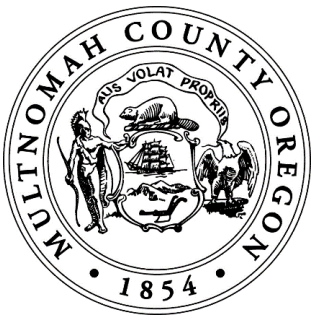


# County Ethical Culture Survey Results

Ethical culture is generally strong, but there is room for improvement

April 2017



Steve March, Multnomah County Auditor  
Fran Davison, Senior Management Auditor  
Jennifer McGuirk, Senior Management Auditor

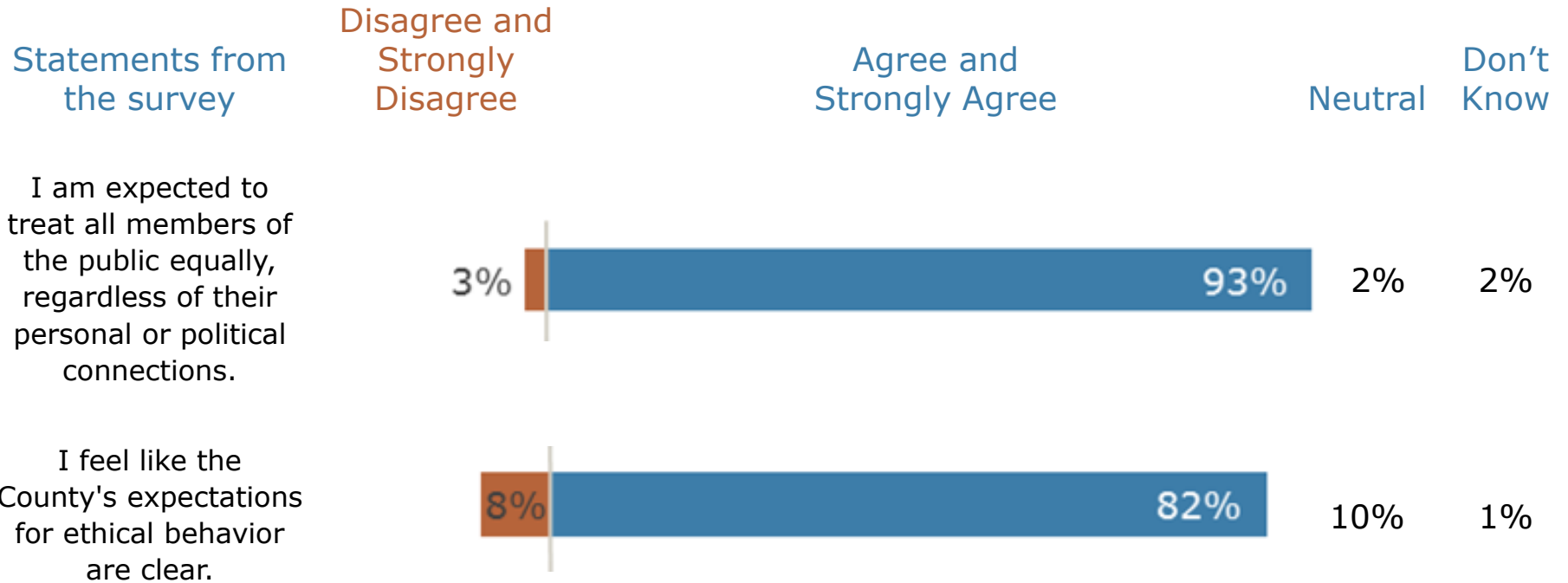
## About the survey

- Issued survey: 11/29/16
- Closed survey: 12/16/16
- 2,454 employees took the survey (about 40% of workforce)

## Why we did it

- Learn how County employees perceive the County's ethical culture

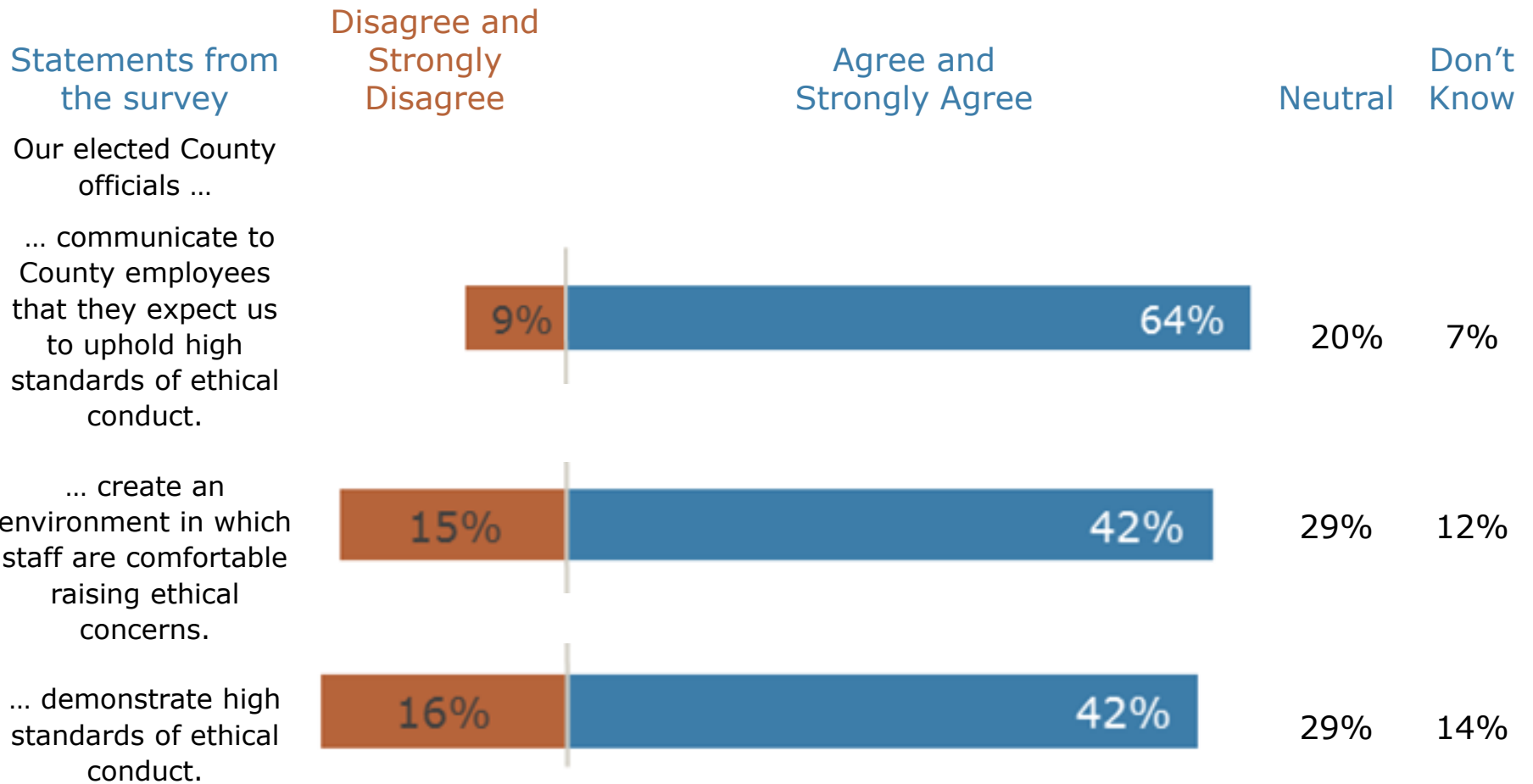
# Our ethical culture is generally strong.



Our ethical culture is generally strong.

“ ... in general, I am impressed with the ethical sensibility of county employees I encounter - they seem to genuinely identify with the role of public servant and seriously reflect on the ethics that entails.”

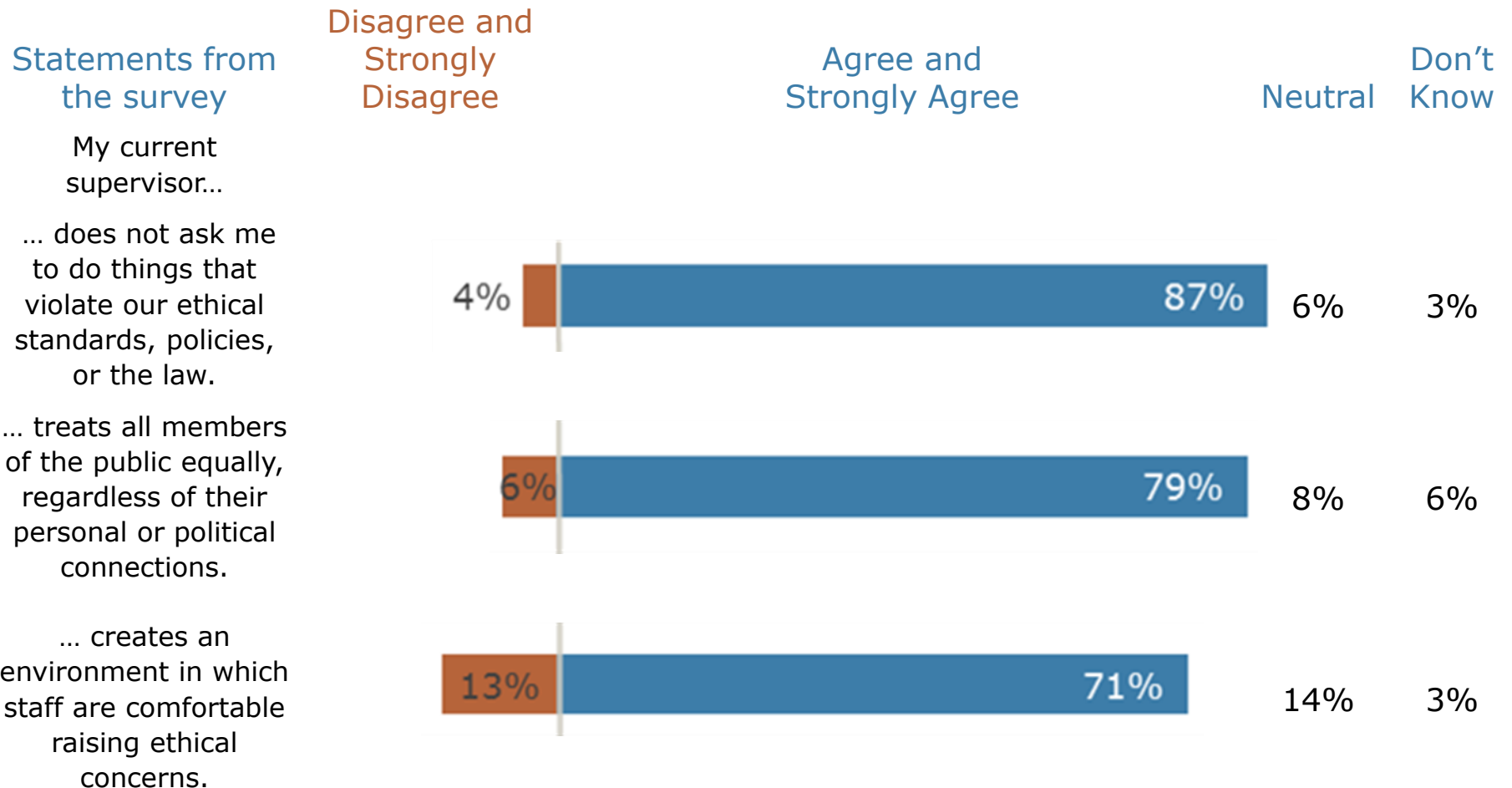
# County elected officials have opportunities to strengthen our ethical culture.



County elected officials have opportunities to strengthen our ethical culture.

“We don’t get a lot of contact with our elected County officials or know what their views are of ethical conduct or concerns.”

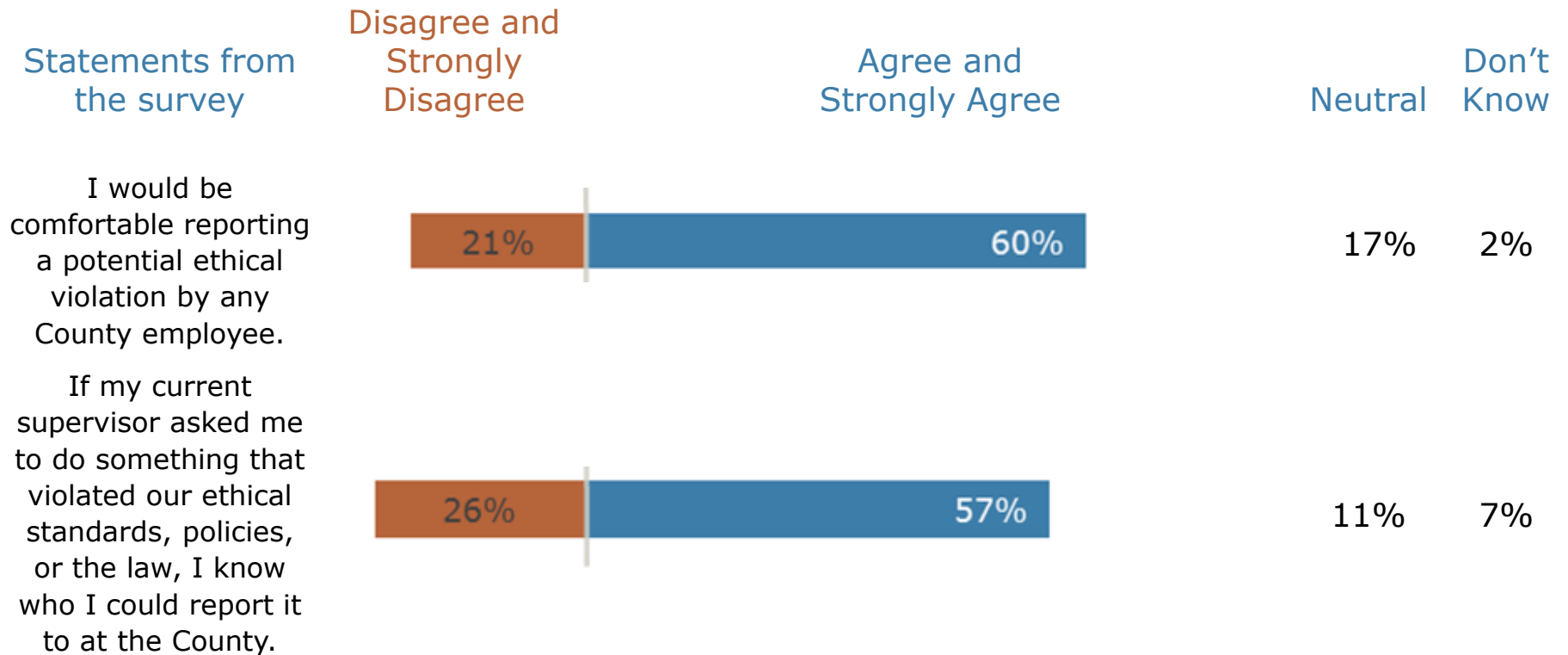
# Employees generally agree that their direct supervisors are ethical, but supervisors need to create cultures where staff feel they can raise issues.



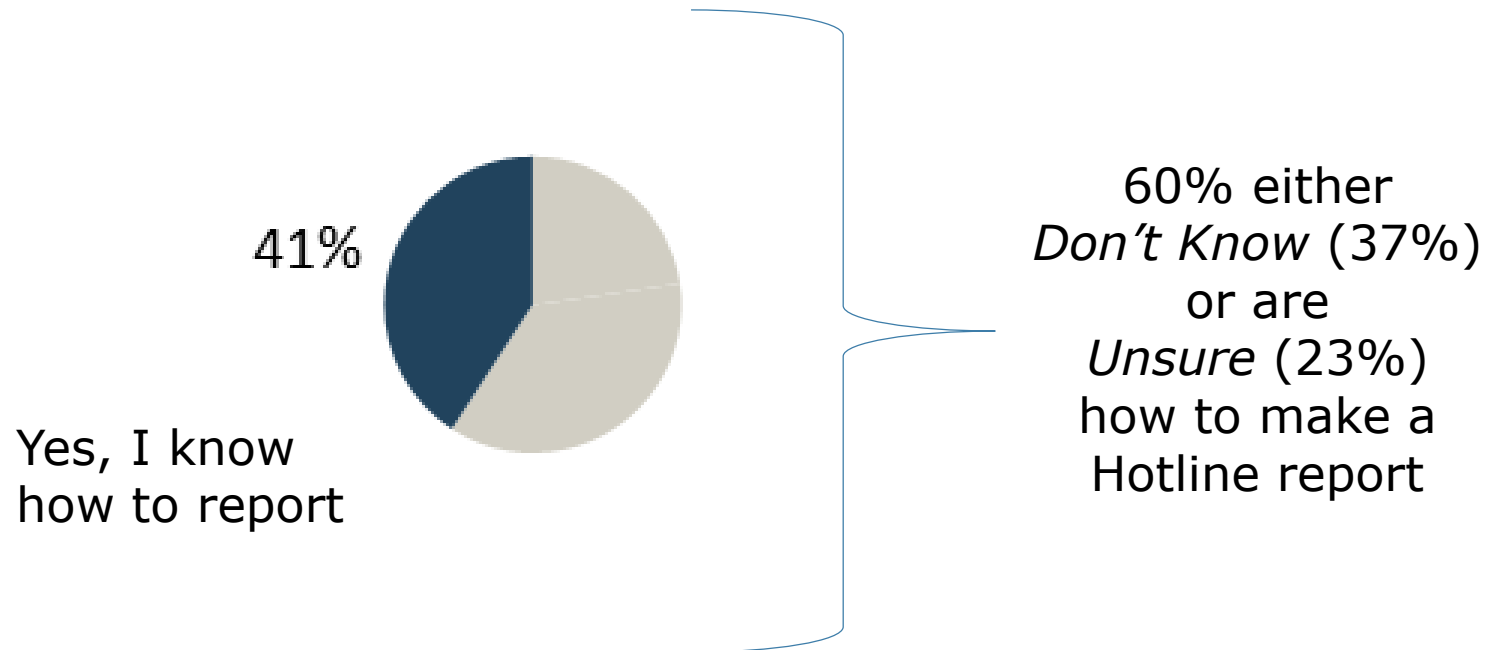
Employees generally agree that their direct supervisors are ethical, but supervisors need to create cultures where staff feel they can raise issues.

"I've chatted with some people who did not feel comfortable talking with their supervisor about anything."

# The County could improve our culture related to reporting ethical concerns.



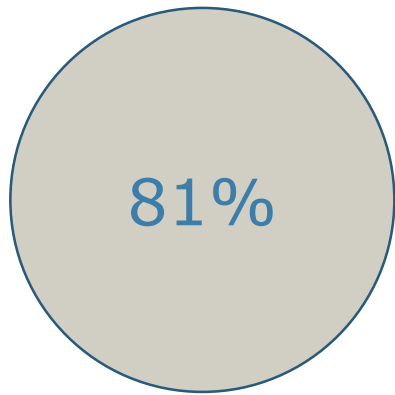
## Less than half of employees knew how to report to the Good Government Hotline.



The County could improve our culture related to reporting ethical concerns.

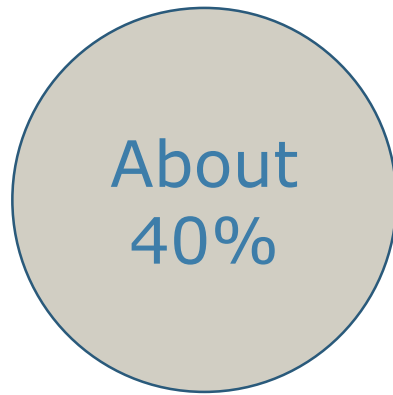
“Reporting ethical issues usually get referred back to the HR office for that particular department which usually strongly lean to support the managers. It makes it difficult to report issues when you know that the investigation is not being done by an external, neutral, investigator.”

## Employees generally know how to apply the Code of Ethics.



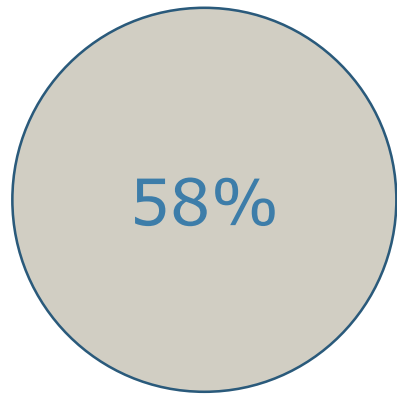
Most employees said they know how to apply the Code of Ethics to their County jobs.

The County has an opportunity to clarify where to find ethics help.



Many survey takers said *Not sure* or *No* when asked if they knew where to find assistance with ethical issues.

Many employees report having taken ethics training in the last five years.



A small majority said they had taken ethics training in the last five years.

Most said they received this training at New Employee Orientation or through the ethics eLearning.

Ongoing training could help bring the County into alignment with best practices.

- Training can take many forms, such as
  - Work unit discussions
  - Classroom training
  - eLearnings
  - Wednesday Wire articles

It's about bringing ethics into the conversation.

## What we recommend

Survey results suggest that the County could strengthen the ethical culture through efforts such as:

- County elected officials building connections with employees and helping create environments in which staff are comfortable raising ethical concerns;
- Supervisors taking steps to improve County work environments;
- Carefully studying the current system for reporting ethical concerns, including acknowledging people's concerns about retaliation and take steps to ensure retaliation will not be tolerated;
- Examining the County's current ethics training options for alignment with best practices;

## What we recommend

- Providing more education to employees on how to navigate ethical issues in ways that comply with the Code of Ethics and County expectations;
- Improving employee awareness of when they are required to fill out the Code of Ethics Disclosure Form;
- Improving employee awareness on how to access and use the Good Government Hotline;
- Examining the County's resources for help with ethical issues; and
- Examining the Code of Ethics for gaps, such as regarding its discussion of service on nonprofit organization's decision-making boards and of favoritism, and considering making the Code stronger than minimum state standards for ethical behavior.

## What we recommend

We recommend the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners direct a work group of frontline staff and managers to study best practices for local government ethics programs and adjust the County's approach to ethics, including the Code of Ethics, as needed.

Questions?