

# Employer Survey Results for 2014 and 2015

March 8, 2016

## 1. Overall Results

This report of employer customer satisfaction is based on recorded survey numbers that grantees entered into SPARQ from January 1, 2014, to December 31, 2015. There are several steps in completing the employer survey process, with areas of responsibility for both the sub-grantee and the employer. The sub-grantee must identify qualifying employers, enter the survey number and date of delivery into SPARQ, and deliver the survey to the employer. The employer must complete and return the survey. The sub-grantee must also keep track of the survey number to determine if the employer has returned the survey. If the employer has not returned the survey, the sub-grantee is required to record another survey number and deliver a second survey to the employer.

As in previous years, the uneven returns from grantees indicate that there are many points along the way where this process breaks down. Despite the changes in SPARQ to strengthen the consistency of reporting, the number of recorded surveys is disappointing. Table 1 presents the count of employer surveys recorded in SPARQ at the time of delivery to an employer. AARP accounts for 22.7 percent of the 480 recorded survey numbers, and National Urban League (NUL) accounts for 19.2 percent. Only six other grantees had more than 10 surveys recorded. Thirty-nine grantees recorded no surveys in the 24-month reporting period.

Table 1

	Count	Percent
AARP	109	22.7
Easter Seals	1	.2
Experience Works	2	.4
Goodwill	43	8.9
Mature Services	2	.4
NCOA	2	.4
NUL	92	19.2
SER	10	2.1
SSAI	37	7.7
ATD	38	7.9
Alaska	1	.2
California	1	.2
Connecticut	4	.8
Delaware	1	.2

	Count	Percent
Florida	3	.6
Georgia	2	.4
Illinois	5	1.0
Kentucky	2	.4
Louisiana	29	6.0
Minnesota	6	1.2
Mississippi	2	.4
Missouri	8	1.7
Ohio	1	.2
Pennsylvania	34	7.1
Tennessee	29	6.0
Texas	5	1.0
Utah	2	.4
Vermont	4	.8
Wisconsin	5	1.0
Total	480	100.0

Employers returned 354 completed surveys. While Table 1 shows the number of records where the sub-grantee recorded an employer survey number in SPARQ, Table 2 presents only the SPARQ records that were matched to a completed survey. One hundred and sixty-eight (47.5%) of the 354 returned surveys had a match in the SPARQ records, indicating that the survey number had been recorded, the survey had been delivered to an employer, and the employer had returned the survey. The 186 completed surveys that are not matched to SPARQ are not included in this report because there is no grantee to which those surveys can be connected.

Of the 168 returns, 26.8% (45) are from AARP, and 25.6% (43) are from NUL. There are 17 other grantees with at least one matched record, but none has more than 11 matched records. Forty-nine grantees have no matched records. The dominance of AARP and NUL in the recorded and matched surveys may be a combination of consistent recording on the part of the sub-grantees and more frequent placement of participants with non-host agency employers. Placement with employers that are host agencies or private sector employers where the participant did the work of identifying and obtaining the job are not eligible to receive an employer survey.

Table 2

	Count	Percent
AARP	45	26.8
Experience Works	2	1.2
Goodwill	6	3.6
Mature Services	1	.6

	Count	Percent
NCOA	1	.6
NUL	43	25.6
SER	2	1.2
SSAI	11	6.5
ATD	11	6.5
Delaware	1	.6
Illinois	1	.6
Louisiana	11	6.5
Minnesota	4	2.4
Ohio	1	.6
Pennsylvania	10	6.0
Tennessee	10	6.0
Texas	4	2.4
Utah	2	1.2
Vermont	2	1.2
Total	168	100.0

Table 3 presents the number of grantee survey that had both a match in the SPARQ records and answers to the first three survey questions, which are required to calculate the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). The two grantees with sufficient numbers of surveys to conduct separate analyses are AARP and NUL.

The remainder of this report will include results for AARP and NUL and a third group, “Other Grantees,” an aggregate of the 17 other grantees in Table 3 with matched records. Because the Other Grantees group contains so many different national and state grantees, it could be considered a nationwide group; however, because of the limited number of surveys, it cannot be considered truly representative of nationwide data.

Table 3

Grantee	Count
AARP	44
Experience Works	2
Goodwill	5
Mature Services	1
NCOA	1
NUL	37
SER	2
SSAI	11
ATD	11

Grantee	Count
Delaware	1
Illinois	1
Louisiana	11
Minnesota	4
Ohio	1
Pennsylvania	8
Tennessee	9
Texas	3
Utah	2
Vermont	2
Nationwide	156

## 2. Analyses of Employer Returns

### A. Response Rate and ACSI

Because of the widespread inconsistency in recording and delivering surveys, it is not possible again this year to report a response rate for any group of grantees or for all grantees nationwide.

Based on the current returns with the first three questions completed, the ACSI scores for AARP and Other Grantees are extremely high, considerably higher than WIA survey scores and consistent with previous SCSEP nationwide survey scores. The NUL score is significantly lower than that for AARP and Other Grantees, and significantly lower than NUL's scores on prior employer surveys. The small number of surveys may render the NUL results not representative for the ACSI and for most of the other questions presented below.

Table 4

	ACSI			
	Count	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
AARP	44	87.55	11	100
NUL	37	67.71	44	100
Other Grantees	75	90.43	12	100

## B. Staff Service to Employers

In the remaining analyses, the responses for several questions (Questions 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10) are numerically transformed so that all employer responses can be compared to each other.<sup>1</sup> As a result, all of the survey questions are comparable on a 1-10 scale, except for Questions 9 and 14, which are Yes/No questions.

The first section of the analysis looks at staff services to employers. The score for Question 4 (Table 5) is very high and suggests that the sub-grantee staff communicate effectively with employers so that employers are able to understand the Older Worker Program. The average score of 9.0 on Question 4 for AARP and the Other Grantees is very high, indicating that employers for these two groups felt communication was good. NUL's score is significantly lower.

Table 5

	Q4. The Older Worker Program staff gave me all the information I needed to understand the Older Worker Program.			
	Count	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
AARP	44	8.95	1	10
NUL	37	6.97	5	10
Other Grantees	74	8.97	1	10

The scores on Question 5, regarding an understanding of employers' needs, while fairly high, are significantly lower than the average scores for Question 4. Table 6 presents the responses to Question 5 for the three groups. There is some room for improvement as evident from the scores.

Table 6

	Q5. Would you say that the Older Worker Program staff that made the job referral(s) had a good understanding of your business needs?			
	Count	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
AARP	44	8.36	1	10
NUL	37	7.41	4	10
Other Grantees	73	8.52	4	10

Question 7, whether the staff stay in touch with the employer after the participant is hired, shows scores similar to Question 5. As in the other questions' scores, AARP and Other Grantees have similar scores, and NUL has a significantly lower score.

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<sup>1</sup> These transformations do not distort the original values chosen by the employer.

Table 7

	Q7. The Older Worker Program staff stayed in touch with me after I hired the applicant to make sure that everything was going well.			
	Count	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
AARP	44	8.77	1	10
NUL	39	7.18	4	10
Other Grantees	72	8.15	1	10

Question 11, being helpful in resolving problems, reaffirms the staff’s success in providing customer service to the employers at a high level. On this question, AARP and Other Grantees have the same high score. NUL has a significantly lower score. The scores on Question 11 are strongly associated with the ACSI score.

Table 8

	Q11. When I hired older workers with the assistance of the Older Worker Program, the Older Worker Program staff was helpful in resolving any problems I had.			
	Count	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
AARP	36	8.81	1	10
NUL	32	6.87	4	10
Other Grantees	186	8.80	1	10

### C. Participants Skills

The scores for Question 6, whether participants have the right skills for the job, are relatively low and virtually identical to those from prior reports. The scores are similar for all grantees. The newly approved employer survey may help to identify areas in which employers would like participants to have better skills.

Table 9

	Q6. Would you say that the job applicant(s) referred by the Older Worker Program had the necessary skills for the job?			
	Count	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
AARP	45	7.87	1	10
NUL	38	7.71	4	10
Other Grantees	76	8.07	4	10

In contrast to Question 6, the scores for Question 8 are one of the more notable results from this survey. Previously, scores on this question about basic computer skills were among the lowest in all the SCSEP surveys. All of the scores for Question 8 are significantly and substantially above the score from prior reports. NUL’s score in particular shows that participants are much more

likely to have the necessary computer skills than they were in prior years. Either participants are coming to the program with better computer skills, or grantees are helping participants to gain the necessary computer skills. Computer skills training is one of the great challenges for older workers, and grantees seem to be meeting that need more successfully than they had previously.

Question 8 is the one area in which employers rated NUL higher than AARP and Other Grantees.

Table 10

	Q8. How many of the older workers hired with the assistance of the Older Worker Program came with the basic computer skills they need?			
	Count	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
AARP	28	7.54	1	10
NUL	32	8.88	4	10
Other Grantees	46	7.46	1	10

#### D. Supportive Services

As has been true in previous years, very few employers indicate that older workers need supportive services. As seen in Table 11, only 15 of 168 employers (8.9%) indicated in Question 9 that they had an older worker with supportive service needs. As is evident in Table 11, the percentage of older workers needing supportive services is similar across the three groups.

Table 11

		Q9. Did any of the older workers you hired with the assistance of the Older Worker Program require supportive services, such as assistance with housing, transportation, or medical needs	
		Count	Percent
AARP	Yes	3	6.7%
	No	28	62.2%
	Don't know	14	31.1%
NUL	Yes	3	9.1%
	No	21	63.6%
	Don't know	9	27.3%
Other Grantees	Yes	9	12.0%
	No	56	74.7%
	Don't know	10	13.3%

The results in Table 12 are difficult to interpret. One problem is the inconsistency in the number of responses to Question 10 compared with the number of responses to Question 9. Only the 15 employers that answered Question 9 in the affirmative should have answered Question 10; however, 55 employers responded to Question 10. In any event, the number of responses is so small that the results must be viewed with extreme caution.

Table 12

<b>Q10. Would you say that the Older Worker Program provided the supportive services that the older workers needed?</b>			
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
None	3	7.7	7.7
Few	3	7.7	15.4
Some	13	33.3	48.7
Nearly all	20	51.3	100.0
Don't know	16		
Total	55	100.0	

Question 12 is a standard question that is widely used in satisfaction surveys and is highly correlated with overall satisfaction. The score is very high for AARP and Other Grantees. The much lower NUL score for NUL parallels its lower ACSI score.

Table 13

	<b>Q12. Would you recommend the services of the Older Worker Program to other employers?</b>			
	Count	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
AARP	44	9.27	1	10
NUL	40	7.02	4	10
Other Grantees	74	9.24	1	10
Total	158	8.69	1	10

#### E. The Use of Wage Subsidies to Encourage Employer Participation

The responses to Question 13 in Table 14 have been fairly consistent since the survey was first used. Seventy percent or more of employers over the years have agreed that they would be more inclined to use the program if older workers' wages were subsidized at the beginning of employment. The response from employers associated with NUL breaks from the norm. Rather than most NUL employers thinking subsidized employment would be a good idea, 61 percent said they would not be more inclined to use the program if it included subsidized employment. We would have to ask more detailed questions to know what is causing this low score. However, these results do suggest that a less than positive experience may lead to

employers being less interested in subsidized employment or that some of these employers simply would not use SCSEP under any conditions in the future.

Table 14

		Q 13. Would you be more inclined to use the Older Worker Program if the program paid the wages of the older workers for a number of weeks while they were gaining work experience?	
		Count	Percent
AARP	Yes	32	88.9%
	No	4	11.1%
NUL	Yes	11	39.3%
	No	17	60.7%
Other Grantees	Yes	43	82.7%
	No	9	17.3%

#### F. Employer Types

According to the guidelines for the administration of surveys to employers, sub-grantees are supposed to survey an employer only if it is not a host agency. Despite this restriction, each of the groups had employers that were also host agencies according to the records in SPARQ (AARP had 3; NUL had 5; Other Grantees had 30).

Nationwide, the percentage of private sector employers is below 50 percent. As seen in Table 15, both AARP and NUL significantly exceed that percentage. In contrast, Other Grantees as a group have a percentage of for-profit employers closer to the nationwide benchmark.

Table 15

		Count	Percent
AARP	For-profit	27	60.0%
	Government	1	2.2%
	Not-for-profit	17	37.8%
NUL	For-profit	34	79.1%
	Government	1	2.3%
	Not-for-profit	8	18.6%
Other Grantees	For-profit	28	35.0%
	Government	12	15.0%
	Not-for-profit	40	50.0%

Table 16 shows the ACSI scores for each grantee group by employer type. Although there appear to be differences in ACSI scores among these categories of employers, none of those differences are statistically significant. The counts are very small in several of the cells, limiting the practicality of even the testing. Allowing for the uncertainty caused by very small numbers, it appears that the three grantee groups serve all three employer types equally well.

Table 16

		ACSI	
		Count	Mean
AARP	For-profit	27	89.77
	Government	1	96.17
	Not-for-profit	16	83.25
NUL	For-profit	30	65.44
	Government	1	44.44
	Not-for-profit	6	82.94
Other Grantees	For-profit	25	84.83
	Government	12	92.39
	Not-for-profit	38	93.50

#### G. Questions Associated with ACSI Scores

An analysis of the data was conducted to determine if there were questions that form a pattern or cluster that relates to the ACSI. A factor analysis was used to identify questions in the survey that form groups. For these purposes, all available data were used in Tables 17 and 18 even if there was not a match in the UE records.

These clusters of questions can be used to determine if a particular aspect of the sub-grantees' interactions with employers is more important than others and can provide greater improvements in overall satisfaction. The factor analysis presented in Table 17 found the same factor structure as was found in prior analyses. The majority of the questions divided into two major clusters: Questions 4, 5, 7, and 11 are all associated with the actions of staff in informing and assisting employers; and the second cluster, Questions 6, 8 and 10, is associated with the services provided to the older workers who have been hired, particularly the program's delivery of skills training and supportive services.

To better understand the most efficient way to improve employer satisfaction, it is important to determine whether one of these clusters of questions is more closely associated with overall satisfaction as represented by the ACSI score than the other. This would help grantees seeking to improve their program to focus on the most important program elements. The strength of these associations is indicated by the correlations in Table 18. The closer to 1, the stronger the association of the question with overall satisfaction.

Table 17: Clustering<sup>2</sup> of Individual Questions

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2
Q4. The Older Worker Program staff gave me all the information I needed to understand the Older Worker Program.	.810	
Q5. Would you say that the Older Worker Program staff that made the job referral(s) had a good understanding of your business needs?	.759	
Q6. Would you say that the job applicant(s) referred by the Older Worker Program had the necessary skills for the job?		.811
Q7. The Older Worker Program staff stayed in touch with me after I hired the applicant to make sure that everything was going well.	.705	
Q8. How many of the older workers hired with the assistance of the Older Worker Program came with the basic computer skills they need?		.666
Q10. Would you say that the Older Worker Program provided the supportive services that the older workers needed?		.856
Q11. When I hired older workers with the assistance of the Older Worker Program, the Older Worker Program staff was helpful in resolving any problems I had.	.733	

*Rotated Component Matrix*

Table 18 shows that the relationship (correlation) between the staff service cluster (Cluster 1) and the ACSI is much stronger than the relationship between the participant skills cluster (Cluster 2) and the ACSI. The difference between the two is practically and statistically significant. Staff service explains about 26 percent of the variation in ACSI scores, while participant skills explain about 19 percent. The message for grantees is that they will maintain high employer satisfaction levels by continuing to focus on the way they interact with the employer and will get less “bang for the buck” by seeking to improve the scores for participant skills. However, since the scores for participant skills are substantially lower than the scores for staff services, there is an opportunity for improvement in that area as well.

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<sup>2</sup> The clustering process in Table 17 identifies those questions that are most closely associated with each other, indicating that the respondents were to some extent responding to the clustered questions as a group. This analysis produced only two components or clusters. The numbers in the last two columns can range from 0 to 1 and, like a correlation, the larger numbers can be interpreted as indicating stronger relationship to the factor and to each other. There are relationships for each question with both cluster factors. However, only the numbers that distinguish the cluster to which the question belongs are reported in Table 18 for simplicity and clarity.

Table 18

		Staff Service	Participant Skills/Qualities
ACSI	Pearson Correlation	.615**	.296**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	327	335

## H. Summary

AARP and NUL are the two groups with sufficient data for survey analyses as individual grantees. The remainder of the surveys for the 17 grantees with matched survey returns are combined into an Other Grantee group. AARP’s and Other Grantees’ ACSI scores and scores on the service questions are similar and generally high. Their scores on Question 12, “would recommend,” are also high. In contrast NUL’s scores are significantly lower than those of both other groups. In terms of computer skills, employers rated NUL’s participants as having more of the necessary skills than did employers rating AARP and the Other Grantees; however, all three groups were rated at the same level regarding participants’ overall skills for the job.

From a national SCSEP perspective, the employer survey continues to provide insight for grantees about an important aspect of their services. As indicated in the factor analyses, all grantees could learn much from the surveys if they were administered and used more consistently. In particular, the focus on service to the customer is essential. In addition, while variation in the skills and qualities of participants is of secondary importance, it is not inconsequential. The new survey that is being used as of March, 2016, is designed to dig deeper into some of the questions raised by the data in this report.