach/PR – training/support for community outreach. Annual statewide EDP. Running workshops for adults. Education for older kids. How to gain public interest. Outreach for specific groups/topics. Social media engagement & networking. State/Area training or support meetings.

Employee Support / HR – help with job postings and hiring. Website with statewide SWCD job postings. Mental health and Stress management support. HR support for employees outside of district/county when internal issues get ignored. Employee onboarding and development. Issues between generations

(old versus new employees). Employee management and evaluations. Doing same work as NRCS but getting paid less than they do. Cost of living support. Wages/Benefits not keeping up compared to the past. More modern HR support. Staff/conflict management. Info for new hires regarding OPERS and Student Loan Forgiveness. Support on public speaking, listening, problem solving, adapting to change. Support with getting a better work/life balance. Succession planning. Help with internal review, beehive, and non-traditional employees. Developing a mentor program for new employees.

Engineering/Design – wetland design/construction, construction erosion control, reading blueprints, installation. Design of different conservation practices. Being better informed when there are changes/updates to designs and specifications. Waterway design and construction.

Financials – quick books, cash basis, form 11, cost-share program reporting, increasing wages while maintaining benefits. Help with grants and ways of getting additional funding. Help with pay increases, cost of living increases. Help with budgeting. Dealing with sales tax, credit/debit cards, audits. Hinkle reporting.

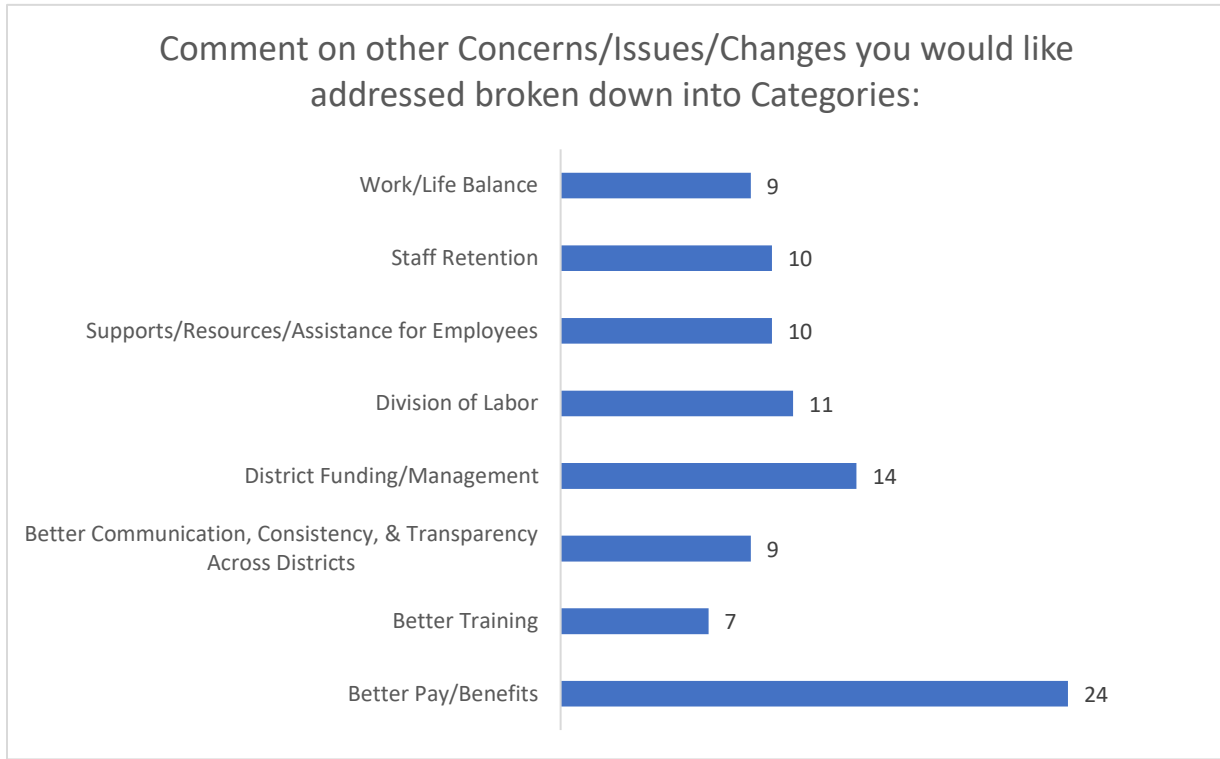
Records/Legal/Admin – annual plan of work. Working with other county agencies/districts, sharing ideas. Operations/Reporting. Communicating with legislature and promote needed activity amongst government officials. Business facilitation & psychology. Adjusting to new policies, mandates, and changes from the State. Civil litigation. Sunshine law. Legal help.

Surveying & Site Visits – site visits, manure complaints. Data collection/analysis. Surveying. Doing more surveying/data collection training specific to the tools that districts actually have. Monitoring for success of conservation practices.

Technology – ArcMap, AutoCAD, Civil 3D, website management, adobe suite, Excel, Teams, design tools. More hands-on training with these tools.

Urban/Drainage/Watershed – SWPPP reviews. Petition Ditch process and design. Watershed planning. Urban Stormwater training. EPA permits. Stormwater calculations. Site inspections. Drainage law. Wetland implementation. More support for urban/suburban programs. Nine Element Plans.

“Please use this space to comment on any other concerns/issues/changes you would like addressed in relation to your work and employment.”



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Work/Life Balance – More time to see family. More vacation time. Better/Fairer policies in regards to time off. Working a 4-day work week while maintaining current salary. More flexibility/opportunity to work from home. More paid leave similar to benefits that our federal counterparts earn. More flexibility in schedules and how leave is earned. More flexible work hours. Ability to earn overtime instead of comp time.

Staff Retention – employees getting better pay/benefits by transferring to NRCS. Large work load, then lack of proper support/training for employees leading to turnover. Temporary funding from programs/grants leading to job insecurity. Have been called ‘boots on the ground’ and ‘frontline’ workers, but receive none of the supports/benefits/pay that those at ODA, OFSWCD, NRCS, etc. do. Employees burning out. New expectations be added regularly on top of previous work. Blurred lines of roles/responsibilities leading to employees not knowing where they stand. Help with funding to hire more staff and increase wages. Having

pay scales or promotions for employees so they don't see SWCD as a stepping stone towards something different. Keeping wages worthwhile for those with degrees/experience.

Supports/Resources/Assistance for Employees – Unable to argue for better pay/benefits/conditions. No 'HR' support for employees. Having to continually seek guidance from outside of the office. Inconsistencies in what resources are available and from who. Trouble finding an employee's or district's 'niche' amongst other coworkers/agencies/etc. No centralized support structure for issues. Staff/Boards/Districts pushing religious/political ideologies & agendas. Not speaking up about issues due to fear of reprisal. No voice against management. No advancement opportunities or guarantees that pay will keep up with inflation. Being given work without the proper training on how.

Division of Labor – Regularly been handed down work from ODA/OFSWCD/etc without a say in the matter. No clear expectations for individual staff members. Being forced to take on tasks/responsibilities that are outside of their expertise/duties. Lack of consistent responsibilities or job titles across districts. Increased workloads without the backing of support/staff/funding to get it done. SWCD's asked to 'make it work' when given work by ODA/USDA/etc. but don't have the resources/funding/benefits that they do. Having to follow NRCS guidelines but given little support/training/help in doing so. Feeling like partnerships are 'one-sided'. Staff having to cover multiple roles in a district.

District Funding/Management – Constant need to beg for money from County Commissioners, Legislature, etc. Existence of SWCDs mandated by ORC, but funding/budget for them is not. Instability/Inconsistency of funding, difficulty of long-term planning. Having to constantly be on the lookout for new funding opportunities. Having to balance need for pay raises with possible future needs. Funding from state not consistent with workload/needs of each district. Districts not given the freedom to manage things the way that makes sense for them, but receive no support from state to do things their way. Need for change/rework of how districts are funded. Boards/Supervisors not having the experience/knowledge to make informed decisions about staffing/pay/topics/etc.

Better Communication, Consistency, & Transparency Across Districts – Need for consistent guidance on job duties, pay grades, etc. across counties. No consistency on equipment or software used across districts. Better ways of communicating and sharing resources across districts. Need for state-wide communication and support. Transparency/Consistency of work loads across counties. Desire for centralized location/webpage for sharing

information/resources. Transparency of wages across districts. Guidance on providing fair/equitable pay across counties.

Better Training – More training in financial aspects from people who do the same/similar jobs. Trainings that actually contribute towards certifications and pay increases. Help with getting new employees onboarded without overwhelming them. More/Better training for urban programs and technicians. No training/support on what tends to become day to day operational work. More training from state and/or other agencies when required to follow their program/specifications. Training for more specialized areas of expertise. TDPs feeling outdated and not consistent with what districts are actually doing or using.

Better Pay/Benefits – Need for better wages/benefits that are more in line with the private sector. Need for defined pay grades, consistent increases, and advancements/promotions. Too much focus on ‘fringe’ benefits that don’t help pay bills. Desire for employer match towards deferred compensation. Desire for paid overtime. Consistent expectations for what is required to earn higher wages. Need for fair compensation. Need for inflation/cost of living pay raises. Being underpaid for job duties compared to other agencies/districts. Wage Increases/Advancements are slow in coming. Desire for fair pay grades across state.