



# **MRC 2014 Consumer Satisfaction Survey Summary Report**

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**Presented to the Massachusetts State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)**

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**MRC Research, Development, and Performance Management**

**June 9, 2015**

## KEY FINDINGS AND RESULTS

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The 2014 MRC consumer satisfaction survey was the first to be implemented completely online. There were 319 responses out of a total of 1,687 survey recipients, achieving a response rate of 19% and strong statistical validity. The relatively high response demonstrates the viability of conducting an all-online satisfaction survey using email addresses. In addition, new survey questions yielded valuable data on consumer outcomes.

- A large majority of MRC consumers, 84%, were satisfied with MRC services overall. About 49% (very close to half) were very satisfied.
- About 80% of respondents would encourage others with disabilities to go to the MRC for training or employment services.
- About 83% of respondents were satisfied that MRC services assisted them in becoming more independent (44% were very satisfied, 27% were satisfied, and 12% somewhat satisfied).
- 71% of respondents (224 individuals) reported that they had a job.
- 88% of respondents with a job were satisfied with their job (38% were very satisfied).
- About 84% of respondents were satisfied that their job matched the goals developed in their MRC employment plan (38% were very satisfied in this regard).
- A majority of respondents with jobs (38%) work more than 35 hours per week. The next largest group with jobs (14.5%) work 16-20 hours per week.
- The majority of respondents with jobs earn between \$12 and \$20 per hour. (27% earn \$12 to \$14 an hour, 23% earn \$9 to \$11 an hour, and 20% earn \$15 to \$20 an hour.)
- 83% of respondents were satisfied with the ability of the MRC to identify their interests, strengths, and employment goals (40% of respondents were very satisfied in this regard).
- Overall, 82.5% were satisfied with the employment plan that they developed with their MRC counselor (42% were very satisfied, 24% were satisfied, and 15.5% were somewhat satisfied with their employment plan.)
- Overall, 82.5% were satisfied with their level of participation in their employment plan (40.5% were very satisfied, 27.5% satisfied, and 14.5% somewhat satisfied).
- A majority of respondents were very satisfied with the kinds of job leads they received through the MRC. Overall, about 70% of respondents were satisfied with their job leads.
- A majority of respondents (67%) were very satisfied with the number of job interviews they received through the MRC.
- About 79% of survey respondents were satisfied with the promptness of services at the MRC.

## BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

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The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's (MRC) Research, Development, and Performance Management Department works with the Consumer Satisfaction Committee of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to implement the annual Consumer Satisfaction Survey and survey report. The Consumer Satisfaction Committee is a standing committee of the SRC that meets regularly to monitor the mandated Consumer Satisfaction Survey. Results and preliminary drafts of this survey report were shared and discussed with the Consumer Satisfaction Committee.

The annual Consumer Satisfaction Survey measures consumer satisfaction with the MRC's VR programs and services, supports the quality improvement and evaluation activities of the MRC, and makes up part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) process. The survey is intended for all MRC consumers whose cases were closed in "Status 26" or "Status 28" in the prior federal fiscal year (between October 1<sup>st</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup>). Status 26 consumers are those who are successfully closed after their Individualized Plan for Employment goals are achieved. Status 28 consumers are those who are unsuccessfully closed after receiving VR services.

In 2014, the MRC Research, Development, and Performance Management Department enacted key changes to the survey in consultation with the Consumer Satisfaction Committee of the SRC. The changes included: implementing 2014 survey as an all-online survey; introducing new survey questions measuring the employment status, job satisfaction, work hours, and wages of recently closed consumers; and rewording and reordering some survey questions to increase their clarity and effectiveness.

The total number of consumers closed in Status 26 or 28 in fiscal year 2014 period was 7,647. The number of these with known email addresses was 1,842. Out of the 1,842, there were 155 undeliverable email addresses. The final sample size was 1,687. A survey announcement was emailed to the 1,687 individuals in November, and four reminders were sent between November and February. The survey closed on February 25<sup>th</sup>.

There were a total of 319 survey responses, achieving a response rate of 19% and statistical validity (at a confidence level of 95% with a 5% margin of error, using a 70:30 distribution split). These results exceed the 2013 results in both response rate and satisfaction rate. Along with the use of mailed surveys, the 2013 survey was sent to 1,277 closed cases with valid email addresses. In 2013, there were 159 online responses (a response rate of 12%).

The 2014 survey responses were exported for statistical analysis. Data from the MRC electronic management information system (MRCIS) was linked to survey responses to

explore demographic correlation. Consumer comments to open-ended questions were analyzed using qualitative methods. Common themes were coded and categorized according to theme and frequency. The Research, Development, and Performance Management Department refers any survey respondents who express serious problems or concerns through the consumer satisfaction survey to the MRC Ombudsman's office. No such instances arose in the 2014 survey.

A limitation of the 2014 Consumer Satisfaction Survey methodology was that drawing a sample comprised only of consumers with email addresses could have resulted in a sample that did not accurately represent the full population of Status 26 and 28 closed cases, constituting a coverage error. However, the final sample of 1,687 individuals were not notably different in age, race, gender, or level of education from previous years' survey samples, when samples were drawn randomly and data was collected entirely or primarily by mail. As in previous years, the 2014 respondents were slightly older and slightly more educated than the overall population of closed cases. The slight difference between the 2014 survey respondents and the total population of 2014 closed cases would very likely persist regardless of what sampling approach was used. That is, survey respondents would continue to be slightly older and slightly better educated than the overall population.

The benefits of increased efficiency, cost savings, and of meeting consumers' growing desire for more electronic forms of communication outweigh the stated limitations. It is also reasonable to expect that the number of MRC VR consumers with recorded email addresses will continue to grow across all demographics, reducing any potential coverage error over time. The general makeup of the 2014 survey respondents is discussed below.

## **DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF 2014 SATISFACTION SURVEY RESPONDENTS**

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The following itemizes key demographic information comparing respondents to the 2014 satisfaction survey to the population from which they were sampled.

### **Gender:**

There were 47% men and 53% women among respondents, a rough inverse of the figures for the population of MRC closed cases in FY 2014 (54.7% male and 45.3% female).

### **Race/Ethnicity:**

With regard to race/ethnicity, the percentage of Whites was very slightly higher among respondents (84%) than among the population of FY 2014 closed cases (82.3%). There were somewhat fewer African Americans (13.6% vs. 14.7%) and Hispanics (7.3% vs. 10%) among respondents than the population. Asian/Pacific Islanders made up 3.5% of all MRC VR closures, and 2.5% of all survey respondents in FY 2014.

**Age:**

As in previous years, respondents were slightly older than the population from which they were sampled. The following presents information regarding age demographics:

- The largest group of respondents was in the 41-50 age range (27.5%) followed by the 51-60 age range (22.5). There were notably more 41-50 year old respondents (27.5%) compared to all FY 2014 cases closed in Status 26 or 28 (20%).
- There were more respondents over 50 (33%) than the overall population (25%).
- There were fewer respondents in the 23-30 age range (17.5%) compared to the FY 2014 population of closed cases (24%).
- The 31-40 age range was a closer match; there were 53 respondents, or 17%, in this range and there were 16% of the total group of MRC cases closed in Status 26 or 28.

**Education:**

As in previous years, survey respondents were slightly more educated than the population from which they were sampled. A majority of respondents had an Associates' degree/certificate or a Bachelor's degree (51% compared to about 38% in the population).

**Disability:**

There were few differences with type of disability between respondents and the population from which they were drawn, with some exceptions; there were many more respondents with hearing/communication disabilities (18%, vs. 8.5%) and there were more respondents with Mobility/Orthopedic disabilities than the population of cases closed in Status 26 or 28 (16% vs. 10.3%). There were less respondents with cognitive disabilities in all the FY 2014 cases closed in Status 26 or 28 (16% vs. 25%).

**Work Hours and Wages:**

The 2014 satisfaction survey was the first to ask respondents about their employment outcomes (job status, wages, and work hours). With regard to hours worked per week and hourly wages, survey respondents essentially matched the population of MRC closed cases. A large majority of respondents with jobs (38%, the largest group by far) responded that they work 35 hour or more, followed by 16-20 hours by week (14.5%). In addition, 70% of respondents, or 143 individuals, earn between \$11 and \$20 an hour, with the majority earning \$12 to \$14 an hour. By comparison, the population of all MRC VR closed cases in FY 2014 had an average work week of 26.9 hours, and average hourly wages of \$12.69.

**Status at Closure:**

The percentage of 2014 survey respondents who were closed in Status 26 was 74%, a great majority, while 26% were closed in Status 28. By comparison, among the population of all MRC closed cases in FFY 2014, Status 26 cases accounted for 63.3% of closed cases while

Status 28 accounted for 36.7%. As in previous years, it is reasonable to receive more survey responses from those closed in Status 26 vs those closed in Status 28.

**MRC Area Offices:**

With regard to the distribution of responses from the MRC area offices, there were between 2 and 44 respondents from each of the offices (which vary greatly in the number of consumers served depending on catchment area). The largest number of responses came from area offices in relatively dense areas, such as Downtown Boston (44), Somerville (32), and Worcester (26). The offices with the least number of responses were Fall River (2), Milford (3), Fitchburg (3), and Sturbridge (4).

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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1. The MRC should continue to work to make sure all new and existing consumers are given access to the MRC Consumer Handbook, to increase consistency and uniformity of VR services across area offices and providers as well as to ensure that consumers are made aware of all services available to them. The MRC will continue to track consumer awareness of the handbook through the annual Consumer Satisfaction Survey.
2. The MRC should work to improve the quality and number of job interviews and job leads for MRC VR consumers. Though satisfaction with these services was moderately high (in the 60% to 70% range), improvements can be made.
3. The MRC should continue to work to measure and analyze consumer outcomes beyond the current 90 day case closure timeframe, to determine longer term outcomes regarding job status, work hours, wages, and job satisfaction for MRC VR consumers.
4. Following SRC recommendations and annual Needs Assessment findings that indicate a growing preference for more electronic forms of communication from consumers, the MRC should continue to work to increase the number of recorded consumer email addresses, in order to facilitate future online surveys as well as general communication with consumers.