Background

CFI Group, an independent consulting and market research firm, conducted this study on behalf of ACF OCS Community Services Block Grant (CSBG). Founded in 1988 and headquartered in Ann Arbor, Michigan, CFI Group serves global clients from a network of offices worldwide and utilizes the science of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). The ACSI is the national indicator of customer evaluations of the quality of goods and services available to U.S. residents. It is the only uniform, cross-industry/government measure of customer satisfaction. Since 1994, the ACSI has measured satisfaction, its causes, and its effects, for seven economic sectors, 41 industries, more than 200 private-sector companies and has measured more than 100 programs of federal government agencies since 1999. This allows benchmarking between the public and private sectors and provides information unique to each agency on how its activities that interface with the public affect the satisfaction of customers. The effects of satisfaction are estimated, in turn, on specific outcomes (such as trust).

The program objective for OCS CSBG was to measure satisfaction of Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) eligible entities to better understand how well the States, as part of the CSBG network, are delivering services to local entities, to drive improvement in major areas addressed in the State Accountability Measures, and determine where to best focus OCS training and technical assistance efforts for the State CSBG Lead Agencies. The survey was fielded via email from October 5 to December 21, 2015. A total of 1,091 surveys were sent and 579 were completed nationally, resulting in a response rate of 53% which is excellent. Measures of this nature typically achieve a response rate of 20-30%.

Results

Each State Report Workbook is comprised of 3 Tabs: Tab 1. Overview of Results; Tab 2. Scores and Impacts; Tab 3. State Specific Verbatim Comments. While Tab 1 and Tab 3 are self-explanatory, Tab 2 includes the following: the lowest and highest national scores in the study, the national average scores, state specific scores and national impacts.

Definitions

Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) - Tab 2. Row 36

The CSI is the weighted average of three questions that ask directly about customer satisfaction. These three questions are the same for each entity that measures customer satisfaction, whether public or private.
1. How satisfied are you with the services provided by the State CSBG Lead Agency as it relates to CSBG?
2. How well do the services from the State CSBG Lead Agency meet your expectations?
3. How do the services from the State CSBG Lead Agency compare to an ideal grant awarding agency?

Drivers (of Satisfaction) - Tab 2. Rows 4, 8, 11, 14, 19, 26

The aspects of the customer experience measured in the survey by a series of rated questions. Drivers for this study include:
1. Development of the CSBG State Plan
2. Distribution of Funds
3. Use of Remainder/Discretionary Funds
4. Training and Technical Assistance
5. Monitoring and Corrective Action
6. Linkages and Communication

Driver Scores - Tab 2. Rows 4, 8, 11, 14, 19, 26
• Each driver score is the weighted average of several questions within the survey asked on a 1 to 10 scale which is then converted to a 0 to 100 scale.
• For example, the driver score for Development of the CSBG State Plan is made up of rated questions for extent of involvement, caliber of opportunities and reflects your input.
• Scores are an index, like reporting a temperature, not percentages.

Question Score - Tab 2. Rows 5, 6, 7, etc.
• Average respondent score for questions asked in the survey.
• Questions are asked on 1-10 scale and translated to 0-100.

Future Behavior - Tab 2. Rows 40, 42
• Represents the desired behaviors that results from changes in CSI.
• Future Behaviors in this study include:
1. How confident are you that the State CSBG Lead Agency is fulfilling its mission of supporting eligible entities in their mission of helping low-income individuals out of poverty?
2. How much do you trust the CSBG State Lead Agency to work with you to meet your organization's needs?

Future Behavior Score - Tab 2. Rows 41, 43
Average respondent score for each rated future behavior.

Impact
Impacts, shown in the last column of Tab 2, are derived from a statistical analysis of the relationship between the drivers and satisfaction using the science of the ACSI methodology. Impacts quantify the relationship between each driver and the Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI). The impact is the predicted change in the CSI score that results from a 5-point change in a driver's score. For example, if the Linkages & Communication driver has an impact of 2.5, we would expect CSI to increase by 2.5 points when the Linkages & Communication driver score increases 5 points. In other words, high impact means greater leverage on customer satisfaction, which translates to increased confidence that the State CSBG Lead Agency is fulfilling its mission of supporting eligible entities in their mission of helping low-income individuals out of poverty. Note that the impact values were calculated for OCS CSBG as a whole in order to provide the most reliable data for all the States in the network as sample sizes were too small to calculate impacts at the State level.

Future Behavior Impact - Tab 2. Column H. Rows 40, 42
This number shows the expected change in respondent behavior for every 5-point increase (or fraction thereof) in Satisfaction.

Confidence Interval
• A confidence interval is a range around a sample score that is likely to contain the true population score.
• For this study, the confidence level used is 80%.
• Michigan's Confidence Interval is +/-3. The confidence interval of 3 means that one is 80% certain that the CSI score falls between 66 and 72.

Interpreting Scores

CFI Group recommends that scores be viewed on a continuum and each agency use the results to identify strengths and areas of opportunity. To answer the question on how to interpret a particular score, one can use the below general guideline.

Exceptional: 90-100
Excellent: 80-89
Good: 70-79
Average: 60-69
Below Average: Less than 60

Additionally, Tab 2 contains the National Minimum Score in Column B and the National Maximum Score in Column C for this study. The overall average Customer Satisfaction Index for the Federal Government is 64.

Highlights

1. The Michigan Customer Satisfaction Index is 69, compared to the CSBG National Customer Satisfaction Index of 65. The Federal Government average for 2015 is 64.
2. Scores for drivers of satisfaction range from 50 to 78, with Development of the CSBG State Plan scoring the lowest and Distribution of Funds scoring the highest.
3. Linkages and Communication is the driver with the highest impact and therefore the most influence on satisfaction at this time. It should be considered a primary focus for improvement.
4. The comments received provide additional specific feedback that may be helpful in suggesting other improvements the state might undertake.

2015 Office of Community Services (OCS) - Eligible Entities Satisfaction with the States Survey
State - Michigan
Score Table

	National Min	National Max	National Scores	National Sample Size	Michigan Scores	Michigan Sample Size	National Impact
Sample Size			579		21		
Development of CSBG State Plan	18	76	50	561	50	21	0.4
Extent of involvement	6	74	46	551	48	20	--
Caliber of opportunities	19	81	54	557	53	21	--
Reflects your input	11	78	49	529	49	18	--
Distribution of funds	11	100	68	578	78	21	0.5
Ensured no interruption	11	100	70	573	79	20	--
Quality of process	23	100	67	575	77	21	--
Use of Discretionary funds	16	94	59	523	61	19	0.4
Transparency of distribution	15	96	60	519	64	19	--
Responsiveness to needs	16	93	60	495	61	18	--
Training & Technical Assistance	17	89	66	568	67	21	0.5
Effectiveness of training	0	89	66	559	66	21	--
Effectiveness of assistance	32	88	65	555	65	21	--
Responsiveness of staff	11	95	71	529	71	18	--
Amount of training & assistance	11	89	64	562	67	21	--
Monitoring & Corrective Action	20	95	69	574	72	21	0.8
Consistency of monitoring	33	100	67	511	71	19	--
Adherence to plan	33	100	75	553	78	21	--
Usefulness of visits	22	89	68	562	72	21	--
Clarity of feedback	0	96	71	559	79	21	--
Timeliness of feedback	13	100	66	558	59	20	--
Clarity of process	35	95	68	483	73	16	--
Linkages & Communication	6	91	65	576	70	21	2.5
Awareness of efforts	11	89	57	522	57	19	--
Sufficiency of linkages	19	89	56	500	51	19	--
Effectiveness of partnerships	0	86	56	510	53	17	--
Sufficiency of information	0	92	62	566	74	19	--
Usefulness of feedback	22	94	65	561	69	21	--
Frequency of communication	11	97	71	573	81	21	--
Clarity of communication	0	100	69	574	75	21	--
Responsiveness of staff to requests	0	100	74	567	81	21	--
Consistency of responses	0	100	68	567	78	20	--
Customer Satisfaction Index	19	96	65	579	69	21	N/A
Overall satisfaction	22	96	69	579	71	21	--
Satisfaction compared to expectations	22	96	64	579	71	21	--
Satisfaction compared to ideal	11	96	62	579	64	21	--
Confidence in Lead Agency	22	95	69	570	72	20	5.1
Confidence in fulfilling mission	22	96	69	570	72	20	--
Trust in the CSBG State Lead Agency	11	96	70	576	74	21	5.1
Trusted to meet needs	11	96	70	576	74	21	--

Q4. How could the process of developing the State Plan be improved?
not sure
Joint meetings between CAA staff and State staff.
invite a committee of the CAA Executive Directors to work with the State staff to develop; all we do is review the finished product and provide feedback prior to submission
More lead time. Highlighting proposed changes.
focus groups
I have been a director for less than a year, so my knowledge of and involvement with developing the State Plan was very minimal.
not sure
don't know
Should be an engagement process
More caa input in the development of the plan and utilize the solicited input
true involvement with the network prior to submission
Not enough knowledge to answer.
Not sure.
More outreach to rural areas.
Additional formal timeline role out and type of feedback or input that local agencies can have on and for the state plan, which can sometimes be unclear. / /
I think it was done appropriately
Q5. What training and technical assistance for developing the State Plan would you recommend OCS provide to the State CSBG Lead Agency?
Time at a state association meeting to work on the plan together
How to collaborate with multiple partners.
Encourage local agency involvement. They do a good job, but do not have the direct knowledge on the impact of their plan.
Clear expectations of what is expected and why.
Since I am a new director, my involvement was minimal; therefore, I do not have a recommendation.
not sure
don't know
A more engaged process would be helpful
Review of policy to make sure plan implementation is in alignment
honest teamwork
None. They understand the process and open to suggestions by the Network.
Better explaining the purpose and process, and how important it is.
None
Training and input is offered
Q8. What technical assistance would you recommend OCS provide to the State regarding its grant award process?
none
Our State Michigan, does a good job getting funds to agencies in a timely manner.
works well in our state
To a great extent the process is controlled by state departments external from our Bureau.
webinar of funding process, things required.
The CSBG application is extremely difficult to complete in the format DHHS created. It was difficult to keep margins the same, the blue circles with the section numbers were sometimes off and couldn't be fixed. It would be much better if the application was a word document.
not sure
Our State office has greatly improved it's process for getting the funding to us in the last couple of years. They continue to evaluate the process and make changes when they can.
works well
It currently works well for us.
Unsure at this time
The state has done a good job in improving this process over the past couple of years.
None that I know of. State is in the best position to answer.
None.
Less paperwork and upfront payments of grant awards.
No technical assistance recommended at this time.

Q11. What technical assistance would you recommend OCS provide to the State regarding its use of discretionary funds?
Enhance RFP selection process.
Too much alignment with our State Department that manages CSBG rather than what the CAA network would identify as important
Bureau is making an effort to be more transparent.
I have no knowledge of the State's use of discretionary funds and therefore have no recommendation.
not sure
don't know
Best practices as to how other states are distributing discretionary funds.
Unsure
The process utilized for the past several years was changed abruptly this year with little notice. Agencies that had received the funds in past years routinely were told at the last minute that it would be a competitive process and not all agencies would be funded. Transparent? I suppose so, but terrible timing!
Do not know.
None.
Assist them to come up with a better plan then they did this year.
The technical assistance provided by the OCS to the State regarding its use of discretionary funds has been viewed as transparent and effective from our point of view. / /
Q16. What training and technical assistance needs do you want OCS to address?
Eligibility training & super circular training.
none at this time
Encourage state to make sure T/TA better reflects needs of network.
not sure.
The monitoring visit letters and T/TA documents are often difficult to follow. Even though the recipient may interpret what the documents mean one way, when a verbal explanation is given by the state agency a different meaning is provided. "Say what you mean and mean what you say." Verbal follow up with the state agency is almost always necessary.
none at this time
non that aren't adddressed
Sometimes there is TOO much training and not enough funds to go to them all!
Organizational standards
It would be good to go through a program year without rule changes; get them set at the beginning of the year and then stick with those through the year. It would also be good to avoid knee-jerk changes that are being driven by one or two agencies that are struggling and address those individually. Again, implement necessary rule changes just once a year along with the grant award (look at the number of "Community Services Policy Manual" (CSPM) changes there are through the course of a year.
Continue to provide training on ROMA and the Performance Standards to keep us all up to date of changes, challenges, etc.
None.
OCS through training and technical assistance can address how CAA's can access information about national changes that will affect our local state plans.

Q17. What, if any, additional training and technical assistance needs do you want the State CSBG Lead Agency to address?
Individual agency on-site trainings per need of individual agency
Eligibility Training
some of the training has been too basic for agency staff that have been in the network for decades
Ensure network is ahead of the curve when it comes to WX.
not sure but maybe agency staff visiting other sites...agencies.
I can't think of anything
none at this time.
none
Our office does a good job providing training, often too much training, so much so we cannot attend them all
None
Coordinate training with the state association office and combine when possible. Trainings by the association, the partnership, and outside consultants have been excellent. / Work with at least some portion of the network to talk about proposed rule changes before simply implementing them to consider some feedback, possible improvement suggestions and maybe even buy-in.
None. The do a good job now.
None.
The State CSBG Lead Agency can address additional technical assistance in providing feedback about grant proposals that are submitted to the agency which do not receive funding and follow up with areas for agency improvement after the completion of the monitoring period.

Q24. What, if any, suggestions do you have for how the State CSBG Lead Agency could improve its monitoring process?
Get the report out more quickly
Establishment of written monitoring guidelines for consistency. The establishment of a consistent monitoring schedule with timely feedback.
they do very well in this area
Emphasize where we are doing well and ensure we are given guidance/direction where we need to do better.
The state has done a poor job providing reports after a monitoring visit. Identified areas of improvement can't be completed if the report isn't sent a year or more after a monitoring visit. Perhaps they are short-staffed. It becomes even more difficult when the monitoring report addresses identified issues where former staff were involved. The new staff member(s) then must attempt to respond to issues/concerns they played no role in. More timely reports is imperative.
none at this time
Getting the reports back to us quickly after the monitoring is a issue. This has improved greatly over the last year.
None it works well
Timely letters that show results of monitoring
Timeliness with responses
Haven't seen it yet but apparently it's being redesigned on a priority basis, which could be a good thing. Appreciate the bureau trying to do what's best for the network, especially giving attention to those who need it most. The reports must come faster!
None. Very well done by professionals that understand Community Action. No suggestions for improvement.
None.
Too many monitoring visits.
There is a need for detailed feedback on the score after the monitoring visit is completed along with recommendations for improvement. / /

Q25. What technical assistance would you recommend OCS provide to the State CSBG Lead Agency regarding its grant monitoring process?
none at this time
Emphasize the importance of the staff assistance role when monitoring.
Since the state lead agency has made recent changes to its grant monitoring process by assigning the monitors to a small number of specific agencies, it remains to be seen whether technical assistance is necessary.
none at this time
None
CSBG Act training
None
The Organizational Performance Standards should make for an excellent tool to get improve the process. Perhaps seeing, recognizing, collecting and sharing best practice from around the network could help as they go forward. Again, reports by monitors should be generated in a more timely fashion.
Do not know.
None.
none
The OCS can provide the State CSBG Lead Agency will additional information about the Line Item Transfer process and how the information should be conveyed to CAA's to ensure proper communication and compliance. / /

Q35. What kinds of information, if any, would you like to receive from the State CSBG Lead Agency that you are not now getting?
n/a
How we (the network) can better assist one another in improving the reputation of Community Action.
I don't know anything about the state lead agency's efforts at providing CAAs with information about linkages.
The information seems to be flowing however clarity and timeliness could be slightly improved
None
None, we're good
None
The bureau does not occupy a high place in state government and the linkages to other state divisions are few. They are doing a better job in creating linkages to the divisions of the department where they are housed, but frankly the linkages made by individual agencies at the local level are more productive. The bureau is not really in a position to make much happen in state government, but they are trying.
Nothing.
None.
None.
Information on when CAA's will receive correspondence from the State CSBG Lead Agency when questions are sent via email.

Q36. What technical assistance would you recommend OCS provide to the CSBG Lead Agency regarding its communication efforts?
Michigan in the past year has done a good job communicating with CAA's on a regular basis.
n/a
State is working hard to provide quality communications to the network.
There appears to be an excessive amount of communication (emails) from the state lead agency. I don't know if it's because there are lots of changes to rules, etc., or something else. If they could create a schedule of what information will be passed on and when, we know when/what to expect.
not sure
None
None, communicates well
None
Do not know.
None.
None.
The OCS could provide technical assistance by helping with the creation of a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page for reporting, budget, updates, upcoming training and correspondence questions
Q42. What more could OCS do to help the States and eligible entities meet the needs of low-income people in the State?
less restrictions, less regulations
By providing the needed supports and training CAA's are communicating they need.
involve the CAA network in developing initiatives, plans, training, etc.
To minimize the amount of restrictions placed upon the network.
Determine why it takes so long to receive monitoring reports. If improvements are needed, timely reports about what they are is key. The needs of low-income people could be delayed or not provided at all if an eligible entity continues somewhat unaware that improvements are needed.
not sure
finds ways to get more funding
Put more $$ in to directly service clients
Change the household composition rules. Exceptions should be made for extended family arrangements so homeless families can qualify for services
The more programmatic depth an agency has with many opportunities for long-term comprehensive engagement the better chances at truly moving people out of poverty. It takes time, along with trusted relationships. OCS and states need to recognize what really makes a difference (for those who in fact CAN move out of poverty) and what doesn't. The biggest impediment to telling the aggregated stories of success is that each funder has a different required software system and none of them "talk to each other". It's time all state and federally funded programs either move to one unified system of data collection and reporting or require developers to implement add-ons to their systems so that they can talk to each other.
Keep providing our State Agency with the support they need in order to properly support the State CAA Network.
Doing a good job.
The OCS can provide States and eligible entities with information on additional federal or state educational or financial resources to help meet needs of low-income people in the state.