

2019 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 the 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. Publication is available 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.

The consumer satisfaction survey sample size this year was **20,400**, reflecting 20% of the department's consumer population. Of the 20,400 surveys sent in April 2019, **18,666** were deliverable surveys and 1,734 were undeliverable surveys. DOR received **3,483** (18.7%) responses. The 18.7% response rate reflects a 4.7% decrease from the 2018 response rate of 23.4%, which had the same sample size of 20,400. The details are included in the table below:

Survey Method	2019 CSS	2018 CSS	2017 CSS
Sample Size	20,400	20,400	20,400
Total Surveys Sent	18,666 ¹	18,561 ¹	18,676 ²
Electronic	17,734	17,650	17,676

¹ Excludes surface mails returned and invalid email address returns.

² Excludes invalid email addresses but may contain undeliverable surface mails.

Survey Method	2019 CSS	2018 CSS	2017 CSS
Surface Mail	932	911	1,000
Responses Received	3,483	4,351	4,344
Response Rate	18.7%	23.4%	23.3%

Highlights of the survey results are included below. For a comprehensive comparison of 2019 to 2018 survey responses, please refer to the Summary of Results beginning on page 7.

Agency Satisfaction

- **90%** of respondents reported they understand that the reason for DOR services is to help them become employed. No change from prior year.
- **84%** of respondents reported they were treated with courtesy and respect from the counselor and DOR team. This reflects a 1% decrease from prior year.
- **79%** 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.
- **76%** of respondents expressed overall satisfaction with the services provided directly by DOR. No change from prior year.
- **66%** responded that their quality of life has improved because of DOR services. No change from prior year.

Satisfaction with Services from External Service Providers

- **73%** responded they were satisfied with the quality of service from their service providers. No change from prior year.
- **69%** responded they were satisfied with the timeliness of services from their service providers. No change from prior year.

Provision of Benefits Counseling (Work Incentive Planning)

- **62%** responded that they received benefits counseling from DOR and/or their service provider(s). No change from prior year.

Satisfaction with Counseling Services Provided

- **73%** 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.
- **73%** responded that their counselor and/or DOR team clearly explained all services available to them. No change from prior year.
- **71%** were satisfied with the level of vocational guidance and quality of counseling received. No change from prior year.

For Consumers Who Were Employed

- **86%** of respondents reported that the services provided by DOR were instrumental in their becoming employed. This reflects a 2% increase from prior year.
- **81%** reported they were satisfied with their job. This reflects a 2% decrease from prior year.
- **80%** were satisfied that their job was consistent with their employment plan. This reflects a 3% increase from prior year.
- **14%** reported they were dissatisfied with health benefits received from their job. This reflects a 1% decrease 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. No change from prior year.
- **18%** reported they are not ready to start working. This reflects a 1% decrease from prior year.
- **17%** reported that DOR did not help them find a job. This reflects a 1% increase from prior year.
- **10%** reported their disability prevented them from working. This reflects a 1% decrease from prior year.
- **11%** reported there were no jobs available consistent with their employment plan. This reflects a 1% increase from prior year.
- **4%** reported they did not want to give up SSI/SSDI benefits. No change from prior year.

Methodology

The sample size of 20,400 remained the same as prior year's survey to comply with SRC's recommendation to represent 20% of the DOR consumer population. The **20,400** sample names were generated at random from the consumer database: **19,400** consumers with email addresses, and **1,000** with mailing addresses. The sample selected included consumers whose cases were in open status as of drawn date³, or who had a closure outcome as of January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018.

Surveys are conducted in two formats: email recipients take the survey electronically through the Survey Monkey website, and surface mail recipients take the survey by mail, which includes a postage paid return

³ Drawn date of February 14, 2019

envelope. Email recipients received both a first and second reminder notice to complete the survey, while surface mail recipients received one reminder.

In addition to the English version, the survey was translated into seven languages consistent with the prevalent consumer population (including the DORs biennial languages). There were no changes in languages this year.

- Armenian
- Farsi
- Chinese
- Korean
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Vietnamese

Note: Biennial Languages consist of Armenian, Spanish, and, Tagalog.

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 anonymously provide their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with services, staff, service providers, and other aspects of the vocational rehabilitation process. At the end of the survey, consumers are able to provide open-ended feedback and contact information should they want to be contacted by DOR staff. 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 2019 to the 2018 and 2017 respondents, the percentages by disability are relatively comparable between all three years with a few noticeable trends. Deaf/Hard of Hearing respondents are trending down by 1% each year and Psychiatric Disability respondents have consistently remained the same throughout.

Disability Impairment	2019	2018	2017
Blind/Visually Impaired	7%	8%	8%
Cognitive Impairment	5%	6%	5%
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	8%	9%	10%
Intellectual/Developmental Disability	8%	7%	7%
Learning Disability	21%	20%	20%
Physical Disability	21%	22%	22%
Psychiatric Disability	18%	18%	18%
Traumatic Brain Injury	4%	3%	3%
Not Reported	8%	7%	7%

For 2019, a selected number of satisfaction ratings by disability are included below. Note that some consumers reported multiple disabilities.

- **90%** or more respondents with blind/visual impairment, cognitive impairment, intellectual/developmental disability, learning disability, psychiatric disability, physical disability, and other categories responded with the highest satisfaction rating on the statement that they understand that the reason for DOR services was to help them become employed.
- **83%** of respondents who are blind/visually impaired expressed the highest overall satisfaction with the services provided directly by DOR.
- **83%** or more respondents of all disability types except for traumatic brain injury respondents reported the highest satisfaction rating on the statement that they were treated with courtesy and respect from the counselor and DOR team.
- **49%** of respondents with traumatic brain injury reported the lowest satisfaction rating of any category regarding the statement, “My counselor helped me understand my disability and how it may affect my work.” This is a 1% decrease from prior year.

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; a fourteenth district includes consumers who are blind and/or visually impaired in any of the geographical districts. The statewide responses are summarized below.

Statement	2019 Satisfied	2018 Satisfied	2019 Dis-satisfied	2018 Dis-satisfied	2019 No Opinion	2018 No Opinion
Overall, I am satisfied with the services provided directly by the DOR.	76%	76%	17%	17%	7%	7%
I found the level of vocational guidance and quality of counseling received from my DOR counselor adequate for my needs.	71%	71%	19%	19%	10%	10%
I was treated with courtesy and respect by my counselor and DOR team.	84%	85%	9%	8%	7%	7%
I was satisfied with the quality of services from my service provider(s). (examples: school, job coach, community rehabilitation program, etc.)	73%	73%	17%	16%	10%	11%
I was satisfied with the timeliness of services provided by my service provider(s). (examples: school, job coach, community rehabilitation program, etc.)	69%	69%	20%	19%	11%	12%
My counselor and/or DOR team responded promptly to my questions and requests.	73%	75%	19%	17%	8%	8%
My counselor helped me understand my disability and how it may affect my work.	59%	60%	19%	18%	22%	22%
I was informed of my right to disagree with and	72%	73%	11%	11%	17%	16%

Statement	2019 Satisfied	2018 Satisfied	2019 Dis-satisfied	2018 Dis-satisfied	2019 No Opinion	2018 No Opinion
appeal DOR decisions.						
I understand the reason for DOR services was to help me become employed.	90%	90%	4%	4%	6%	6%
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.	76%	76%	12%	12%	12%	12%
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 and service provider(s) to meet my specific needs.	63%	63%	19%	19%	18%	18%
I received benefits counseling from DOR and/or my service provider(s).	62%	62%	18%	18%	20%	20%
I would recommend DOR services to other persons with disabilities who want to become employed.	79%	80%	11%	11%	10%	9%
My quality of life has improved because of DOR services.	66%	66%	17%	17%	17%	17%

If Employed	2019 Satisfied	2018 Satisfied	2019 Dis-satisfied	2018 Dis-satisfied	2019 No Opinion	2018 No Opinion
I am satisfied with my job.	81%	83%	7%	7%	12%	10%
I am satisfied with the health benefits available from my job.	55%	55%	14%	15%	31%	30%
I am satisfied with other employment benefits available through my job (examples: vacation, sick leave, retirement, long term disability, etc.)	63%	65%	11%	12%	26%	23%
My job is consistent with my employment plan.	80%	77%	7%	7%	13%	16%
The services provided by DOR were instrumental in my becoming employed.	86%	84%	4%	4%	10%	12%

If Not Employed <i>Check all reasons that prevented your ability to become employed</i>	2019 # of Responses (Count)	2018 # of Responses (Count)	2019 # of Responses (Percent)	2018 # of Responses (Percent)
Total Number of Responses	3,460	4,532	100%	100%
I did not want to give up my SSI/SSDI benefits.	147	194	4%	4%
There was no job available to me that is consistent with my DOR employment plan.	367	446	11%	10%
DOR did not assist me in finding a job.	581	738	17%	16%
My disability prevented me from working.	332	499	10%	11%
Family issues such as daycare, caring for relative.	130	172	4%	4%
Lack of or no transportation.	233	268	6%	6%
I am not ready to start working.	616	853	18%	19%
Need additional help to find a job.	773	991	22%	22%
No jobs are available that I want.	281	371	8%	8%

Consumer Comments

A total of **1,560** consumers provided open-ended statements or comments. These comments consist of consumers who were satisfied with DOR services that assisted in reaching their employment and educational goals. A few consist of valuable comments to improve services. Positive remarks were received from consumers who are in the transition of completing their plan and becoming employed or have already found employment.

Some of the positive comments received are included below:

- “My experience is and was fantastic! I received much more than I ever expected. I'm nearing the end of my studies and in the process of researching and exploring employment opportunities in my chosen field. I feel confident I will be able to support myself soon using the education I've received.”
- “All services as of right now have helped me towards my goal to becoming a RN. Thank you.”
- “I feel that the services I receive from my DOR Case Manager are phenomenal. Not only have they helped me go back to school, get a much needed eye exam, and provide me with support and info on how to better help myself and understand my illnesses and how it effects my work participation, they treat me as an individual and truly care that I accomplish my set out goals. This agency has provided the support that I need so that I can be an employed independent individual. My counselor does such a great job and is available for me to meet with her in a timely matter. I feel a part of team. Thank you so much for letting me be a part of this program/agency. If you'd like to contact me, my name is XX and my phone number is XX
Thank you so much team!”
- “My experience with DOR services was phenomenal. I am extremely grateful for the aid received and the time frame it took to completion. It helped me financially as well. I'm pleased and would recommend these services with no reservations.”
- “I am still currently in the process of receiving my degree/ training to become employed. Everything the DOR has done to help me has furthered this initiative.”

- “I'm very happy with DOR. This kind of help has made it so it's relieves stress and not so much of a hardship while obtaining my degree and obtaining employment. Now, I am able to further my education & I would have never been able to this without help. My counselor is awesome & is very responsive to my questions & assistance. 5 stars!!!”

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

- “The program and the counselors are AMAZING at what they do, the only thing I can recommend is that they respond faster to our emails and voicemails.”
- “It is sometimes hard to get a hold of the DOR counselor because they are busy. There should be various ways to get a hold of a counselor.”
- “I am a College 2 Career student through the DOR. I am grateful for the program, but it has been stressful getting funding/authorizations completed in a timely manner. As a result, I have been unenrolled in my classes and ended up on waitlists.”
- “Have a pool of employees that help this department employ people with disabilities.”
- “Need to improve communication from VR counselor.”
- “Be more specific and open about the services DOR provides, such as for college, internships, and ISPs. Be more helpful to the ISPs, such as paying them on time and responding to them and the clients immediately or more conveniently.”

SRC Recommendations for 2019:

Please see ENCLOSURE A.

DOR's Response:

The DOR is committed to partnering with the SRC to support the Council in carrying out its federal mandate to review and analyze consumer satisfaction. The DOR also acknowledges receipt of the SRC's July 22nd memo entitled "2020 Consumer Satisfaction Survey" and thanks its members for their ongoing efforts to improve the CSS. In order to address the recommendations outlined for an updated CSS in 2020, the DOR will create a workgroup consisting of at least one member/volunteer from ASD, VRED, VRPRD, and SSD. This workgroup will work alongside the SRC to measure the *(i) The functions performed by DOR; (ii) The VR services provided by State agencies and other public and private entities responsible for providing VR services to individuals with disabilities under the Rehabilitation Act; and (iii) The employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under this part, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with those employment outcomes as per * 34 CFR § 361.17 - Requirements for a State Rehabilitation Council.*

Update to SRC 2018 CSS Recommendation:

SRC Recommendation 2018.3:

The SRC recommends that the Comprehensive Statewide Assessment (2018-20) be used to gather information from consumers regarding effective methods to elicit feedback about their DOR experience. This information could be utilized by the SRC and the Department to develop the Consumer Satisfaction Survey.

DOR Update:

The DOR is in the planning stages of gathering input from consumers on how they would like to provide feedback on their DOR experience. The final results of the information gathered will be released in September 2020 when the Comprehensive Statewide Assessment 2018-2020 is published.

ENCLOSURE A



Memorandum

To: Armel Biscocho, Deputy Director, Administrative Services Division
Mark Erlichman, Deputy Director, VR Employment Division
Elena Gomez, Deputy Director, Specialized Services Division

From: Lesley Ann Gibbons, SRC Chair

Cc: Kathi Mowers-Moore, Deputy Director, VR Policy & Resources
Division
SRC Members

Date: July 22, 2019

Subject: 2020 Consumer Satisfaction Survey

Throughout the 2017-18 and 2018-19 federal fiscal years, the SRC has engaged in many collaborative discussions with DOR regarding the Consumer Satisfaction Survey (CSS). The following topics have been discussed:

- The CSS scope, methodology and goals.
- Brainstorming new strategies for gathering consumer feedback.
- The need for an expanded data analysis.
- Review of CSS data trends and findings.
- Report outs from the National Coalition of SRCs on how other states are conducting satisfaction surveys.
- Review of the CSS survey timeline.

In August 2018, the SRC adopted the following recommendation: “The SRC recommends that the Comprehensive Statewide Assessment (2018 – 20) be used to gather information from consumers regarding effective methods to elicit feedback about their DOR experience. This information could be utilized by the SRC and the Department to develop the Consumer Satisfaction Survey.” The SRC understands this is a long-term research

initiative and looks forward to partnering with the DOR Planning Unit on next steps.

In the meantime, the SRC recognizes that many beneficial updates and improvements can be made to the existing CSS. During the June 12 – 13, 2019 SRC meeting, the Council was joined by representatives from the Blind Advisory Committee (BAC) and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Committee (DHHAC) to identify and summarize feedback for the 2020 CSS. The SRC recommends that the following updates, modifications and considerations be incorporated into the 2020 CSS:

- Survey name: Rename the CSS to increase understanding and relatability. Example: *Voice of the DOR Community*.
- Cover letter: In the survey cover letter, expand the following statement by describing the types of support that are available, such as ASL interpretation of the survey, Braille copies, etc.
“Thank you in advance for participating in the enclosed survey. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Stanley Goodner...”
- Executive summary: Expand the data analysis in the CSS executive summary to include the following elements:
 - Notable data trends, fluctuations and findings.
 - Significant data increases and decreases.
 - High and low satisfaction rates by District and disability.
 - Programmatic interpretation of the data.
 - When feasible, a multi-year analysis.

- Sample size: Standardize the sample size for each DOR District.
- Rating system: Update survey to utilize a seven-point rating system (example below).

Not at all Satisfied 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely Satisfied 7	Not Applicable
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- Demographics: Add demographic questions for the respondents.
 - Age (Important now with the emphasis on DOR Student Services).
 - City (This will help us determine if location was a barrier to services).

- Using a method identified by DORs researchers, modify the survey instrument so the survey results clearly indicate which consumers are receiving services through the Blind Field Services District.
- Question order: Reorder the survey questions so all questions pertaining to service providers are grouped together, and all questions pertaining to DOR services and counselors are grouped together.

Question Specific Feedback

- Question 3: “Overall, I am satisfied with the services directly provided by the DOR”.
 - Expand this question to ask about satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of services, thereby aligning with the service provider satisfaction questions.
- Question 4: “I found the level of vocational guidance and quality of counseling received from my DOR adequate for my needs.”
 - Correct grammatical error - change the word “my” to “the.”
- Question 9: “My counselor helped me understand my disability and how it may affect my work.”
 - The role of the VR Counselor is to discuss job training and supports. Reframe this question so the focus is on “did your VR Counselor provide you with examples of employment success stories for individuals with similar types of disabilities.”
- Question 13: “My counselor and/or DOR team clearly explained all services available to me.”
 - How would a consumer know if they had been informed about all available services? Reframe question so the focus is on “My counselor explained that other services (such as [list examples] were available.”
- Question 17: “My quality of life has improved because of DOR services.”
 - Modify the question so it is more specific: What does “quality of life” mean?
- Question 22: “The services provided by DOR were instrumental in my becoming employed.”
 - Move this question to immediately after the section break that reads “IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED THROUGH

THE EFFORTS OF DOR, PLEASE ANSWER THE STATEMENTS BELOW:"

- Add an option for consumers to specify (and comment on) if they obtained employment on their own, without the assistance of DOR.
- Question 23: "Check all the reasons below that prevented your ability to become employed"
 - Add: "Not applicable, I'm currently a student" as an option.
- Add the following qualitative questions to the end of the survey:
 - Can you tell us about your previous experiences with the DOR?
 - For what purpose have you used the DOR services in the past? (maintaining employment, finding employment, advancing in your career, etc.)?
- Using language identified by DOR's researchers, reword the survey questions in plain language to increase comprehension while retaining the original intention of the questions.
- Many DOR consumers do not differentiate between services received from providers and the Department. The SRC welcomes DOR's recommendation(s) on how to clarify the survey questions accordingly.