

2016 Consumer Satisfaction Survey Results



Prepared in collaboration with
the State Rehabilitation Council

Executive Summary

The mission of the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) is to work in partnership with consumers and other stakeholders to provide services and advocacy resulting in employment, independent living, and equality for individuals with disabilities.

The DOR Vocational Rehabilitation program provides direct services to eligible individuals with significant disabilities to prepare for, find, and retain a job. In furtherance of its mission, DOR recognizes the value of consumer input to evaluate services, processes, and improve results. In accordance with 34 Code of Federal Regulation §361.17 (h)(4), the DOR in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) conducts an annual Consumer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) in an effort to ensure that DOR is meeting its vocational rehabilitation program responsibilities to its consumers by providing high quality, effective services that ultimately result in employment outcomes. The survey results inform the Department and the SRC and are utilized to increase effectiveness and efficiency in the service delivery process, both internally and externally. This report is shared with DOR staff, consumers, and the public; and will be published on the DOR intranet and internet domains.

The SRC is a federally mandated policy advisory body composed of individuals appointed by the Governor. The DOR and SRC work jointly to determine the goals and priorities for the State's effort on behalf of its vocational rehabilitation consumers.

In April 2016, DOR sent out a total of **11,844** surveys and received **2,253** (19.0%) responses. Of the total respondents, 532 were screen reader users. The 19.0% response rate reflects a slight decrease from the 2015 response rate of 19.7%. The details are included in the table below:

Survey Method	2016 CSS	2015 CSS	2014 CSS
Total Surveys Sent ¹	11,844	12,004	12,024
Electronic	11,126	11,204	11,316
Surface Mail	718	800	708
Responses Received	2,253	2,360	1,911
Response Rate	19.0%	19.7%	15.9%

¹ Excludes surface mail returned and invalid email address returns.

The overall satisfaction rating for a majority of the survey questions remained at the same level as prior year, not only for the consumers who are in plan, but also for those who became employed.

Highlights of the survey results are included below. For a comprehensive comparison of 2016 to 2015 survey responses, please refer to the Summary of Results beginning on page 6.

Agency Satisfaction

- **72%** of respondents expressed overall satisfaction with the services provided directly by DOR. This reflects a 3% decrease from prior year.
- **89%** of respondents reported they understand the reason for DOR services is to help them become employed. This reflects a 1% increase from prior year.
- **82%** of respondents reported they were treated with courtesy and respect from the counselor and DOR team. This reflects a 3% decrease from prior year.
- **77%** responded that they would recommend DOR services to other persons with disabilities who want to become employed. This reflects a 1% decrease from prior year.
- **63%** responded that their quality of life has improved because of DOR services. No change from prior year.

Satisfaction with Services from External Service Providers

- **69%** responded they were satisfied with the quality of service from their service providers. This reflects a 3% decrease from prior year.
- **66%** responded they were satisfied with the timeliness of services from their service providers. This reflects a 3% decrease from prior year.

Provision of Benefits Counseling (Work Incentive Planning)

- **60%** responded that they received benefits counseling from DOR and/or their service provider(s). This reflects a 2% decrease from prior year.

Satisfaction with Counseling Services Provided

- **72%** were satisfied with the prompt response to questions and requests by the counselor and/or DOR team. This reflects a 2% decrease from prior year.
- **69%** were satisfied with the level of vocational guidance and quality of counseling received. This reflects a 1% decrease from prior year.

- **73%** responded that their counselor and/or DOR team clearly explained all services available to them. No change from prior year.

For Consumers Who Were Employed

- **81%** reported they were satisfied with their job. This reflects a 3% decrease from prior year.
- **81%** reported that the services provided by DOR were instrumental in their becoming employed. This reflects a 6% decrease from prior year.
- **17%** reported they were dissatisfied with health benefits received from their job. This reflects a 3% decrease from prior year.
- **10%** were dissatisfied that their job was not consistent with their employment plan. This reflects a 4% increase from prior year.

For Consumers Who Were Not Employed

(Consumers were asked to check all reasons that prevented their ability to become employed.) Of the total responses;

- **22%** reported they need additional help to find a job. This reflects a 1% increase from prior year.
- **16%** reported that DOR did not help them find a job. This reflects a 1% increase from prior year.
- **15%** reported they are not ready to start working. This reflects a 3% decrease from prior year.
- **12%** reported there was no job available that was consistent with the DOR employment plan. No change from prior year.
- **4%** reported they did not want to give up SSI/SSDI benefits. No change from prior year.

Methodology

The consumers are selected at random and responses are anonymous. A total of **12,800** sample names were generated from the consumer data base: **12,000** consumers with email addresses, and **800** with mailing addresses. From this sample, a total of 11,844 surveys were actually sent due to email addresses that were no longer valid. The sample selected included consumers whose case was in open status as of December 31, 2015, or who had a closure outcome during the 12 months prior.

In addition to the English version, the survey was translated into seven languages consistent with the prevalent consumer population:

- Armenian
- Cambodian

- Chinese
- Korean
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Vietnamese

The survey contains a series of questions designed to measure program satisfaction and provide a systematic method of obtaining the point of view of DOR consumers. Through the survey, consumers are able to provide their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with services, staff, service providers, and other aspects of the vocational rehabilitation process. In addition, the survey assists in identifying areas where program and process improvements can be made to enhance the services provided by DOR and its service providers and increase employment outcomes for Californians with significant disabilities.

Demographics - Disability

Respondents were asked to self-identify their disability, and some consumers reported multiple disabilities. In comparing 2016 with the 2015 and 2014 respondents, the percentages by disability have remained fairly consistent between all three years. The largest percent change for 2016 was a 1% increase in the Blind/Visually Impaired and the Deaf or Hard of Hearing categories. The biggest decrease was also 1% and was in the Traumatic Brain Injury category.

Disability Impairment	2016	2015	2014
Blind/Visually Impaired	9%	8%	9%
Cognitive Impairment	6%	6%	5%
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	10%	9%	12%
Developmentally Disability	5%	5%	4%
Learning Disability	20%	20%	20%
Physical Disability	23%	23%	23%
Psychiatric Disability	18%	18%	16%
Traumatic Brain Injury	3%	4%	3%
Other	7%	7%	8%

For 2016, a selected number of satisfaction ratings by disability (some consumers reported multiple disabilities) are included below.

- **74%** of respondents with a physical disability and **74%** of respondents with learning disability expressed overall satisfaction with the services provided directly by DOR.
- **87%** of respondents who are blind/visually impaired reported the highest satisfaction rating on the statement that they were treated with courtesy and respect from the counselor and DOR team.
- **90%** or more of the respondents within the cognitive impairment, psychiatric disability, physical disability, and traumatic brain injury categories responded with the highest satisfaction rating on the statement that they understand the reason for DOR services was to help them become employed.
- **50%** of respondents with cognitive impairment also reported the lowest satisfaction rating of any category on the statement “My counselor helped me understand my disability and how it may affect my work”.

Summary of Results

The DOR provides vocational rehabilitation services through its Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Division and Specialized Services Division which are administratively organized into fourteen districts. Thirteen districts are constructed along geographic lines; with a fourteenth district to include consumers in any of the geographical districts who are blind and/or visually impaired. The statewide responses are summarized below.

Statement	2016 Satisfied	2015 Satisfied	2016 Dis-satisfied	2015 Dis-satisfied	2016 No Opinion	2015 No Opinion
Overall, I am satisfied with the services provided directly by the DOR.	72%	75%	19%	17%	9%	8%
I found the level of vocational guidance and quality of counseling received from my DOR counselor adequate for my needs.	69%	70%	20%	20%	12%	10%
I was treated with courtesy and respect by my counselor and DOR team.	82%	85%	10%	8%	8%	7%

Statement	2016 Satisfied	2015 Satisfied	2016 Dis-satisfied	2015 Dis-satisfied	2016 No Opinion	2015 No Opinion
I was satisfied with the quality of services from my service provider(s). (examples: school, job coach, community rehabilitation program, etc.)	69%	72%	18%	16%	13%	12%
I was satisfied with the timeliness of services provided by my service provider(s). (examples: school, job coach, community rehabilitation program, etc.)	66%	69%	21%	20%	12%	11%
My counselor and/or DOR team responded promptly to my questions and requests.	72%	74%	18%	17%	10%	9%
My counselor helped me understand my disability and how it may affect my work.	58%	59%	20%	19%	22%	22%
I was informed of my right to disagree with and appeal DOR decisions.	70%	71%	12%	12%	18%	17%
I understand the reason for DOR services was to help me become employed.	89%	88%	4%	5%	7%	7%
I was satisfied with my level of participation and involvement in the decision making process that led to my vocational goal and the services provided.	71%	73%	14%	13%	15%	14%
My counselor and/or DOR team clearly explained all services available to me.	73%	73%	16%	16%	11%	11%
My counselor and/or DOR team assisted me in connecting with other agencies.	62%	62%	20%	20%	18%	18%
I received benefits counseling from DOR and/or my service provider(s).	60%	62%	20%	17%	20%	21%

Statement	2016 Satisfied	2015 Satisfied	2016 Dis-satisfied	2015 Dis-satisfied	2016 No Opinion	2015 No Opinion
I would recommend DOR services to other persons with disabilities who want to become employed.	77%	78%	12%	11%	11%	11%
My quality of life has improved because of DOR services.	63%	63%	18%	17%	19%	20%

If Employed	2016 Satisfied	2015 Satisfied	2016 Dis-satisfied	2015 Dis-satisfied	2016 No Opinion	2015 No Opinion
I am satisfied with my job.	81%	84%	8%	6%	11%	10%
I am satisfied with health benefits from my job.	48%	49%	17%	20%	35%	31%
I am satisfied with other employment benefits available through my job (examples: vacation, sick leave, retirement, long term disability, etc.)	58%	60%	14%	14%	28%	26%
My job is consistent with my employment plan.	73%	77%	10%	6%	17%	17%
The services provided by DOR were instrumental in my becoming employed.	81%	87%	4%	2%	15%	11%

If Not Employed <i>Check all reasons that prevented your ability to become employed</i>	2016 # of Responses (Count)	2015 # of Responses (Count)	2016 # of Responses (Percent)	2015 # of Responses (Percent)
Total Number of Responses	2,468	2,632	100%	100%
I did not want to give up my SSI/SSDI benefits.	104	100	4%	4%
There was no job available to me that is consistent with my DOR employment plan.	293	308	12%	12%
DOR did not assist me in finding a job.	390	404	16%	15%
My disability prevented me from working.	254	296	10%	11%

If Not Employed <i>Check all reasons that prevented your ability to become employed</i>	2016 # of Responses (Count)	2015 # of Responses (Count)	2016 # of Responses (Percent)	2015 # of Responses (Percent)
Family issues such as daycare, caring for relative.	106	99	4%	4%
Lack of or no transportation.	167	174	7%	7%
I am not ready to start working.	371	468	15%	18%
Need additional help to find a job.	531	553	22%	21%
No jobs are available that I want.	252	230	10%	9%

Consumer Comments

A total of **980** consumers provided open-ended statements or comments. The majority of consumers were happy and pleased with their services, and more positive remarks were received from consumers who are either close to completing their plan or becoming employed, or have already found employment. Some of the positive comments received are included below:

- Many consumers expressed their appreciation to DOR and the services provided that helped them acquire gainful employment.
- Some consumers also stated that their counselor or DOR team is respectful, professional, encouraging, compassionate, and supportive.
- Some personal statements:
 - “My counselor has been very informative and insightful throughout the qualification process, acceptance, and keeping in touch with me frequently. I feel very fortunate to have the counselor handling my case and truly appreciate all her efforts, ongoing. She is very professional, considerate, patient, compassionate, empathetic, and resourceful.”
 - “Generally, I am pleased with the DOR services that I am receiving. I believe that I can find employment in the near future. Thank you for your services. They are greatly appreciated.”

- “DOR staffs were very helpful in getting me trained and employed. I am grateful for the services. I often recommend DOR services to people I come across with disabilities to help them get trained to qualify for a satisfying job.”

Some consumers provided comments based on their experiences to inform DOR and the SRC where opportunities for change exist, and are included below:

- A number of consumers who expressed dissatisfaction stated that their calls or emails are not being returned promptly or at times being ignored.
- Some consumers stated that counselors did not know or are hesitant to tell them what services are available for them, and then they find out from other agencies what services DOR can provide.
- Several consumers feel there is a need to streamline the DOR process and to improve the timeline for services; and that many counselors are carrying a high caseload, affecting the speed of service.
- Some consumers who attend college reported delays in getting their books, supplies, or adaptive devices, which can put them at risk of falling behind in their studies.
- There are some consumers who feel that they have a difficult time in developing rapport with their counselor or other staff who are not sensitive to their disabilities or needs, and are not being courteous or kind when communicating with them.
- Those who are actively seeking employment indicated that more efforts should be made to broaden employment resources, as the resources currently offered are limited, and are mostly available for those seeking non-professional jobs.
- Some consumers expressed an urgent need to be contacted as soon as possible, and provided contact information. These consumers were contacted immediately by appropriate DOR staff.

SRC Recommendations

The SRC provided the following response to the survey results:

SRC Recommendation 2016.3

The State Rehabilitation Council recommends that the Department of Rehabilitation notify the following groups of service providers when the Consumer Satisfaction Survey is being distributed and provide them with guidance and recommendations on how to best encourage and assist consumers in completing the survey:

- A. Appropriate field staff, including Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Employment Coordinators, Service Coordinators, Work Incentives Planners
- B. DOR's Community Rehabilitation Program partners
- C. The Client Assistance Program

The guidance provided by DOR should include the recommendation that, if a consumer requires assistance completing the survey, someone other than the consumer's rehabilitation counselor should assist them.

DOR's Response

The DOR concurs with the recommendation to notify and provide guidance to the group of service providers noted to encourage and assist consumers in completing the Consumer Satisfaction Survey. Currently, when the Consumer Satisfaction Survey is being conducted, the Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Division and the Specialized Services Division receive an email notification that contains instructions for our staff in the field offices to encourage and remind their consumers to complete the Consumer Satisfaction Survey. A sample of the paper survey was included for their reference. For the upcoming survey distribution cycle, the memo notification will also be issued to Community Rehabilitation Program partners and the Client Assistance Program to have them as available resources to support this activity.