

Our Clients Speak

Results from the Social and Health Services Client Survey



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2025

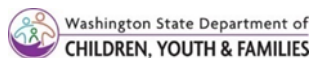
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Washington State
Health Care Authority



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES



Our Clients Speak: Results from the 2025 Social and Health Services Client Survey

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August 2025

Abstract

The biennial Client Survey shares the experiences of Washingtonians who use social and health services in the state. The results highlight where services are strong and where customer service can be improved.

Between October 2024 and May 2025, the Research and Data Analysis Division of the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) conducted 1,167 telephone interviews with randomly selected clients who received services from at least one of ten programs between May 2023 and April 2024. The programs are in DSHS (Aging and Long-Term Support, Division of Child Support, Community Services Division, Developmental Disabilities, and Vocational Rehabilitation), Health Care Authority (Apple Health/Medicaid, Mental Health Services, Substance Use Disorder Treatment Services), and Department of Children, Youth, and Families (Child Welfare Services).

Results show that clients continue to be satisfied with program services and to say that programs are helpful for them and their families. Compared to 2023, clients are significantly more satisfied with phone access to staff, even as this also remains an area for ongoing improvement. On all other questions, results were stable, and there were no significant declines in satisfaction.

In their comments, clients express appreciation for compassionate staff and gratitude for the services they receive. They also mention that program resources don't always keep up with growing needs and that navigating the system can be challenging.

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2025 Client Survey Report



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Our Clients Speak

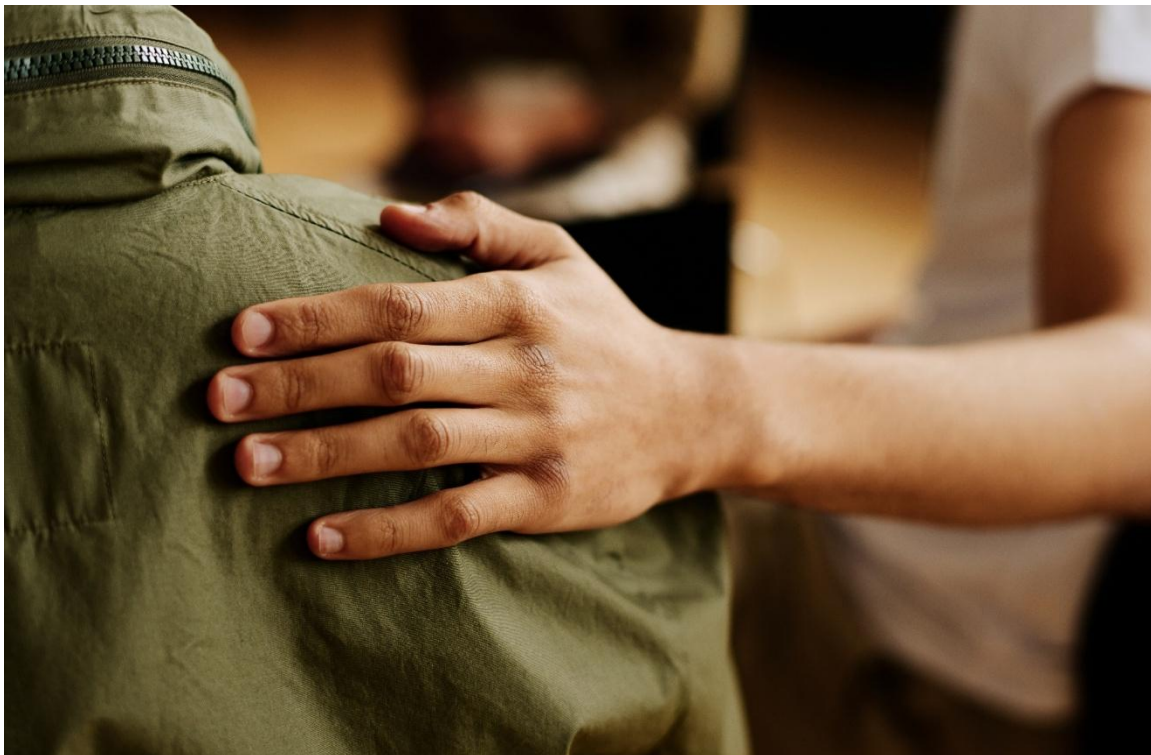
The Client Survey is a voice for Washington's social and health services clients.

“ I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO SURVIVE WITHOUT THEM. AFTER I GOT BACK ON MY FEET, THEY HAVE HELPED ME MAINTAIN MY WELLNESS. ”

Washington's social and health services programs partner with Washingtonians who need food assistance, financial aid, medical care, and other services. The biannual Client Survey helps us learn about their experiences, highlighting where services are strong and where customer service can be improved.

From October 2024 to May 2025, the Research and Data Analysis Division of the Department of Social and Health Services conducted 1,167 interviews with a representative sample of social and health services clients in the State of Washington. The survey consisted of standardized and open-ended questions about clients' satisfaction with the programs they interacted with over the past two years

Results show that clients continue to be satisfied with program services and to say that programs are helpful for them and their families. Compared to 2023, clients are significantly more satisfied with phone access to staff, even as this also remains an area for ongoing improvement. On all other questions, results were stable, and there were no significant declines in satisfaction. In their comments, clients express gratitude for staff and programs, while also asking for more staff and resources to better support their needs.



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Successes

Most clients continue to be highly satisfied with the quality and helpfulness of social and health services programs. **More than 9 of 10 clients (93%) said that services help them and their families and more than 8 of 10 clients (86%) said they are satisfied with their program services.** This is similar to results in 2023.

Over half of the client comments (55%, 605 comments) praised the helpfulness and quality of service programs. Clients appreciate the many ways social and health services help them and their families during challenging times.

“
**THEY ARE VERY
COMPASSIONATE AND
CARING. THEY LISTEN
AND GIVE THE RIGHT
INFORMATION.**
”

Clients also continue to be happy with staff interactions. Similar to 2023, more than 9 of 10 clients said staff treat them with courtesy and respect (91%) and listen to what they have to say (91%). In addition, 88% of clients said that staff explain things clearly. Over half (54%) of the comments about staff were positive, highlighting staff compassion, understanding, and helpfulness.

Though access to staff is an ongoing challenge, client satisfaction increased on these measures. About two-thirds of social and health services clients (67%) were satisfied with the ease of reaching a live person, up 8 points compared to 2023. In addition, the percentage of clients who said that staff returned their calls within 48 hours rose 5 points to 78%. Both of these changes are statistically significant.

Washington continues to take steps to develop integrated processes to improve client experiences with social and health services programs. **About 8 of 10 clients (81%) said that their services work well together and 7 of 10 (73%) said that staff from different programs work together as a team to get them the help they need.** Results in 2023 were similar.

Long-term trends show continued improvement in client experiences in social and health services programs. On 9 of 15 questions, clients in 2025 are significantly more satisfied than they were in 2015. No questions had significant declines in satisfaction over this same period.

Significant changes in percentage of “Yes” and “Strong Yes” responses, 2025 vs. 2015



Opportunities to Improve

Although clients are generally satisfied with services and find the programs helpful for them and their families, there are also areas where customer service and the client experience can be improved.

Less than two-thirds of clients (64%) say that they know what services are available for them and their families. This is consistently one of the lower scoring questions on the survey. Though over 8 of 10 clients (82%) say that it is easy to get information about the programs they are a part of, they are less aware of other services that may be supportive for them. In their comments, clients suggested public outreach and partnering with schools and medical providers so that all Washingtonians are aware of programs that may help them and their families.

“
**THEY NEED TO GET THE
WORD OUT ABOUT THEIR
SERVICES. MAYBE BY
INFORMING MEDICAL
PROVIDERS AND TEACHERS.**
”

Fewer than 7 of 10 clients (67%) said that they helped make plans and set goals about services. Though this may not be a program priority for all services, ensuring that clients are appropriately involved and respected as program partners is key to customer satisfaction. This question is down 3 points from 2023 and down 11 points from a recent high of 78% in 2019.

“
**THEY NEED MORE STAFF.
THEY MUST BE
OVERWHELMED. I THINK
EVERYTHING IS RELATED
TO THAT. THEY DON'T
GET BACK TO ME.**
”

Like in previous years, clients often have a hard time reaching staff. Though client satisfaction in this area has improved since 2023, at 67% positive, ease of reaching a live person is still among the lowest scoring questions on the survey. In addition, over 140 comments (13% of all comments made) mentioned how difficult it can be to contact someone to speak with. They mention long wait times on the phone and in offices and lack of responsiveness to email and voicemail messages. They also mention long wait lists for providers in some areas. This is a consistent challenge, but one that is key to helping clients feel valued as they navigate these complex systems.

Clients continue to identify opportunities for process improvement in their comments. Among clients who made comments, 27% described processes they would like to see improved. Common requests included more staffing to manage high caseloads, streamlined and more timely application processes, and better coordination among programs.

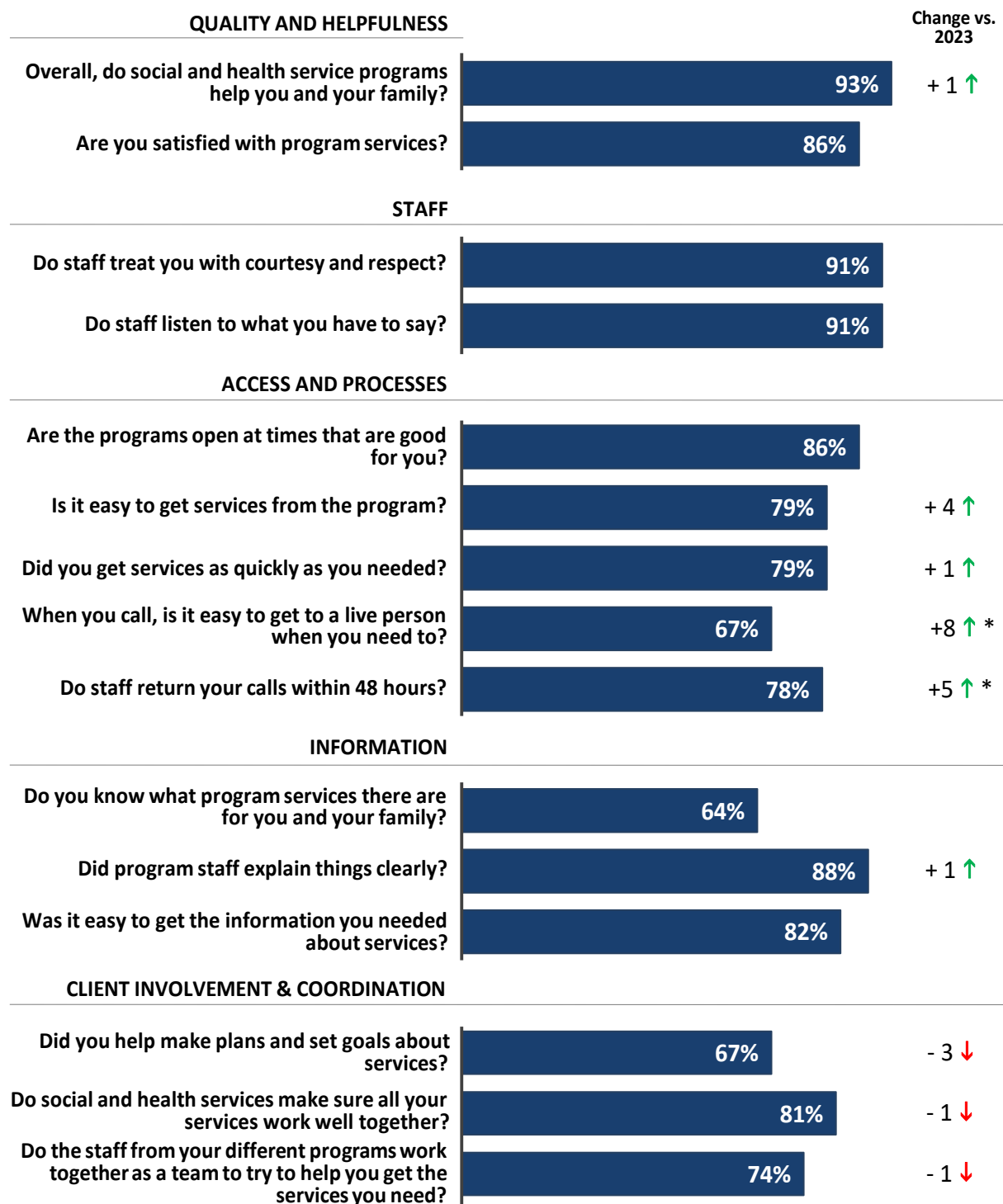
A small but important number of clients reported unfair treatment. One of 20 clients (5%, n=63) said they were treated unfairly due to race, culture, age, gender, sexual identity, or disabilities. Disability and race/culture were cited most frequently as the reason for unfair treatment. Perceptions of unfair treatment have a negative effect on the client experience: clients who felt they had been treated unfairly were significantly less satisfied on the standard questions.

“
**TRYING TO GET SERVICES
FOR A DEAF PERSON IS
HARD. THE INTERPRETERS
DON'T ALWAYS HAVE
EQUIPMENT THAT
WORKS WELL.**
”

Results: Client Satisfaction

2025 Client Survey Satisfaction Rates: Positive Responses¹ to the Standard Questions

All Social and Health Services Clients (DSHS, HCA, DCYF) • Weighted Percentages • Unweighted N = 1,167



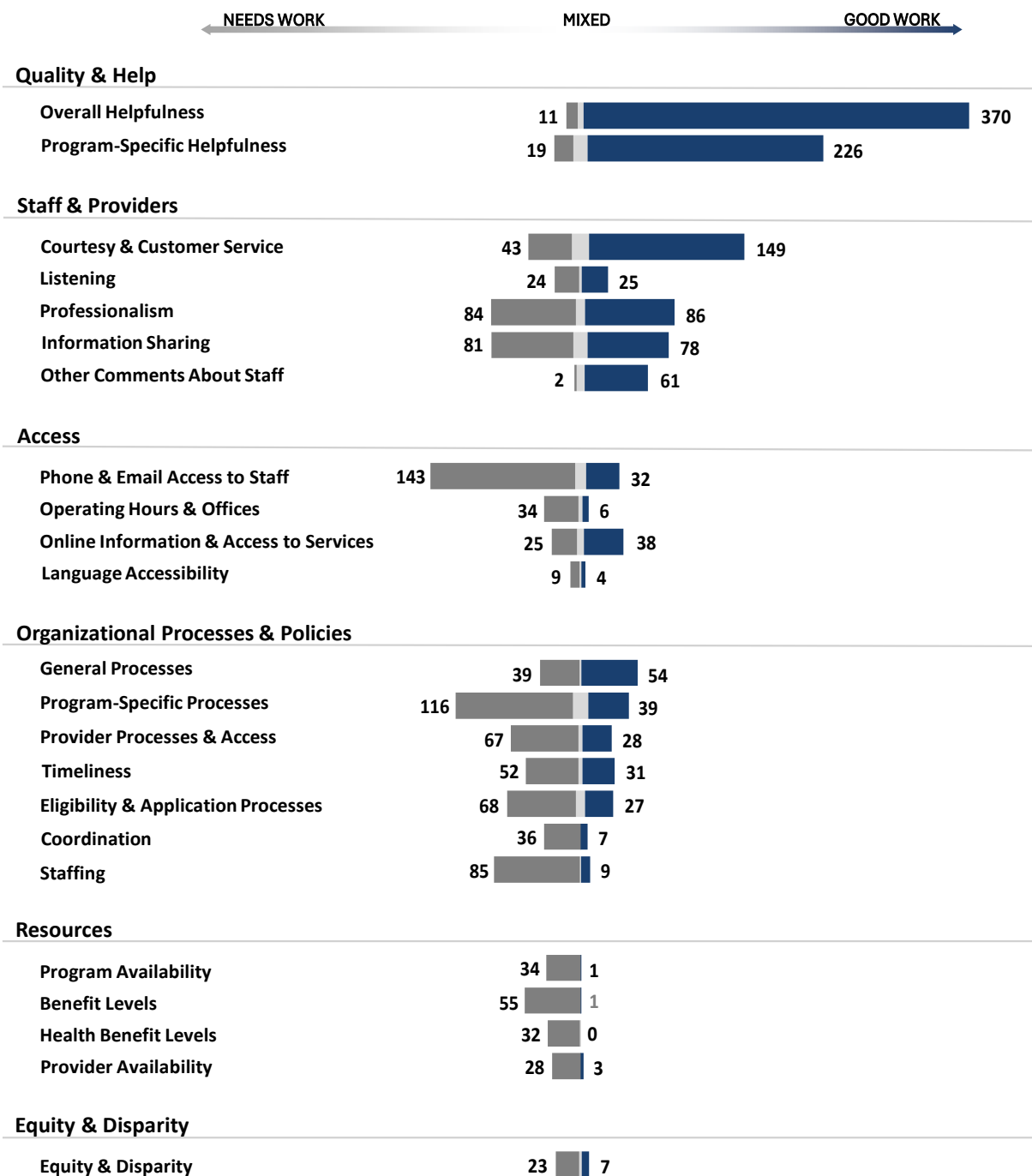
¹ Percent responding "Strong Yes" or "Yes"

* Change is significant at $p < .05$.

Results: Comment Themes

Number of Comments by Topic: Responses to the Open-Ended Questions¹

All Social and Health Services Clients (DSHS, HCA, DCYF) • Unweighted Number of Comments



¹ RDA staff coded each comment by theme(s) and sentiment. The question prompts were, “What do you like best about dealing with social and health services?”; “What is one thing social and health services can do to improve services?”; and “Do you have any additional comments or questions about social and health services agencies in the State of Washington?”

703 of the 1,107 clients who made comments (64%) mentioned the overall quality of services: 86% of those comments were positive, 8% were negative, and 6% had mixed sentiment.

KEY FINDINGS

Client comments about the overall quality and helpfulness of services were overwhelmingly positive.

- Many clients are happy to know their needs will be met through the services provided.
- Clients often expressed appreciation for the specific programs they interacted with, sharing experiences of how these programs provided much needed support and assistance.
- Negative comments tend to be general, often stating that the program did not help or needs to improve.

“
**IT IS OUTSTANDING THAT
THEY ARE HELPING PEOPLE
IN NEED.**
”

Our clients speak . . .

Clients are grateful that assistance is available.

“They do good things for the community.”
 “Very helpful for my family. We wouldn’t survive without it.”
 “They help the kids a lot and I appreciate that.”
 “I like that they have these services for people. They are open to diversity and don’t exclude anyone.”
 “They helped me a lot when I was struggling. I am where I am today because of the good help I received.”
 “They provide care for those who can’t afford it.”
 “Provides me with peace of mind and security.”
 “They just give me the best services and resources for my predicament.”
 “I’m very happy. We have always been taken care of.”
 “What they did for my parents is so helpful and I really appreciate all of the services.”
 “They’ve helped my uncle with a ton of things. I think the programs are collectively trying to find ways to better people’s lives.”
 “They provide help and support when needed which is hard to find on your own.”
 “Continue to be awesome!”

Many share how specific programs have helped them.

“The summer food care we got helped my kid out a lot.”
 “I’m a big fan of the amount of coverage that I get with Apple Health, and it has improved my quality of life. My inhalers are expensive. The coverage is really helping me.”
 “They helped me with my resume and tuition help and sometimes gas. They helped me to actually graduate from technical school.”

“They are helping me try to get another job. I am thankful that DVR is helping me.”
 “Once we got him into an adult home things have been fine. Aging and Adult services does a good job.”
 “The financial and medical worked very well to help me stay on treatment and be able to function. I am now in housing and off drugs.”
 “I think they are amazing on how they help me with child support.”
 “We get adoption support which is helpful.”
 “I have had several surgeries, and I am grateful to have good medical care without cost to me.”
 “DDA has taught me a lot and has helped me help my daughter.”
 “Substance abuse counseling has helped me so much.”
 “They make sure my kids get the child support that they are entitled to and deserve.”
 “I have been clean for a year and a half because of the help I’ve received.”

Some are dissatisfied with the level of service or with specific programs.

“They are there and are doing what they can, but it isn’t enough.”
 “They could benefit by expanding services. I have gotten the help I need, but I know of others who have not.”
 “I’ve never liked anything about interacting with DCS.”
 “We need help with Apple Health, sometimes the medicine the doctor prescribes isn’t covered.”
 “Improve the program for DVR.”
 “I was trying to get help with employment and housing, and I did not get it. They didn’t give me any help.”

482 of the 1,107 clients who made comments (44%) mentioned interactions with staff and providers: 54% of those comments were positive, 29% were negative, and 17% had mixed sentiment.

KEY FINDINGS

Client comments about staff and providers were mostly positive, but some also shared experiences where treatment by staff could be improved.

- Many clients spoke positively about how they were treated by staff and providers, often saying they felt cared for. Some shared negative experiences where they felt dismissed by staff.
- Clients were more evenly divided when it came to staff listening, professionalism, and information sharing, describing approximately equal positive and negative experiences.
- Other comments included general compliments for staff whom the clients worked with. Only a few people mentioned negative interactions.

“
**THE PEOPLE WHO WORK
 FOR THE STATE ACTUALLY
 HELP ME GET THE
 SERVICES I NEED.**
 ”

Our clients speak . . .

Staff courtesy and customer service are important to clients' experience with programs.

- “The amount of overall kindness and adaptability of workers to work with people that have disabilities is really good.”
- “Everyone wants to help. They're pretty engaged in taking care of my sister.”
- “I can't find a doctor who seems like they care about my problems.”
- “They are courteous, listen to the problem before they present their answers. They treat everyone really well.”
- “I feel very cared for. I feel that I am worthy of receiving this service.”
- “A lot of them seem in a hurry and like they don't care.”
- “The staff understand the situation and are supportive.”
- “I think DSHS needs more good people because it depends on who you talk to whether you are treated nicely.”
- “They should be more patient because sometimes we have a hard time expressing ourselves.”
- “My representative is great. She has always shown empathy and explained things very well. I'm grateful for her professionalism and understanding. Especially in a world where we need more empathy.”

Listening, professionalism, and information sharing are also crucial to customer experience.

- “I get the feeling that I'm being listened to and the person helping is genuinely interested in helping me.”
- “The people are very kind and if you ask a question they will find an answer for you.”
- “People don't listen to me or understand my disability.”

- “They always ask me how I'm doing and check on me.”
- “What I like best is the approachable nature of the people in DVR. They will sit down with me and discuss my needs and tailor plans to those needs.”
- “I think the people are overworked. They aren't very understanding, and they don't listen or acknowledge.”
- “Allow staff more time to discuss resources and services. Often times seems like it is crisis mode.”
- “People listen and are willing to work with me.”
- “They do respond quickly, when I have questions they give me the information I need. If I don't understand they will help me understand what is going on.”
- “If there is some other things I can apply for to help me, I would like to know about it. I would like to know if there is other services that I can use.”
- “We receive text messages all the time keeping us up to date.”
- “The local staff are great, but people who work at headquarters have given us bad information several times.”
- “My support officer was very attentive and always got back to me. He would send me emails with direction of what needs to be done, and it was very clear and helpful.”

Some clients simply said they were happy with staff who helped them.

- “The workers are fantastic.”
- “We have had really good luck with the caseworkers we have had and that is very important.”
- “I love my mental health and family doctors.”
- “The social worker was a good advocate.”
- “I just love my caseworker.”

268 of the 1,107 clients who made comments (24%) mentioned their ability to access staff and providers: 22% of those comments were positive, 62% were negative, and 16% had mixed sentiment.

KEY FINDINGS

Most client comments about access to staff and services describe areas for improvement, with some giving actionable suggestions.

- Clients find it difficult to reach staff, noting long hold times and lack of response to calls. Some suggested extending operating hours to accommodate different work schedules.
- Some clients commended the ease and convenience of online systems that allowed them to quickly find information or complete tasks. However, others found the websites difficult to navigate.
- A small group of clients talked about the availability of interpreters to assist those whose first language is not English.

“
**PEOPLE CAN'T WAIT IN THE
OFFICE FOR HOURS, OR BE
ON HOLD FOR HOURS.
THEY NEED TO EXTEND THE
HOURS OR HIRE MORE
STAFF.**
”

Our clients speak . . .

Access to staff via phone or email is often challenging for clients.

“Return phone calls a little faster. When you're trying to first sign up you have questions, it was so hard to get in touch with someone.”

“One time when they called me for an interview the system told me to touch a number, but I'm blind so I couldn't see where to touch and I got disconnected.”

“The biggest problem is getting ahold of someone on the phone. One time I called, and I was on hold for over 4 hours. I didn't want to hang up either because when you call the voice tells you the calls are answered in order as they come in, so you're afraid to lose your spot if you hang up.”

“If we need something, it's only a telephone call away.”

“When I called my SEO [Support Enforcement Officer] I maybe got ahold of her once or twice and never get a call back.”

“[I want] more readily available people to talk to instead of automated.”

“Sometimes I'm on hold and then it hangs up on me and I have to call back.”

“I love that I can send an email, and he is always responsive within a couple of hours and answers any questions I have.”

Some also mentioned challenges with physical offices and operating hours.

“Not enough privacy when in the office.”

“Change the hours to help people that work after 5:00.”

“I like that they have a screen up in the office that tells you your approximate wait time.”

“Have Saturday times available for service like the phone call service.”

“I wish they would be open on the weekends.”

Many clients appreciate online access, but others struggled with this format.

“The website to pay child support is user friendly and very functional.”

“It is very hard to get through on the phone. That's why I like online services.”

“I am 30 years old, and I am used to technology and have been to college. If I am struggling with the website for food services, then I know some older people are really having trouble.”

“I have tried setting up online payment and I have never been able to get it to work since the system does not recognize my bank's routing number.”

“I like the ability to scan the documents and email them instead of having to go to an office, that's easy.”

“State websites are not user friendly.”

“I think the website is my favorite because it's easy for me to find where I can get services and I appreciate that.”

“I felt like they could do better with online access. Sometimes it is a bit hard.”

A few clients talked about language accessibility.

“Language barriers make it difficult to understand sometimes.”

“I like that they continue to help us with the interpreter like they have been doing.”

“They need to have translators more available. I don't speak Russian and often times they can't find an Ukrainian translator.”

511 of the 1,107 clients who made comments (46%) mentioned organizational processes and policies: 24% of those comments were positive, 59% were negative, and 17% had mixed sentiment.

KEY FINDINGS

Clients took the opportunity to share their ideas for improvements in organizational processes and policies.

- Clients appreciate easy access to services but also pointed out difficulties in the application process or eligibility rules.
- Timeliness of services, coordination between programs, and staffing policies were common themes in clients' experiences with navigating services.
- Many clients shared challenging experiences with specific program processes and gave suggestions for improvement.

SERVICES ARE CLIENT DRIVEN, SO THE FOCUS IS ON THE CLIENT'S NEEDS RATHER THAN THE NEEDS OF THE AGENCY.

Our clients speak . . .

Clients recognize the support programs provide and had suggestions to improve eligibility processes.

"It has been wonderful experience with us because the benefits have been so beneficial to our son and made easy to access."

"I appreciate the coverage and the cost for people who can't always afford it."

"Just make the applications a little easier. They are repetitive and it would be easier if they sent something showing what you said last time for you to scan through and make a note of changes."

"I believe the yearly assessments are important as they clear things out and getting everything on paper so if there's changes, they have a history for the next person."

"I think they raised the amount of income a person is allowed to make and that was helpful."

"They go based off of income before taxes. I think it should be based on after taxes because that is what we survive on."

"I like that they do an assessment and have a specific plan that is individualized."

"Shouldn't have to recertify every three months for food stamps."

Clients also spoke about their experiences with provider policies and access.

"It was hard finding a provider when I needed dental care. I lived in Port Angeles and needed to go a long distance to get Molina support."

"Once you're established, it's easy to make appointments."

"I'm taking medications that I'm not supposed to stop taking, but I've run out because the doctor doesn't respond promptly to the pharmacy."

Timeliness of services is important to clients.

"When I needed help it didn't take more than a day to get what I needed."

"There are long wait times and that is hard for people needing services."

"It took me 2 years to get my services, and it was court ordered."

"They are pretty responsive to approve urgent medical or dental. Everything is done in a timely manner."

"It took six months to get a counselor when we moved from King County to Thurston County."

Some clients suggested better coordination and staffing policies would improve their experience.

"I think they could communicate better between the divisions."

"We had the same caseworker for several years, and the continuity of care services was great."

"More communication between programs so I don't have to repeat myself so much."

"They could pay their caseworkers more, and hire more staff, so the caseworkers could spend more time with the families."

"It seems like it depends on who you talk to as to what answer you get so, i.e. in different counties, so more consistency."

"Honestly it would be more staff. I think the staff is overworked. There is too much turnover in case managers."

"They need more help because they are shorthanded. This isn't their fault – they just need more staffing."

Many people commented on processes and policies specific to the programs they interacted with.

Aging and Long-Term Support (DSHS)

"I wish there were less delegations necessary to find specific caregiving personnel. I wish they didn't need nursing to do specific tasks."

"I like they always send letters with explanation about changes and what is new."

"Well, it would be good if social and health services could help me in a quicker way to find a place for my dad."

Developmental Disabilities (DSHS)

"DDA does the assessment which helps me know how I'm doing as a caregiver and keeps me on track."

"More support for parents when they are struggling with behavior issues. Better training for staff in using sign language and other alternative methods of communication."

"DDA just authorizes the services and where I have a problem is getting the services paid or finding a new person with CDWA. There is a disconnect which makes it difficult for the client."

Vocational Rehabilitation (DSHS)

"I think they have need for more community engagement when it comes to finding jobs. It doesn't seem like there is a lot out there."

"With DVR when I took a pause from school, they dropped me. When I was going to school, they said they would provide me with a laptop and they didn't so I had to borrow one."

Community Services Division (ESA-DSHS)

"Maybe if the card can be used for more stores where food is sold. It would also be helpful if people could use the food stamps for personal care items like soap."

"I like the fact that my food stamps come on the same day each month."

"They do a good job adjusting if you need more support. If I buy greens at the store and other healthy foods, I get a coupon for next time."

Child Support – Non-Custodial Parents (ESA-DSHS)

"Would like documentation from other parent about what the money is being used for."

"Court orders are on monthly basis, but people don't generally get paid on a monthly basis. The consequence for me is that I have to make an extra voluntary payment in order to be in compliance for tax benefit."

"I like that you can do an electronic payment online."

Child Support – Custodial Parents (ESA-DSHS)

"They are pretty consistent with the direct deposit, and monthly statements are pretty easy to read."

"They had an attorney available to me for problems with my child support."

"I don't believe the parent who receives support should be penalized by having to pay a yearly fee."

Apple Health (HCA)

"I wish they would combine the medical for all my children instead of making it separate for one and then the other two are together."

"I like Medicaid because it was easier to get treatment."

"Basic services to help me get better are not covered yet they will pay for things that are expensive like a caregiver instead of paying me to go to a gym to lose the weight and help myself. It's always a fight to get what I need. They would rather pay for expensive drugs than help me get well."

Substance Use Disorder Treatment Services (HCA)

"Location and convenience for treatment could be improved. They went by my zip code, and it was actually shorter to go to Lacey than Kelso."

"I also wish that after some years of getting clean UAs [urinalyses] that you could get more than a month's supply of your meds. After you've proven yourself and shown over time that you are working the program like you're supposed to."

Mental Health Services (HCA)

"Mental Health services are great. They come to my house."

"Just be more willing to deal with us using email and texting and have a portal like MyChart."

"I don't know how you'd improve this, but my son, you know he has such bad social anxiety that he can't talk on the phone or do anything really so there are times when you guys call and I get on the phone, but you want to speak to him."

Child Welfare Services (DCYF)

"The one thing that they almost have in common is they try to do the best for the child."

"The State could work better with the tribal system regardless of the tribes they come from. I felt he was left in the foster care system too long when there was a tribal family available."

"The visits from CPS can be stressful, I know they are required but can be very stressful."

146 of the 1,107 clients who made comments (13%) mentioned resources: 3% of those comments were positive, 96% were negative, and 1% had mixed sentiment.

KEY FINDINGS

Client comments about the overall availability of resources were mostly negative.

- Some clients gave ideas for new programs that could provide more opportunities, such as community involvement. Others noted that increased funding could improve services.
- Many clients described challenges with their current benefit levels.
- Clients appreciate medical coverage and health benefits and asked for expanded dental, mental health, and vision services. Additionally, some clients had difficulty finding a provider.

“
**MAKE SERVICES MORE
ACCESSIBLE AND HELPFUL
FOR INDIVIDUALS.**
”

Our clients speak . . .

Clients requested more programs and better funding.

- “Maybe they should hire some folks that are only for community involvement.”
- “Expand to be able to serve more people.”
- “More funding for the department would probably allow them to improve services.”
- “State funding so there is more to offer those in need.”
- “They should have legal resources available to refer non-custodial parents to who can't afford the expensive legal system.”
- “More community exposure. Maybe people that come around and take her out places.”

Many said they want an increase in benefit levels.

- “I have two kids, and I only get \$200 a month for food. It's very hard to work with. I pay so much in rent and other bills. I would like to try to have it reevaluated but I'm afraid they might bring me down lower.”
- “More caregiver hours.”
- “More resources for supporting caregivers.”
- “The biggest issue is how low the food benefits are. The economy is so bad, and food costs are just outrageous, the amount really doesn't go very far anymore.”
- “Give the chore service person more hours.”
- “It would be nice if other resources were available like detergent, toiletries, personal items.”
- “I only receive \$79 a month for 2 adults. My amount hasn't changed but food costs so much more than it used to.”
- “My food stamps keep going down and the cost of food keeps going up. I'm 82 and it helps to get the assistance.”

Others asked for more medical coverage or health benefits.

- “Wish more dental services were covered.”
- “Expand the dental health insurance and the eye benefits.”
- “Provide better dental care for those over 21.”
- “I think that mental health care access should be expanded. My Apple Health is very limited, and it would be beneficial to have it expanded to include counseling and general mental health.”
- “Mental health services for people with disabilities is terrible. He has a counselor that they are no longer going to pay for and he has been seeing this counselor for 10 years. The contracts are so little compensation that they can't continue.”
- “They don't provide enough services for adults with special needs. When they are children, everything is covered. I had to pay \$2,000 dollars to have my son sedated for x-rays. You have to pay too much out of pocket. There are so many disabled people who have horrible teeth because they need to put them out to do what they need to do.”
- “If we have to pay for prescriptions out of pocket we should be able to get paid back for that.”

Some clients are dissatisfied with provider availability.

- “I like that there are more providers now that contract with State services. It will help tremendously.”
- “There are a lot of places who don't accept state provided assistance for children any longer. It is an issue I run into quite a bit. They can have two-year waiting lists.”
- “More dental providers are needed!”
- “I did have a lot of trouble finding mental health services for my daughter.”

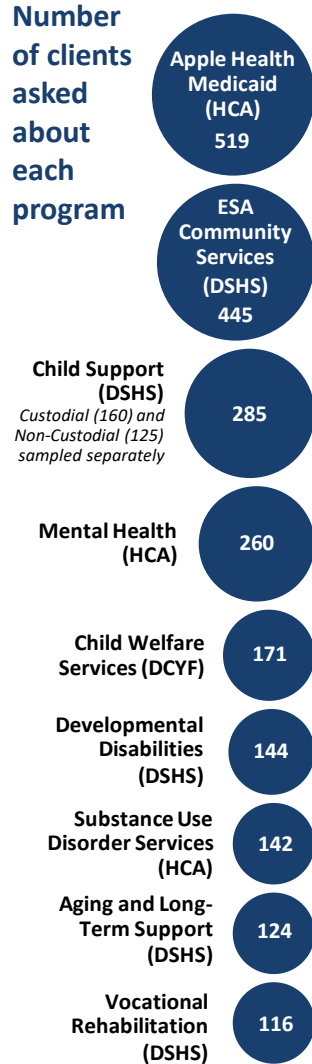
About the Respondents

At least 100 clients in each of nine major programs were represented in the completed survey. Survey participants from each program were randomly chosen from among clients who received services from that program between May 2023 and April 2024.¹ Though clients were sampled from a specific program, clients were asked separately about every social and health program from which they received services.

The figure below shows the number of respondents interviewed about each program. Because clients were asked about every social and health service they have used in the past two years, the total across programs exceeds the number of clients interviewed. About 83% of the 1,167 clients in the survey used one or both of the most widely utilized programs: Apple Health (Medicaid) and ESA Community Services.

The person who completed the survey was not always the client. In 363 cases (31%), the client selected for the survey was a child or youth (age 17 or under) or was otherwise unable to complete the survey. In these cases, a parent, guardian, caregiver, family member, or other representative who interacts with social and health service programs on behalf of the client was asked to complete the survey.

Number of clients asked about each program



Client Characteristics

The average client age was 39 years, but ranged from early childhood through late adulthood:

- 15% of the clients in the survey were children (under 18)
- 75% were working-age adults (18 to 64)
- 10% were older adults (65+)

More clients were female:

- 54% of the clients were female
- 46% were male
- 2 clients identified in another way (0.2 percent)

Clients were more likely to live on the west side of the state:

- 26% lived in DSHS Region 1, in Eastern Washington
- 36% lived in DSHS Region 2, in Northwestern Washington
- 34% lived in DSHS Region 3, in Southwestern Washington
- 4% lived out of state at the time of the interview

Clients were asked what racial and ethnic group(s) best describes them.

Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native	56	5%
Asian	66	6%
Black or African American	107	9%
Hispanic or Latino	214	18%
Middle Eastern or North African	12	1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	27	2%
White	758	65%
White, Non-Hispanic	661	57%
Other/Unknown	82	7%

Note: With the exception of White, Non-Hispanic, clients may be in more than one racial-ethnic group.

¹ Due to data availability, the service period for DVR clients was May 2023 through December 2023.

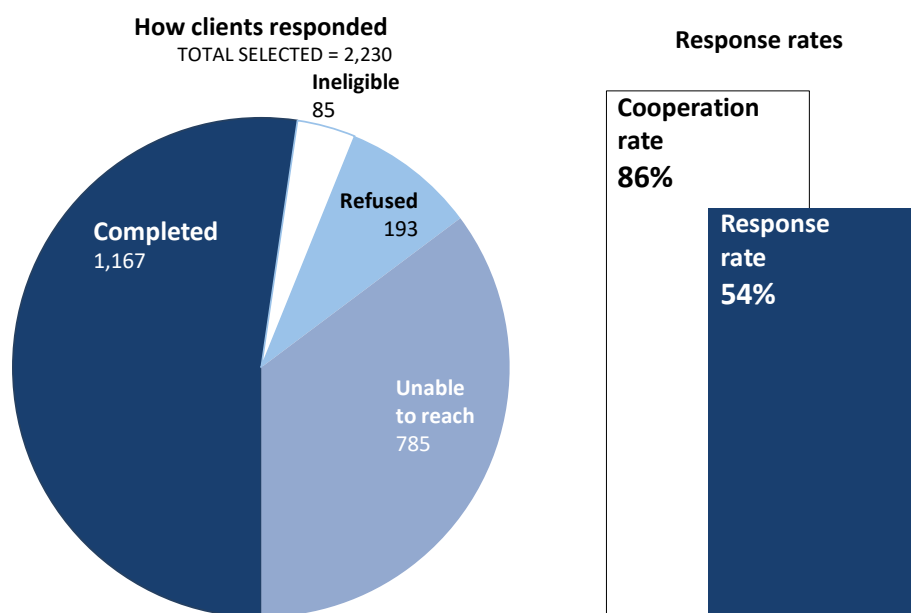
About the Survey

- The 2025 survey is the 14th in a series of biennial surveys initiated in 2001.
- Clients were randomly selected from Washington state social and health service programs and were asked about all social and health services they used. Responses are weighted so that they represent all social and health services clients in the state.
- 1,167 clients were interviewed between October 2024 and May 2025. 1,093 interviews were completed by telephone; 74 were completed online.
- The response rate was 56% of sampled clients. Of the clients who could be contacted, 86% completed the survey.
- Most programs covered in the survey were administered by the Department of Social and Health Services. Medical assistance, community-based mental health services and substance use disorder treatment services were provided by the Health Care Authority. Child welfare services were provided by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

Cooperation and Completion Rates

The response rate was 56% of sampled clients. Of the clients who could be contacted, 86% completed the survey. These response rates are lower than in recent years, but higher than industry standards and especially notable for a survey of social and health service clients.¹

The chart below shows the disposition of all clients selected for the survey. To meet the goal of 100 completed surveys for each of the sampled programs, 2,230 clients were randomly selected as the survey sample. Of those, 785 clients could not be reached, either because we did not have correct contact information or they did not pick up their phone. Of those who could be reached, 1,167 people completed the survey, 193 refused to complete the survey, and 85 were found to be ineligible.



¹ Surveyors employed a number of measures to increase response rates. Descriptions of methods used to increase response rates, and of how clients are deemed ineligible, can be found in the technical appendix.

Survey Responses

2025 Client Survey Satisfaction Rates: Distribution of Responses

All Social and Health Services Clients (DSHS, HCA, DCYF) • Weighted Percentages • Unweighted N = 1,167

	Strong NO	No	Neutral	Yes	Strong YES
QUALITY AND HELPFULNESS					
Overall, do social and health service programs help you and your family?	1%	3%	3%	59%	34%
Are you satisfied with program services?	2%	4%	9%	64%	22%
STAFF					
Do staff treat you with courtesy and respect?	1%	2%	6%	69%	22%
Do staff listen to what you have to say?	1%	2%	6%	75%	16%
ACCESS AND PROCESSES					
Are the programs open at times that are good for you?	1%	5%	8%	68%	18%
Is it easy to get services from the program?	2%	9%	10%	68%	11%
Did you get services as quickly as you needed?	2%	9%	9%	68%	12%
When you call, is it easy to get a live person when you need to?	7%	13%	13%	58%	9%
Do staff return your calls within 48 hours?	3%	9%	11%	68%	9%
INFORMATION					
Do you know what program services there are for you and your family?	1%	21%	14%	59%	5%
Did program staff explain things clearly?	1%	5%	6%	74%	15%
Was it easy to get the information you needed about services?	1%	6%	10%	72%	11%
CLIENT INVOLVEMENT					
Did you help make plans and set goals about services?	1%	21%	11%	59%	8%
COORDINATION¹					
Do social and health services make sure all your services work well together?	1%	6%	12%	73%	8%
Do the staff from your different social and health service programs work together as a team to try to help you get the services you need?	2%	13%	12%	63%	11%

¹ The coordination questions were asked only if the client was served by two or more programs (n=569).



2025 Social and Health Services
Client Survey
Our Clients Speak

