

Participant Customer Satisfaction PY 2021

Grantee Report: Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulations

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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 2021 was conducted between April 2022 and September 2022. Of the 16,929 participants surveyed, 8,712 returned completed surveys¹, yielding a nationwide response rate of 51.5 percent. This response rate is significantly lower than the PY 2020 rate of 59.5 percent but higher than the response rate for PY 2019 of 50.4 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.

¹ 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 85.9, significantly lower than the PY 2020 score of 87.2 but higher than most previous years. If your ACSI score is 85 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. Question 18 is an area of some challenge, being the lowest scores among the key drivers. Question 6 is somewhere between the two 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	8.4	8.3	7.9
	Count	38	38	35
Nationwide	Mean	9.0	8.7	8.4
	Count	8609	8475	9199

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 the lowest nationwide score (8.1) 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. 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 giving participants a say in identifying those skills most likely to prepare them for the workforce.

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 significance². 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 (7.8) 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.
- 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 87.2, you may still have some areas needing improvement. Similarly, if the rating for one or more of the key questions is above the cut-off point of 7.8, 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 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

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

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 2021:

Preparation for employment. If your individual rating for Question 18 is less than 8.4 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 8.5 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 a third of your participants or more 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 9-12 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 1-5 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 higher than usual response rate is likely an anomaly related to the influence of COVID on participants. Therefore, we continue to stress the importance of achieving a 50 percent or higher response rate. If your response rate is below 50 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	Did not respond	36	48.0%
	Responded	39	52.0%

Table 2. ACSI

	Count	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
ACSI	39	81.0	11.11	100.00

Table 3. Reasons for Enrolling

		Count	Percent of All Responses
4. The primary reason(s) I enrolled in the Older Worker Program/SCSEP were to:	4a. Obtain a full-time job after completing the program	5	3.6%
	4b. Obtain a part-time job after completing the program	22	15.8%
	4c. Participate in the program's training and host agency activities	17	12.2%
	4d. Provide service to my community	20	14.4%
	4e. Meet new people	18	12.9%
	4f. Increase my income	27	19.4%
	4g. Feel more useful and independent	26	18.7%
	4h. Other	4	2.9%

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.	38	8.4	1	10
6. The Older Worker Program/SCSEP staff gave me a host agency assignment that matched my employment interests and needs.	38	8.3	1	10
9. There is someone in the Older Worker Program I can talk to when I need to.	36	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	13.2%
	2	2	5.3%
	4	1	2.6%
	5	1	2.6%
	6	2	5.3%
	7	2	5.3%
	8	4	10.5%
	9	4	10.5%
	10 Strongly agree	6	15.8%
	Did not need support	11	28.9%
	Total	38	100.0%

Table 6. Geographic Convenience

		Count	Percent
8. Given your transportation situation, was your host agency assignment convenient to where you live?	Yes	38	97.4%
	No	1	2.6%

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.	33	8.0	2	10
11. I had a say in the types of skills I would gain during my host agency assignment.	34	7.9	1	10
13. I feel comfortable at my host agency assignment.	37	8.6	1	10

Table 8. Computer Training

		Count	Percent
12. Which of the following best describes your experience with computer training?	I received the computer training I needed	20	55.6%
	I received computer training, but it didn't meet my needs	3	8.3%
	I needed computer training, but little or none was offered	10	27.8%
	I didn't need computer training but was given the training anyway.	1	2.8%
	I didn't need computer training and didn't receive any	2	5.6%

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	9	25.7%
	Worse	3	8.6%
	About the same	23	65.7%
	Don't know	0	0.0%

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	2	5.1%
	A little more negative	2	5.1%
	About the same	13	33.3%
	A little more positive	6	15.4%
	Much more positive	16	41.0%

Table 11. SCSEP Wages

	Count	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
16. The income I receive from the Older Worker Program/SCSEP is important for meeting my basic expenses.	38	9.0	1	10

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	5.7%
	No	19	54.3%
	Does not apply	14	40.0%

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?	35	7.9	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?	2	5.5	1	10

Table 15. Preparation for Employment

		Count	Percent of All Responses
20. Do you feel that your participation in the Older Worker Program prepared you for employment in these organizations?	20a. I felt prepared for employment in a nonprofit organization.	0	0.0%
	20b. I felt prepared for employment in a government organization	1	50.0%
	20c. I felt prepared for employment in a for-profit business	0	0.0%
	20d. I did not feel prepared for employment in any organization or business.	1	50.0%

Appendix B: Demographics and Characteristics of Grantee Respondents

Table 1. Gender, Race, Ethnicity, Education

		Count	Percent
Gender	Male	15	39.5%
	Female	23	60.5%
Race	White	9	25.0%
	Black	27	75.0%
	Asian	0	0.0%
	American Indian	0	0.0%
	Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
	Hispanic	0	0.0%
Ethnicity	Not Hispanic	31	100.0%
Education	Less than HS diploma	7	17.9%
	HS Diploma/GED	20	51.3%
	Some college	3	7.7%
	Vocational/Technical degree	1	2.6%
	Associate's degree	4	10.3%
	BA/BS	3	7.7%
	Bachelors Plus	1	2.6%

Table 2. Barriers to Employment

		Count	Percent
Disability	Yes	8	20.5%
	No	31	79.5%
LEP	Yes	0	0.0%
	No	39	100.0%
Low Literacy Skills	Yes	18	46.2%
	No	21	53.8%
Rural	Yes	10	25.6%
	No	29	74.4%
Poor Employment Prospects	Yes	29	74.4%
	No	10	25.6%
Homeless or at Risk	Yes	14	35.9%
	No	25	64.1%
Veteran	Yes	6	15.4%
	No	33	84.6%
Severe Disability	Yes	0	0.0%
	No	34	100.0%
Frail	Yes	0	0.0%
	No	34	100.0%
Old Enough for but Not Receiving Social Security	Yes	2	5.9%
	No	32	94.1%
Failed to Find Employment After WIOA Services	Yes	7	17.9%
	No	32	82.1%
Severely Limited Employment Prospects	Yes	17	50.0%
	No	17	50.0%
Seventy-five Plus	Yes	5	12.8%
	No	34	87.2%
Formerly Incarcerated	Yes	0	0.0%
	No	7	100.0%

Table 3. Average Barriers per Participant

	Count	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Number of Barriers	39	3.0	1	5

Table 4. Age

		Count	Percent
Age	Less than 65	20	51.3%
	65 or older	19	48.7%

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

		Count	ACSI Score
7. The Older Worker	1 Strongly disagree	5	48.4
Program/SCSEP helped	2	2	51.8
me obtain the supportive	4	1	77.8
services that I needed to	5	1	96.1
meet my employment	6	2	79.6
goals.	7	2	75.9
	8	4	74.2
	9	4	87.0
	10 Strongly agree	6	96.3
	Did not need	11	91.5
	support		

Table 2. Computer Training and ACSI

		Count	ACSI Score
12. Which of the following	I received the computer	20	91.4
best describes your	training I needed		
experience with computer	I received computer	3	93.7
training?	training, but it didn't meet		
	my needs		
	I needed computer	10	50.2
	training, but little or none		
	was offered		
	I didn't need computer	1	92.4
	training but was given the		
	training anyway.		
	I didn't need computer	2	100.0
	training and didn't receive		
	any		

Table 3. Preparation for Employment and ACSI

		Count	ACSI Score
20. Do you feel that your participation in the Older Worker Program prepared you for employment in these organizations?	20a. I felt prepared for employment in a nonprofit organization.	4	90.7
	20b. I felt prepared for employment in a government organization	3	96.3
	20c. I felt prepared for employment in a for-profit business	1	81.3
	20d. I did not feel prepared for employment in any organization or business.	3	52.1

Table 4. Having a Say in Training and Skills and 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	1	92.4
	2	1	44.7
	4	2	53.6
	5	2	70.4
	6	2	79.6
	7	4	64.9
	8	5	79.8
	9	3	82.7
	10 Strongly agree	14	98.1