

# Participant Customer Satisfaction PY 2022

## Grantee Report: Maryland

June 20, 2024

### Overview

The participant customer satisfaction survey is one of three customer surveys used by SCSEP to assess the quality of the program's services and how those services relate to desired outcomes. The results from the participant, host agency, and employer surveys are provided to the grantees to help them identify the strengths and weaknesses of their programs and develop appropriate strategies for improving their services and meeting the specific needs of their three customer groups.

The nationwide participant survey for PY 2022 was conducted between October 2023 and January 2024. Of the 16,689 participants surveyed, 6,929 returned completed surveys<sup>1</sup>, yielding a nationwide response rate of 41.5 percent. This response rate is significantly lower than the PY 2021 rate of 51.5 percent.

A guide to interpreting your own grantee results is provided below, followed by your individual grantee results for all questions in Appendix A, your survey sample demographics and characteristics in Appendix B, and an analysis of the relationship between certain questions and your ACSI score in Appendix C. The report provides guidance in areas likely to be most useful to you in refining services and service delivery to meet participants' needs.

### Guide for Interpreting Grantee Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

The following suggestions are intended as a guide for grantees to interpret and use their individual survey reports. Before looking at their own survey data, however, grantees should read the nationwide survey report and recommendations. This guidance is intended to focus grantees on key areas identified in the nationwide report that affect customer satisfaction and the quality of the program and that reflect the program's outcomes. After reviewing the nationwide analyses, grantees should look at their results in comparison to the nationwide analyses. The focus should be on program areas that are likely to provide grantees with the most benefit from program improvements.

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<sup>1</sup> Completion of the survey means, at a minimum, that the respondent answered the first three questions that make up the American Customer Satisfaction Index.

## Comparison to Nationwide Averages

*General guidance.* The first step is to review the ACSI score, the key measure of satisfaction. The ACSI tells the grantee about participants' overall satisfaction with the program, incorporating in a single number from 0-100 the overall assessment of the program, both quality and outcomes. This year's nationwide score is 84.5, somewhat lower than the PY 2021 score of 85.9 but similar to ACSI scores for years prior to PY2021. If your ACSI score is 83 or less, you should look carefully at your scores on questions other than the first three questions that make up the ACSI to see if there is evidence of weaknesses in particular areas.

The second step is to look at your scores on the key drivers discussed in the nationwide analyses: Questions 5, 6, and 18. Question 5 is the area of greatest strength with a nationwide score of 8.8. Question 18 is an area of some challenge, being the lowest nationwide score (8.2) among the key drivers. Question 6 is somewhere between the two (8.6) and is an area of relative strength. If you have a score on one or more of these questions that is below the nationwide average for that question, you should consider ways to improve that area and related areas. Especially if you also have an ACSI score lower than the nationwide average, addressing improvements in any of these three areas is likely to improve both the particular program area and your overall satisfaction score as well. The table below provides your scores on these three questions and the nationwide scores.

|            |       | Areas of Strength                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                         | Area of Challenge                                                                      |
|------------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|            |       | 5. At the time I enrolled, the SCSEP staff told me what I needed to know about how the program worked and what to expect. | 6. The Older Worker Program/SCSEP staff gave me a host agency assignment that matched my employment interests and needs | 18. Overall, how helpful has SCSEP been in preparing you for success in the workforce? |
| Maryland   | Mean  | 8.8                                                                                                                       | 8.6                                                                                                                     | 8.2                                                                                    |
|            | Count | 30                                                                                                                        | 31                                                                                                                      | 29                                                                                     |
| Nationwide | Mean  | 8.8                                                                                                                       | 8.6                                                                                                                     | 8.2                                                                                    |
|            | Count | 7052                                                                                                                      | 6989                                                                                                                    | 6609                                                                                   |

The next step is to review your score on Question 11, having “a say in the types of skills I would gain during my host agency assignment.” Although this is not a strong, independent driver like the three questions above, it is highly correlated with overall satisfaction and has one of the lowest nationwide scores (8.0) of any of the questions scored on a 1-10 scale. Moreover, there is approximately a 43-point difference in the ACSI score for those who felt they had the most say in their training and those who felt they had the least say. The question with the lowest 1-10 scale score, however, is Question 19, a nationwide average of 7.6. Question 19's correlation is moderate, but the nationwide average is so low that all grantees should review their score and consider how they can make program improvements.

Preparing participants for the workforce involves giving them the right skills, and Questions 18 and 11 together suggest that providing the right skills must involve allowing participants to participate in the preparation and skill-building process.

### **Comparison to Standards and to Self over Time**

*General guidance.* Comparisons to standards should be used in conjunction with comparisons to nationwide averages. There are several types of standards:

- Fixed standards are a specific number chosen for its historical/community significance<sup>2</sup>. The standard may then be considered a score below which you would not want to fall. Fixed standards can also suggest the lowest of what is acceptable.
  - Example 1: 1-10 ratings, converted to a grade standard would translate a score of 7.5 - 7.8 into a B-; anything below a B (7.6) suggests improvement is needed.
  - Example 2: An ACSI score (0-100) of 80 or 81 may be translated to a grade standard of B- and considered a standard for what is minimally acceptable.
- Relative standards are comparisons grantees can make with other industries. (See ACSI website for more information.)
- Relative standards based on the scores of specific peers can be used by an individual grantee to determine how far its score is from the best in its peer group. The grantee can decide which peers it most closely resembles (e.g., other state grantees, other large national grantees).
- Relative standards can also be based on the average scores of peer groups. The nationwide report presents aggregate national grantee and state grantee scores. The grantee should use the appropriate group for comparison.

Ratings on questions with a 1-10 scale that are below 8.0 are generally “red flags.” ACSI scores (0-100 scale) below 81 are also “red flags.” These scores may point to areas where improvements would not only strengthen services but could also improve overall satisfaction with the program. Even if your ACSI score is at or slightly above the nationwide average of 84.5, you may still have some areas needing improvement. Similarly, even if the rating for one or more of the key questions is above the cut-off point of 7.6, it may still be worth exploring the suggested improvement strategies, especially if that program area is a strong driver of satisfaction. We suggest paying particular attention to the corresponding sections in the nationwide report, comparing your scores to the nationwide scores, and using the guidance below for additional approaches to improvement.

In addition to the comparison of your own scores to the nationwide and standard scores, it is important to compare your current scores to your own scores for the last few years. A single point in time is often less informative than the trend over a number of years. Comparing your current scores with those for the same or substantially similar questions in the prior four years can be highly informative. Even if your scores are above the standard, a trend that is going in the wrong direction usually signals the need for a change in approach or at least recognition of the changing needs of participants. Alternatively, if you have implemented an improvement action and do not see an improvement in the score for the related

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<sup>2</sup> An historical/community standard is being an “A” student. Getting all “Cs” in school is associated with being average or not trying very hard.

question, you may need to investigate whether you implemented the change well or whether the improvement action you chose was the right response. Grantee level reports of the participant customer satisfaction surveys for this year and the prior four years are available on the Older Workers Community of Practice.

Here are additional areas that warrant attention based on the nationwide report for PY 2022:

*Preparation for employment.* If your individual rating for Question 18 is less than 8.2 or if the percentage of your participants reporting in Question 20 that they did not feel prepared for employment in any sector is more than 8.7 percent, you will want to review the type of training you are providing to participants, the ways you can improve the quality of training, and the relevance of the training for your participants. This might include talking to some of your exiters and asking them to help you with improvements. Former participants are often the best source of new ideas and approaches. Another approach to improving low scores on training questions could be to check in at each assessment and IEP update with individual participants. Grantees can use these regularly scheduled IEP updates to explore what can be done to improve the entire program at the same time as they are revising IEPs for individual participants.

Also, do not forget computer training, Question 12. If 35 percent or more of your participants report that they did not receive needed computer training or that the training did not meet their needs, take the time to understand the type and level of training participants need. Participants who do not receive the computer training they need have overall satisfaction scores 12-15 points lower than participants who do receive the training they need.

*Supportive services.* If 25 percent or more of respondents who needed supportive services gave Question 7 a rating of 5 or less on the 10-point scale, you can use the IEP strategy as suggested above for training. Since you may not have the resources for a full range of choices for or control over supportive services, you may not be able to address every situation. Nonetheless, there may be much to learn in many of these circumstances. You should also take advantage of the exit interview and Follow-ups 1 and 2 to assess the supportive services needs of participants entering or continuing in unsubsidized employment. A similar question was asked of host agencies so combining information from the participant and the host agency survey reports may provide additional insights.

*Response rate.* This year's lower than usual response rate raises concerns about the reliability of the survey results. Therefore, we continue to stress the importance of moving back to a rate at or above 50 percent. If your response rate is below 41 percent, this should be particularly important to you. A response rate above 50 ensures that your scores are truly representative of your own participants; with too few responses, your scores may not be as useful as they would be otherwise. Grantees have a fair degree of control over the response rate. They should take advantage of regular opportunities within the program, such as orientation, review of IEPs, recertification, and exit interviews, to remind participants of the surveys and their importance as a consistent and valuable form of feedback to help improve your program. Grantees should also be diligent in sending pre-survey letters to participants as instructed by DOL.

## Appendix A: Grantee Tables

**Table 1. Response Rate**

|               |                 | Count | Percent |
|---------------|-----------------|-------|---------|
| Response Rate | Responded       | 31    | 41.3%   |
|               | Did not respond | 44    | 58.7%   |

**Table 2. ACSI**

|      | Valid N | Mean | Minimum | Maximum |
|------|---------|------|---------|---------|
| ACSI | 31      | 80.5 | .0      | 100     |

**Table 3. Reasons for Enrolling**

|                       |                                                                      | Count | Percent of All Responses |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| Reason for Enrollment | 4a. Obtain a full-time job after completing the program              | 7     | 8.0%                     |
|                       | 4b. Obtain a part-time job after completing the program              | 18    | 20.5%                    |
|                       | 4c. Participate in the program's training and host agency activities | 9     | 10.2%                    |
|                       | 4d. Provide service to my community                                  | 13    | 14.8%                    |
|                       | 4e. Meet new people                                                  | 7     | 8.0%                     |
|                       | 4f. Increase my income                                               | 17    | 19.3%                    |
|                       | 4g. Feel more useful and independent                                 | 17    | 19.3%                    |
|                       | 4h. Other                                                            | 0     | 0.0%                     |

**Table 4. Treatment of Participants**

|                                                                                                                                                | Count | Mean | Minimum | Maximum |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------|---------|---------|
| 5. At the time I enrolled, the Older Worker Program/SCSEP staff told me what I needed to know about how the program worked and what to expect. | 30    | 8.8  | 1       | 10      |
| 6. The Older Worker Program/SCSEP staff gave me a host agency assignment that matched my employment interests and needs.                       | 31    | 8.6  | 1       | 10      |
| 9. There is someone in the Older Worker Program I can talk to when I need to.                                                                  | 29    | 8.6  | 1       | 10      |

**Table 5. Supportive Services**

|                                                                                                                       |                      | Count | Percent |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------|---------|
| 7. The Older Worker Program/SCSEP helped me obtain the supportive services that I needed to meet my employment goals. | 1 Strongly disagree  | 5     | 16.7%   |
|                                                                                                                       | 5                    | 1     | 3.3%    |
|                                                                                                                       | 6                    | 1     | 3.3%    |
|                                                                                                                       | 7                    | 1     | 3.3%    |
|                                                                                                                       | 8                    | 4     | 13.3%   |
|                                                                                                                       | 9                    | 2     | 6.7%    |
|                                                                                                                       | 10 Strongly agree    | 5     | 16.7%   |
|                                                                                                                       | Did not need support | 11    | 36.7%   |

**Table 6. Geographic Convenience**

|                                                                                                       | Count | Percent |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|---------|
| 8. Given your transportation situation, was your host agency assignment convenient to where you live? | 28    | 100.0%  |
| Yes                                                                                                   | 0     | 0.0%    |
| No                                                                                                    |       |         |

**Table 7. Host Agency Experience**

|                                                                                                                             | Count | Mean | Minimum | Maximum |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------|---------|---------|
| 10. During my community service assignment, my host agency gave me the training I needed to be successful in my assignment. | 29    | 8.1  | 1       | 10      |
| 11. I had a say in the types of skills I would gain during my host agency assignment.                                       | 30    | 7.4  | 1       | 10      |
| 13. I feel comfortable at my host agency assignment.                                                                        | 30    | 8.3  | 1       | 10      |

**Table 8. Computer Training**

|                                                                                   | Count | Percent |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|---------|
| 12. Which of the following best describes your experience with computer training? | 8     | 25.8%   |
| I received the computer training I needed                                         | 1     | 3.2%    |
| I received computer training, but it didn't meet my needs                         | 7     | 22.6%   |
| I needed computer training, but little or none was offered                        | 1     | 3.2%    |
| I didn't need computer training but was given the training anyway.                | 14    | 45.2%   |
| I didn't need computer training and didn't receive any                            |       |         |

**Table 9. Physical Health**

|                                                                                                                                                                 |                | Count | Percent |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------|---------|
| 14. Compared to the time before you started working with the Older Worker Program/SCSEP would you say your physical health is better, worse, or about the same? | Better         | 8     | 26.7%   |
|                                                                                                                                                                 | Worse          | 2     | 6.7%    |
|                                                                                                                                                                 | About the same | 20    | 66.7%   |

**Table 10. Outlook on Life**

|                                                                                                                                  |                        | Count | Percent |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------|---------|
| 15. Compared to the time before you started working with the Older Worker Program/SCSEP how would you rate your outlook on life? | Much more negative     | 1     | 3.4%    |
|                                                                                                                                  | A little more negative | 1     | 3.4%    |
|                                                                                                                                  | About the same         | 8     | 27.6%   |
|                                                                                                                                  | A little more positive | 6     | 20.7%   |
|                                                                                                                                  | Much more positive     | 13    | 44.8%   |

**Table 11. SCSEP Wages**

|                                                                                                          |                     | Count | Percent |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------|---------|
| 16. The income I receive from the Older Worker Program/SCSEP is important for meeting my basic expenses. | 1 Strongly disagree | 1     | 3.4%    |
|                                                                                                          | 3                   | 1     | 3.4%    |
|                                                                                                          | 5                   | 1     | 3.4%    |
|                                                                                                          | 6                   | 2     | 6.9%    |
|                                                                                                          | 7                   | 2     | 6.9%    |
|                                                                                                          | 8                   | 2     | 6.9%    |
|                                                                                                          | 9                   | 2     | 6.9%    |
|                                                                                                          | 10 Strongly agree   | 18    | 62.1%   |

**Table 12. Pressure to Leave the Program**

|                                                                                                                                                          |                | Count | Percent |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------|---------|
| 17. During my host agency assignment, the Older Worker Program/SCSEP staff pressured me to leave my host agency assignment for a job before I was ready. | Yes            | 2     | 7.4%    |
|                                                                                                                                                          | No             | 22    | 81.5%   |
|                                                                                                                                                          | Does not apply | 3     | 11.1%   |

**Table 13. Preparation for Success in the Workforce**

|                                                                                                                 | Count | Mean | Minimum | Maximum |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------|---------|---------|
| 18. Overall, how helpful has the Older Worker Program/SCSEP been in preparing you for success in the workforce? | 29    | 8.2  | 1       | 10      |

**Table 14. Help in Finding Employment**

|                                                                                        | Count | Mean | Minimum | Maximum |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------|---------|---------|
| 19. How much help did Older Worker Program/SCSEP staff give you in finding employment? | 6     | 8.3  | 5       | 10      |

**Table 15. Prepared for Employment**

|                                                                                                       |                                                                              | Count | Percent of All Responses |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| 20. Do you feel your participation in the program prepared you for employment in these organizations? | 20a. I felt prepared for employment in a nonprofit organization.             | 5     | 35.7%                    |
|                                                                                                       | 20b. I felt prepared for employment in a government organization             | 4     | 28.6%                    |
|                                                                                                       | 20c. I felt prepared for employment in a for-profit business                 | 3     | 21.4%                    |
|                                                                                                       | 20d. I did not feel prepared for employment in any organization or business. | 2     | 14.3%                    |

**Table 16. Employment Preparation by Number of  
Sectors**

|                   |      | Count | Percent |
|-------------------|------|-------|---------|
| Number of Sectors | 1.00 | 3     | 75.0%   |
|                   | 3.00 | 1     | 25.0%   |

## Appendix B: Demographics and Characteristics of Grantee Respondents

**Table 1. Gender, Race, Ethnicity, Education**

|           |                             | Count | Percent |
|-----------|-----------------------------|-------|---------|
| Gender    | Male                        | 12    | 38.7%   |
|           | Female                      | 19    | 61.3%   |
| Race      | White                       | 12    | 41.4%   |
|           | Black                       | 16    | 55.2%   |
|           | Asian                       | 1     | 3.4%    |
|           | American Indian             | 0     | 0.0%    |
|           | Pacific Islander            | 0     | 0.0%    |
|           | Hispanic                    | 3     | 9.7%    |
| Hispanic  | Not Hispanic                | 28    | 90.3%   |
|           |                             |       |         |
| Education | Less than HS diploma        | 3     | 10.0%   |
|           | HS Diploma/GED              | 14    | 46.7%   |
|           | Some college                | 7     | 23.3%   |
|           | BA/BS                       | 2     | 6.7%    |
|           | Bachelors Plus              | 3     | 10.0%   |
|           | Vocational/Technical degree | 0     | 0.0%    |
|           | Associate's degree          | 1     | 3.3%    |

**Table 2. Barriers to Employment**

|                           |     | Count | Percent |
|---------------------------|-----|-------|---------|
| Disability                | Yes | 8     | 25.8%   |
|                           | No  | 23    | 74.2%   |
| LEP                       | Yes | 2     | 6.7%    |
|                           | No  | 28    | 93.3%   |
| Low Literacy Skills       | Yes | 12    | 40.0%   |
|                           | No  | 18    | 60.0%   |
| Rural                     | Yes | 7     | 22.6%   |
|                           | No  | 24    | 77.4%   |
| Homeless or at Risk       | Yes | 10    | 32.3%   |
|                           | No  | 21    | 67.7%   |
| Poor Employment Prospects | Yes | 27    | 90.0%   |
|                           | No  | 3     | 10.0%   |

**Table 2. Barriers to Employment**

|                           |     | Count | Percent |
|---------------------------|-----|-------|---------|
| Veteran                   | Yes | 5     | 16.1%   |
|                           | No  | 26    | 83.9%   |
| Severe Disability         | Yes | 0     | 0.0%    |
|                           | No  | 19    | 100.0%  |
| Frail                     | Yes | 0     | 0.0%    |
|                           | No  | 19    | 100.0%  |
| Old Enough for but Not    | Yes | 3     | 15.8%   |
| Receiving Social Security | No  | 16    | 84.2%   |
| Failed to Find Employment | Yes | 2     | 6.7%    |
| After WIOA Services       | No  | 28    | 93.3%   |
| Severely Limited          | Yes | 7     | 36.8%   |
| Employment Prospects      | No  | 12    | 63.2%   |
| Seventy-five Plus         | Yes | 0     | 0.0%    |
|                           | No  | 11    | 100.0%  |
| Formerly Incarcerated     | Yes | 1     | 5.6%    |
|                           | No  | 17    | 94.4%   |

**Table 3. Average Number of Barriers to Employment**

|                    | Count | Mean | Minimum | Maximum |
|--------------------|-------|------|---------|---------|
| Number of Barriers | 31    | 2.7  | 0       | 5       |

**Table 4. Age**

|     |              | Count | Percent |
|-----|--------------|-------|---------|
| Age | Less than 65 | 14    | 46.7%   |
|     | 65 or older  | 16    | 53.3%   |

## Appendix C: Questions Associated with the ACSI

The nationwide driver analysis will provide guidance on certain program areas that are important to overall satisfaction (ACSI). Additional program areas associated with the ACSI for your project are in the tables below.

**Table 1. Supportive Services and ACSI**

|                           |                      | ACSI  |            |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-------|------------|
|                           |                      | Count | ACSI Score |
| 7. The Older Worker       | 1 Strongly disagree  | 5     | 44.8       |
| Program/SCSEP helped me   | 5                    | 1     | 93.1       |
| obtain the supportive     | 6                    | 1     | 100.0      |
| services that I needed to | 7                    | 1     | 96.4       |
| meet my employment goals. | 8                    | 4     | 87.1       |
|                           | 9                    | 2     | 81.6       |
|                           | 10 Strongly agree    | 5     | 98.7       |
|                           | Did not need support | 11    | 79.8       |

**Table 2. Computer Training and ACSI**

|                            |                               | ACSI  |            |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|------------|
|                            |                               | Count | ACSI Score |
| 12. Which of the following | I received the computer       | 8     | 90.7       |
| best describes your        | training I needed             |       |            |
| experience with computer   | I received computer training, | 1     | 100.0      |
| training?                  | but it didn't meet my needs   |       |            |
|                            | I needed computer training,   | 7     | 64.2       |
|                            | but little or none was        |       |            |
|                            | offered                       |       |            |
|                            | I didn't need computer        | 1     | 96.7       |
|                            | training but was given the    |       |            |
|                            | training anyway.              |       |            |
|                            | I didn't need computer        | 14    | 80.3       |
|                            | training and didn't receive   |       |            |
|                            | any                           |       |            |

**Table 3. Prepared for Employment and ACSI**

|                                                                                                       |                                                                              | ACSI  |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------------|
|                                                                                                       |                                                                              | Count | ACSI Score |
| 20. Do you feel your participation in the program prepared you for employment in these organizations? | 20a. I felt prepared for employment in a nonprofit organization.             | 4     | 100.0      |
|                                                                                                       | 20b. I felt prepared for employment in a government organization             | 3     | 87.7       |
|                                                                                                       | 20c. I felt prepared for employment in a for-profit business                 | 3     | 100.0      |
|                                                                                                       | 20d. I did not feel prepared for employment in any organization or business. | 1     | 32.7       |

**Table 4. Having a Say in Training and Skills and ACSI**

|                                                                                       |                     | ACSI  |            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------|------------|
|                                                                                       |                     | Count | ACSI Score |
| 11. I had a say in the types of skills I would gain during my host agency assignment. | 1 Strongly disagree | 5     | 39.1       |
|                                                                                       | 2                   | 1     | 63.1       |
|                                                                                       | 5                   | 2     | 91.1       |
|                                                                                       | 7                   | 3     | 85.2       |
|                                                                                       | 8                   | 3     | 90.4       |
|                                                                                       | 9                   | 1     | 96.7       |
|                                                                                       | 10 Strongly agree   | 15    | 92.3       |