

Research Participant Characteristics

Based on discussions with advisory committee members and key informants, recruitment of study participants focused primarily on environment- and health-based agencies, but participants from other agencies were not excluded. The 37 participants had experience working for 13 different agencies (see Table 2); several interviewees had experience at multiple agencies, which resulted in a total of 55 agency work experiences.

It is noteworthy that 12 of the participants had experience working for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In addition, five participants were members of the Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps; members of the PHS work for a variety of agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) while serving in the PHS.

Table 2: Number of Interviewees with Experience at Various Federal Agencies

Agency	Number of Participants
US Department of Health & Human Services (HHS)	34
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), including the Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry (ATSDR) and National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH)	20
Food & Drug Administration (FDA), including the Center for Drug Evaluation & Research (CDER) and the National Center for Toxicological Research (NCTR)	6
Indian Health Service (IHS)	3
National Institutes of Health (NIH)	4
Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)	1
US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)	1
US Department of Agriculture (USDA)	3
US Department of Commerce, including the National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST)	1
US Department of Defense (DoD)	4
US Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)	1
US Department of Labor, including the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)	1
US Department of Veterans Affairs, including the Veterans Health Administration (VHA)	2
US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	8

Participants were asked to provide the position titles of all of the scientific positions they held at federal agencies. They provided the following titles:

Activity Chief
 Associate Director for [Topic Area]
 Associate Director of Health
 Behavioral Scientist
 Branch Chief
 Clinical Associate
 Commander
 Director of [Topic Area] Health Program
 Director of Policy
 Division Director
 Environmental Analyst
 Environmental Engineer
 Epidemiologist
 Health Scientist
 Health Scientist Administrator
 Health Statistician
 Health Systems Specialist
 Industrial Hygienist
 Institutional Environmental Health Officer
 Mathematical Statistician
 Medical Director
 Medical Epidemiologist
 Medical Officer
 Project Officer
 Research Biologist
 Research Chemist
 Research Scientist

Senior Advisor
 Senior Economist
 Senior Epidemiologist
 Senior Research Health Scientist
 Senior Research Scientist
 Service Unit Sanitarian
 Statistician
 Survey Statistician
 Team Leader
 Veterinary Medical Officer

Information about participants' sex, race, and age was compared to corresponding information from the OPM's Demographic Report of 2006⁶² regarding government employees in the "professional" category, whose description matched the study's recruitment criteria most closely. OPM defines professional occupations as follows:

Occupations that require knowledge in a field of science or learning typically acquired through education or training pertinent to the specialized field, as distinguished from general education. The work in a professional occupation requires the exercise of discretion, judgment, and personal responsibility for the application of an organized body of knowledge that is constantly studied to make discoveries and interpretations, and to improve the data, materials, and methods."⁶²

Comparisons between the sex, race, and age of research participants and professional federal workers are detailed in Tables 3–5.

Table 3: Sex of Interview Participants and Professional Federal Workers

Sex	No. of Participants	% of Participants	% from 2006 OPM Report
Male	22	59.5%	56.9%
Female	15	40.5%	43.1%
TOTAL	37	100%	100%

Table 4: Race of Interview Participants and Professional Federal Workers

Race	Participants	% of Participants	% from 2006 OPM Report
Non-Minority	37	100%	75.5%
Black	0	0%	9.4%
Hispanic	0	0%	4.9%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0%	8.8%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	0%	1.4%
TOTAL	37	100%	100%

Study participants were asked which of four age ranges they fell into. OPM uses different age ranges, and it reports age distribution for the entire federal civilian non-postal executive-branch workforce, rather than just for workers falling into the professional category. Table 5 describes the age distributions of the participant pool and the federal civilian non-postal executive-branch workforce.

Table 5: Age of Interview Participants and Federal Workers

Age Range for Participants	No. of Participants	% of Participants	Age Range from 2006 OPM Report	% from 2006 OPM Report
< 35 years	0	0%	< 31 years	11%
36-45 years	2	0.5%	31-40 years	18.8%
46-55 years	15	40.5%	41-44 years	11.8%
> 55 years	20	54.0%	45-49 years	16.8%
TOTAL	37	100%	50-54 years	18.1%
			> 55 years	23.5%
			TOTAL	100%

Because the OPM report does not calculate average length of government service for the professional category alone, the average number of years of service for all federal civilian non-postal executive-branch employees, which is 14.6 years,⁶² was used. The interview participants had a longer average length of service, 16.9 years. Table 6 describes the years of service of research participants.

Table 6: Interview Participants' Length of Government Service		
Years of Service	No. of Participants	% of Participants
0-5 years	3	8%
6-10 years	10	27%
11-15 years	2	5%
16-20 years	7	19%
20+ years	15	41%
TOTAL	37	100%

Table 7 describes the advanced degrees held by participants (several held more than one). OPM reports that 43% of federal civilian non-postal executive-branch employees hold at least a bachelor's degree;⁶³ this compares to 100% of research participants who have more than a bachelor's degree, but that outcome is to be expected since having an advanced degree was one of the study recruitment criteria.

Table 7: Advanced Academic Degrees Held by Participants		
Advanced Academic Degrees	No. of Participants	% of Participants
MA	3	4.7%
MF	1	1.6%
MPH	14	22%
MS	10	15.6%
MD	13	20%
PhD	20	31.3%
DVM	1	1.6%
ScD	2	3.2%