

Office of Internal Audit

2025 Annual Ethics Survey

November 2025

City Auditor

Stan Sewell, CPA, CGFM, CFE





OFFICE OF INTERNAL AUDIT

Stan Sewell, City Auditor

November 18, 2025

To: Mayor Tim Kelly
City Council Members

Subject: 2025 Annual Ethics Survey

Integrity and ethical values are an integral part of the City's process to achieve desired goals. To evaluate the effectiveness of the work environment, the Office of Internal Audit conducted an anonymous survey to determine employee opinions of the City's work environment. Survey questions primarily relate to ethical culture. However, we have included some questions that pertain to the broader work environment. A similar survey has been conducted the last several years allowing for some trend analysis. Thirty-two percent of employees responded to the survey (908 individuals). Survey responses were solicited from October 17, 2025, to November 3, 2025.

The position classifications of respondents this year were consistent with prior years. Approximately two-thirds classified themselves as staff, and one-third classified as middle management.¹ The majority of respondents believe their supervisor demonstrates high ethical standards, believe their department's policies and procedures help them do their job effectively, believe their job responsibilities and reporting relationships have been clearly established and communicated to them, and know how to report fraud, waste and abuse.²

Perception Differences Based on Classification

- Regarding whether wrongdoing would stop if reported, fewer staff level employees (52%) thought wrongdoing would stop than middle management (63%) or upper management (69%).³

¹ Work Environment Survey question 1.

² Work Environment Survey questions 3, 6, 7 & 11.

³ Work Environment Survey question 4.

- Fewer staff level employees (55%) believe they will not experience retaliation if they report wrongdoing than middle management (60%) or upper management (74%).⁴
- Fewer staff level employees (77%) believe their department's policies and procedures help them do their job effectively than middle management (81%) or upper management (83%).⁵
- Regarding satisfaction with training opportunities, fewer staff level employees (69%) are satisfied than middle management (77%) or upper management (90%).⁶

Ethical Standards and Reporting Misconduct (Prior Year Comparison)

- Slightly less respondents believe their supervisor demonstrates high ethical standards (84% in 2025 vs 85% in 2024)⁷;
- Slightly less respondents are confident wrongdoing would stop if they reported it (56% in 2025 vs 58% in 2024)³;
- Slightly more respondents believe they would experience retaliation if they reported wrongdoing (19% in 2025 vs 17% in 2024)⁴; and
- Slightly less respondents indicated they know how to report fraud, waste and abuse (91% in 2025 vs 93% in 2024)⁸.

Job Clarity and Resources (Prior Year Comparison)

- Slightly more respondents think their department's policies and procedures help them do their job effectively (79% in 2025 vs 78% in 2024)⁵;
- Slightly less respondents believe their job responsibilities and reporting relationships have been clearly established and communicated (87% in 2025 vs 88% in 2024)⁹; and
- Perceptions on whether employees are satisfied with training opportunities (72%) were unchanged from 2024.¹⁰

⁴ Work Environment Survey question 5.

⁵ Work Environment Survey question 6.

⁶ Work Environment Survey question 8.

⁷ Work Environment Survey question 3.

⁸ Work Environment Survey question 11.

⁹ Work Environment Survey question 7.

¹⁰ Work Environment Survey question 8.

**Performance Evaluations
(Prior Year Comparison)**

- More respondents indicated they received a periodic job evaluation or performance appraisal (82% in 2025 vs 69% in 2024)¹¹. Additionally, a notable positive trend is the increase of annual job performance appraisals from 47% in 2021 to 82% in 2025.¹¹
- Perceptions on whether employees feel their job evaluation was beneficial (63%) were unchanged from 2024.¹²

**Overall Opinion
(Prior Year Comparison)**

- Less respondents feel having a well-run City is a top priority for the City's leadership (81% in 2025 vs 84% in 2024)¹³.

Summary graphs displaying the results of our work environment survey are attached. Detail data can be obtained in Excel format on the City's website (<https://chattanooga.gov/stay-informed/audit-reports/internal-audit-surveys>). We encourage analysis of the raw data to obtain a more in depth understanding of perceptions by applying various filters (such as comparing current year to prior year for individual departments).

The issues discussed in this report are not the result of an audit performed in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Had we performed such an audit, additional issues might have been reported.

Sincerely,

Stan Sewell, CPA, CGFM, CFE
City Auditor



Attachment

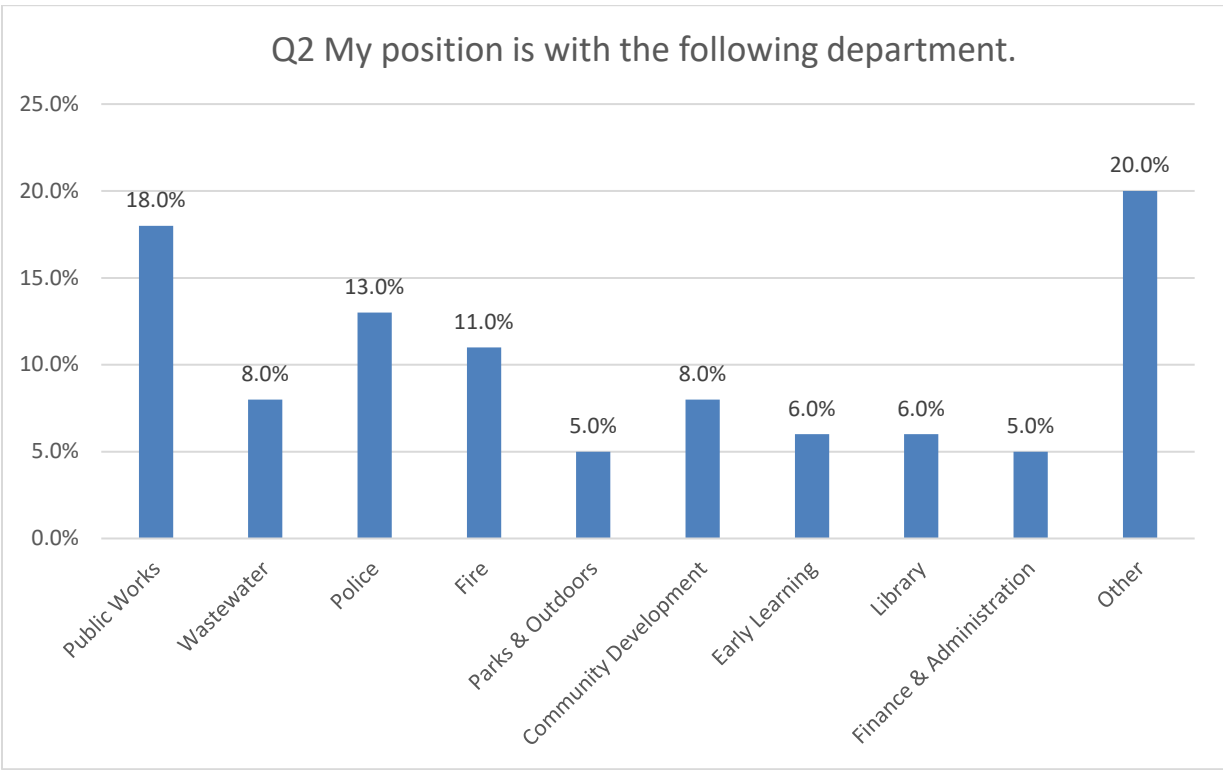
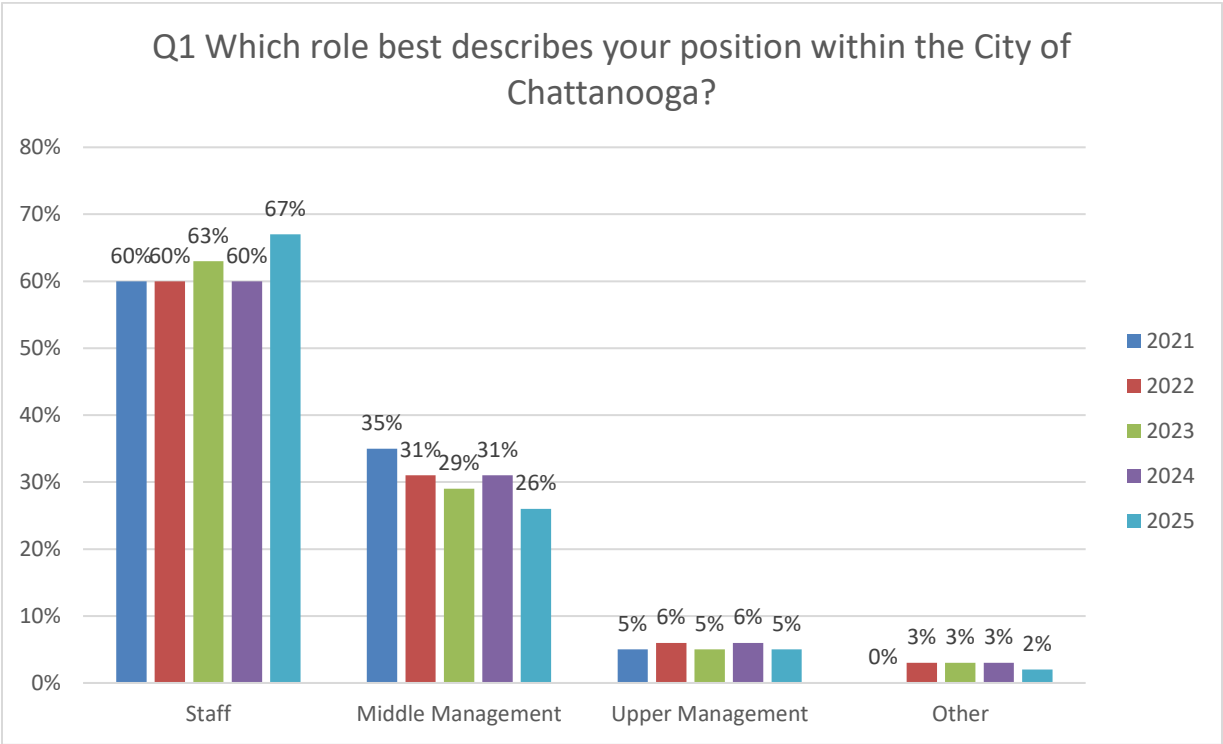
cc: Audit Committee
 Kevin Roig, Chief of Staff
 Mande Green, Chief Operating Officer
 Department Heads

¹¹ Work Environment Survey question 9.

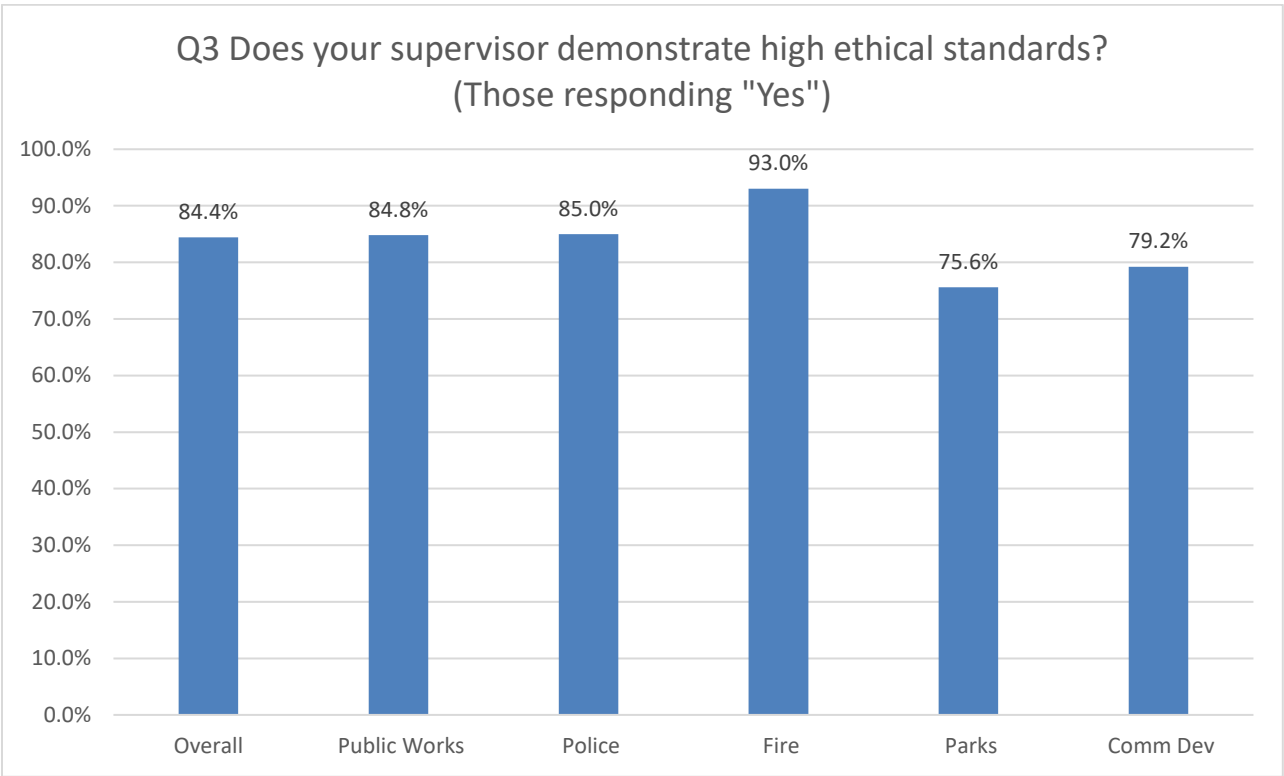
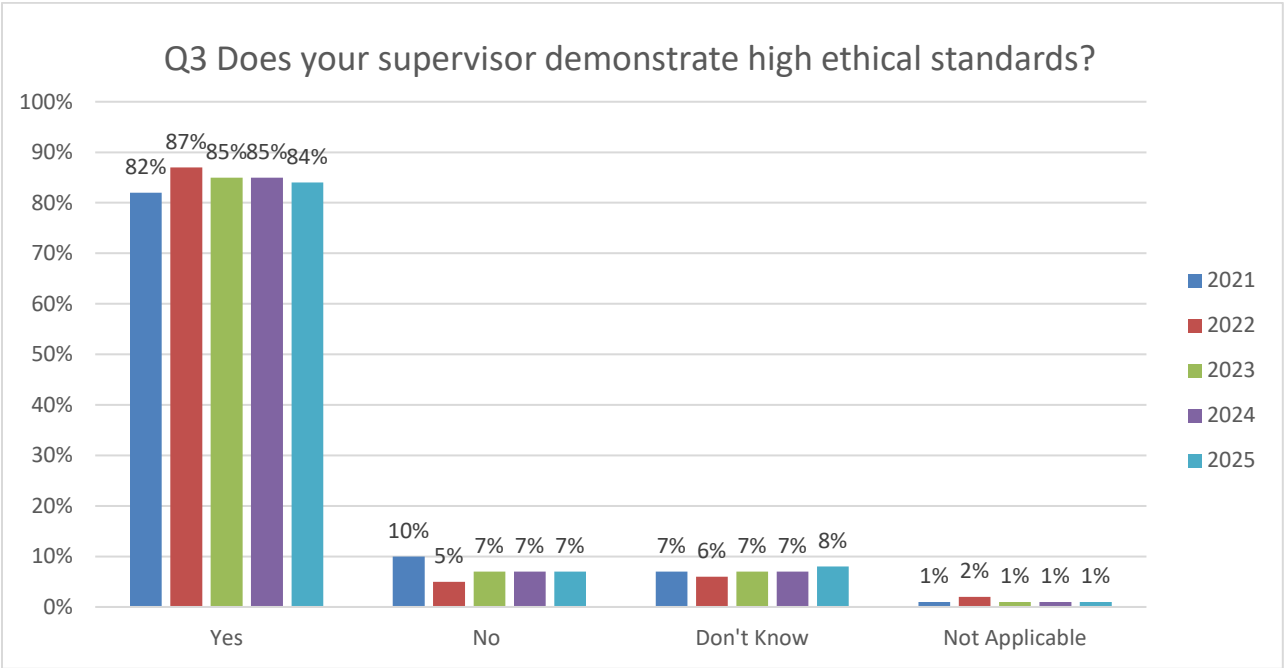
¹² Work Environment Survey question 10.

¹³ Work Environment Survey question 12.

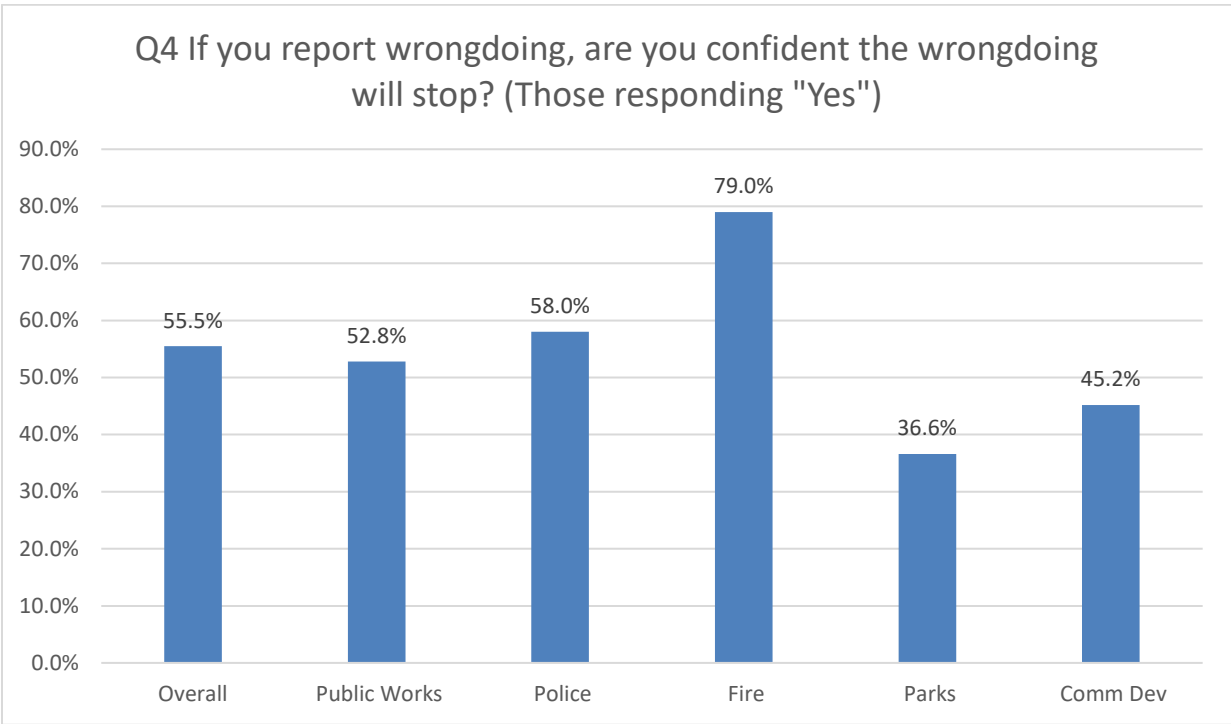
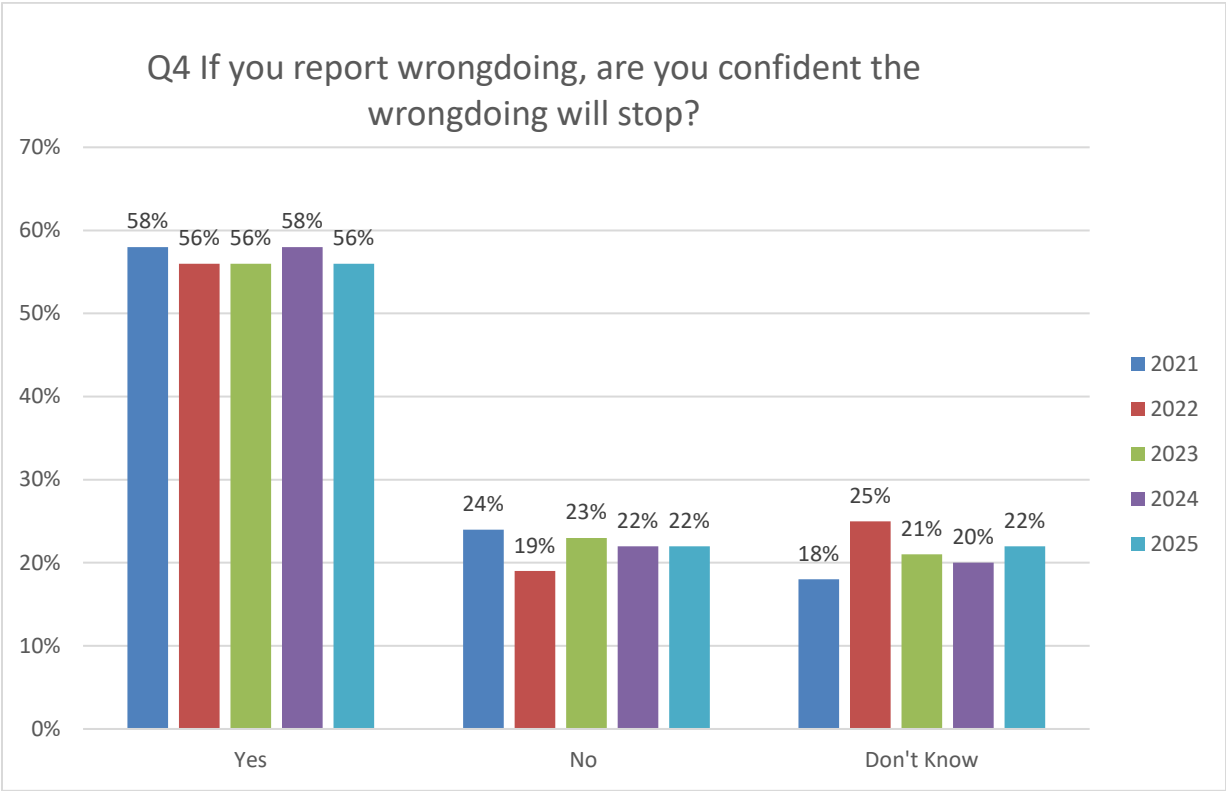
City of Chattanooga Work Environment Survey 2025



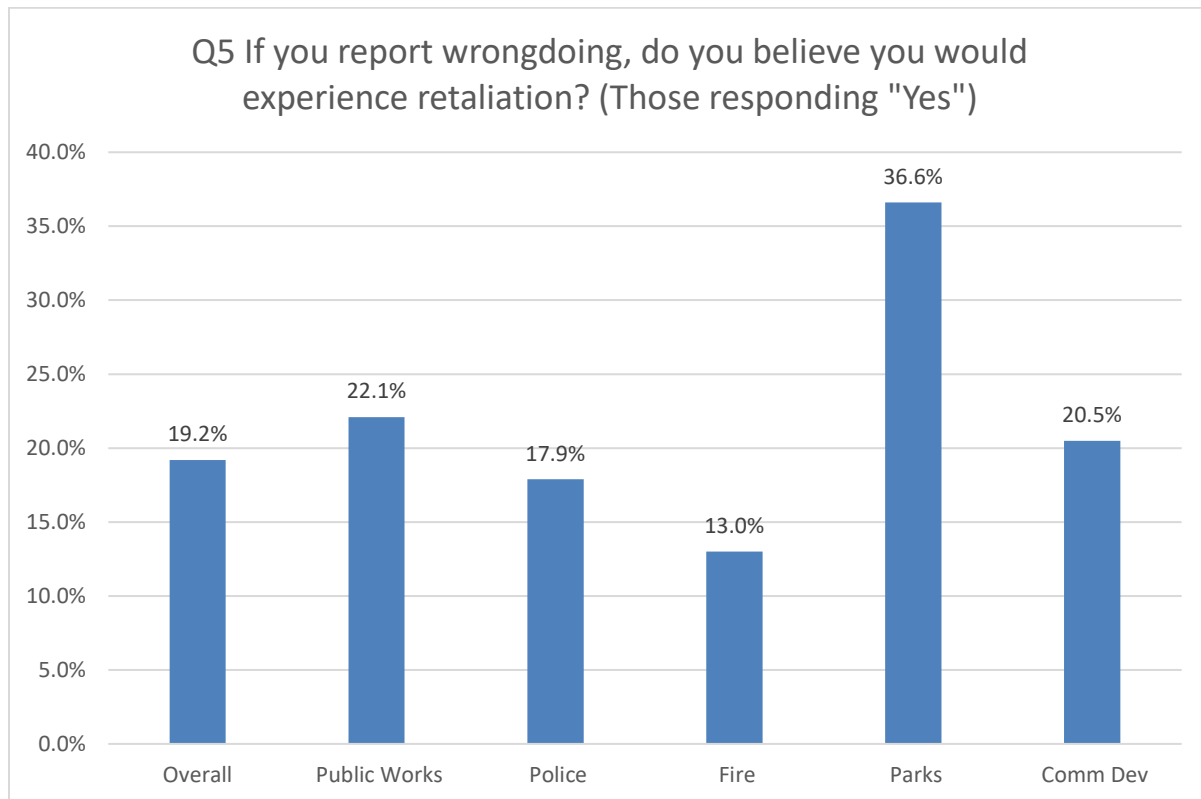
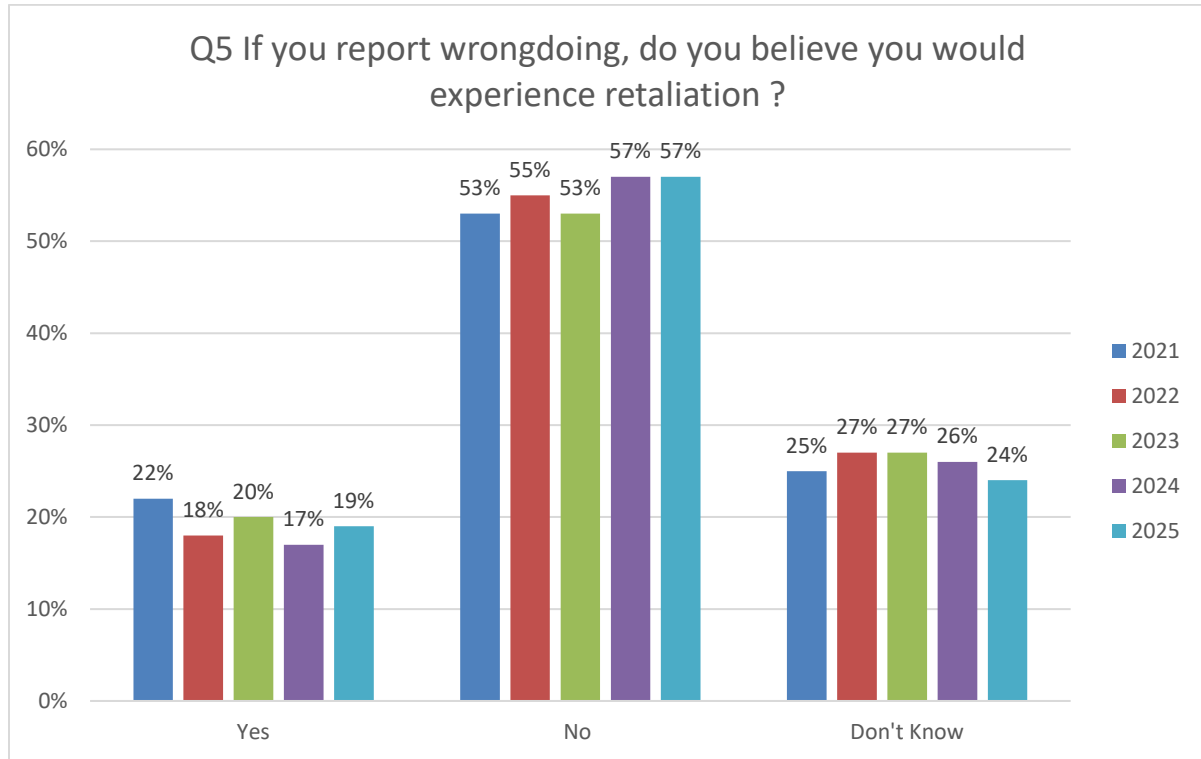
City of Chattanooga Work Environment Survey 2025



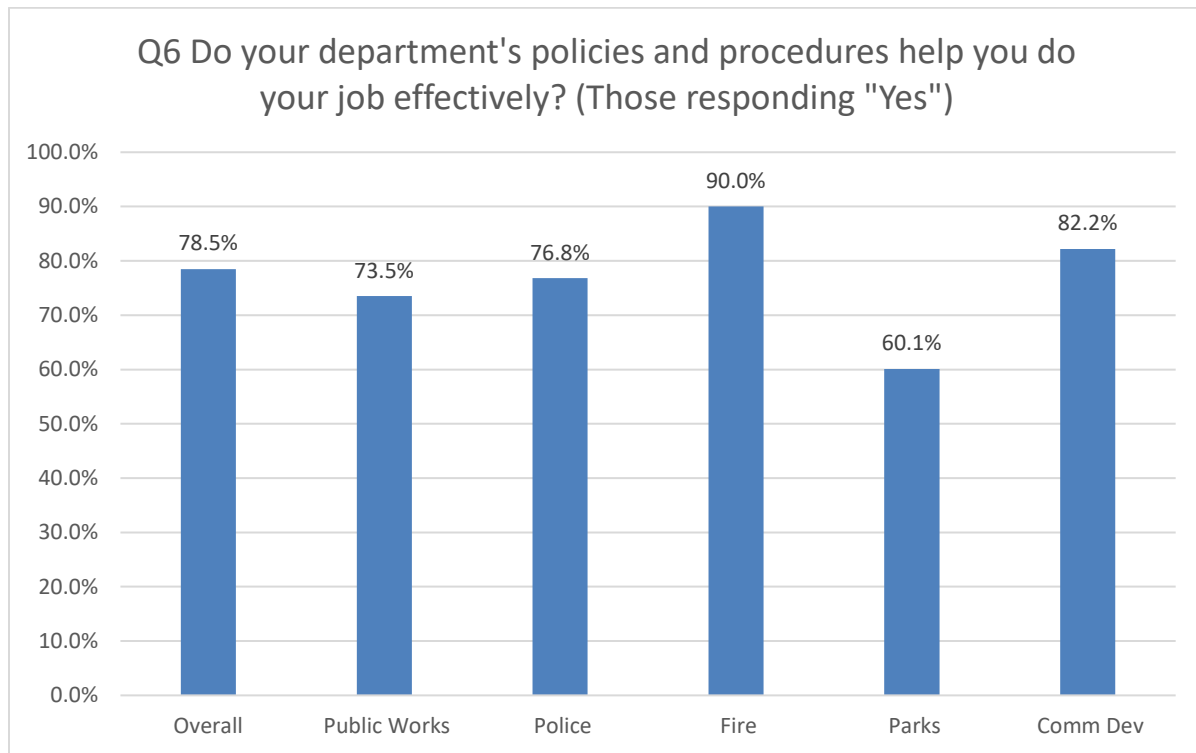
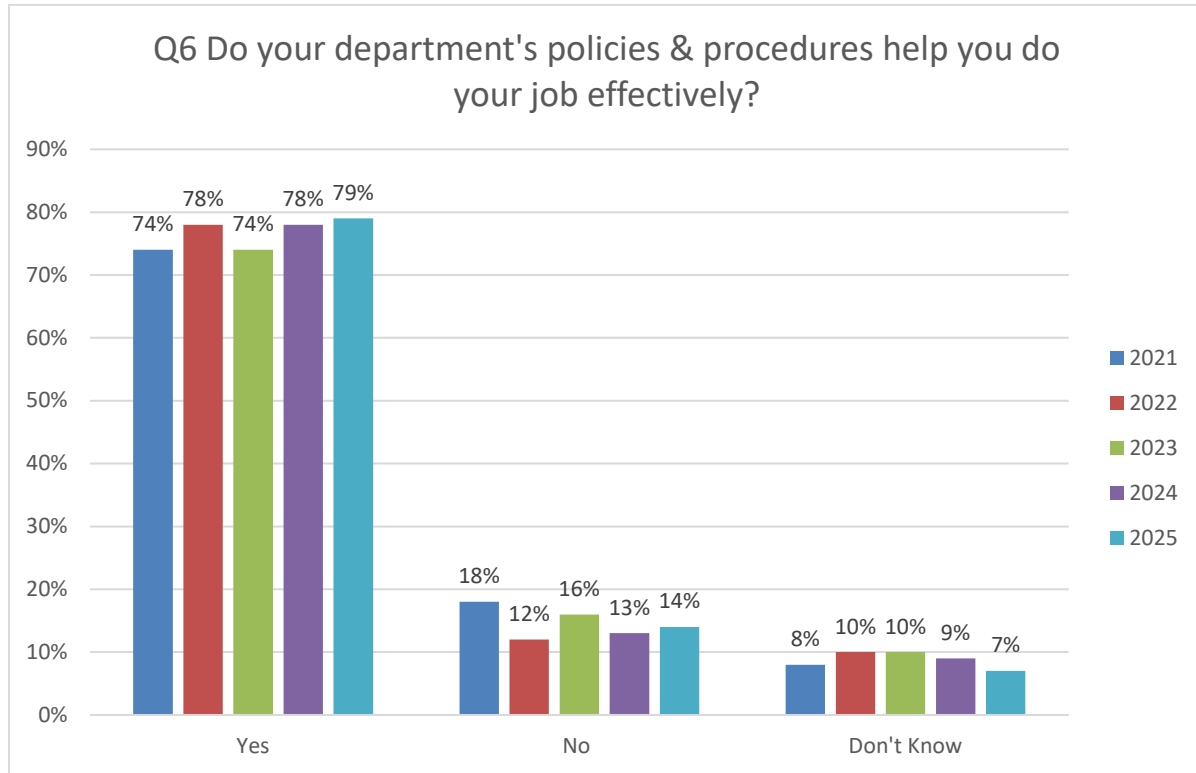
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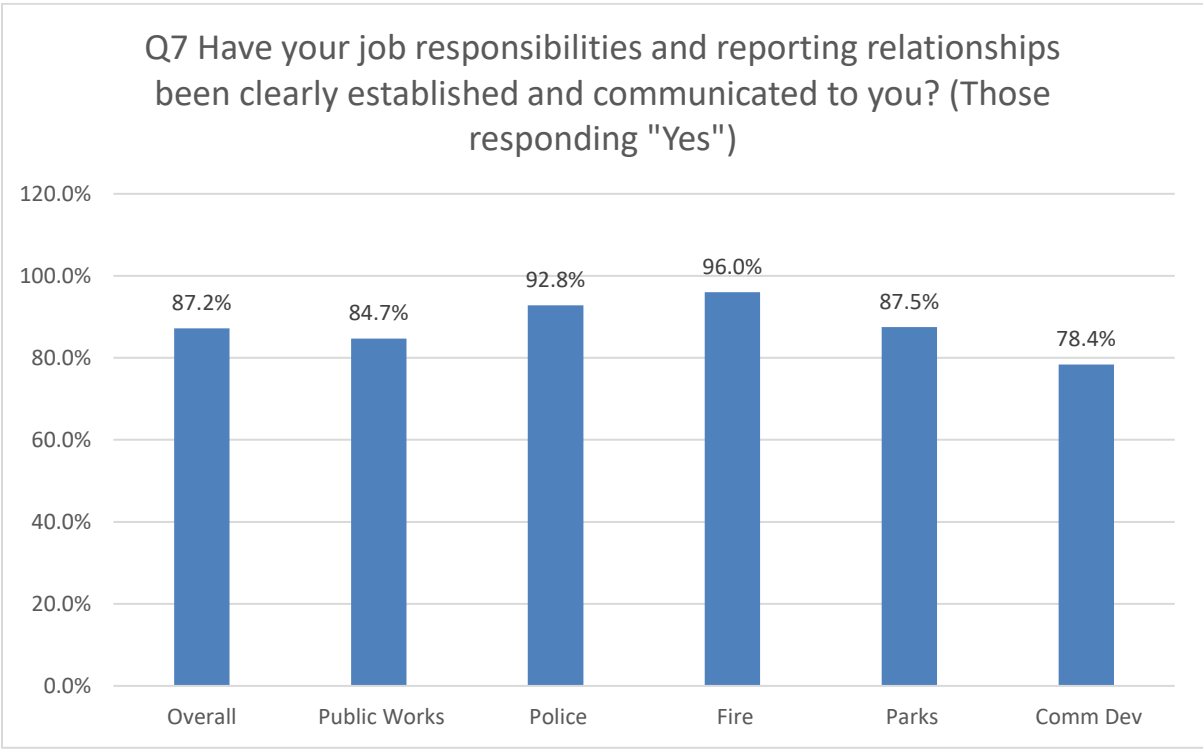
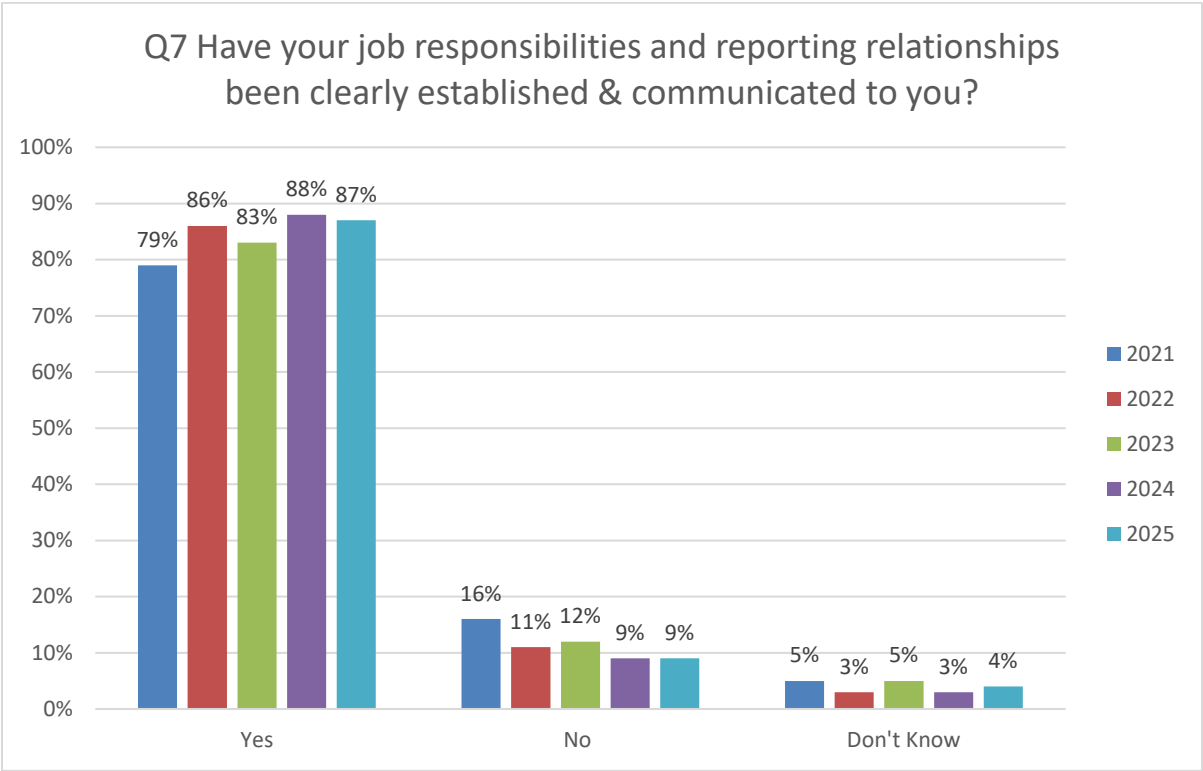
City of Chattanooga Work Environment Survey 2025



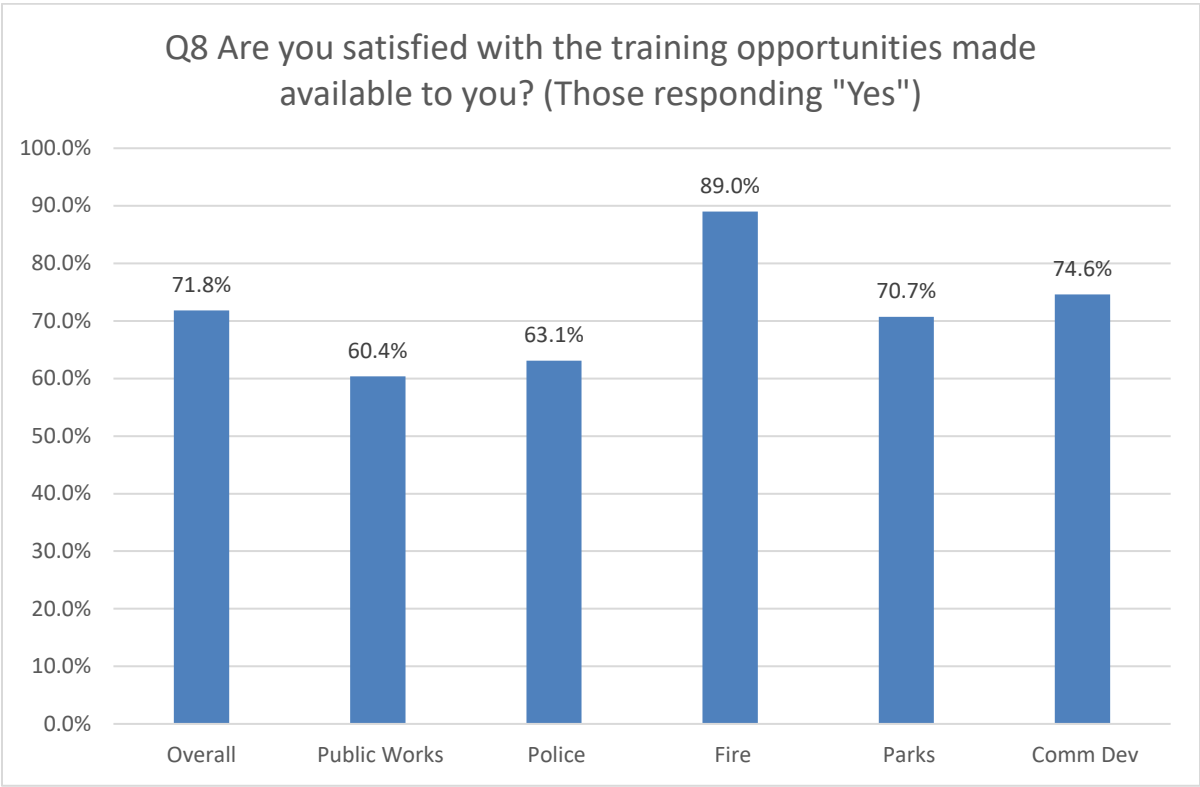
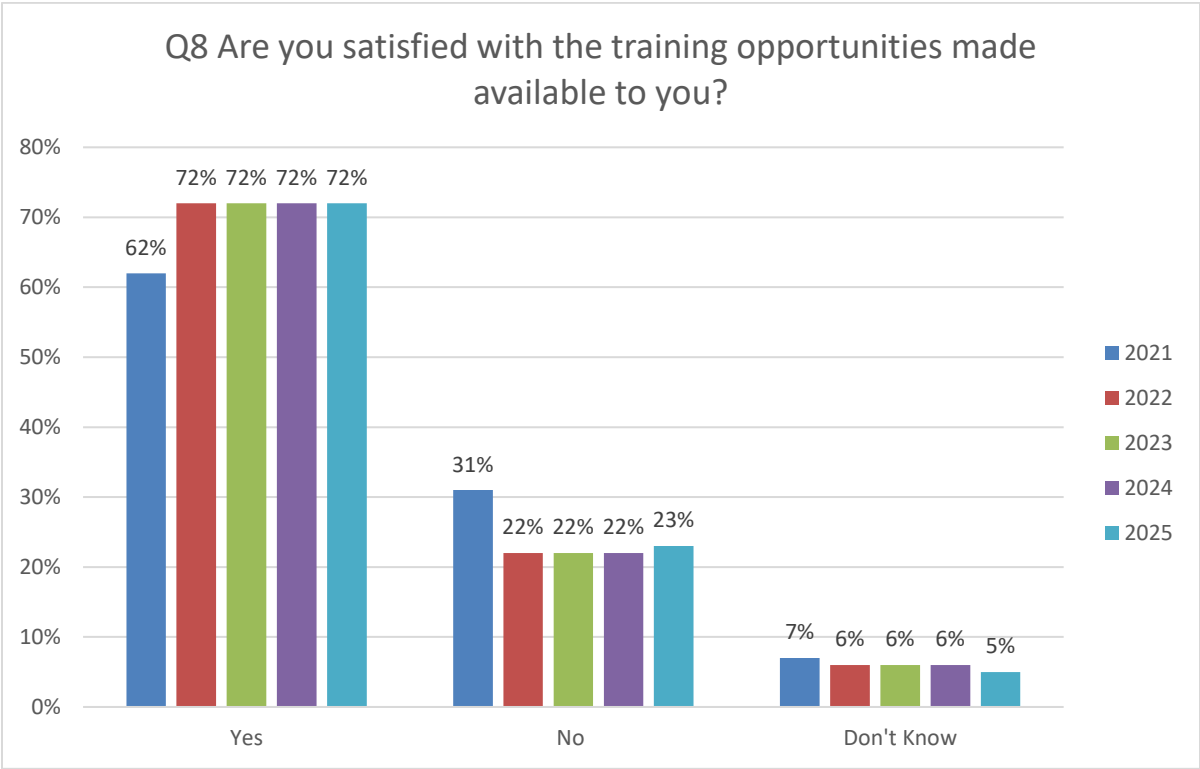
City of Chattanooga Work Environment Survey 2025



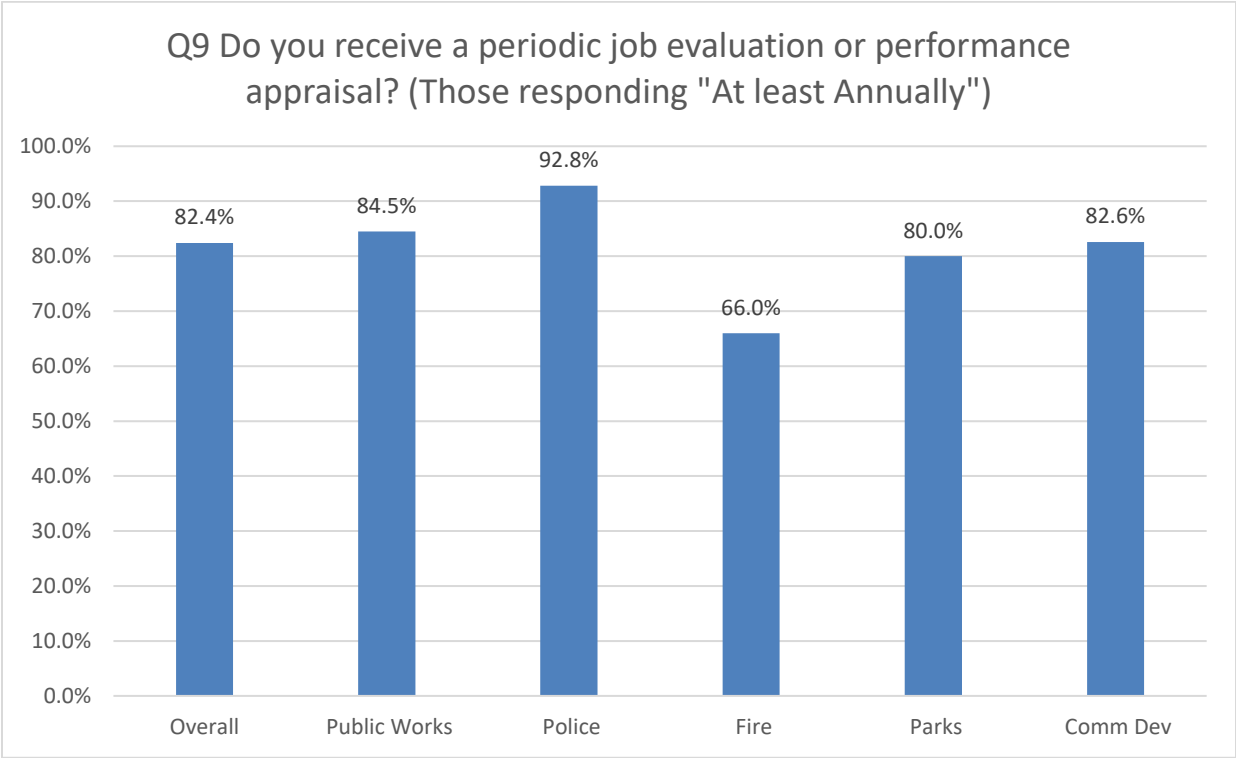
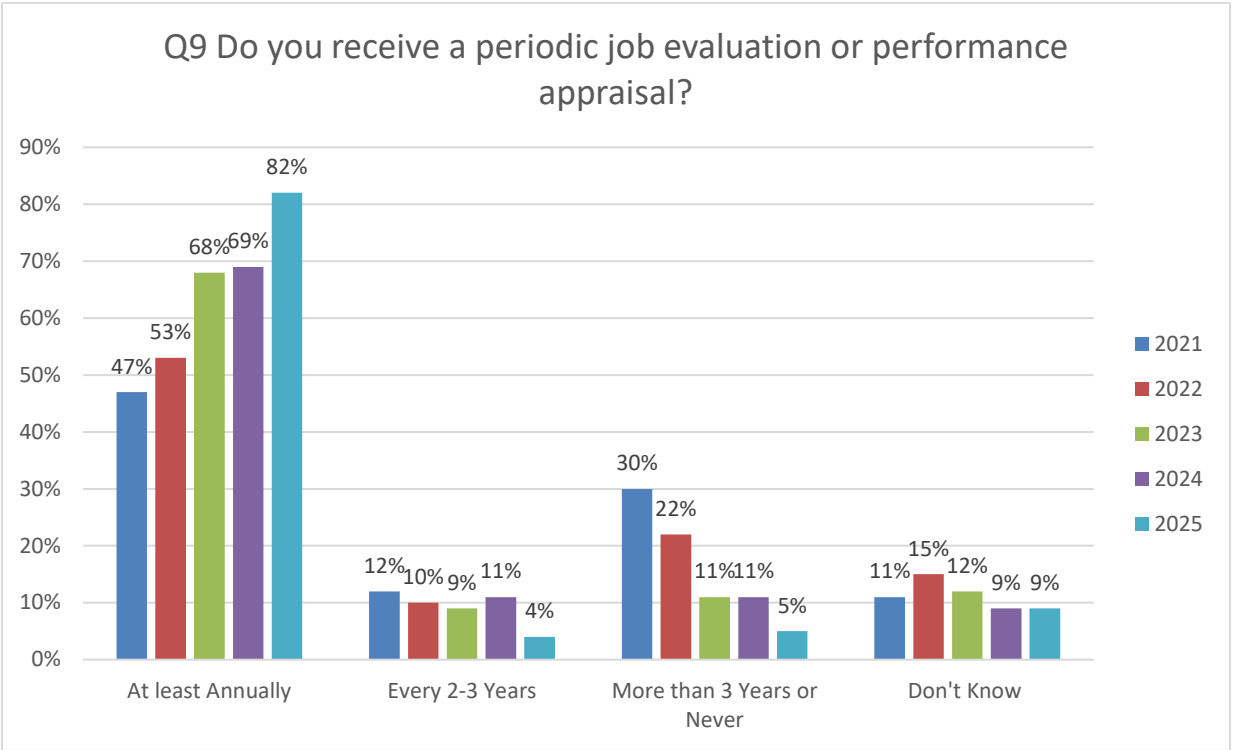
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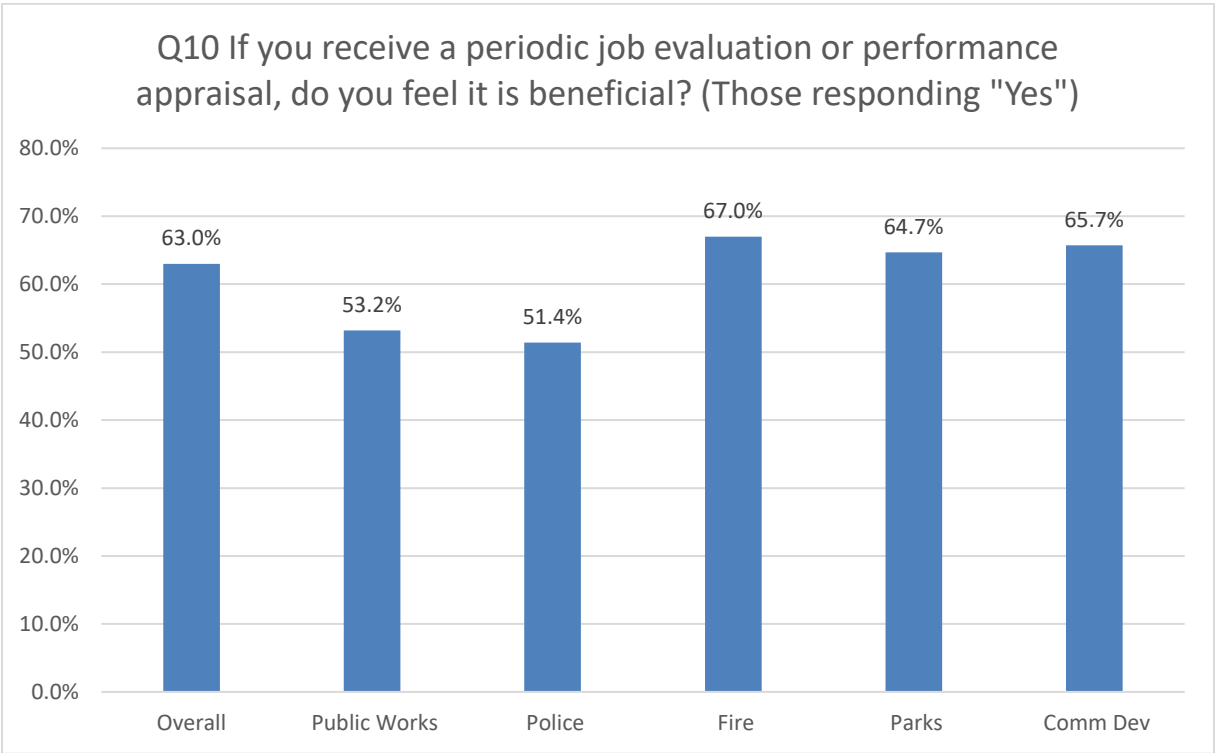
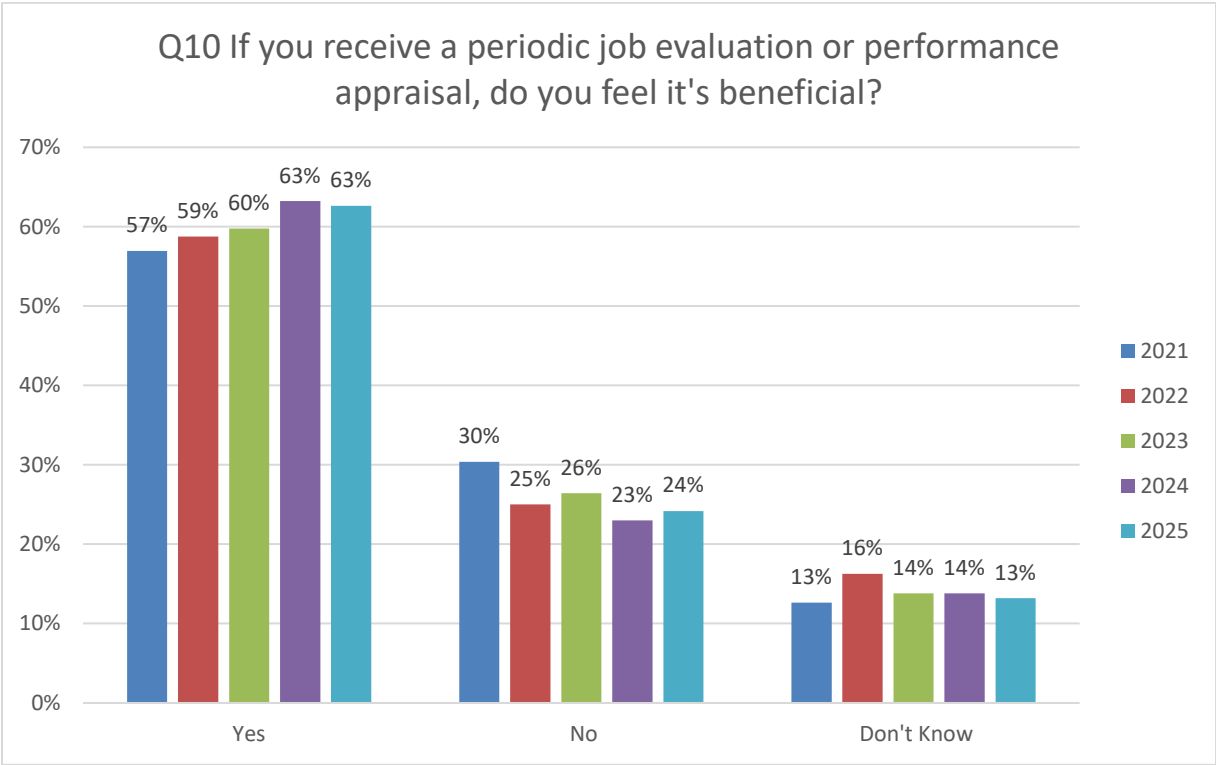
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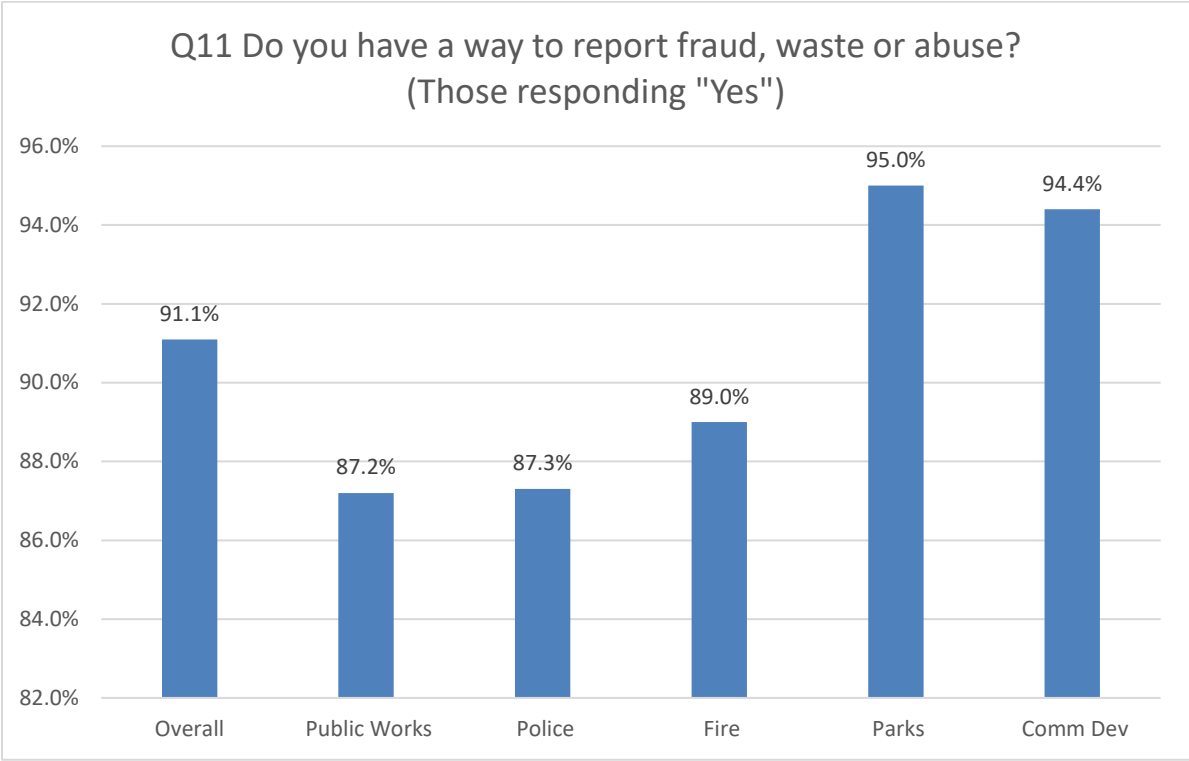
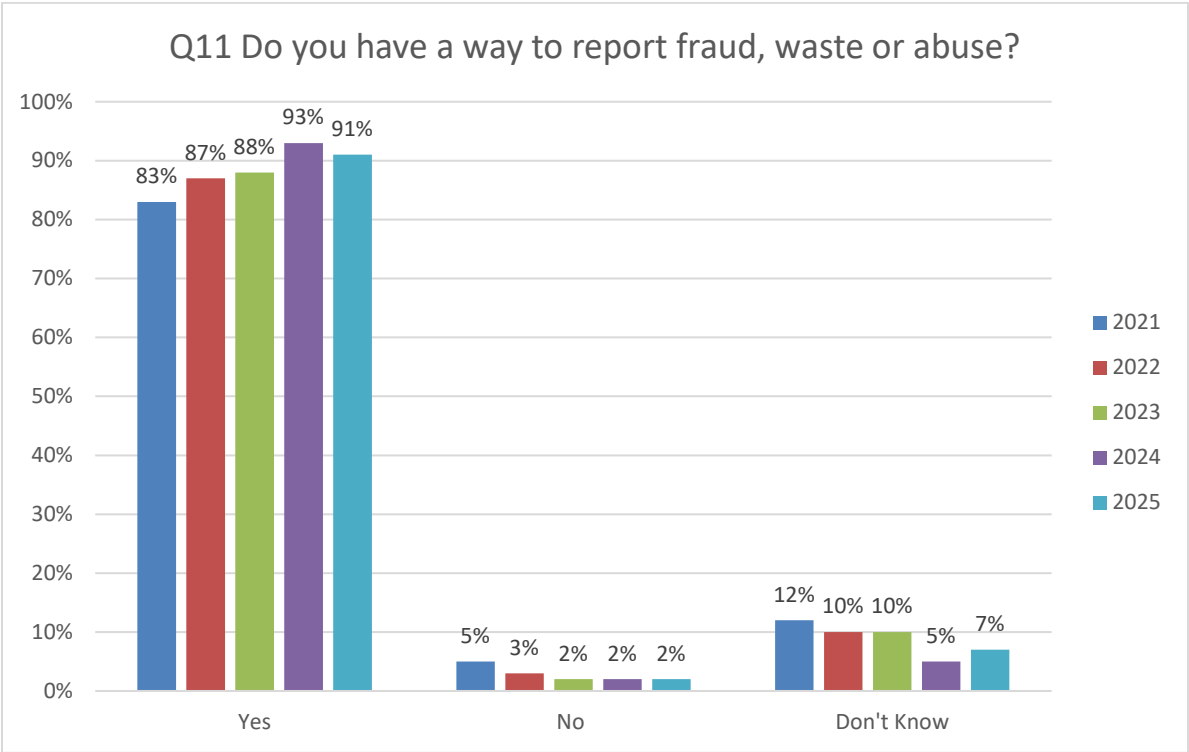
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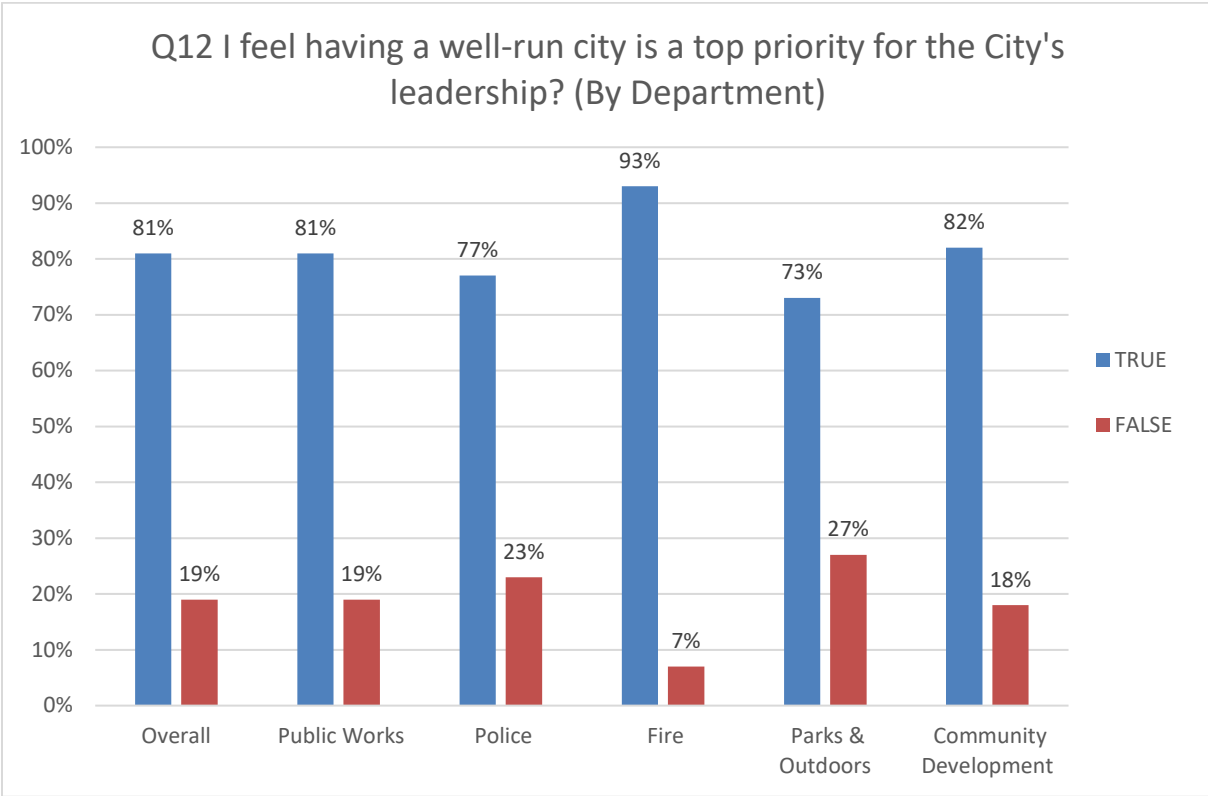
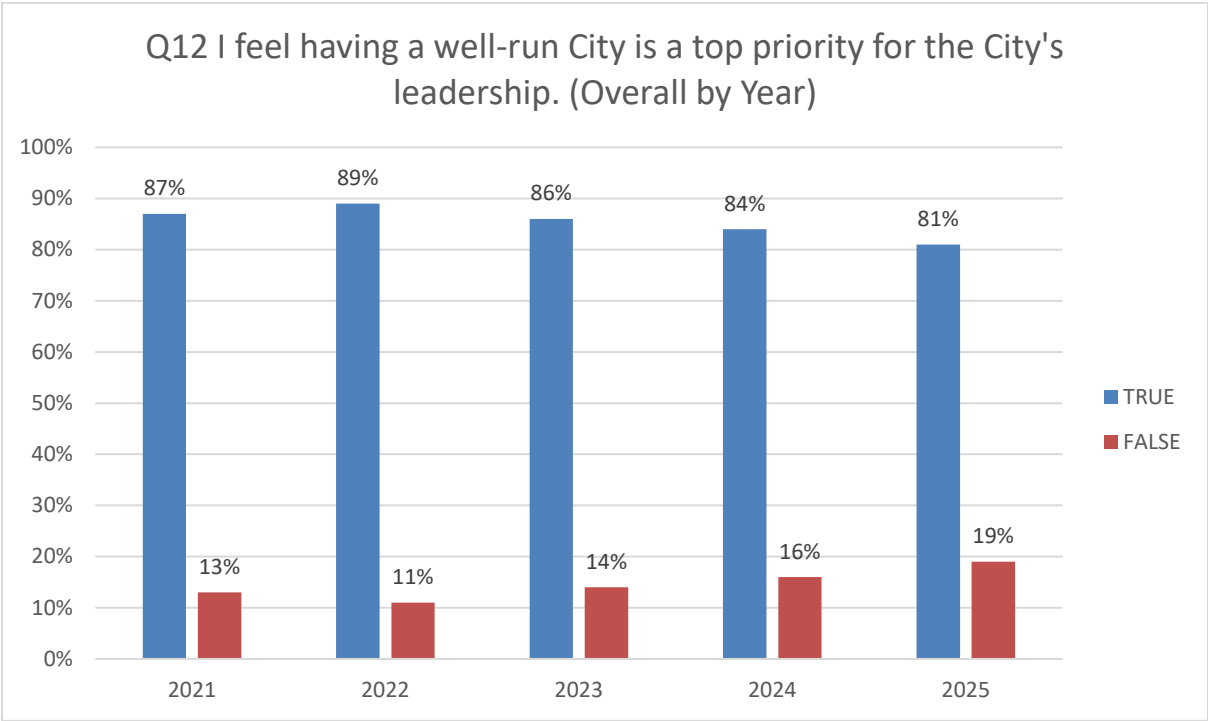
City of Chattanooga Work Environment Survey 2025



City of Chattanooga Work Environment Survey 2025



City of Chattanooga Work Environment Survey 2025



City of Chattanooga Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Hotline

Internal Audit's Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Hotline gives employees and citizens an avenue to report misconduct, waste or misuse of resources in any City facility or department.

Internal Audit contracts with a hotline vendor, Navex Global, to provide and maintain the reporting system. The third party system allows for anonymous reports. All reports are taken seriously and responded to in a timely manner. Reports to the hotline serve the public interest and assist the Office of Internal Audit in meeting high standards of public accountability.

To make a report, call 1-877-338-4452 or visit our website:

www.chattanooga.gov/internal-audit