



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DOJ OIG Releases Interactive Survey Results of DOJ Litigating Attorneys and Immigration Judges on Work Experiences during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of an interactive dashboard with results from surveys of more than 4,600 DOJ litigating attorneys and Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) judges on work experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. These surveys were conducted from May 17 to June 6, 2021.

The results of these surveys by the DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG) describe how litigating attorneys and EOIR judges perceived the effects of the pandemic on the workforce, coordination efforts, and cases. The results also detail these attorneys' and judges' preferences and expectations for a post-pandemic work environment.

Results of the surveys include:

Pandemic Operating Environment. Over 65% of attorneys responded that they have teleworked full-time during the pandemic with ad hoc trips into the office for mission-critical work. A majority of these attorneys reported that they received sufficient access to guidance, equipment, software, and personnel. By contrast, about 37% of immigration judges indicated that they have teleworked full-time. EOIR judges described being able to complete certain activities while teleworking like legal research and checking emails; however, many judges described frustration over the inability to hear cases while teleworking.

- **Workload Changes.** Over 95% of attorneys noted that their workload increased or stayed the same during the pandemic, and while 40% reported a negative effect to work-life balance, only 24% indicated a decrease in job satisfaction. Attorneys' comments reflected that while teleworking provided the benefit of eliminating their commute, it also resulted in increased stress, burn out, or unsustainable workloads.

More than 57% of responding EOIR judges reported that their workload decreased, and they noted the changes in their workload resulted in enhanced work-life balance. However, the OIG received approximately 30 comments from judges expressing a general belief that there was an unfair division of labor between judges whose dockets were suspended during the pandemic and those who still had active dockets, and for judges who were granted accommodations allowing them to remain home.

- **Coordination.** In general, most attorneys noted a similar level of coordination with outside parties when compared to before the pandemic. In contrast, most EOIR judges felt that they were not able

to maintain a similar level of interaction with many of the entities traditionally involved in their cases—such as individuals subject to immigration proceedings and DHS attorneys who represent the federal government in removal proceedings.

- **Expectations for the Post-Pandemic Operating Environment.** Both attorneys and EOIR judges noted that in the post-pandemic operating environment, they would like their components to expand the availability of telework and other workplace flexibilities that were either unavailable or not as readily available prior to the pandemic.

The OIG’s surveys are intended to provide DOJ component leadership with insight and perspective helpful to for navigating the future of their workforce environments. As noted online the data presented in these dashboards is only representative of employees who responded to our surveys and should not be interpreted as representing all DOJ employees. Responses represent perceptions of survey respondents and may differ from the official policies, practices, or procedures of DOJ components.

Survey: To view the survey results with interactive graphics, please visit:

<https://oig.justice.gov/reports/survey-doj-litigating-attorneys-and-immigration-judges-work-experiences-during-covid-19>

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