

**A Consumer Outcome Satisfaction Survey of Individuals who are
Deaf or Hard of Hearing Served by the VR Program**

**Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
State of Alabama Title 1 – Section 110
Final Report FY 2014**

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Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

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State of Alabama Title 1 – Section 110

FY 2014

I. BACKGROUND

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) recognizes the need for specialized staff and programs in order to provide quality services to individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. ADRS works through a unique partnership between the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and a Deaf Advisory Council, which works collaboratively with ADRS leadership in providing valuable input relative to administrative codes, rules, and policies to regulate Alabama's vocational rehabilitation service delivery system. The Vocational Rehabilitation Service division of ADRS serves Alabamians with disabilities eligible for VR services. These citizens receive individualized services necessary to prepare them to enter the workforce in their pursuit of self-sufficiency and independence. The mission of ADRS is "to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential" by assisting Alabamians with disabilities at home, in school and on the job.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS) helps Alabamians with disabilities achieve independence through employment. The Division of Blind and Deaf Services provides assistance through a statewide VR service delivery system to individuals who are Deaf, Deaf Blind or Hard of Hearing. In FY 2014, the Deaf/Hard of Hearing services program provided employment related services to Alabamians with significant hearing losses. An employment outcome means, with respect to an individual, entering or retaining full-time or, if appropriate part-time competitive employment in the integrated labor market.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Services provides a wide variety of services throughout the state including:

- vocational guidance and counseling
- vocational evaluation to determine skills, abilities and potential to work
- vocational training
- transition services
- job placement assistance
- rehabilitation technology services
- rehabilitation audiology
- interpreter services

Skilled staff personnel who maintain specialized caseloads of consumers who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deaf Blind provide these services throughout the state. Specialized staff is located in eight (8) area offices (Montgomery, Huntsville, Tuscaloosa, Mobile, Dothan, Homewood Birmingham, Talladega and Decatur). Rehabilitation Counselors serving persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing have average caseloads of approximately 149 individuals. All individuals served have to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- I. The applicant has a physical or mental impairment;
- II. The applicant's physical or mental impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment for the applicant.
- III. The applicant can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

II. PREVALENCE OF HEARING LOSS IN ALABAMA

The *Model State Plan for Rehabilitation of Individuals who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing or Late Deafened* (Watson, Jennings, Tomlinson, Boone & Anderson, 2008, p.3) states that:

Hearing loss is the most prevalent, chronic, disabling condition in the United States today. Applying estimates of the prevalence of the population to contemporary population data from the United States Census, it is estimated that more than one in every ten Americans, or 31 million among 308 million, have a hearing loss. Approximately 18 million of these persons are of working age (16 to 64 years old).

Estimates of Prevalence

More than one in every ten Americans has a hearing loss.

By applying these estimates of the prevalence of hearing loss to contemporary data from the United States Census, it is possible to estimate the number of Americans with three types of hearing loss. Since the incidence of hearing loss varies significantly by age, it is also critical to look at these estimates by key age groups within the population.

Research conducted by Kochkin (2007) reports that the population of people in the United States with hearing loss has grown from an estimated 28 million in 1989 to over 33 million and is anticipated to grow to over 40 million people in less than a generation. About half a million are Deaf and the rest are hard of hearing or late deafened. The number of hard of hearing and late deafened people is increasing as the population becomes older. Over the age of 45, the percentage of people having a hearing loss increases sharply, and over the age of 70 may reach as high as 50 percent. As the baby boomer workforce ages, these statistics have real implications for vocational rehabilitation programs. There has also been an increase in the number of younger people having noise induced hearing loss from loud music and occupational noise.

There has never been a comprehensive census of the parameters of the population of persons with hearing loss in the U.S. Therefore, it is necessary to base prevalence estimates for the population on a number of key assumptions (Schroedel, 2006). These estimates are based upon the prevalence rates discussed below.

Several factors explain why these new estimates are higher than previously reported estimates of 29 million persons:

Table 1
Prevalence of Hearing Loss in America (Schroedel, 2006)

Age Group	Deaf	Late Deafened	Hard of Hearing	Total
15-19	49,200	None	1,376,300	1,425,500
20-44	211,200	1,236,500	4,673,200	6,121,100
45-64	372,800	2,183,400	8,252,500	10,808,800
65-74	169,500	992,200	3,750,400	4,912,100
75 up	254,300	1,489,700	5,630,600	7,374,700
Total	1,057,300	5,901,800	23,683,000	30,642,200

- The population is increasing as the nation yearly adds 2.8 million individuals.
- The population is “graying” as people live longer. Increase in age is closely associated with increased prevalence of hearing loss: 26% of those 65 to 74 years old and 40% of those 75 and older have a hearing loss compared to 2% of those under age 18.
- The “baby boomer” bubble, of those born between 1945 and 1964, comprises the largest age group across the chronological age spectrum. As these persons become older, increasing numbers begin to lose their hearing: 15% of those in this age range have a hearing loss.

Following these socio-demographic trends, we can refine US population calibrations to more accurately estimate the total number of persons with hearing loss as well as those in specific age groups (Table 1).

Estimating the Prevalence of Hearing Loss in Alabama

Prevalence estimates are derived from large-scale representative samples of the general population. Applying national prevalence rates to Alabama we can say several things:

1. In the most recent 2010 census, Alabama's population was estimated at approximately 4.8 million persons. By applying the national prevalence rates to what we know about Alabama's population, we would estimate (Watson, 2011):
 - That there are approximately 477,973 residents with a functional hearing loss.
 - Although the primary target population for state VR services historically has been those residents with a hearing loss of working age (18-64), the ADRS VR service program team has implemented programming designed to reach and serve the growing number of workers with hearing loss who continue to work full or part time well into their seventies. Findings of the FY 2007-2014 Deaf Consumer Outcome Studies conducted by our research group indicate that ADRS has been highly effective in reaching and serving significant numbers of older workers.
 - Among the estimated 242,305 persons of traditional working age with a hearing loss in the state, we would estimate that 185,045 are hard of hearing, 48,875 have experienced adult-onset (post-vocationally) deafness, and 8,385 are pre-vocationally deafened, having experienced an early life onset of severe to profound loss of hearing.
2. Alabama's general population in the 2010 census was 4.8 million persons--compared to 4.4 million in 2000 -- estimating a gain of approximately 400,000 persons over the decade. Roughly, 40,000 of these individuals have a hearing loss based on our estimate that Alabama adds approximately 4,000 persons with hearing loss per year. In forecasting or other future planning purposes, these population estimates would lead us to the expectation that there will be an additional 4,000 residents with hearing loss each year.
3. Demographers advise that prevalence estimates by county are problematic for several reasons. Take the 67 counties in Alabama. Among the state's 67 counties in 2010, twelve had more than 100,000 persons, 28 counties have less than 30,000 persons and 13 of those counties have below 15,000 residents. The Birmingham metro area (Jefferson County) had a population of 662,000 persons in 2000, approximately 15 percent of the total state population. However, the 2010 census reports they lost 12.5 percent of their central city population and even had a 5 percent drop in Jefferson County. Huntsville's metropolitan area, by contrast, grew 22 percent, adding 75,217

people, making it the state's second-largest metro area. Statewide, "the four major metros along the I-65 corridor are now home to 49 percent of the state's population" (Thomas Spenser, February 25, 2011, 2010 Census: Rural to urban shift for Alabama population: Birmingham News). Greene County, at the other extreme, has only 9,045 residents.

4. These population variations highlight the major population shifts that are taking place across the state as many rural areas and central cities are experiencing a loss in their population base at the same time that many urban and suburban areas outside the central cities are experiencing dramatic growth. The state also became more diverse as the Hispanic population grew 145 percent, adding 109,772 to the state's population and the state's Asian population increased 71 percent, to 53,595 residents. Jefferson, Madison and Shelby counties absorbed major proportions of the Hispanic immigration growth. On the other hand, these trends remind us that since population studies routinely find that rural counties generally have disproportionately more elderly persons than urban counties, ADRS and other service agencies can expect to see a higher percentage of seniors among rural residents seeking VR and related human services. Because increase in chronological age is a leading cause in the increase of hearing loss, many of these rural counties will as a result have disproportionately more residents with hearing loss. These kinds of factors make it problematic to use one state-wide prevalence estimate for a state.
5. It is difficult to generate reliable updated prevalence estimates for hearing loss in Alabama or other states because compared to the US population of over 308 million: (1) the state's general population of 4.8 million is comparatively small, (2) there is a wide range in the number of persons living in each of the 67 counties, and (1) and (2) combine to increase the sampling error rate for demographic estimates of hearing loss. Given that caveat, Watson (2011) used the 2010 census population estimates to guide an update of Table 2 that was initially compiled by Watson, et al (2008), to illustrate the estimated number of residents with hearing loss that might be expected to reside in each of the 67 counties of Alabama. The revised county-by-county estimates are based on the 2010 U.S. census estimates of a 7.5 percent overall increase in the state's population.
6. Deaf and hard of hearing consumers closed by ADRS in 2014 lived and worked in 57 of the 67 Alabama counties (85%). These FY 2014 findings repeat the consistent finding of prior years where high statewide rates of participation further documents and illustrates the widespread prevalence of hearing loss throughout the population and geographical regions of the state. It also highlights the extent to which the statewide program of rehabilitation services that ADRS currently provides in Alabama effectively reaches and serves residents throughout the entire state.

Table 2

ALABAMA

Estimated County-by County Population of Persons with Hearing Loss in 2010(all ages)

County	Population	Estimate with Hearing Loss	County	Population	Estimate with Hearing Loss
Autauga	54,571	5457.1	Houston	101,547	10154.7
Baldwin	182,265	18226.5	Jackson	53,227	5322.7
Barbour	27,457	2745.7	Jefferson	658,466	65846.6
Bibb	22,915	2291.5	Lamar	14,564	1456.4
Blount	57,322	5732.2	Lauderdale	92,709	9270.9
Bullock	10,914	1091.4	Lawrence	34,339	3433.9
Butler	20,947	2094.7	Lee	140,247	14024.7
Calhoun	118,572	11857.2	Limestone	82,782	8278.2
Chambers	34,215	3421.5	Lowndes	11,299	1129.9
Cherokee	25,989	2598.9	Macon	21,452	2145.2
Chilton	43,643	4364.3	Madison	334,811	33481.1
Choctaw	13,859	1385.9	Marengo	21,027	2102.7
Clarke	25,833	2583.3	Marion	30,776	3077.6
Clay	13,932	1393.2	Marshall	93,019	9301.9
Cleburne	14,972	1497.2	Mobile	412,992	41299.2
Coffee	49,948	4994.8	Monroe	23,068	2306.8
Colbert	54,428	5442.8	Montgomery	229,363	22936.3
Conecuh	13,228	1322.8	Morgan	119,490	11949.0
Coosa	11,539	1153.9	Perry	10,951	1095.1
Covington	37,765	3776.5	Pickens	19,746	1974.6
Crenshaw	13,906	1390.6	Pike	32,899	3289.9
Cullman	80,406	8040.6	Randolph	22,913	2291.3
Dale	50,251	5025.1	Russell	52,947	5294.7
Dallas	43,820	4382.0	Shelby	195,085	19508.5
DeKalb	71,109	7110.9	St. Clair	83,593	8359.3
Elmore	79,303	7930.3	Sumter	13,763	1376.3
Escambia	38,319	3831.9	Talladega	82,291	8229.1
Etowah	104,430	10443.0	Tallapoosa	41,616	4161.6
Fayette	17,241	1724.1	Tuscaloosa	194,656	19465.6
Franklin	31,704	3170.4	Walker	67,023	6702.3
Geneva	26,790	2679.0	Washington	17,581	1758.1
Greene	9,045	904.5	Wilcox	11,670	1167.0
Hale	15,760	1576.0	Winston	24,484	2448.4
Henry	17,302	1730.2	Total	4,779,736	477,973

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2010; Thomas Spenser. (February 25, 2011). 2010 Census: Rural to urban shift for Alabama population: Birmingham News.

III. DESIGN OF THE FY 2014 DEAF CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

The Rehabilitation act of 1973, as amended, provides for an ongoing review of state rehabilitation agencies by the Rehabilitation Services Administration, part of which includes consumer satisfaction reviews and analyses. Consumer satisfaction data can be used by VR agencies in a number of ways for several different purposes, including improving services for consumers, planning programs, evaluating counselors and providing feedback and identifying staff training needs (Moore, McDonnall, Schaefer, & Sansing, 2006, p.8).

Building from its long history of random sample consumer satisfaction surveys conducted with all closed cases, ADRS contracted with a Mississippi State University research team in FY 2006 to develop a consumer satisfaction research protocol designed specifically for blind and visually impaired consumers. The new survey format from that collaboration combined items taken from the existing ADRS Consumer Satisfaction Survey with various demographic data matched to the R-911 dataset and a scale developed by Capella (2004) to measure consumers' satisfaction with their counselors. Following the successful conduct of the study with blind and visually impaired FY 2006 closures, ADRS proceeded to conduct annual ADRS Consumer Satisfaction Outcome Studies specifically designed for use with consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Beginning with FY 2007, ADRS administrative staff and the Arkansas Communication Plus+ research team adapted key elements of the three approaches in the construction of an ADRS Deaf Consumer Satisfaction Survey Instrument (see Appendix A). The revised survey instrument was designed to parallel the ADRS VR Services Satisfaction Survey and selected adaptations introduced by the Questionnaire for Blind or Visually Impaired Consumers, and added questions specifically designed for deaf and hard of hearing consumers. Consumers were also asked to rate their satisfaction level with various services received as part of their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE); other questions were asked relative to ADRS' staff speed of arranging services and consumers' feelings regarding their level of independence. Drawing from the experiences of those annual surveys, a number of methodological revisions have been made each year to the research questionnaire to further simplify the wording and terminology in order to make the questions more readily presented in American Sign Language (ASL) for face-to-face and video telephone interviews with Deaf consumers whose preferred mode of communication is ASL. The research team has surveyed over 2,700 deaf and hard of hearing consumers over the previous seven years (FY 2007-2013), averaging a 53 percent response rate.

Methodology of Deaf Consumer Outcome Satisfaction Study in 2014

Four questions were added in FY 2013 regarding consumer satisfaction with their caseload counselor (Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf-RCD). A copy of the additional four items can be seen in the FY 2014 Questionnaire located in Appendices A and B (i.e., Q6, Q7, Q8 & Q9). In addition, the agency asked that consumers closed "not rehabilitated" (i.e., closed without an employment outcome for reasons such as declined services, unable to locate or contact, moved, etc.) also be surveyed as part of the consumer satisfaction study. FY 2013 represented the first year that both -- rehabilitated and not rehabilitated -- deaf and hard of hearing consumers closed by ADRS were surveyed.

In FY 2014, ADRS Deaf Services provided two separate monthly lists of Deaf and hard of hearing consumers whose cases were closed in "Status 26" (rehabilitated) and/or "Status 28" (not-rehabilitated) during Fiscal Year. The research team received a total of 745 unduplicated consumer names and addresses to contact for research interviews. Contact information was obtained via ADRS R-911 files that contained summary data on all individual closures during the year. The data files provided contact information along with a recommendation by the case counselor(s) about which communication approach might prove most productive for the individual consumer. The research team utilized individual file data to locate, contact and invite these 745 consumers to participate in the FY 2014 study. To accommodate the wide range of communication preferences of Deaf and hard of hearing consumers, the research team established five different approaches to data collection:

1. Mail questionnaires;
2. Online questionnaires using Survey Monkey survey methodologies;
3. Telephone interviews;
4. Video Phone (VP) interview protocols using American Sign Language; and
5. Face-to-face interviews using American Sign Language.

Drawing from our prior experience conducting these annual surveys, contact was initiated by mailing a cover letter along with the research questionnaire to all consumers immediately upon receiving their contact information. Both groups receive the same questionnaire. This step has facilitated and otherwise enhanced consumer participation by providing timely visual/printed information at first contact in order to inform and otherwise invite consumers to participate in the study prior to their receiving subsequent requests to conduct telephone, online and Video Phone interviews.

A minimum of three attempts were made to locate and administer the survey questionnaire to all 745 ADRS Deaf and hard of hearing consumers who we invited to participate in the study during FY 2014. A combination of one or more of the five approaches to data collection was used. Survey contacts were implemented for a new cohort of consumers each month upon receipt of ADRS RSA 911 data files for Deaf, Deaf Blind and Hard of Hearing consumers whose cases had been closed in "Status 26 or Status 28" by the agency the previous month. Efforts were made to programmatically call, contact, or mail each consumer on three or more occasions from November 1, 2013 to January 28, 2015. Consumers were given the opportunity to decline participation or terminate the interview or questionnaire at any time.

Of the 745 consumer names provided by ADRS, 218 (29%) were not traceable or reachable due to problems with their telephone or Video Phone numbers, incorrect or out-of-date postal, street, or email addresses and relocations with no forwarding contact information. Six of the consumers were deceased and significant numbers had been inactive, their case files reflecting client failure to keep appointments or to follow through, considered uncooperative, were ruled ineligible for various reasons or were closed because consumers had severed contact with VR or moved out of state. Many had remained inactive for extended periods of time before being closed in status 28 during FY 2014. It was not surprising that 159 or almost 53 percent of the 300 non-rehabilitated and 59 (13%) of the 445 rehabilitated cases that had been inactive for an extended period of time were unreachable. We were able to locate 527 of the 745 closed cases (71%), by using various

combinations of the five different survey approaches, but were unable, despite multiple attempts, to locate and interview more than half of the not-rehabilitated closed cases.

Postal mail and online survey methodologies have proven effective with hard of hearing consumers who experience difficulty on the telephone. Many frequently request or take the option of completing a mail survey. For Deaf consumers, the use of face-to-face interviews via Video Phones (VP) interviews is a highly effective approach with those consumers who prefer to communicate using ASL as their primary mode of communication. Efforts in prior years to encourage Deaf ASL users to interview by VP stimulated a higher response rate by this group over the past several years.

Completed interviews or questionnaires were collected from 276 consumers. Results discussed in this report are based on information provided by 276 respondents (52%) out of 527 closed cases we were able to locate. Of the 276 respondents, 221 (80%) were closed as "rehabilitated" and 55 (20%) were closed as "not rehabilitated." A majority of the respondents (168; 61%) completed and returned research questionnaires either by e-mail or postal mail. The other 108 (39%) research questionnaires were completed by consumers who had participated in either a combination of live face-to-face interviews via Video Phone and telephone interviews or completed online questionnaires. When removing the consumers who were unreachable (218 out of 745 or 29%) due to problems with their contact phone numbers and postal and email addresses, the overall response rate for the FY 2014 Deaf Consumer Outcome Satisfaction Study was 52.3% as responses were received from 276 of 527 consumers. A substantially higher percentage of the rehabilitated consumers than the non-rehabilitated successfully tracked completed the survey interviews or questionnaires (57% and 39%, respectively).

Compared to the much higher response rates (e.g., 58, 60, 57, and 68 percent) attained in the prior seven years, the survey has experienced a much more difficult time the past two years locating and conducting interviews with consumers. In part, the drop in response rates can be explained by the addition of large numbers on consumers who were closed as "not rehabilitated." Approximately 50 - 60 percent of the FY 2013 and 2014 not rehabilitated consumer groups have represented cases that had been dormant for extended periods of time, moved out of the area/state, were found ineligible, or failed to follow through on their VR program. A number of the not rehabilitated respondents also reported they got lost in the staff changes that were taking place at ADRS as a new generation of RCDs and direct service staff were replacing their previous counselors who were retiring. In addition, prevailing economic and labor market issues appear to have discouraged some consumers from participating in these annual follow up studies. When questioned about their personal situation in life and work, it seemed that some were struggling to hold onto what they had and did not have the more positive outlook on future work and life prospects that characterized many consumers in prior years. We remain optimistic, however, that as the economy and labor markets are more stabilized, the new generation of ADRS RCDs and staff will empower future consumers to more effectively achieve their employment goals and stimulate a more positive outlook on life and work.

Table 3

**Combined Databases: ADRS Fiscal Year Closures in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014
Study of ADRS Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Outcome Satisfaction**

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services	TOTAL	FY 2014	FY 2013	FY 2012	FY 2011
Population Sample	2,215	745	600	426	444
Completed Interview or Questionnaire	1,032	276	243	245	268
4-Year Response Rate	49%	37%	41%	58%	60%

IV. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FY 2014 CONSUMER RESPONDENTS

An overview of the demographics of the 276 consumers who responded to the survey is summarized in Table 4. The response rates achieved here -- in terms of gender, race, age, and degree of hearing loss -- are generally consistent with what are commonly found in large-scale population survey research. Females were more likely to respond than males, and older consumers were more likely to respond than younger consumers. As in FY 2013, Deaf consumers whose preferred mode of communication was in American Sign Language (ASL) or other visual modalities had a “percent completed” response rate higher (i.e., of 47.8%) than for those who were hard of hearing while consumers with adult onset hearing losses had the highest rate of response (81.3%). Older consumers over the age of 50 had proportionately higher response rates than younger persons – regardless of gender, race, or degree of hearing loss. Table 4, along with Figures 1-6, which follow below provide a demographic profile of the 276 consumers who participated in the FY 2014 ADRS survey.

Table 4
Demographics of Respondents versus Non-Respondents in 2014
N: 745

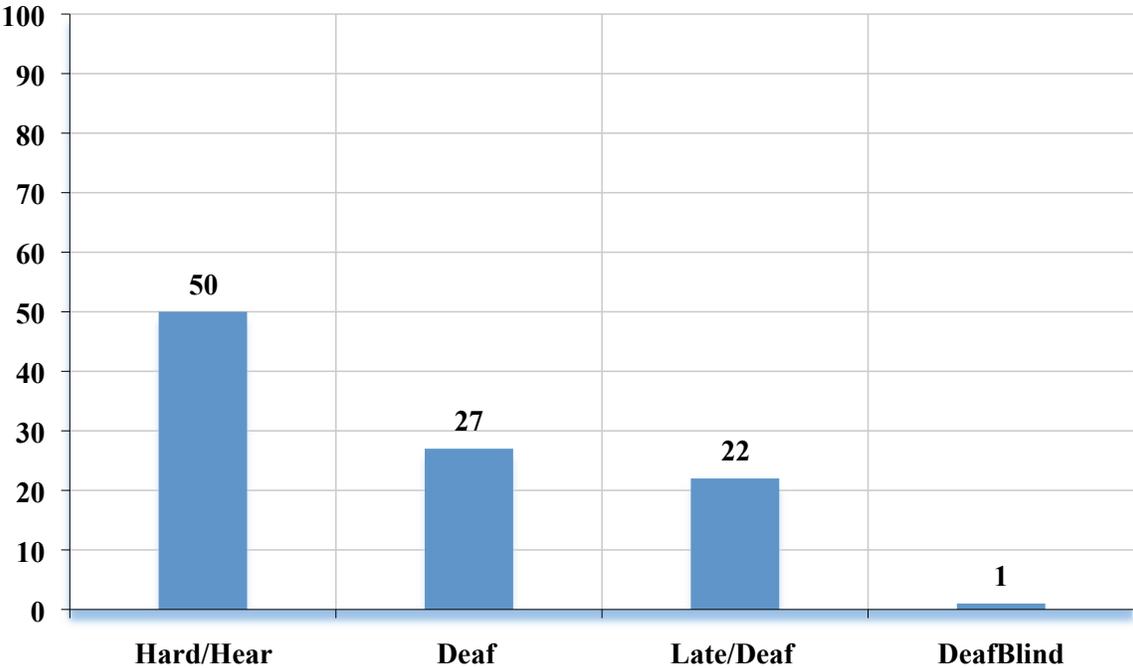
Variable	Number of Closed Cases ^a	Number of Respondents ^a	Percent Responded % ^{a,b}
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>N=745</u>	N=276	<u>37%</u>
Male N: 331	331	109	32.9
Female N: 414	414	167	40.3
<i>Race</i>			
Black/African American	212	63	29.7
White	519	206	39.6
Other	14	07	50.0
<i>Hearing Status</i>			
Deaf	157	75	47.8
Hard of Hearing	499	137	27.5
Adult Onset Deafness	75	61	81.3
Deaf-Blindness	14	04	28.6
<i>Age</i>			
Under 30	175	38	21.7
30-39	121	36	29.7
40-49	149	61	40.9
50-59	167	77	46.1
60-and above	107	63	58.9

Note: ^a Total number of consumer closed cases and the number of respondents are listed in the first two columns and the percentages of the population that responded are listed in the third column.

Note:^b Non-respondent numbers and percentages included closed cases of consumers who could not be located due to combination of disconnected phones, bad postal or e-mail addresses. The response rate from the consumers who could be located was **52.3 percent: 276 of 527 consumers successfully tracked.**

Figure 1

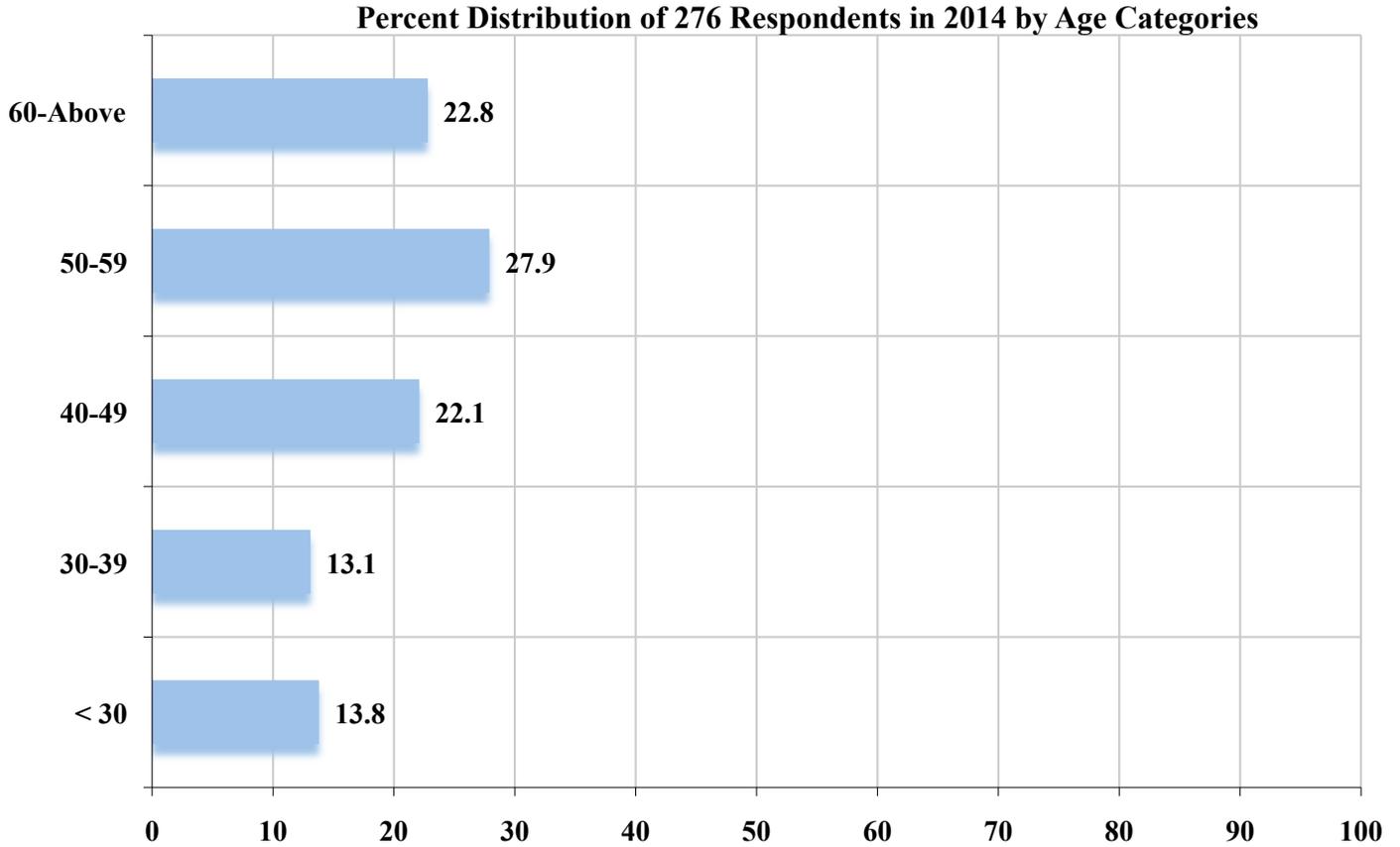
**Percent Distribution of 276 Respondents in 2014
by Type of Hearing Loss**



Hearing Status

Consumers were asked to describe their hearing loss in terms of how severe their loss was. Of the 276 respondents, 137 (50%) described themselves as hard of hearing while 75 (27%) described themselves as Deaf and 61 (22%) indicated they had severe adult onset hearing losses (Late Deafened). Four respondents (1%) described themselves as Deaf-Blind.

Figure 2

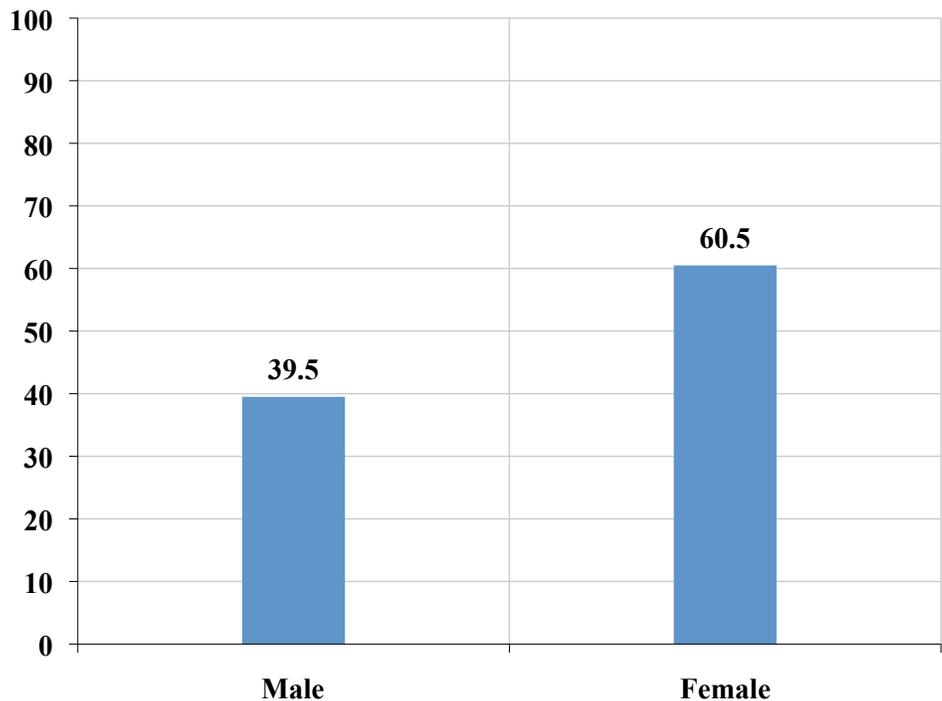


Age Distribution by Category

The current age of the 276 respondents was obtained from their RSA 911 data forms. Reviews of the age distributions indicate that: 48.9% were below 50 years of age, 13.8% were below age 30, and another 13.1% were between ages 30-39 and 22.1% were between the ages of 40 and 49. Slightly more than half (50.7%) of the respondents were above 50 years of age: 27.8% were between the ages of 50 and 59, followed by 22.8% who were 60 and above.

Figure 3

**Percentage Distribution of 276 Respondents in 2014
by Gender**

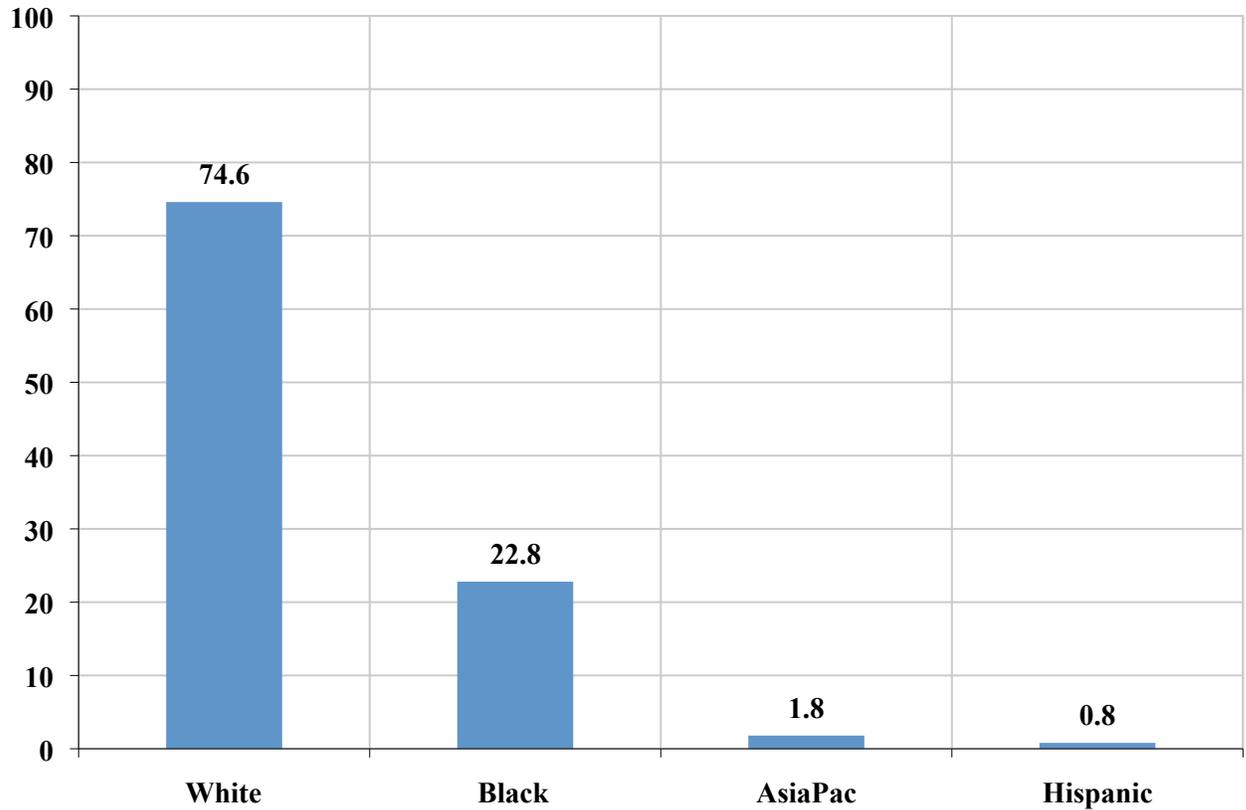


Gender

More female consumer respondents participated in the outcome survey than male. A total of 60.5% consumer respondents were female while 39.5% of the respondents were male.

Figure 4

**Percentage Distribution of 276 Respondents
by Race or Ethnicity**

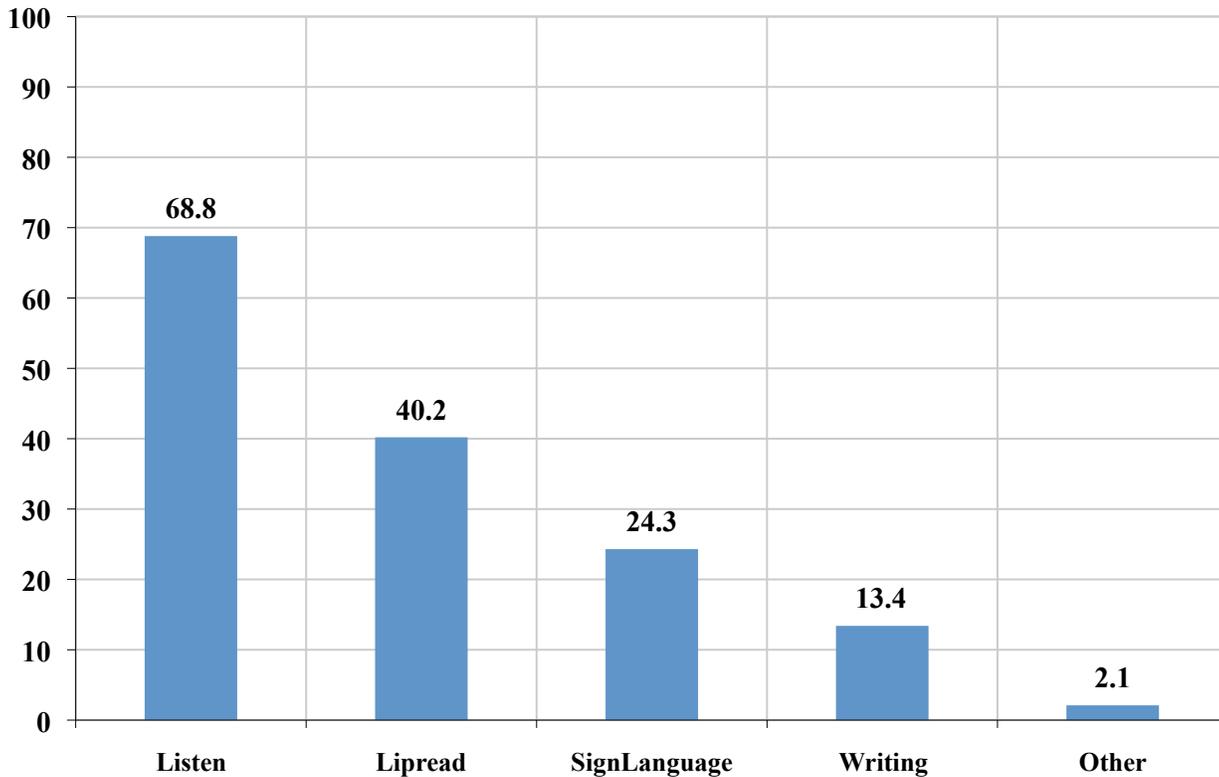


Race or Ethnicity

The data for race or ethnicity of the 276 respondents were obtained from their RSA 911 data forms provided by ADRS. A total of 206 or 74.6% were White. A total of 63 consumers (22.8%) were coded as Black. Five respondents (1.8%) were coded as Asian or Pacific Islanders, and two respondents were coded as Hispanic (0.8%).

Figure 5

Percentage Distribution of 276 Respondents' Self-Report of Communication Preferences in 2014

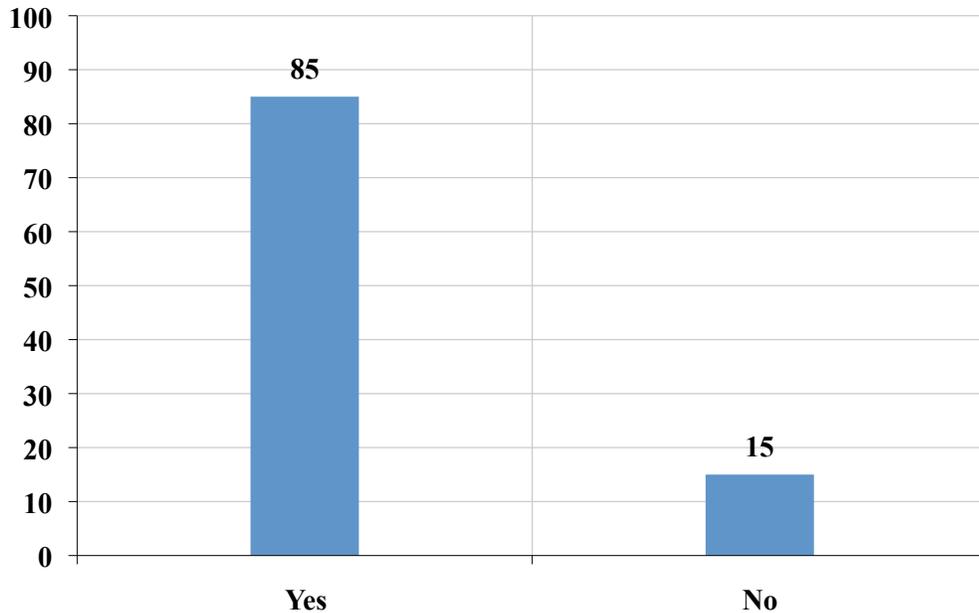


Communication Preferences

Each consumer was asked how he or she preferred to communicate. Many indicated they used a combination of communication modalities and reported using multiple approaches so that the percentage totals reported in Figure 5 exceeds 100 percent. More than 2/3 of the respondents (68.8%) reported speaking and listening as their primary means of communication while 40.2% indicated they frequently used speech or lip-reading. Sign language was the communication preference for 24.3% and 13.4% reported they frequently used writing or other (2.1%) combination of communication modalities depending on the situation.

Figure 6

Percentage of 276 Respondents who Reported Using Hearing Aids or other ALDs in 2014



Use of Assistive Listening Devices

Asked whether they use a hearing aid, cochlear implant or other assistive hearing devices (ALDs), 233 (85%) consumers responded in the affirmative while 41 (15%) reported they did not use assistive listening devices. A vast majority of the respondents reported that ADRS provision of auditory assessment, fitting and training in use of hearing aids and related assistive hearing devices made a significant difference in their lives. Many identified the acquisition of highly superior expertise in audiological testing and fitting for hearing aids and other critical ALDs as one of the most important benefits they received from ADRS.

Table 5

**Percent Distribution of 276 Respondents' Ratings of:
How well Can You Hear with Best Correction and Amplification**

Can You Hear and Understand when Another Person:	Percent who can hear and understand speech when using Amplification	
	Yes	No
Shouts to you	71.3%	28.6%
Speaks loudly	75.6%	24.4%
Talks normal	37.8%	62.2%
Whispers	1.8%	98.2%

Self-Report of Hearing Ability with Amplification

Asked how well they can hear and understand speech in different situations and loudness, 243 people responded to this item. Only about a third of the consumer's report they can hear and understand normal conversational speech--even with the best amplification. Approximately 62% or 171 consumers reported they could not hear and understand normal speech but could hear and understand if people spoke loud enough. Approximately 71% reported they retained some combination of functional hearing for environmental sound awareness. These findings indicate that the 2014 consumers, on average, reported they had severe hearing losses.

V. CONSUMER RATINGS OF SATISFACTION WITH COUNSELOR

This section of the report provides data on which ADRS VR offices and which counselors served the 276 consumers who responded to the 2014 survey on consumer satisfaction. Data in Table 6 show the number and percentage of consumer closed rehabilitated by various VR offices. Next, Table 7 shows the number and percentage of the respondents served by the counselors who are assigned caseloads of consumers who are Deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened or deaf-blind.

Regional VR Offices that Served the FY 2014 Consumers

ADRS consumer respondents with hearing loss reported receiving services through 15 different RCDs and 13 general VR counselor and their support teams. These VR counselors met and worked with consumers in 11 ADRS regional and satellite office locations.

Table 6

**Which VR office served ADRS Deaf and Hard of Hearing Respondents Closed in FY 2014
N: 276 Respondents**

ADRS Office	Frequency	Percent
Birmingham	43	15.6
Decatur	23	8.3
Dothan	18	6.5
Gadsden	30	10.9
Huntsville	08	2.9
Mobile	57	20.7
Montgomery	29	10.5
Muscle Shoals	12	4.3
Opelika	27	9.8
Talladega	19	6.9
Tuscaloosa	10	3.6
Total	276	100.0

RCDs in the Mobile offices served the largest number of consumer respondents, followed by the Homewood Birmingham, Gadsden, Montgomery and Opelika offices. Fifty-seven (20.7%) respondents received services at Mobile, 43 (15.6%) respondents were served by Homewood, while Gadsden served 30 (10.9%) and 29 respondents (10.5%) were closed by Montgomery. Opelika served 27 (9.8%), Decatur served 23 (8.3%), followed by the 19 (6.9%) closed by Talladega. Dothan closed 18 (6.5%), followed by the 12 (4.3%) served in the Muscle Shoals program. Ten (3.6%) of the consumers were served by the Tuscaloosa office and Huntsville served eight (2.9%) of the 276 respondents in FY 2014.

Major ADRS Turnover with New RCDs and Supervisory Personnel Statewide

Over the past several years, major RCD staff turnover took place in about half the regional offices as senior RCDs have retired, died or were promoted to new positions in Decatur, Homewood, Montgomery, Tuscaloosa, Talladega and Mobile. Those vacancies have been filled by a new generation of RCDs, along with additional audiological, interpreting and job placement staff. Equally significant is the promotion of former RCDs to head up regional office leadership positions in Decatur, Montgomery and Mobile. In addition, 13 general counselors served an individual Deaf-Blind consumer that was included in the FY 2014 survey. Four of the 13 Deaf-Blind consumers responded to the survey. Most of these cases were consumers with a combination of significant dual vision and hearing losses. Four different offices closed those four respondents: Homewood, Tuscaloosa, Decatur and Mobile offices.

Table 7

276 Consumer Respondents were from Caseloads of 15 RCDs and 4 General VR Counselor in 2014

19 Counselors who Closed Cases in FY 2014	# Respondents By Counselor	Percent
11-10A	22	7.9
11-10B	8	3.2
11-10C	11	3.9
41-10A	18	6.5
41-10B	11	3.9
41-10 C	18	6.5
41-10D	27	9.7
51-10A	30	10.8
51-10B	19	6.9
51-10C	16	5.7
51-10D	20	7.2
51-10E	9	3.2
51-10F	24	8.7
61-10A	20	7.2
61-10B	20	7.2
04 General RCs	4	1.5
Total	276	100.0

Table 8 and Figures 7-10 in the following pages present an item by item report on how these consumers rated their level of satisfaction with the RCD who served as their caseload counselor. We then present Figures 11-20 and Table 9 that provide a summative table of ratings by 276 ADRS Deaf and hard of hearing respondents of their satisfaction with staff performance in providing VR services to consumers whose cases were closed in FY 2014.

Satisfaction with VR Counselor

Consumer satisfaction with their counselors (as reported below in Table 8 and Table 9 and supplemented by Figures 7-16) was assessed with a subscale adapted from the Vocational Rehabilitation Consumer Satisfaction Instrument (CSI) developed by Capella (2004). Our previous field test of her original 18 items, 5-point Likert scale indicated it was not a good fit for our target groups. We scaled it back to a ten item, 3-point likert scale (Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree) which works much better with consumers who are Deaf (Watson, January 29, 2008: *Report to ADRS: FY 2007 Deaf Consumer Outcome Satisfaction Study*). Since we are not using the standardized CSI scale, we do not calculate positive and negative score values for the ratings scale. Instead we use +1, +2, and +3 scaled score for the 3-point scale (the lower the inverse scaled score, the better the satisfaction rating).

The Annual Consumer Satisfaction Survey now assesses additional Counselor Items

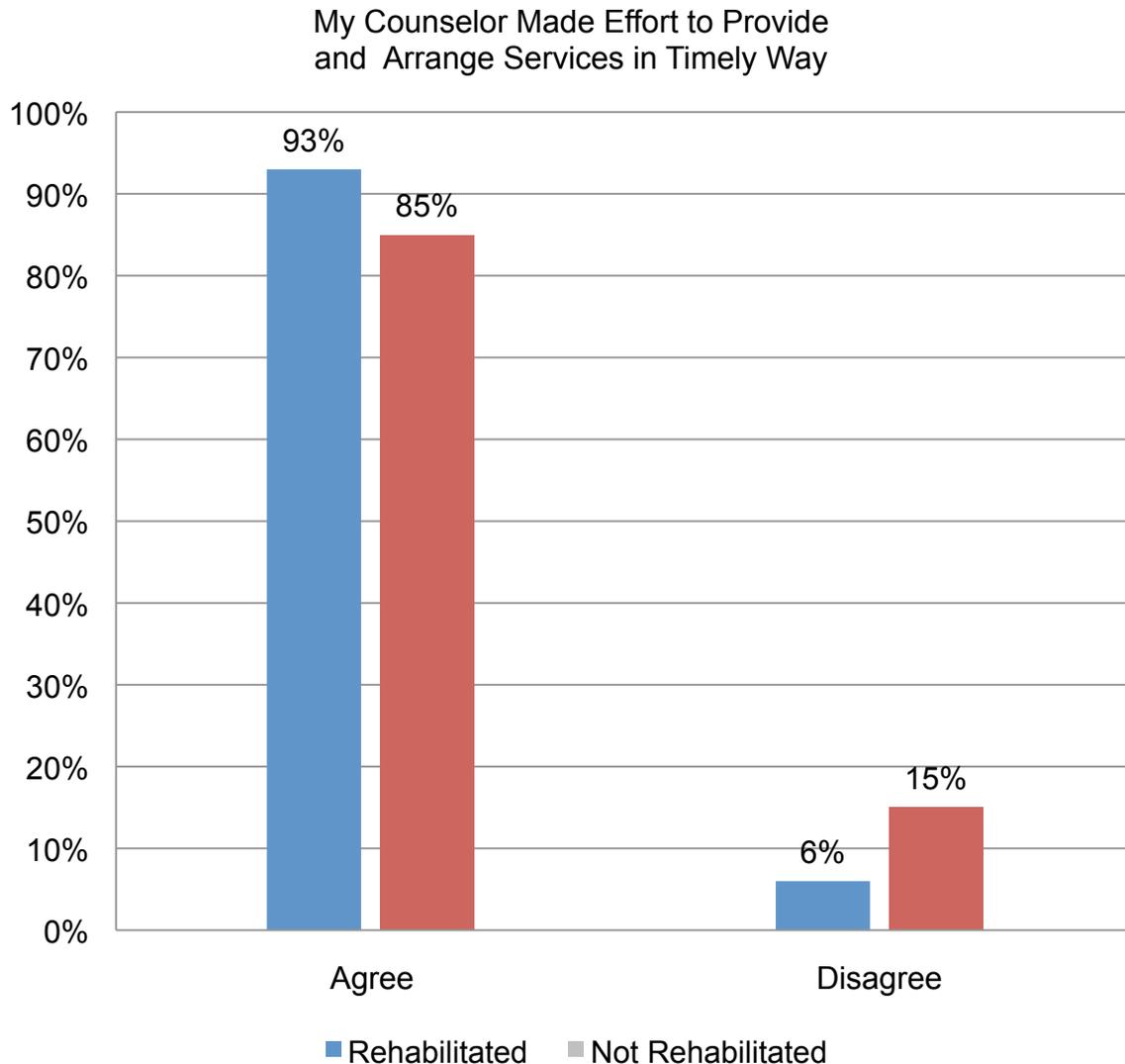
Four additional counselor items (Questions # 6, 7, 8 & 9) added to the survey for FY 2013 have been retained and will be featured in all future consumer outcome satisfaction surveys. These questions were asked of all Deaf, Deaf Blind and hard of hearing consumers whose cases were closed. Consumers were asked to assess their satisfaction with their caseload counselor. The four questions and their results for FY 2014 are provided in Table 8 and Figures 7-10 below.

Table 8
Counselor Satisfaction Items in 2014 (N=276)

Item	Percent “Yes” Rehabilitated	Percent “Yes” Not Rehabilitated
Did your VR Counselor make an effort to provide and arrange services to you in a timely manner?	93.2	85.2
Did your VR Counselor involve you when planning services to reach your employment goal?	92.7	70.4
Were you able to contact your VR Counselor when needed?	91.4	66.7
Did your VR Counselor treat you with courtesy and respect during your program?	97.3	88.9

These four questions were designed to focus on the consumer's experiences and satisfaction with their VR caseload counselor (RCD). The four additional items (e.g., Table 8 and Figures 7, 8, 9 & 10) expand upon a broader series of 10 questions (e.g., Figures 11- 20 and Tables 9 & 10) that asked about consumer' satisfaction with the overall VR staff, including their VR counselor. Since the VR counselor/consumer relationship is at the core of the VR process, the quality and effectiveness of that relationship is crucial to the success of the program. Recognition of that unique qualitative factor led to the decision to add the four questions in the annual ADRS Consumer Outcome Satisfaction Surveys. Adding these items allow us to assess and monitor the qualitative aspects of the client/counselor relationship as distinct from the overall VR program staff and support personnel that are addressed in a second set of 10 questions.

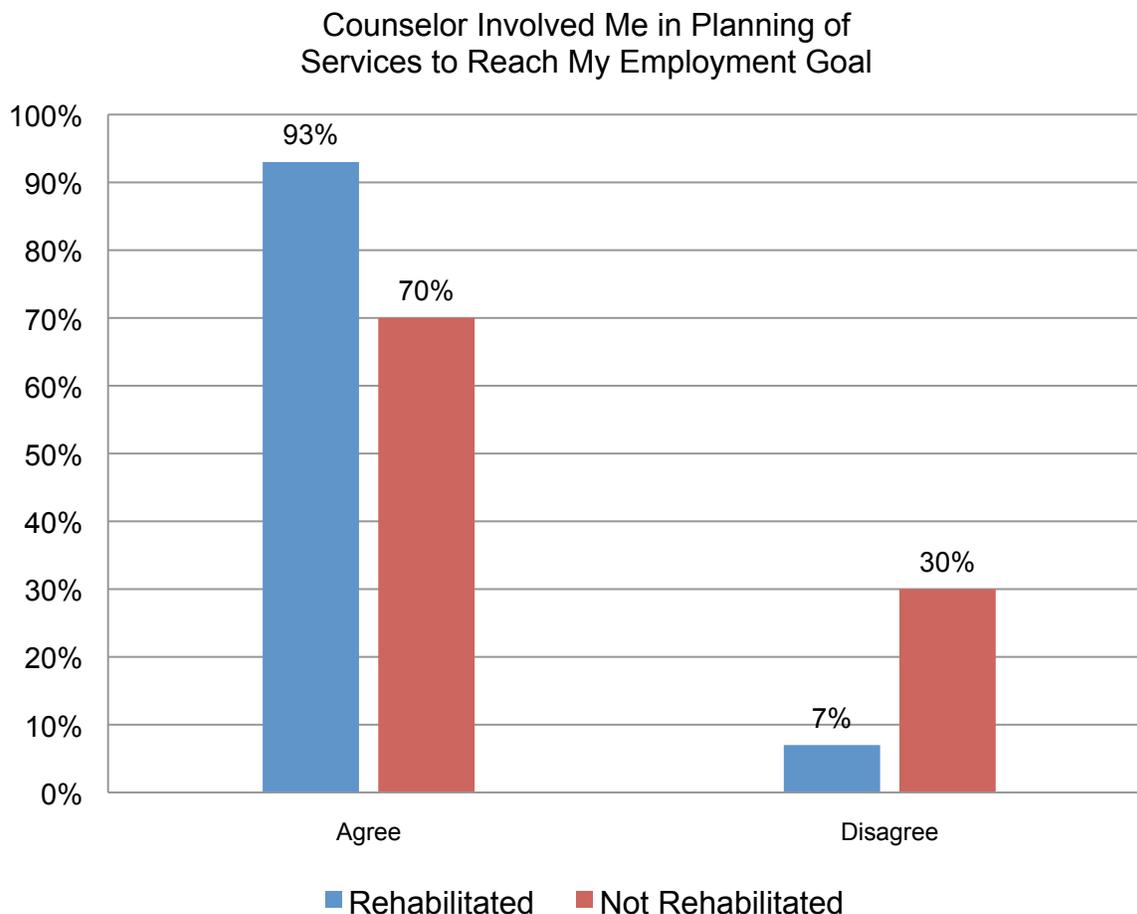
Figure 7



Did VR Counselor make an effort to provide & arrange services for you in a timely way?

Of the 276 consumer respondents, 205 (93%) of the Rehabilitated, but only 46 (85%) of the Not Rehabilitated reported their VR counselor made an effort to provide and arrange services in a timely and effective way. Combined together 251 (91%) of the two cohorts agreed that their counselor made positive efforts. Of the 23 respondents (8.3%) who reported that their VR counselor did not make the effort, 15 (6% of 221) were in the Rehabilitated cohort and 8 (15% of 55) were from the Not Rehabilitated group. In effect, one of every six Not Rehabilitated respondents believed their RCDs did not make their best efforts on the consumer's behalf.

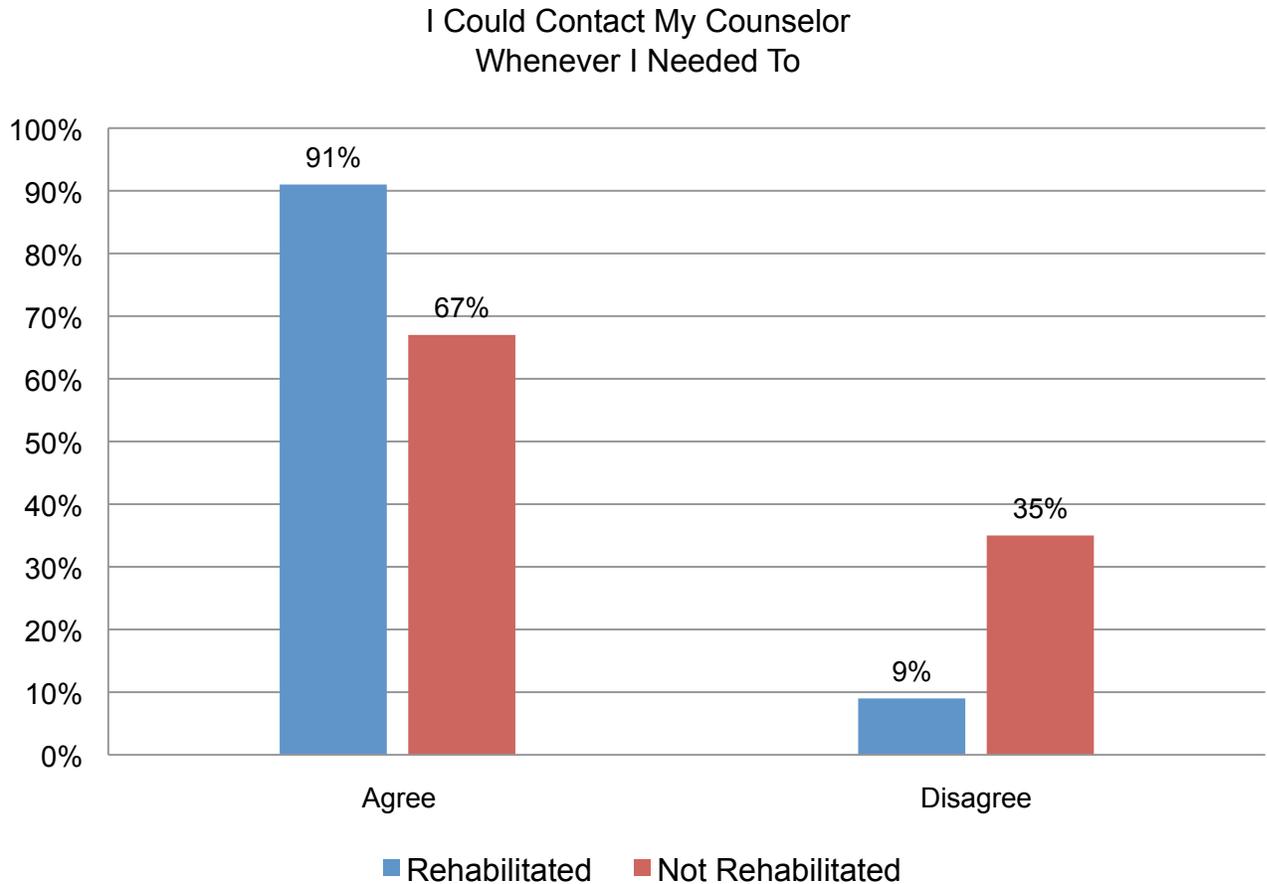
Figure 8



VR Counselor made an effort to involve the 276 consumers in planning of services to reach their employment goal

Two hundred and four (93%) of the Rehabilitated, but only 39 (70%) of the Not Rehabilitated agreed that their counselor made efforts to involve them in planning of services to reach their employment goal. Combined together 243 (87.6%) consumers agreed that their VR counselor made an effort to involve them in exploring and planning services designed to assist them reach their employment goals. Thirty-two (11.5%) respondents did not agree their counselors involved them in the process: 16 (7.3% of 221) were in the Rehabilitated group and 16 (29.6% of 55) were from the Not Rehabilitated cohort. Many of these consumers indicated that ADRS needs to make sure RCD counselors are consistently proactive in taking steps to assure that consumers are directly and meaningfully involved in making the key decisions toward setting up steps and procedures to reach the consumer's employment goals.

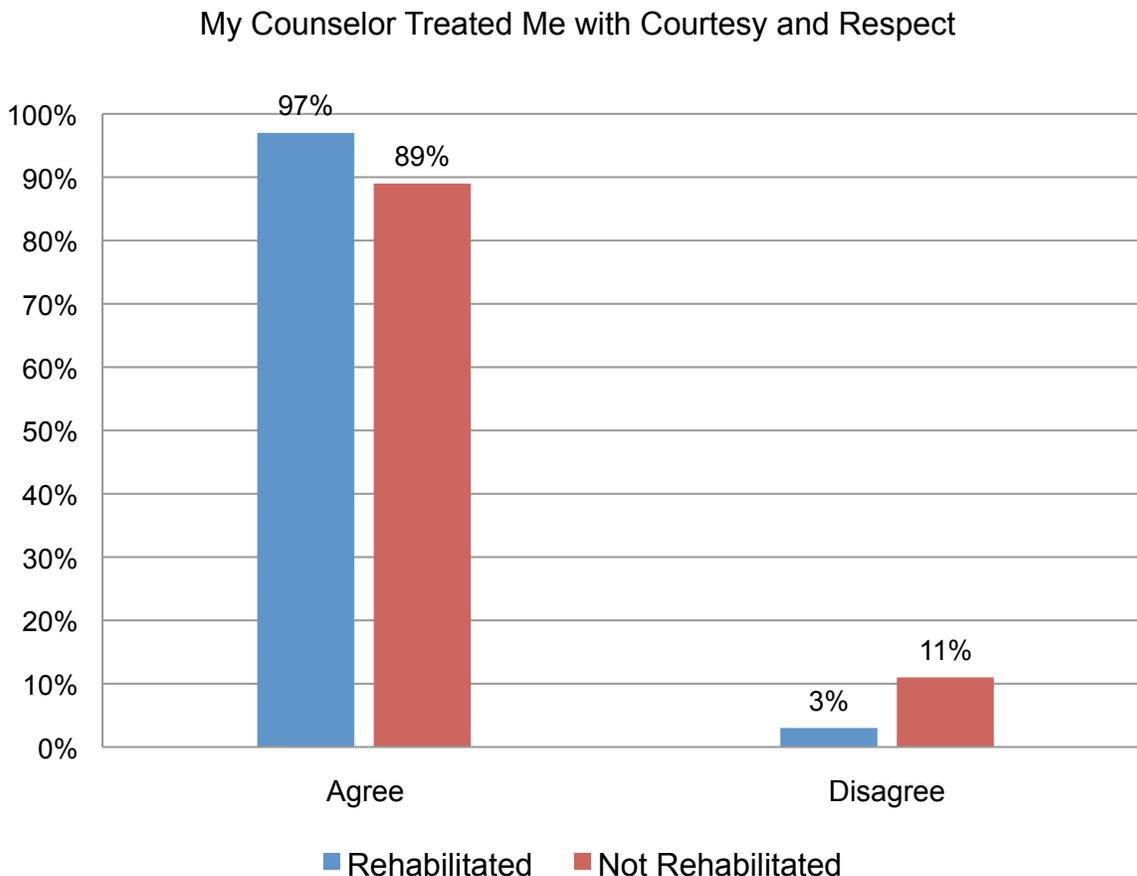
Figure 9



Were you able to contact your VR Counselor when needed ?

Two hundred and two (91%) of the 221 Rehabilitated, compared to 36 (67%) of the 55 Not Rehabilitated agree that consumers were able to contact their counselor when they need to do so. Two hundred and thirty-eight (86.2%) of the two combined consumer cohorts agreed that they were able to contact their VR counselor whenever they needed to make contact. An even number of respondents --19 (9% of 221) in the Rehabilitated group and 19 (35% of 55) of the Not Rehabilitated reported that too many (13% of 276) consumers are not able to make contact with their counselors on an as-needed basis during their VR program. Most of these consumers pointed to their inability to make timely, as-needed contact with their VR counselor posed a major detriment to their progress toward reaching their employment goals.

Figure 10

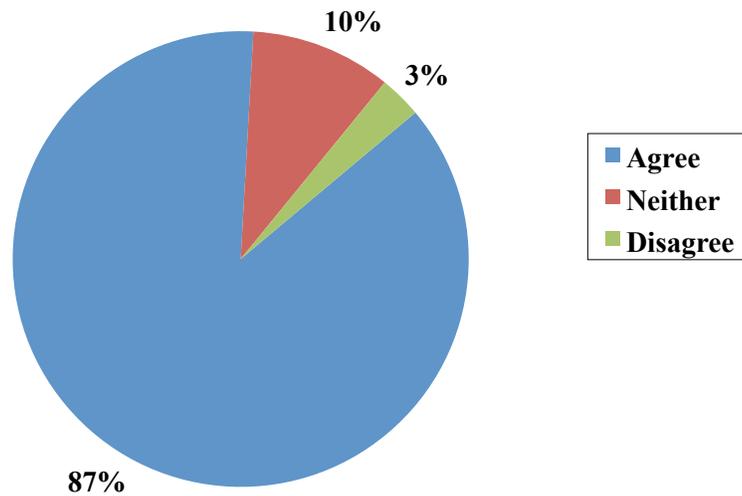


Did your VR Counselor treat you with courtesy and respect during your VR program?

When asked if their counselor treated them with courtesy and respect throughout their VR program, 215 (97%) of the 221 Rehabilitated and 49 (89%) Not Rehabilitated respondents were affirmative. Only six Rehabilitated respondents (3% of 221) and six (11% of 55) of those Not Rehabilitated reported that their ADRS caseload counselor failed to demonstrate acceptable levels of courtesy and respect during their contacts and interactions during their VR program. Overall, a much larger percentage of the two respondent groups indicated that they thought their caseload counselor and staff could and should have been more courteous and respectful to them. However, 264 (95.6%) of the combined consumer groups reported that: "although there were some problems, most VR counselors generally treated them with courtesy and respect during their VR program."

Figure 11

Percentage of 265 who say ADRS Staff were easy to work with

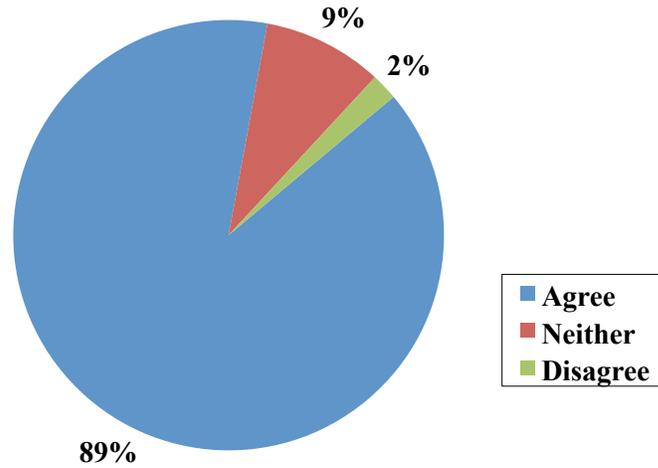


The ADRS VR staff was easy to work with

In addition to their rating their experience with VR counselors (Figures 7-10 above), consumers were also asked how they would rate their level of satisfaction with the ADRS staff who served them. A combined total of 231 (87%) of the respondents reported the ADRS staff were easy to work with while 26 (10%) respondents neither agreed nor disagreed and eight (3%) consumers disagreed.

Figure 12

Percentage of 265 who say VR Staff Asked Me About My Needs

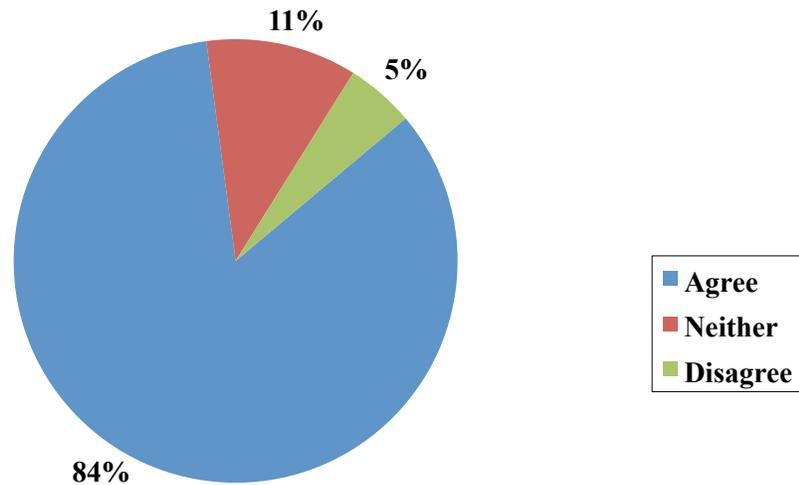


VR staff asked me about my needs

A combined total of 237 (89%) consumers agreed with the statement that “VR staff asked about my needs.” Twenty-five (9%) consumers neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement while four (2%) did not agree with the statement that VR staff asked about their needs.

Figure 13

Percentage who say that VR Staff Encouraged and Supported Me

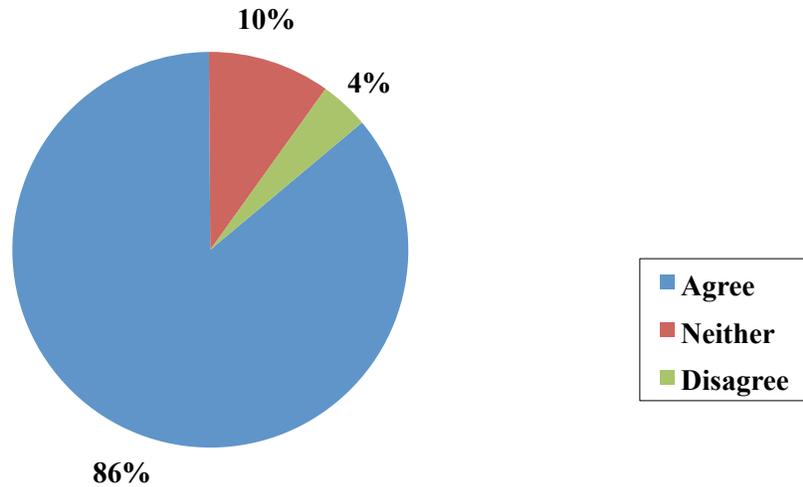


VR staff encouraged and supported me

When asked if “VR staff encouraged me and supported me,” 225 of 265 consumers (84%) in the combined respondent groups agreed that VR staff had been supportive. Twenty-eight (11%) of the respondents stated they neither agreed nor disagreed and 12 (5%) disagreed with the statement. Almost half (42%) of the 48 Not Rehabilitated respondents to this item reported they did not perceive their RCD nor VR staff as a source of encouragement and support, leading to their eventually being closed as Not Rehabilitated. Comparable reports by 20 (10%) of those closed as Rehabilitated likewise indicated that they were successful in spite of not feeling fully encouraged or supported by the VR counselor and team.

Figure 14

Percentage of 265 who say that VR Staff Knew How To Work With Deaf and Hard Of Hearing People Like Me

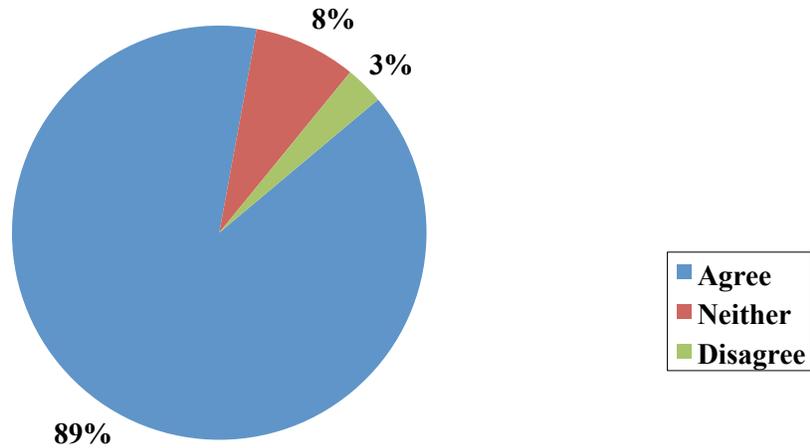


VR staff knows how to work with deaf and hard of hearing people

When asked if “VR staff knew how to work with deaf and hard of hearing people like me,” 228 (86%) of the combined groups of respondents reported they agreed with the statement. Twenty-seven (10%) consumers stated they neither agreed nor disagreed while 10 (4%) disagreed. It should be noted that 60 percent (22 of the 37 negative ratings for this item) were reported by consumers closed as Rehabilitated and 40 percent (15 of 37 negative ratings) by Not Rehabilitated respondents. It is also worth noting that none of the Deaf Blind consumer respondents perceived their counselor or staff as not knowing how to serve consumers with combined visual and hearing disabilities.

Figure 15

Percentage of 264 who say that VR Staff respected me

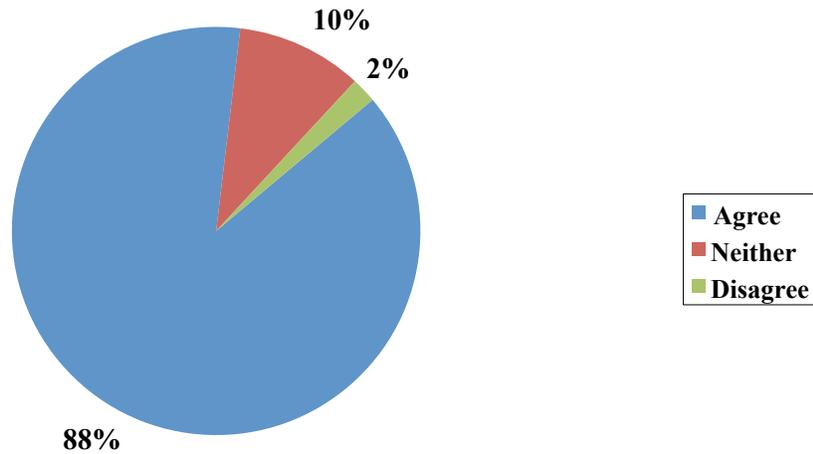


VR staff showed respect to me

When asked if “VR staff respected me,” 235 (89%) of the overall number of respondents (264) who rated this item agreed that the VR staff they worked with had demonstrated respect to them. Twenty-one (8%) of the respondents reported they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement while seven (3%) reported that based on their experience, they disagreed with the statement.

Figure 16

Percentage of 265 who say VR Staff Asked About My Work Interests and Needs To Plan My Services

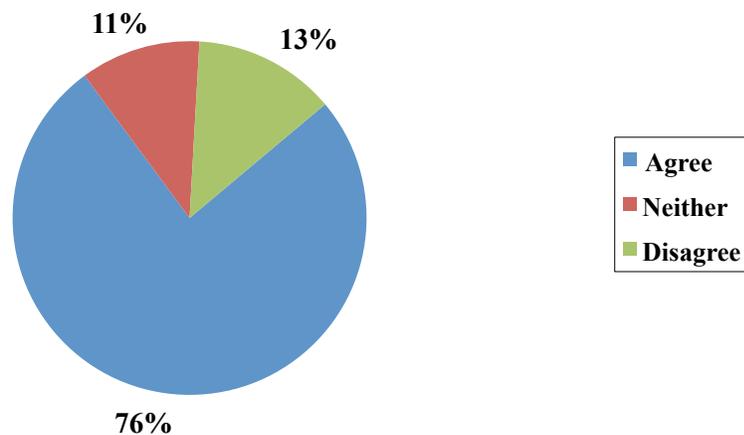


VR staff asked about my work interests and plans

A vast majority of the consumers agreed that VR staff asked about their work interests and needs in the planning of their VR program of services. Two hundred and thirty-three (88%) reported their VR counselors asked about the consumer's interests and goals. Twenty-seven (10%) of the consumers neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement while five (2%) disagreed with the statement. Noting that 18 (8%) of the 217 Rehabilitated respondents had given negative reports on this item, we followed up for elaboration and found that: generally, many were already employed consumers who had successfully obtained assistance with their progressive hearing loss issues in order to retain existing employment and not to search for new career opportunities.

Figure 17

Percentage of 265 who say VR Staff Returned My Phone Calls within 72 Hours (TDD, VP, Email, or IM)

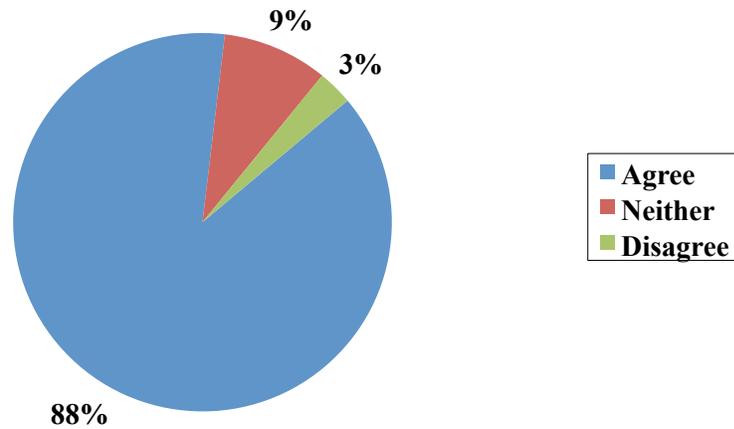


VR staff quickly returned calls within 72 hours

When asked how quickly VR staff returned phone calls, TDD, VP, Email or AIM calls, 204 of 265 respondents (76%) reported they agreed that their calls were returned in a timely fashion. However, 28 (11%) of the consumers stated they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement about timely return calls and 33 (13%) of the consumers disagreed with the statement that VR staff quickly returned their calls within a reasonable time period (i.e., 72 hours). These ratings are consistent with feedback from previous annual surveys (i.e., previous seven-year period of FY 2007-FY 2013 that point to approximately one-quarter of respondents report they had major problems reaching and/or receiving timely call-backs from their RCDs and related VR staff.

Figure 18

**Percentage of 264 who say
VR Staff Had A Positive Attitude Toward Me**

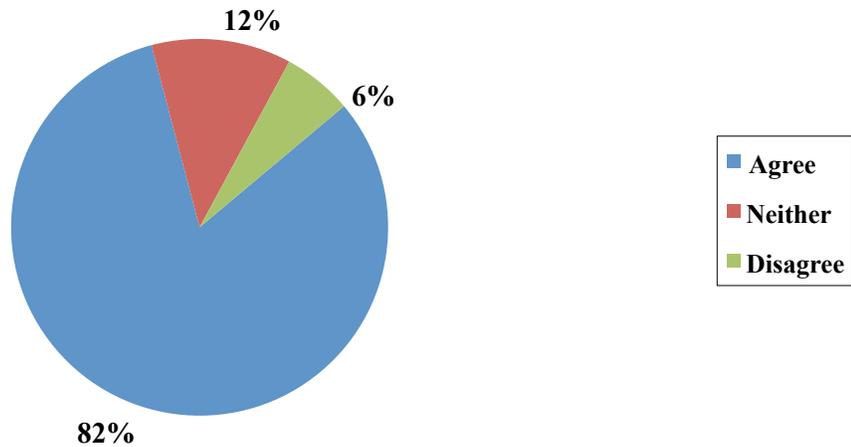


VR staff attitude toward me

When asked if “VR staff had a positive attitude toward me,” 232 (88%) of 264 consumers said they agreed with the statement. Twenty-four (9%) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and nine (3%), mostly from the Not Rehabilitated group, disagreed.

Figure 19

Percentage of 265 who say VR Staff Did What They Said They Would In My Rehabilitation Plan (Followed Through)

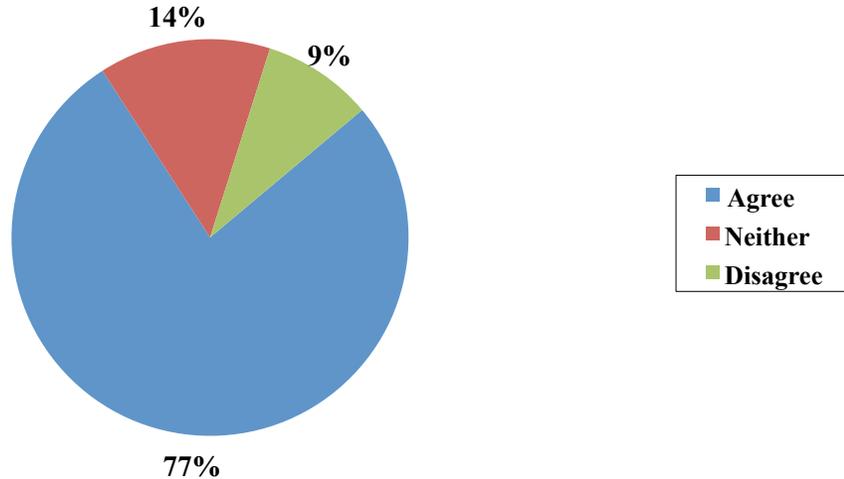


Did VR staff follow through to do what they said they would do?

Two Hundred and eighteen (82%) of the 265 respondent consumers said they believed “VR staff did what they said they would do in my rehabilitation plan.” Thirty-one (12%) of the consumers neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement while 17 (6%), including equal numbers from both groups reported that they disagreed.

Figure 20

Percentage of 264 who say VR staff did all they could to help me find or keep my job



VR staff did all they could to help me find or keep my job

A total of 203 (77%) of 264 respondents agreed with the statement that: “VR staff did everything they could to help the consumer find or keep a job.” Thirty-six (14%) of the consumers neither agreed nor disagreed while 25 (9%) disagreed with the statement. A large number (35 of 216), representing over 16 percent of the Rehabilitated group contributed to the "Neither and/or Disagree" categories on this item. Likewise, 54 percent (26 of the 48) of Rehabilitated respondents to this item expressed their dissatisfaction. Many indicated they applied for VR assistance to "prepare for and find them a job" and were discouraged to discover the VR program instead required excessive/considerable time and energy up front devoted to navigating the VR process and long periods of 'hurry up and wait' for paperwork, testing, etc., etc. for documentation of eligibility instead of timely and expedient assistance toward the toward goal of preparing themselves for success in today's rapidly changing job market.

Table 9

**Recap of 276 Consumer Ratings of their Experience in Working with ADRS Staff:
FY 2014***

Rate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by checking the box:	Agree	Neither	Disagree
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
VR staff was easy to work with.	231 (87%)	26 (10%)	8 (3%)
VR staff asked me about my needs.	237 (89%)	25 (9%)	4 (2%)
VR staff encouraged me and supported me.	223 (84%)	28 (11%)	12 (5%)
VR staff knew how to work with deaf and hard of hearing people like me.	228 (86%)	27 (10%)	10 (4%)
VR staff respected me.	235 (89%)	21 (8%)	7 (3%)
VR staff asked about my work interests and needs to plan my services.	233 (88%)	27 (10%)	5 (2%)
VR staff quickly returned my phone calls within 72 hours (Text, TDD, VP, Email, IM)	204 (76%)	28 (11%)	33 (13%)
VR staff had a positive attitude towards me.	232 (88%)	24 (9%)	9 (3%)
VR staff did what they said they would do in my rehabilitation plan (followed through on it)	218 (82%)	31 (12%)	17 (6%)
VR staff did everything they could to help me find (or keep) a job.	203 (77%)	36 (14%)	25 (9%)

* **Note:** 221 Rehabilitated and 55 Not Rehabilitated consumer ratings of their experiences with ADRS staff are presented in additional detail in Appendix B (page 92) and Table 16 (on page 77) so readers can further analyze the differences in staff ratings between the two groups of consumers.

Discussion of Key Findings from the Counselor Satisfaction Inventory

Analysis of the response patterns of the 276 Deaf, Deaf Blind and hard of hearing consumers indicate that overall most consumers were satisfied with the performance of their counselors. (Tables 9 on the previous page and 10 on the next page present a summation of their ratings for the past Fiscal Year). This year, eight items received an 80% or higher level of satisfaction (agree) related to relationships between the consumers and their VR staff such as:

- VR staff respected me (89%);
- VR staff asked me about my needs (89%);
- VR staff had a positive attitude towards me (88%);
- VR staff asked about my work interests and needs in order to plan my services (88);
- VR staff was easy to work with (87%);
- VR staff knew how to work with deaf & hard of hearing people like me (86%);
- VR staff encouraged me and supported me (84%); and
- VR staff did what they said they would do in my rehabilitation plan (82%).

The items that received the least satisfying (Disagree) ratings had to do counselors or staff timely performance of specific tasks or actions such as:

- VR staff quickly returned my phone calls (TDD, VP, E-mail, or IM) (76%) and
- VR staff did everything they could do to help me keep or find a job (77%)

In view of the comparable ratings of satisfaction respondents expressed across the rating scale, no group comparisons were conducted on overall Satisfaction with Counselor ratings. However, as this is the second fiscal year that we have surveyed Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf blind consumers who ADRS closed as Not Rehabilitated, we are appending a series of tables that presents the reader an opportunity to further examine detailed comparative data on the two groups (see, Appendix B). Our survey interviews with the Not Rehabilitated core group consistently finds many acknowledge their appreciation for the VR services they received, but continue to struggle with the reality that rehabilitation services had not and probably cannot restore their hearing and their work and social communication capabilities to the degree they had hoped it could. Younger workers, particularly those who are seeking employment for the first time, represent a disproportionate percentage of the cases being closed as Not Rehabilitated. In FY 2014, for example, more than 81 Deaf consumers (27%) were represented in the 300 cases closed in this status. Prevalence rates would lead us to estimate that there would be one Deaf person per every 15-20 of those with significant hearing losses, or about 20 in a group of 300 persons with hearing losses. The RSA files of many of the closed deaf cases are replete with case notes about lost opportunities, immaturity, lack of understanding of the VR process, poor communication, missed appointments, and countless other reasons too many are closed as Not Rehabilitated. Many appear to be struggling with disincentives to investing themselves in the VR process - expressing distress with the prospects of employment in entry-level jobs with low pay and no benefits and what they perceive as limited opportunities for career track jobs. Many are receiving SSI benefits which equal or exceed potential earnings if they go to work.

Table 10

RCD Performance Outcomes for 2014: Satisfaction with Counselor Inventory^{a, b, c}

Counselor Caseload Number	# Closed	Completed Survey		Total Counselor Rating Scale			Score Per Item			Range of Scores	
		#	%	N*	Mean	SD	N*	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
11-10A	43	22	51.1	22	10.00	0.0	22	1.00	.00	10.00	10.00
11-10B	26	08	30.8	08	13.90	5.9	08	1.39	.59	11.70	13.90
11-10C	45	12	26.6	12	10.10	4.0	12	1.01	.04	10.00	11.30
41-10A	45	18	40.0	18	11.50	3.9	18	1.15	.39	10.00	12.70
41-10B	40	18	45.0	18	11.30	3.6	18	1.13	.36	10.60	12.40
41-10C	41	11	26.8	11	11.60	4.7	11	1.16	.47	10.00	12.20
41-10D	68	27	39.7	27	11.20	2.9	27	1.12	.29	10.00	14.70
51-10A	57	30	52.6	30	11.30	3.6	30	1.13	.36	10.00	13.20
51-10B	86	19	22.1	19	12.70	5.8	19	1.27	.58	10.80	16.20
51-10C	36	16	44.4	16	11.50	3.9	16	1.15	.39	10.00	14.60
51-10D	42	20	47.6	20	10.40	1.2	20	1.04	.12	10.00	13.30
51-10E	39	09	23.0	09	10.01	4.0	09	1.01	.04	10.00	11.40
51-10F	58	22	37.9	22	11.80	4.2	22	1.18	.42	11.20	14.70
61-10A	58	20	34.5	20	10.50	2.1	20	1.05	.21	10.00	11.60
61-10B	48	20	41.7	20	12.20	4.6	20	1.22	.46	11.70	13.30
13General	13	04	31.0	04	11.60	4.8	04	1.60	.48	10.00	15.00
TOTAL	745	276	37.0	276	11.60	3.70	276	1.16	.37	10.34	13.16

Note^a The 276 consumers closed by ADRS counselors represent those consumer cases whose RSA 911 closure data was provided to the research team over a 12-month period during FY 2014. Responses were obtained from 276 of the 745 consumers with hearing loss who were closed as Rehabilitated (N: 445) or Not Rehabilitated (N: 300) by ADRS' VR program in FY 2014. Survey data was obtained from 221 (49.6% of 445) Rehabilitated and 55 (18.3% of 300) Not Rehabilitated respondents.

Note^b Counselors with general caseload assignments closed 13 cases. Responses were obtained from four of these 13 hard of hearing-visually impaired and Deaf-Blind consumers served by general counselors in Homewood, Decatur, Tuscaloosa and Mobile.

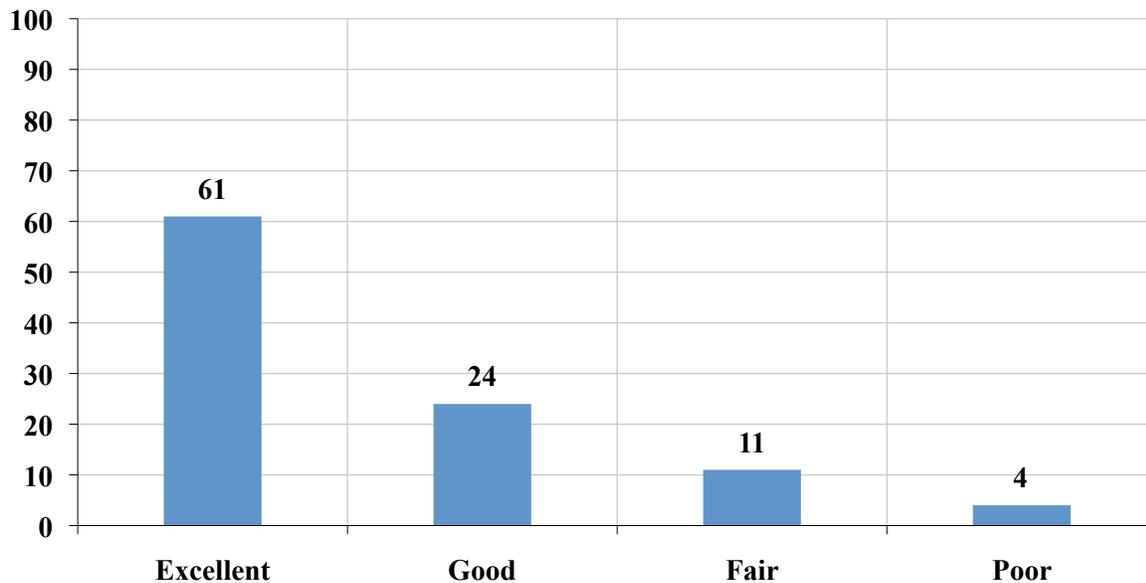
Note^c Contact information and data provided by ADRS for 745 consumers closed in FY 2014 by RCDs and general counselors were used to successfully locate and obtain completed questionnaires from 276 consumers with hearing loss for an overall response rate of 27% (276 Respondents and 469 Non-Respondents). If we deduct the 218 consumers (23.5%) who had undeliverable postal mail and Email addresses or disconnected telephone numbers, the overall response rate for consumers we could successfully locate and interview for the survey in FY 2014 was 52.3 percent (276 respondents out of 527 with valid and viable contact data).

Satisfaction Level with Overall Experience in their ADRS Program

In addition to rating their satisfaction with their VR counselor (Tables 9 & 10), respondents were also asked to provide an overall rating regarding their experience with the ADRS VR program staff. They were asked to provide ratings on: how well they communicated with their rehabilitation counselor and the VR team (Figure 21), how satisfied they were overall with their rehabilitation staff (Figure 22), how involved they were in planning their own VR program (Figure 23), whether they received all the VR services they felt they needed (Figure 24), and how satisfied were they with the speed at which services were provided (Figure 25).

Figure 21
N: 268

How Well do You Think You and VR Staff Communicated? Percentage % Ratings

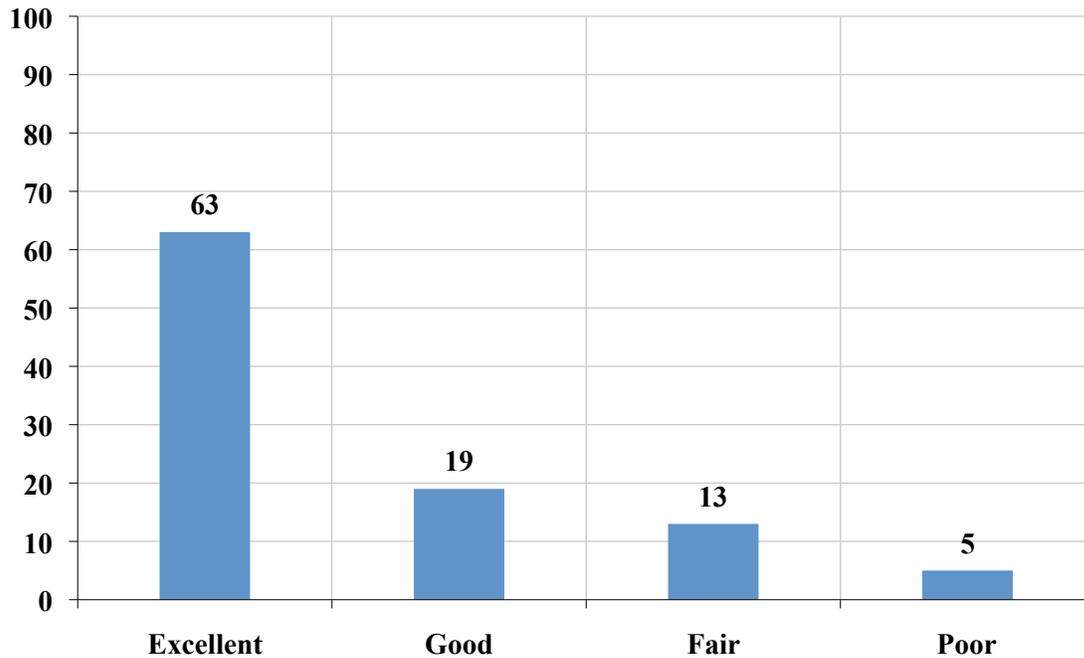


How well do you think you and VR staff communicated?

Asked how well they thought they and VR staff communicated, out of 268 consumers, 164 respondents (61%) rated their communication with VR staff as being excellent and 64 (24%) rated their communication as good. On the less positive side, 28 (11%) consumers rated their communication experiences as fair and 12 (3%) reported they experienced poor communication.

Figure 22
N: 268

**Overall, How Satisfied Were You
With Your VR Staff?
Percentage % Ratings**

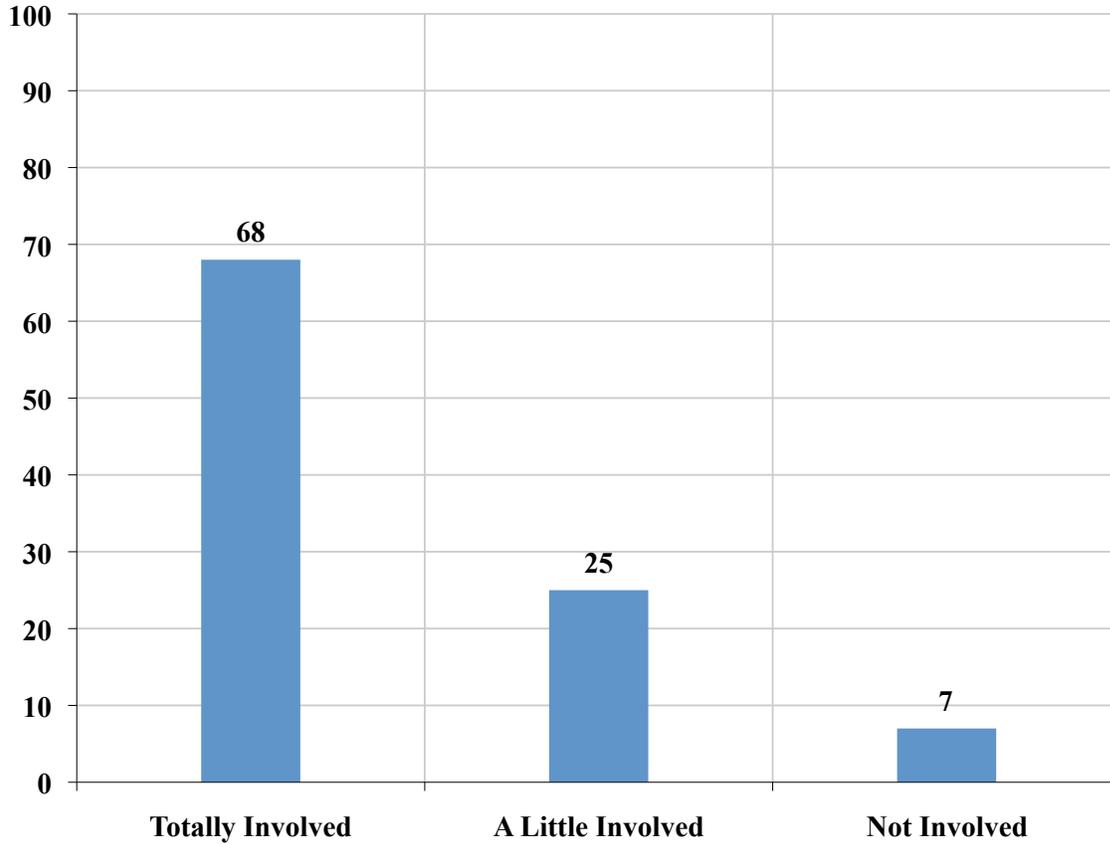


Overall, how satisfied were you with your VR staff?

Asked to rate how satisfied they were with their VR staff overall, 168 (63%) of 268 respondents reported their VR staff were excellent; 52 (19%) rated their staff as good while 34 (13%) rated them fair. A smaller group of 14 respondents (5%) rated their level of satisfaction with their VR staff as poor.

Figure 23
N: 269

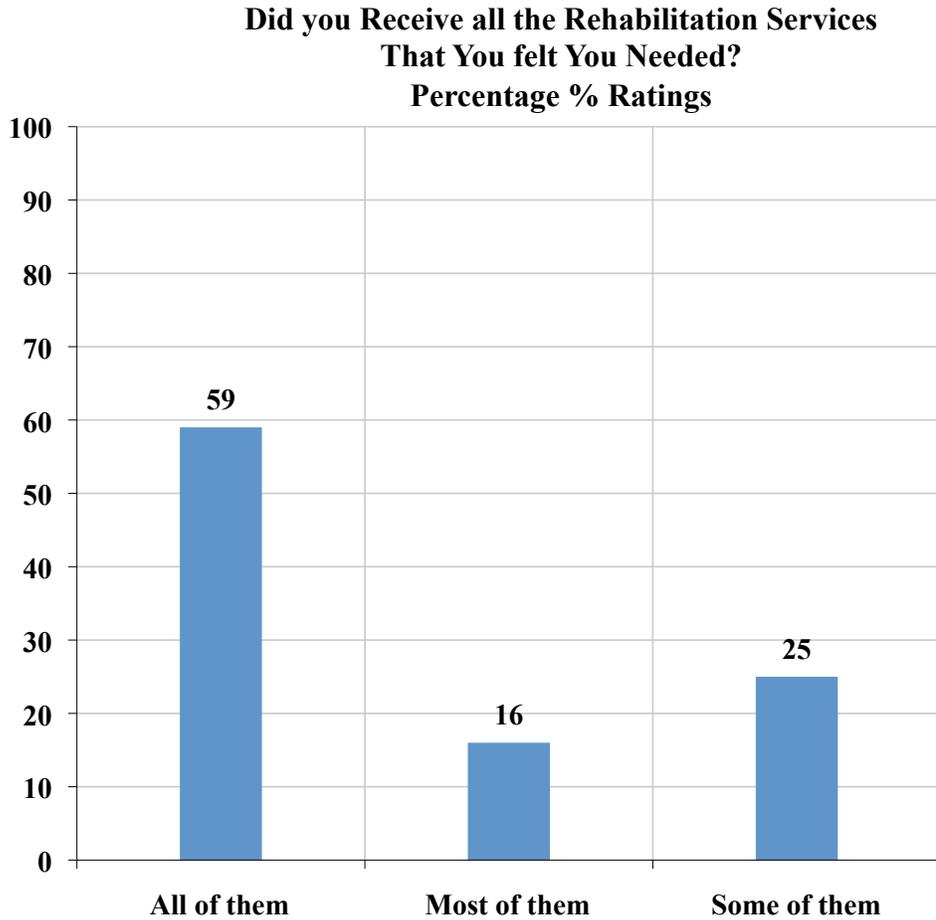
**How Involved Were You In Planning
Your Rehabilitation Program (Contract)?
Percentage % Ratings**



How involved were you in planning your own VR program?

Altogether, 269 respondents provided input for this item. Asked how involved they were in planning their own VR program, 184 consumers (68%) reported they were totally involved. Sixty-six respondents (25%) reported they were a little involved while 19 (7%) of the consumers reported they were not all that involved in planning their VR program.

Figure 24
N: 267

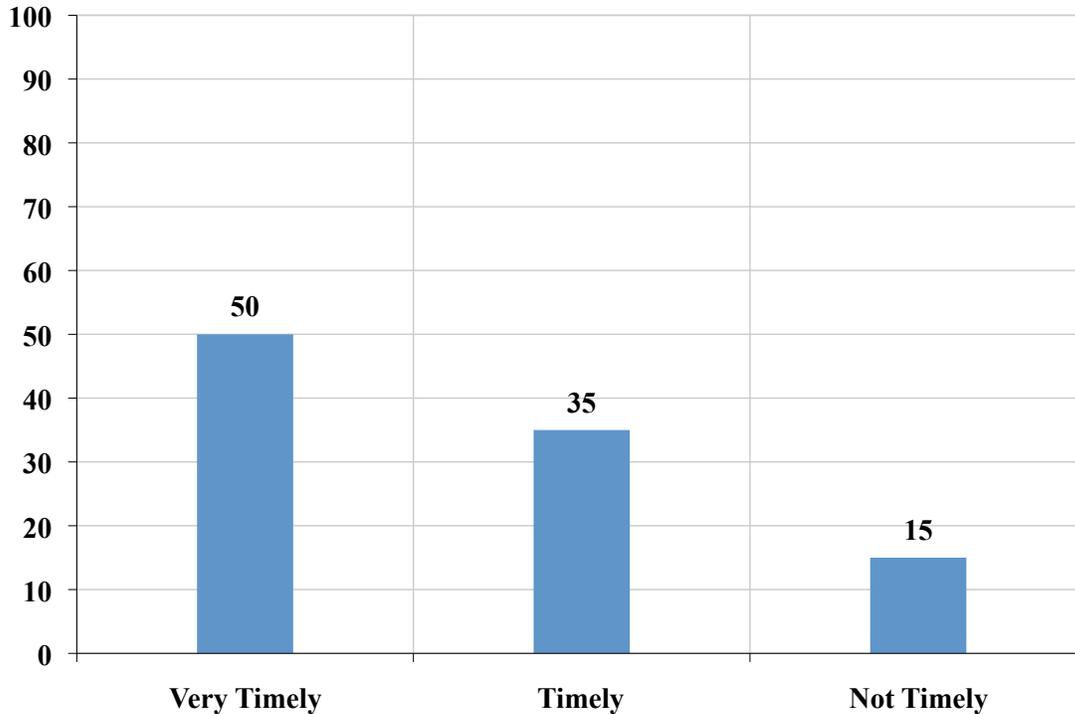


Did you receive all the rehabilitation services that you felt you needed?

Following the questions related to services provided, consumers were asked whether they received all of the rehabilitation services that they felt they needed. Two hundred and sixty-seven responded to this item, with 158 (59%) reporting they received all the rehabilitation services they needed. Forty-two consumers (16%) reported receiving most of the services they needed. A third group of 67 consumers (25%) reported they only received some of the services they felt they needed.

Figure 25
N: 266

**Would you say speed of arranging services was:
Percentage % Ratings**



Speed of Arranging Services

Each respondent was asked to characterize the speed at which services were arranged. Of the 266 responses to this item, 225 (85%) expressed satisfaction with the overall speed in which services were arranged. Of that consumer group, 133 (50%) indicated that services were arranged in a very timely manner while another 92 (35%) indicated they thought services were arranged in a timely manner. By way of contrast, 41 (15%) reported that the speed of service delivery was not timely enough for them.

VI. CONSUMER SATISFACTION WITH REHABILITATION SERVICES

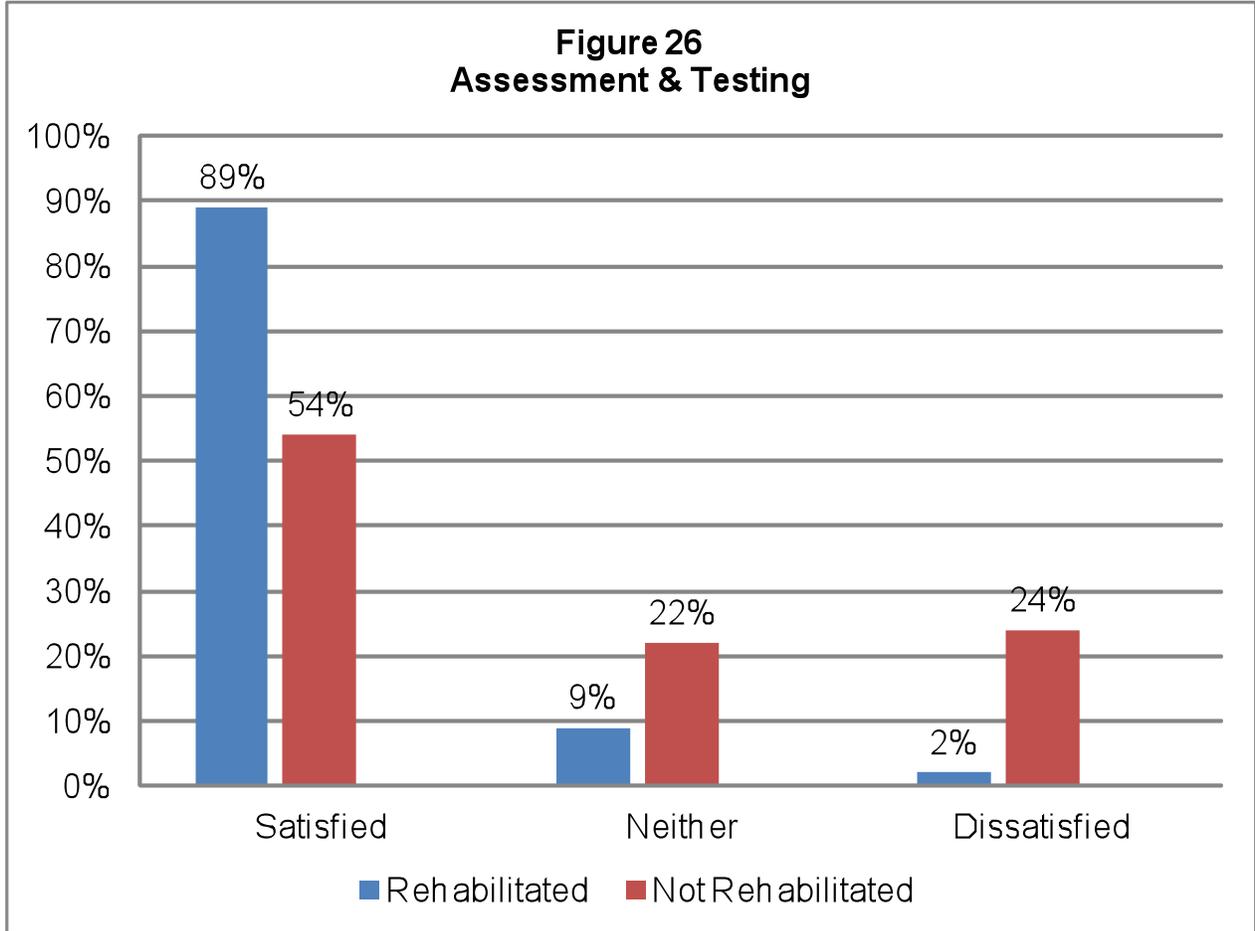
Consumers were next asked a series of questions about their satisfaction level with each of ten specific categories of VR services they may have received from ADRS. Their responses for each service category are presented in Figures 26-37 and Table 11 on the following pages. As in previous years, a majority of consumers do not respond to the question regarding the “Did Not Receive” category. This pattern is especially prevalent among the postal mail and E-mail respondents who routinely provide responses for only specific categories of service that they received or remember and do not deal with other service categories. More important, though, our interactions with consumers reveal that many consumers simply do not recognize that they received particular categories of assistance; for example: numerous respondents talk about positive and beneficial relationships with their VR counselors, but then remark or indicate that they did not receive "VR counseling and guidance services!" When questioned about various services they had received but not rated, some come to realize that they had misconstrued the question and some proceeded to change their responses accordingly during the survey interview.

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction level with each of the specific services that they received from ADRS. Their responses (for each service category are provided in the form of bar charts and a narrative description on the following pages. In the charts, results are divided by type of closure when at least 5 people in each category responded to the item. In the narrative description, results are reported overall, for both groups combined. When significant differences between the groups are noted in satisfaction for a service, this will be discussed in the narrative. A common pattern found on our consumer ratings of staff and services the past several years is that consumers who have encountered post-service life and work difficulties are more likely to report being “satisfied” rather than “very satisfied” with their VR experience, compared to consumers who feel they are doing well by the time they are surveyed. Some respondents provide positive staff and service satisfaction ratings but then use open ended questions to write in strongly worded comments of dissatisfaction regarding their experience with VR services.

For the purposes of this report, responses are organized in a format that provides a listing only of those respondents who indicated they received a specific category of service. Responses to the “did not receive” category were not used in calculating the percentage totals for consumer ratings of satisfaction reported in Figures 26-37.

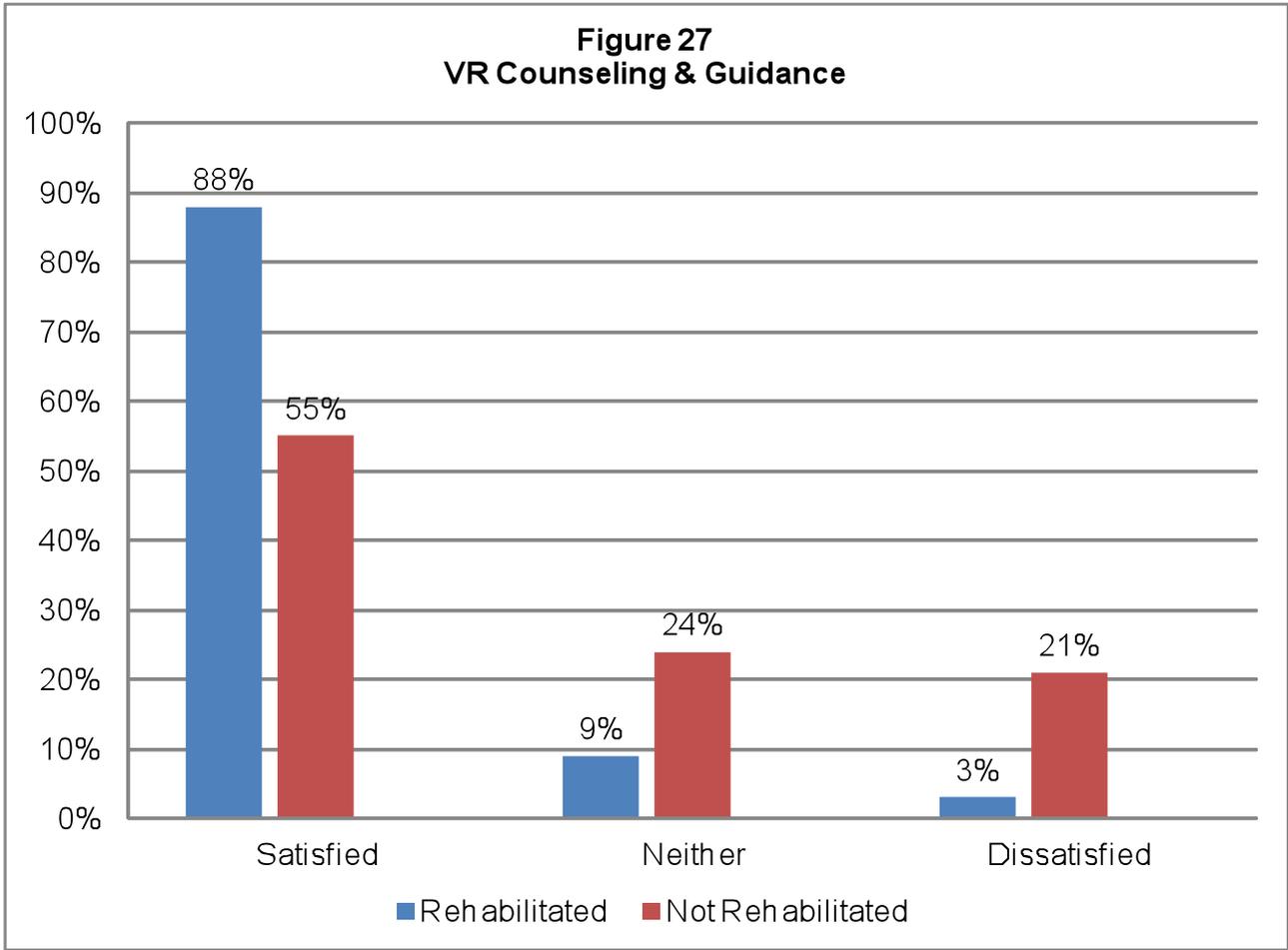
This section of the report closes with Table 11 that presents a summary comparison of consumer satisfaction levels with the various VR service categories. The table provides a comparison of the percentage of respondents satisfied with each category of services they received in FY 2014.

**Satisfaction with Specific Types of Services
Percentage % Ratings of Service**



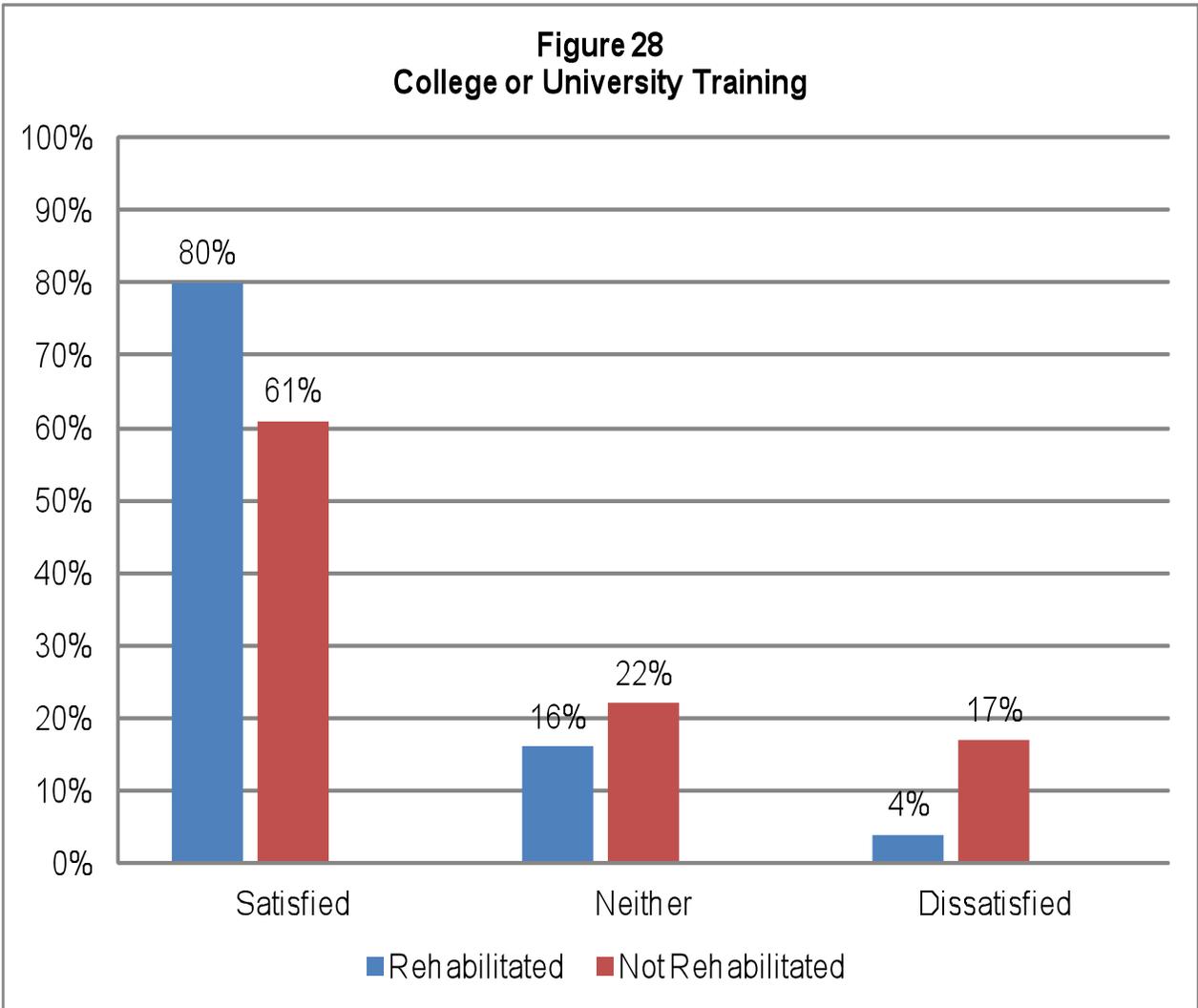
Satisfaction with Assessment & Testing

Each consumer was asked to describe their level of satisfaction with the various services they received as part of their rehabilitation program. Of the 276 completed research protocols, 221 respondents reported receiving assessment and testing services. Ratings by Rehabilitated consumers indicate that 165 (89%) of 185 reported they were satisfied with the services; 16 consumers (9%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their assessment services while three (2%) were dissatisfied. Not Rehabilitated consumers reported that 20 (54%) of 37 tested were satisfied, eight (22%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and nine (24%) were dissatisfied. As in prior years a significant number of respondents who were highly satisfied with the assessment services specifically mentioned the services they received from the regional ADRS team that provided expert audiological testing and fitting for hearing aids



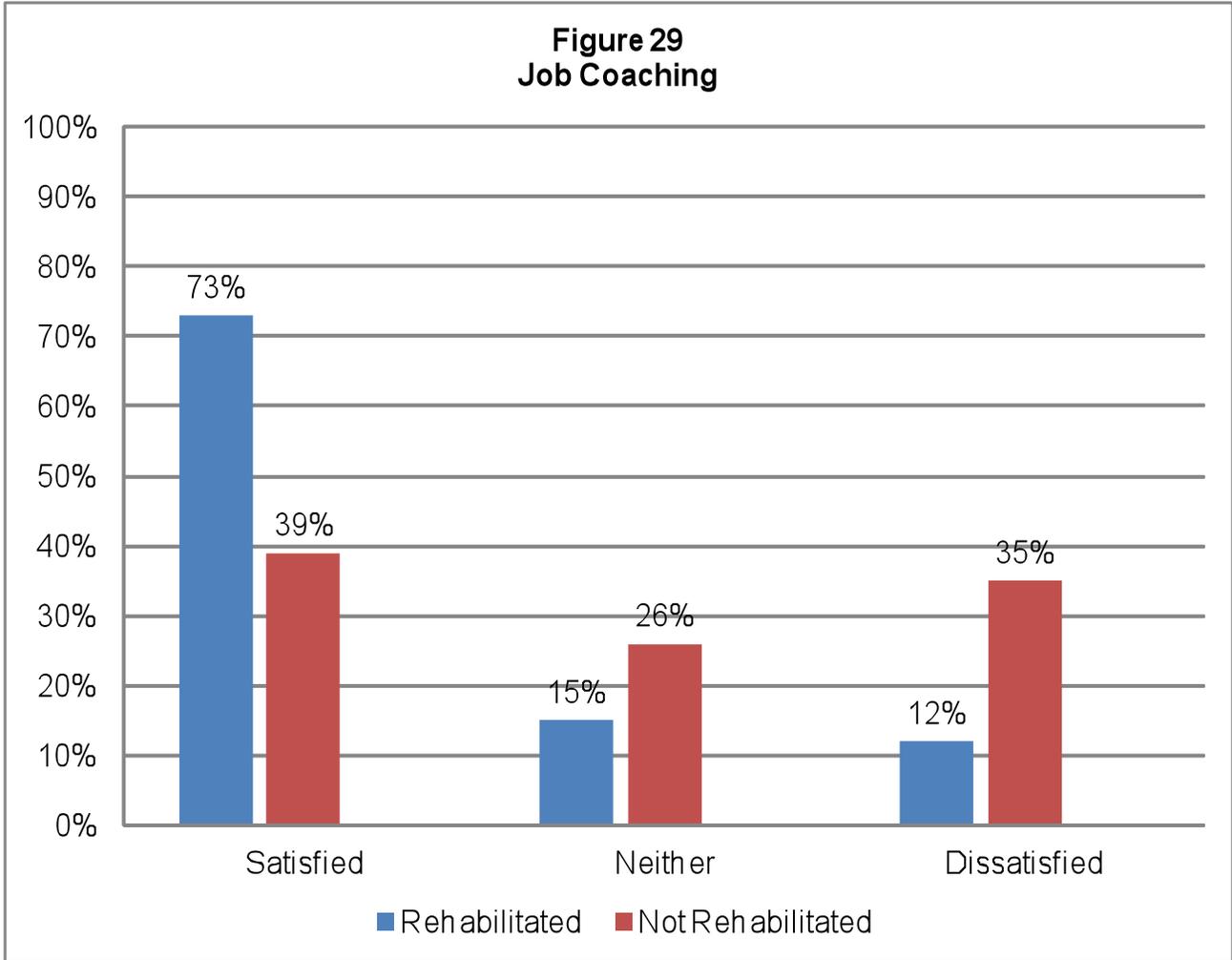
Satisfaction with Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling & Guidance

Of those consumers who responded, 215 reported they had received counseling and guidance services. Rehabilitated ratings indicate 152 (88%) of 173 were satisfied with the services while 15 (9%) indicated they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and six (3%) were dissatisfied with the counseling and guidance services received. Not Rehabilitated consumers reported that 23 (55%) of 42 rating this category were satisfied, 10 (24%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and nine (21%) were dissatisfied with the counseling services they received.



Satisfaction with College, Technical or University Training

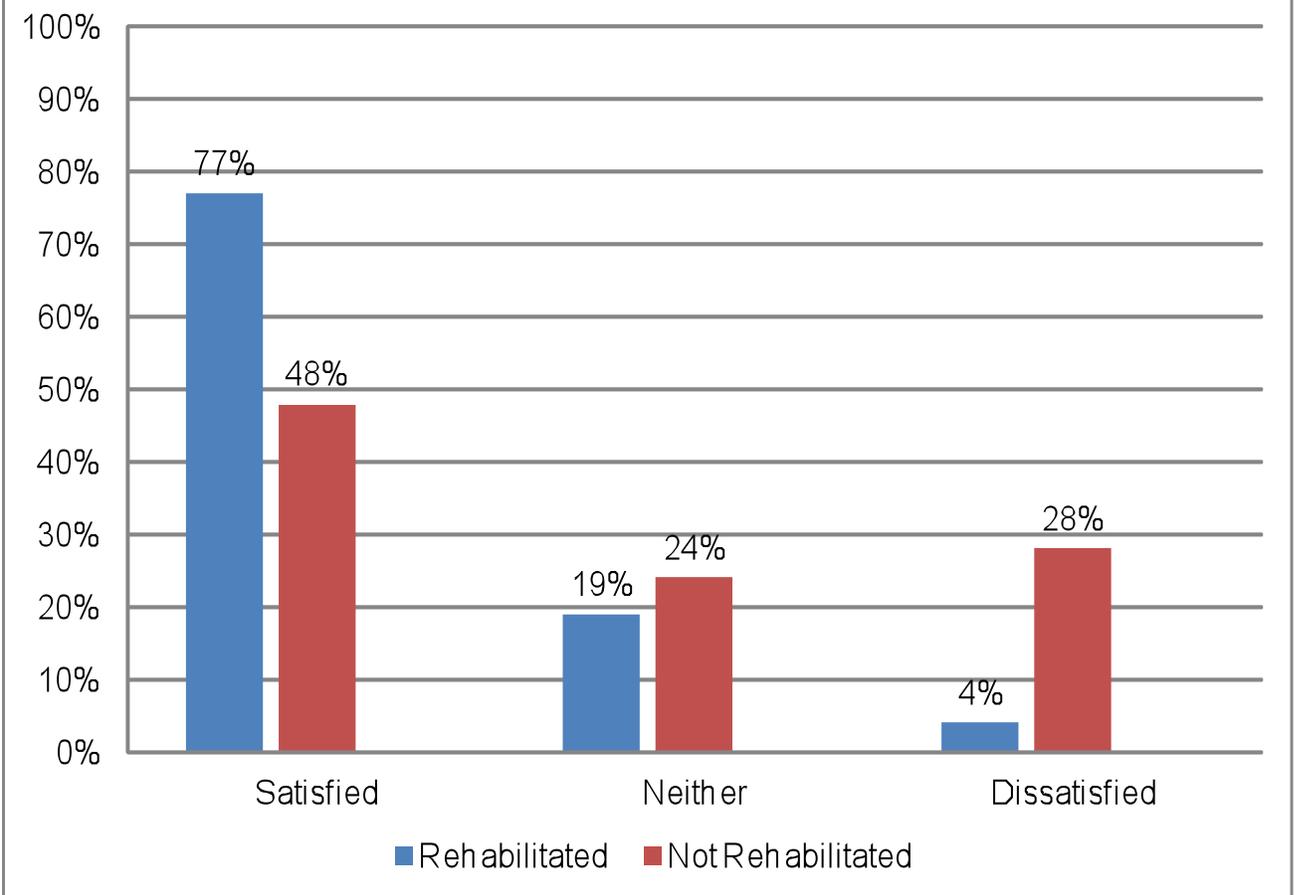
A total of 62 respondents rated this service category. Among those Rehabilitated rating the service category, 35 (80%) of 44 reported satisfaction from receiving college, technical or university training services with ADRS support, seven (16%) reported they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and two (4%) were dissatisfied with the ADRS-sponsored training services they received. Not Rehabilitated consumers reported that of the 18 who received training, 11 (61%) were satisfied, four (22%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and three (17%) were dissatisfied with the training services they received. Rehabilitated consumers were the most satisfied with training services and Not Rehabilitated group was most dissatisfied with training.



Satisfaction with Job Coaching & On-the-job Training

A total of 83 consumers responded to this item. Rehabilitated consumers who report receiving training services reported 44 of 60 (73%) they were satisfied with the job coaching and on-the-job training services they received while nine (15%) reported they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the services they received and seven (12%) said they were dissatisfied with the job coaching and on-the-job training services they received. Not Rehabilitated consumers reported that of the 23 who received job coaching/training, nine (39%) were satisfied, six (26%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and eight (35%) were dissatisfied with the training services they received

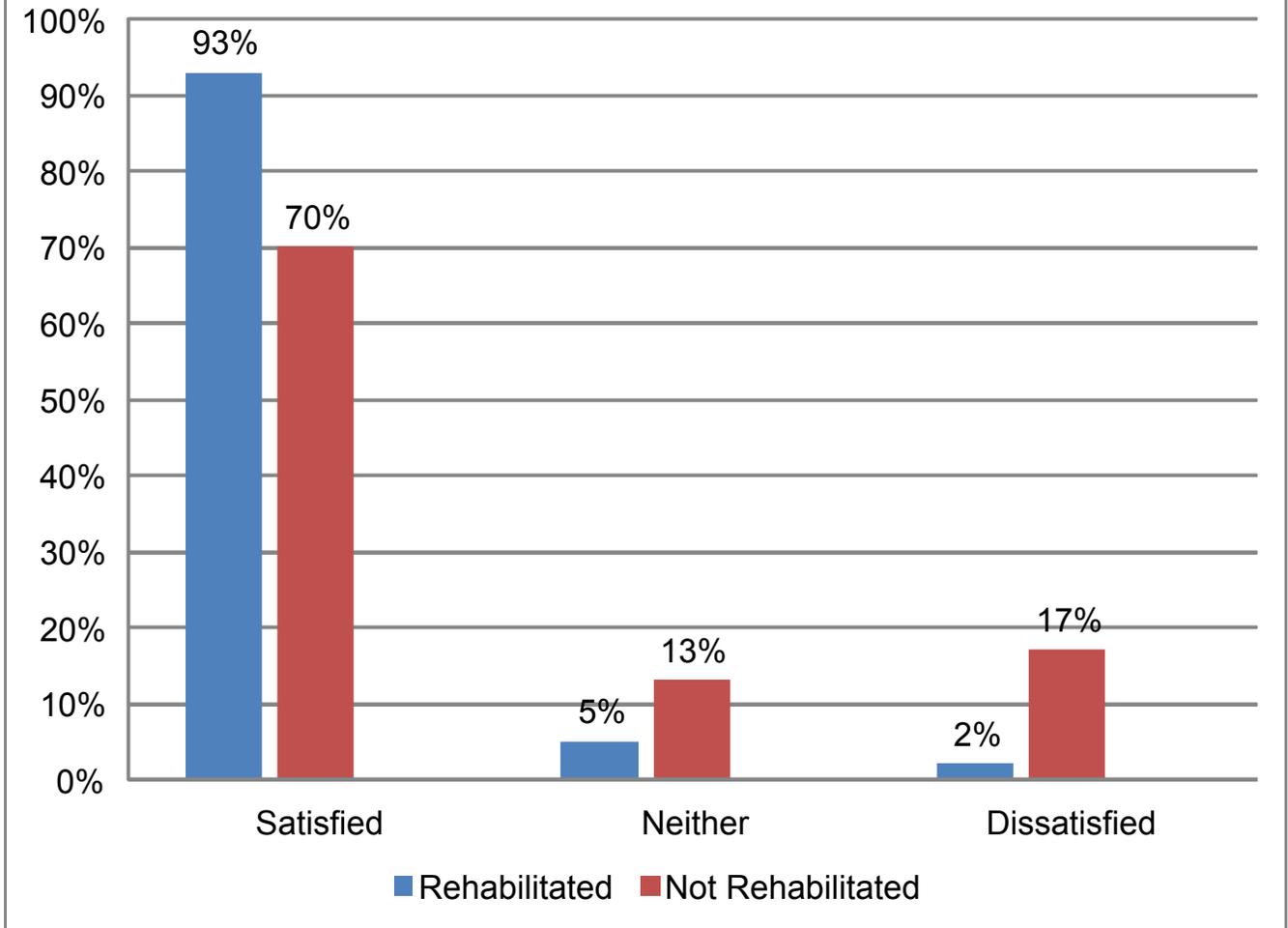
**Figure 30
Job Readiness Training**



Satisfaction with Job Readiness Training

A total of 73 consumers responded to this item. Forty (77%) of the 52 Rehabilitated consumers who reported receiving these services indicated they were satisfied with the job readiness training services they received through ADRS. Ten individuals (19%) reported they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the services they received and two (4%) said they were dissatisfied with the job readiness training services they received. Not Rehabilitated consumers reported that of the 21 who received job readiness training, 10 (48%) were satisfied, five (24%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and six (28%) were dissatisfied with the training services they received.

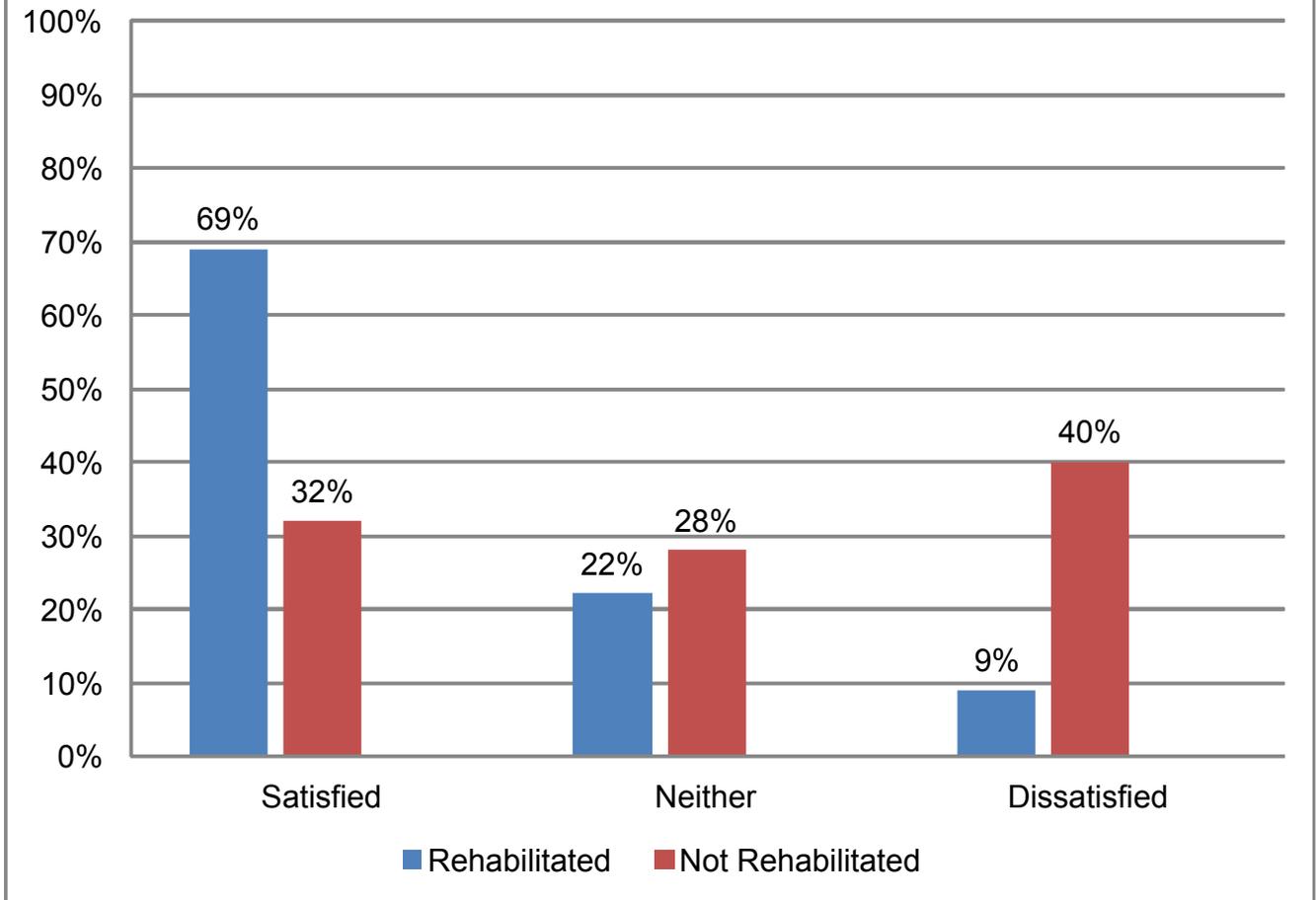
**Figure 31
Training to Use Hearing Aids & ALDS**



Satisfaction with Training on using Hearing Aids or Other Assistive Listening Devices

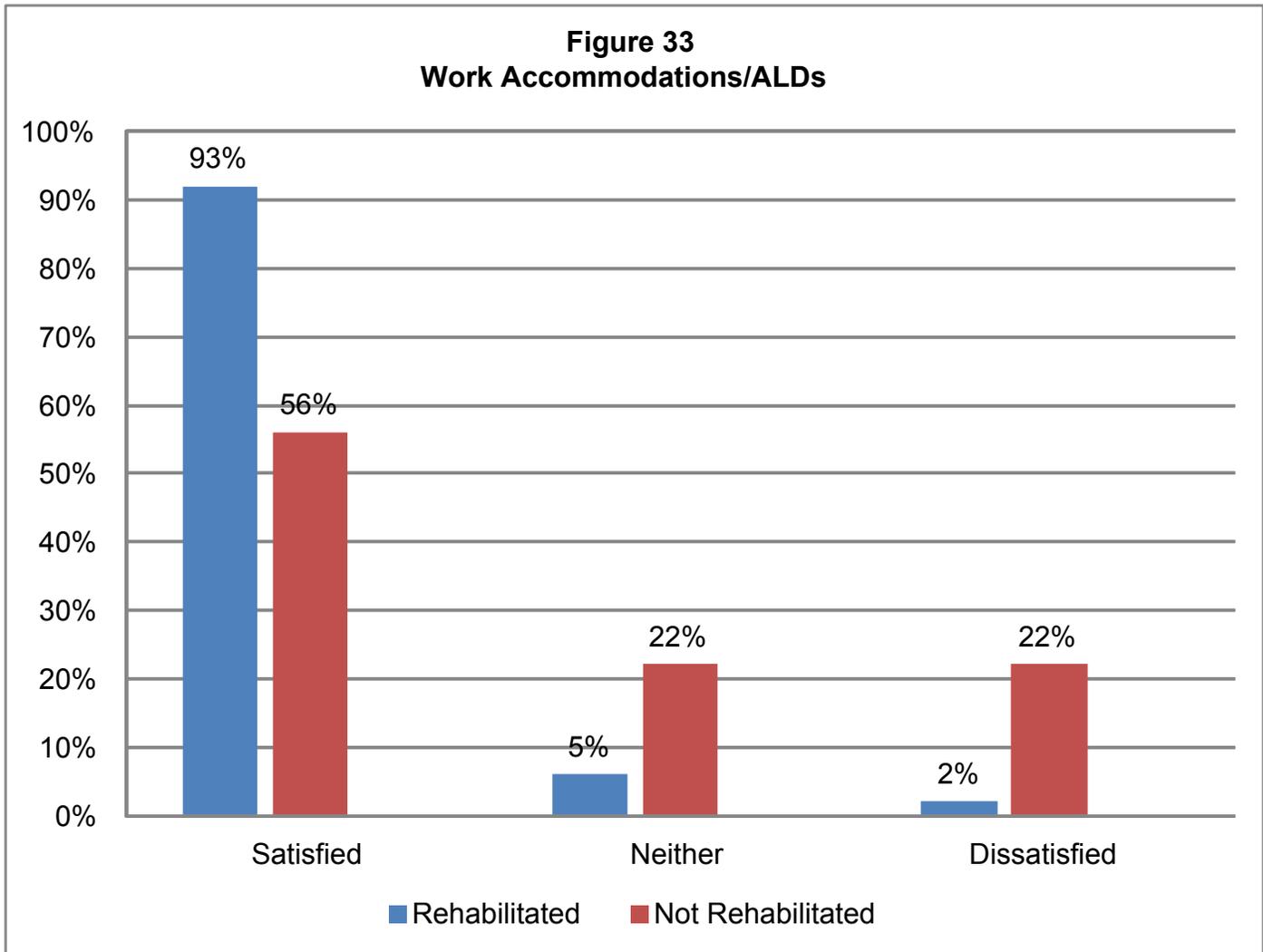
A total of 193 (70%) out of the 276 consumers provided ratings for their level of satisfaction with this service category. Of the 170 Rehabilitated consumers receiving these services 158 (93%) reported they were satisfied with their training on using hearing aids and other assistive listening devices. Nine (5%) respondents reported they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their training with hearing aids while three (2%) reported dissatisfaction with the services they were provided. Not Rehabilitated consumers reported that of the 23 who received training with hearing aids and assistive devices before their cases were closed, 16 (70%) were satisfied, three (13%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and four (17%) were dissatisfied with the training services that ADRS VR program offered and/or provided.

**Figure 32
Job Search Assistance**



Satisfaction with Job Search Assistance

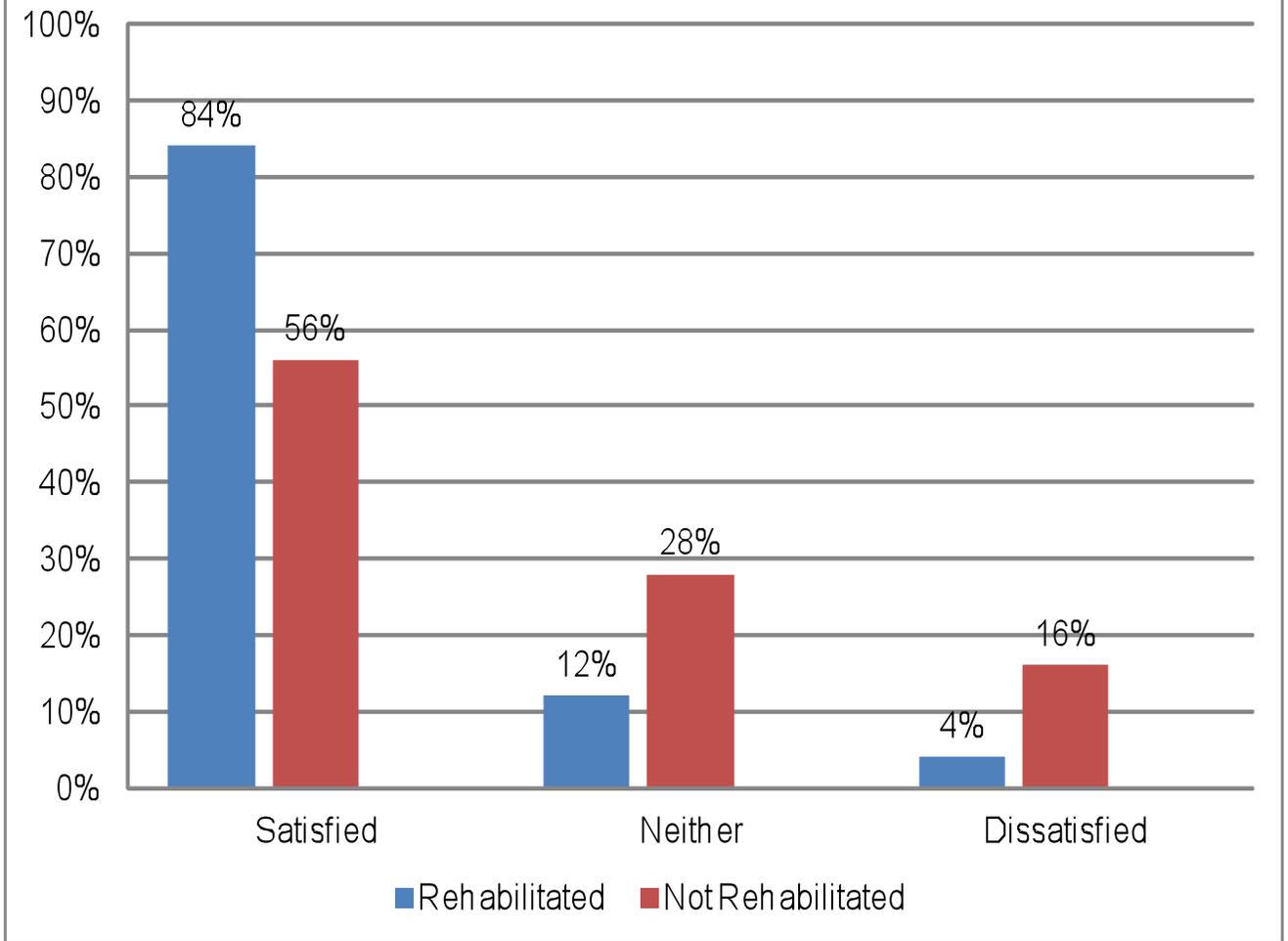
A total of 102 respondents rated the job search assistance services they received. Fifty-three (69%) of the 77 Rehabilitated consumers receiving these services reported they were satisfied, while 17 (22%) reported they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the services they received and seven (9%) said they were dissatisfied with the service. Not Rehabilitated consumers reported that of the 25 who received job search assistance, eight (32%) were satisfied, seven (28%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 10 (40%) were dissatisfied with the job search services they received. Respondents to this item (including those who rated the services as satisfactory) consistently report that VR job development effort is focused too much on placements in part time, entry level and/or dead end jobs with low pay and no benefits.



Satisfaction with Work Accommodations, Assistive Technology or Hearing Aids

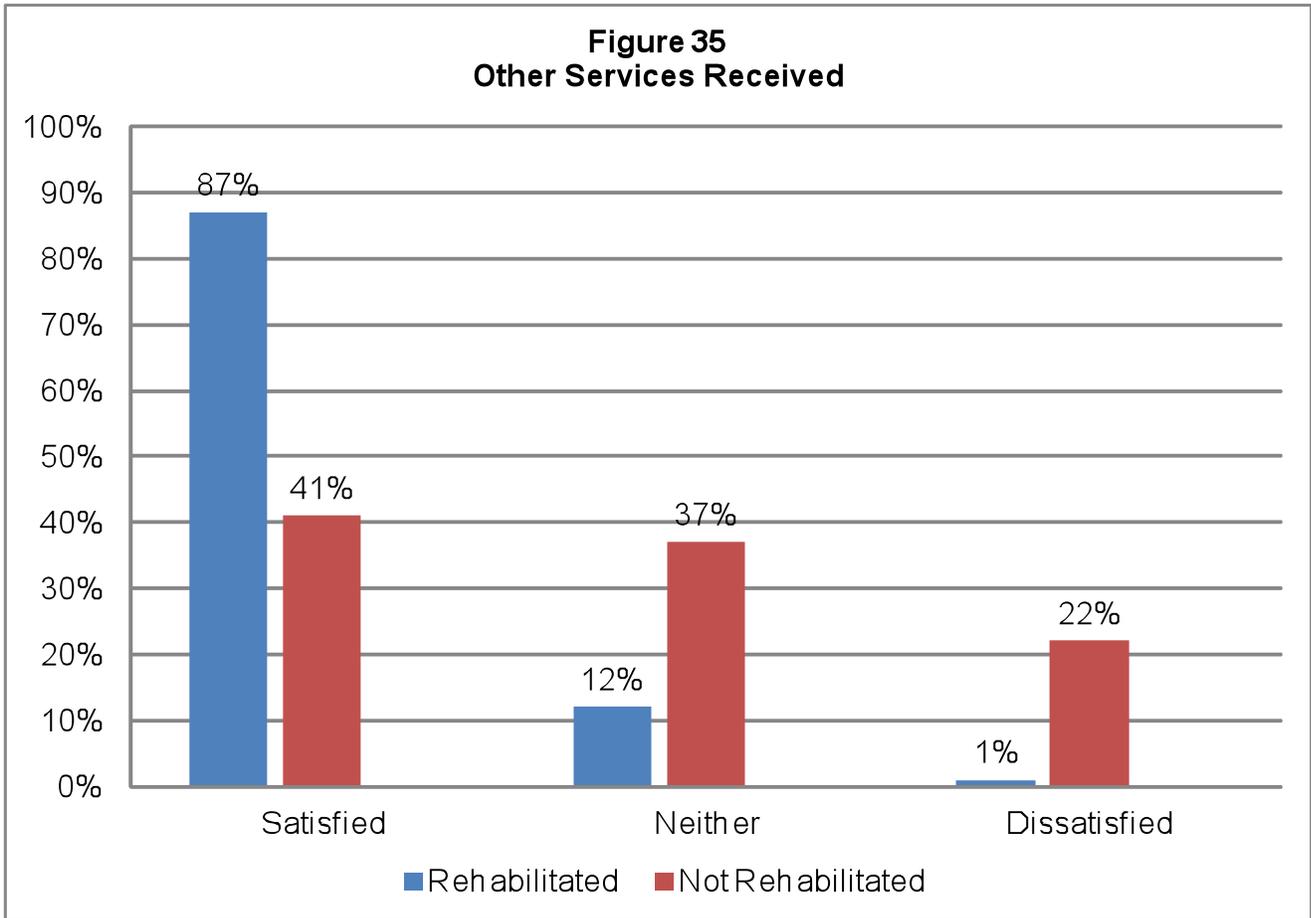
A total of 206 consumers responded to this item. Of the 182 Rehabilitated consumers who reported they received workplace accommodations, assistive technology (AT) and hearing aids, 169 (93%) reported they were satisfied with the workplace AT accommodations they received. Ten respondents (5%) reported they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the services they received and four (2%) said they were dissatisfied with the accommodation services they received. Not Rehabilitated consumers reported that of the 23 who received Workplace and AT accommodations, 13 (56%) were satisfied, five (22%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and another five (22%) were dissatisfied with the job search services they received.

**Figure 34
Interpreting Services**



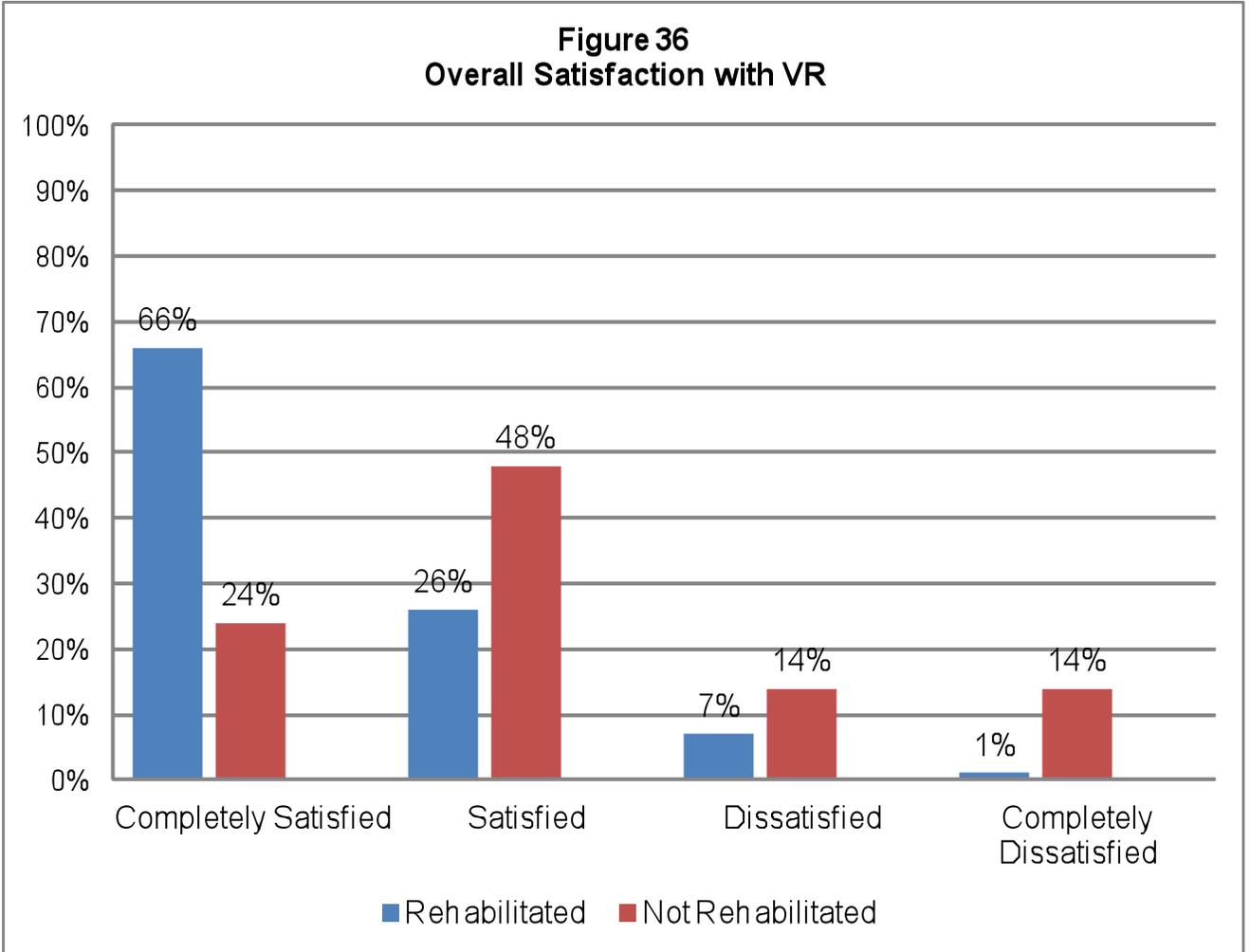
Satisfaction with Interpreter Services

A total of 74 Deaf and Deaf Blind consumers responded to this item. Of the 49 Rehabilitated consumers who received interpreting services, 41 (84%) reported they were satisfied with the interpreter services they received while six (12%) reported they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the services they received. Two respondents (4%) said they were dissatisfied with the interpreter services they received. Not Rehabilitated consumers reported that of the 25 who received interpreting services, 14 (56%) were satisfied, seven (28%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and four (16%) were dissatisfied with the job search services they received.



Satisfaction with any other VR services received

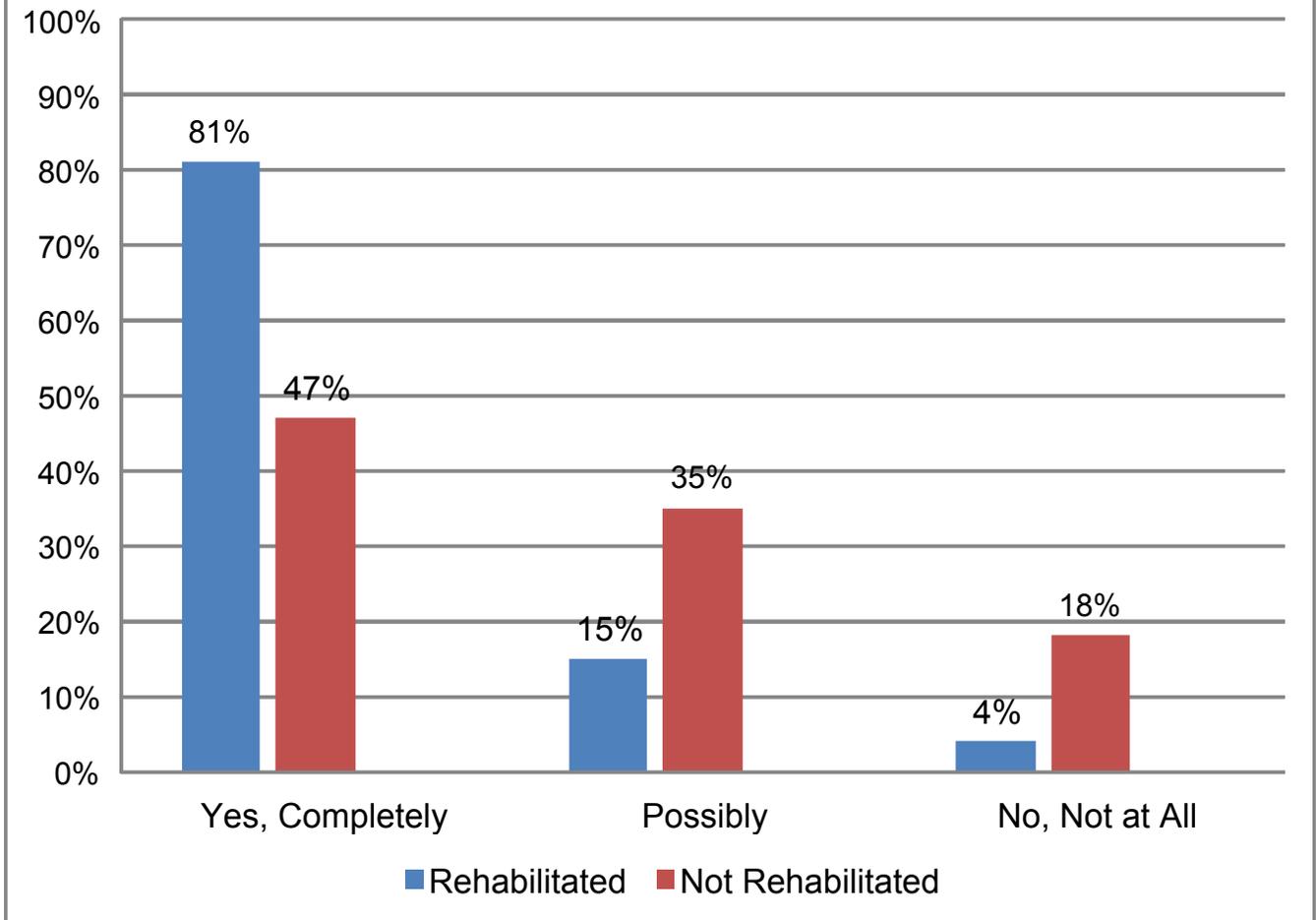
One hundred and seventy-five (63%) consumers responded to this item, rating their satisfaction with “Other VR services” they had received. Of the 143 Rehabilitated consumers who received "Other Services," 124 (87%) reported they were satisfied while 18 (12%) reported they were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied with the other services they received and one (1%) were dissatisfied. Not Rehabilitated consumers reported that of the 32 who received other services, 13 (41%) were satisfied, 12 (38%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and seven (22%) were dissatisfied with the other services received.



How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your VR Program?

The 2014 ADRS survey participants were asked how they would rate their overall satisfaction with their rehabilitation program. A vast majority of the respondents reported that they were satisfied with their VR program: 142 Rehabilitated (66%) reported they were "Completely Satisfied" and 55 (26 %) rated their experience as "Satisfactory." Sixteen (7%) of the consumers were dissatisfied with their program and three respondents (1%) reported they were completely dissatisfied. Not Rehabilitated consumers reported that of the 50 who responded to this item, 12 (24%) were completely satisfied, 24 (48%) were satisfied, seven (14%) were dissatisfied and followed by another group of seven (14%) reported they were completely dissatisfied.

Figure 37
Recommend VR Program to Family/Friends?



Would you recommend the ADRS Rehabilitation Program to your Family or Friends?

Consumers were asked if they would recommend the ADRS VR program to their own family or friends. A majority of the Rehabilitated individuals respondents (174 or 81%) indicated that they would completely recommend the program while 33 consumers (15%) indicated that they possibly would and eight (4%) said they would not recommend the program to their family and friends. Not Rehabilitated consumers reported that of the 51 who rated this item, 24 (47%) said yes, they would completely recommend the program, 18 (35%) indicated they possibly would recommend the program. Nine respondents (18%) said no, they would not recommend the VR program to others.

FY 2014 Consumer Satisfaction with Ten Specific Rehabilitation Service Categories

As illustrated below in Table 11, when the 2014 Rehabilitated and Not Rehabilitated consumers' ratings of satisfaction for services they received are combined, the ratings are much lower than in prior years when only Rehabilitated consumers participated. First, group satisfaction ratings of 90 percent or higher were obtained in only one service area. This is in sharp contrast to previous years in which 90-96% ratings by respondents reported they were consistently satisfied with the services consumers received in five out of ten (5 out of 10) specific ADRS service categories. Instead, this year only one service category--training on use of hearing aids and ALDS (90%) generated a 90 percent rating, followed by three other categories with ratings in the 80 percent range: work accommodations & assistive technology (89%), assessment/testing (84%) and VR guidance & counseling (81%). The combined groups of respondents also gave much lower ratings to job search assistance (60%), job coaching/on-the-job-training (66%) and job readiness training (68%). (See Table 17 on page 78 for comparative consumer ratings of satisfaction with VR services in previous years when only Rehabilitated consumers were interviewed).

Table 11

Rehabilitated & Not Rehabilitated Satisfaction with Each VR Service Received: N=276

How satisfied are you with each of this list of ADRS services that you received in 2014?	Satisfied		Neither		Dissatisfied	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Assessment/Testing (Ratings by 221)	185	(84%)	24	(11%)	06	(05%)
Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance (Ratings by 215)	175	(81%)	25	(12%)	15	(07%)
College, Technical or University Training (Ratings by 62)	46	(74%)	11	(18%)	05	(08%)
Job Coaching/On-the-job Training (Ratings by 83)	53	(64%)	15	(18%)	15	(18%)
Job Readiness Training (Ratings by 73)	50	(68%)	15	(21%)	08	(11%)
Training on Using Hearing Aids or Other Assistive Listening Devices (Ratings by 193)	174	(90%)	12	(06%)	07	(04%)
Job Search Assistance (Ratings by 102)	61	(60%)	24	(23%)	17	(17%)
Work Accommodations/ Assistive Technology/ Hearing Aids (Ratings by 206)	182	(89%)	15	(07%)	09	(04%)
Interpreter Services (Ratings by 74)	55	(74%)	13	(18%)	06	(08%)
Other Services Received (Ratings by 175)	137	(78%)	30	(17%)	08	(05%)

VII. CONSUMER EMPLOYMENT AND EARNING OUTCOMES

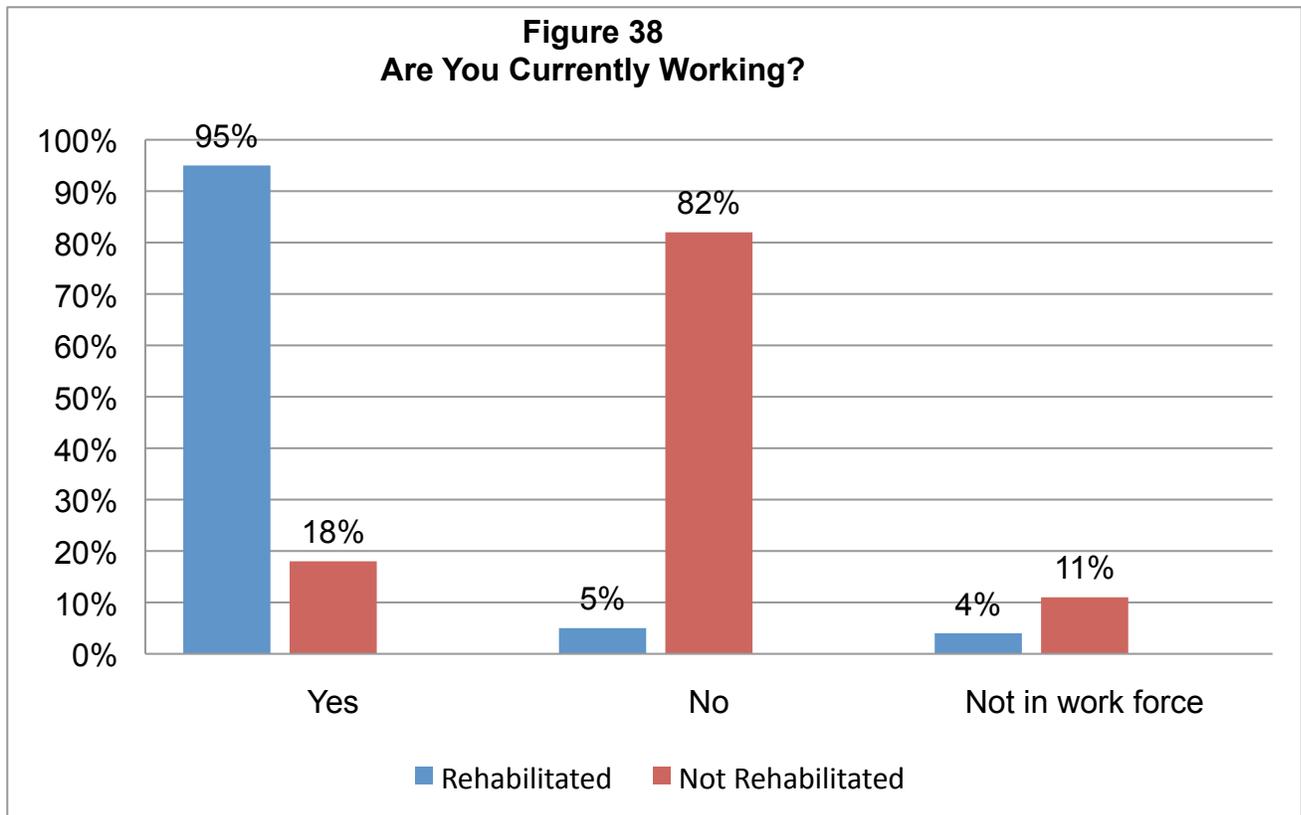
This section presents findings on the employment and earning outcomes reported by consumer respondents to the 2014 survey. Their responses to specific question items are reported on the following pages (Figures 38-42 and Tables 12 and 13).

As a group, 221 of these respondents were closed Rehabilitated and 55 as Not Rehabilitated in FY 2014. Respondents (273) ranged in age from 18 to 93. Asked whether they were currently employed at the time of the survey contact, 212 (78%) reported they were working. The 61 (22%) that reported not working included 21 Rehabilitated and 40 Not Rehabilitated. Eleven of the Rehabilitated unemployed and 24 of the Not Rehabilitated unemployed said they would appreciate assistance in returning to the work force and obtaining a job at this time.

Most of those who were “laid off” indicated they had lost their jobs as part of general or seasonal cut backs by their employer. In addition, a number of the workers who had applied for or were already drawing disability said they had serious health issues that prevented them from working. Several of the unemployed who were actively seeking new jobs reported they had requested but not received “post-employment” assistance from their VR team to obtain help in obtaining a new job.

Consumers who reported being currently employed were asked how many hours they worked each week and what their job titles and pay were. Overall, approximately 77% of the employed respondents indicated they worked 30 or more hours per week on the average. On the other hand, approximately 23% said they worked less than 30 hours weekly. It is worth mentioning here that employment data from the RSA 911 database shows that many of the FY 2014 non-respondents were likewise working less than full time and/or working in low-paying jobs at the time of case closure.

A list of the job titles provided by workers can be found in Appendix C. The jobs held by 2014 respondents range from entry level service jobs to skilled workers, city, county and state workers, federal government staff, health care and human service providers with children, adults and senior citizen programs, managers, technicians, teachers in K-12, vocational technical career programs, colleges and universities, professional positions, self-employed, owners of businesses, and management positions of small to medium size companies and a full range of other jobs representative of a wide array of professions, technical fields, skilled and unskilled labor (see Figure 38 and Appendix C for additional examples and a more complete listing of job titles reported by consumers).

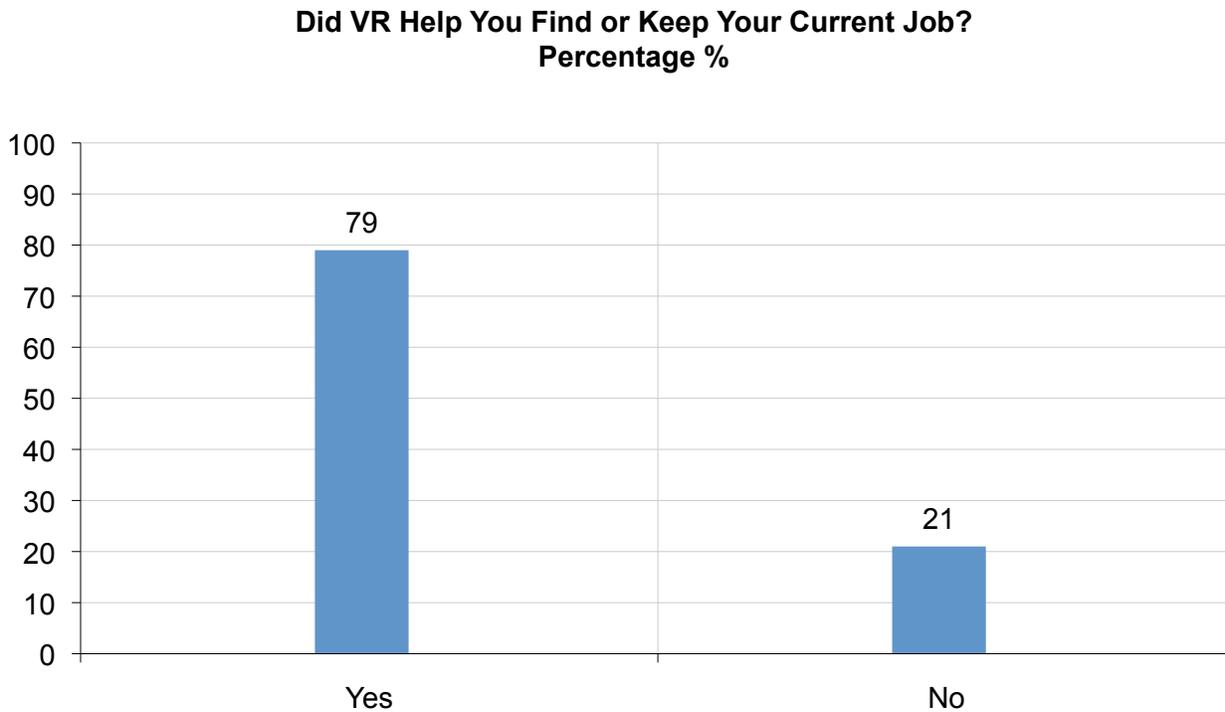


Are you currently employed?

Consumers were asked if they were currently employed. Of the 273 who responded, 198 (90%) of the Rehabilitated group and 14 (26%) of 54 Not Rehabilitated consumers were currently employed for an overall combined 78% rate of employment. Sixty-one (22%) respondents (21 Rehabilitated and 40 Not Rehabilitated) were not working at the time surveyed. Ten (4%) of the Rehabilitated consumers indicated they were not in the work force, while 11 had been laid off or fired and would like ADRS help to find a new job. Twenty-four (60%) of the 40 unemployed in Not Rehabilitation group likewise said they would like help to get a job.

Respondents were employed in a wide variety of labor market occupations (See Appendix C for more complete listing). Sample jobs included: Medical staff coordinator, ASD Sub teacher, Dental Technicians, OCC Nurse, Electrician, Social Work, Carpenters, Shift Manager @ Burger King, Administrative Assistants, Rural Mail Carriers, Cosmetologists, Certified Nursing Assistants, Wood Chipper, Social Services staff, Sheriff & Police officers, RN nurses, Telecommunications Techs, Welders, Auditors, Data Entry Techs, Hotel Staff, Ambulance Driver, Sales, Truck Drivers, Dishwashers, Cooks & Cashiers, Coordinator @ Deaf Blind Services, Custodians, CDL Bus Drivers, OTR Truck Drivers, LPN for elderly, ADRS staff, Assistant Librarian, Mechanic, Maintenance Staff, Wal-Mart Associates, Farmers & farm workers, Equipment Operators, Laborers, Landscape workers, Small Business owners, K-12 and College Teachers.

Figure 39
N: 203



Did VR help you find or keep your current job?

Each consumer was asked whether or not VR had helped them find or keep their current job. A total of 203 consumers responded to this question. Of the consumer respondents, 161 (79%) reported affirmatively that VR services had helped them find or to keep their current jobs. As in previous years, many of these consumers were hard of hearing individuals at mid-career with mid-life (ages 40-65) onset of hearing loss who needed VR assistance in order to keep or otherwise retain jobs they had held for years. Many workers with mid-career onsets of hearing loss express deep appreciation of how important ADRS assistance was to their ability to work and live effectively following VR assistance with being fitted with appropriate hearing aids and assistive listening devices. A smaller group of 42 (21%) respondents indicated that they saw no direct link between the VR services they received and finding or keeping their jobs.

Table 12

N: 207

How Many Hours Do You Work Each Week?

Hours worked (weekly)	Frequency	Percent %
1-19	22	11
20-29	24	12
30-39	36	17
40-49	109	52
50+	16	08
Total	207	100

Hours Worked Each Week

Asked about how many hours they worked each week, a combined total of 207 employed consumers (193 Rehabilitated & 14 Not Rehabilitated) provided information about the number of hours they worked. Eleven percent (22 workers) reported they worked less than 20 hours weekly; 24 workers (12%) were working between 20-29 hours weekly. Thirty-six (17%) of the respondents indicated they regularly worked 30-39 hours per week. There were 109 (52%) workers who reported working 40 to 49 hours each week while 16 (08%) worked over 50 hours weekly. A review of the individual responses shows a pattern in which many older, more experienced and established workers are employed full time while mixed cohorts of mostly younger and older workers are employed in part-time and entry level jobs with limited hours and benefits. Overall, 60% of respondent workers were working 40 hours or more and 40% worked less than a 40-hour week. These data are comparable to findings regarding hours worked in prior years.

Table 13

N: 209

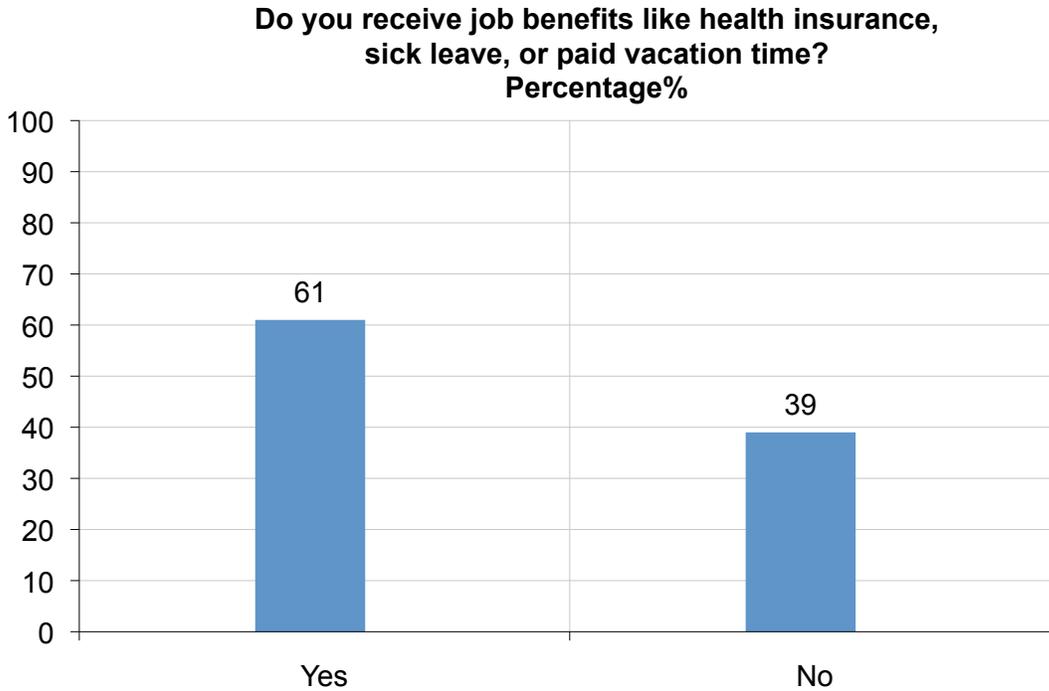
What is Your Pay?

Hourly Rate of Pay	Frequency	Percent %
\$7.99 or Less	36	17
\$8 - \$11.99	68	33
\$12 - \$14.99	35	17
\$15 - \$19.99	28	13
\$20 - \$24.99	29	14
\$25 +	13	6
Total	209	100

Rate of Pay on Job

A total of 209 employed consumers answered this survey question asking about “What is your pay?” Respondents’ answers varied from hourly rate of pay to weekly, monthly or annual salary figures. The various responses were converted to an hourly rate of compensation for purposes of this report. Rates of pay for the respondents ranged from entry-level restaurant workers paid minimum wages plus tips up to consumers who were in established mid or late-career jobs paying over \$50,000 in annual salaries. The highest hourly pay - as in prior years - was earned by established workers in career track jobs who obtained mid-life assistance from ADRS to assist them deal with progressive loss of hearing and onset of other mid-life related disabilities.

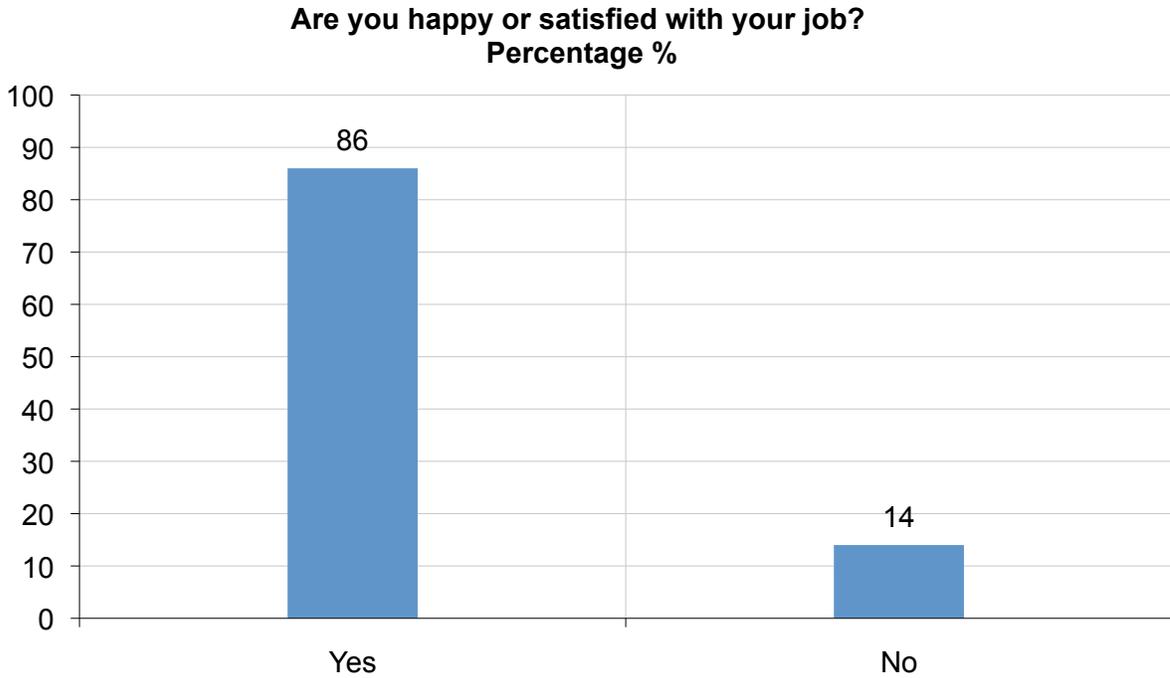
Figure 40
N: 210



Job Benefits

Employed consumers were asked whether their employers provided benefits like health insurance, sick leave, or vacation leave. Of the 210 consumers who responded to this question, 128 (61%) reported they received benefits while 82 consumers (39%) said they did not get benefits from their employer. It should be noted that this represents a drop off from the benefits consumers reported in the earlier surveys. The data do not provide an explanation for this change. These decreases may be tied to the reduction in health care and other benefits for new workers, especially unskilled workers taking non-career track jobs. A related consideration might be that many of these workers are holding part time or temporary jobs and have not yet become vetted and entitled to benefits from their employers. On the other hand, the stability of the 60-plus percent participation rate in employer benefit programs may be related to many of the older respondents obtaining VR assistance to remediate the effects of mid-career and mid-life onset of severe hearing losses while retaining and maintaining their employment in full time jobs with benefits.

Figure 41
N: 212

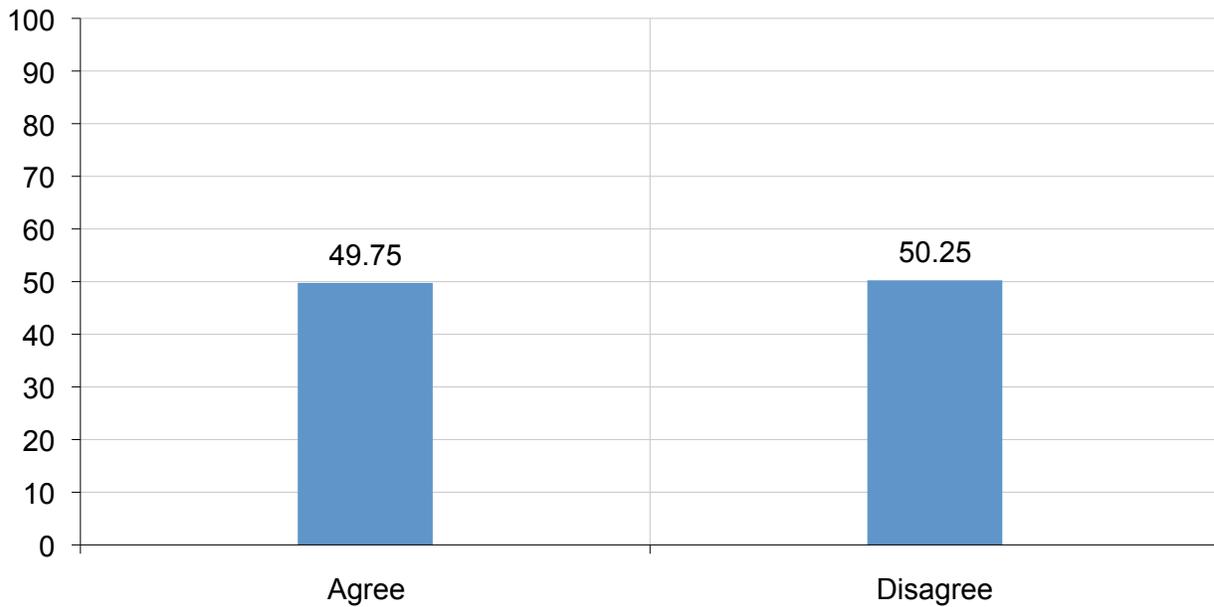


Job Satisfaction

Consumers were asked if they were happy or otherwise satisfied with the job they held at the time they completed the consumer outcome survey questionnaire. Out of 212 respondents to this item, 182 employed consumers (86%) reported they were satisfied with the job they were holding while 30 consumers (14%) indicated they were not entirely happy or satisfied with their current job. It should be noted, however, that some who answered “yes” to this item indicated that they were content to retain their job until prospects improved. This was especially true for many younger workers who expressed dissatisfaction with the jobs they were able to obtain, but were staying in those entry-level jobs until better job opportunities become available as the economy rebounds and employers start hiring again.

Figure 42
N: 193

**I have a new better job now than
I did before my VR program**
Percentage %



Do you have a better job now than before your VR program?

A total of 193 consumers responded to this question: 96 (49.75%) reported they now have a better job now than before their VR program while 97 respondents (50.25%) did not agree with the statement. Of those respondents who agreed that they had better jobs almost all - 89 out of the 96 (93%) workers - were closed Rehabilitated. As in prior years, many of those Rehabilitated consumers who answered “Disagree” reported that they already had their current jobs when they went to VR seeking help with their hearing loss. Many of those respondents further commended VR assistance for helping them to retain or otherwise keep their jobs. (See related data and discussion for Figure 39).

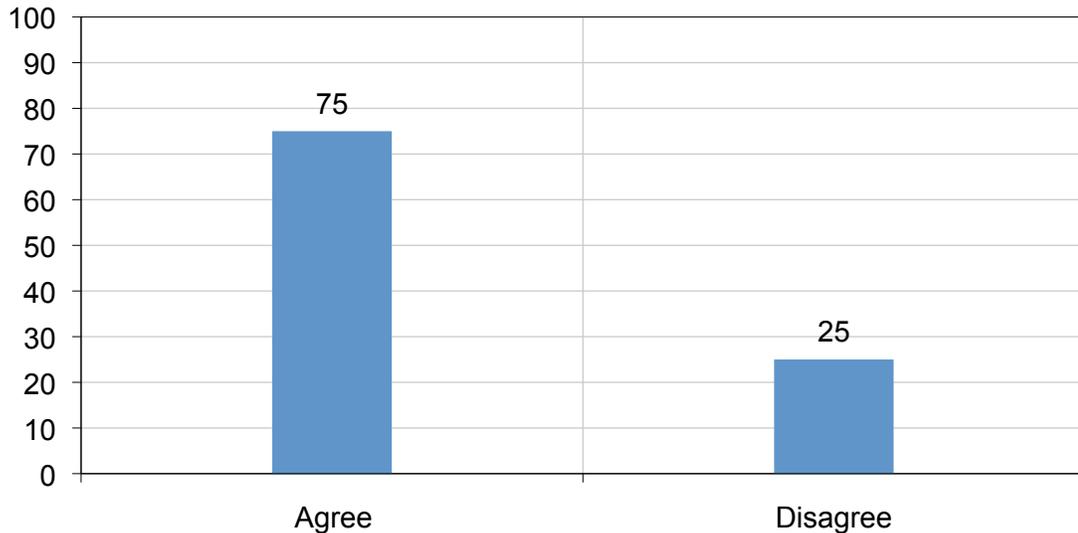
VIII. FEELINGS ABOUT LIFE AND FUTURE PROSPECTS AFTER VR

The next set of three questions asked consumers how they felt about themselves, their future prospects and ability to live more independently as a result of their rehabilitation program. Their responses are presented below in Figures 43, 44 and 45.

Figure 43

N: 255

I feel better about myself and who I am than before my VR program
Percentage %

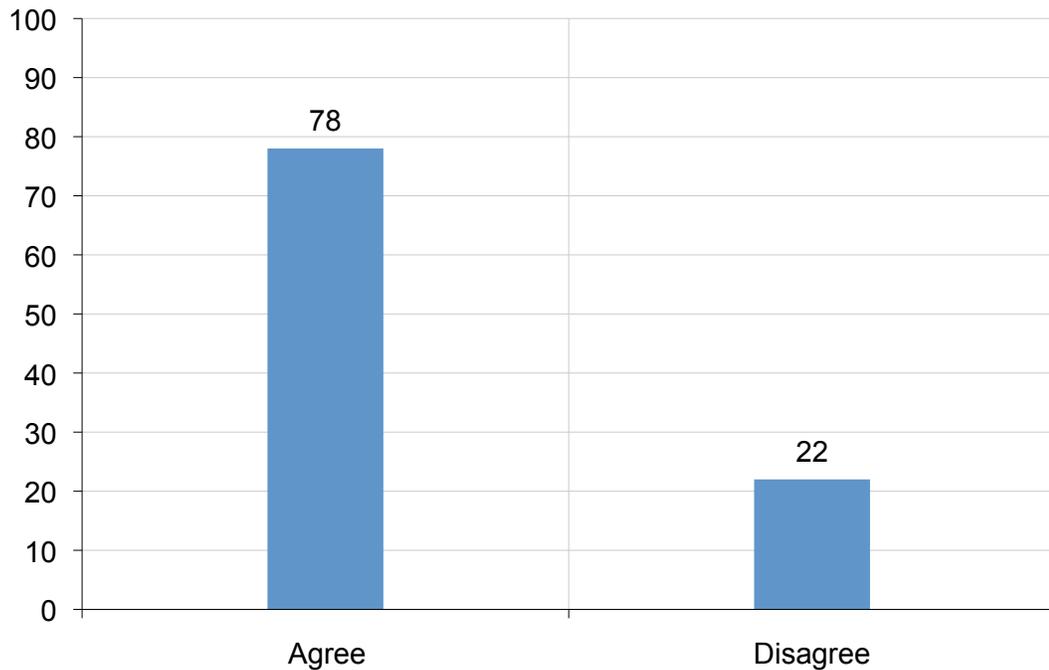


I feel better about myself and who I am now than I did before my VR program

Participants were asked whether they felt better about themselves and whom they are than before their VR program of services. The vast majority (192 or 75%) of the 255 who responded stated that they felt better about themselves and whom they are as compared to before their VR program while 63 consumers (25%) disagreed with the statement. Out of 212 Rehabilitated respondents, 173 (82%) agreed they felt better about self--in contrast to only 19 (41%) of 43 Not Rehabilitated. Responses for this item frequently highlight major ongoing concerns many Not Rehabilitated respondents express regarding their continuing struggle with the profound and pervasive impact of severe hearing loss. Especially, the extent to which it can detrimentally affects their personal lives and relationships as well as their ability to work.

Figure 44
N: 258

**I feel better about future than
before my VR program**
Percentage %

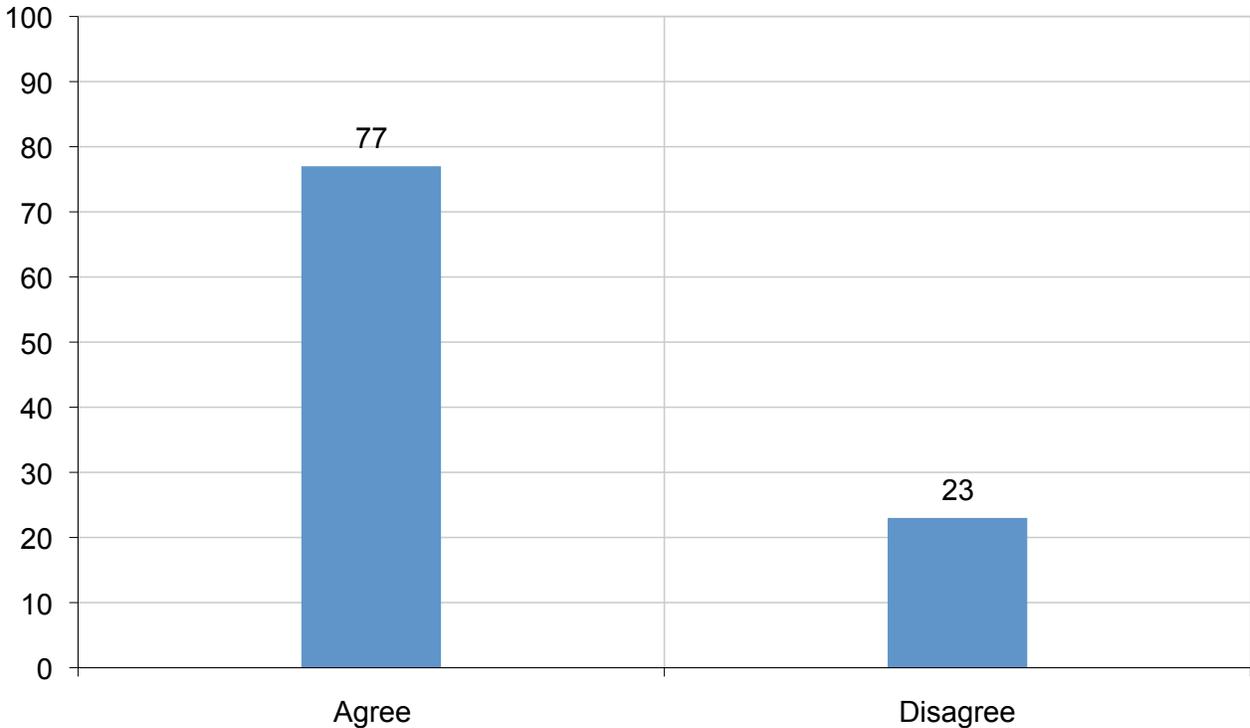


I feel better now about my future than I did before my VR program

Participants were asked whether they felt better now about their future than before their VR program of services. The vast majority (200 or 78%) of 258 who responded stated that they felt better about themselves and their future at closure than before their VR program while 58 consumers (22%) disagreed with the statement. As with the previous item (i.e., Figure 43), the pervasive impact of severe adult onset hearing loss often contributes to less than optimistic expectations for the future for some individuals with mid-life onset of significant hearing losses.

Figure 45
N: 260

**I am more independent now because
of my VR program**
Percentage %



I am more independent now because of my VR program

A total of 201 (77%) out of the 260 consumers who responded to this item agreed that they were more independent at the time of the follow up survey because of their VR service program. The other 59 (23%) respondents to this question disagreed with the statement. This finding is highly consistent with survey findings of prior years. Consumers who answered that they “disagreed” were most often individuals who were unemployed, felt they were under-employed, or had chronic ongoing problems and concerns regarding the pervasive impact their hearing loss was having on their quality of life and their fragile sense of confidence that they could continue to be productive workers and confidently participate in family and social communication situations.

IX. CONSUMER REPORTS OF MAJOR BENEFITS THEY RECEIVED

At the end of the survey, consumers were asked an open-ended question about the major benefits they received from participating in the ADRS rehabilitation program. Eighty-one percent (n=223) consumers (186 Rehabilitated & 37 Not Rehabilitated) responded to this item and cited the benefits they received (Table 14 on page 72).

Most of the benefits mentioned by consumers can be grouped into the ten different categories that were developed in prior years. Generally, respondents did not limit their comments to only one benefit, but listed a combination of important benefits received from their rehabilitation programs. The most commonly reported benefits are summarized below, in order of frequency. The list of benefits received, in the consumers' own words, is provided in **Appendices G and H**.

- **Equipment** – One hundred and eighteen comments cited the equipment they received (such as hearing aids, alarms and work-related equipment and tools) as a major benefit from the program. (104 by Rehabilitated & 14 by Not Rehabilitated).
- **Increased independence** – Ninety comments were addressed to the increased level of independence (78 Rehabilitated and 12 Not Rehabilitated) say they gained as an important benefit received from their rehabilitation program. Many specifically cited their improved ability to hear and communicate at work, home and in social situations.
- **Financial** – One hundred and eight (90 Rehabilitated & 18 Not Rehabilitated) expressed their appreciation for ADRS' assistance in the purchase of hearing aids, various ALDS or college tuition, indicating the financial assistance provided to them by the rehabilitation program was one of the major benefits received.
- **Counseling and support from counselor** – Thirty-seven individuals (30 Rehabilitated & 7 Not Rehabilitated) cited the caring and compassionate support and encouragement they received from their counselors and DSS teams as among the most important benefit they received from their rehabilitation program. Six RCDs and VR offices were cited by name as providing superior support.
- **Placement, Job Coaching, On-the-Job Supports** – Thirty-two (30 Rehabilitated & only 2 Not Rehabilitated) consumers cited the value of the extra assistance and support they received from DSS staff in obtaining and retaining their job. Workers often cited this extra assistance as one of the most valuable benefits they received toward helping them achieve employment goal. Many commended DSS job coaches and interpreters.
- **Employment** – Fifty-five (53 Rehabilitated & 2 Not Rehabilitated) workers indicated that the job they obtained, or the help they received in keeping their job, was the major benefit they received from ADRS.
- **Improved feelings about self** – Seventy-one (64 Rehabilitated and 7 Not Rehabilitated) consumers indicated that they felt more confident, had greater self-esteem and feelings of dignity and that they altogether felt much better about themselves and their life prospects.

- **College or other training** – Forty-one (35 Rehabilitated & 6 Not Rehabilitated) reported that ADRS sponsorship of their college or other postsecondary career training and education programs or on-the-job training, were among the most important benefits.
- **Assistive technology** – Thirty-nine (35 Rehabilitated & 4 Not Rehabilitated) consumers indicated that in addition to personal hearing aids, etc, they greatly appreciated the assistive technology devices and services they received through VR.
- **Did not receive major benefit** – Twenty (6 Rehabilitated & 14 Not Rehabilitated) consumers indicated that they did not feel they had received the quality and kind of help they needed and expected from their rehabilitation program. Several mentioned their expectations about forthcoming VR services and/or funding support that (ADRS would provide) were never fulfilled – leaving them discouraged and disappointed.

Table 14
Comparison of Major Benefits Consumers Reported Receiving: 2014 vs 2013, 2012 & 2011

Service	2014 % Major Benefit^a	N^b	2013 % Major Benefit^a	N^b	2012 % Major Benefit^a	N^b	2011 % Major Benefit^a	N^b
Equipment	53	118	49	120	71	160	56	140
Increased Independence	40	90	23	57	34	76	25	64
Financial	48	108	25	61	69	156	18	46
Counseling Support for Consumer	17	37	19	46	26	58	16	39
Placement, job coaching on-job site	15	33	12	29	44	98	13	32
Employment	25	55	20	48	19	43	12	31
Improved Feelings about Self	32	71	16	38	31	70	12	29
College or other Training	18	41	08	20	09	21	11	28
Assistive Technology	17	39	09	21	22	50	08	20
Did not Receive Major Benefits	09	20	05	13	2.6	06	2.4	06

^a Column lists percentage of persons who reported that they received this as a Major Benefit as a direct outcome of a specific VR service that was provided for them through ADRS. ^bN values represents the total number of respondents who provided a response regarding their having received major benefits from the specific VR services they received.

Comparisons of Consumer Reports of Major Benefits Received: 2014, 2013, 2012 & 2011

Table 14 on page 72 presents a four-year side-by-side comparison of the number and percentage of 2014, 2013, 2012 and 2011 respondents who reported they received major benefits from the ADRS VR program. The data reflect significant year-to-year fluctuations in numbers and percentages across all ten of the “Major Benefit” categories that were reported. The data indicate that the top four benefits listed – “Equipment, Financial Support, Increased Independence and Improved Feelings about Self”- are interrelated and are consistently among the benefits most often reported by consumers during the four-year period. The reader will note that consumers vary year-to-year in terms of their perceptions of what they needed and what they gained from their VR program, but improved hearing rehabilitation is a dominant theme.

X. CONSUMER SUGGESTIONS FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

The final survey question asked respondents how ADRS could improve their VR services. While some individuals indicated that they could not think of ways to improve a good program, a large number enthusiastically expressed how very pleased they were with the services they received. Altogether, 172 (62%) of the respondents generated a pool of suggestions for improving services that have been grouped into nine broad categories (Table 15 on page 75). The most frequently mentioned suggestions of ways ADRS might improve services are presented below, in order of frequency. Suggestions, in consumers’ own words, are provided in **Appendices I and J**.

- **Appreciation for quality of ADRS staff and services** – Eighty-one (75 Rehabilitated & 6 Not Rehabilitated) commended ADRS for employing VR counselors and support staff that provide caring, compassionate counseling support and encouragement to consumers.
- **Improve specific services** – Fifty-three (35 Rehabilitated & 18 Not Rehabilitated) suggested specific services needing improvement, such as more timely intake, eligibility determination, assessment and fitting of equipment and related services; assistance with transportation to and from work place, and on-going post-closure employment assistance (such as interpreting in the workplace) as well as on-going post-employment services.
- **More frequent counseling contacts** – Thirty-four (23 Rehabilitated & 11 Not Rehabilitated) recommended that RCDs really get to know their client by providing more frequent qualitative and caring support during each step of the VR process. Counselors and support staff need to take more proactive approach to career guidance and counseling resources and tools in order to truly assist clients pursue their employment goals.
- **Employment or job-related** – Thirty-two (22 Rehabilitated & 10 Not Rehabilitated) asked that the agency place added value and more emphasis on development of Jobs, especially career-track employment placements. Also, do longer-term visits to job sites in support of workers & new employers; do better post-employment follow-along.
- **Being timelier** – Forty-one (29 Rehabilitated & 12 Not Rehabilitated) suggested that RCDs and DSS staff need to make more timely responses to consumer contacts and also be timelier in procuring and providing services or equipment.

- **Need for more direct service support staff** – Forty-one (30 Rehabilitated & 11 Not Rehabilitated) respondents encouraged ADRS to hire or train more VR staff on how to work effectively with Deaf/HOH consumers. Several consumers urged VR to establish regular RCD office hours in various rural areas via Video Phone and on site visits.
- **Development of better quality in hearing aids & services** – Twenty-four (22 Rehabilitated & 2 Not Rehabilitated) see need for VR to exert pressure on suppliers and vendors to provide better and more extended warranties for service, repairs and consultation. Rural areas especially cite a need more timely and comprehensive Hearing Aid Service Centers to enhance access & utility by workers.
- **More publicity for program** – Twelve (11 Rehabilitated and 1 Not Rehabilitated) indicated that too many people are not aware of ADRS’ outstanding rehabilitation services program, and suggested that more and better information about the program should be made available to the public. They believe that an effective public infomercial approach could reach many more disabled people who need VR services.
- **Funding levels** – Twenty of the (15 Rehabilitated & 5 Not Rehabilitated) respondents suggested that VR seek expanded funding for career and college training. Group also recommends VR develop a way to help cover cost for interpreting services and/or hearing aids for working people. Doing so would serve as an effective proactive measure to maintain/preserve their long-term retention of employment instead of losing jobs and needing public assistance rather than working to be self-supported workers.

XI. DISCUSSION OF KEY FY 2014 FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Comparison of Consumer Suggestions for ADRS Improvement: 2014 vs 2013, 2012 & 2011

Table 15 on page 75 presents a four-year side-by-side comparison of the number and percentage of 2014, 2013, 2012 and 2011 respondents who offered their suggestions for ways and means that ADRS could improve its program of VR services. The data indicate that the top three suggestions listed: “Need to Improve Specific Services, Being More Timely, and Need to hire more direct service support staff”, are consistently among the top suggestions for improvement most often recommended. Those top three categories are followed by recommendations that the state agency needs to develop better quality career-track job opportunities. Each year, many consumers recommend that ADRS needs to hire and/or train additional RCDs and Deaf Support Specialists, job coaches and interpreters to expand and improve the timely availability of key support services that consumers view as critically important to helping them achieve their goal of obtaining and maintaining employment and the ability to live independently and be self-supporting. ADRS has, to its’ credit, addressed this need by increasing its direct service support staff in the past few years. Consumers living in rural areas of the state see the need for RCDs to be housed in rural areas such as Fort Payne and other geographical areas so as to better serve rural residents by giving them much better access to VR services. The same need exists for hearing aid dealers/vendors to set up rural locations where consumers can more readily gain ongoing access for repairs, supplies, etc.

Table 15

Comparison of Annual Suggestions for Program Improvement: 2014 vs 2013, 2012 & 2011

Suggestions for Improvement	2014 % Need^a	N^b	2013 % Need^a	N^b	2012 % Need^a	N^b	2011 % Need^a	N^b
Appreciated Quality of Staff & Services	47	81	43	67	65	116	52	107
Need Improve Specific Services	31	53	11	17	19	34	22	47
More Frequent Counseling Contacts	20	34	14	22	09	16	14	30
Employment or Job-Related Suggestions	19	32	08	13	12	21	14	29
Counselors & Staff Need be More Timely	24	41	06	10	11	19	11	24
More Direct Service Staff Needed	24	41	08	12	13	23	11	24
Develop better Quality in HA & Services	14	24	08	13	08	15	11	23
More Publicity about ADRS	7	12	06	09	07	12	10	21
Funding Levels Need be Increased	12	20	12	19	08	19	07	15

^a Column lists percentage of persons who made Suggestions for Improvement of VR service that ADRS provides for consumers who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

^b N values represent the total number of respondents who provided a suggestion for ways that ADRS could improve VR services provided to consumers who are Deaf and hard of hearing.

Note: *FY 2014 N:276; FY 2013 N:243; FY 2012 N:188 and FY 2011 N: 213*

Ratings of counselor overall performance: A large majority of Deaf and hard of hearing consumers who responded to the FY 2014 survey were satisfied or completely satisfied with their ADRS rehabilitation counselors (RCDs). Total counselor scores could have ranged from 10 to 30. The overall average score that consumers gave to the 19 ADRS VR counselors was 11.60 (SD: 3.7), based on 276 respondent ratings. The most commonly occurring score was in the range of 10.0–13.0 (where 10.0 is the maximum best overall rating possible – i.e., a ‘perfect’ score of 1 on each of 10 items), with a vast majority of consumers expressing positive levels of satisfaction regarding their relationship with their counselors. The data for consumers satisfaction with their counselor (see Table 9 on page 38 and Table 10 on page 40) also provides a summary of the overall performance of each counselor in terms of number of deaf and hard of hearing cases they closed and the number of each counselor's closed cases who responded to the survey at the time of contact by the FY 2014 ADRS Deaf Consumer Satisfaction Survey.

Consumer annual ratings of experience with their VR staff: 2014 - 2011

Table 16 on page 77 presents a four-year comparison between 2014, 2013, 2012, and 2011 consumer ratings of their satisfaction with VR staff that served them. The data show that ADRS consumers who are Deaf and hard of hearing consistently rate their experiences with staff as overall satisfactory.

These year-by-year ratings show that until FY 2013 when consumers closed each year as Not Rehabilitated were added to the ADRS Consumer Outcome Satisfaction Surveys, consumers consistently reported overall ratings of 90% or higher levels of satisfaction with their VR staff in eight of the ten key counselor-client-staff relationship and case management areas. The percentage of consumers satisfaction with VR staff was lowest for the two categories of “VR staff quickly returned my phone calls”(item #7) and “VR staff did everything they could to help me find (or keep) a job”(item#10). The interested reader should note the differences illustrated when comparing the 2013 and 2014 fiscal year ratings to those obtained in FY 2011 & 2012. Although adding Not Rehabilitated respondent ratings has decreased the overall ratings, these data continue to represent reasonably acceptable levels of overall ADRS consumer satisfaction with the qualitative aspects of their relationships with VR staff.

Comparisons of Consumer Satisfaction with ADRS Services in 2014, 2013, 2012, and 2011:

Table 17 on page 78 presents a four-year side-by-side comparison of the percentage of 2014, 2013, 2012 and 2011 respondents who reported on their satisfaction with specific VR services. The data reflect annual year-to-year fluctuations in numbers and percentages across all ten of the specific service categories listed. However, in previous years (e.g., FY 2012 & 2011) consumers reported higher levels of satisfaction across all 10 categories and gave 90% or higher ratings to five of the ten service categories. The current year’s consumer ratings of satisfaction with VR services did not rate any of the service categories that high; ratings of satisfaction actually declined across the board. Four categories (College Training, Job Coaching & OJT, Job Readiness Training, & Job Search Assistance) received satisfaction ratings in the 60th percentile range and 75% indicated they were satisfied with Interpreting Services. On the positive side, the five VR service categories that had been receiving annual ratings ranging from the mid-to upper 90% satisfaction range still generated ratings of 82 to 89 percent satisfaction in 2014.

Table 16

Comparative Percentage Reporting Satisfaction with VR Staff: 2014 vs 2013, 2012, & 2011

Service	2014 % Agreed^a	N^b	2013 % Agreed^a	N^b	2012 % Agreed^a	N^b	2011 % Agreed^a	N^b
VR staff was easy to work with.	87	231	91	221	93	227	93	248
VR staff asked me about my needs.	89	237	91	221	93	229	94	253
VR staff encouraged me and supported me.	84	223	89	216	90	220	92	247
VR staff knew how to work with deaf and hard of hearing people like me.	86	228	90	217	89	219	93	249
VR staff respected me.	89	235	94	226	92	226	94	252
VR staff asked about my work interests and needs to plan my services.	88	233	90	216	89	218	93	246
VR staff returned my phone calls within 72 hours (TDD, VP, Email or IM)	76	204	77	185	79	193	77	205
VR staff had a positive attitude towards me.	88	232	90	219	92	226	92	246
VR staff did what they said they would do in my rehabilitation plan (followed through on it)	82	218	87	209	92	224	90	238
VR staff did everything they could to help me find (or keep) a job.	77	203	81	195	85	204	88	231

^a Column lists percentage of persons who indicated that they agreed with a positive statement of satisfaction regarding their experience with ADRS staff.

^b N values represent the total number of respondents who provided a response indicating they agreed with a positive statement of satisfaction regarding their experience with ADRS staff.

Table 17

Comparative Percentage Reporting Satisfaction w/VR Services: 2014 vs 2013, 2012 & 2011

Service	2014 % Agreed^a	N^b	2013 % Agreed^a	N^b	2012 % Agreed^a	N^b	2011 % Agreed^a	N^b
Assessment and testing	84	185	84	184	91	198	92	228
Vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance	81	175	82	179	90	192	90	227
College, technical or university training	74	46	63	30	87	38	85	40
Job coaching and on-the-job training	64	53	60	37	80	44	85	60
Job readiness training	68	50	61	36	78	39	84	46
Training on using hearing aids or other assistive listening devices	90	174	86	153	92	184	96	216
Job search assistance	60	61	66	63	78	60	80	79
Work accommodations, assistive technology or hearing aids	89	182	87	160	93	196	95	210
Interpreter services	74	55	75	43	87	46	85	59
Other services	78	137	82	115	91	172	96	235

^a Column lists percentage of persons who indicated that were “satisfied” with a specific VR service that was provided for them through ADRS.

^b N values represent the total number of respondents who provided a response regarding their satisfaction with specific VR services they received.

Consumer perceptions of the major benefits received: Most of the respondents, when asked to list major benefits that they received from their rehabilitation program, mentioned receiving a combination of important benefits. The most frequently cited benefits the last four years (FY 2011- FY2014) has been ADRS provision of hearing aids and related amplification aids that helped restore or otherwise enhance the hearing ability of more than half of the respondents. For a vast majority of hard of hearing consumers, the restoration or improvement of their ability to hear and understand conversational speech by virtue of VR assistance toward obtaining the necessary technology and equipment is the key to their successful rehabilitation and productive return to work and living. Regaining the ability to better hear and understand work-related communication with customers and co-workers as well as feelings of increased confidence in terms of work, personal and social independence were the two other highly valued benefits they received from their rehabilitation program. The fourth most frequently mentioned major benefit

consumers pointed to was the quality of VR counseling support and encouragement they received from their counselors and rehabilitation team. To more fully appreciate the quality and depth of the appreciation that many consumers expressed for the benefits obtained from their rehabilitation program, the reader is encouraged to review how they described the benefits in their own words – in Appendix H.

Employment outcomes and list of job titles: A total of 212 respondents (77%) reported that they were currently employed at the time they responded to the survey. These consumers reported being employed in a wide variety of labor market occupations and settings (see Appendix C). Sixty-three (23%) of the respondents (22 Rehabilitated and 41 Not Rehabilitated) who were not employed included comparable numbers reporting that they either: (1) had a disability preventing them from working, (2) had been laid off or fired from their jobs or (3) had retired from the work force. It should be noted that most of those who were laid off or fired indicated they would like to work but were encountering difficulties finding employment opportunities.

Consumer suggestions for ways and means to improve ADRS' service program: Respondents provided a wide variety of suggestions for improving services of the program. Consumers frequently reported that they believe ADRS is doing good work, but needs to provide for more counselors trained and experienced in working with consumers who are Deaf or have severe hearing losses. Also, for RCD counselors to be more attentive and responsive to consumer needs throughout each step of the VR process. For the sixth consecutive year, approximately a quarter of respondents suggested that their VR counselors and ADRS office staff need to improve the timeliness of providing services, including returning phone calls more quickly and reduction of the long waiting periods many consumers encounter in their rehabilitation program. Younger workers continue to ask ADRS to allocate more staff and program resources to improving the agency's employment preparation and job-related service program. These comments range from the recommendation that ADRS expand upon the program's efforts to develop more and better career-track jobs with benefits and to provide extended follow-along services and post-employment support services for consumers after VR case closure. The interested reader is encouraged to read their actual statements and suggestions as listed without editing in Appendix I. There are numerous suggestions by consumers who were very pleased as well as those who felt the program was not meeting their needs and advocated for the program to do a better job.

Major Programmatic Themes Repeated in Annual (FY2014) Consumer Recommendations:

The following recommendations are based on the results of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Outcome Satisfaction surveys over the past four years. Many 2014 recommendations overlap and reinforce recommendations derived from surveys in prior years asking ADRS to give priority to addressing fundamental VR service delivery and infrastructure issues.

- ADRS needs to generate more frequent and better public postings and related marketing strategies to enhance the public's awareness of and knowledge about ADRS services as well as increase public awareness of VR services and locations (including satellite offices) in the various geographical regions of the state.

Rationale: Many respondents report it is often difficult for consumers with disabilities to locate information regarding the range and scope of services ADRS provides and the eligibility requirements associated with the various service options offered.

- ADRS needs to continue recent successful efforts to employ more VR staff trained and experienced in service to consumers with hearing loss to assure that regional offices as well as their satellite office locations can receive a more frequent and consistent schedule of coverage so as to reduce the long waiting periods that consumers often endure during their VR program.

Rationale: Respondents in both urban and rural areas alike noted they encounter extremely long waiting times for appointments, face-to-face meetings for counseling and guidance, approval for various services, devices and related technology.

- ADRS should take care to assure that counselor and DSS team caseloads do not become so large that staff does not have sufficient time for timely and productive interaction with their caseload in order to provide timely counseling, guidance and follow along services.

Rationale: A number of consumers report they often found it very difficult to contact and talk with their counselor and DSS staff because they are rarely available or accessible on an as-needed basis by clients seeking timely guidance and counseling or service authorization.

- Consumers have commended ADRS' recent hiring of additional interpreters and job coaches to assist more consumers by providing ongoing follow-along work place assistance during their first months on the job. A number of consumers suggest ADRS might benefit by harnessing the use of Video Remote Interpreting whereby staff interpreters could utilize current computer video technology to interpret for Deaf workers and their employers from a distance. By using Skype, Face Time, Purple, Sorenson, and/or other existing video phone systems available in the public domain, more cost-effective interpreting services might be delivered to ADRS consumers and their employers on an as-needed basis via computer-based Video Phone transmission.

Rationale: Deaf and hard of hearing consumers most often need communication accommodations during the process of job seeking and learning the duties of their new jobs. Each year, Deaf and hard of hearing consumers point to the lost opportunities consumers endure due to the lack of more DSS staff that can provide essential community and work place support services.

- ADRS is encouraged to set up a more effective system by which to closely monitor and provide longer-term Post-employment follow-ups with employed consumers to ensure they have been able to satisfactorily maintain their new employment and living situations.

Rationale: A number of consumers who had lost their jobs and were having problems finding new jobs due to lay-offs and related loss of employment, reported they would like to work, but needed assistance to find a job to replace the one lost. Most did not fully understand that they could turn to ADRS for "Post-Employment" services.

- ADRS is encouraged to develop and implement strategies for strengthening partnerships with Alabama employers and empower consumers with training, education and experience that lead to consumers qualifying for a range of jobs and career opportunities beyond the current array of entry-level jobs.

Rationale: Respondents continue to express dissatisfaction with the limited range of career opportunities that their VR program currently offers for consumers with hearing loss. Many find that they are faced with the distasteful option of taking lower level entry-type jobs that do not match up to their education, training and career aspirations. In light of the current economic and labor market improvements, the agency is encouraged to place priority on increasing its' investment in development of more and better job prospects.

- It is recommended that ADRS continue its' ongoing commitment to provide consumers and employers with information, materials and training (e.g., the PAH! training workshops) related to how to effectively advocate for and apply ADA policies and procedures to more effectively and cost-efficiently implement work place communication accommodations for workers with hearing loss. Perhaps the agency can tap into current WIOA funding initiatives to enhance its' capacity to cultivate more and better employment opportunities through partnerships with employers.

Rationale: Many hard of hearing and Deaf consumers experience a wide range of difficulties in the work place due to employer and co-workers' poor or inadequate understanding of how basic workplace communication accommodations can be set up. Consumers recommend that ADRS job developers and job coach teams continue and even expand their proactive approach to providing employers with guidance and assistance in making better use of existing ADA informational and training materials on how to make reasonable workplace communication access for workers who are Deaf and hard of hearing. Perhaps the agency could consider ways and means the new WIOA funding initiatives could be harnessed to expand and enhance these efforts.

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Appendix A

ADRS Deaf Consumer Satisfaction Survey FY 2014

APPENDIX A

ADRS Consumer Satisfaction Study for Persons Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing PO Box 241873 Little Rock, Arkansas 72223

Date: Month, Day, 2014

Dear Deaf & Hard of Hearing Consumers:

We are contacting all deaf and hard of hearing Alabama consumers who recently had their case closed by the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) VR program.

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) asked our team, Communication Plus⁺ Research Associates, to do an independent survey asking consumers like yourself about your experiences with vocational rehabilitation services. ADRS asked our research team to help them do this study because we have over 25 years of experience in doing research studies with people who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

Please complete and return the enclosed questionnaire. We will work with ADRS to use the information that you provide to guide its efforts to improve VR services for persons who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

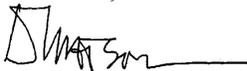
This survey is voluntary. Your name was selected because you received VR services from ADRS and your case was closed. We will add your responses to others who are being contacted.

You may stop answering at any time. You may also decide not to answer any specific question. All information collected will be kept private and stored in locked files.

By completing and returning the questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in this study. If you have any questions, please telephone us by text or voice (501.951.5171) or Videophone (501.246.8431). The survey will take about 15-20 minutes of your time. You can email me at dwatson@uark.edu

Please return the questionnaire to us in the enclosed postage-free envelope with our return address on it.

Thank You,



Douglas Watson, Director

Enclosures: ADRS Consumer Satisfaction Questionnaire
Return envelope with Pre-paid postage

Alabama Rehabilitation Consumer Satisfaction Study – FY 2014

1. How do you describe yourself?

- Deaf
- Hard of Hearing
- Late Deafened
- Other, please specify:

2. How do you prefer to communicate?

- Speaking and listening
- Speech or Lip reading
- Sign Language
- Writing
- Other, please specify:

3. Do you use a hearing aid, cochlear implant or other assistive listening device?

- Yes
- No

4. Using your personal communication device, can you usually hear and understand what a person says without seeing his or her face if that person:

- a. SHOUTS to you from across a quiet room?
- b. SPEAKS LOUDLY to you from across a quiet room?
- c. TALKS IN A NORMAL VOICE to you from across a quiet room?
- d. WHISPERS to you from across a quiet room?

Yes	No

5. **Tell us about your experiences with VR staff.**

Who was the VR counselor who helped you?

Which VR office served you?

--	--

6. Did your VR Counselor make an effort to provide and arrange services for you in a timely way?

- Yes
- No

7. Did your VR counselor involve you when planning services to reach your employment goal?

- Yes
- No

8. Were you able to contact your VR counselor when needed?

- Yes
- No

1. Did your VR counselor treat you with courtesy and respect during your program?

- Yes
- No

2. We also want to know about your experiences with the overall VR staff. Please rate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by checking the box:

	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree
VR staff was easy to work with.	1	2	3
VR staff asked me about my needs.	1	2	3
VR staff encouraged me and supported me.	1	2	3
VR staff knew how to work with deaf and hard of hearing people like me.	1	2	3
VR staff respected me.	1	2	3
VR staff asked about my work interests and needs to plan my services.	1	2	3
VR staff returned my phone calls within 72 hours (TDD, VP, Email, or IM).	1	2	3
VR staff had a positive attitude towards me.	1	2	3
VR staff did what they said they would do in my rehabilitation plan. (followed through on my plan)	1	2	3
VR staff did everything he/she could to help me to find (or keep) a job.	1	2	3

11. How well do you think you and VR staff communicated?

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent

12. Overall, how satisfied were you with your VR staff?

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent

13. How involved were you in planning your rehabilitation plan or contract? Would you say:

- Not involved
- A Little Involved
- Totally Involved

14. Did you receive all the rehabilitation services that you felt you needed? Would you say:

- Some of them
- Most of them
- All of them

15. Would you say speed of arranging services was?

- Very Timely
- Timely
- Not Timely

Tell us about your satisfaction with the services you received.

16. Check which services you received from VR. How satisfied are you with each service that you received?

	Did you receive service?			Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	Satisfied
	No	Yes		1	2	3
Assessment/Testing	No	Yes		1	2	3
Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance	No	Yes		1	2	3
College, Technical or University Training	No	Yes		1	2	3
Job Coaching/On-the-job Training	No	Yes		1	2	3
Job Readiness Training	No	Yes		1	2	3
Training on Using Hearing Aids or Other Assistive Listening Devices	No	Yes		1	2	3
Job Search Assistance	No	Yes		1	2	3
Work Accommodations/Assistive Technology/Hearing Aids	No	Yes		1	2	3
Interpreter Services	No	Yes		1	2	3
Other: _____	No	Yes		1	2	3

17. How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your rehabilitation services?

- Completely Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Satisfied
- Completely Satisfied

18. Would you recommend the ADRS rehabilitation services to your family or friends?

- No, Not at all
- Possibly
- Yes, Completely

Tell us about your job.

19. Are you currently employed?

- Yes.....(Go to question 21)
- No.....If not, how long did you work after your case was closed? _____ weeks

If not, why are you not working?

If not, would you like to work now?

- Yes
- No

20. Did VR help you find or keep your current job?

- Yes
- No.....If not, who helped you get your job?

21. What is your current job title (or kind of work you do)?

--

22. How many hours do you work each week?

What is your pay?

--	--

23. Do you get benefits from your job like health insurance, sick leave, or vacation leave?

- Yes
- No

24. Are you happy or satisfied with your job?

- Yes
- No

25. VR services helped me do my job better.

- Yes
- No

26. I have a new, better job, now than I did before my VR services.

- Agree
- Disagree

27. I feel better about myself and who I am now than before my VR services.

- Agree
- Disagree

28. I feel better now about my future than before my VR services.

- Agree
- Disagree

29. I am more independent now because of my VR services.

- Agree
- Disagree

30. How did VR help you the most?

31. How could ADRS improve their services?

If you have any questions about this study, please contact:

Bedarius Bell
Bedarius.Bell@rehab.alabama.gov

1-334-293-7128

Alabama ADRS Questionnaire Number: _____

Thank you!

Please return the questionnaire in the self-addressed Envelope with pre-paid postage.

APPENDIX A – Continued

ADRS DEAF CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEY - FY2014

NAME: _____

PHONE: _____

CONTROL ID: _____

Hello, my name is _____

I am with the Communication Plus⁺ Inc. Research team. We are conducting a Consumer Satisfaction Survey for the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. You should have received a letter explaining that we would be calling to ask you about your experience as a consumer with ADRS.

Based on your experience, ADRS would appreciate your response to a few questions to help them look at ways to improve services provided by the agency to persons who are hard of hearing or deaf.

This interview is strictly voluntary on your part. Your name was selected from a list of people who received services within the past year and was provided to us by the State VR agency. Your name will not be included with your responses. We will add your responses to the responses of the other persons participating in the interviews and give this summary information to ADRS. You may also stop the interview at any time or elect not to answer specific questions.

Your responses will be confidential, and your name will not be used in any report of the research. By continuing this interview, you will be indicating your consent to participate in the study.

If you later have any questions about the study, you can reach me at:

The interview will take about 15-20 minutes. Would you like to go ahead with the interview?

First, I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself:

APPENDIX B

Comparative Consumer Ratings of ADRS VR Counselors by 221 Rehabilitated and 55 Not Rehabilitated Consumers in FY 2014

2014 ADRS Consumer Satisfaction Survey -- REHABILITATED

Did your VR counselor make an effort to provide and arrange services for you in a timely way?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	93.2%	206
No	6.8%	15
<i>answered question</i>		221
<i>skipped question</i>		1

2014 ADRS Consumer Satisfaction Survey -- REHABILITATED

Did your VR counselor involve you when planning services to reach your employment goal?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	92.8%	205
No	7.2%	16
<i>answered question</i>		221
<i>skipped question</i>		1

2014 ADRS Consumer Satisfaction Survey -- REHABILITATED

Were you able to contact your VR counselor when needed?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	91.4%	202
No	8.6%	19
<i>answered question</i>		221
<i>skipped question</i>		1

2014 ADRS Consumer Satisfaction Survey -- REHABILITATED

Did your VR counselor treat you with courtesy and respect during your program?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	97.3%	215
No	2.7%	6
<i>answered question</i>		221

APPENDIX B - CONTINUED

2014 ADRS Consumer Satisfaction with VR Services -- NOT REHABILITATED

Did your VR counselor make an effort to provide and arrange services for you in a timely way?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	85.2%	46
No	14.8%	8
<i>answered question</i>		54
<i>skipped question</i>		1

2014 ADRS Consumer Satisfaction with VR Services -- NOT REHABILITATED

Did your VR counselor involve you when planning services to reach your employment goal?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	70.4%	38
No	29.6%	16
<i>answered question</i>		54

2014 ADRS Consumer Satisfaction with VR Services -- NOT REHABILITATED

Were you able to contact your VR counselor when needed?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	66.7%	36
No	33.3%	18
<i>answered question</i>		54

2014 ADRS Consumer Satisfaction with VR Services -- NOT REHABILITATED

Did your VR counselor treat you with courtesy and respect during your program?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	88.9%	48
No	11.1%	6
<i>answered question</i>		54
<i>skipped question</i>		1

APPENDIX C

What is your current job title or kind of work you do? Closed Rehabilitated

N=191 (Listed in the chronological order that they were received from respondents)

1. Janitorial & Maintenance Services @ Animal Clinic
2. Case Librarian
3. Nutrition Clerk
4. Intern Architect
5. Pre-cook @national restaurant chain
6. Receiving Associate at Sears!
7. Morgue assistant
8. Office Assistant II for City Treasury Department
9. Foreman for Tree Company
10. Child Care Specialist
11. Hairdresser @ Cosmetology Services in my home
12. Farm Worker
13. Irish Impressions Director
14. OCC Nurse
15. Research Associate
16. Instructional Aide
17. Teacher Aide for K-4 grades
18. Nursing Assistant/Escort
19. Bookkeeper
20. Child Nutrition Manager @ County Board of Education
21. Coordinator of Volunteers @ Hospice
22. Massage Therapist
23. Coordinator of Deaf-Blind Services
24. Housekeeping Staff
25. Substitute Teacher

26. Wal Mart Associate
27. Daycare Teacher
28. Pastor
29. Technician
30. Building Maintenance Director
31. School Bus Driver
32. Communications Service Tech
- 33.. Custodial Worker
34. Electrician
35. Dell Sales Associate
36. Owner of business
37. Carpenter @ Home Construction Company
38. Aide to the Elderly
39. Security @ Grand Prix Race Track
40. Sales Associate in Hoover, AL
41. EMR Ambulance worker
42. Housekeeper @ Hotel
43. Sterile Processing Technician
44. Rubber Worker @ Goodyear Tire
45. Financial support worker
46. Teacher
47. Assistant Manager
48. Teacher 2nd grade
49. Registered Dental Hygienist
50. Church Custodian
51. Reference Librarian
52. Cook
53. Receptionist/Switchboard operator

54. Case Manager
55. Transportation maintenance Tech II (Road Work)
56. Church Pastor
57. Lee County BOE
58. Director, Business Services and Accounts Receivable
59. Custodian
60. Catering Manager
61. Grocery Stocker @ Sam's Club
62. Part-time job to unload merchandise
63. Deli Restaurant Prep worker
64. Food Service
65. Wal Mart Associate
66. Stocker @ Wal-Mart
67. Laundry Worker in Nursing Home
68. Executive administrative Assistant
69. Carpenter, painter, & Maintenance worker
70. Sales Consultant
71. Laundry Worker for Uniform Company
72. Cashier @ restaurant
73. Teacher
74. Accounting office work for city police department
75. Small business owner
76. Custodial worker
77. Administration Clerk
78. The Bakery-wrapper
79. Radiological technician
80. Sales
81. Human Resources Manager

82. Shift Manager @ Burger King
83. Teacher
84. Substance Abuse Counselor
85. Receptionist
86. Plumber
87. Social Worker
88. Compliance Director
89. Record Management Specialist I @ UAB
90. Cook & Counter waitress @ Restaurant
91. Home Depot Sales associate
92. Maintenance/custodian worker @ Law Firm
93. Unload trucks
94. Software technical serviceman
95. Medical Staff Coordinator
96. Administrative assistant of Laboratory
97. Event Specialist
98. Interpreter (English/Spanish)
99. Deaf Support Specialist with VR
100. Truck Driver @ Grocery Chain
101. Stock Clerk
102. Administrative Assistant
103. Deliver mail for the USPS
104. Shift Manager @ Burger King store
105. Administrative assistant
106. Office assistant
107. Accounts Payable/Secretary/Receptionist
108. Real Estate Agent
109. Customer Service Tech

110. Electronics Tech
111. Marketing & telephone appointment calls from home
112. Employment Services Assistant
113. Mainstream Teacher for Deaf & Hard of Hearing students
114. Administrative Assistant
115. Hotel House Keeping staff
116. Civil Document Server for County Sheriff's office
117. Carpet manufactur9ing worker
118. Receiving Manager
119. Production Assembly Line
120. Dental Assistant
121. Inspector
122. HVAC technician
123. Data entry Tech (ASA1)
124. Manufacture windows & doors
125. Clerk
126. CNN @ Nursing Home
127. Auditor
128. Information Technology Tech
129. Quality filter, Inc.
130. Teacher
131. Carpenter & welder on big building construction
132. Clerical worker
133. Post office rural carrier
134. Minister
135. Cosmetologist - own Business
136. Maintenance @ McDonald's
137. Sam's Club & Target

138. Auditor II @ Auburn University
139. Weight Watcher's Leader
140. Operations Area Stockroom Supervisor
141. Housekeeper @ National Hotel chain location
142. Seamstress Operator
143. Custodian for a school
144. Master Merchandiser
145. Clerk
146. Teacher @ Day Care
147. Carpenter/Painter
148. Truck Driver
149. Bakery packager
150. Corrections Officer
151. Hostess @ restaurant
152. Administrative Assistant for ADRS
153. Cosmetologist
154. Truck Dispatcher
155. Dental Assistant
156. Operator II Mechanic
157. Sam's Club - bakery
158. Retail Sales @ Bass Pro
159. Foreman for Tree Cutting crew
160. Minister
161. Administrative Assistant-State Department of Military
162. Garden Bar - preparation of food, dishwasher
163. Supervisor for Security Guards
164. Custodian/School System
165. Maintenance of office complex

166. Accounting Analyst for Insurance Co.
167. Water System Operator
168. Water Department & Sewer Maintenance Worker
169. Sales Associate @ Dollar Tree
170. Hotel Housekeeping Dept.
171. Wal Mart Associate
172. Assembly worker
173. Maintenance Trades helper, Ft. Rucker
174. New Patient Examiner @ Chiropractor's office
175. Hotel Housekeeping staff
176. Part time Library Assistant
177. Corporate Accounts Tech
178. Substance Abuse Counselor (LGSW)

Kind of Current Job Titles/Work Reported by Not Rehabilitated

N=13

179. Music Instrument Repairman and Teacher
180. Production worker
181. Cashier & Salesperson @ Jewelry Retail outlet
182. Carpentry Service office staff worker
183. Medical Staff coordinator
184. ASA II Tech
185. Language Lab Mentor
186. Assistant to Director of Children's Services
187. Clerical Worker in Mfg Plant
188. Sonic Grill Worker
189. National Restaurant Chain kitchen staff
190. Sub Teacher @ Alabama School for the Deaf
191. Bridal Consultant

APPENDIX D

Please describe any other services you received: Closed Rehabilitated

N= 47

1. Classroom assistance, note takers & captioned videos
2. Assistive Listening Devices (ALDS)
3. Easter Seals & other additional adjustment and work training assistance
4. ALDS, work clothing & equipment
5. ALDS
6. Vocational training and two PWEs at Gentry and follow-up service support on the job. Rocky T. provided great job coaching to me
7. Eyeglasses, assistive technology, tools/equipment and food handlers permit
8. ALDS
9. Assistive technology, work clothing, alarm, ADL, glasses, job coaching, job readiness and interpreting
10. Cataracts surgically removed
11. Audiological assessment and consultation & guidance
12. I received services from my first counselor but when she retired, it went downhill from there. When I moved to Auburn looking for better services it seemed that Tuscaloosa didn't even care
13. I am having problems with my hearing aids. The volume is too low and I have a hard time with them. I called the VR for help, but they have not returned my calls to check on the issues I am having
14. Resources like the clock alarm and ALDS
15. They helped me get hearing aids and kept in touch to make sure things worked out for me, but the aids have been nothing but trouble and I have had to go back six times for repairs and one time to replace the aids. In fact, FYI--they have not workedor been in shop.... much more than they have been used by me!!!
16. Support and assistance in understanding the extent of my hearing loss
17. Hearing aids
18. ALDS
19. Glasses
20. ALDS, etc
21. Audio and communication devices and systems
22. I was provided work clothing to wear to a substandard part time job

23. Work boots and equipment
24. Glasses
25. New glasses with transition lenses
26. Hearing aids to help me with my job
27. Excellent counseling and guidance by nice and helpful staff
28. Custom Orthotics
29. Great and amazing services. I loved the experience
30. Hearing aids, ALDS
31. Interpreting for job interviews and on-job instruction & training
32. A new pair of glasses
33. Hearing aids, sonic clock and shaker alarm
34. Various ALDS
35. I received the resource of an alarm clock-- that is all
36. ALDS
37. Hearing accommodation devices
38. ALDS and maintenance funds
39. Transportation, alarm system for Deaf and ALDS
40. College expenses and Summer job experiences, etc

Please describe any other services you received: Not Rehabilitated

N=7

41. Captioning service for my classes
42. Hearing aids
43. When I got hearing aids from another source, they arranged to help adjust them to my particular needs
44. I did get some job openings, to send out resumes in the Troy area
45. I got nothing at all from them
46. They hooked me up with a volunteer service group for personal assistance.
47. Currently getting help to look for a new job.

APPENDIX E

Why are you not working - Closed Rehabilitated

N=19

1. I am presently living with/caring for my mom, she has Alzheimer's. She has got to the point now that she can't be left alone for long periods of time.
2. Unable to communicate with my nursing patients due to my progressive deafness.
3. I hurt my back and not able to work.
4. Because I was working as part time at Post Office before I left there. I have two jobs now working as part time at two different companies.
5. I was unable to communicate via phone & with patients so I resigned due to disrespect in the work force for persons with deafness.
6. I was fired on my job for someone else's mistake!!
7. Laid off as they told me my services were no longer needed!!
8. Moved to North Carolina.
9. Job closed down / liquidated.
10. Let go.
11. I do in home care. My client died. I have not worked in about five months. I have asked ADRS to help me get new hearing aids so I can hear well enough to take on new clients who need in-home care.
12. Retired.
13. The job that I had allowed work about 1 day every other week. I never know when I will be needed. I am still looking for part time work, even if I am needed for the previous work. I have communicated this to VR in a survey to VR. I have physical limitations.
14. I retired from my public job to pastor a church. And I work part time self-employed.
15. Broken bone on right foot and severely sprained on left foot.
16. I am now on total disability
17. I have not been able to get a job other than temporary work, which I myself have found WITHOUT VR, help. Plus, I didn't know my case was closed until I got this inquiry from your survey!
18. Due to my health problems, I missed work a lot. But, I am not ready to go back to work yet. I will look for another job when my health improves enough that I can work.
19. I work for a charter bus company. Work is slow at this time of year.

APPENDIX F

Why are you not working? Not Rehabilitated

N=30

1. Moved to new home in northern state; now searching for job.
2. I'm trying to find job but I have no car now.
3. Discrimination about my lack of hearing and use of hearing aids and wanting more written communication between bosses and subrogates.
4. I have a difficult time with things.
5. Disabled.
6. My VR counselor, McConico never even tried to help me---she did not want to help me!
7. Trying to get my disability. Having anger issues. Can't get along with people very good because of anger issues. No transportation, so can't depend on anyone to take you to work.
8. In school.
9. Health Reasons.
10. Am looking for work.
11. Laid off. Now looking for another job.
12. Unable to find a job.
13. Still looking for work on my own
14. Due to physical impairment, and the health problems my parents are currently having, there has been no way to return to employment, at this time.
15. I have not been able to find a job in my area and my VR told me he noticed I get sick a lot and he was afraid if I got a job I would get sicker and then get let go but never even give me a chance .. but I am moving anyway .. out of state.
16. The job search is challenging in today's economic problems.
17. VR did not give me a job. Now I have a car and can get to work ok.
18. Could not handle the job, just too hard.
19. Applied for disability because of hearing loss, low vision & knee problems.
20. Wife's illness requires me being at home to assist her.
21. I have cancer of the spine and am undergoing treatment
22. Still a student in High School.

23. I'm leaving b-cuz I'm blacking out but nobody helping me cuz I'm deaf. I have problems often and supervisor does not help me as she is so very lazy sits there with her I-Pad in Lobby!
24. They did not find a job for me.
25. Never chance to have work for a long time.
26. Retired.
27. VR did not help me find job; instead, they closed my case unfairly...blaming me...but they never helped me.
28. Because I can't find a job.
29. Decided on a career change as well as a relocation.
30. Not physically able to work.

APPENDIX G

How did VR help you the most ? Closed Rehabilitated

(N=186)

1. Helped me get new hearing aids and training on how to gain most benefit from them.
2. Job search and on-the-job assistance as needed.
3. Helping me get hearing aids in order to successfully retain my job as a receptionist answering the phone and handling the switchboard.
4. They were able to get my hearing aid and testing done in a timely manner.
5. Hearing Aids/Palm Pilot.
6. Getting hearing aids that I could never afford.
7. With being able to hear what was being said to me, without asking over and over.
8. By receiving the hearing aids, I am able to perform better on my job. The hearing aids help me with my interaction with others in a way that I was not able to do before I got them.
9. Helping me to acquire hearing aids in order for me to work SAFER and more EFFECIENTLY by being able to hear fellow workers and Bosses instructions more clearly.
10. Provided hearing test, fitting and aids along with ALDS.
11. Helped pay for books, tuition and related training costs.
12. By supplying me with a hearing aid so I could continue working with my clients as their beautician/hairdresser. Now able to talk on telephone and hear it ring when I am at work.
13. They helped me a lot because I feel better now. ADRS helped me get what I needed in order to do my job better.
14. By providing me with hearing aids, which I could not afford.
15. Helped me afford hearing aids that I really needed. Not only for personal situations, but also definitely help me communicate and do my job much more efficiently.
16. They supplied me with hearing aids and any other device I needed.
17. In some areas I can hear better.
18. I learned how to talk and deal with people better.
19. ADRS helped me with hearing aids and with my vision equipment. Unfortunately, my vision keeps deteriorating and interferes with my work abilities.
20. The hearing aids they helped me get gives me the independence that I needed to do my job and in my personal/social life as well.

21. Staff person Susan Gordon helped me the most! She was a great help. In addition, I requested the help of Easter Seals in my job search. This is how I got my current job.
22. Helped me to communicate more effectively with my boss, co-workers, and my students at my job.
23. Helped me with hearing aid and assistive listening devices, work clothing, tools and transportation so I could return to my old job.
24. They helped in getting the assistive devices I needed to function in the job force and in my everyday life.
25. They got me hearing aids.
26. Assistive listening devices and college costs.
27. Financially.
28. Hearing much improved via assistive listening devices ADRS helped me obtain.
29. Through the program I was able to afford the hearing aids.
30. With my hearing.
31. Encouragement.
32. Able to hear better.
33. Allowing me to have confidence in meetings.
34. On site doctor and hearing testing.
35. By enabling me to hear better to get a full time job that pays good with benefits.
36. They helped me the most when I was in school, which I enjoyed very much. I also enjoyed their help in getting me a job. But, I think I can do better than the simple custodial job I currently have.
37. K. Klopp was very considerate and showed immense concern for my rehabilitation. She went out of her way on a number of occasions. She was kind, considerate, caring, helpful, honest, trustworthy and thoughtful. She is the best counselor ever!!
38. Gave me the skills to improve my work skills, work ethic, and work style.
39. Services & equipment needed to do my job.
40. Helped me looking for and finding my job.
41. By showing genuine interest in me and helping me deal with my hearing loss and obtaining hearing aids.
42. Obtained hearing aids for me.
43. Able to hear better. Plus, they really truly respected me, which meant the world to me.
44. Hearing aids.
45. By enabling me to hear & improving my job performance.

46. Help with hearing aids and communication at work.
47. Mrs. Tora McConico did a wonderful job!!! I can't explain how much I appreciate her doing everything for me that was needed for me to move forward in life!!! I love Mrs. Tora McConico!!!
48. By providing me with hearing aids. I can hear so much better and can communicate with my co-workers in order to relate to what is being said to me.
49. Gave me back my confidence.
50. Helped me have confidence in myself. Helped me with getting new glasses and aids.
51. The hearing aids that ADRS helped me get have helped me to continue teaching in a regular classroom environment.
52. Helped me get new hearing aids that were desperately needed.
53. By providing hearing testing, new aids and job tools. Even with that help, I was unable to communicate with patients via phone so I resigned.
54. They did all they could to help me.
55. By their help in paying for hearing aids that I needed to keep working. I have worn out two sets of aids before getting help this time.
56. Getting me the hearing aid and new eye glasses I needed, but couldn't afford. Working hard every day now, but not a lot of money though.
57. I would be unable to work without the help of VR and the hearing aids. I could not afford the hearing aids without VR providing them for me. I only realized I could get help through VR by a friend that told me about how VR helped her get hearing aids. I am very happy now and work better.
58. Hearing loss was affecting my ability to do my job. Hearing aids help a great deal.
59. Obtaining a hearing aid.
60. Provided expert hearing assessment, purchase and fitting of hearing aids, which are critical for me to fulfill my job duties as a pastor.
61. I can hear.
62. Helped me do my job better by being more able to hear customers on phone and face to face work situations.
63. Financial support with school and supplies.
64. Found my job through summer work program. I live in a rural area and ADRS did not even try to help me find a local job. I drive 50 miles each work day to and from work.
65. Providing hearing aids.
66. Did not help me very much. Did not help me get a job that pays very much or makes me more independent.
67. Helped me prepare for and do a successful job search and application leading to my job. Helped me stay on search and not give up until I got my job.

68. My RCD was always supportive of my goals since case opened. Staff had a lot of patience with me during my job search. In my hometown it is very tough to get a job due to my deafness and color. VR was on my side and they were on my side supporting me each step of the way. I am very pleased with ADRS' efforts to communicate with me and help me reach my goals.
69. Had cataracts surgically removed and obtained hearing aids: I can see & hear better.
70. Made it financially possible for me to obtain hearing aids.
71. Helped me get hearing aids.
72. Because of my hearing aids from ADRS, I can hear better when talking to customers.
73. Improved my hearing and understanding more in group conversations so much better.
74. Received prompt, very polite services. Staff was understanding and demonstrated genuine concern/support.
75. Hearing aids at no cost.
76. To secure hearing aids and advice/counseling/guidance on other items and services I could utilize as my hearing loss gets worse.
77. Got me glasses and hearing aids and got me through my associates and then abandoned me when moved and needed assistance getting a home in auburn
78. They had been an excellent help to me with the program they have were awesome.
79. Hearing Aids and Glasses.
80. They provided me with my hearing aids.
81. No comments.
82. By being able to get the aids and do my job and hear at my job.
83. I had not realized how great my hearing loss had become. The hearing aids and associated equipment has changed my work life and personal life.
84. I am now able to hear everything I need to keep me successful in my current carrier choice.
85. They provided me with friendly services I needed for hearing aids so I can hear better. And they trained me on how I can use the aids to hear better. They also taught me how to better make use of assistive hearing devices/accommodations at work and in personal/social communications.
86. College tuition and transportation expenses.
87. They assisted me with hearing aids for 10-13 years. They worked around my schedule, assisting me get my assessments & scheduling hearing tests all on the same day. During my last hearing test, Dr. Grisham recommended I see a doctor in Memphis, telling me that technology had come a long way and that I seem to be a good candidate for surgery to correct my hearing loss. I went to see them and had surgery this past December. I currently have 50% hearing back & doctors think it should be 90% soon.
88. Aside from the obvious monetary help, I think the Paid Work Experience is what benefitted me the most. It allowed my current employer to see what type of worker I am on a trial basis, when in actuality, I would probably have never even gotten my foot in the door since UAB is such a large & vast employer.

89. I can hear now! Thank You.
90. Supplying hearing aid.
91. By making sure I knew everything I needed to know and understood the information.
92. By helping me be able to hear what people are saying to me for the first time! I am getting along better with people because they don't have to repeat themselves when talking to me.
93. Find better job.
94. Helped me to acquire hearing aids.
95. Paying for my hearing aids. Without them I could not perform the job I am doing now.
96. PROVIDING SERVICES FOR HEARING AID AND ALSO PROVIDED UNIFORMS AND ALARM CLOCK THAT ASSISTS THE HEARING IMPAIRED.
97. They provided me with hearing aids and glasses.
98. Providing me with Hearing Aids.
99. Accommodation.
100. Their assistance helped me keep a good job. Provided me with hearing aids, which help me to keep working to support my family. Therefore can only say good things about the wonderful support they provided to me and my family. Words alone cannot tell you how much I appreciate the help I got.
101. They furnished the hearing aids I needed but could not afford so I could hear my clients and the phone. When I was out of work they helped me find work with new in-home client care.
102. Helped me get my job.
103. Provided financial aid to assist me attend college.
104. Providing me with quality hearing aids with on out-of-pocket expenses on my part.
105. They provided me with friendly service for hearing aids so I can now hear better. They also trained me to hear and listen more effectively with the hearing device.
106. Hearing aids that I otherwise could not afford. Without the hearing aids I would not have gotten my current job.
107. My counselors @ Muscle Shoals were a tremendous source of encouragement and really tried to help me find another job. I am thankful for all the help they have provided.
108. To be able to hear with the assistance of hearing aids. By getting hearing aids, VR is helping me to not be frustrated at work and at home or feel withdrawn and isolated. The aids help me communicate with my family and everyone at work.
109. Whitt was very helpful and informative. She was a pleasure to work with. I have already referred an associate of mine to her and my associate received hearing aids through VR. Thanks a million.
110. Obtaining a hearing aid.
111. Got me hearing aids and phone device and alarm clock.

112. Helped me keep the job I have. Without their help I would not have been able to keep it. Attached is the survey form that you forwarded me. I apologize for the delay, but have been not at my best by far lately but wanted to get it returned to you. I felt that I needed to go a little farther than what the survey asked for with my rehab help from Alabama Department of Rehabilitation. My primary counselor, Kristine Klopp has done an outstanding job in assessing my needs and taking care of the problems I have presented her. She has handled everything in a very professional manner. She has been very caring and compassionate in working with me. She has been to my home on several occasions to make sure that all was in place and working and to make sure that what they recommended and provided would be the proper solution. Ms. Klopp assembled a team of her associates to work with her on making sure I had everything needed to continue my employment in the proper and successful manner. Dr. Kelly Kovach has worked with me on hearing aids and the telephone connection to make sure I can perform to my maximum on my job. She has done an excellent job in making sure all is working and keeping up with me. Beth Warren (Technology Specialist) has been to my home also on several occasions to evaluate my needs and make recommendation of equipment, which I have been provided. She also has done an exceptional job in making sure that all is in place and working. I feel that all three of these ladies have gone above what a person would normally expect to make sure that I was taken care of. Especially Ms. Klopp, she has followed up to make sure that I had everything needed to perform on my job. They are all a very valuable asset to the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation. I believe they need to be recognized for their efforts. Thank you for allowing me to participate in this survey. If any additional information is needed, please feel free to contact me.
113. The ability to hear much better and getting transition glasses because I am sensitive to light. I suffered from headaches because of the sun and these glasses have helped end a lot of them.
114. Get hearing aids to help with my job.
115. Hearing is greatly improved!
116. The job coach team helped me get my job
117. By helping me to defray the costs of my hearing devices.
118. Hearing aids.
119. Getting me some hearing aids.
120. Provided me with VR services.
121. Hearing is improved.
122. With my High School work and my hearing.
123. Provided me with hearing aids that I otherwise could not afford.
124. Improving my hearing.
125. Provided financial and technical assistance to get new hearing aids that improved my hearing. Hearing is an important safety issue in doing my job at work.
126. By providing hearing aids that help me better perform the duties of my job as an Adm Asst.
127. Obtained my hearing aids.
128. I would not be working if VR had not helped with my hearing aids. They have helped me to keep my job for 33 years. I am 93 years old and remain very active.

129. Hearing aids they helped me get fitted with.... help me ...understand my patients and co-workers better when they are talking to me.
130. Got hearing aids.
131. I can hear in loud meeting and crowded rooms. Phone conversations are easier now that I have an adapter for my phone. This allows me to hear via my hearing aids. Before I would miss conversations and this could cause me to miss information at work.
132. By providing custom orthotics & hearing aids
133. VR is doing good helping me to getting a job
134. Hearing aid and hearing amplifiers for my classroom
135. The hearing aids they helped me get made it possible for me to be able to communicate and not have to repeatedly ask over and over what people say.
136. Improved my hearing.
137. Interpreting support services.
138. Much better hearing.
139. I was always very shy because I didn't want to talk and then not be able to hear the other person when they talked back. Now, I can hear great! Very, very pleased!
140. Hearing Aids.
141. The capable staff at Opelika is always helpful. I would like to give a special 'Shout Out' for Dr. Page Crenshaw. While the first set of hearing aids I received from VR was when they did not have an audiologist on site. Dr. Page Crenshaw goes above and beyond to make sure you understand all the workings of your new devices. Jacoway was very helpful making sure all was taken care of in a timely way. Thanks.
142. Great counseling & guidance service; very caring and patient and supportive.
143. They told me what services they had to offer someone like myself.
144. Provided guidance about job leads and tips for application. However, they were slow and did not develop good job leads for me. I then found my own job leads and set up successful applications with the assistance of an ADRS interpreter.
145. Getting a new hearing aid.
146. By helping me keep my job through assisting me get new hearing aids that allowed me to hear well enough to do the work.
147. Provided me with two new hearing aids and a com pilot, making phone calls loud & clear. Also provided me with a sonic boom alarm clock.
148. Got me the new hearing aids so I can hear better.
149. ADRS helped me get hearing aids that have indeed helped me. I am a retired educator working full time at a daycare center. However, I will not be able to replace my hearing aids when they are no longer serviceable on my income.

150. Providing me with counseling and guidance as well as assistance in buying hearing aids.
151. I did not receive much assistance from Ms Jacoway, so I looked for help from others and did it on my own.
152. Did not get much of any assistance.
153. Helped me with my communication problems.
154. By getting me hearing aids. The job I had applied for put my application on hold because I failed the hearing test. They lifted the hold once I got the hearing aids. Also, I got the hearing aids at a fraction of the cost I was quoted by a hearing aid vendor before I went to VR.
155. Hearing aids helped with customer service and completing tasks on the job.
156. With the hearing aid I can understand my clients better. Communication with my co-workers is much better.
157. With obtaining a hearing aid.
158. I can hear again!!!!
159. My new hearing aids not only improved my hearing but helped me with my ear blockage. Because of the way they're made they don't trap so much of the wax (which I produce a lot of in my ears). Therefore, I've experienced fewer trips to my ENT. Thank you so much!!!
160. Hearing tests and fitted with hearing aids.
161. By providing me with hearing aids that I needed on my job. Now that I am in the church I need the hearing aids even more.
162. My job coach and me called each other for job search and info about government openings.
163. Helped me get a hearing aid. Without the hearing aid I would not have been hired and could not do retail customer sales work.
164. With the aids they provided, I hear what people are saying more clearly now.
165. Attaining much needed hearing aids that I could not have afforded on my own.
166. ADRS helped me a lot when I needed their help and they gave me some of advice which the best thing for me to do. They did listen and encourage me to grow in my success. My VR experience was great and I encountered no problem with the Opelika office..
167. Improved my ability to do my job by helping me get hearing aids.
168. I have been in the school system for eight years. Having been an Aid in the classroom before moving to custodial work. I cannot function or read lips without assistance from hearing aids. ADRS' helping me get hearing aids that I needed really helps me do my job well.
169. Became able to hear again. Thanks for the hearing aids.
170. By giving me my hearing aids.
171. I could not hear over the phone and my job depended on the phone! Also, I could not distinguish words from my co-workers any more so they were having to always repeat everything to me. My hearing aids via ADRS have opened up a whole new world for me on my job by making it possible for me to hear far better than without the aids. I am now able to hear and interact much more effectively.

172. Getting hearing aids. Being able to hear better. Improved my communication with fellow workers and customers.
173. With the hearing aids that ADRS helped me get, I can now hear and understand what I am being taught when my job sends me to in-service training classes and workshops.
174. Helping me get job and setting up a Deaf Wake-up alarm.
175. VR helped me get a job. I got a job as housekeeper at a hotel. ADRS also got me a new alarm clock for my job. She also sent several VR staff to check on me at my job to make sure I was satisfied with the job.
176. Helped me get my job.
177. Provided needed financial assistance for me to obtain the hearing aids that I needed badly.
178. Helped me get the hearing aids and services I needed to do my job. They also put me in contact and helped with setting up an interview with the company that I now work for. They were all great at the Dothan VR team. They changed my life - for me and my family - in a dramatic and most satisfying way with my new hearing ability and new job!!!! Thank You!
179. Helped me get through college, financially and mentally/emotionally. I would not have been able to make the grades I made without their assistance.
180. Not sure.
181. Helped me get job training and email capability.
182. Made my job easier and more comfortable as direct benefit from the new hearing aids ADRS helped me obtain.
183. By assisting me to get hearing aids, so that I could pass the hearing part of the DOT physical. If I had not had the aids, I would have no job.
184. Helped me obtain best hearing aids for my needs.
185. Kept me motivated. ADRS counselors and staff were extremely supportive and even gave me a baby shower when I had my daughter.
186. Found a good job for me and helped me get started.

APPENDIX H

How did VR help you the most? Not Rehabilitated

N: 37

1. Assisted in showing opportunities available of which I had been unaware.
2. They did not help me; just a waste of time because they did not really help me out the way I needed.
3. Helped me get the accommodations I needed for school, and helped finance my schooling and books
4. I am able to hear better now than before--thanks for the hearing aids VR helped me get.
5. The hearing aids are great, I need help finding a job in management where I am accepted
6. Hearing aids
7. Hearing aids
8. MY VR counselor assisted me review my finances and set up plan to make ends meet.
9. Provided hearing aids. But, the hearing aids don't help in hearing. In other words, they helped me get hearing aids, but the hearing aid doesn't always work.
10. They could not help me because I am too disabled to work.
11. I did not get too involved with VR.
12. Paying for my hearing aids and blue tooth listening device.
13. They helped me look for a job. BUT, they were very slow and delayed me all the time so I was waiting for weeks and weeks with no help to look for job. I finally gave up and looked for myself.
14. Teaching and preparing me for the workforce according to my ability
15. I received my hearing aids while employed with Troy University. Hearing my student via phone, in person, was vital to the work I was doing. I would have been helpless without these aids.
16. They did not give me the help I needed from them. It took them too long to schedule appointments for me with audiologists and other medical personnel. I also did not know how I would be able to pay for hearing devices that they said I would have to take care of.
17. By paying for my BA
18. Did not help me at all.
19. Helped me obtain Driver's permit and Driving practice. Mr. Reed and Hollingsworth @ Decatur were my counselors: Reed was NOT helpful and Hollingsworth was most helpful of the two. However, if what I wanted fit VR's preconceived idea for my future, VR made effort to serve me; but if I wanted to direct my path--they did not support me. When I had my own ideas/goals on how to proceed, they were not supportive, saying my goals were wrong! Reed's information many times was not accurate; when I did research to find correct information he was unwilling to seek the truth out so I could have the right service. VR followed through only with their plans...not mine. Hollingsworth knew how to work with me as a deaf consumer while Reed did not. Communication with Hollingsworth was excellent; only poor/fair with Reed.

20. Zero.
21. They did not really help me at all before.
22. Getting hearing aids for me. I am on a fixed income and could not afford any extras. I was able to get aids through ADRS VR help. I am thankful for the help they gave to me.
23. Providing my hearing aids and referring me to Social Security Disability.
24. Replace old hearing aid that was not helping me hear. I usually was better off without the aid on.
25. Provided assistive technology.
26. Explained importance of using hearing aids, but I still have difficulty adjusting to them. My self confidence about using them at school remains low because of noise levels. I can't seem to get the hearing aid adjusted in a way to control or reduce the noise levels.
27. They didn't! I wanted a job but they did not help me get a job.
28. The RCD in Opelika was very un-helpful and did not try to assist me work toward my employment goals. I had to run all over the place without success. BUT never got help from that office which is not deaf friendly at all.
29. Paid 100% for my new hearing aids.
30. ADRS helped me learn how to be more independent and dependable worker and to respect others.
31. With my hearing aids and helping with my job search.
32. VR Jacoway did not help me at all. I need work, but she closed my case without my agreement to it. She does not know how to work with deaf who use ASL and video phones.
33. To be able to keep working
34. Lousy!
35. It helped me finish my training program when my Pell stipend stopped! I learned a lot in training. More than just academics. Very invaluable.
36. No real results.
37. No help was received; only humiliation!

APPENDIX I

How could ADRS improve their services? Closed Rehabilitated

N= 138

1. They did a good job helping me with my situation, so I think they are doing good job as is.
2. Services were satisfactory @ the Homewood staff.
3. Keep doing what you do best.
4. They could offer advice or be clearer on hearing aid (and other technologies) maintenance and predicted associated costs once warranties run out and long after the client's VR account is closed.
5. You're doing great.
6. Continue to provide this service.
7. Offer more assistance such as: Job placement, follow along, and staying in touch with worker and employer longer-term (5-8 months). Creating a plan in collaboration with the consumer...not without her full participation!!!!
8. Just keep on doing the good work for people like me and other trades people. Thank You!
9. Keep doing what they are doing so well
10. I could not have asked for finer service from Jamie Glass and his team at Homewood. I greatly appreciate what they did for me.
11. To provide better notification/communication to and from consumers. Provide better array of quality vocational preparation services/training and to provide better assistance to people looking for gainful employment in good jobs.
12. I can't think of any way at this time. 13 I feel if I had not been assertive and persistent I may not have gotten the help that I did. I wonder what other people who may not have my tenacity--who will be there for them?
14. They should listen to people!!! They don't seem to want to know what we need and want....instead send us here and there and everywhere without really listening to where we are at and what OUR VR goals are.
15. They are fine as they are.
16. Use better job agency.
17. Ask the VR personal that meets the customer to ascertain what devices or tech. they need. I found no flaw in the way I was treated by Whitney Witt.
18. As of now none.
19. Making sure that I could actually use my hearing aids before turning me loose; I hear better without them.
20. By having onsite testing.

21. By working closer with the disabled making sure that our disability benefits would not be in jeopardy by taking a job. Work harder and smarter in placing us in on-the-job-training or job placements that we embrace and not on job situations that they think we may benefit from. By helping us stay under the umbrella of AIDB employment or industries instead of some temporary job in a company that doesn't benefit us.
22. Reach out to more people in need. ADRS services may not be known to all those who really need VR assistance.
23. Very satisfied
24. You want to know how Mobile VR is doing? Here is how I look at this. (1). You need a new area director instead of the one you have. Someone who wants to make a difference, instead of being right. (2). I have been through 2 VR counselors in the span of 4 years. One counselor could not deal with the stress of the job (literally). The other basically quit and moved back to her hometown. It does no good to critique their performance. But, I will say that neither of my counselors would ever answer the phone or return any of my phone calls. This is very unprofessional. I would fire someone for not answering their phone calls. (3). You ask questions like what is the nature of your disability? Who cares how I am disabled? It is the job of VR to place people who need income in a position that will pay them a decent wage. VR counselor's and job placement coordinators end up placing clients in minimum wage positions that take advantage of their situation. This means these clients will never be able to afford an apartment on their own, get a car, or live the American dream as long as VR is the one helping these people. VR needs to realize these people may be disabled but, they are not necessarily dumb or stupid. In fact several of your VR clients have their own businesses. One of your Mobile clients went to college and graduated from a nationally recognized school. They started their own business, which has won Nappie awards in the Mobile area for 4 years in a row!!! (<http://lagniappemobile.com/cover-2014-nappie-awards/>). (4). I have clients of mine that are former VR recipients that currently pay their employee's at least \$13 an hour or more! It kills me that VR does not reach out to its own clients to help other clients find work. (5). I'd like to see more groups where people like myself that have ADHD can meet other like people to see how they cope with the stress of everyday life. We could then see who is working for who. If someone is hiring we could share this information far faster than any VR counselor could help us.(6). We are people too! I hate being talked down to, and chastised. Employers need to understand we are human beings. Don't ask us to do anything you would not. Treat us as you would anyone else. (7). My satisfaction rating would be a 3 out of a 10. Which is unacceptable.
25. Be positive and supportive of consumers as they seek VR assistance and help in finding a good job.
26. They don't need improving.
27. Cannot think of anything.
28. I think they are doing excellent work.
29. IT WOULD BE BETTER IF THE WHOLE PROCESS DIDN'T TAKE so long.
30. By helping Deaf and Hard of Hearing with everything they need and assist them deal with the pressures they are experiencing as they look for jobs, transportation and apartments, etc.
31. They are doing a good job. I don't know anything that they can do to improve their service programs.
32. I was completely satisfied with my service.
33. They do a great job in Gadsden office. They helped me more than you know.
34. They do great job now; no change needed
35. My VR counselor was very kind but seemed kind of rushed all the time. I felt she was very busy due to her schedule so I did not bother her. I am now trying to learn Sign so I can look for a nursing job in that field.

Nursing otherwise is no longer a viable option due to my hearing loss.

36. They are very good at what they do -- by providing all kinds of helpful services
37. I wish there was a way that ADRS could help more people know they can receive help via the Alabama VR program.
38. Most excellent already for those of us who need assistance in getting hearing aids.
39. Provide better public infomercials about ADRS VR services and office locations.
40. VR services were excellent and need to be better advertised and promoted in public media
41. I thought everything was great and very helpful.
42. I would like to get job training. VR closed my file, but I want to do more than just stocking groceries!
43. None that I can say
44. Try to match the person to a job they want and are trained for
45. Mobile ADRS doing good work.
46. Just continue doing your best to be patient in your agency's support and provide good communication assistance for Deaf consumers.
47. Increase public awareness about the services ADRS provides.
48. Don't buy just the cheapest hearing aids.
49. Can't say as the services are excellent now.
50. Stay way and who they are. Very nice people!
51. Very kind and professional to me. They understood my needs and the problems I was having communicating on the job. I have worked in my current job 25 years and my hearing loss was making it very difficult to communicate effectively with my co-workers and the public.
52. Hire people who care.
53. The service was great in a timely manner. I did not see where improvement needs to be made great service.
54. Develop more and better jobs with good employers who are stable in this bad economy.
55. Return calls when their clients are having issues with their devices.
56. No comments.
57. Great already.
58. I could not imagine better service.
59. I was very satisfied with all of the services I received.
60. N/A.

61. More help for people getting their Master's degree.
62. The Muscle Shoals office of ADRS provides excellent services & gave me the help I needed but could never have afforded on my own. Being very hard of hearing/deaf is miserable & depressing. I am so very thankful for the VR services provided by ADRS!
63. I honestly do not know. My experiences have been wonderful and everyone I have worked with at ADRS was helpful, friendly & understanding. I would recommend that the government should allot more money to fund the programs/services performed by ADRS!
64. No problems encountered; great service all the way around in Ft. Payne!
65. I think your people at Decatur office do a great job and it is and cover everything a person needs to know and are comfortable with the information.
66. I feel that Homewood office does a great job in assisting ADRS consumers in Birmingham area.
67. No suggestions.
68. Faster call back to consumers, please.
69. *NO IMPROVEMENT NECESSARY; ADRS DOES A WONDERFUL JOB.*
70. By helping me find a real job that will get me off of Disability!
71. I don't think they need any improvement in my case, I'm very grateful with all your help. Thank you very much.
72. Reply back to consumers more quickly --- especially the Video Phone calls with Deaf & Deaf Bind .
73. Keep up the good work and may God bless ADRS and the VR staff who are so helpful to those of us who need assistance to keep our jobs and our health.
74. I don't know; they always helped me find work and also supplied me with a hearing aid and phone so I could do the work.
75. ADRS did not help me find my current job. Therefore, they should not be entitled to know/ask for information about my salary, etc.
76. They already do great. Maybe they should offer free ASL courses.
77. Services were excellent. I don't see any need for improvement. Staff was excellent & so were services!! Well satisfied!
78. The staff in Dothan seems to be overworked and spread too thin. I think the office needs more counselors to handle the numbers of consumers seeking VR assistance there.
79. Just hire more people like Ms Klopp, Dr. Kovach & Ms Warren in the Mobile ADRS regional office.
80. None- it was a good experience.
81. I can't think of anything right now.
82. I don't know.

83. If there are any better hearing instruments that would help me to hear, that would be most useful.
84. ADRS rarely or never returned my many, many calls for help and guidance. I would call them frequently but they did not return my calls to get appointment or other issues.
85. They are great now.
86. You already have made many improvements in your VR service program in Montgomery. Thanks and God bless all of you.
87. Help as many people as possible. Thank you all for helping me.
88. Provide more attention & interest in the person as a human being and their rights, health, etc.
89. Not any way they can improve. I appreciate your help. I am very pleased with the services I get. Thank you very much.
90. I think they are already doing a good job.
91. It was a struggle to convince VR to provide hearing aids. I had to contact a manager in Montgomery to get results. I am reluctant to complain without knowing the financial status of the program. Allow the counselors to spend more time helping people than documentation to protect themselves from management. I feel that with training in other fields that I would have much better chances of finding work.
92. Help more Deaf find good jobs.
93. My wife does not have to talk for me now that my aids help me hear and understand what people are saying.
94. They were excellent! Just need them to make sure they make follow-up appointments after the client is given their hearing aids because I didn't receive mine!
95. They could not; it was great.
96. Like the old saying goes: "If it 's not broke, don't fix it."
97. For their educational services, they should let clients know they will have to meet specific requirements to obtain funding (meaning a good GPA).
98. Do better at developing job bank and appointments for DEAF applicants. Opelika VR was toooo slow and did not generate leads for me. I developed my own search and got my current job. VR needs to wake up and do their job of creating viable job leads.
99. Getting me a better paying job with more benefits.
100. I cannot think of anything more needed.
101. Providing a workplace where majority of workers are hard of hearing or deaf working together in a work environment that poses no built in communication barriers.
102. Continue to help who really can't afford the hearing aids they need. Then, they can get out in the working world and make their living.
103. Provide more help with purchase of hearing aids for retired / low-income people with severe hearing loss.
104. I think they are doing an excellent job and hope they will always have counselors and staff who are able to do an excellent job working with consumers.

105. N/A
106. Start seeing to people's needs and help them because that is what an RCD does. And assist each consumer because that is your job...don't act like you are doing someone a favor!! I have friends who got more/better service than I did, but I couldn't get that same help and it was a shame because I was highly motivated but did not receive the help that would have enabled me to succeed. I was once told something by a former VR counselor, but he did not keep his word and that's what turned me off and led me to look at VR very differently due to the lack of trust.
107. They knew exactly what to do.
108. As far as how they assisted me, I could offer no suggestions for improvement.
109. I received great services and really don't know if improvement was a need. Very smooth process.
110. I was helped tremendously and am very satisfied with the whole process. The counselors are wonderful at Homewood.
111. Assist consumers in obtaining a replacement hearing aid.
112. I don't know, I have no complaints.
113. I don't have any suggestions at this time.
114. Thank You.
115. I think the service was a blessing for me and the service was great.
116. ADRS is doing well and trying to assist Deaf clients to get better jobs.
117. My RCD, Mrs. Pratt, was a pleasure to work with
118. Just keep doing the great job that you are doing for Muscle Shoals area. Keep trying to serve MORE people.
119. Great job. Keep it up.
120. Need to speed up their services with their clients and not take too long.
121. I mean, they were great people that I worked with. They were really good to me and I don't see any issues with their service. It was wonderful and a lot of help.
122. Doing good job already in Muscle Shoals.
123. Don't know.
124. Can't be improved, very satisfied with their services. Thanks a lot!!!
125. The wonderful services I received from the Opelika office make it difficult for me to see where any improvement would be needed. The staff is caring and respectful in a way that any office would be proud to have. Mrs. Jacoway and Page went all the way they could to help me succeed.
126. I had a wonderful experience; the Decatur office team was very helpful to me.
127. Help people get hearing aids and Deaf ALDs as well as job coaches and interpreters. Provide job coach and interpreting support services for first 6-12 months on job.

128. ADRS provided me with the interpreters that I needed on my new job; they meet my communication needs at work.
129. Develop more/better jobs for consumers.
130. Have someone assigned to help answer phone calls to Mrs. Jacoway; especially our Video Phone calls.
131. Dothan office team is the best!
132. Enable/empower consumers by providing a more timely communication system for interactive contacts between RCDs and consumes. I had a very good counselor but had hard time reaching him throughout my college years. Also ADRS should have better system to keep us informed about their support: I was receiving help with living expenses at one point and then it all of a sudden stopped. Advance warning would have helped with rent, etc. And worse, I was then told it would start back soon but it never did.
133. Not sure, except to say I was not satisfied with the poor service I received from the Huntsville group.
134. They are doing good work by helping people who are deaf attend college or trade school training and then find a job. Homewood VR helped me succeed!!!!
135. I think it is good as it is now.
136. Improve their job database to be more current with present job market/openings
137. I had to drive to north Alabama for school and it would really help if the gas vouchers could be increased a little.
138. They did good job with me. I am pleased with the services I received from ADRS.

APPENDIX J

How could ADRS improve their services? Not Rehabilitated

N: 34

1. Continue to care--which they do well!
2. Do better job to help Deaf workers find jobs that pay enough to live on and give benefits to workers.
3. Nothing really.
4. I don't know. Maybe offer counseling to clients.
5. Quality hearing aids and job placement.
6. Be more accessible and respond to client requests/contacts in much more timely way. Set up and keep regularly scheduled visits/meetings with clients. Assign only one caseworker and do intake and eligibility determinations in an efficient and timely manner instead of repeated detailed information and data requests in disjointed fashion. Provide better assistance to consumer resume and interviewing preparations.
7. By not prematurely closing out people's cases when people still need help. They closed my case cause I did not have transportation to go to work--which obviously is not helping people with the problems I have.
8. Be more involved with disabled consumers earlier on while they are still in High School.
9. Help support me to get in college and get training that will empower me to something for my life.
10. ADRS closed out my case too fast. To continue with ADRS, I was going to have to go through testing, etc all over again. I had just been tested a year previously. Surely, VR can do better than play ring around the posies and all fall down again and again. Please make the process more reasonable and timely so consumers like me can focus on achieving our goal of gainful employment without being required to repeat the process on some technicality. I went my own way, no thanks to my VR team, and have done very, very well career wise and financially.
11. I was very disappointed with their very slow and unhelpful approach to assist me looking for work. It was very bad long waits with no help. I mean, making us wait 2,3,4 months in between their helping me and other Deaf people looking for jobs is very poor VR service!!!!
12. Helping me find a job within my experience. 10/15/2014 10:35 AM
13. Be more concerned about and try to meet the needs of their client better.
14. To increase job trainings related to majors attained from colleges/universities in the local area rather than having people to move out of the state.
15. Listen to your consumer's wants, need, dreams, and related life and career preparation preferences/choices. The problem on the end was it seemed VR had their own agenda concerning my future which the counselor was to implement; NOT my agenda.

At the end, my counselor's list of tasks to be done and my list did not match at all so I gave up on hopes that Decatur ADRS could help me and asked that my case be closed so I could work on my goals in my own preferred way. I cannot and will not recommend the program to others as I found they do not have the interest of the consumer at top of their program/approach.

16. More job options and job announcements
17. Zero.
18. Help deaf workers find good part time jobs so they can earn some money to supplement their SSI/SSDI support.
19. ADRS should have someone to help consumers with any problems they encounter with hearing aids. I was extremely dissatisfied with the lack of help in dealing with problems using and maintaining the hearing aids.
20. No suggestions.
21. They were very efficient and courteous and helpful in every way but during the latter part of the process I told the counselor I had to quit my job in the next few weeks due to illness of my wife. The counselor explained I was required to remain working so long since purpose was to enable me to be employed. I understand their point of view, but have to credit them for doing their job quiet well.
22. Cut the self-employment review time...Opportunities can be lost. It might be worth either employing a specific business adviser or an outreach business volunteer.
23. Find jobs for people who want to work.
24. Need to find more productive way to provide more accurate and timely information about job openings. Your counselors are too slow and not on top of job market!
25. I wish my case worker would relocate to TN where I live now! He was great.
26. They need more interpreters and DSS teams to help more Deaf and HOH people learn about and keep jobs and take responsibility to do more for themselves.
27. I would like for ADRS to help my wife with her failing eyesight.
28. Talladega ADRS does great work with Deaf.
29. Replace Jacoway with a staff counselor who likes and can work well with ASL Deaf and Video Phone.
30. They were so efficient it would be difficult to suggest improvements.
31. They did nothing at all for me. As is, they are not helping deaf people.
32. I don't think I was clear enough about what career path I really wanted to pursue and should have presented it clearer so they could've helped me better.
33. Offering alternatives to working with a disability.
34. Do better job at categorizing clients and managing caseloads: I am visually impaired, not hearing impaired!!! Regardless, the system at ADRS failed me miserably and I still need help since I lost my job and want to return to work as an RN.