

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

Health and Human Services CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY REPORT

November 9, 2004
Chief Administrative Office
on behalf of the
Customer Service and Satisfaction Network

Health and Human Services

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY REPORT

Phone service is terrible, you can never speak to a live person and when you leave messages, phone calls are not returned.

People on window #9 [and] #10 are very kind and helpful, always smiling and very polite. Thank you. We need more people like that working today.

I feel that I didn't receive the services that I applied for.

They need to learn how to treat humans with respect and dignity. We all struggle, but we get back on our feet and just remember how you treat people.

I wish I had this job. I'd know how to treat people.

Flexible hours are most important to me.

You're welcome!

When I came to apply I needed the services immediately and I came [illegible]. She didn't give any emergency food stamps or money knowing they would kick me out if I don't have the rent. She didn't care. She said she has 30 days to approve it.

(A random selection of comments from survey respondents. The comprehensive listing of comments, by survey site, available in Appendix K).

INTRODUCTION

The County of Los Angeles' Strategic Plan includes Goal 5, a goal for children and families' well-being through the delivery of services in a manner consistent with its Customer Service and Satisfaction (CSS) Standards. In June 2002, the New Directions Task Force (NDTF) adopted the CSS Standards as the acceptable performance level for delivering service to children and families for all County Health and Human Service (H&HS) providers. In addition to the CSS Standards, the NDTF also adopted an implementation plan for communicating, implementing, evaluating, and recognizing the achievement of the CSS Standards.

In January, 2004, the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) spearheaded the first effort to assess performance of the CSS Standards among H&HS staff. The Customer Satisfaction Survey was conducted at over 250 County H&HS offices to establish a baseline level of customer satisfaction. The Customer Satisfaction Survey was conducted to obtain customers' perspectives about how well services are delivered in relation to the CSS Standards. This report presents the survey's results and will serve as a baseline to both guide quality improvement activities and track future progress in achieving the CSS Standards, thereby enhancing the County's ability "to enrich lives through effective and caring service".

Methods and Survey Administration

The Customer Satisfaction Survey was developed by a workgroup consisting of operations and research staff from H&HS departments. The workgroup defined relevant questions and the most appropriate process to survey their customers and service environment. The Survey was field tested by fifty-four (54) customers at six (6) H&HS sites, following its review by survey experts at the Department of Health Services. The field test required that customers participate in two ways: (1) by responding to the survey, and (2) by participating in a focus group to provide feedback about the survey. Customers' feedback about how to revise the survey was accepted by the New Directions Task Force.

In December 2003, the New Directions Task Force approved the Survey Administration Plan, which outlined the process to implement and analyze the Customer Satisfaction Survey. The CAO and H&HS departments' CSS Network representatives were the primary coordinators of this plan and were responsible for confirming participation, estimating the number of customer surveys needed, and designating Survey Supervisors to manage the effort within each participating office (survey sites). The Survey was distributed to all customers entering survey sites between January 12, and 29, 2004. The survey was anonymous; however, surveys were coded to identify the survey site at which the survey was taken.

The customer satisfaction survey asked customers to rate their satisfaction on the three CSS Standards: Personal Service Delivery; Service Access; and Service Environment. The Personal Service Delivery Standard requires all staff members to treat customers with courtesy, dignity, and respect. The Service Access Standard requires staff members to proactively meet the customer's needs. The Service Environment Standard requires that the environment in which services are provided is clean, safe, and welcoming.

In the survey, two questions were asked on twenty-five items (hereafter referred to as indicators) designed to measure how service is provided. The first question addressed the level of performance and the second question addressed the importance or value of the item to the customer. Several survey questions were asked to identify customers' demographic characteristics. Another set of questions were presented to verify customers' perceptions of accessibility and responsiveness, such as wait time and office hours. Finally, the survey contained space for open comment from customers. A copy of the survey is attached in Exhibit A.

Data entry was completed following survey submissions to the CAO, using an optical mark recognition scanning system. Thereafter, the database was cleaned and transformed for analysis. Data analysis was performed by Walter R. McDonald & Associates, Inc., to ensure adequate resources and expertise were available to complete this task. Customers' comments were manually input into a separate database and are organized by site in Appendix K.

KEY FINDINGS/RESULTS

RESPONSES

A total of 29,381 customers responded, ranging from 488 for the Department of Children and Family Services to 11,138 from the Department of Public Social Services. Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents by department. The sizes of these samples are sufficiently large to make accurate statements about the satisfaction of customers receiving services from these departments. However, it is not known if there is a selection bias introduced by who chose to fill out the questionnaire. Customers who did not fill out a questionnaire, or filled it out incompletely, may be more or less satisfied than those who responded to the questions.

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents by Department

LOS ANGELES COUNTY TOTAL	29,381	100.0%
CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES DEPARTMENT (CSSD)	1,197	4.1%
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (CDC)	1,319	4.5%
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (DCFS)	488	1.7%
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND SENIOR SERVICES (DCSS)	1,809	6.2%
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES (DHS)	7,511	25.6%
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH (DMH)	2,214	7.5%
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION (DPR)	634	2.2%
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES (DPSS)	11,138	37.9%
PROBATION DEPARTMENT	2,564	8.7%
SHERIFF DEPARTMENT	507	1.7%

Most H&HS departments collected data by survey site, the exceptions being DHS and DPR. Some of the sites had a small number of respondents, and although percentage distributions are presented for all the sites, they should be interpreted very cautiously when the sample size is less than 20. Scatterplots were not produced for sites that had fewer than 20 responses.

Characteristics of Respondents

Slightly less than two-thirds (64.7 percent) of the respondents to the question on gender were female (see Table 2). Almost half (49.7 percent) of the respondents to the question on race/ethnicity were Hispanic or Latino, 27.2 percent were Black or African American, 14.7 percent were White, 5.3 percent were Asian or Pacific Islander, 0.9 percent were American Indian, and 2.3 percent indicated Other (see Table 3, which also contains a further breakdown of Asians by subgroups).

Table 2
Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Male	Female	Trans-gender	Missing¹	Total
9,173	16,968	78	3,162	29,381
35.0%	64.7%	0.3%	--	100%

¹ Missing refers to non-responses. Also see glossary of terms.

Table 3
Distribution of Respondents by Race/Ethnicity

Hispanic or Latino	13,365	49.7%
Black or African American	7,322	27.2%
White	3,946	14.7%
Other	624	2.3%
Filipino	524	1.9%
Chinese	274	1.0%
American Indian	239	0.9%
Vietnamese	192	0.7%
Korean	171	0.6%
Pacific Islander	149	0.6%
Japanese	112	0.4%
Missing	2,463	--
Total	29,381	100.0%

Of the respondents indicating language fluency, 70.1 percent were fluent in English and 45.4 percent were fluent in Spanish (see Table 4). There were four languages for which between 1.0 and 2.0 percent of the respondents indicated fluency: Tagalog, Chinese, Armenian and Russian.

When customers were asked which language they preferred to speak, 63.5 percent preferred English, 31.9 percent preferred Spanish, and 4.2 percent preferred another language.

Table 4
Distribution of Respondents by Language Fluency and Preference

	Language Fluency		Language Preference	
English	19,184	70.1%	16,535	63.5%
Spanish	12,410	45.4%	8,296	31.9%
Tagalog	491	1.8%	199	0.8%
Chinese	320	1.2%	182	0.7%
Armenian	385	1.4%	169	0.6%
Russian	345	1.3%	142	0.5%
Vietnamese	235	0.9%	141	0.5%
Korean	155	0.6%	109	0.4%
Cambodian	148	0.5%	60	0.2%
Farsi	152	0.6%	52	0.2%
Japanese	220	0.6%	43	0.2%
Other	--	0.8%	114	0.4%
Missing	2,019	6.9%	3,339	--
Total	NA*	NA*	29,381	100.0%

*Respondents may speak more than one language.

Age and Service History (Table 5 and 6) provide context for customers' level of experience with a particular departments' services. Slightly more than 77% of the population ranged from 19-54 years in age. Nearly 11% of respondents were 55-64 years in age. Remarkably, the majority (62.5%) of respondents reported that it had been less than 5 years since they first received services from the department being assessed.

**Table 5
Distribution of Respondents by Age**

10 to 13	429	1.6%
14 to 18	1,052	3.9%
19 to 34	9,958	37.0%
35 to 54	10,892	40.4%
55 to 64	2,946	10.9%
65 to 85	1,548	5.7%
85+	119	0.4%
Missing	2,437	--
Total	29,381	100.0

**Table 6
Distribution of Respondents by Service History**

New Client	< 1 year	1-5 years	5-10 years	10-15 years	> 15 years	Not Known	Not Applicable	Missing	Total
5,148	6,367	8,998	2,221	1,151	688	1,491	427	2,890	29,381
20.9%	25.9%	36.6%	9.0%	4.7%	2.8%	--	--	--	100.0%

The number of family members living in respondents' homes was equilaterally distributed, with not more than 22% in any one category, as seen in Table 7.

**Table 7
Number of Immediate Family Members Living in Home**

1	2	3	4	5 or more	Missing	Total
5,498	5,303	4,624	4,490	5,627	3,839	29,381
21.5%	20.8%	18.1%	17.6%	22.0%	--	100.0%

Responses to Service Delivery Indicators

Tables 8 and 9 present the distribution of responses to the service delivery questions. Appendices A through J contain the same information for departments and their respective sites. Only participating departments have access to their respective department's appendix.

**Table 8
Distribution of Responses by Question, County Totals**

Question Item	Does Not Apply	Never	Not Often	Sometimes	Usually	Always	Missing	Total
Direction Signs Are Posted in Office	625	566	1017	2533	5801	14013	4826	29381
Staff Are Respectful	0	470	1055	3452	5220	14295	4889	29381
Immediate Appointments Are Available for Urgent Needs	1783	2004	2529	4227	5053	8050	5735	29381
Private Areas Are Provided When Personal Information Is Gathered	2172	1735	1234	2158	4355	12101	5626	29381
Appointments Are Available Soon After Request	1710	988	1547	3899	6097	9318	5822	29381
Service Provider Introduces Self by Name	750	1534	1481	2981	4490	12658	5487	29381
Staff Explain Well What is Happening and Why	51	798	1087	3200	5631	12509	6105	29381
Client Knows the Name of Person Providing Services	51	1027	1557	3357	4678	12338	6373	29381
Can Schedule an Appointment in Less Than 10 Minutes	1756	2027	2257	4665	5371	7353	5952	29381
Staff Are Helpful with Requests and Needs	40	695	1357	4038	5844	11231	6176	29381
Services Are Provided in Language Client Speaks	26	397	515	1629	2951	17723	6140	29381
Staff Return Calls Promptly	2217	2344	2374	4394	4738	6916	6398	29381
Public Telephones Are Available for Clients	2313	1417	1183	2141	3852	12137	6338	29381
Office Accessible Within 15 Minutes	817	3417	2518	4198	4128	8424	5879	29381
Wait Time After Arriving for Appointments is Reasonable	1388	1887	1956	4600	5365	8172	6013	29381
Restrooms Are Clean and Well Supplied	1311	950	1223	3395	5686	10708	6108	29381
Concerns with Service Are Properly Addressed	2541	1207	1470	3531	4931	8413	7288	29381
The Service Location is Safe	27	563	704	2448	5313	13876	6450	29381
When Calling Can Easily Get Information or Help	885	1584	1985	4108	5072	9667	6080	29381
Waiting Areas Are in Good Condition	15	482	753	2506	6253	13156	6216	29381
Client is Encouraged to Ask Questions and Express Opinions	998	1611	1655	3504	4944	10370	6299	29381
Office Hours Fit Client Schedules	583	633	930	2442	5593	13089	6111	29381
Staff Offer Services that Client Needs	101	713	1033	3219	5656	11810	6849	29381
Waiting Areas Easily Accommodate Children	2307	1452	1541	3057	5043	9293	6688	29381
Staff Provide Information on Other Available Services	1213	2494	1809	3314	4275	9754	6522	29381

Table 9
Percentage Distribution of Valid Responses² by Question for Valid, County Totals

Question Item	Never	Not Often	Sometimes	Usually	Always	Total	N
Direction Signs Are Posted in Office	2.4%	4.2%	10.6%	24.2%	58.6%	100%	23,930
Staff Are Respectful	1.9%	4.3%	14.1%	21.3%	58.4%	100%	24,492
Immediate Appointments Are Available for Urgent Needs	9.2%	11.6%	19.3%	23.1%	36.8%	100%	21,863
Private Areas Are Provided When Personal Information Is Gathered	8.0%	5.7%	10.0%	20.2%	56.1%	100%	21,583
Appointments Are Available Soon After Request	4.5%	7.1%	17.8%	27.9%	42.6%	100%	21,849
Service Provider Introduces Self by Name	6.6%	6.4%	12.9%	19.4%	54.7%	100%	23,144
Staff Explain Well What is Happening and Why	3.4%	4.7%	13.8%	24.2%	53.9%	100%	23,225
Client Knows the Name of Person Providing Services	4.5%	6.8%	14.6%	20.4%	53.7%	100%	22,957
Can Schedule an Appointment in Less Than 10 Minutes	9.4%	10.4%	21.5%	24.8%	33.9%	100%	21,673
Staff Are Helpful with Requests and Needs	3.0%	5.9%	17.4%	25.2%	48.5%	100%	23,165
Services Are Provided in Language Client Speaks	1.7%	2.2%	7.0%	12.7%	76.3%	100%	23,215
Staff Return Calls Promptly	11.3%	11.4%	21.2%	22.8%	33.3%	100%	20,766
Public Telephones Are Available for Clients	6.8%	5.7%	10.3%	18.6%	58.5%	100%	20,730
Office Accessible Within 15 Minutes	15.1%	11.1%	18.5%	18.2%	37.1%	100%	22,685
Wait Time After Arriving for Appointments is Reasonable	8.6%	8.9%	20.9%	24.4%	37.2%	100%	21,980
Restrooms Are Clean and Well Supplied	4.3%	5.6%	15.5%	25.9%	48.8%	100%	21,962
Concerns with Service Are Properly Addressed	6.2%	7.5%	18.1%	25.2%	43.0%	100%	19,552
The Service Location is Safe	2.5%	3.1%	10.7%	23.2%	60.6%	100%	22,904
When Calling Can Easily Get Information or Help	7.1%	8.9%	18.3%	22.6%	43.1%	100%	22,416
Waiting Areas Are in Good Condition	2.1%	3.3%	10.8%	27.0%	56.8%	100%	23,150
Client is Encouraged to Ask Questions and Express Opinions	7.3%	7.5%	15.9%	22.4%	47.0%	100%	22,084
Office Hours Fit Client Schedules	2.8%	4.1%	10.8%	24.7%	57.7%	100%	22,687
Staff Offer Services that Client Needs	3.2%	4.6%	14.4%	25.2%	52.7%	100%	22,431
Waiting Areas Easily Accommodate Children	7.1%	7.6%	15.0%	24.7%	45.6%	100%	20,386
Staff Provide Information on Other Available Services	11.5%	8.4%	15.3%	19.7%	45.1%	100%	21,646

² Valid responses do not include “does not apply” responses or non-responses.

The Customer Satisfaction Survey was designed to facilitate management's use of the data for quality improvement purposes by analyzing performance of the CSS Standards and their perceived importance. To accomplish this objective, each indicator was assigned to one of the three CSS Standards. Table 3 displays which indicators were assigned to each CSS Standard. Indicators proposed to assess Personal Service Delivery were assigned to scale 1, Service Access, scale 2, and Service Environment, scale 3.

Table 3
Questions by Scale Assignment and Percent of Valid Responses

Question Item	Scale	Question	Valid Responses	Percent	Total N
Direction Signs Are Posted in Office	3	9a	23,930	81.4	28,062
Direction Signs Are Posted in Office Value	3	9b	16,622	56.2	28,062
Staff Are Respectful	1	10a	24,492	83.2	28,062
Staff Are Respectful Value	1	10b	15,807	53.3	28,062
Immediate Appointments Are Available for Urgent Needs	2	11a	21,863	74.2	28,062
Immediate Appointments Are Available for Urgent Needs Value	2	11b	15,321	51.7	28,062
Private Areas Are Provided When Personal Information Is Gathered	3	12a	21,583	73.4	28,062
Private Areas Are Provided When Personal Information Is Gathered Value	3	12b	15,078	50.8	28,062
Appointments Are Available Soon After Request	2	13a	21,849	74.3	28,062
Appointments Are Available Soon After Request Value	2	13b	14,993	50.6	28,062
Service Provider Introduces Self by Name	1	14a	23,144	78.6	28,062
Service Provider Introduces Self by Name Value	1	14b	15,113	51.0	28,062
Staff Explain Well What is Happening and Why	1	15a	23,225	78.9	28,062
Staff Explain Well What is Happening and Why Value	1	15b	15,190	51.2	28,062
Client Knows the Name of Person Providing Services	1	16a	22,957	78.0	28,062
Client Knows the Name of Person Providing Services Value	1	16b	15,123	51.0	28,062
Can Schedule an Appointment in Less Than 10 Minutes	2	17a	21,673	73.7	28,062
Can Schedule an Appointment in Less Than 10 Minutes Value	2	17b	14,791	49.9	28,062
Staff Are Helpful with Requests and Needs	1	18a	23,165	78.7	28,062
Staff Are Helpful with Requests and Needs Value	1	18b	15,083	81.4	29,381
Services Are Provided in Language Client Speaks	2	19a	23,215	56.6	29,381
Services Are Provided in Language Client Speaks Value	2	19b	15,044	83.4	29,381

Question Item	Scale	Question	Valid Responses	Percent	Total N
Staff Return Calls Promptly	1	20a	20,766	53.8	29,381
Staff Return Calls Promptly Value	1	20b	14,591	74.4	29,381
Public Telephones Are Available for Clients	3	21a	20,730	52.1	29,381
Public Telephones Are Available for Clients Value	3	21b	14,555	73.5	29,381
Office Accessible Within 15 Minutes	2	22a	22,685	51.3	29,381
Office Accessible Within 15 Minutes Value	2	22b	14,822	74.4	29,381
Wait Time After Arriving for Appointments is Reasonable	2	23a	21,980	51.0	29,381
Wait Time After Arriving for Appointments is Reasonable Value	2	23b	14,707	78.8	29,381
Restrooms Are Clean and Well Supplied	3	24a	21,962	51.4	29,381
Restrooms Are Clean and Well Supplied Value	3	24b	14,815	79.0	29,381
Concerns with Service Are Properly Addressed	1	25a	19,552	51.7	29,381
Concerns with Service Are Properly Addressed Value	1	25b	14,267	78.1	29,381
The Service Location is Safe	3	26a	22,904	51.5	29,381
The Service Location is Safe Value	3	26b	14,913	73.8	29,381
When Calling Can Easily Get Information or Help	2	27a	22,416	50.3	29,381
When Calling Can Easily Get Information or Help Value	2	27b	14,816	78.8	29,381
Waiting Areas Are in Good Condition	3	28a	23,150	51.3	29,381
Waiting Areas Are in Good Condition Value	3	28b	14,876	79.0	29,381
Client is Encouraged to Ask Questions and Express Opinions	1	29a	22,084	51.2	29,381
Client is Encouraged to Ask Questions and Express Opinions Value	1	29b	14,647	70.7	29,381
Office Hours Fit Client Schedules	2	30a	22,687	49.7	29,381
Office Hours Fit Client Schedules Value	2	30b	14,709	70.6	29,381
Staff Offer Services that Client Needs	1	31a	22,431	49.5	29,381
Staff Offer Services that Client Needs Value	1	31b	14,684	77.2	29,381
Waiting Areas Easily Accommodate Children	3	32a	20,386	50.4	29,381
Waiting Areas Easily Accommodate Children Value	3	32b	14,350	74.8	29,381
Staff Provide Information on Other Available Services	2	33a	21,646	50.1	29,381
Staff Provide Information on Other Available Services Value	2	33b	14,484	74.7	29,381

A two dimensional scatterplot was created for each CSS Standard. One dimension was the average score on Level of Performance for each indicator, the second dimension was the average score on Level of Importance for each indicator. Only indicators with more than 20 valid responses were included in this portion of the analysis.

Customers' scores on each scale were divided into four categories (see the sample scatterplot below). Category 4 customers indicated that the service was always or usually provided and the items were important. This level of service should be actively maintained. Category 3 customers indicated that the services were always or usually provided but they did not rate the service as important, which indicates level of service is acceptable. Category 2 customers indicated that the services were not usually provided, but were not important. Although attention should be given to indicators in this area, this category represents lower priorities. Category 1 customers indicated that the services were not usually provided and were important. One clear service delivery goal is to minimize the proportion of indicators in this category, which notably need work to improve.

County Level Scales

Personal Services Delivery

On personal service delivery questions, the customers rated the following indicators highest on being received usually or always:

- Staff being respectful (79.7 percent);
- Staff explaining well what is happening and why (78.1 percent); and
- Staff offering the services that the client needs (77.9 percent).

Customers rated the following indicators of personal service delivery the lowest on being received usually or always:

- Staff returning calls promptly (56.1 percent);
- Concerns with service are properly addressed (68.2 percent); and
- Clients are encouraged to ask questions (69.3 percent).

The following personal service delivery indicators were most often considered by customers to be very important:

- Staff being respectful (76.6 percent);
- Staff explaining what is happening and why (73.3 percent); and
- Staff being helpful with requests and needs (71.4 percent).

The personal service delivery indicators least likely to be rated by customers as very important were:

- Service provider introducing self by name (58.0 percent);
- Client knowing the name of the person providing the service (64.3 percent); and
- Client being encouraged to ask questions and express opinions (64.6 percent).

The scatterplot below contains points to identify the average score for each indicator on Level of Performance and Level of Importance. The lowest performance score possible was 1, indicating “never performed” and the highest score was 5, for “always performed.” The importance scores ranged from 1, for “not important” to 3, for “very important.” Items in the lower right quadrant are those with lower than average performance scores while being given higher than average importance scores. These indicators are logical points to focus on in efforts to raise customer satisfaction with County services.

Figures 1 through 3 contain the Countywide results. The scatterplot does not show the entire range of scores so that differences among the items are clearer. Note, however, that in this and the following scatterplots, the average of the ratings given by customers to the County departments are much closer to the maximum than the minimum. Each department’s and its respective sites’ scatterplots are also available in Appendices A through J.

County of Los Angeles
SAMPLE SCATTERPLOT

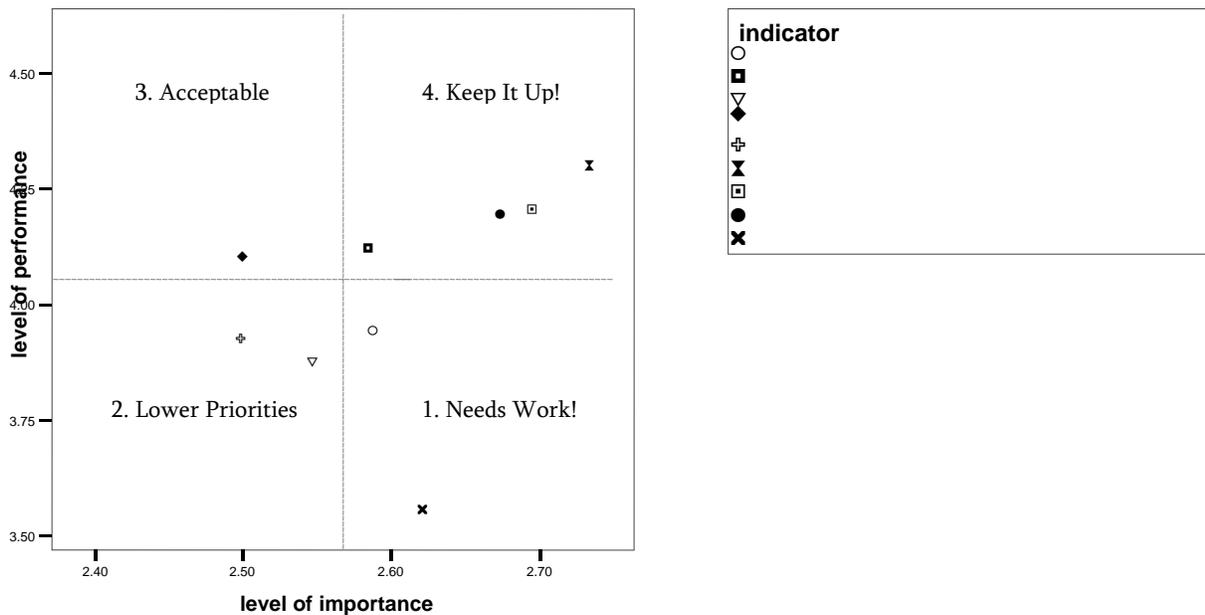
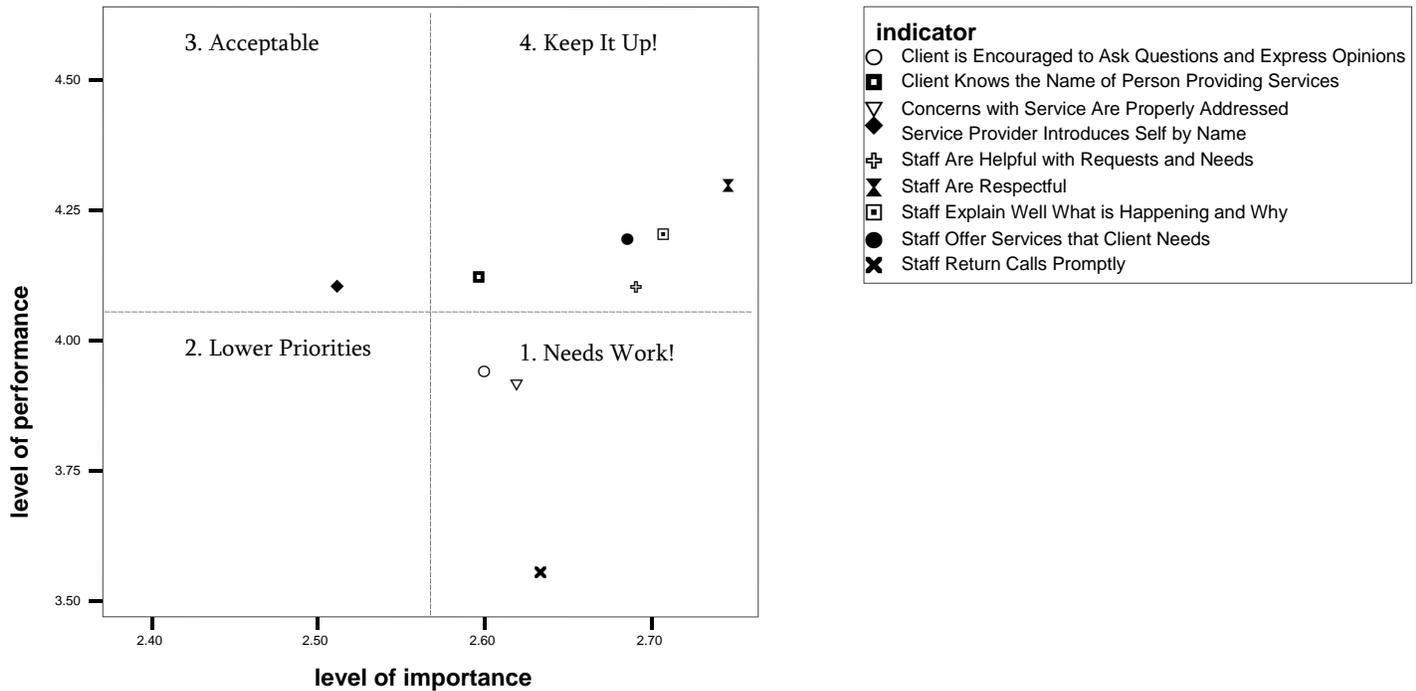


Figure 1

County of Los Angeles
Personal Service Delivery



Although there are three indicators of the Personal Service Delivery Standard within category 1 in Figure 1, staff returning calls promptly is the least performed and most important item in that quadrant. This suggests that it is a critical area for improvement.

Service Access

Concerning service access, customers indicated that the following indicators were usually or always executed:

- Staff providing information on other available services (89.1 percent);
- Office hours fitting client schedules (82.3 percent); and
- Being able to get information or help easily when calling (70.6 percent).

The lowest scores on service access indicators were for:

- Immediate appointments being available for urgent needs (55.3 percent);

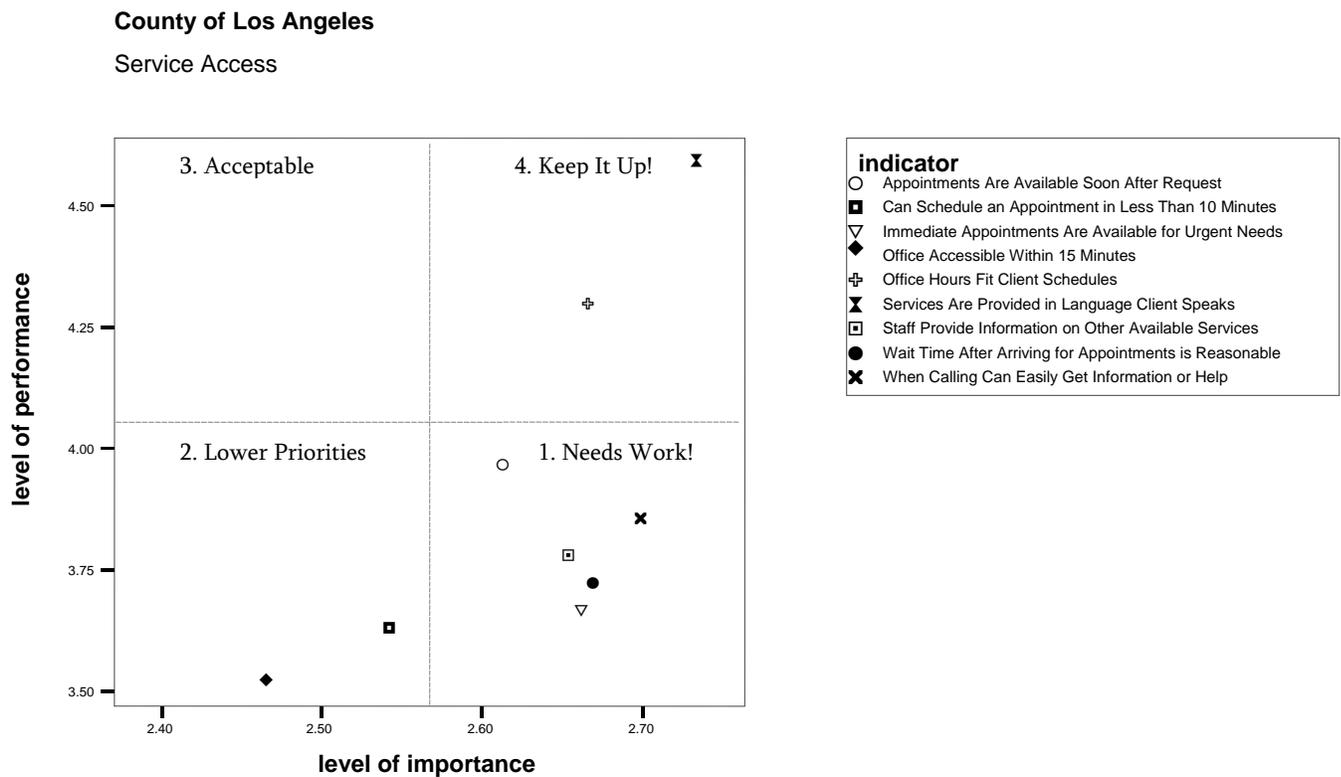
- Appointments being available soon after a request (58.7 percent); and
- Being able to schedule an appointment in less than 10 minutes (59.9 percent).

Customers most often rated the following service access indicators as very important:

- Services being provided in a language the client speaks (76.2 percent);
- Being able to get information or help easily when calling (72.5 percent); and
- Immediate appointments being available for urgent needs (70.3 percent).

Customers scored five of the most important items in the lower range of being usually or frequently available. The two receiving the lowest appraisal for performance are reasonable appointment wait time and availability of immediate appointments. Still, customers considered being able to easily get information by phone most important. Figure 2 is a scatterplot showing the level of performance and importance for service access indicators.

Figure 2



Service Environment

On service delivery questions, the highest percentages of customers identified the following indicators were usually or always available:

- Waiting areas in good condition (83.8 percent);
- A safe service location (83.8 percent); and
- Posted signs providing directions on where to go (82.8 percent).

Customers indicated that the following were the least likely to be found usually or always:

- Waiting areas that easily accommodate children (70.3 percent);
- Restrooms that are clean and well supplied (74.6 percent); and
- Private areas for when personal information is gathered (76.2 percent).

Customers most often considered the following service environment items to be very important:

- A safe service location (74.0 percent);
- Clean and well supplied rest rooms (69.2 percent); and
- Private areas for gathering personal information (64.2 percent).

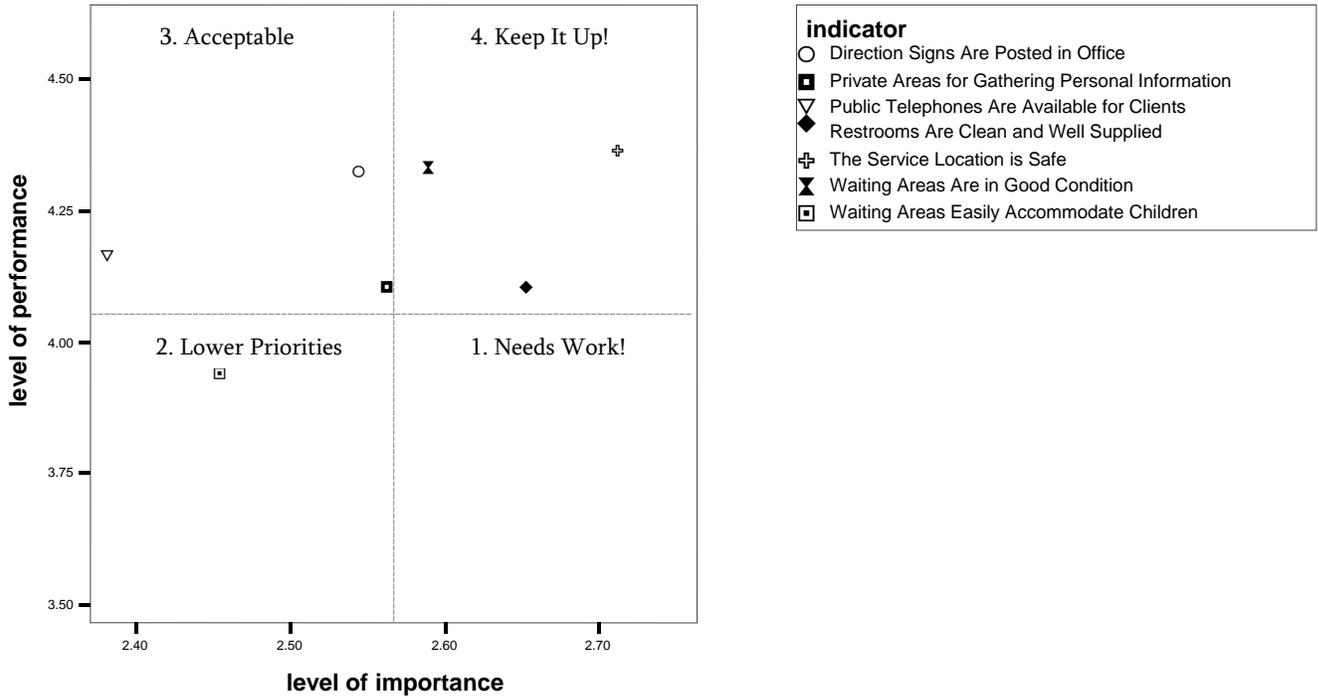
The service environment items least often considered by customers to be very important were:

- Public telephones being available for clients (52.5 percent);
- Waiting areas that easily accommodate children (57.0 percent); and
- Posted signs providing directions on where to go (61.4 percent).

Figure 3 contains the scatterplot showing the average of scores given service environmental indicators by customers.

Figure 3

County of Los Angeles
Service Environment

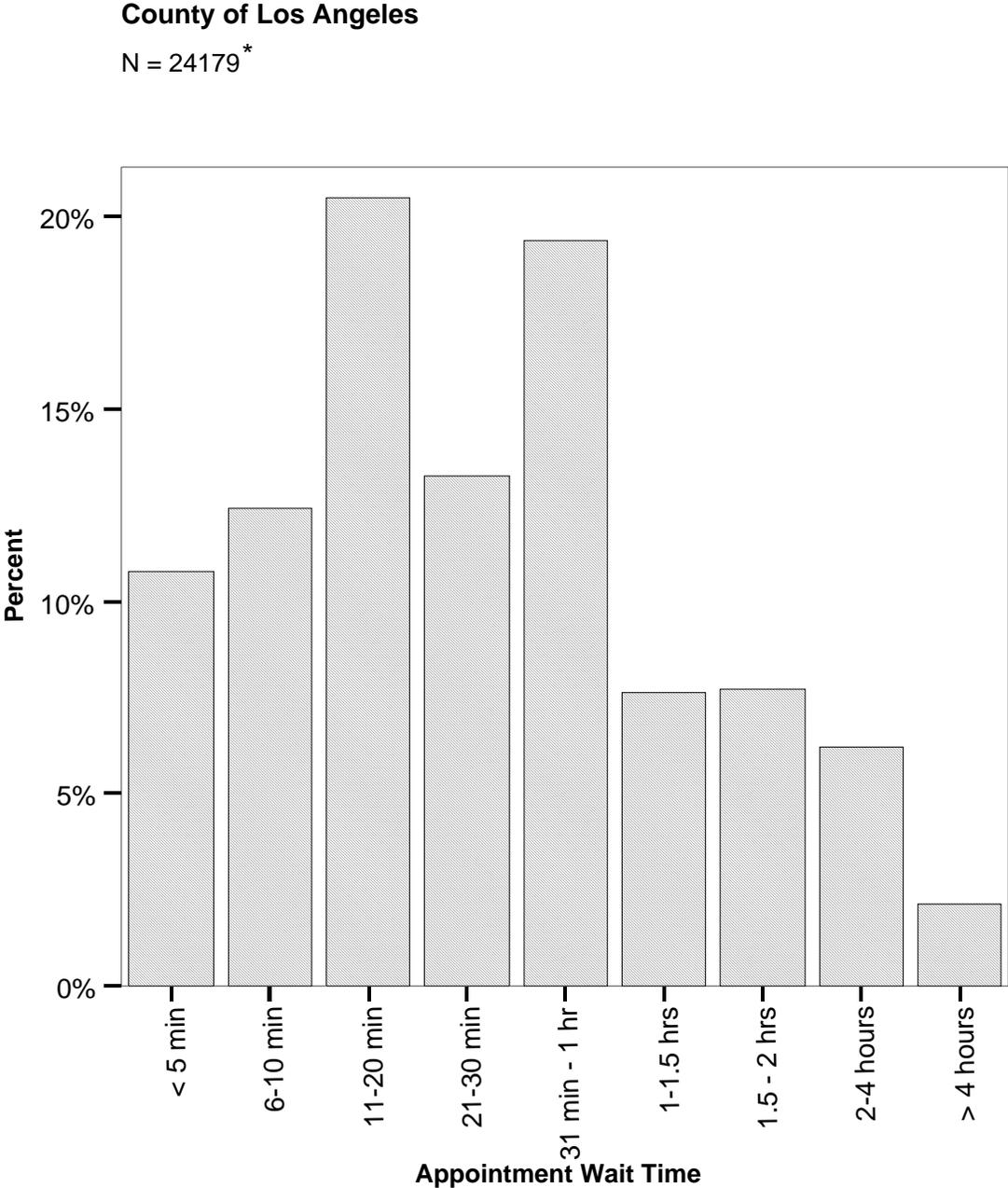


ACCESSIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS

The Customer Satisfaction Survey acquired additional data to verify customers' perceptions of site accessibility and staffs' responsiveness, such as wait time and office hours. Figure 4 through 10 depict the findings on each of these measures. With exception of Figure 8, each graph illustrates the proportion of valid responses on each question. Figure 8 displays the total number of responses in each category, as more than one response could have been selected by each customer. While the present report contains frequency data concerning these items, further analysis would be necessary to determine the strength of any relationships to their corresponding indicators. For example, additional analysis could determine what amount of time customers believe is reasonable by looking at the reported amount of time customers' spend waiting for their appointment in relation to those indicating that the wait time is always or usually reasonable. In the example above, it is expected that customers with wait times less than 20 minutes would also report that the wait time was reasonable.

In this study, nearly half (45%) of all customers report waiting 20 minutes or less for their appointment. Another 30% wait 21 minutes to 1 hour for their appointment (see Figure 4). The New Directions Task Force established a wait time standard of 20 minutes for appointment wait time in December 2003. Further work is needed to achieve this standard.

Figure 4
Appointment Wait Time



* N = number of responses

Figure 5 indicates that the application process was reported to be easy by the majority of customers. Applications were also noted to be short to medium in length, by more than 75% of respondents, as depicted in Figure 6. Lastly, the County usually responded to applications for service immediately or in a timely manner (see Figure 7).

Figure 5
Length of Time to Complete Application

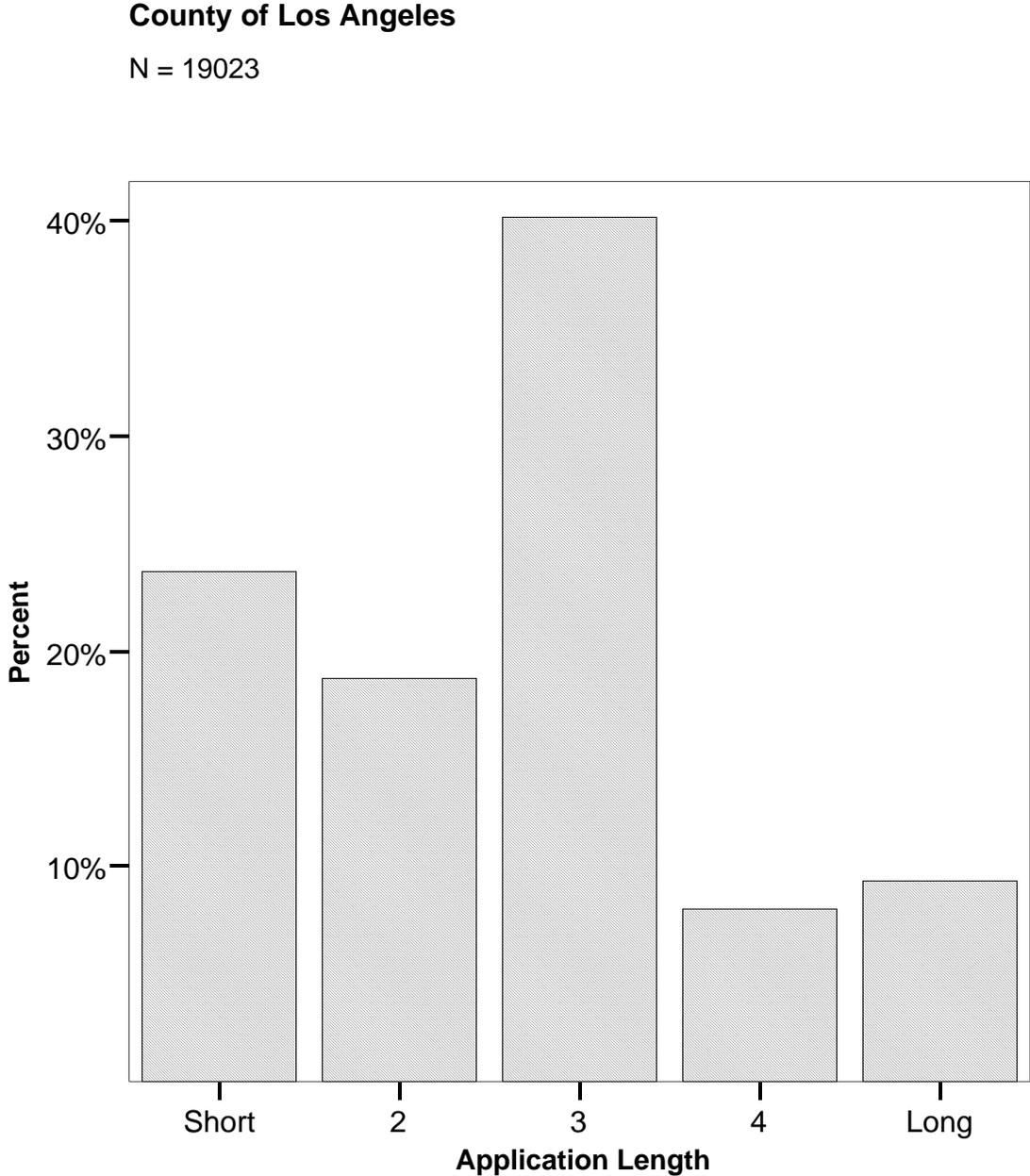


Figure 6
Complexity of Application

County of Los Angeles

N = 19036

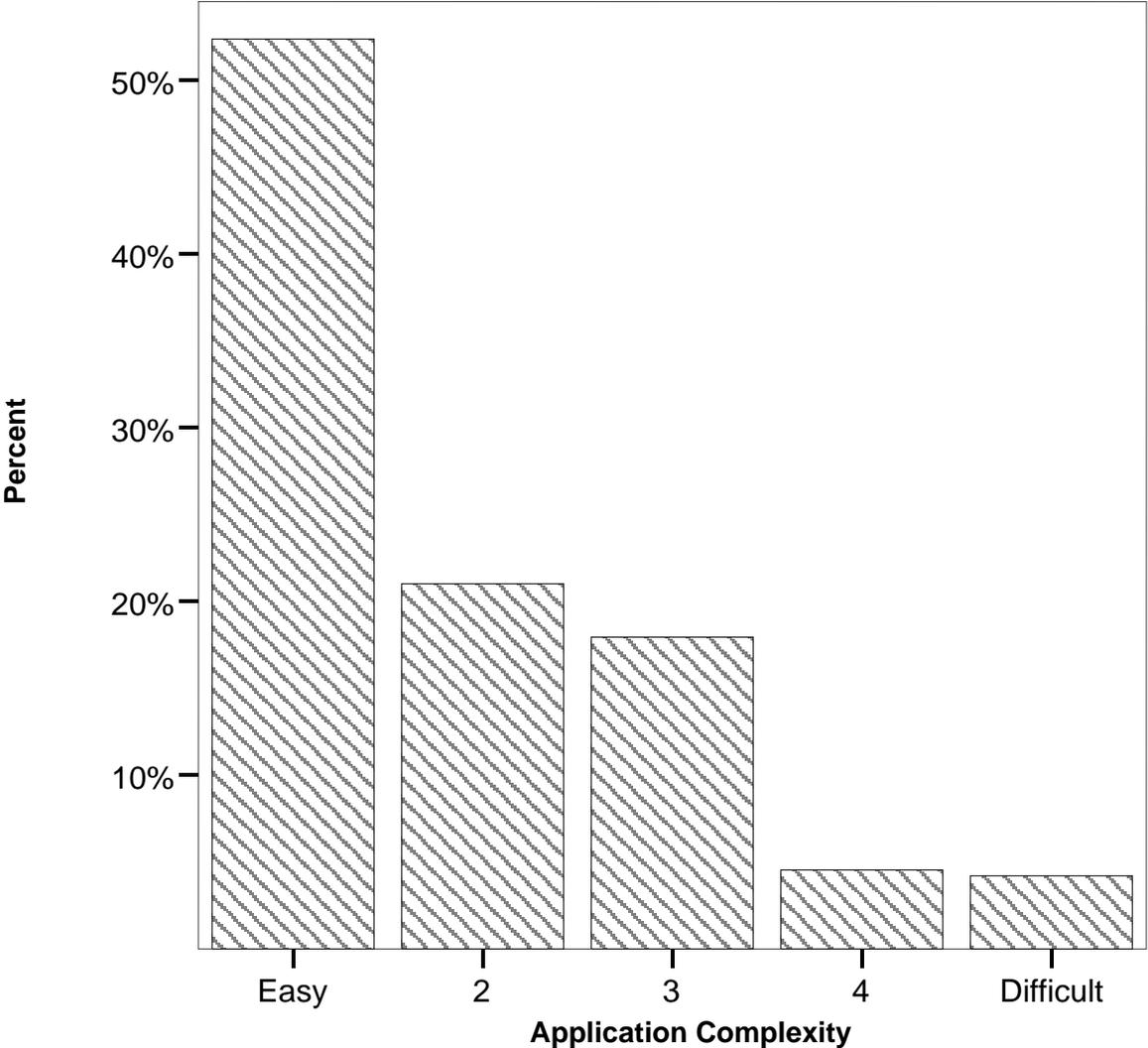
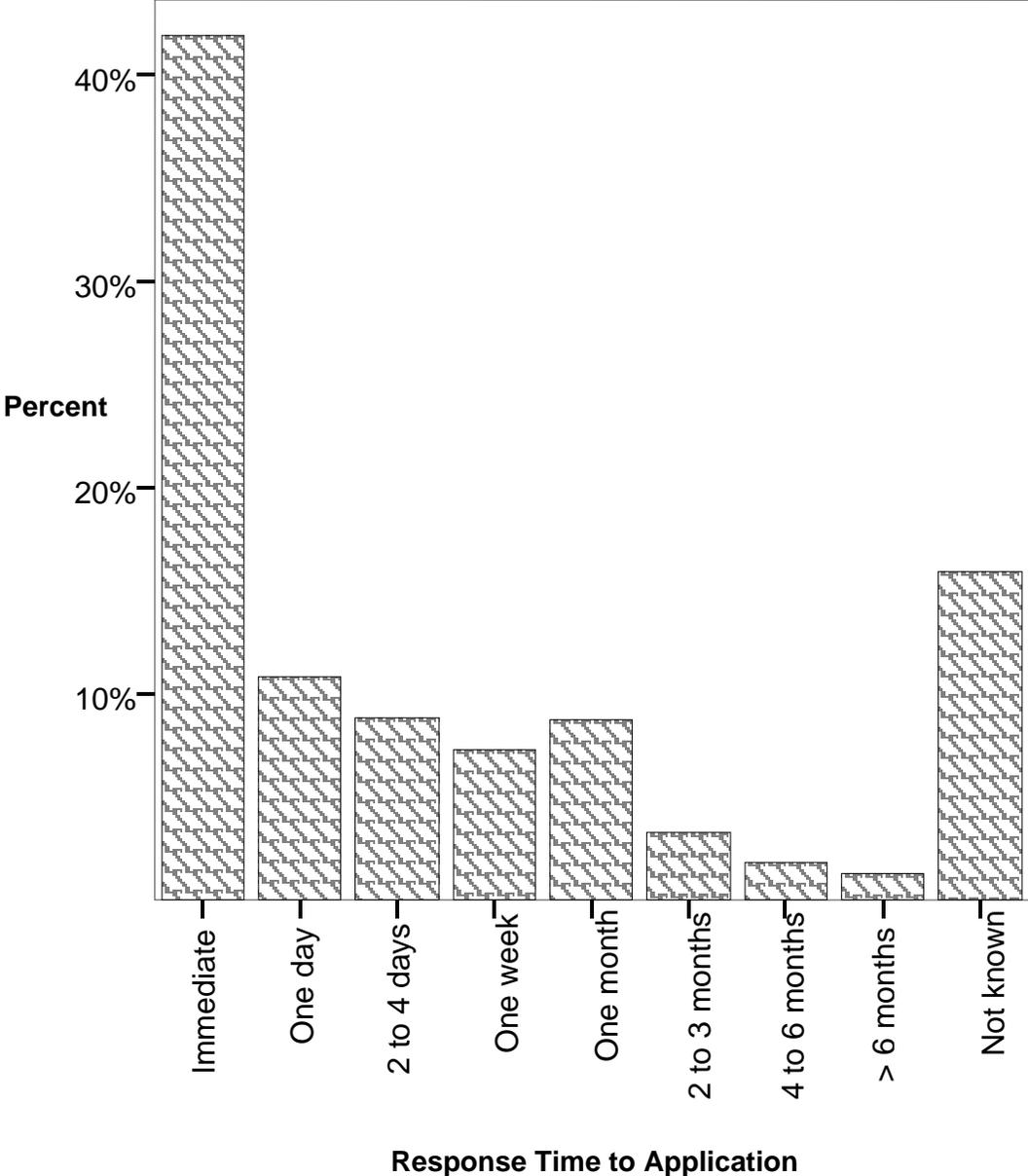


Figure 7
Response Time to Application

County of Los Angeles

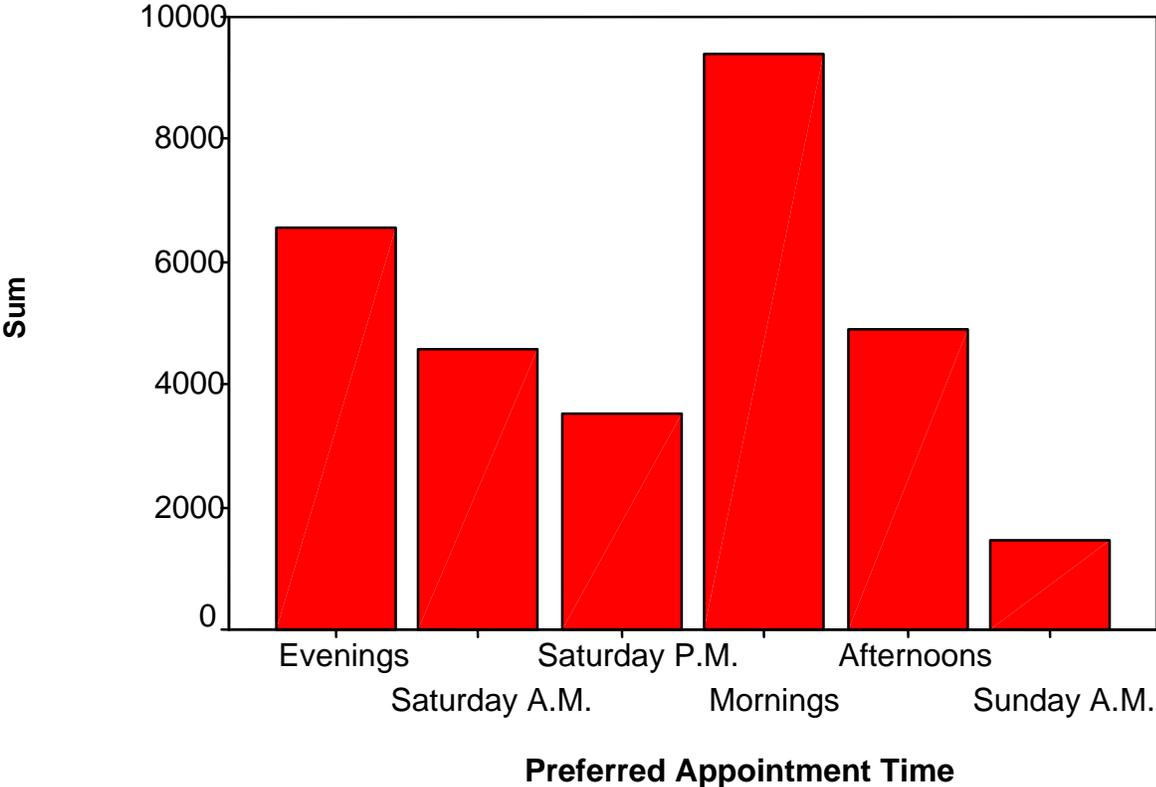
N = 18069



Approximately 15,000 customers would prefer appointment times during the evenings (Monday-Friday), on Saturdays, or Sunday morning. Nevertheless, 14,000 also indicated they would want their appointment during regular service hours (Monday-Friday 8-5 p.m.), even if flexible hours were available.

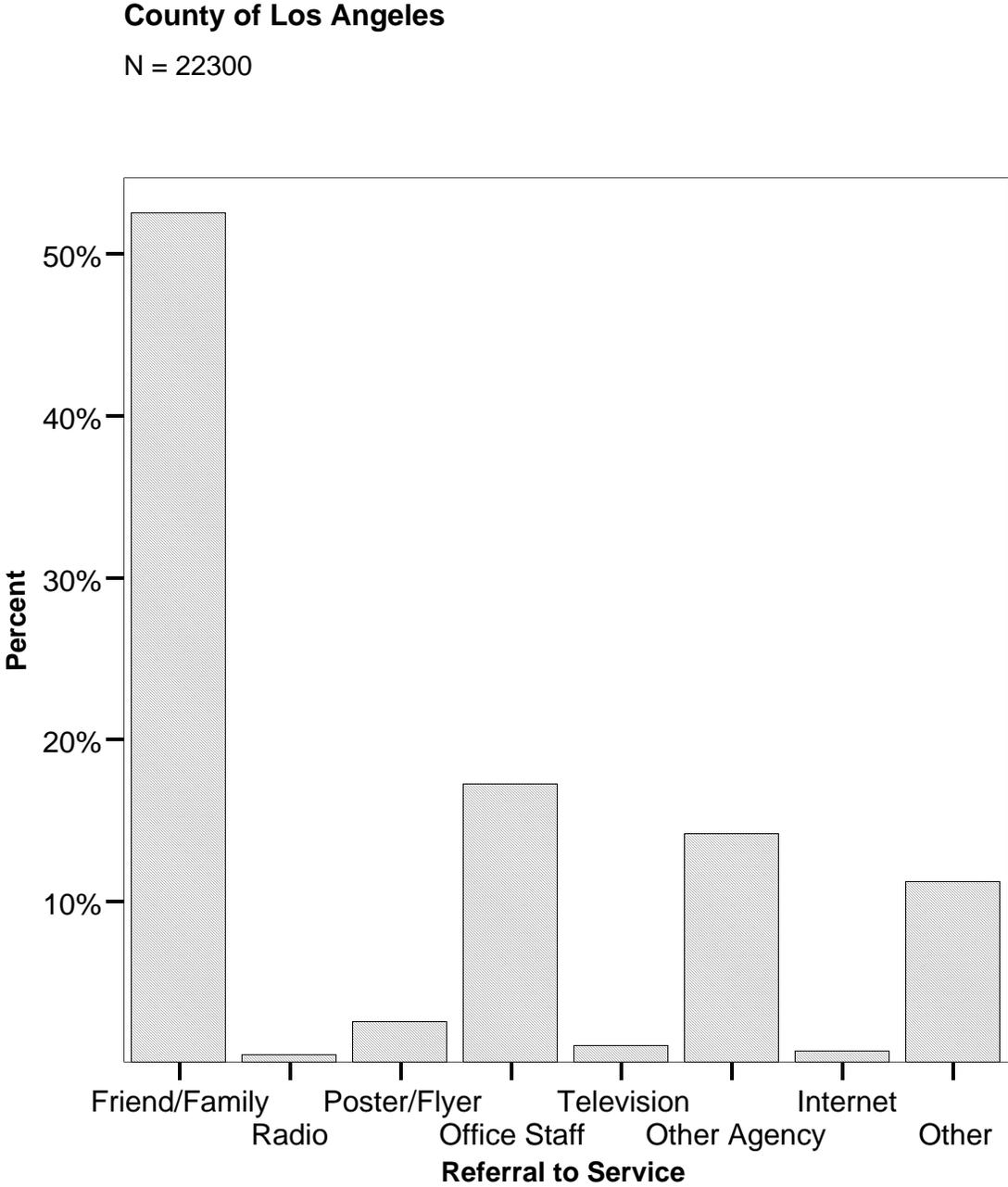
**Figure 8
Preferred Appointment Times**

County of Los Angeles



Finally, County services are largely promoted through friends and families. While County employees and other agency staff are also contributors in referring customers for service, radio, posters, television, and internet were not a major source of information.

Figure 9
Marketing/Promotion Source of Information on Services



DISCUSSION

Customer Service and Satisfaction is a key component in County Health and Human Service departments' strategies to achieve Goal 5 of the County Strategic Plan, Children and Families Well-Being. The current baseline level of satisfaction reported by customers will afford County managers the tools necessary to determine the appropriate response to ensure each of the three CSS Standards, Personal Service Delivery, Service Access, and Service Environment are proactively pursued by all staff while interacting with customers. Countywide, the baseline performance rating for Personal Service Delivery is estimated to be a 4 on a 5-point scale. Service Access clustered slightly lower at 3.75, with positive outliers on indicators of language capacity and accommodating office hours. Overall, Service Environment was rated highest (4.25) among all three CSS Standards. It is also the only CSS Standard for which there are no indicators that customers perceived as important, but not performed, on a Countywide basis.

While these are relatively high ratings, it is important to consider that ratings at the department and site level are most effective in planning for further improvements. It is also essential to recognize that an average rating of 4 on a CSS Standard does not negate responses that suggest a particular indicator was not always nor usually provided or available. In some cases, responses that an indicator is only "sometimes", "not often", or "never" available may account for more than one-third of all customers. For example, the Service Access indicator "Immediate Appointments Are Available for Urgent Needs" is reportedly poorly available by more than 40% of customers. In effort to continue the County's customer service effort and improve customers' satisfaction, these concerns should be addressed to meet customers' expectations and needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The data provided in this report affords County officials and decision makers the opportunity to determine priority areas for action, at numerous levels. This report also presents an opportunity to consider future assessments of customer satisfaction and the administration process. The following recommendations are presented in two areas, Data Utilization and Survey Administration, for future customer service planning:

Data Utilization

1. It is recommended that departments publicize departmental findings or feedback via department-wide mediums such as a department's intranet site, newsletter, or e-mail.
2. Taking advantage of the cues to action in the four-quadrant schema for each CSS Standard, it is recommended that:
 - Departments and sites develop quality improvement plans for any CSS Standard that has at least 3 indicators in the "Needs Improvement" dimension, building on existing customer service programs.
 - Departments and site recognize staff for achieving 5 or more indicators within the "Keep It Up" category on any one CSS Standard.

- Additional analysis be performed to identify proportions of the customer population that are more or less satisfied with services, and why.

Survey Administration

It is further recommended that:

- All participating survey sites use site codes to allow for reporting specificity.
- Survey questions are critiqued with regard to customer and data value.
- Departments' sites are sampled, as well as customers, to reduce the production costs, while maintaining quality valid data.
- The County consider partnering with a major university or other research organization to plan, administer, and analyze future survey assessments.

Customer Satisfaction Survey GLOSSARY OF TERMS & ACRONYMS

CSS	Customer Service and Satisfaction
Customer	Any person with whom employees of an organization interact during the course of their work duties. They include both external contacts, e.g., clients, caregivers, patients, children, and parents; and internal contacts, e.g., community partners/contractors, court personnel, volunteers, vendors, and staff at all levels of the organization.
Field Test	A review of a test or system through trial usage, which requires specific feedback from the users. The feedback allows designers to better specify or calibrate the tools reliability and validity.
H&HS	Health and Human Service Departments of the County of Los Angeles, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Child Support Services DepartmentChildren and Family ServicesCommunity and Senior ServicesCommunity Development CommissionHealth ServicesMental HealthOffice of EducationParks and RecreationProbation DepartmentPublic LibraryPublic Social ServicesSheriff Department
Indicator	A measure that quantifies the achievement of an outcome, where the outcome is a CSS Standard. A comprehensive list of the indicators is included in the document entitled, "Service Integration Action Plan for Children and Families Customer Service and Satisfaction Standards."
Missing	Number of surveys that did not contain a response for the noted question.
N	Number of responses. This differs from question to question depending on how many customers answered each question.
NDTF	New Directions Task Force – a body of County Department Heads from H&HS departments appointed by the LAC Board of supervisors to create a seamless service delivery system. The task force is chaired by the Department of Public Social Services.
Scatterplot	A graphical depiction of two variables several data points that illustrate a pattern typically used to indicate the strength of the relationship between the two variables. In this report, they are used to identify and prioritize the status of indicators.
Service Recipient	A customer (external) who receives a service from a County department.

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- ❖ Pauline Charles of the Registrar Recorder/County Clerk for the loan of their ballot boxes for use as Survey Collection Boxes at our survey sites.*
- ❖ Terril Gayden of Internal Services Department for coordinating mail delivery of the ballot boxes and more than 30,000 survey responses.*

Special recognition is also given to members of the Customer Service and Satisfaction Network representing participating departments for their dedication in overseeing all aspects of survey within their respective organizations. The Network's leaders are especially commended for their commitment and perseverance over the past two years.

TONI DELLIQUADRI, Current Chair
Department of Mental Health

JANE E. MARTIN, Former Chair
Probation Department

CAROL SALVA, Former Co-Chair
Probation Department

TONI SAENZ YAFFE, Consultant
Children's Planning Council



DEAN DEGRUCCIO
Child Support Services Department

LAURA MEDINA
Community and Senior Services

RAMON CHAVEZ
Department of Children and Family Services

LOWERENCE PITTMAN
Department of Health Services

BRIDGET WARD
Department of Health Services

GLENN JORDAN
Department of Public Social Services

MARGARITA D. RAMOS
Parks and Recreation

RICHARD WEINTRAUB
Sheriff's Department