

Background and Purpose

The Department of Early Learning and Care's (DELIC) mission is to foster coordinated, culturally appropriate, and family-centered services that recognize and respect the needs of all children, families, and early learning and care professionals. Our vision is that children, families, early care and education professionals, and communities are supported and empowered to thrive. As a new state agency, launched July 1, 2023, DELIC is committed to developing and improving operational foundations to serve Oregonians efficiently and effectively.

DELIC's efforts to provide quality customer service are crucial to achieving our agency's mission and vision. Outlined in *Growing Oregon Together*, DELIC's five-year Strategic Plan, one goal is to develop and improve operational foundations to efficiently serve Oregonians. Data on customer satisfaction is critical to understanding DELIC's ability to serve Oregonians well. DELIC set a target of 75% of customers rating their satisfaction with DELIC customer service as "good" or "excellent", both overall and across the following domains: timeliness, accuracy, helpfulness, expertise, and availability of information. The target was set based on the previous year's Customer Service Survey results when DELIC was a part of the Oregon Department of Education.

By implementing a survey to collect information from DELIC customer bases, DELIC gains valuable insights about how well operational structures are functioning. DELIC may use this information as a key performance indicator for the agency, such that operational improvement projects can have their own specific performance measures, and when achieved, will have a positive impact on this customer service key result measure. Each year, DELIC will actively review the results of our Customer Service Survey and engage in continuous improvement activities to ensure our customer service is timely, helpful, accurate, demonstrates expertise, and provides necessary information to Oregonians.

Survey Implementation

In preparing DELIC's inaugural administration of the Customer Service Survey, the Customer Service Key Performance Measure (CS-KPM) project team was assembled to design, plan, and implement the survey. The CS-KPM project team included members from DELIC's quality assurance, research and evaluation, data and analytics, organizational development, and social equity teams. DELIC's Customer Service Survey was designed to both address requirements as a state agency and include the perspectives and priorities of DELIC staff. The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) requires all Oregon state agencies to include and report on a set of questions in their Customer Service Surveys. These questions comprised one section of DELIC's Customer Service Survey and covered six topics: timeliness, accuracy, helpfulness, availability of information, and overall service. The required questions used a four-point rating scale (Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor), as well as the answer option "don't know." For example, customers were asked, "How do you rate the timeliness of the services provided by DELIC?" The specific wording for all the required questions is shown in the survey instrument that can be found in Appendix A.

In addition to the questions required by DAS, the CS-KPM project team decided that additional questions specific to DELIC should be included in the survey. To inform the development of these additional questions, the project team conducted engagement sessions with agency staff. The staff engagement process and how it informed the development of additional survey questions is described in the [Staff Engagement](#) section of this report.

Additional questions included in the survey related to characteristics of customers and their relationship with DELIC. These questions ask customers about their accessibility and language access needs, based on direction from members of DELIC's Social Equity Office; geographic areas of

communities served; participation in DELC programs; organization type; and questions to identify if participants were child care providers, what type of program they worked in, and whether they interacted with DELC's Child Care Licensing Division (CCLD). Participants who interacted with CCLD received a separate set of questions about their experiences with CCLD staff; results for these questions are analyzed and described separately from the results of the overall survey and are not included in this report. Lastly, all participants were asked questions about their personal identities, including race, ethnicity, and gender identity. The race and ethnicity questions were based on the Race, Ethnicity, Language or Disability (REALD) questionnaire developed by the Oregon Health Authority (see: [Oregon Health Authority : REALD & SOGI : Equity and Inclusion Division : State of Oregon](#)).

The survey instrument went through an iterative review process, which included reducing the overall survey length. In addition to English, the survey was available to customers in Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Arabic, and Somali. The final survey instrument is included in Appendix A.

Staff engagement

To design a Customer Service Survey that aligned with DELC's Customer Service practices and needs, the CS-KPM project team facilitated discussions with DELC staff. Between February 28 and March 26, 2024, the CS-KPM project team held a total of 19 guided conversations with DELC staff to identify DELC's core customer bases and evaluate the meaning of good customer service for each team.

The Customer Service KPM project team facilitators used Jam Boards to gather information on the following engagement questions from each of guided conversations with DELC staff:

1. Who are the customer bases for your work?
2. What does good customer service look like for your team?
3. What would you like us to ask your customers about their customer service experiences?

The Customer Service KPM Survey Subcommittee analyzed and categorized the feedback from questions two and three to develop customer service themes from the internal engagement sessions. These themes were then used to develop survey questions in addition to the required DAS questions. The CS-KPM survey subcommittee identified 31 dimensions and 30 question topics, most of which were mapped back to the five dimensions of Customer Service included in DAS's required questions: timeliness, helpfulness, expertise, availability of information, and accuracy.

The most common customer service categories mentioned by DELC staff outside of the required dimensions were:

Communication (e.g., accessibility, transparency, clarity, setting clear expectations)

- Inviting In
- Conveying Courtesy and Respect
- Responsiveness
- Earning Trust
- Follow-through
- Providing Quality Service

After a review of potential additional questions, the final Customer Service Survey included six additional statements related to the commonly mentioned dimensions of customer service as identified by DELC staff that were not fully addressed by DAS's required questions. Two additional

open-ended questions were also included to allow customers to share what has gone well and what DELC can do better. The full text of the additional questions can be found in Appendix A.

Data Collection

The Customer Service Survey was fielded from August 1 to August 30, 2024. The survey was built in Microsoft Forms.

Customer bases

Through the staff engagement process, the project team developed a broad list of customer types, which were then themed into several key customer groups. Specifically, four high-level groups were identified: direct care providers, Tribal organizations, contracted external partners and regional service providers. Families with young children were also identified as key customers, but due to limitations in capacity for this inaugural survey and the large scale of the family customer group, the project team scoped the survey to include the other four groups, as they had the most direct contact with DELC in its first year as a state agency.

The project team then operationalized the high-level customer categories into specific business process-defined contact groups (e.g., Early Learning Hubs, research partners, Registered Family providers, etc.) and worked with relevant DELC offices to identify contact data sources for each of those groups. For each data source, the project team assessed whether there were any restrictions or concerns regarding the use of the contact data source for the purpose of this survey. No issues were identified, so all data sources were compiled into a single email address contact list. That final list was deduplicated, reviewed for formatting errors (e.g., failure to include a domain in the email address), and had any internal DELC emails removed. These processes were conducted in R version 4.3.0. The final contact list included approximately 25,000 individual emails.

Sampling methods

The goal number of responses for this year's Customer Service Survey was 400. To calculate this response goal, we utilized Yamane's sample size for a known population formula, $\frac{[Population\ Size]}{(1+([Population\ Size] \times ([Margin\ of\ Error]^2)))}$. To estimate DELC's customer population size (excluding Central Background Registry [CBR] applicants, as that group contains individuals with limited DELC contact), we multiplied the number of identified customer contacts (e.g., providers, sites, grantees, Tribal affiliates, and contractors) by five, acknowledging that for every survey sent directly to members of those groups, there were likely additional customers who were not contacted directly but would still have access to the survey via the DELC website or other channels. This resulted in an estimated population size of 39,069. The final recommended sample size was 396, which we rounded up to 400. Yamane's sample size determination method was selected in part because traditional power analysis was not possible without a priori specification of our analytical approach. Additionally, the population of DELC customers is finite and thus determining a population estimate was possible.

Survey participants

We received a total of 384 responses to the survey. Considering the recommended sample size of 400, this is a 96% target response rate for surveys received. Responses were removed from the final sample if they selected that they had never been in contact with DELC during the last year; therefore, the final sample size included in the analysis was 296. When considering the recommended sample size of 400, this is a 74% target response rate for usable surveys received. Customers' Relationship with DELC

Participants were asked about their relationship with DELC, and they were able to select all customer groups that apply to them; therefore, group percentages will sum to greater than 100%. In total, 199 respondents (67%) identified themselves as direct care providers, 128 (43%) as regional service

partners, 26 (9%) as contracted external partners, and six (2%) as Tribal organizations. Additionally, 48 (16%) of respondents did not select one of the four customer groups. These respondents are represented in the "Unknown" customer base group.

Out of all direct care providers, 85% indicated that they worked in a licensed child care program, including Certified Center (36%), Certified Family (30%), or Registered Family (19%). Furthermore, 9% selected "license exempt program," and 6% were unsure of what kind of program they worked in.

Participants were also asked if they were part of an organization that participates in any DELC programs; results are shown in Figure 1. This question was also select all that apply, so the group percentages sum to greater than 100%. Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) was the most frequently selected option, followed by Preschool Promise (PSP). All the other programs listed received less than 20 responses, including Healthy Families Oregon (HFO), Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten (OPK), Early Childhood Equity Fund (ECEF), Baby Promise (BP), and Relief Nurseries (RN).

Customer participation in DELC programs

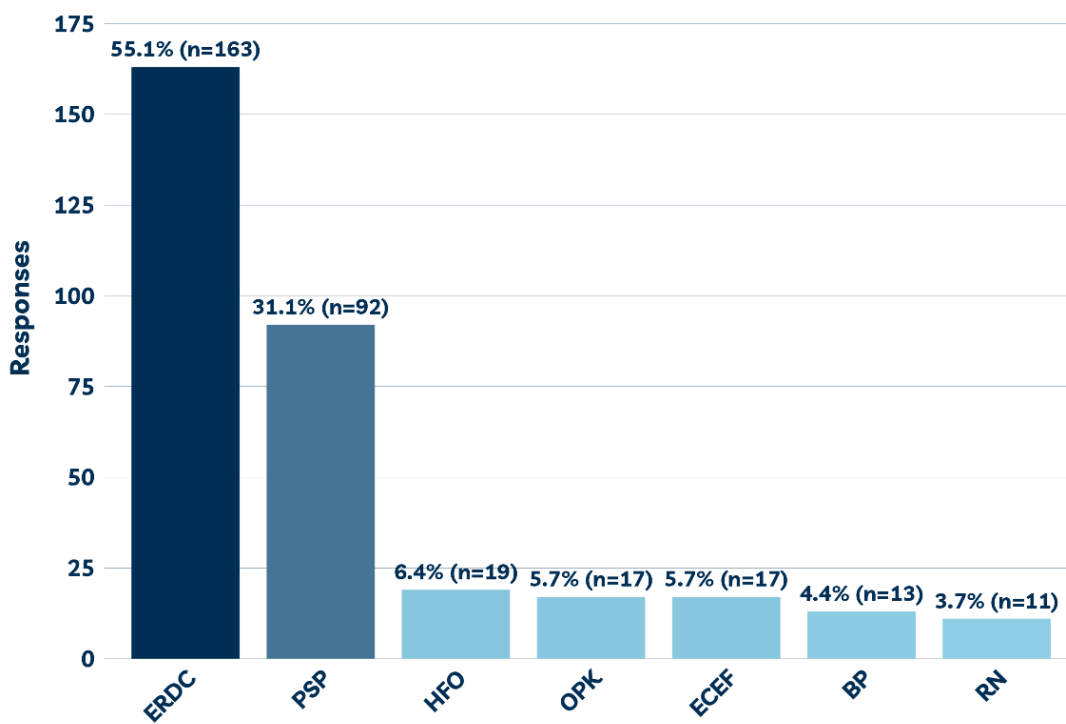


Figure 1: Counts and percentages of survey participants who participated in DELC programs. Programs include Employment Related Day Care (ERDC), Preschool Promise (PSP), Healthy Families Oregon (HFO), Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten (OPK), Early Childhood Equity Fund (ECEF), Baby Promise (BP), and Relief Nurseries (RN)

Participants were asked to indicate the geographic areas of the community they serve, with the option to select all that apply; therefore, group percentages for this question amount to greater than 100%. Urban was most frequently selected (164, 55.4%), followed by rural (126, 42.6%). 25 respondents (8.5%) selected statewide, 16 (6.4%) selected remote, and 10 (3.4%) selected Tribal.

Frequency of Contact with DELC

The participants were asked about how often they contacted DELC within the last year. The most common responses were monthly (121, 41%) and quarterly (94, 32%). An additional 34 respondents (11.5%) selected weekly, and 33 respondents (11%) selected yearly. Only 4 respondents (1.4%) selected daily, while 10 respondents (3%) indicated that they would prefer not to answer.

Languages, Race, Ethnicity, and Gender

The survey was available to customers in English, Spanish, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, and Somali. Most responses were in English (265, 89.5%), followed by Spanish (27, 9.1%). Two responses (0.7%) were in Russian, and Arabic and Simplified Chinese each received one response (0.3%). No responses were received in Vietnamese or Somali.

Participants were asked to select the race and ethnicity categories that best describe them, and participants could select each category they identify with. Most participants (207, 70%) selected White, followed by Hispanic or Latine (50, 17%). There was also a group of "unknown" responses for race/ethnicity - this means that the participant selected either "no" or "prefer not to answer" for every race/ethnicity question. Of the 12 participants who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, five shared that they were affiliated with federally recognized Tribes.

Table 1 shows the distribution of responses for each race and ethnicity group; the table also includes the percentage of the ECE workforce population for each group, which is based on results from the Oregon Child Care Research Partnership's [2022 Workforce Report](#). White participants were overrepresented in the survey sample compared to the ECE workforce population. Most of the other populations in the sample were underrepresented, especially individuals identifying as Hispanic or Latine. Additionally, the group sizes were small for populations other than White and Hispanic or Latine. Strategies to increase response rates, such as intentional outreach within communities, should be considered for future survey administrations.

Table 1. Race and ethnicity of Customer Service Survey participants

	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of the ECE workforce population
American Indian or Alaska Native	12	4%	1%
Asian	9	3%	4%
Black or African American	6	2%	4%
Hispanic or Latine	50	17%	23%
Middle Eastern or North African	4	1%	-
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3	1%	1%
White	207	70%	65%
Unknown	36	12%	-

Note. ECE workforce population percentages from 2022 Workforce Report, Oregon State University. This report did not include figures for the Middle Eastern or North African group.

Most survey participants identified as women (n=265, 90%). Other gender identities of participants included men (n=9, 6%), non-binary (<1%), and gender expansive (<1%). Six percent of participants selected "prefer not to answer" for the question about gender identity (n=17).

Survey Response Rate

The survey was grouped into several question categories: mandatory DAS questions, supplemental questions, accessibility questions, CCLD-specific questions, and personal identity questions (race, ethnicity, gender identity). The CCLD questions had the highest response rate (99.7%), followed by the supplemental questions (97.7%), and the mandatory DAS questions (97.1%). The personal identity questions had the lowest response rate (88.9%). Response rates were calculated as the proportion of all questions in that group that received a response other than "prefer not to answer." The CCLD questions' response rate only includes participants who indicated that they interact with CCLD (n=165).

Analysis

Descriptive statistics were primarily used to analyze the survey results, including frequencies and proportions. Graphic visualizations were produced for most of the questions. Results are presented for the overall sample, as well as subgroup analyses for some questions.

Qualitative analysis using NVivo software was used to analyze responses to the two primary open-ended questions: 1) *What has gone well?* and 2) *What can DELC do better?*. The responses were first coded using the aspects of customer service identified by DELC staff during [staff engagement sessions](#). Additional codes were created for customer feedback that was not represented by the aspects of customer service identified by DELC staff. Open-ended responses from surveys in languages other than English were professionally translated into English for analysis. 223 participants provided responses to at least one open-ended question.

Survey Results

Customer Service Questions Required of All Oregon Agencies

Figure 2 shows the results for the mandatory DAS questions, which all Oregon state agencies are required to ask their customers. Results are presented both for the overall sample and for three customer base groups with the largest number of responses (child care providers, regional service partners, and contracted external partners). Figure 2 includes the distribution of responses to each statement, including the percentage of respondents that rated the items as *poor*, *fair*, *good*, and *excellent*. The fourth customer base group, Tribal organizations, was selected by only six participants. Given the small size of the group and that each of the six participants who selected Tribal organization also selected one of the other customer base groups, the full distribution of the Tribal organization groups responses is not included in Figure 2. Instead, the percentage of respondents who rated the statements as good or excellent for all customer base groups is included in Table 2. The responses for those who did not select any of the set customer bases (the "Unknown" customer base group) are also included in Table 2.

As part of the Key Performance Measure processes required by all agencies, agencies must set targets for their KPMs. DELC's target for its inaugural Customer Service KPMs, set prior to data collection, was to receive 75% *good* or *excellent* responses for each question. In Figure 2, the percentage displayed on the right-hand side of each bar represents the percentage of *good* or *excellent* responses for that question.

Overall, "helpfulness of employees" and "knowledge and expertise of employees" are the items that 75% or more of survey participants rated as *good* or *excellent*. The other items ranged from 66 – 72% of the participants rating them as good or excellent; these items represent opportunities for growth.

There are some notable differences in response to these required questions by customer base subgroup. First, child care providers, the customer base with the largest number of respondents, were more likely to rate "ability to provide services correctly the first time" and "availability of information" as *good* or *excellent* than the sample overall, while their ratings for the other items were more comparable to the sample overall. Additionally, contracted external partners were less likely than the other groups to rate these items as *good* or *excellent* than the whole sample. This may be partially influenced by the smaller number of respondents in this group. Finally, regional service providers were more likely than any customer group to rate the "helpfulness of employees" as *good* or *excellent*.

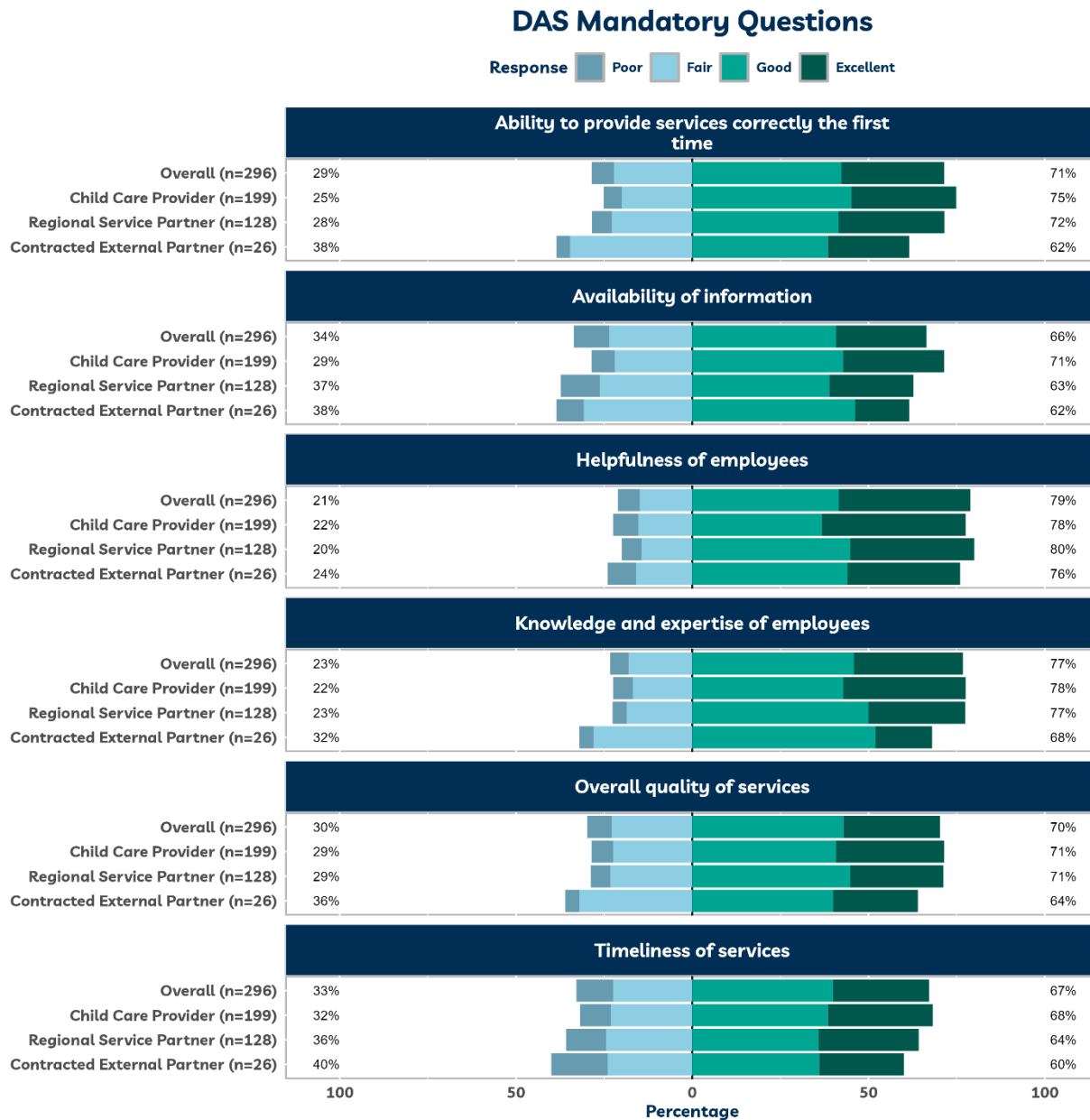


Figure 2: Percentages of ratings for the DAS mandatory questions by customer group. The percentage displayed on the right-hand side of each bar represents the percentage of *good* or *excellent* responses for that question, and the percentage rating on the left-hand side of each bar represents the percentage of *fair* or *poor* responses for that question.

Table 2. Percentage of survey respondents rating aspects of customer service as “Good” or “Excellent” by customer base group

Customer Base	Helpfulness	Knowledge and Expertise	Accuracy	Timeliness	Availability of Information	Overall Quality
Direct Care Provider (n=199)	77.5	77.6	74.8	68.2	71.5	71.4
Regional Service Partner (n=128)	80	77.4	71.6	64.3	62.7	71.2
Contracted External Partner (n=26)	76	68	61.6	60	61.6	64
Tribal Organizations (n=6)	66.7	83.3	50	50	66.7	50
Unknown (n=48)	84.5	84.5	72.7	71.1	66.7	75.6
Total	78.9	76.7	71.5	67.2	66.4	70.2

Table 3 shows the percentage of *good* or *excellent* ratings for the DAS required questions by race and ethnicity of the survey participants. The race/ethnicity groups with 5 or fewer responses, Middle Eastern or North African and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, were combined into a group together to balance protecting the identity of individual respondents and being inclusive of the data we share in this report. Breaking out the results by race and ethnicity allows for the ability to notice if customers of particular backgrounds are experiencing DELC’s customer service differently than the overall sample. For example, participants who identified themselves as Hispanic or Latine (n=50), Asian (n=9), or Black or African American (n=6) were more likely to rate DELC’s customer service as *good* or *excellent* in terms of timeliness, availability of information, and overall quality than the overall sample. On the other hand, participants who identified themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native (n=12) or did not choose to share race or ethnic information (n=33) were less likely to rate DELC’s customer service as *good* or *excellent* across all the required DAS questions.

Table 3. Percentage of survey respondents rating aspects of customer service as “Good” or “Excellent” by Race and Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity Group	Helpfulness	Knowledge and Expertise	Accuracy	Timeliness	Availability of Information	Overall Quality
American Indian or Alaskan Native (n=12)	75%	58%	50%	42%	42%	42%
Asian (n=9)	100%	89%	100%	100%	89%	100%
Black or African American (n=6)	100%	83%	100%	100%	100%	83%
Hispanic or Latine (n=50)	78%	78%	76%	70%	76%	74%
Middle Eastern or North African; and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (n=7)	100%	86%	100%	86%	71%	100%
Unknown (n=33)	55%	52%	43%	36%	49%	47%
White (n=204)	81%	80%	74%	70%	67%	73%
Overall (N=296)	79%	77%	71%	67%	66%	70%

DELC's Additional Customer Service Questions

Survey participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with six additional statements related to their experience with DELC customer service on a 5-point scale (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree). For each statement, Figure 3 displays the distribution of responses for all respondents, direct care providers, regional service partners, and contracted external partners. The percentage to the left marks the percentage of respondents in each group who disagreed with the statement. The percentage in the middle marks the percentage of respondents in each group who neither agreed nor disagreed. The percentage to the right marks the percentage of respondents in each group who agreed with the statement. As in the previous analyses, due to the small size of the Tribal organizations customer group and that each of the six participants who selected Tribal organization also selected one of the other customer base groups, the full distribution of the Tribal organization groups responses is not included in Figure 3. Instead, the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement for all customer base groups is included in Table 4. The responses for those who did not select any of the set customer bases (the "Unknown" customer base group) are also included in Table 4.

Supplemental Questions

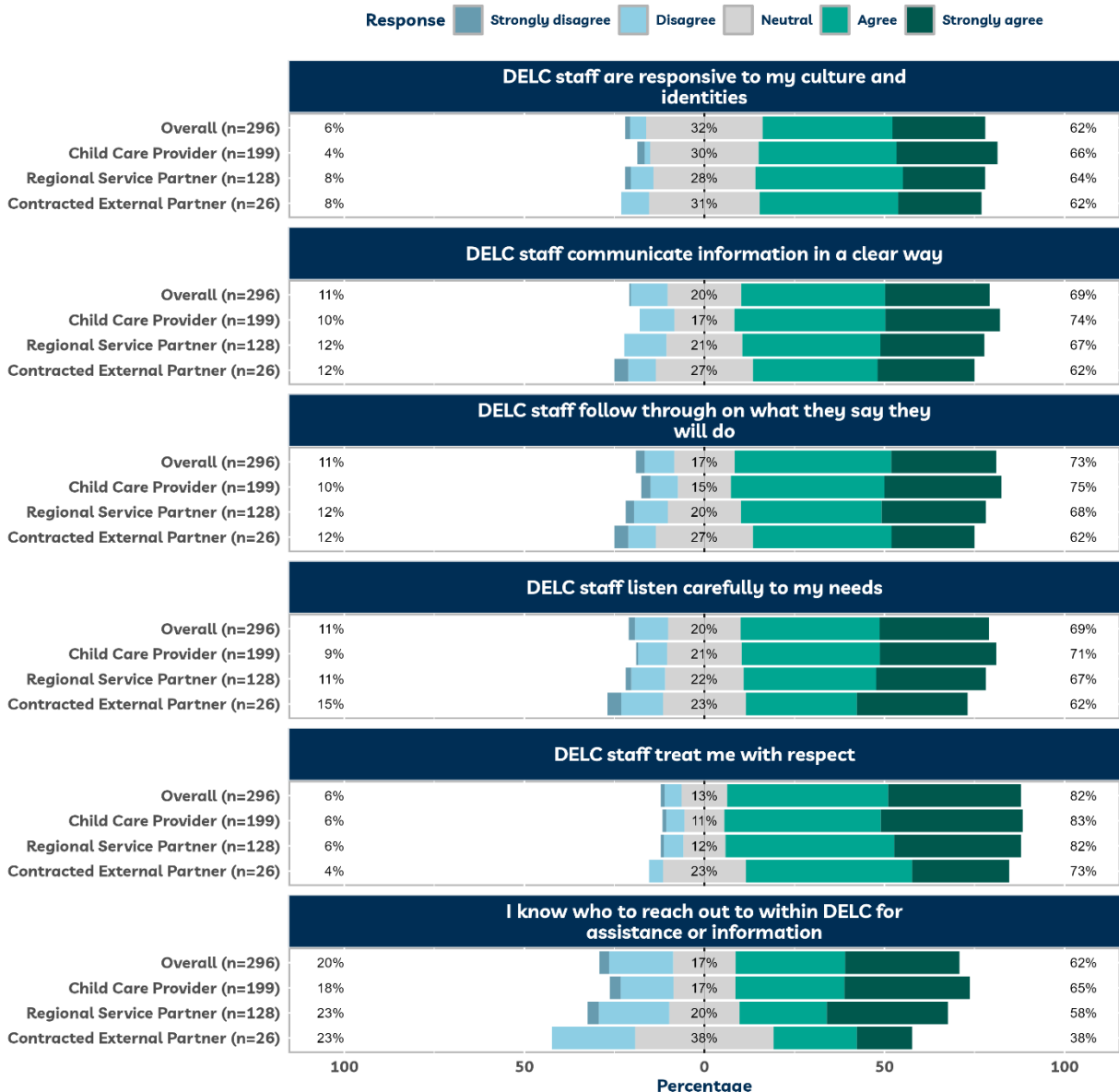


Figure 3: Percentages of ratings for supplemental questions customer group. The percentage to the left marks the percentage of respondents in each group who disagreed with the statement. The percentage in the middle marks the percentage of respondents in each group who neither agreed nor disagreed. The percentage to the right marks the percentage of respondents in each group who agreed with the statement.

Table 4. Percentage of survey respondents who selected "agree" or "strongly agree" by customer base

Customer Base	DEL C staff are responsive to my culture and identities	DEL C staff communicate information in a clear way	DEL C staff follow through on what they say they will do	DEL C staff listen carefully to my needs	DEL C staff treat me with respect	I know who to reach out to within DEL C for assistance or information
Direct Care Provider (n=199)	66%	74%	75%	71%	83%	65%
Regional Service Partner (n=128)	64%	67%	68%	67%	82%	58%
Contracted External Partner (n=26)	62%	62%	62%	62%	73%	39%
Tribal Organizations (n=6)	50%	50%	83%	50%	83%	33%
Unknown (n=48)	50%	67%	83%	72%	85%	65%
Total	62%	69%	73%	69%	82%	62%

Table 5 shows the percentage of agree or strongly agree ratings for the supplemental questions by race and ethnicity of the survey participants. The race/ethnicity groups with 5 or fewer responses, Middle Eastern or North African and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, were combined into a group together to balance protecting the identity of individual respondents and being inclusive of the data we share in this report. Disaggregation by race and ethnicity can highlight whether customers of particular backgrounds are experiencing DELC's customer service differently than the overall sample. For example, participants who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native (n=12) or did not choose to share race or ethnic information (n=33) were less likely to agree across all the supplemental questions, compared to the overall sample. Participants who identified as Asian or Black had higher levels of agreement with each question, compared to the overall sample.

Table 5. Percentage of survey respondents who selected “agree” or “strongly agree” by Race and Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity Group	DELC staff are responsive to my culture and identities	DELC staff communicate information in a clear way	DELC staff follow through on what they say they will do	DELC staff listen carefully to my needs	DELC staff treat me with respect	I know who to reach out to within DELC for assistance or information
American Indian or Alaskan Native (n=12)	50%	42%	50%	58%	67%	17%
Asian (n=9)	89%	78%	78%	89%	89%	78%
Black or African American (n=6)	67%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Hispanic or Latine (n=50)	66%	66%	76%	68%	80%	60%
Middle Eastern or North African; and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (n=7)	71%	57%	71%	57%	86%	57%
Unknown (n=34)	32%	47%	41%	44%	62%	44%
White (n=206)	66%	72%	76%	71%	84%	65%
Overall (N=296)	62%	69%	73%	69%	82%	62%

Accessibility Questions

Most respondents indicated that their accessibility needs are being met by DELC (90.6%, n=259). Accessibility was defined for survey participants in the text of the question: “Accessibility means that information, interactions, and services are easy to approach, reach, or use.”

The 27 participants who responded that their accessibility needs were not met by DELC received a follow-up question about their specific accessibility needs. Table 6 includes the responses to this question. The responses total above 100%, since this question had the option to select all that apply. The options with the highest level of need were “materials in an accessible format” and “information in simplified, plain language.” “Information available in my preferred language” also received some responses.

Table 6. Types of accessibility needs not currently being met by DELC

ASL interpretation	0% (n=0)
Closed captioning	0% (n=0)
Information in simplified, plain language	44.4% (n=12)
Information available in my preferred language	11.1% (n=3)
Materials in an accessible format (e.g., accessible using a mobile phone, Alt Text, able to use a screen reader)	48.1% (n=13)

Participants were also asked to select their preferred language for materials and/or services provided by DELC (Table 7). Other than English, Spanish was the language with the most responses. Most of the

language options received either zero or very few responses. A more targeted approach to understanding language access needs of DELC customers will likely be necessary to collect data that is more representative and accurate.

Table 7. Preferred language for materials and/or services provided by DELC

English	89.0% (n=250)
Spanish	10.0% (n=28)
Russian	0.7% (n=2)
Arabic	0.4% (n=1)
Korean	0% (n=0)
Vietnamese	0% (n=0)
Simplified Chinese	0% (n=0)
Traditional Chinese	0% (n=0)

Participants who selected a language other than English as their preferred language (n=31) received a question asking if they preferred translated written materials or oral interpretations (Table 8). Most participants indicated either translation or no preference.

Table 8. Preference for translated written materials or oral interpretations

Translation	61.3% (n=19)
Interpretation	16.1% (n=5)
No preference	22.6% (n=7)

Open-ended Responses

Survey participants were given the opportunity respond to two questions in their own words: "What has gone well?" and "What can DELC do better?". We received 204 responses to the first and 209 responses to the second. 223 participants provided responses to at least one open-ended question. This section describes the aspects of customer service that participants mentioned in their responses.

Timeliness

Across all the open-ended responses, the most common aspect of customer service discussed was *timeliness*, which was mentioned 103 times. *Timeliness* was commonly included both in response to the question "What has gone well?" (48 mentions) and the question "What can DELC do better?" (55 mentions).

In response to "What has gone well?", survey participants referenced *timeliness* by describing timely responses to questions and improved timelines for processes.

- "Whenever I have needed help, I get a timely response and good information."
- "Procurement is so much better and our timelines for getting grants approved and funded is so much better."
- "They got my background check and everything back sooner than I thought. They helped me so much."

In response to "What can DELC do better?", survey participants referenced *timeliness* by describing inconsistent response times, processes that are behind schedule, and consequences to prioritizing *timeliness* over other aspects of customer service.

- "Staff outside of our [direct contact] have not been timely in responses."
- "Get our billing forms and payments to us in time. It is unacceptable how late DELC is on payment and billing forms."

- "The information from DELC is getting quicker, but that leads to it not always being accurate."

What has gone well?

Aside from *timeliness*, the most common aspects of customer service mentioned in response to the question "What has gone well?" were *helpfulness* (64 mentions) and *responsiveness* (39 mentions).

Responses referencing *helpfulness* described aspects of DELC's customer service that participants found to be helpful and described DELC employees as helpful in addressing their needs.

- "Monthly updates, open office hours, and other opportunities to engage is helpful."
- "Any questions I have had, they have thoroughly answered."
- "Every time I have contact with DELC employees, the service is great and they are incredibly kind and helpful."

Survey participants referenced *responsiveness* by describing how DELC staff approach providing customer service and responding to individual needs.

- "Very supportive and do their best to listen, identify what's needed, and seek answers in a timely way."
- "I always appreciate the follow up emails and willingness to meet for additional clarification when I need it."

What can DELC do better?

Aside from *timeliness*, the most common aspects of customer service mentioned in response to the question "What can DELC do better?" were *communication* (46 mentions), and *availability of information* (32 mentions). 41 comments provided feedback to specific teams within DELC. These comments are not summarized here and will instead be shared directly with the relevant DELC teams.

Responses referencing *communication* described the desire for transparent, timely communication; better communication within and across DELC teams; and clear, simple communication.

- "There is still room for growth in DELC's processes and their communication. I know they are shooting for transparency, but it still feels like they are missing the mark a bit."
- "...We can see that DELC is trying to provide more information about different initiatives coming out. However, more clarity and more time before initiatives are rolled out are important in order to get good traction."
- "I feel that the communication between [DELC teams] can be better. It took months and several phone calls to [address my concern] ... due to lack of communication between my [DELC contact] and [another DELC team]."
- "Share information with each other so we are able to get consistent answers to questions."
- "Simplify, simplify, simplify please."

Responses referencing *availability of information* described the desire for improvements to DELC's website that allow for easier access to materials; being unsure of who within DELC to reach out to for different pieces of information; and the availability of information in languages other than English.

- "Available on your website are reams of information, some small fraction of which may actually be applicable to my own needs. However, wading through the detritus of material requires time and energy I do not have..."

- "I think forms and information can be difficult to find on the website. I definitely think it could be more user friendly."
- "Typically have no clue who to reach out to for different questions."
- "Knowing who to reach out to for different things (like a directory) would be great. Also, having the "batman line" when emergency/unique situations arise would be helpful."
- "DELIC needs to improve how they create and distribute any and all information in all five languages at the same time. It should not be English first and then slowly send things out in other languages. If it isn't ready to go out in all languages, then it shouldn't be going out in English either."
- "The website needs to be accessible in languages other than English. For example, the documents in the 'Resources' tab are not all labeled with a Spanish title, and documents are not able to be searched for using a word in Spanish."

How Aspects of Customer Service Relate to Each Other

In the open-ended responses, survey participants often described how multiple aspects of customer service relate to each other. The three most commonly mentioned aspects of customer service across both open-ended questions (*timeliness* with 103 mentions, *helpfulness* with 72 mentions, and *communication* with 72 mentions) were often mentioned in tandem with other, less frequently mentioned aspects. By exploring how aspects of customer service relate to each other, DELIC can develop a deeper understanding of the customers' experiences.

Responses that mentioned *timeliness*, the most common aspect of customer service mentioned in the open-ended responses, often also mentioned *responsiveness* and *communication*. Quotes that demonstrate how *timeliness* relates to *responsiveness* and *communication* are included in Table 9.

Table 9.

	Responsiveness	Communication
Timeliness	<p>"Responsiveness and timeline of response is excellent. [I] feel there is a true partnership to ensure our program is aware of regulations and that we are providing high quality care for families in Oregon." - in response to what has gone well</p> <p>"Respond to emails, calls and texts within 24 hours or at least actually respond." -</p> <p>in response to what DELIC can do better</p>	<p>"Transparency and clear answers that are provided to early childhood educators and system partners in a timely manner rather than after the fact policies/procedures are supposed to be implemented." - in response to what DELIC can do better</p>

Responses that mentioned *communication* often also mentioned *timeliness* and *availability of information*. Quotes that demonstrate how *communication* relates to *availability of information* are included in Table 10 (*timeliness* and *communication* associations are included in Table 9).

Table 10.

	Timeliness	Availability of Information
Communication	-see Table 9-	<p>"Clear and concise information, everyone has the same rules and answers." - in response to what DELC can do better</p> <p>"The newsletters, information sessions, and updates on childcare rules has also been very good." - in response to what has gone well</p>

Responses that mentioned helpfulness often also mentioned responsiveness, consistency, and availability of information. Quotes that demonstrate how helpfulness relates to responsiveness, consistency, and availability of information are included in Table 11.

Table 11.

	Responsiveness	Consistency	Availability of Information
Helpfulness	<p>"Licensing specialists being very responsive and helpful to questions, especially about opening a new program." - in response to what has gone well</p> <p>"... but what would be the greatest support is a guide through the process, an actual human who cared about my fate, about building child care spaces in the community to call and provide information, guidance and support." - in response to what DELC can do better</p>	<p>"Most people answering the phone are kind and helpful. There have been a few who, couldn't be bothered by my inquiry." - in response to what has gone well</p> <p>"Every time I have contact with DELC employees, the service is great and they are incredibly kind and helpful." - in response to what has gone well</p> <p>"I understand that some people have had a LONG day, but they should be helpful throughout the day." - in response to what DELC can do better</p>	<p>"DELC has done a really good job with the introduction of the new Certified Center rules in 2024 - lots of advanced notice, the License Renewal packet was wonderfully complete and helpful, with updated information." - in response to what has gone well</p> <p>"Our certifier has been excellent helping make sure we have appropriate info on rule changes that affect us." - in response to what has gone well</p>

Takeaways

The following are key takeaways from DELC's inaugural Customer Service Survey.

- Customers have identified strengths in DELC's Customer Service. Customers rated DELC highly on the dimensions of helpfulness, knowledge and expertise, and courtesy and respect.
 - There are notable nuances within the dimensions of Customer Service that were identified as strengths. For instance, the qualitative analysis showed that the dimension of helpfulness was often paired with availability of information. Availability of information was identified as an opportunity for improvement for DELC, and its relationship to helpfulness suggests that improving how DELC provides information to customers may be a way to further improve customers' perception of DELC's helpfulness.
- Customers also identified opportunities for DELC to improve its Customer Service. Of the dimensions of Customer Service required by DAS, availability of information and timeliness were the two with the lowest customer ratings. Of the dimensions of Customer Service included in DELC's supplemental questions, listening to needs, clear communication, and knowing who to reach out to have the lowest levels of agreement.
- As with DELC's strengths, the qualitative analysis revealed nuances in DELC's improvement opportunities. Timeliness was the most mentioned dimension of customer service in the qualitative analysis. Interestingly, the qualitative analysis identified timeliness as both a strength for some respondents and weakness for others. This suggests that there are some aspects of DELC's work that are timely, and that customers who experience timely services appreciate. DELC can learn what conditions are resulting in timely services in some aspects of its work to help guide improvements in other areas. Additionally, the qualitative analysis showed a connection between timeliness and the dimensions of communication and responsiveness. This suggests that DELC may benefit from focusing its efforts to improve timeliness in the context of communication and responsiveness for the greatest impact.
- Lastly, the survey questions related to accessibility and the qualitative analysis revealed that customers' perceptions of DELC's communication are interconnected with their perceptions of DELC's timeliness, availability of information, DELC's website, and accessibility. Survey respondents emphasized the need for information in simplified, plain language; materials in an accessible format in the appropriate language that are easy to find; and better communication within and across DELC teams. This suggests that DELC could benefit from an agency-wide focus on how DELC staff and DELC materials communicate with customers. The CS-KPM team suggests that this will require agency-wide investment and is not the sole responsibility of DELC's small (but mighty) Communications Office.
- The survey also suggests that experiences with DELC's Customer Service vary by customer group. For example, direct care providers were more likely to have positive perceptions about DELC's Customer Service than the group of respondents as a whole, while external contractors were less likely. Given the variety of ways that DELC interacts with its customers, it is not unexpected for there to be differences in experiences across customer groups based on the nature of their relationship with DELC.
- Direct care providers were the largest group of respondents to this survey. Of the customer groups identified in this survey administration, this customer group is the most likely to interact with directly with DELC staff in the customer service unit, and they are potentially more likely than the other identified customer bases to come to DELC staff with problems that have standard, practiced solutions (e.g., a document that provides the answer, or a licensing specialist available to help with rule interpretation). This group's tendency to have more positive

perceptions of DELC's customer service suggests that, overall, the policies and procedures organized by CCLD and DELC's customer service unit to support providers are working well.

- DELC's external contractors have different scopes of work dependent upon the nature of their contracted partnership with DELC. This means that the experience of one external contractor may be very different from another, as they may be working with different teams across DELC and have different project goals they are working towards. Therefore, the challenges that arise in external contractors' work may not have standard, well-practiced solutions and instead need to be addressed in an iterative, case-by-case approach. Additionally, the external contractor customer group was one of the smaller customer groups, with only 27 survey respondents. While the survey results suggest that there is an opportunity to improve customer service for DELC's external contractors, the CS-KPM project team suggests that it would be important to further engage DELC's external contractors to better understand the breadth of their experiences before developing a strategy specific to this customer group.
- Finally, the Customer Service Survey revealed a need for additional outreach to better understand language access needs among DELC customers. A small number of respondents indicated that their preferred language is a language other than English, most of those respondents selecting Spanish. The CS-KPM project team has determined that the Customer Service Survey, with its goal to broadly understand the experiences of DELC's customers, is insufficient to understand the languages access needs of DELC's customers that do not speak English or Spanish. DELC's Social Equity Office and Research Team will partner to design a specific approach to understanding language needs in the upcoming year.

Limitations

DELC's Customer Service Survey has limitations that should be kept in mind while considering its results and findings.

1. This is the first implementation of DELC's newly developed Customer Service Survey. In this implementation, we learned that, while the survey tool is an appropriate tool to engage DELC's broad customer base, it is less appropriate to understand the specific needs and experiences of DELC's smaller customer populations. For example, the survey tool included questions related to language access preferences of those who speak languages other than English. The small number of responses from customers whose primary languages are not English or Spanish limited this survey tool's ability to inform DELC's language access policy. Instead, a focused approach that reaches out directly to those smaller communities to assess their needs, utilizing DELC's connections with community-based organizations, would be a more appropriate approach.
2. The methods we used to contact the customer bases limited our ability to reach and remind potential survey participants of their opportunity to participate. As this was our first attempt to compile contact information for our customer groups. For example, contact information that was available was often limited to individuals who are the primary contact for DELC business processes for a customer entity but may not be the best or only contact who could provide customer service feedback. Although communication to survey recipients noted that the survey link could be shared, it is possible that customer feedback from key individuals was missed. Future efforts should ensure there is additional time dedicated to gathering contact information from entities that DELC serves. We were also unable to send the survey directly to individuals who had reached out to DELC customer service directly, as that information was not available at the time in the form of an email contact list. Access to that contact information would support future customer service efforts. Additionally, limitations in the tools we used to share and administer the survey did not allow us to send reminder emails to potential participants.

More sophisticated survey tools (e.g., Qualtrics) and clearer policies about how DELC can contact its customers would facilitate an improved response rate in upcoming iterations of the survey. Strategies to improve this will be discussed further in an upcoming CS KPM project report recommending an operational plan for survey sustainability.

3. 16% of the respondents to the survey did not identify themselves as one of the four customer groups we intended to reach in this survey administration. We did not anticipate that we would reach customers outside of the four identified customer bases, and as such, we did not include any survey questions designed to capture those participants' relationship with DELC. In future survey administrations, it would be helpful to include such survey questions to describe the participants more accurately. Additionally, the number of "unknown" respondents may suggest that there is an opportunity to clarify the descriptions of the customer bases in the survey, in case any of the "unknown" respondents were members of our four intended customer bases who did not understand the questions designed to capture their customer base membership.
4. Finally, there were small numbers of respondents for some of the customer base groups, which limits our ability to generalize what we learn from this survey to the broader customer groups. In small groups, a single participant's responses have more influence on the groups' aggregated scores than in larger groups. This means that the aggregate scores for small groups are less stable, and therefore less generalizable to the broader population. While we value and hold the responses of participants in the smaller groups as true representations of their experiences with DELC, we should be cautious in generalizing their perspectives to the populations that they represent. Strategies to support participation in the survey, including the use of more sophisticated survey and email tools and specific community outreach methods, will be discussed further in an upcoming CS KPM project report recommending an operational plan for survey sustainability.

Recommendation and Next Steps

DELC has a strong commitment to providing quality customer service. Many key takeaways from DELC's inaugural Customer Service Survey align with plans outlined in DELC's [Growing Oregon Together \(GOT\)](#) five-year strategic plan and DELC's [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) Action Plan](#). As such, recommendations include staying the course outlined in GOT to "develop and improve operational foundations to efficiently serve Oregonians" and the DEI Action Plan goal to "improve quality and access to services and programs while tracking measurable goals." DELC's planned objectives to achieve these goals include:

- defining, publishing, and maintaining formal policies, processes, procedures, and service catalogues,
- upholding commitments through consistent and transparent policies and on-time payments for grants and contracts,
- establishing and implementing training for inclusive customer service, and
- building, maintaining, and monitoring a strategic set of performance metrics to enhance operational excellence.

Key takeaways from the Customer Service Survey also align with the DEI Action Plan goal to "strengthen relationships internally at DELC and externally with all communities". GOT objectives related to this DEI Action Plan goal include:

- developing tools for consistent, timely, and relevant information sharing and
- increasing accessibility of communications by considering reading level and expanding availability in multiple languages.

DELC teams focused on implementing strategies to achieve these objectives should look at this report to ensure alignment of planned activities and to develop new activities for the described

improvement opportunities. DELC's upcoming customer service policy development work provides an opportunity for DELC to establish agency-wide guidance for customer service practices to improve responsiveness, timeliness, access, and availability of information.

Over the next year, it is recommended that DELC convene internal work groups to identify specific opportunities to improve key aspects of customer service. Work groups should be supported by a member of the Research, Analysis, and Data (RAD) Office to review the results from this survey to best understand the aspects most related to their business area. After reviewing the survey results, workgroups should discuss potential reasons for results falling below ideal standards, develop solutions, and implement targeted action plans. Targeted action plans may include tips to manage email inboxes and organize work. Given the size of DELC, it is recommended that workgroups for business teams within DELC that provide the most direct support to customers via our customer service support center and for teams that oversee DELC communications, including DELC's website, are prioritized and supported by the RAD office in establishing measurable service level goals.

Appendix A – Survey Instrument

Your Customer Service Experiences

The following questions ask about your customer service experiences with DELC. Please think about any interactions you have had with DELC staff in the last 12 months as you answer these questions.

1. About how often did you have contact with DELC in the last 12 months?*

 - Never
 - Yearly
 - Quarterly
 - Monthly
 - Weekly
 - Daily
 - Prefer not to answer

2. Please answer the following questions regarding your rating of services provided by DELC in the last 12 months.
Scale: Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, Don't Know/Not Applicable (required questions marked by *)
 - a) How do you rate the timeliness of the services provided by DELC?*
 - b) How do you rate the ability of DELC to provide services correctly the first time?*
 - c) How do you rate the helpfulness of DELC employees?*
 - d) How do you rate the knowledge and expertise of DELC employees?*
 - e) How do you rate the availability of information at DELC?*
 - f) How do you rate the overall quality of service provided by DELC?*
3. Please share how much you agree with the following statements about your customer service experiences with DELC in the last 12 months.
Scale: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree)
 - a) DELC staff communicate information in a clear way.
 - b) I know who to reach out to within DELC for assistance or information.
 - c) DELC staff listen carefully to my needs.
 - d) Please select "agree" for this statement.
 - e) DELC staff are responsive to my culture and identities.
 - f) DELC staff treat me with respect.
 - g) DELC staff follow through on what they say they will do.
4. What has gone well?
5. What can DELC do better?

Accessibility

6. Are your accessibility needs met by DELC? Accessibility means that information, interactions, and services are easy to approach, reach, or use.

- Yes
- No

h) What accessibility needs do you have that are not being met? Select all that apply.

- I need ASL interpretation
- I need closed captioning
- I need information in simplified, plain language
- I need information available in my preferred language
- I need materials in an accessible format (e.g., accessible using a mobile phone, Alt Text, able to use a screen reader)
- Other _____

7. What is your preferred language for materials and/or services provided by DELC? Select one.

- English
- Spanish
- Korean
- Russian
- Simplified Chinese
- Traditional Chinese
- Vietnamese
- Other _____

8. Do you prefer translated written materials or oral interpretations?

- Translation
- Interpretation
- No preference

Describe your relationship with DELC

The following questions ask about your organization and your relationship to DELC.

9. Please select the options that describe the geography of the community you serve. (select all that apply)

- Urban (in or near a densely populated area of about 40,000 or more people)
- Rural (outside of a densely populated area)
- Remote (six or fewer people per square mile)
- Tribal land
- Statewide

10. Are you part of an organization that participates in any of the following DELC programs? Select all that apply.

- Employment Related Day Care

- Preschool Promise
 - Baby Promise
 - Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten
 - Healthy Families Oregon
 - Early Childhood Equity Fund
 - Relief Nurseries
 - I don't know
 - None of the above
11. Are you part of any of the following organization types? (Yes, No)
- Regional Service Partner (e.g., Child Care Resource and Referral, Early Learning Hubs, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Regional Service Provider)
 - Tribal Organization (e.g., Tribal Government, organization affiliated with Tribal communities)
 - External partner contracted with DELC for a particular purpose (e.g., Research and Evaluation, Professional Learning, System Coordination)
12. Do you work in an early care and education program that directly provides care for children?*
- Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to answer
13. What type of early care and education program do you work in?*
- Registered Family
 - Certified Family
 - Certified Center
 - License Exempt Program (e.g., ...)
 - Unsure
 - Prefer not to answer
14. Are you someone who interacts with staff from DELC's Child Care Licensing Division?*
- Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to answer

Your Experiences with CCLD Staff Visits

The following questions ask about your experiences with DELC's Child Care Licensing Division (CCLD) staff visiting your program.

15. Based on the last time someone from CCLD visited your program, share how much you agree with the following statements (strongly agree – strongly disagree, NA)
- CCLD staff responded to my individual concerns.

- Any information CCLD staff provided was accurate.
- Any information CCLD staff provided was easy to understand.
- CCLD staff were helpful.
- CCLD staff were respectful.
- CCLD staff were professional.

16. What kind of visit was it?

- Renewal
- Monitoring
- Complaint
- Not sure
- Other_____

17. Please rate your overall satisfaction with visits to your program by CCLD staff in the past 12 months.

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

Describe Yourself

Please describe your racial or ethnic identity. You can select all that apply.

18. Do you identify as American Indian/Alaska Native?

- Yes
- No
- I'd prefer not to answer questions about my racial or ethnic identity

19. Which of the following describes your racial or ethnic identity? Select all that apply.

- American Indian
- Alaska Native
- Canadian-Inuit, Metis, or First Nation
- Indigenous Mexican, Central American, or South American

i. Are you affiliated with a federally recognized Tribe? (Affiliated means that you are an enrolled member of a federally recognized Tribe, a descendant of a federally recognized Tribe, or have some other affiliation.)

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

- ii. Which federally recognized Tribe are you affiliated with? This list includes the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon. Please select "other" to write in which Tribe you are affiliated with if your Tribe is not included in the list.
- Burns Paiute Tribe
 - Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians
 - Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde
 - Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
 - Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
 - Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
 - Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians
 - Coquille Indian Tribe
 - Klamath Tribes
 - Other _____

20. Do you identify as Black/African American?

- Yes
- No
- I'd prefer not to answer questions about my racial or ethnic identity

21. Which of the following describes your racial or ethnic identity? Select all that apply.

- African American
- Afro-Caribbean
- Ethiopian
- Somali
- Other African (Black)
- Other Black

22. Do you identify as Asian?

- Yes
- No
- I'd prefer not to answer questions about my racial or ethnic identity

23. Which of the following describes your racial or ethnic identity? How would you describe your Asian identity? Select all that apply.

- Asian Indian
- Cambodian
- Chinese
- Communities of Myanmar
- Filipino/a

- Hmong
- Japanese
- Korean
- Laotian
- South Asian
- Vietnamese
- Other Asian

24. Do you identify as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander?

- Yes
- No
- I'd prefer not to answer questions about my racial or ethnic identity

25. Which of the following describes your racial or ethnic identity? Select all that apply.

- Chamoru (Chamorro)
- Marshallese
- Communities of the Micronesian Region
- Native Hawaiian
- Samoan
- Other Pacific Islander

26. Do you identify as Hispanic and Latino/a/x?

- Yes
- No
- I'd prefer not to answer questions about my racial or ethnic identity

27. Which of the following describes your racial or ethnic identity? Select all that apply.

- Central American
- Mexican
- South American
- Cuban
- Puerto Rican
- Other Hispanic or Latino/a/x

28. Do you identify as Middle Eastern/North African?

- Yes
- No
- I'd prefer not to answer questions about my racial or ethnic identity

29. Which of the following describes your racial or ethnic identity? Select all that apply.

- Middle Eastern
- North African

30. Do you identify as White?

- Yes
- No
- I'd prefer not to answer questions about my racial or ethnic identity

31. Which of the following describes your racial or ethnic identity? Select all that apply.

- Eastern European
- Slavic
- Western European
- Other White

32. Please select the option that best describes your gender identity.

- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary
- Agender/No gender
- I'd prefer not to answer
- I would like to self-describe

In your own words, how would you describe your gender identity?

Appendix B - DELC Internally Identified Customers

Customer label	Count
Other state agencies	22
Child care providers	17
Legislators	11
Contractors	10
Grantees	9
External research organizations	9
Tribal nations	9
CCR&Rs	8
Families	8
Hubs	8
CBR individuals	7
Unions	6
Child care business owners	6
Find Child Care Oregon	6
CCDF	5
Child care program directors	4
Federal government	4
Early Learning Council	3
Governor's office	3
LFO	3
211 Service	3
Advocates	3
Community based organizations	2
OCCD	2
Head Start Association	2
ORO	2
Child care staff	1
Language translation services	1
Multilingual communities	1
Complainants	1
CBD individuals	1
IECMHC organizations	1
Philanthropic organizations	1