

Policy

It is the California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) policy that any employee who is separating, transferring, or promoting from or within CDFA be asked to participate in an Exit Interview.

It is also CDFA's policy that annually a random selection of CDFA employees will be chosen and requested to complete a Stay Interview.

The purpose of the Exit and Stay Interviews is to obtain employees' input regarding Department working conditions, employment policies, practices, procedures; and to ensure a positive, safe, secure, discrimination-free work environment. Information obtained will be used for statistical purposes and to meet CDFA's ultimate goals of facilitating employee retention and enhancing the work environment. While not mandatory, employees are highly encouraged to participate.

Definitions

Exit Interview: A structured conversation or survey with a departing employee to gather feedback on their experience with the Department, reasons for leaving, and potential areas for improvement.

Stay Interview: A structured conversation or survey with a current employee, focused on understanding what makes the employee stay with the Department and what might cause them to leave.

Responsibility

Office of Civil Rights (OCR):

- Administer the Exit and Stay Interview program.
- Retain all records of Exit and Stay Interviews conducted.
- Conduct Exit or Stay Interviews on behalf of the program if requested by the manager/supervisor or the employee.
- Conduct follow-up interviews upon receipt of an Exit or Stay Interview that contains information related to discrimination, harassment, misconduct, or other prohibited behavior.
- Review information gathered in the Exit and/or Stay Interviews for trends, concerns, or needs for action from the OCR, Human Resources Branch (HRB), impacted program, or other internal party.
- Maintain confidentiality of information gathered in the Exit and/or Stay

Exit and Stay Interviews

Interviews to the extent possible and only share information only with those who have a need to know.

- Conduct investigations related to discrimination, harassment, workplace violence, hostility, retaliation, or other prohibited behavior as needed.

Human Resources Branch (HRB):

- Provide guidance to managers and supervisors if information shared would require discipline or other actions outlined in HRB policies and procedures.

Managers/Supervisors:

- Ensure every departing employee is provided with an opportunity to complete an [Exit Interview \(SO-9\)](#) prior to their last day of employment with CDFA.
- May conduct the Exit Interview verbally with a departing employee if the employee requests.
- Forward any received Exit or Stay Interviews to the OCR within 24-hours of receipt.
- Ensure employees identified by the OCR are encouraged to complete the [Stay Interview Form \(SO-10\)](#) by the identified deadline.
- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

Employees:

- If choosing to complete the Exit Interview form ([SO-9](#)), return the completed form to the OCR prior to the last day in the position.
- If selected to participate in a Stay Interview and choosing to participate, complete the Stay Interview form ([SO-10](#)) and return it to the OCR.
- If agreeing to participate in further inquiry after the Exit or Stay Interview, engage with the OCR or other identified CDFA official as requested.
- If declining to participate in either the Exit or Stay Interview, the employee may decline verbally or in writing to the individual(s) who provided the form.

Exit Interview Procedures

Upon learning an employee is separating, transferring, or promoting out of their program, the employee's manager/supervisor shall:

1. Offer the employee the opportunity to participate in a verbal Exit Interview and/or complete the Exit Interview Form ([SO-9](#))
2. Notify the employee that:
 - They have the options of:

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- A verbal Exit Interview with:
 - Their immediate supervisor;
 - Another manager or supervisor in the program/branch/or division; or
 - A representative from the OCR; or
 - Completing the Exit Interview Form ([SO-9](#)) without a verbal interview.
 - Completing an Exit Interview and/or the Exit Interview Form ([SO-9](#)) is encouraged, but not mandatory.
 - The employee may remain anonymous if they choose, even if they fill out the form.
 - If the employee does disclose their identifying information, that information will be held by the OCR, will be kept confidential to the extent possible, and will only be shared with those who have a need to know.
 - If only completing the Exit Interview Form, the employee may use a reasonable amount of state time to complete and return the form to the OCR.
3. If conducting the Exit Interview verbally with the employee, follow the Exit Interview Form and complete each section as completely as possible based on the responses from the employee. If the employee wishes to remain anonymous, do not provide their name on the Exit Interview document.
 4. Return all completed Exit Interview Forms or other Exit Interview related information to the OCR for review and record keeping.

The OCR will review and log all Exit Interview Forms received and contact the employee if necessary.

Stay Interview Procedures

The following procedures and practices will be followed to administer the Stay Interview program:

1. Each October the OCR will select approximately 5% of CDFA's employees at random to participate in the Stay Interview process.
2. The OCR will contact the identified employees via email or through their supervisors if they do not have CDFA email addresses and request that they complete the Stay Interview Form ([SO-10](#)) and return it to the OCR by a specific date.
3. Managers/supervisors of the identified employees will be cc'd on the respective email and separately notified of their employees' request to participate in the Stay Interview process.
4. Managers should encourage their employee(s) to participate, but inform them that:

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- Participation, while highly encouraged, is voluntary.
 - The employee may remain anonymous if they choose.
 - If they do disclose identifying information, the information will be held by the OCR, will be kept confidential to the extent possible, and will only be shared with those who have a need to know.
5. The OCR will review and log all Stay Interview Forms received and contact the employee if necessary.
 6. The OCR will use the data collected to provide guidance as necessary based on the feedback received. This may include any trends, concerns, or necessary Departmental planning.

Distribution

Distribution of the above policy includes all CDFA employees.

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the OCR at civil_rights@cdfa.ca.gov or 916-654-1005.