

# COLLABORATIVE TO ADVANCE HEALTH SERVICES

2022

STAFF SURVEY  
RESULTS



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## Introduction

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In September 2022, the Collaborative to Advance Health Services (CAHS) contracted with a professor in the Department of Public Health from the University of Missouri (MU) who has expertise in data evaluation to administer a staff survey. Over the last couple of years, the CAHS has experienced rapid growth, both in number of projects and number of staff. This rapid growth has come with its set of challenges and successes. Gathering input on the organization's culture, structure, and individual work satisfaction is imperative to the continued growth of the CAHS, and it is a good business practice to regularly evaluate such perspectives. The CAHS values the staff's voice, and it strives to provide an environment where they can thrive.

The purpose of the survey was to help identify issues affecting the CAHS' internal environment and possible solutions to challenges that are within the teams' ability to change or influence by collecting data on:

- Work experiences
- Work culture
- Work perspectives
- CAHS as an organization

The survey was administered electronically using the Qualtrics platform. A small group of CAHS supervisors and the leadership team developed the questions. The survey consisted of 31 quantitative and three qualitative questions. The survey format kept all responses completely anonymous and could not be linked to individual staff. Responses were collected by the MU faculty, who then tabulated the results.

The overall response rate was 31 of 38 current staff at the time of the survey. Quantitative data is reported in this document using range, average, and count. As is common in this type of analysis in order to maintain anonymity among survey respondents, all individual open-ended responses are not listed in this report. Instead, qualitative responses that were collected in the survey were analyzed by the evaluator for reoccurring themes, primarily employing content analysis. Some direct quotes are included in the analysis to highlight a particular theme.

While the findings in this report provide some insight, they only scratch the surface of what the CAHS can learn about work experiences, culture, and perspectives. Gathering initial data is the first step of an iterative process to improve the CAHS work environment.

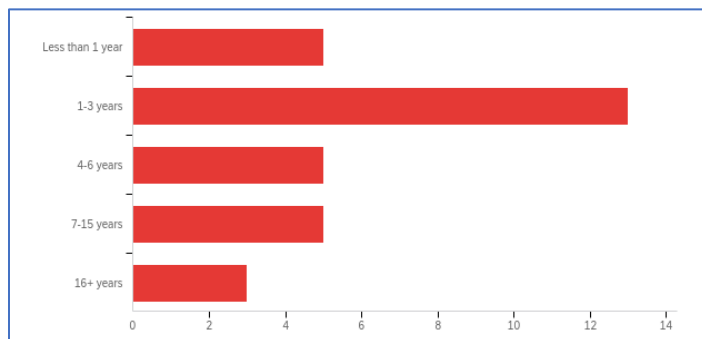
## Results

### CAHS Work Experience

	CAHS	Specific project	Professional experience
Range	<1 year to 16+years	<1 year to 16+years	<1 year to 16+years
Average response	1 to 6 years	1 to 6 years	4 to 15 years
Count	31	31	31

**Key points.** The largest number of staff (n=13) have worked at CAHS for 1-3 years. The time spent on a significant project closely matches the timeframe of working at CAHS. The largest number of staff have 7 to 16+ (n=8) or 1 to 3 years (n=13) of work experience. The workforce is mostly divided between very experienced and fairly new staff (see Table 1).

Table 1. Number of years worked at CAHS.



## Work Culture

Question	Range	Average	Count
SCALE: 1, strongly disagree to 5, strongly agree			
1. We treat each other with respect.	2-5	4.1	30
2. The CAHS recognizes/celebrates the contributions and good work of team members.	2-5	3.6	31
3. I feel my unique background and identity are valued at the CAHS.	2-5	4.0	31
4. I believe CAHS is a safe and supportive workplace for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, & People of Color), LGBTQ and people of a range of identities and abilities.	2-5	3.9	31
5. I feel a sense of belonging at the CAHS.	2-5	3.9	31
6. I can communicate openly about my questions or concerns and feel listened to.	2-5	3.8	
7. I often feel stressed and overwhelmed.	2-5	3.6	31
8. In the past 30 days, I have contemplated leaving CAHS.	1-5	2.6	31
9. I want to work here as long as possible.	1-5	3.7	31
10. I would recommend CAHS as a place to work.	2-5	3.7	31
11. The environment at the CAHS helps foster self-care and wellness.	1-5	3.7	31

Lower #  
better

Key points. Many staff agree that they are valued at CAHS and that it is a supportive workplace. Over half (64%) report feeling stressed or overwhelmed often, however, and 30% have contemplated leaving in the last 30 days. In the majority (9/11) of the questions, the average scores were lower among people who have worked at the CAHS 0-3 years versus those who have worked at the CAHS 4 or more years, indicating newer employees are experiencing more stress and less overall satisfaction with work culture. Differences were somewhat minor, however.

## Work Perspectives

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Question	Range	Average	Count
SCALE: 1, strongly disagree to 5, strongly agree			
1. I am given opportunities for mentorship and professional development.	1-5	3.4	31
2. My values match the values of the CAHS (Honesty, Hard Work, Humility, Hunger, Humor).	3-5	4.4	31
3. My job responsibilities are clearly defined.	1-5	3.0	31
4. I have the tools and technologies I need to do my job well.	1-5	3.9	31
5. I receive the project/grant-related guidance I need from my project lead(s).	1-5	3.4	31
6. My knowledge, skills and experience are well-matched to my level of responsibility/role in the CAHS.	1-5	3.9	31
7. Work is mostly evenly distributed across my team.	1-5	3.1	31

Key points. Many staff agree that their values align with those of CAHS. The most neutral scores, however, are around clearly defined responsibilities and even work distribution. Staff also report varied experiences. For example, nearly 30% disagree and 30% agree that they have mentorship opportunities. The majority (60%) believe they get the guidance they need. In every measure except one, average scores were lower among people who worked here 0-3 years versus those who worked here four or more years. The largest discrepancy was regarding clarity of job roles suggesting that newer employees are less clear about their tasks and expectations.

## CAHS as an organization

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Question	Range	Average	Count
SCALE: 1, strongly disagree to 5, strongly agree			
1. The CAHS clearly defines its objectives.	1-5	3.5	30
2. I find my direct supervisor to be a sounding board and resource I can go to for information and guidance.	1-5	3.9	31
3. I have adequate access to the PI(s) on the grants I work on.	1-5	3.4	31
4. The CAHS invests time and energy into building diverse teams.	1-5	3.7	31
5. The CAHS structure adds additional tasks, hierarchy, and complexity to my job.	1-5	3.7	31
6. We are open to change as an organization.	2-5	3.5	31
7. The leadership team (PIs) are transparent.	1-5	3.2	31
8. I receive regular feedback from my supervisor.	1-5	3.7	31
9. The performance of my supervisor is strong.	1-5	3.8	31
10. The performance of the leadership team (PIs) is strong.	2-5	3.8	30

Key points. Most staff agree that their direct supervisor is a good sounding board and resource for information and guidance, and that the supervisor's performance is strong. Most staff also agree that the leadership team's performance is high. Scores are more neutral regarding transparency and openness to change at the CAHS. In every measure except one, average scores were worse among people who have worked at the CAHS 0-3 years versus those who have worked at the CAHS four or more years.

## Key Themes from Qualitative Responses

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### Theme 1: Positive aspects of working at CAHS

- Mission and impact of work on public health, subject matter, making a difference
  - “The recipients of our work effort motivate me to come to work - what we do makes life better for people.”
- Creativity and excitement
- Skill and commitment of coworkers, colleagues, team members
- Ability to work at home and support for mental health of staff, flexibility
  - “The flexibility and benefits of the position, the work is rewarding, I enjoy what I do here. I also enjoy my colleagues and benefits of working with the university.”
- Independence of work
- Leadership team support

### Theme 2: Aspects that need improvement

- High workload, “spread thin”, growth for “growth’s sake”
  - “Being busy and overworked means you are productive”.
  - “Providing a 'mental health day' while perpetuating the burnout culture will only result in more burnout (e.g., needing to walk to the walk).”
- Transparency and clarity regarding job expectations, lack of clear communication
  - “I believe the Collaborative could benefit from solidifying different departments within the organization. The departments kind of exist (finance, marketing and communications, website administration, etc.) but I think solidifying them in the organization structure would provide clarity.”
  - Want continued, more opportunities for remote work
- PIs are too busy, would like more timely responses to emails
- More opportunities and time for professional development
- Criticism for mistakes (although heard about more than experienced); resistance to hearing people out
- More big picture strategy and planning needed, infrastructure development, growth management
- More efficient cloud sharing platforms needed
- Different staffing organizational set up
  - “Managers supervise people that they don’t work with”
  - “I think the Collaborative could benefit from developing associate director positions for each grant that oversees all program aspects and reports directly to the PI”
  - “Seems like I should be a consultant instead of staff. They get paid more and leadership actually listen to them.”
  - Orientation for new employees would be helpful
- Competing demands between grants
- Consistency with supervision (“some staff are allowed to miss deadlines, perform poorly”)





### **Additional statements**

- “I enjoy working at the Collaborative very much. The leadership shows their staff appreciation through things like fun activities, coffee breaks, Fri-yays, etc. Leadership appreciation, support, concern for staff, and passion is not a pain point for me. Frustrations that do arise stem from having to make things up as I go too often”
- “Overall, CAHS is a great place to work. I am proud of my position and the projects I am a part of. I know PI's are under a tremendous amount of pressure, but continued transparency and patience with staff will go a long way towards making CAHS even better!”

## Next Steps

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Continuous quality improvement is a process of better understanding what we are doing and how to improve on it. There are some immediate or near-term things the CAHS can do to address some of the issues identified in these survey results and some things that require some planning and will be addressed over a longer period of time.

Efforts are already underway that address some of the needs identified by staff. These include:

1. **Approved software** – Erin Hobbs, with input from UMKC’s IS/IT department and review of the CAHS leadership team, has created an information sheet on UMKC IS/IT approved software applications for project management and email marketing. We are disseminating it in conjunction with this report and we will save a copy in the CAHS All Staff Box folder. Erin Hobbs will provide open office hours for anyone to ask questions regarding these software applications as follows:
  - a. Friday, November 18, 2022, 9:00 – 9:30 am CT
  - b. Monday, November 21, 2022, 9:00 – 9:30 am CT
2. **UMKC Flexible Work Arrangements** – The university has recently formalized the process for requesting and receiving approval of flexible work arrangements, which includes a standardized form that must be completed. Since CAHS is part of UMKC and must follow UMKC’s processes and procedures, we all need to follow these flexible work procedures. The CAHS leadership team has created an informational sheet to explain how our internal CAHS policies and procedures will adapt to follow UMKC’s process. The informational sheet is being distributed with this report and will be available in the CAHS All Staff Box folder.
3. **Work/Life Balance** – Leadership and supervisors will actively encourage team members to use PTO to take time away from work. Leadership and supervisors will actively discourage staff from working when they have scheduled time off (e.g., checking email while on vacation, out sick, or on the weekends). If a leadership team member sends an email on the weekend or after traditional work hours, it is not expected that a CAHS team member will answer the email until they resume work during regular work hours.
4. **CAHS onboarding/orientation procedures** - In June of 2021, CAHS leadership and supervisors agreed there should be a standard CAHS onboarding document used for all new employees. Prior to that, supervisors often created their own onboarding documents. Although there was some consistency in what was being produced, all agreed the document should be standardized and branded with the CAHS logo for a professional look. CAHS supervisors worked together to agree upon a form that included both information specific to the new staff role as well as information standard for all CAHS staff. Once completed, the onboarding document was added to an onboarding folder and all docs were formatted with CAHS logo and colors. The folder is now presented to new staff on their first day. Because onboarding during COVID-19 fully remote work was handled differently, staff who were hired during this time, or any staff member who would like to experience the updated and enhanced onboarding process, will be invited to participate in new staff onboarding beginning November 2022.

5. **CAHS Communication Channels** – There are many ways that CAHS staff communicate with each other, their supervisors, and the leadership team. Formal methods include:
  - a. Supervisor and staff member 1:1 meetings
  - b. PI and grant project team meetings - (vary by grant project)
  - c. Skip level meetings with leadership team (new initiative that Jacki Witt will pilot test with the CTCFP team Fall 2022)
  - d. University annual performance review meetings
  - e. Leadership team and supervisors monthly meetings
  - f. Leadership team weekly meetings (The leadership team extends an open invitation to any CAHS team member who would like to attend to bring forward a question or concern. Connect with Kelly Reinhardt to schedule time to come to this meeting.)
  - g. CAHS All Hands meetings (quarterly)
    - i. Occasional ad-hoc All Hands meetings for specific announcements
  - h. Ad hoc meetings - all staff are encouraged to reach out to PIs and/or supervisors for individual meetings as needed as questions or concerns arise.
  - i. Digital communication channels: CAHS has a variety of digital avenues to communicate including the CAHS Teams channel, Collaborative All-staff Box folder, CAHS listserv, CAHS staff director, and the *Collaborative Connection* monthly electronic bulleting

In addition, the CAHS leadership team and supervisors have discussed other efforts that will require longer to flesh out and implement, including:

1. Professional development considerations:
  - a. Identify professional development opportunities, including training or coaching, to provide on a range of topics that would support growth in the workplace (e.g., how to express individual needs in the workplace, encouraging dialog that creates better understanding of job roles and responsibilities).
  - b. Explore the potential of offering professional development as part of all-hands meetings.
  - c. Add resources that relate to staff/professional development to the *Collaborative Connection*.
  - d. Provide a consistent level of training and preparation for all CAHS staff who function in a supervisor role (UMKC supervisor training, required reading, etc.).
2. Advancement considerations:
  - a. The leadership team and supervisors have been working on an informational sheet that provides more information about how to advance in the Collaborative. We are working with HR on this subject and will share more information with the Collaborative as a whole as soon as it is available.
  - b. Hiring managers will regularly share information about how current staff can apply for job openings.
3. Ensure that staff surveys take place at regular intervals.
4. Skip level meetings – Jacki Witt will pilot skip level meetings with staff on the CTCFP grant. Once feedback on the pilot process is incorporated, the rest of the CAHS leadership and supervisors will discuss whether to incorporate in our regular communication processes. The goal is to determine an implementation plan by January 2023.