



Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Webinar Series

SSVF Veteran Experience thru:
Unannounced Standardized Veterans (USV)
Program and
Participant Satisfaction Survey 2018 Report

January 10, 2019

[Link to Audio Recording](#)

Presenters

Saul Weiner, MD, Deputy Director, VHA Center of Innovation for Complex Chronic Healthcare, and Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Amy Binns-Calvey, Research Specialist, VHA Center of Innovation for Complex Chronic Healthcare

Daniel Goscicki, M Davis, Survey Programmer and Research Assistant

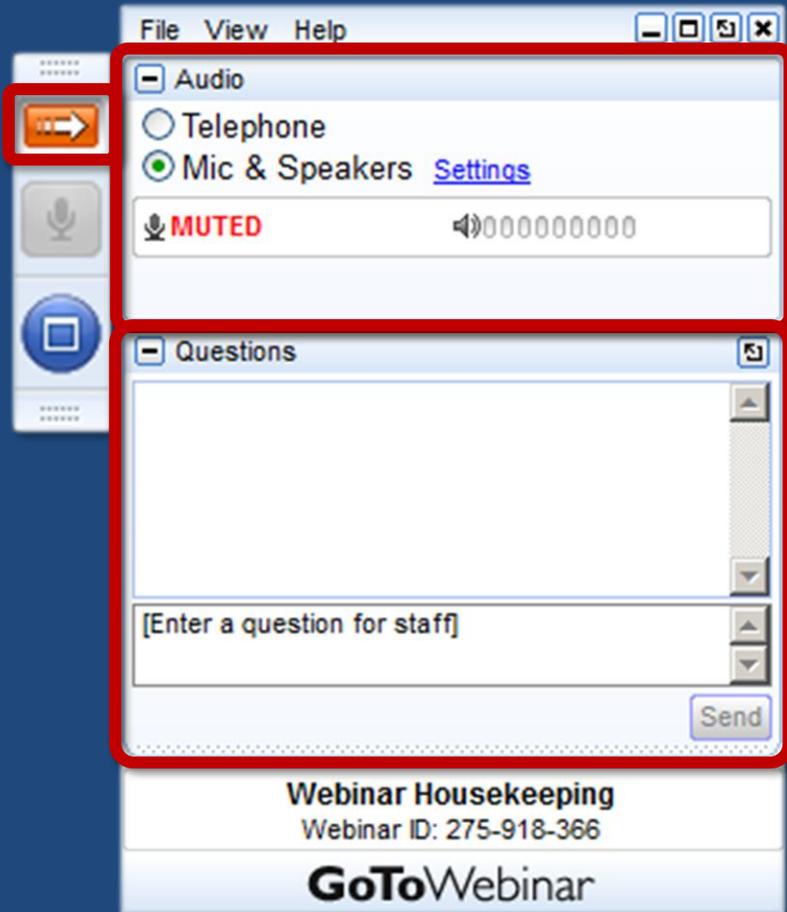
Rico Aiello, SSVF Project Coordinator

Katie Morrissett, LCSW, SSVF Regional Coordinator

Webinar Format

- Webinar will last approximately 1.5 hours
- Participants' phone connections are "muted" due to the high number of callers
- Questions can also be submitted anytime to SSVF@va.gov

QUESTIONS...



Submit questions and comments via the Questions panel

Veterans Health Administration (VHA)
Homeless Programs Office

**Unannounced Standardized Veterans:
A quality improvement effort to disseminate best
practices across
Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF).**

Saul Weiner MD, Deputy Director
VHA Center of Innovation for Complex Chronic Healthcare

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January 2019

Overview

The Unannounced Standardized Veteran (USV)

- Mystery Shoppers are widely employed in retail, service and hospitality industries to provide “ground truth” about the customer experience.
- VHA has pioneered research adapting the “mystery shopper” concept to highly structured methods for assessing how health care is actually delivered at the point of service by introducing the “unannounced standardized Veteran” (USV) which combines the “mystery shopper” and standardized patient. The USV is an actor trained to consistently adhere to a specific script while seeking a pre-identified set of services at multiple sites.
- The USV collects the same data at each site and documents what they observed using standardized measures of access, ICARE values, and process (e.g. number of steps, length of time, and need for assertiveness) while attempting to obtain services as would actual Veterans.
- With assistance from the Health Eligibility Center and the Office of Informatics and Analytics, the identities portrayed are entered into VHA information systems at the start of each project to assure authenticity and then moved out of the production environment to prevent corruption of VA data.

Implementation

- USVs visited 63 SSVFs from February to July of 2018. They also visited all 31 Community Resource and Referral Sites (CRRCs). CRRC sites were also visited in 2017.
- Areas assessed by the USV project included customer satisfaction and streamlined access to VA services in alignment with the VA mission and ICARE values.
- Upon completion of all USV site visits, the results were consolidated into a report to share amongst the SSVF, CRRC and Homeless Program Office (HPO) leadership to ensure more consistent implementation of identified best practices. SSVF leadership will work with select individual SSVFs around specific site specific opportunities for improvements where identified.

Three Cases

Case 1: Male, Caucasian, OEF Veteran with PTSD

Case 2: Female, Caucasian, Desert Storm Veteran with High Blood Pressure

Case 3: Male, African American, Vietnam Veteran with Alcoholism

ACCESS Items

- Were you provided with housing options that meet your needs?
- Were you provided with food?
- Were you provided with appropriate income counseling (employment, education, job-training, VA Benefits, SSI/SSDI)?
- Did you receive Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome referral to a primary care or mental health provider? (USV #1 only)
- Did you receive information about accessing healthcare for high blood pressure/pre-diabetes? (USV #2 only)
- Did you receive substance use disorder referral or assistance for your alcoholism? (USV #3 only)
- Did you receive services without having to go somewhere else first? (i.e. local VA Medical Center)
- Were you able to access services without having to be very assertive?
- Were you provided transportation options to access some or all of the services?
- Did you receive a follow-up phone call or text message?
- Upon showing your VA ID card, were you able to access services without a DD214?

Access Items: Scoring Rubric

Example: Were you provided with housing options that meet your needs?

Response to USV Need	Points
No Info Provided:	0
General Information only. No specific person's name and contact information provided (email, phone, and/or address). You didn't access service,	25
Cold Hand-off. Given information, along with a specific name and their direct email, phone and/or address who represents the service. You didn't access service.	50
Warm Hand-off. Given information, and a direct connection was made with someone on your behalf – on the phone, email, or in-person. You didn't access service.	75
Accessed Service (e.g.: Shelter bed confirmed, provided food, and offered immediate primary or mental healthcare)	100

ICARE

Please rate how the staff at the Community Resource and Referral Center met the following objectives:	Did NOT Meet 0 pts.	Semi-Met 5 pts.	Meets 7 pts.	Exceeds 10 pts.
Integrity – Did the staff act with high moral principles? Did they treat you in a professional manner? Did they maintain your trust and confidence?				
Commitment – Did the staff work diligently to serve you? Were they organized? Did they appear to do their assigned job based on compliance or centered around your satisfaction as a customer?				
Advocacy – Did the staff identify your stated needs, consider them and advance your interests?				
Respect – Did the staff treat you with dignity and respect by listening to your story and calling you by your name?				
Excellence – Did the staff strive for your satisfaction? Were they willing to admit mistakes and work toward correcting them?				

Scoring Process and Time

Process: The *fewer steps*, the more points

Time: The *less time*, the more points

Process Place a "1" if the step occurred*	Unique Step Description	Time Spent in min.	Time Score 1-5 = 7pts 6-15 = 6 pts. 16-35 = 5 pts. 36-59 = 4 pts. 60-89 = 3 pts. 90-120 = 2 pts. >120 = 1
1	Sign in with registrar	5	7
1	Waited in waiting room	120	2
1	Interview with intake counselor	30	5

*1-5 steps = 15 pts.; 6-10 steps = 10 pts.; 11-15 steps = 4 pts.; 16-29 steps = 3 pts.; 30+ = 1 pts.

USVs score their visits: Access+ICARE+Process+Time

Site	Case	ACCESS score	ICARE score	Process Steps	Time Spent	Total
All SSVF	All	164.5	32.7	14.2	20.8	232.1
All CRRC	All	250.0	37.1	12.5	31.4	331.0

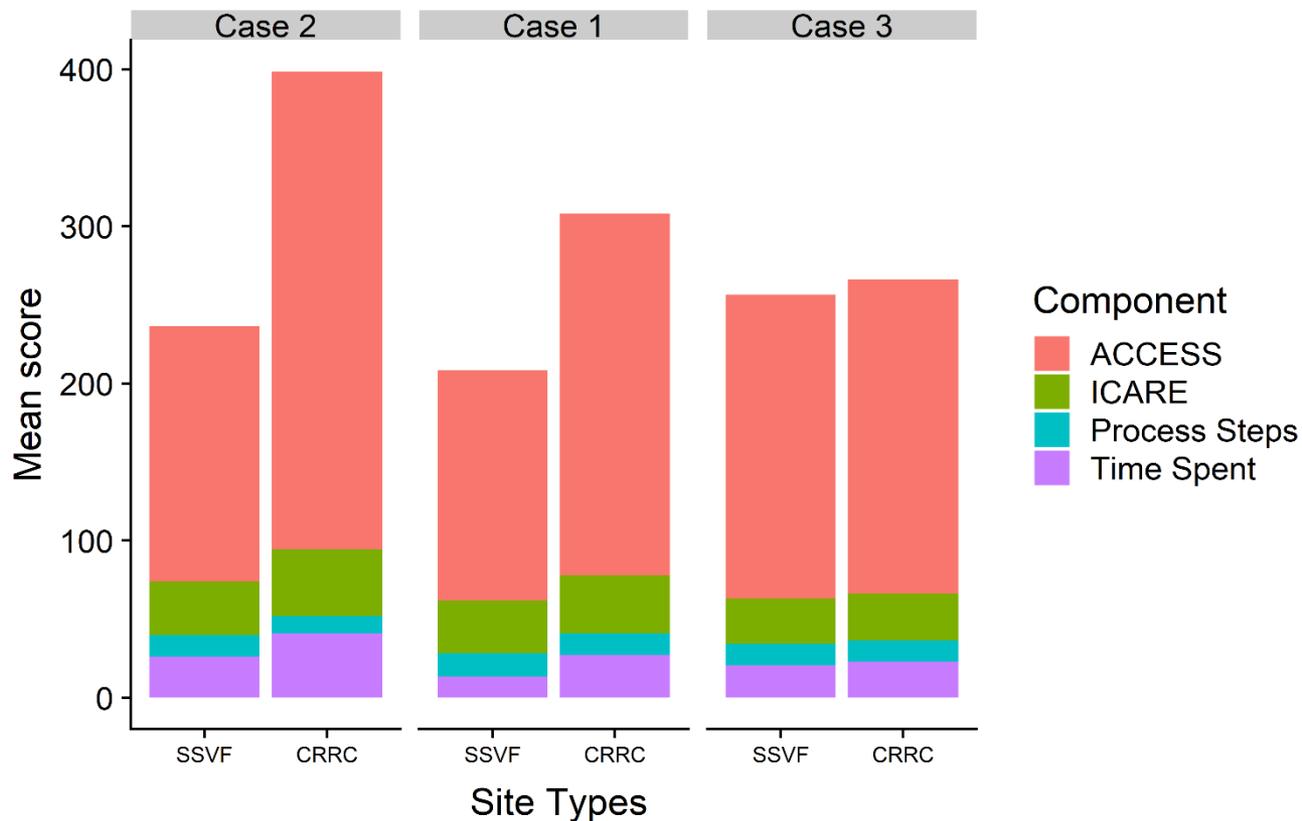
Top 3 & Bottom 3: Performance

Top Scores	SSVF	CRRC
Top 1	602	517
Top 2	521	516
Top 3	510	514

Bottom Scores	SSVF	CRRC
Bottom 1	15	46
Bottom 2	38	49
Bottom 3	47	81

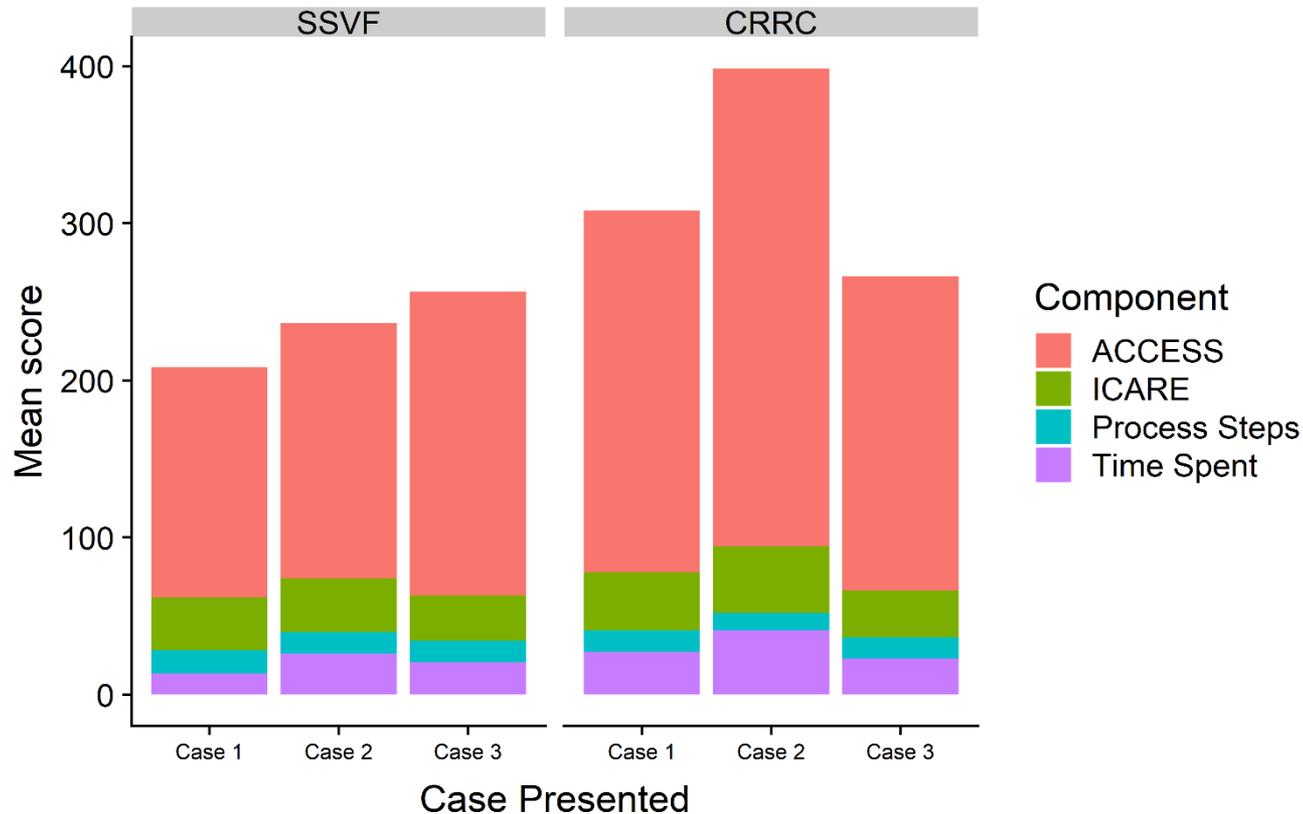
Average Score: **264 (331 for CRRC, 232 for SSVF)**

Cases aligned for comparison



Case 1: Male, Caucasian, OEF Veteran with PTSD
 Case 2: Female, Caucasian, Desert Storm Veteran with High Blood Pressure
 Case 3: Male, African American, Vietnam Veteran with Alcoholism

SSVF and CRRC aligned for comparison



Case 1: Male, Caucasian, OEF Veteran with PTSD
Case 2: Female, Caucasian, Desert Storm Veteran with High Blood Pressure
Case 3: Male, African American, Vietnam Veteran with Alcoholism

Intake Process by Site:

Accessing Services at SSVF and CRRC

Site	# of Sites	Received care without going somewhere else	Accessed care without being assertive	Provided transportation
All (SSVF)	64	41%	42%	25%
All (CRRC)	31	58%	68%	55%

Intake Process by Site: Accessing Services at SSVF and CRRC

Case	Site	n	Received care without going somewhere else	Accessed care without being assertive	Provided transportation
Case 1	SSVF	n=21	48%	43%	19%
Case 2	SSVF	n=28	36%	43%	32%
Case 3	SSVF	n=15	40%	40%	20%
Case 1	CRRC	n=10	70%	70%	50%
Case 2	CRRC	n=12	58%	92%	83%
Case 3	CRRC	n=9	44%	33%	22%

Unable to Access without a DD 214

	SSVF	CRRC
Case 1	9%	11%
Case 2	24%	8%
Case 3	44%	57%

Miscellaneous Barriers to Access

- Site said they no longer serve Veterans because they lost funding.
- Veteran “out of jurisdiction” for sleeping in Walmart parking lot just outside of area covered.
- SSVF said they had to send someone to the parking lot he said he was sleeping in to confirm he is homeless.
- USV told they would have been able to get him more services if he had a criminal record.
- USV told he should say he’s been in county for 3 months to qualify.
- Several of these SSVF sites had the wrong address listed on the internet. They also were difficult to confirm on the phone, sometimes the person on the phone would still give the wrong address.

Follow up: Phone Call or Text Message

	CRRC	SSVF
Phone Number Requested or assisted with obtaining a no cost Lifeline mobile phone plan	84%	57%
Follow-up Call or Text Message Received	43%	30%

Summary of Findings

Item	SSVF	CRRC	Comment
Received care without having to go to medical center first	41%	58%	
VA ID sufficient (no DD 214)	76%	79%	
Able to access services without having to be very assertive	42%	68%	
Provided transportation options to access some or all of the services	25%	55%	Not always applicable to SSVF sites, depending on local available services.
NO info provided for housing options	8%	10%	
NO food provided	39%	19%	
NO income counseling (employment, education, job-training, VA Benefits, SSI/SSDI)	33%	23%	
NO PTSD referral	71%	20%	
NO alcohol abuse referral	47%	44%	
NO follow-up phone call or text message received	70%	57%	Majority of locations collected phone number.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- SSVF sites generally underperformed compared with CRRC sites, but this is partly an “apples” to “oranges” comparison considering their different roles and functions. ICARE scores were lower, however.
- Barriers should be addressed, particularly not accepting the VA ID without a DD 214. Also often required birth certificate, social security card, state ID all in addition to VA-ID
- Follow up phone calls or text messages less common at SSVF sites (about 1/3 the time) compared to the CRRCs (half the time). Also, SSVF sites requested a phone number or assisted the client with obtaining a no cost USAC Lifeline phone plan less frequently (about 1/2 the time) compared to CRRCs (about 2/3rd of the time)
- SSVF sites that asked for a working mobile phone number and followed up with a phone call or text message were also the most accessible. We recommend this best practice be disseminated and reinforced across all SSVF sites, given the importance of follow-up and reminders that phone calls and text messages provide.

Conclusions and Recommendations (Continued)

- Need to address systemic bias. Compared to the CRRC sites, however, the USV portraying an African American Vietnam Veteran had fewer access barriers (i.e. DD 214 requirement, and being sent somewhere else first).
- SSVF sites had a variety of idiosyncratic barriers that can be addressed on a site by site basis, including –
 - Indicating they are no longer funded to serve Veterans,
 - that the Veteran is sleeping outside of their catchment area,
 - that they need to first visit and confirm the location the Veteran reports they are residing at,
 - that they have not experienced homelessness within the county long enough, or
 - that the listed address is not correct.

Note: Despite these hurdles, USVs often experienced a high level of caring and compassion from front line staff. Staff expressed heartfelt concern but were often rule-bound, or misinformed about rules they believed they had to follow.

Draft Bill of Rights

As a Veteran, you have the right...

1. to be treated equally, professionally, and with respect, regardless of your gender, legal history, ability/disability, age, sexuality, race, ethnicity, housing status, or any other protected class
2. to be assessed for available services as a Veteran with your Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) issued photo identification (ID), whether or not you have your DD214.
3. to access or be directly referred to services you need for which you are eligible and that are available within your local community.
4. to have your phone number and general location with a time you can be reached requested so you can receive a text message, phone call, or in-person follow-up within a reasonable time, and to assist you with applying for a subsidized Universal Services Administration Lifeline phone plan, when needed.

Who to contact with concerns: SSVF@va.gov

SSVF Program Office FY19 USV Goals

- Debrief call with each FY18 USV site to include discussion of program strengths as well as action planning for areas identified for improvement
- Draft SSVF “Bill of Rights”
- SSVF ICARE training
- Collect accurate SSVF Grantee contact information



**VA SSVF Program
Participant Satisfaction
Survey: FY18 Year End
Report**

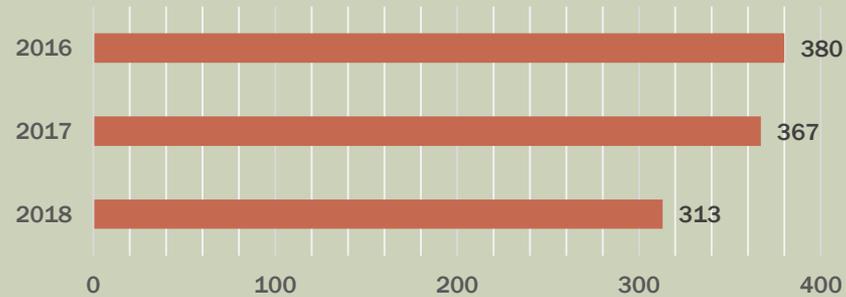
January 10,
2019

Overview

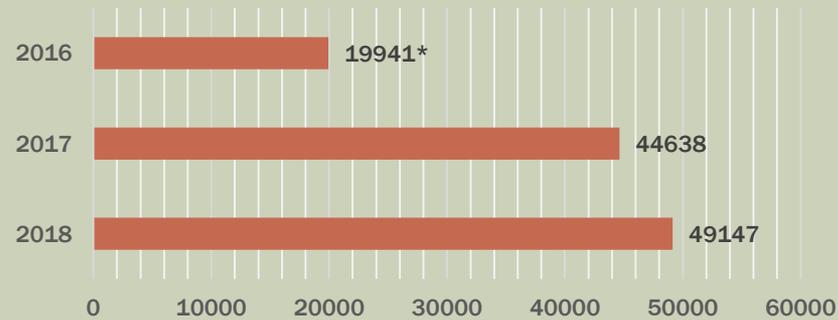
- Trends in response rates and overall program satisfaction over a 3-year period
- Satisfaction with staff as a function of overall satisfaction
- Open-end responses – What do veterans want?

Overall Statistics 2016-2018

Number of Grantees



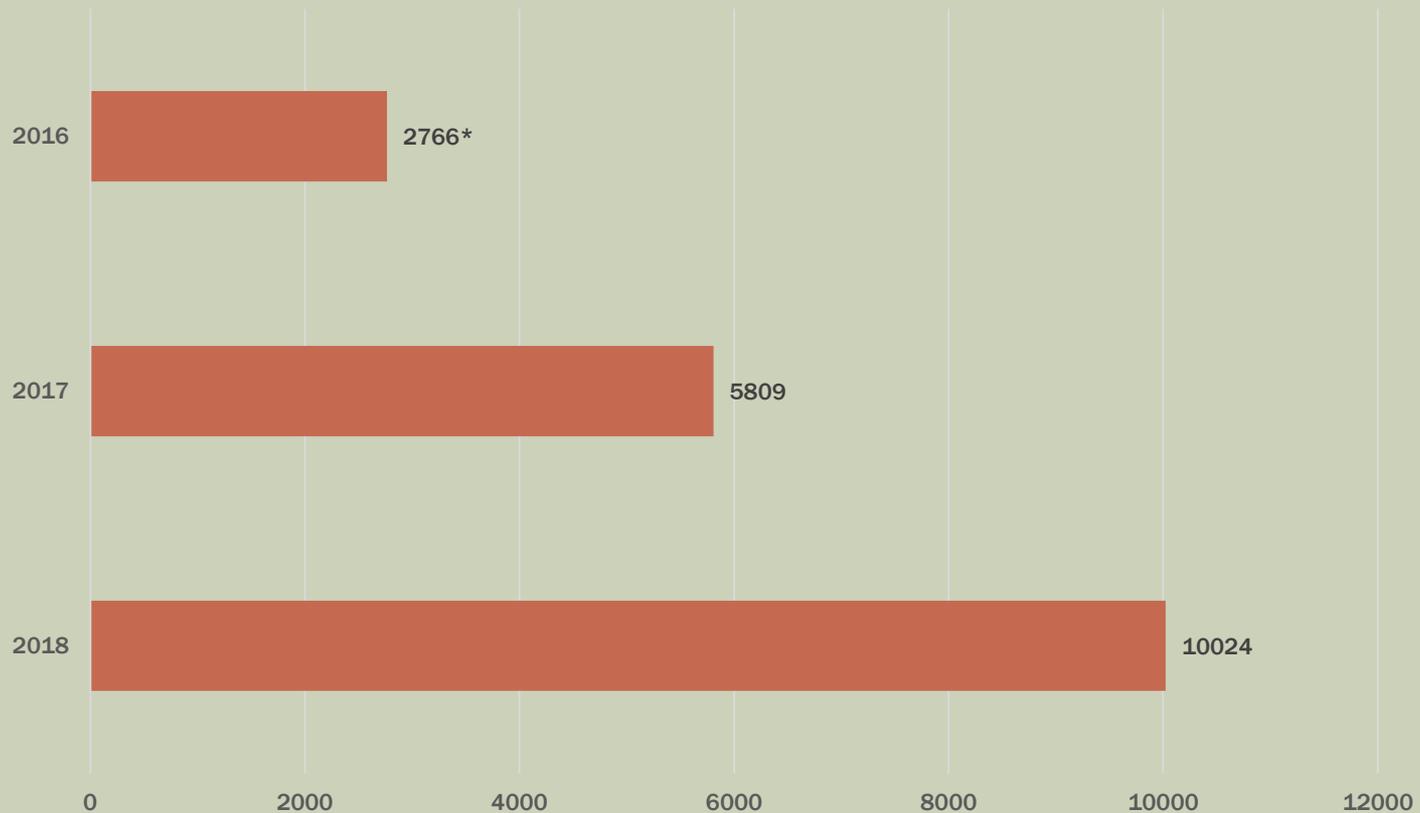
Number of Registrations



Presented By M. Davis and Company, Inc.

Overall Statistics 2016-2018

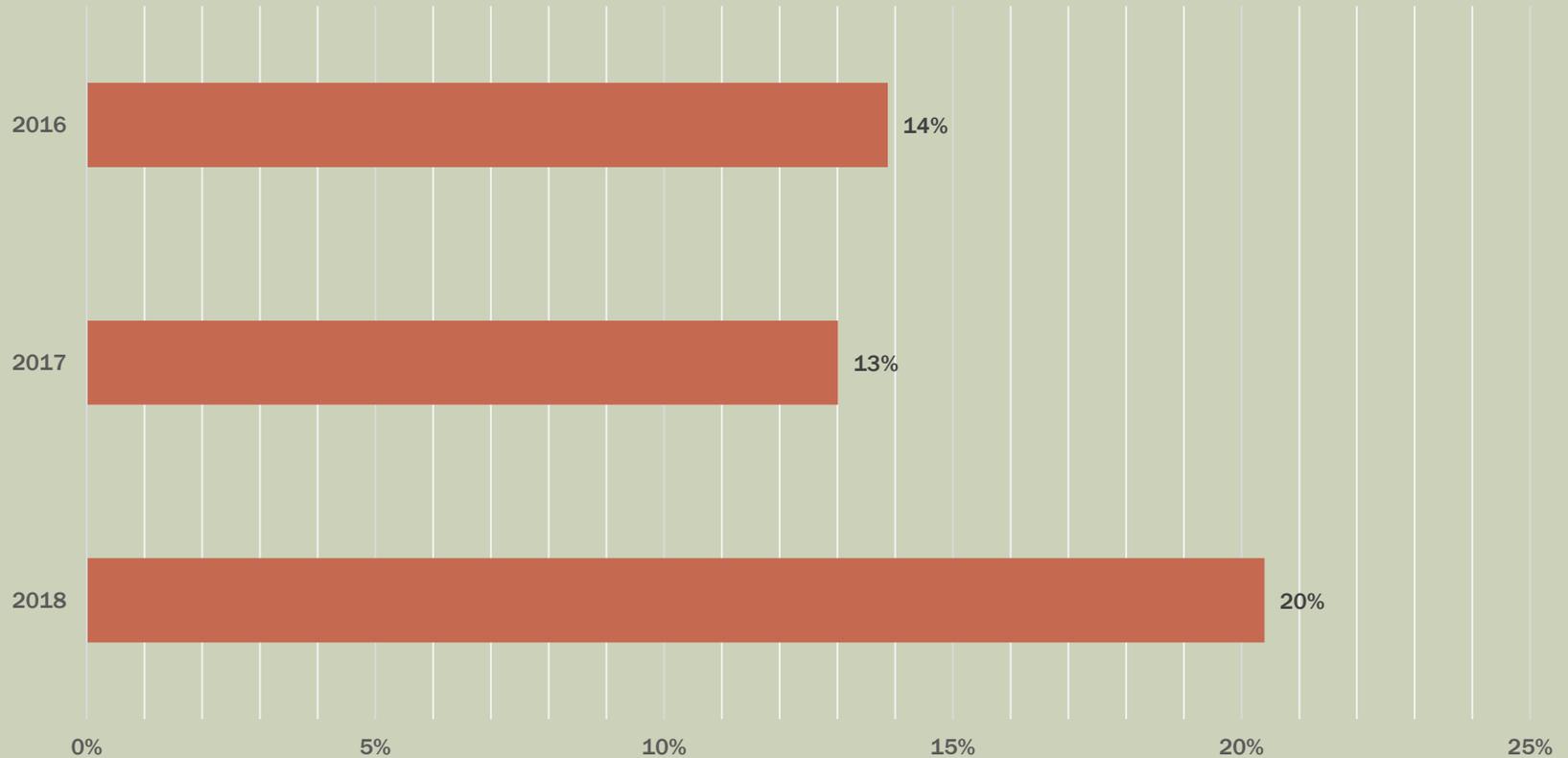
Number of Completed Surveys



Presented By M. Davis and Company, Inc.

Overall Statistics 2016-2018

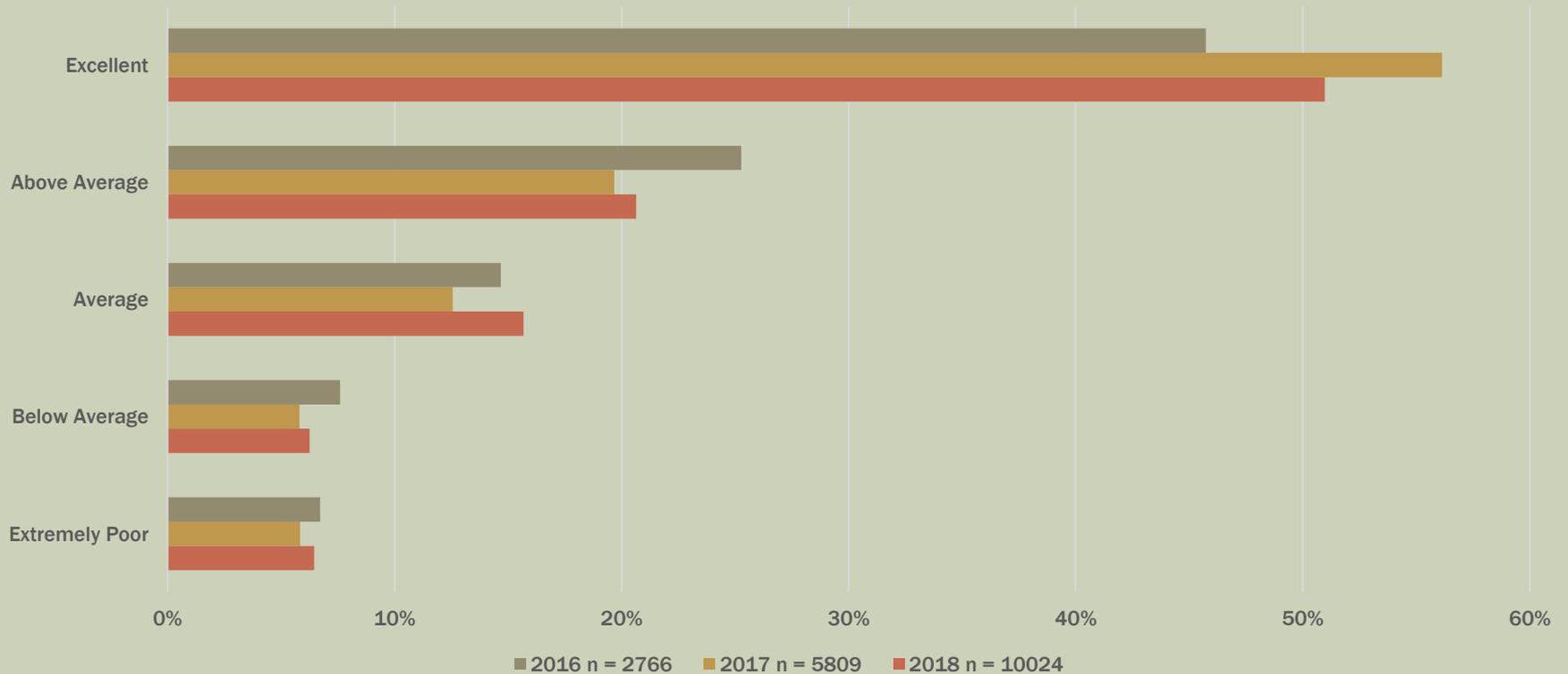
Response Rate



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Overall Satisfaction 2016-2018

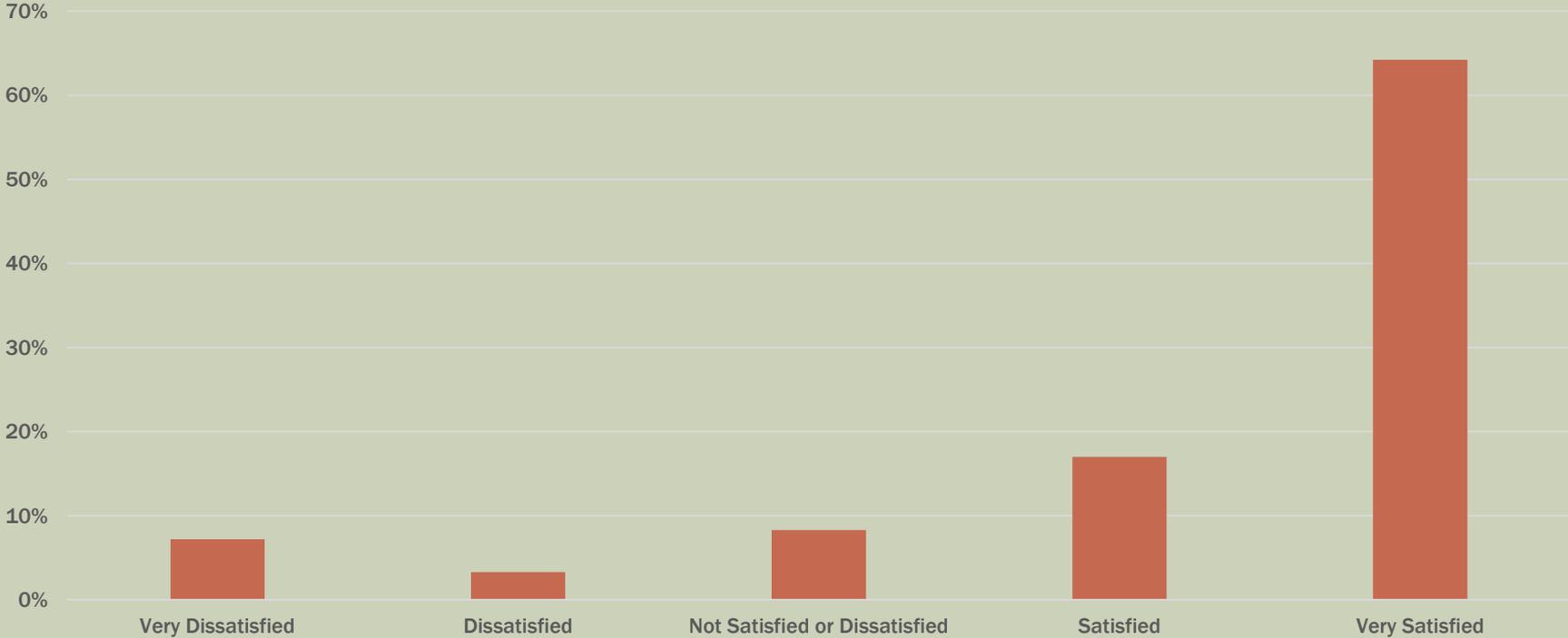
Q1 - How would you rate the quality of the services you have received from this supportive services provider?



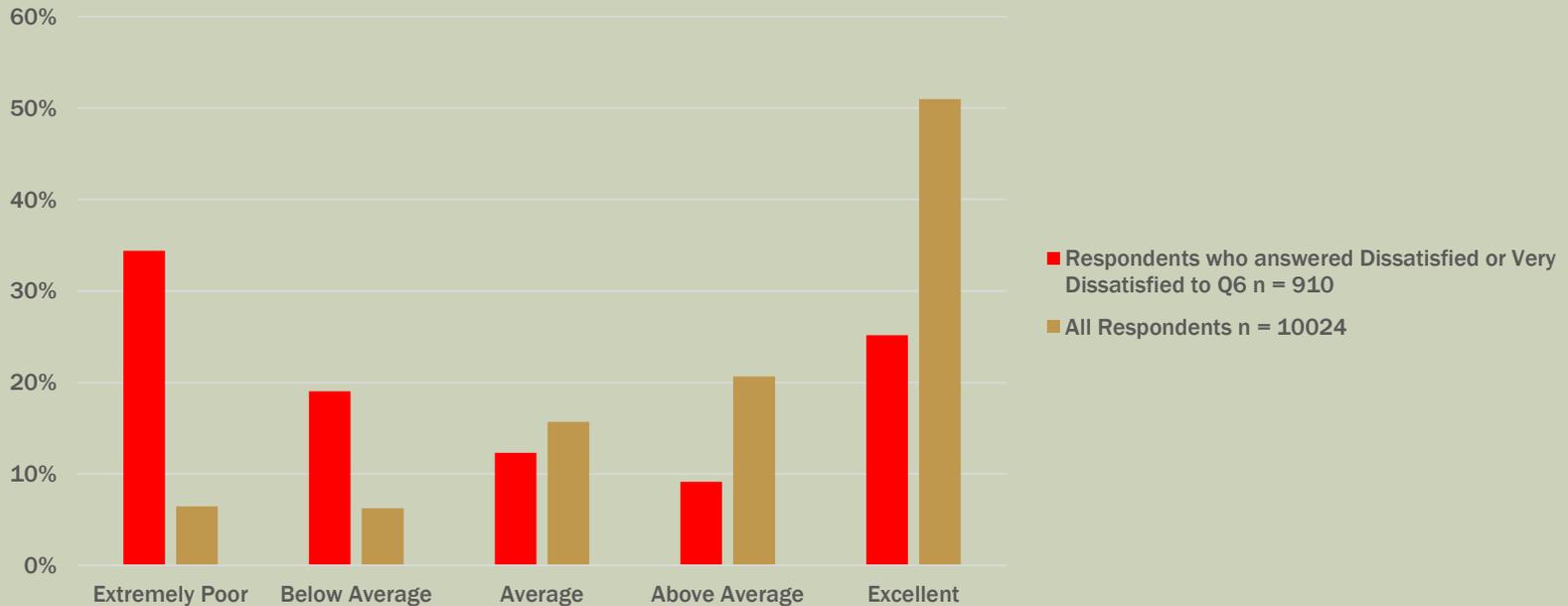
Presented By M. Davis and Company, Inc.

Courteousness of Staff - initially spoke with

Q6 - How satisfied are you with the courteousness of the staff person that you initially spoke with when you contacted the provider?
n = 8681

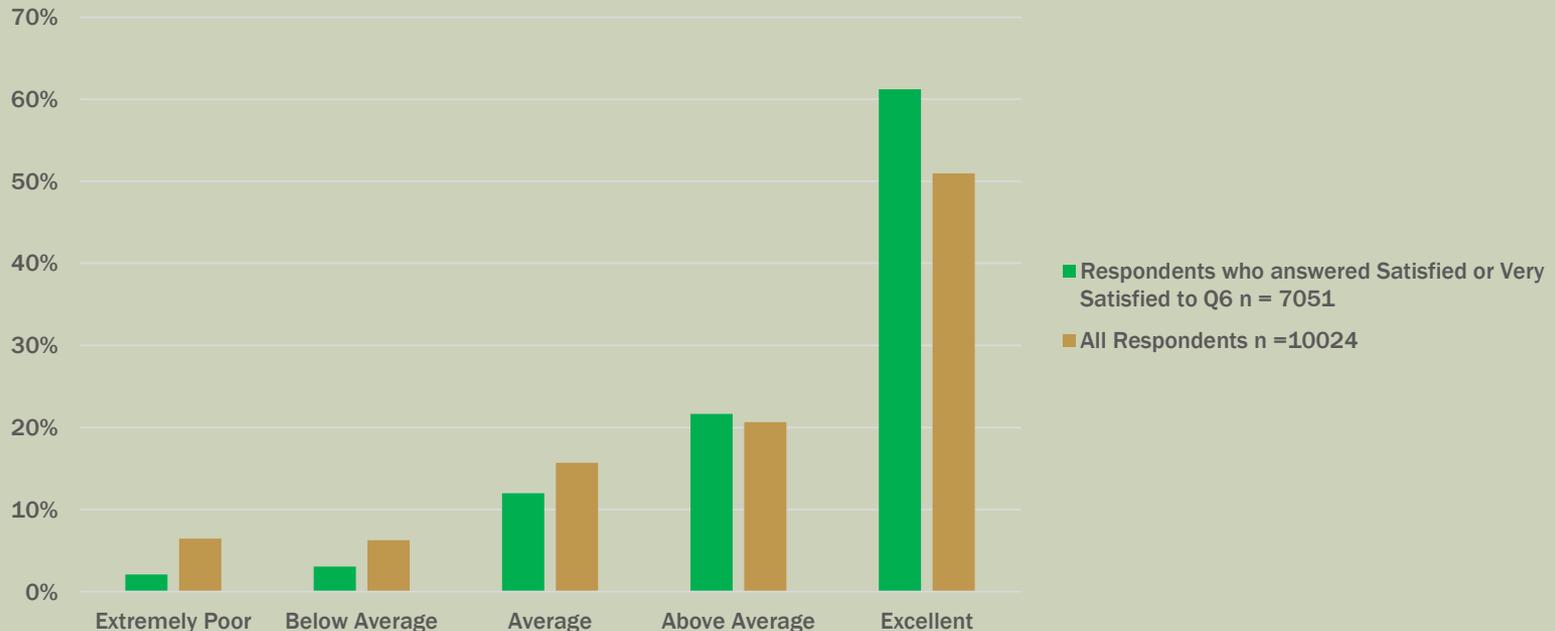


Courteousness of Staff – initially spoke with vs. Overall Satisfaction



- Red bars show each response to overall satisfaction as a percentage of FY18 respondents who were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with courteousness of initial staff
- Orange bars show each response to overall satisfaction as a percentage of all FY18 respondents

Courteousness of Staff – initially spoke with vs. Overall Satisfaction

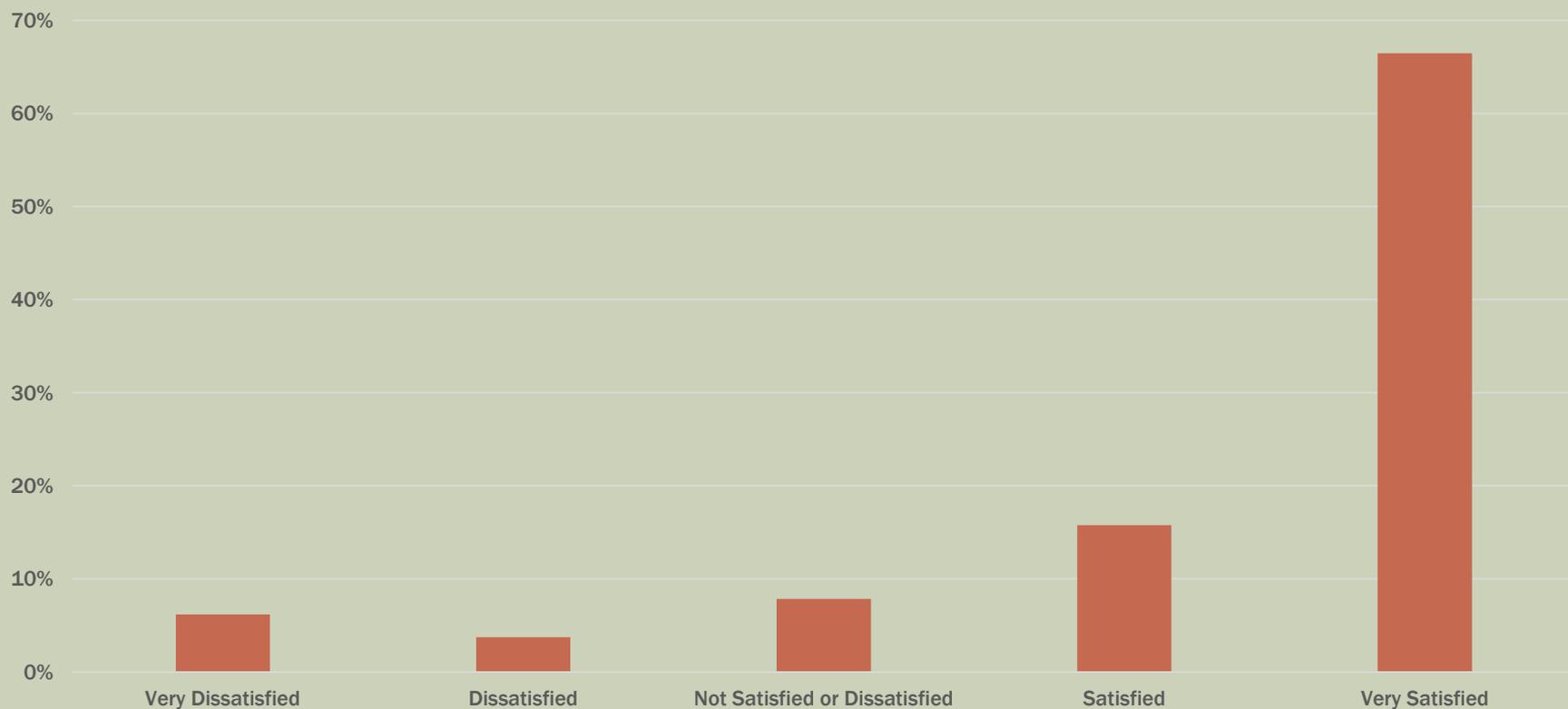


- Green bars show each response to overall satisfaction as a percentage of FY18 respondents who were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with courteousness of initial staff
- Orange bars show each response to overall satisfaction as a percentage of all FY18 respondents

Courteousness of Staff – dealt with most often

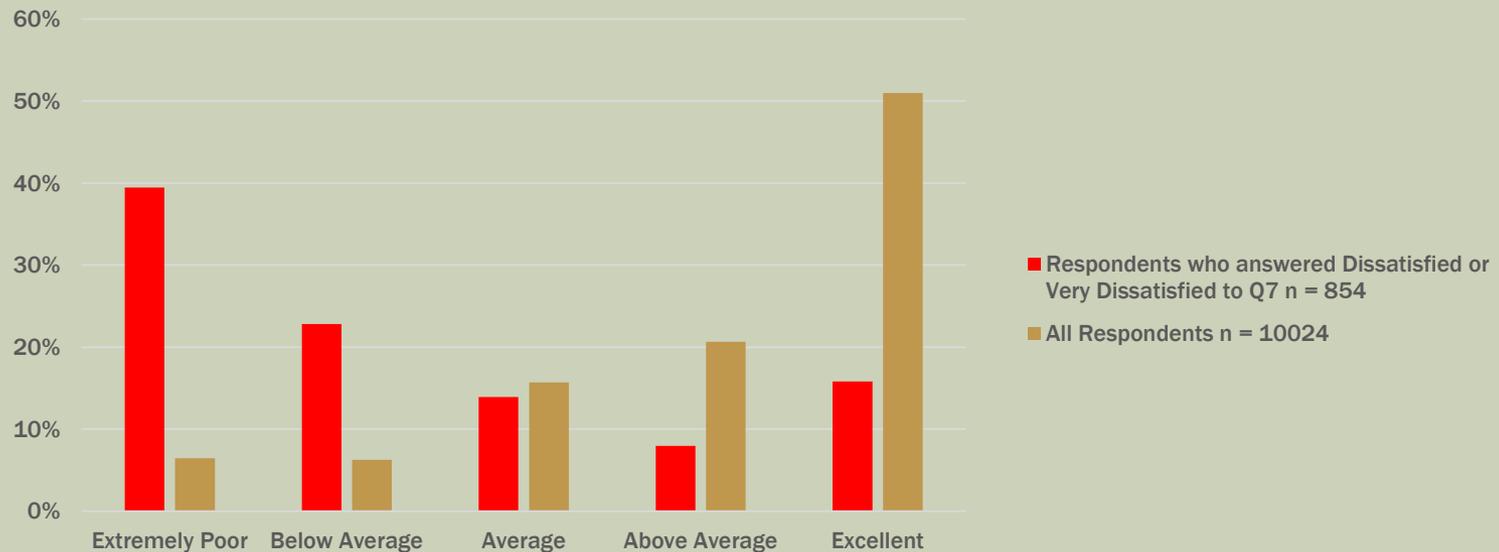
Q7 - How satisfied are you with the courteousness of the staff person that you dealt with most often while you were working with this provider?

n = 8617



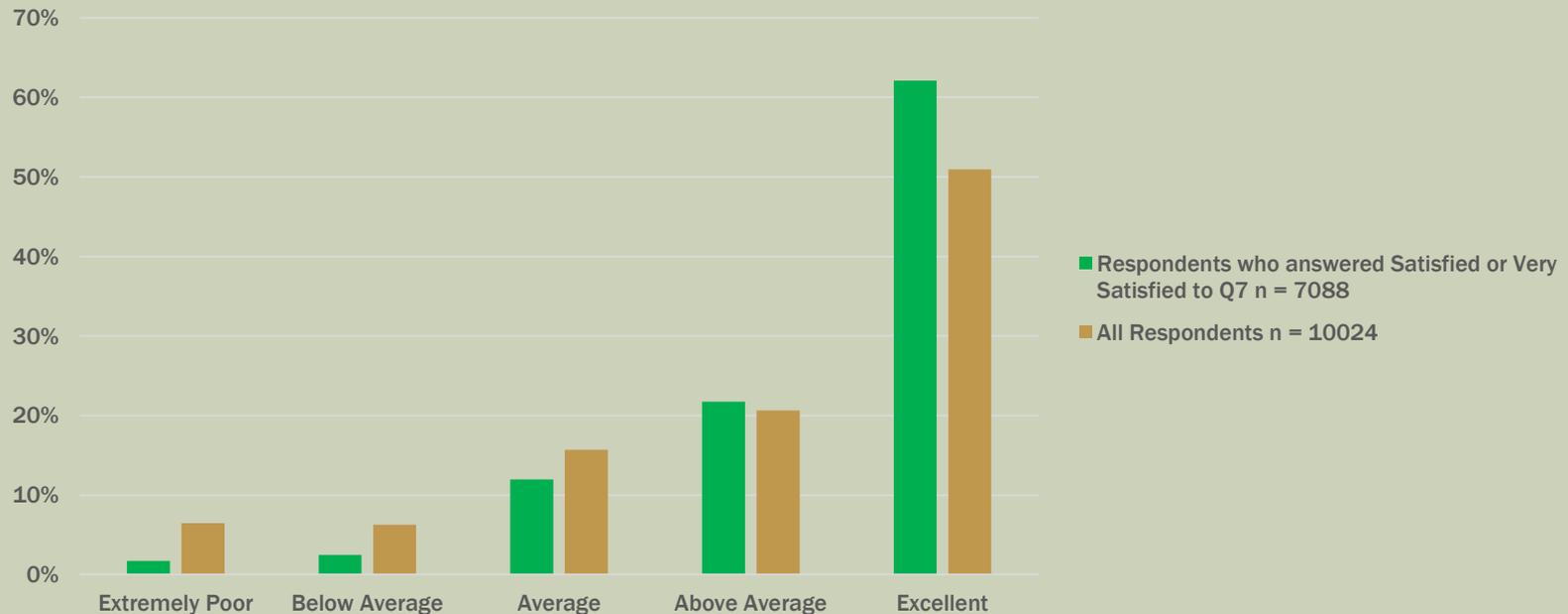
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Courteousness of Staff – dealt with most often vs. Overall Satisfaction



- Red bars show each response to overall satisfaction as a percentage of FY18 respondents who were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with courteousness of staff dealt with the most
- Orange bars show each response to overall satisfaction as a percentage of all FY18 respondents

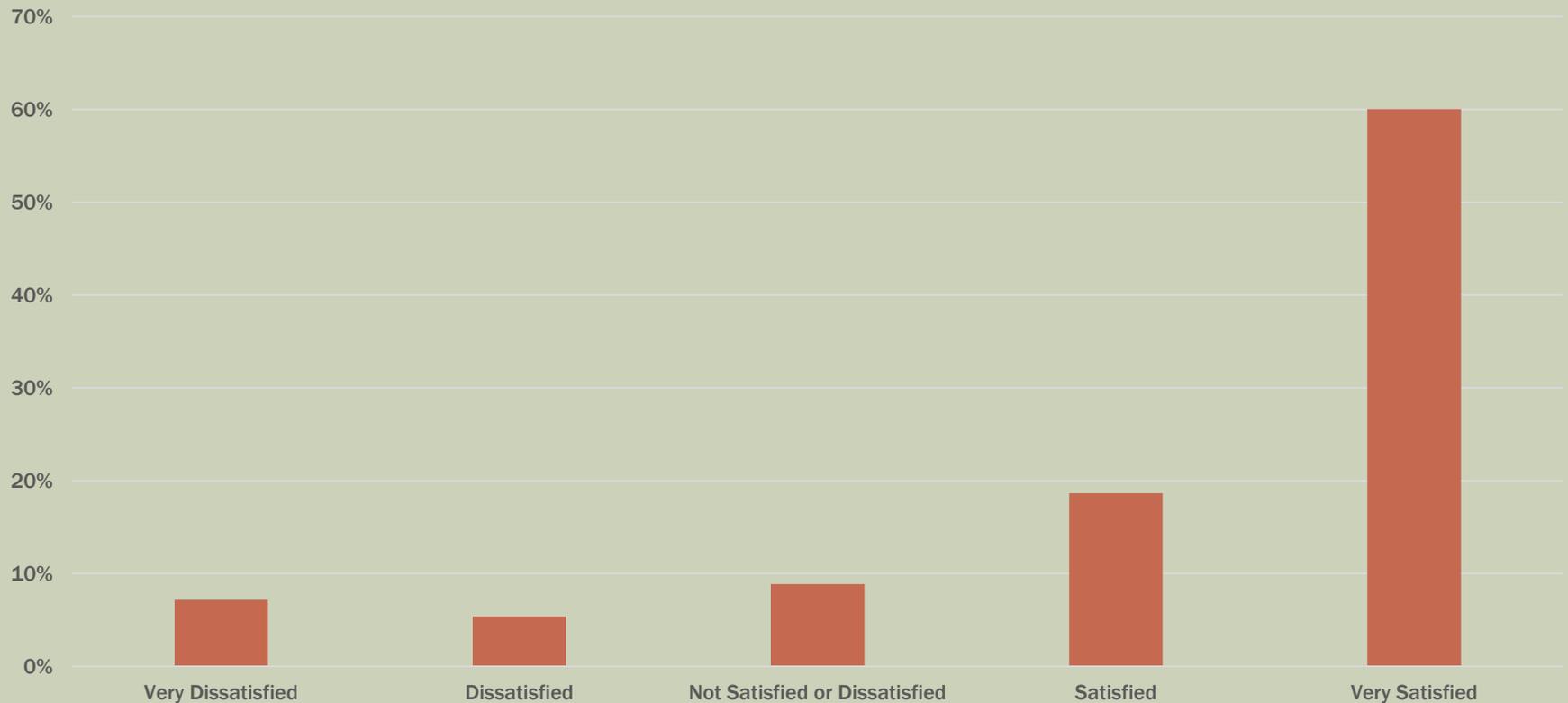
Courteousness of Staff – dealt with most often vs. Overall Satisfaction



- Green bars show each response to overall satisfaction as a percentage of FY18 respondents who were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with courteousness of staff dealt with the most
- Orange bars show each response to overall satisfaction as a percentage of all FY18 respondents

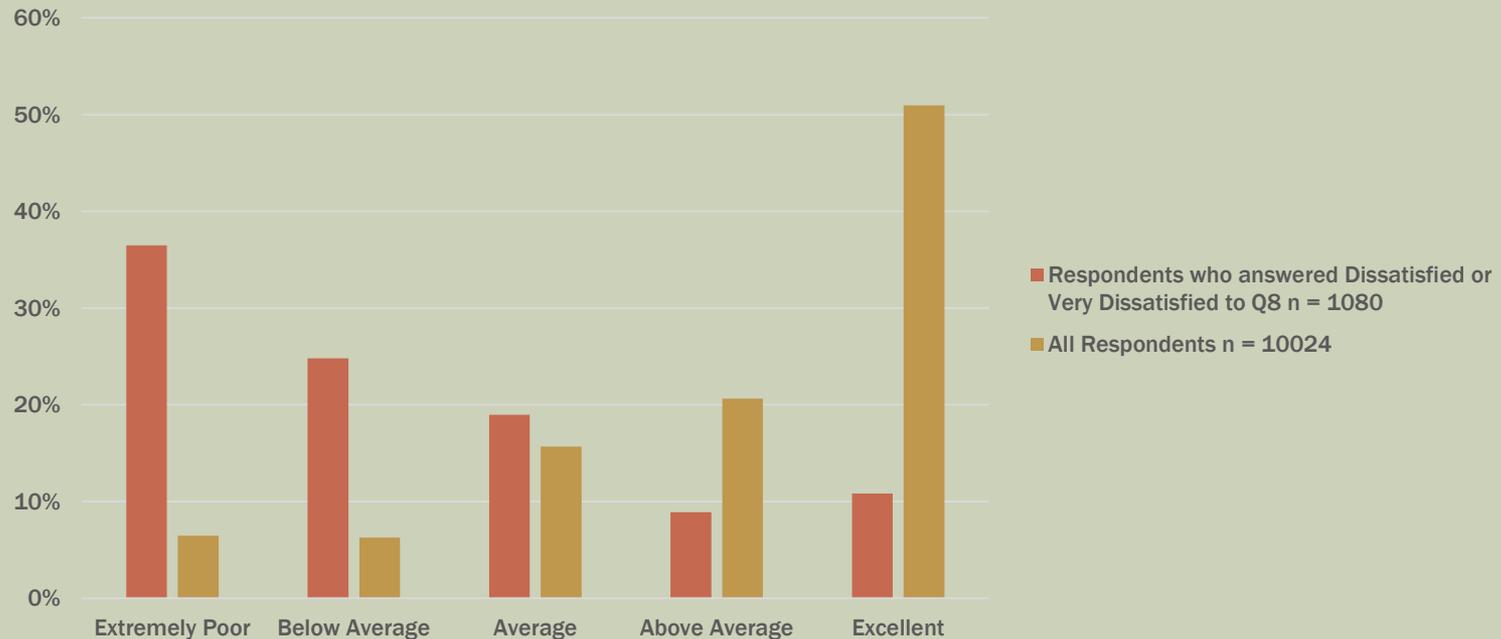
Timeliness of Communication

Q8 - How satisfied are you with the timeliness of communication with the staff person that you dealt with most often while you were working with this provider?
n = 8626



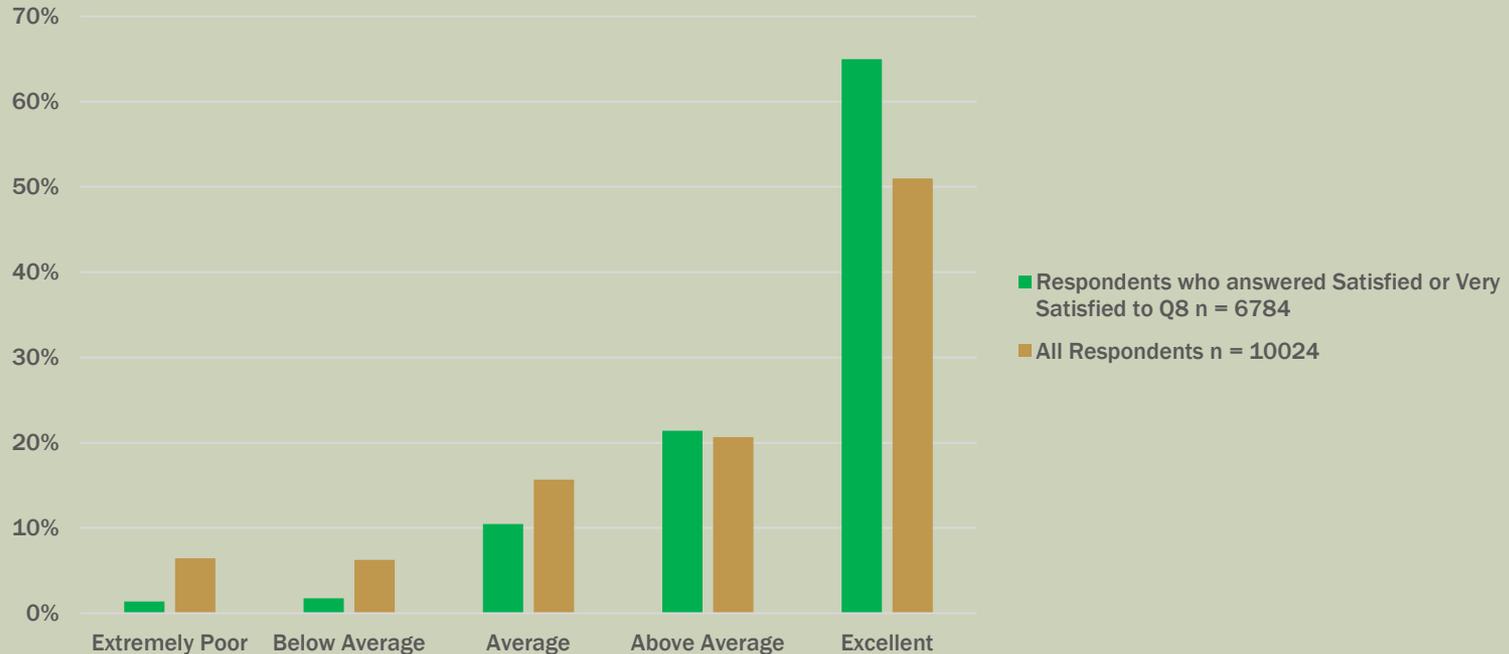
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Timeliness of Communication vs. Overall Satisfaction



- Red bars show each response to overall satisfaction as a percentage of FY18 respondents who were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with timeliness of communication
- Orange bars show each response to overall satisfaction as a percentage of all FY18 respondents

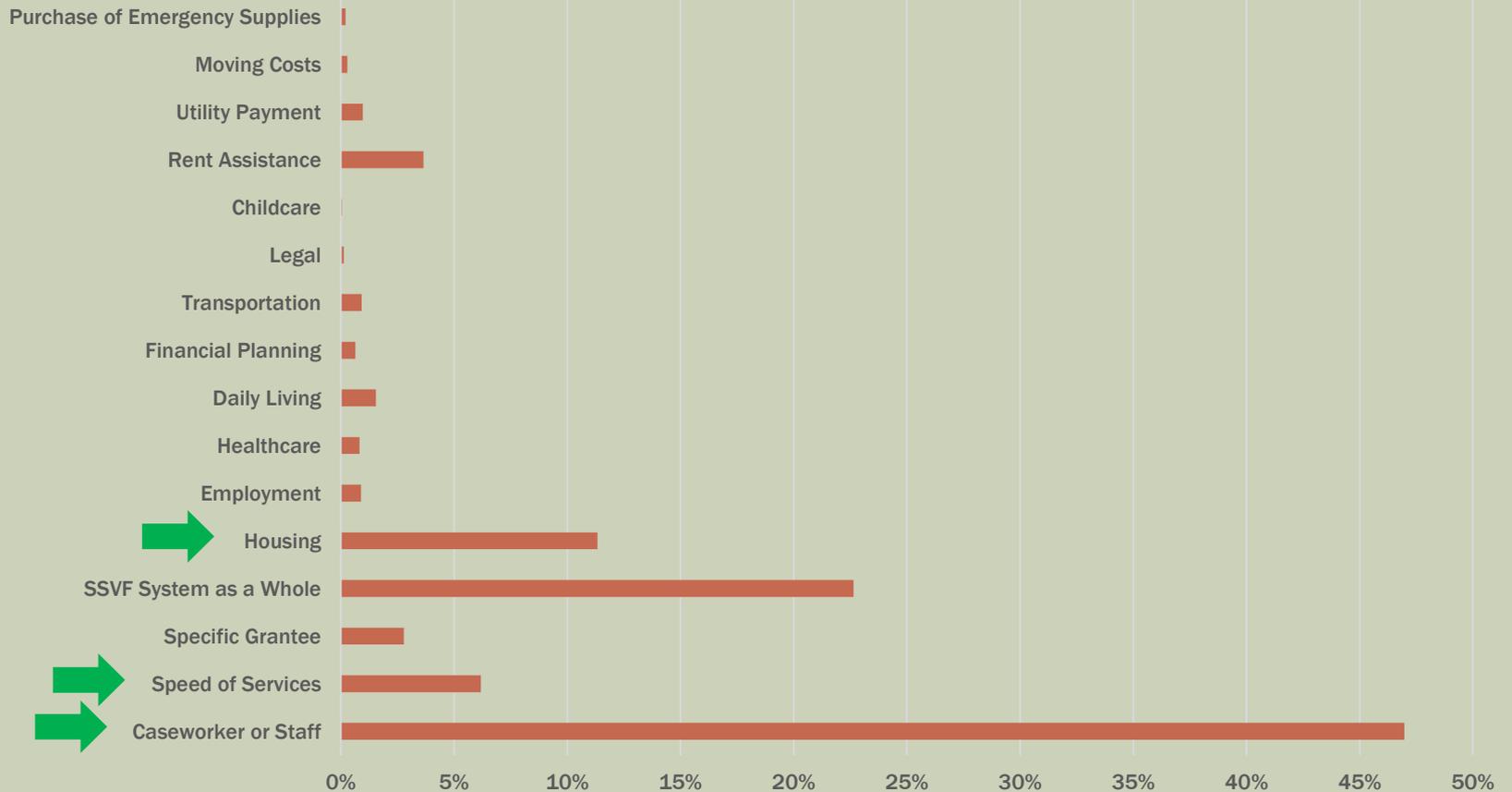
Timeliness of Communication vs. Overall Satisfaction



- Green bars show each response to overall satisfaction as a percentage of FY18 respondents who were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with timeliness of communication
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Open Ended Responses - Positive

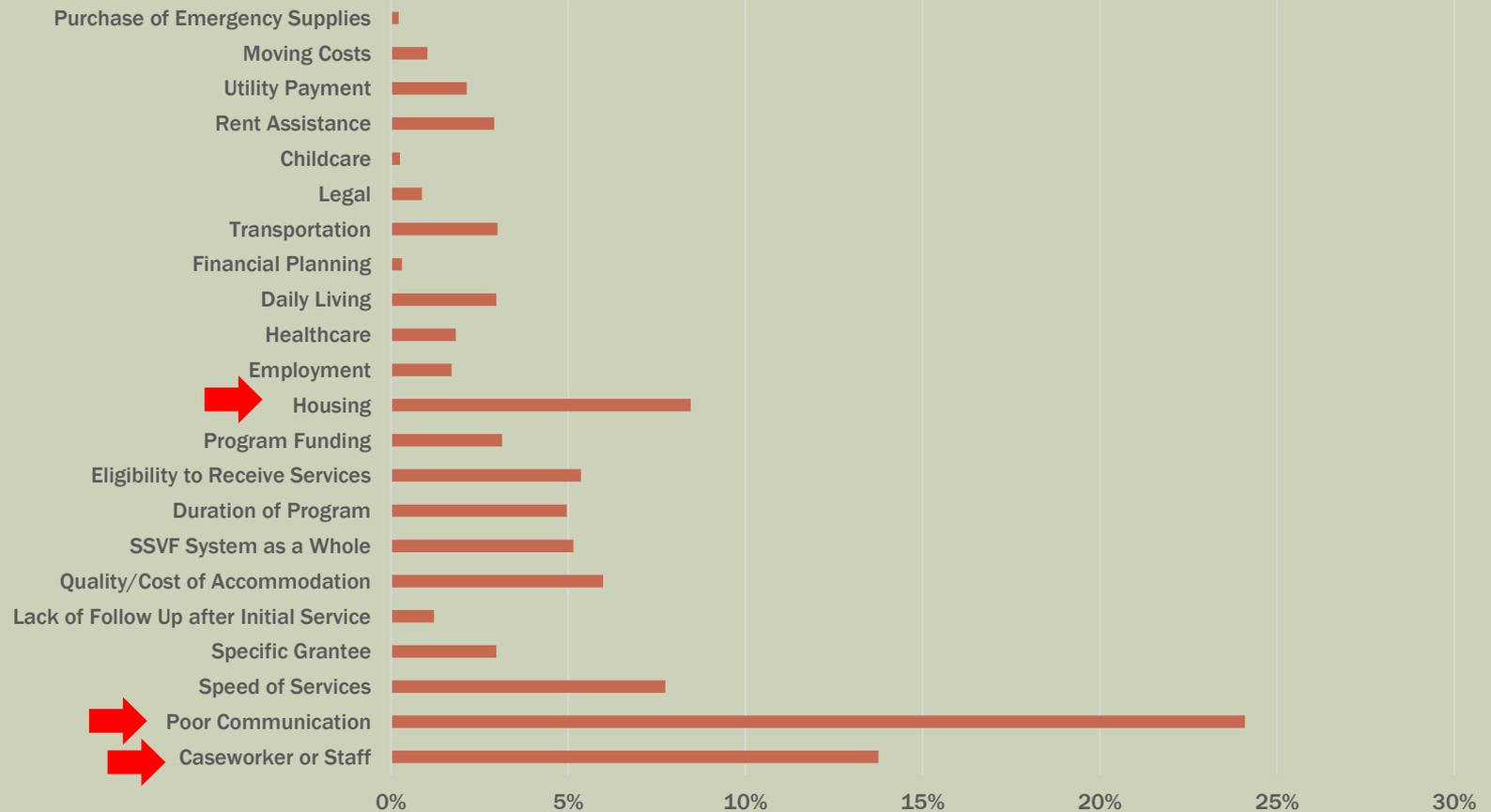
Q9 - Positive Experiences n = 6727



Presented By M. Davis and Company, Inc.

Open Ended Responses - Negative

Q10 - Negative Experiences n = 3229



Open Ended Responses - Suggestions

Q11 - Suggestions n = 2876



QUESTIONS?

- MDAC
 - Please email or call have any questions
 - vassvf@mdavisco.com
 - 215-790-8900 ext 124
- Resources available on SSVF website
 - Webinar slides, copy of survey
 - <https://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf>

Supportive Services for Veteran Families

Thank you

Powerpoint Presentation will be posted on
<http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvfuniversity.asp>

Questions?

Go To: <http://www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp>

Email: SSVF@va.gov