



# Fairfax County Department of Family Services Customer Satisfaction Survey

2019 REPORT OF RESULTS



Prepared by:



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Principal Investigator was Kara Fitzgibbon, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Survey Research. Mitch Morehart, Senior Research Analyst, served as Project Coordinator for the study. Sean Johnson, Survey Operations Manager, oversaw field operations. Megan Miller, Ph.D., and Sarah Warfield served as research analysts on the study.

John Ruthinoski served as the main contact person for DFS and was instrumental in providing the questionnaire translations in Arabic, Farsi, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese to respond to the needs of the DFS client population.

As Principal Investigator, Kara Fitzgibbon was responsible for the scientific direction of the study, including the study and sampling design, weighting, and reporting. Mitch Morehart provided oversight of survey preparation, data management, data analysis, and report writing.

Mitch Morehart and Sean Johnson managed the client lists provided by Fairfax DFS so they could be sampled for inclusion on the survey.

Ila Crawford, Cooper Center Accountant, and Beverley Kerr, CSR Calling Lab Supervisor, coordinated staff and performed hands-on tracking of completed questionnaires and returned questionnaires, responses to requests for re-sends and questionnaires in other languages, and data entry.

Megan Miller and Sarah Warfield conducted the data analysis and prepared the appendices of the report, including compiling the open-ended responses.

The success of the survey ultimately rested with the 918 customers of Fairfax County Department of Family Services who gave their time to answer questions regarding DFS performance on the goals the organization has set for itself.

*The Center for Survey Research is responsible for any errors or omissions in this report. Questions may be directed to the Center for Survey Research,*

*P.O. Box 400767, Charlottesville Virginia 22904-4767. CSR also may be reached by telephone at 434-243-5222; by electronic mail at [surveys@virginia.edu](mailto:surveys@virginia.edu), or via the World Wide Web at: <https://csr.coopercenter.org/>*

## Executive Summary

- The 2019 Fairfax County Department of Family Services (DFS) Customer Satisfaction Survey was conducted from December 2019 thru April 2020 by the Center for Survey Research at the University of Virginia.
- From a list of 5,400 clients, 918 clients completed the survey, yielding a response rate of 18.9 percent after estimating that 542 clients were ineligible for the survey. Overall, clients are very satisfied with DFS services. The mean rating for overall satisfaction with DFS services is 5.90 on a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 means “Very Dissatisfied” and 7 means “Very Satisfied.” This overall rating of 5.90 is lower than the 6.14 reported in 2017, but it is not significantly different from values reported in any other previous surveys.
- More than eight out of ten (85.6%) respondents said that they are either very satisfied, satisfied, or somewhat satisfied with DFS services. This figure was 90.3 and 87.3 percent in 2017 and 2015 surveys, respectively.
- As in 2017, the goal categories of “Respect” (4.01) and “Politeness & Professionalism” (3.98) received the highest overall mean ratings on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means “Poor” and 5 means “Excellent.”
- The areas of moderate performance strength for DFS are the goal categories of “Quality of Life,” “Explanations,” “Responsiveness to Needs,” “Providing Services”, and “Knowledge.”
- As in 2017, “Community Awareness” received the lowest overall performance rating with a mean of 3.58.
- As in recent surveys, the most important DFS goal for driving customer ratings, as determined by regression analysis, is “Quality of Life” The next strongest driver was “Explanations.” These were the only two goal areas with a high statistically derived impact on ratings of overall satisfaction with DFS.
- Mean performance ratings and statistically derived relationships among these ratings and overall satisfaction can be considered simultaneously for the goal areas. A “priority

matrix” summarizes this information. This matrix is shown below.

		Derived Importance (Standardized betas from regression)		
		High	Medium	Low
Performance (Mean Performance Scores)	High		Respect Politeness & Professionalism	
	Medium	Quality of Life Explanations	Providing Services Responsiveness to Needs	Knowledge
	Low		Providing Referrals	Convenience Community Awareness

- Goal areas found in the upper left and upper center of the matrix are strengths to be celebrated. “Respect” and “Politeness and Professionalism” received high marks for performance and had a medium statistical impact on overall ratings of satisfaction. These are areas in which DFS gets high marks from clients and that has strong relationships with clients’ overall satisfaction with DFS.
- Goal areas found in the lower-left cell of the priority matrix would be the first order of concern for DFS. Happily, that cell is empty. Therefore, the goal areas in the middle-left cell –“Quality of Life” and “Explanations”— represent the areas warranting attention from DFS because performance on these goal categories is moderate yet they are very important to clients’ overall satisfaction. These goal categories should be a priority for improvement, which would be likely to raise overall satisfaction among clients.
- The goal category in the lower-center cell of the matrix, “Providing Referrals” should also be an area of attention for DFS as performance on this goal category is low yet it is moderately important to clients’ overall satisfaction with DFS. This goal category should be a priority for achieving a higher level of client satisfaction.
- “Convenience” and “Community Awareness” were relatively poorly rated, but are not strong statistical drivers of overall satisfaction.

- The overall trend in the 2019 performance ratings are mostly comparable to 2017: 34 items showed slight declines and 16 showed slight increases. Only one item (overall satisfaction) showed a statistically significant difference between 2017 and 2019, and this value was a decrease from 2017. It is worth noting that 2017 values across items were especially high compared to previous surveys, and 2019 results are still higher than the historic averages across nearly every measure.

To summarize, the overall performance ratings for DFS services are mostly favorable, with the goal categories of “Respect” and “Politeness and Professionalism” being the areas of greatest strength. As mentioned, the area of greatest concern are “Quality of Life” and “Explanations.”

Fairfax County’s Department of Family Services should take pride in its favorable rating for overall satisfaction among clients and for how it has been able to sustain this favorable rating across surveys spanning several years. Raising performance ratings for important goal categories, as well as striving to maintain current strengths, can further improve Fairfax County’s Department of Family Services. Survey ratings for the individual items that comprise these goal areas can help focus attention on areas for further discussion. Ratings for those individual items are detailed in the body of this report.



## I. Introduction

### About the Survey

The 2019 Fairfax County Department of Family Services (DFS) Customer Satisfaction Survey was sponsored and funded by DFS and conducted by the Center for Survey Research at the University of Virginia (CSR)<sup>1</sup>. Survey packets were mailed December 11, 2019 to the home addresses of 5,400 DFS customers. Data collection closed on April 16, 2020.

### Survey Methods

The questionnaire was designed to be completely anonymous. Instructions in the questionnaire asked respondents to complete the questionnaire and return it to CSR in the enclosed business-reply mail envelope. A separate postage-paid confirmation post card included instructions that asked respondents to return the card to CSR separately from the questionnaire. Returning the postcard separately allowed CSR to match the respondent's name to the mailing list and prevent further reminder notices from being sent without creating any identifying link to the actual completed survey. This protocol assures survey respondents of complete anonymity while still allowing response reminders to be sent to non-respondents. The protocol was reviewed by the University of Virginia Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board in 2017, at which time they granted the project approval through 2021. This documentation was again shared with the Department of Social Services Institutional Review Board in 2019.

The first survey packets were mailed on December 11, 2019. The survey packets included an eight-page questionnaire, a confirmation postcard, an instruction sheet on how to request the questionnaire in a language other than English, a foreign language request postcard, and a business-reply mail envelope. A thank you / reminder postcard was mailed to the 5,400 respondents on December 18, 2019. The purpose of the postcard was to thank respondents who returned a completed

questionnaire and to encourage potential respondents who had not yet done so to participate in the survey.

To reach the diverse client population of Fairfax DFS, the questionnaire was translated into five languages other than English: Arabic, Korean, Farsi, Spanish, and Vietnamese. A respondent who had difficulty with English could request a questionnaire translated into one of the five other languages by returning the foreign language request postcard. Respondents could also have requested an alternative language when contacted by phone. Table I-1 shows the number of requests that were made for a copy of the questionnaire in these languages. As can be seen from this table, the vast majority of foreign language requests were collected through reminder phone calls, demonstrating the importance of this cross-mode contact to better reach respondents for whom English is not their preferred language for survey completion.

**Table I-1: Requests for Questionnaire in Other Languages**

<i>Languages</i>	<i>Requested by Mail</i>	<i>Requested by Phone</i>	<i>Returned</i>
Arabic	0	5	0
Korean	3	7	4
Persian/Farsi	2	6	4
Spanish	9	141	34
Vietnamese	3	7	1

Confirmation postcards that were returned by the respondents were recorded in a tracking file. This was necessary since nothing associated with the completed survey can identify the respondent as the survey was completely anonymous. The 4,748 respondents who did not return a confirmation postcard received a second survey packet shortly after January 24, 2020 with a reminder letter encouraging them to participate in the survey.

CSR began telephone reminder calls on February 11, 2020 to clients who had yet to return completed questionnaires. The purpose of the phone calls was to encourage respondents to participate in the survey and/or identify impediments that may be

<sup>1</sup> Study contact: Mitch Morehart, Center for Survey Research, University of Virginia, [mjm3ccs@virginia.edu](mailto:mjm3ccs@virginia.edu) or 434-982-5541.

keeping individuals from completing the questionnaire. Numbers were attempted at least two times. CSR assisted some of the respondents by completing the questionnaire via telephone in both Spanish and English.

It is also worth noting that compared to previous study years, this year’s data collection yielded a higher number of returned surveys in a foreign language.

For 2019 data collection, CSR intentionally focused reminder calling efforts toward non-respondents for whom we had sample information indicating Spanish was their preferred language, and we had Spanish-speaking interviewers call these individuals. Given the significant increase in Spanish completions, it may be worth considering a change in future study design to begin reminder calling earlier in the data collection window to allow ample time for the mailed out foreign language questionnaires to be completed and returned

Telephone reminder calls were closed on February 28, 2020. All data collection efforts were closed on April 16, 2020. Table I-2 shows the sequence of survey tasks..

**Table I-2: DFS Survey Tasks and Dates**

<i>Task</i>	<i>Date</i>
First survey packet mailed	12/11/2019
Thank you / reminder post card mailed	12/18/2019
Second survey packet mailed	1/24/2020
Telephone reminder calls began	2/11/2020
Telephone reminder calls end	2/28/2020
Close mail-out data collection	4/16/2020

**Questionnaire Design**

The 2019 questionnaire was nearly identical to the questionnaire used in the 2017 study. Three changes were implemented. First, for the gender question, a third category was added to allow for self-description (“*Prefer to provide my own description*”). The other substantive change involved race identity and the addition of a multiple race category (“*two or more races*”). Finally, the DFS services listed in the questionnaire were

adjusted to remove services that fall under the Office for Children.

The objectives of the survey were to measure current customer satisfaction with the Department of Family Services and evaluate changes since the first two surveys. The following goal areas were measured in 2019:

- *Goal 1: Staff is polite and professional.*
- *Goal 2: Staff treats people with respect.*
- *Goal 3: Staff communicates program requirements effectively.*
- *Goal 4: Staff is knowledgeable of programs and services.*
- *Goal 5: Staff provides services requested.*
- *Goal 6: Staff provides referrals as necessary.*
- *Goal 7: Staff / department are convenient.*
- *Goal 8: Staff is responsive to client’s needs.*
- *Goal 9: Community is aware of services.*
- *Goal 10: The services make a difference in the quality of life for individuals.*

To analyze customers’ overall satisfaction with Fairfax County’s Department of Family Services, respondents were asked a general “Overall Satisfaction” question as well. Finally, a single open-ended question was placed at the end of the questionnaire. This question asked respondents to share any additional comments or thoughts they may have about DFS services. See Appendix E for a copy of the questionnaire.

**Sampling**

DFS provided CSR with lists of customer names and addresses representing DFS services. The 2019 survey marks the first time clients of services under the Office for Children were not included in the DFS survey sample due to shifts in the organizational structure at DFS. A schema of the 2019 sampling lists for specific services as provided by DFS is presented in Figure 1 in Appendix G.

After removing duplicate names within and across services, there were 73,179 names forming the sampling frame. When names were found on multiple lists, they were assigned at random to one

of the lists on which they were found. This ensured that smaller client populations would be represented in the sample.

Unlike prior years, the 2019 sample, which was increased in overall size from 3,500 to 5,400, was stratified and employed oversampling in order to enable generalizable results within subgroups. Specifically, the unduplicated list of all DFS customers was stratified between clients of Self-Sufficiency services and Non-Self-Sufficiency services, and 2,700 names were chosen at random from *each* list, resulting in a sample of 5,400 names. Complete details on the counts and distributions along sampling strata are presented in Table 6 in Appendix G

## Survey Response

Table 3 in Appendix G summarizes the sampling distribution and survey responses. The left half of the table lists the service groups included in the sample, the number of cases chosen from among the names assigned to each service group, and the percentage of the total sample allocated to each of the individual services. The right half of Table 3 shows the unweighted number versus the weighted number of respondents selecting each service. Respondents were instructed in the questionnaire to check all services they are currently receiving, thus they could select more than one service beyond the service represented by the service group from which they were originally sampled.

A total of 918 respondents returned questionnaires during the fielding window, and 803 reported using at least one service (including Other or Unknown). However, the number of services checked was 1,462, which indicates that some respondents are receiving more than one service from DFS. In Table 3 in Appendix G, the column labeled “Serv. %” reflects the percentage of checks received by each service and totals 100%. The column labeled “Resp. %” reflects the percentage of respondents that checked off a given service. As each respondent was able to select more than one service, the column has a total greater than 100 percent.

Services provided by DFS can be grouped into three main categories: Self-Sufficiency; Children, Youth, and Family; and Adult and Aging Services. Table 4 in Appendix G shows the sample list as well as the

response and case percentages of respondents in these three categories.

## Response Rate

The response rate is calculated by dividing the number of returned questionnaires (918) by the number of potential valid respondents in the sample (4,858). The response rate for this survey is 18.9 percent. Table 5 in Appendix G presents the complete disposition report for the survey.

The margin of error for the survey is +/- 4.25 percentage points for questions answered by all respondents (the error for subgroups is larger). The margin of error is affected by the weighting of the data, and the reported margin of error has been calculated with the design effect<sup>2</sup> incorporated. The reported margin of error also included the study’s finite population correction factor (FPC)<sup>3</sup> in its calculation.

## Weighting

As noted, the 2019 sample was stratified across Self-Sufficiency services and Non-Self-Sufficiency services, and an equal number of sample cases (2,700) were randomly drawn from each stratum. Table 6 in Appendix G presents the specific stratum counts from the population, sample, and returns.

This sampling strategy was employed to produce survey data that could support subgroup analysis within services types, which it now can. However, for the purposes of generalizing to the entire DFS client population and running statistical comparisons across survey results from previous years, the data had to be weighted to adjust for the over-sampling of Non-Self-Sufficiency clients and under-sampling of Self-Sufficiency clients. This weight adjusts the effects of the sampling design to bring the survey results in line with the population distribution (i.e., it adjusts the survey results to what they would have been had the sample been randomly drawn from the population).

With the weight applied, the 2019 data can be generalized to the DFS client population and compared to survey results from previous years. For within service analysis, the weight should *not* be applied. All results presented in this report and in appendices have been run with the weighted data.

<sup>2</sup> The design effect due to weighting is 1.75.

<sup>3</sup> This study’s finite population correction factor is 0.994.

## Demographic Overview

Women accounted for 67.9 percent of the respondents who indicated their gender, a result that is consistent with the 2017 survey and the population that Fairfax DFS serves.

Nearly half (48.6%) of the responding households had two or fewer residents, 35 percent had three or four residents, and 16.4 percent had more than four residents living in the household. The relatively higher share of single and two-person households likely represents the effort to oversample recipients of non-self-sufficiency types of services.

There was similar representation across four age categories, 25 to 44-year-olds (24.4%), 45 to 59-year-olds (23.5%), 60 to 74-year-olds (23.2%), and those ages 75 or older (24.0%). As in past surveys, respondents younger than 25 represented less than 5 percent.

Over four-fifths (82.3%) of the respondents reported living in Fairfax County for five years or longer, 8.7 percent reported three to four years, 5 percent reported one to two years, and 1.2 percent reported less than one year. In addition to those living in Fairfax County, another 2.9 percent reported living outside the County.

A majority (54.7%) of the respondents indicated that English was the language most often spoken in their households. However, 12.5 percent of respondents named Spanish as their household language, and another 32.7 percent indicated some other language.

Nearly one in four respondents were retired (24.7%); the largest portion in any employment status. The next largest contingent of respondents (19.7%) were those indicating that they were permanently disabled. More than one in six (17.6%) of respondents indicated that they were working full-time. Respondents who are either working part-time (14.8%) or looking for work (9.3%) represent another portion of the cases. Additionally, 5.6 percent of the respondents are not working because of a temporary illness or injury while 8.3 percent are not working because they are either a caretaker or a student.

When asked about educational level, respondents who had less than a high school diploma (20.9%), a GED (4.1%), a high school diploma (19.7%), or job training (5.2%) accounted for half of the cases. The remaining half were those with some college

(15.4%), a college degree (21.9%), or a graduate degree (12.9%)

Respondents were asked to choose a race or ethnicity that best describes their background. Nearly two-fifths (39.7%) of the respondents identified themselves as Caucasian, 24.2 percent as Asian, 17.4 percent as African-American, and nearly one in five (18.7%) indicated something else as their identity.

Respondents were also asked if they consider themselves to be Hispanic (or Latino), or Middle Eastern (or Arab). About one in five (19.4%) identified themselves as Hispanic and 11.4 percent identified themselves as Middle Eastern.

## About the Report

### Overview

The report begins with an analysis of the overall questions—in particular, how satisfied customers are with various DFS services. These services constitute goal categories on the survey. In the sections that follow, each goal category is discussed by noting the high and low ratings and the significant items that drive customer satisfaction. The next sections address the issues identified by customers as important, assess performance on each of the goal categories, and present a priority analysis. The final section is a summary of the findings.

### Questionnaire Scales

Questions in each goal-category section asked the responding customers to rate Fairfax DFS on each of the topics by responding to a five-point scale anchored by “Excellent” to “Poor.” When scoring the responses, the scales were reversed so that higher numbers represent preferred outcomes (*e.g.*, 5=Excellent, 1= Poor).

The final question in the overview section used a different scale. This overall satisfaction question (L1) used a seven-point scale with anchors of “Very Satisfied” to “Very Dissatisfied.” To maintain compatibility during analysis, the scales were also reversed so that high numbers represent favorable outcomes and low numbers indicate less favorable outcomes. The scoring technique for this question is shown in Table A.11 of Appendix A.



## Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis is a statistical method used to analyze relationships between a set of variables known as *independent variables* and a single variable known as the *dependent variable*. The objective is to use the independent variables to predict variation in the dependent variable. A regression analysis weights the independent variables to ensure the maximal prediction of the dependent variable from the set of independent variables. The regression analysis produces standardized regression coefficients (or weights) known as betas ( $\beta$ ) that can have a value ranging from -1 to +1. The betas can be interpreted as the importance of the independent variables in predicting the dependent variable relative to the other independent variables in the regression equation.

A regression analysis established the influence of each goal category on overall customer satisfaction with DFS services. Here, the dependent variable was “Overall Satisfaction” (L1) and the independent variables were the overall items for each of the goal categories (B6, C5, D5, E3, F5, G4, H7, I5, J5, and K5). The results are shown in Table C.11 of Appendix C.

In addition to the analysis of the overall ratings for each goal category, each goal-category’s overall rating was regressed on the goal category’s components. That is, specific goal-category items were positioned as predictors of the overall rating for the goal-category. The results of the multiple regression analyses for each goal category are in Tables C.1 through C.10 in Appendix C.

In the regression analyses, survey items are ranked in order of importance for each goal category. The importance weights are shown in the beta column and the level of significance is in the significance column. To be statistically significant, the level of significance must be 0.05 or less.

Adjusted R-square is an overall measure of the strength of the regression analysis. It is found in the table footnote. It can take on values from 0 to 1. Larger R-squares represent greater explanatory power for the predictors taken as a group.

## Cross-tabulation Analysis

Demographic questions were included at the end of the questionnaire to obtain information about the respondents who completed the survey. In this

study, a cross-tabulation analysis relates demographic variables to ratings of the items in the goal categories as well as the overall satisfaction rating. In this way we can evaluate differences in ratings given by sub-populations, such as males versus females, or those with different levels of education.

Tests of statistical significance were used to verify the existence of differences in satisfaction among various subgroups. We used t-tests to test for differences in proportions and means among ordinal demographic sub-groups. The results of the demographic cross-tabulation analysis are in Appendix D.

## II. Overall Evaluation

### Rating Fairfax County’s Department of Family Services

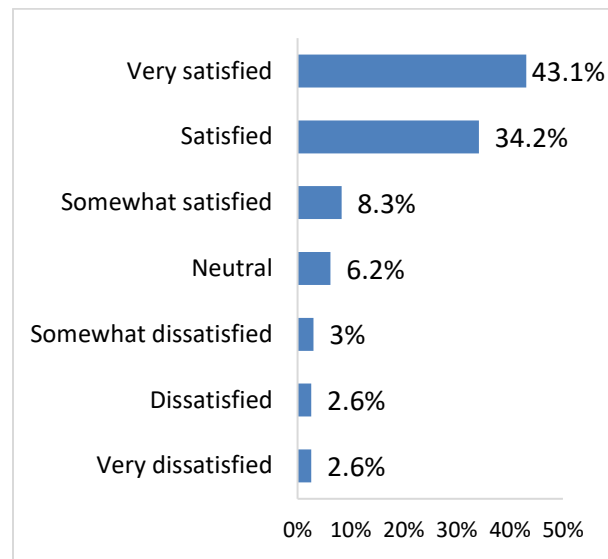
Overall, respondents are satisfied with the Fairfax Department of Family Services (DFS). On a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 means very dissatisfied and 7 very satisfied, respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the services they received from the DFS.

*Overall, how satisfied are you with the services you received from the Department of Family Services?*

### Performance Analysis

Figure II-1 illustrates how participants rated their overall satisfaction with the services they received from DFS. More than two-in-five (43.1%) of respondents said they are very satisfied with the services they received. Another two-fifths of respondents said they are either satisfied (34.2%) or somewhat satisfied (8.3%) with the services they received. Only 8.2 percent of respondents indicated that they are somewhat dissatisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the services, and a slightly smaller proportion (6.2%) rated their “Overall Satisfaction” as neutral. On the scale from 1 to 7, the mean rating for “Overall Satisfaction” is a favorable 5.90. Refer to Table A.11 in Appendix A for a complete distribution of responses for this item.

**Figure II-1: Overall Satisfaction with DFS Services, 2019**



### Importance Analysis

Table C.11 in Appendix C provides the results of the importance analysis. Respondents’ “Overall Satisfaction” ratings are regressed on many predictor variables including the overall ratings for “Respect,” “Politeness and Professionalism,” “Explanations,” “Knowledge,” “Providing Services,” “Responsive to Needs,” “Quality of Life,” “Providing Referrals,” “Convenience,” and “Community Awareness.” Each of these items is rated on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 equals “Poor” and 5 equals “Excellent.”

The regression analysis has an adjusted R-square of 0.647 which indicates a reasonable fit with a significant overall relationship.

“Quality of Life” and “Explanations” are statistically significant predictors of “Overall Satisfaction.” “Convenience”, “Community Awareness”, “Knowledge”, and “Responsive to Needs” were negatively related to overall satisfaction<sup>4</sup>, but not statistically significant; the other predictors carried a positive relationship. As has been the case in previous surveys, “Quality of Life” has the greatest impact on “Overall Satisfaction.”

<sup>4</sup> The negative beta coefficient may be the result of correlations among the predictor variables (multicollinearity).

## Demographic Analysis

As in 2017, gender, household size, race, age, number of years lived in Fairfax County, primary language spoken, work status, and education are used to measure demographic characteristics (see Appendix B for frequencies). The results from 2019 only indicate statistically significant differences in “Overall Satisfaction” in customer service among primary language categories. Those who primarily speak Spanish reported greater overall satisfaction than English speakers. In 2017, there were significant differences by work status and education level.

In addition to the statistically significant demographic differences found in overall rating, there were some smaller differences worth noting:

- Those living in households of three to four people (mean rating of 6.13) were more likely to express satisfaction than those living in smaller households (mean rating of 5.93). Smaller households were also less satisfied in 2017.
- Respondents who identified as African American were more satisfied overall with services (mean rating 6.13) compared to those who identified as White (mean rating 5.73), Asian (mean rating 5.92), or Hispanic (mean rating 5.95).
- Those who had received a high school diploma or less rated higher satisfaction levels (mean rating 6.02) when compared to respondents with a college or professional degree (mean rating 5.89) or with job training or some college (mean rating 5.72). This same education level had the highest overall satisfaction in 2017.
- Those in the 24-44 age group had the highest satisfaction among all different age categories (mean rating of 6.10), while the youngest respondents had the lowest overall satisfaction (mean rating 5.63).
- The highest ratings for overall satisfaction were from respondents who have lived in Fairfax County for two years or less (mean rating of 6.15) and those that no longer reside in the County (mean rating 6.24).

## Overall Goal Category Items

This year, as in 2017, each goal category in the survey was summarized with a single item that asked respondents to give an overall rating for that particular goal category (refer to Appendices A and E). Each overall goal category item is based on a five-point scale from 1 to 5 where 5 equals “Excellent” and 1 equals “Poor.”

When observed together, the mean ratings of these overall items allow for a more illustrative description of how respondents rate the DFS staff in regards to each particular goal category (see Table II-1). As in 2017, respect (with a rating of 4.01) and politeness/professionalism of the staff (mean rating 3.98) received the highest rankings. These items are followed by job knowledge (mean rating 3.86), provision of services (mean rating 3.84), explanations of services (mean rating 3.80), quality of life (mean rating 3.79) and responsiveness to needs (mean rating 3.78). As in 2017, the convenience of staff (mean rating 3.73), providing referrals (mean rating 3.69), and community awareness (mean rating 3.58) received the three lowest ratings.

## Trends in Overall Goal Ratings

Table II-1 ranks the mean overall ratings from 2019 and shows the 2017 ratings as well as the combined percentage of “excellent,” “very good,” and “good” responses.

For the most part, rankings of overall goal category items have remained fairly stable. Quality of Life slipped from fourth in 2017 to sixth in 2019. Providing services moved from fifth to fourth, while explanations also moved up one level in 2019. All other rankings remained in the same order as 2017.

**Table II-1: Trends in Goal Ratings, 2017-2019**

Rank 2019	Mean 2019	Excellent, Very good, and good (%)	Overall Evaluation Items	Description	Rank 2017	Mean 2017	Excellent, Very good, and good (%)
1	4.01	89.2	C5	Respect	1	4.05	90.3
2	3.98	88.7	B6	Polite & Professional	2	4.04	89.7
3	3.86	87.5	E3	Knowledge	3	3.95	90.1
4	3.84	85.3	F5	Providing Services	5	3.88	87.8
5	3.80	84.7	D5	Explanations	6	3.86	85.8
6	3.79	84.3	K5	Quality of Life	4	3.90	87.6
7	3.78	85.0	I5	Responsiveness to Needs	7	3.80	86.3
8	3.73	84.7	H7	Convenience	8	3.78	87.6
9	3.69	82.2	G4	Providing Referrals	9	3.67	84.4
10	3.58	81.1	J5	Community Awareness	10	3.56	81.6

## Summary

Overall, clients give good ratings to the services they receive from DFS. This is demonstrated with a mean score of 5.90 on a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 equals “Very Dissatisfied” and 7 equals “Very Satisfied.” This rating is very similar to ratings in other years of the survey, though it represents a slight decrease from the 6.14 mean rating reported in 2017.

The regression analysis reveals that clients’ “Overall Satisfaction” ratings with DFS services are most impacted by services making a difference in the client’s quality of life followed by the clarity of staff’s explanations of DFS services. The following section of the report provides a detailed analysis of each goal category and the individual survey items.

### III. Goal Categories

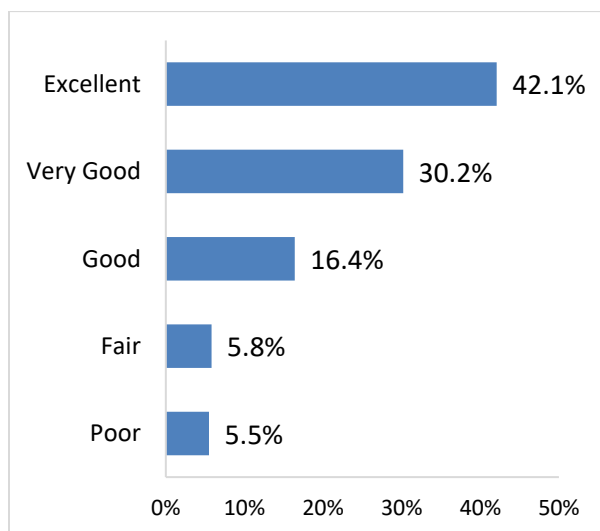
The report now turns to an analysis of the survey instrument's goal categories. Each goal category is assessed using a five-point scale ranging from 1 to 5 where 1 equals "Poor" and 5 equals "Excellent."

#### ***Politeness & Professionalism***

One of the goals assessed is the politeness and professionalism of the staff. To evaluate this, several questions were asked, including the patience/courtesy of the staff, politeness of the staff, how carefully they listen to clients, how promptly they handle clients' requests whether the requests are in person, by telephone, or by mail.

Figure III-1 presents the overall ratings of the politeness and professionalism of the DFS staff. Overall, clients gave high ratings to the overall behavior of the staff in being polite and professional. More than two in five (42.1%) of the respondents rate the overall behavior of the staff in being polite and professional as excellent, while slightly more (46.6%) rate it as either very good or good (see Table A.1 in Appendix A).

**Figure III-1: Overall Behavior of the Staff in Being Polite and Professional, 2019**



### Performance Analysis

Of all the questions used to assess the overall behavior of the staff in being polite and professional, the politeness of the staff when speaking to clients and the staff's patience and courtesy received the highest mean ratings. The mean rating for these two items are respectively 4.09 and 4.06 on the same five-point scale. Next on the list of highest rated items are how carefully the staff listens to clients (3.98) and how promptly the staff handles clients' requests whether they are in person, by telephone, or by mail (3.68). The lowest mean rating is attributed to how promptly the staff returns clients' phone calls (3.53). When asked to rate the overall behavior of the staff in being polite and professional, clients gave a mean score of 3.98.

Analysis of trends in mean ratings indicates no statistically significant differences between 2019 and 2017 concerning politeness and professionalism. The 2019 ratings were significantly higher than both 2009 and 2011 for staff patience and courtesy and how politely staff speak to clients.

### Importance Analysis

Regression analysis indicates a good fit with a very significant overall relationship. Except for how promptly staff returns telephone calls, all the items used to assess this goal have a statistically significant impact on the assessment of the overall behavior of the staff in being polite and professional. How promptly staff responds to requests had the largest impact, followed closely by the staff's patience and courtesy. As in 2017, the prompt return of telephone calls has the least impact on overall ratings of DFS staff when it comes to "Politeness & Professionalism," and as noted, it is not statistically significant.

See Table C.1 in Appendix C for a complete listing of the regression analysis for the politeness and professionalism of the staff.

### Demographic Analysis

Analysis of ratings of the "Politeness & Professionalism" goal items and the demographic variables work status, race, and length of residence influenced how clients perceive this goal category. Respondent's race also influenced ratings in 2017.

Clients that were employed full time gave a significantly higher rating for nearly all

components of politeness and professionalism than those who were part-time employed or looking for work. Clients that were employed full-time gave a higher rating for patience and courtesy than did those who were physically unable to work. Promptness was rated higher by full-time employed respondents than for those that are retired.

White respondents were more likely than Hispanic or other ethnic group respondents to give high ratings on the overall assessment of politeness and professionalism. Clients that no longer lived in the County gave a significantly higher rating regarding promptness than those who have lived there 3-4 years.

### Summary

Overall, respondents gave favorable ratings for the “Politeness & Professionalism” of the DFS staff members. Several components of this goal area had small declines from 2017, although none of the changes were statistically significant.

Like past years surveys, the performance analysis reveals that the staff’s politeness, patience, and courtesy received the highest ratings from DFS clients in this goal area. This was further supported by the importance analysis in which these same areas had the strongest impact.

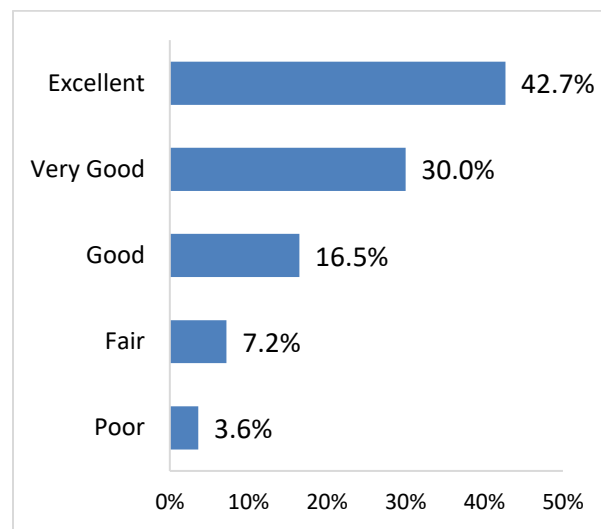
Analysis of the mean ratings by the demographic variables reveals that the clients’ race and work status have significant impacts on how they rate the politeness and professionalism of the staff.

### Respect

This goal category assesses the extent to which DFS staff respectfully treats clients. Questions to evaluate this goal include the staff’s respect for different cultures, races, and ethnic groups, their willingness to accept clients’ suggestions, and their respect and courtesy toward other customers and other co-workers.

Overall, clients gave high ratings to the respect and courtesy shown by DFS staff members. More than two in five (42.7%) rated this item as excellent and nearly a third (30.0%) rated it as very good. An additional 16.5 percent rated DFS staff’s respect and courtesy as good. Combined, just over ten percent (10.8%) of the respondents rated it as either fair or poor (see Figure III-2).

**Figure III-2: Overall Respect and Courtesy Shown by Staff Members, 2019**



### Performance Analysis

The questions regarding “Respect” of DFS staff members are shown in Table A.2 of Appendix A. Of all the items used to evaluate this goal, the staff’s respect for different cultures, races, and ethnic groups received the highest mean rating (4.12), followed by and courtesy toward co-workers (4.10). These two items also received the highest ratings in this series in 2017. Next on the list of rated items in 2019 are overall respect and courtesy shown by the staff (4.01), respect and courtesy of DFS staff toward other customers (3.99), and their willingness to listen to and accept clients’ suggestions (3.89).

Ratings were higher in 2019 than the previous survey for respect for cultures, race, and ethnic groups, but the differences were not statistically significant. Decreases in several of the other components of respect were also not statistically significant from 2017.

### Importance Analysis

The regression results of the overall respect and courtesy shown by DFS staff on these goal items are shown in Appendix C. The results indicate a very good fit with a significant overall relationship.

All the predictor items are positively related to the overall respect and courtesy shown by DFS staff members and are statistically significant. Staff’s willingness to listen and accept suggestions had the strongest impact on overall respect, followed by respect and courtesy towards coworkers. These

items are followed by the staff’s respect and courtesy toward customers and respect for different cultures, races, and ethnic groups. The most notable difference between these results and those from 2017 is that the predictor item that had been the most important in this category in 2017 – respect for different cultures, races, and ethnic groups – ranks last in 2019 (see Table C.2, Appendix C).

## Demographic Analysis

Several demographic characteristics influenced “Respect” goal categories. As with “Politeness & Professionalism,” race, length of residence, and work status are the demographic variables most likely to impact responses to questions involving respect and courtesy. Also, there were significant differences across respondent age categories.

Except for 2 goal items (respect toward other customers and respect and courtesy shown to coworkers), clients employed full-time had significantly higher satisfaction than those who were part-time employed or looking for work in all aspects of respect and courtesy shown by the staff.

In terms of respect for cultures, race, and ethnic groups, clients that lived in the County for less than two years had significantly higher satisfaction than all other residents. Similarly, those that no longer resided in the County had higher satisfaction than all residents except those living there less than two years. Short-term residents had significantly higher satisfaction with respect toward other customers than those living in the County five or more years. Residents of 3-4 years had higher satisfaction for the courtesy shown to coworkers than longer-term residents.

Hispanic respondents gave higher ratings than did Asian respondents for the component dealing with respect for cultures, race, and ethnicity.

Younger respondents were more satisfied with the willingness to listen and accept suggestions than older age groups (age 45 or older).

Other demographic variables generally had little impact on responses.

## Summary

Overall ratings of the “Respect” goal category are very positive. Performance ratings are highest for respect for different cultures, races, and ethnic groups and respect and courtesy toward coworkers.

The importance analysis shows that staff had the greatest impact on overall respect.

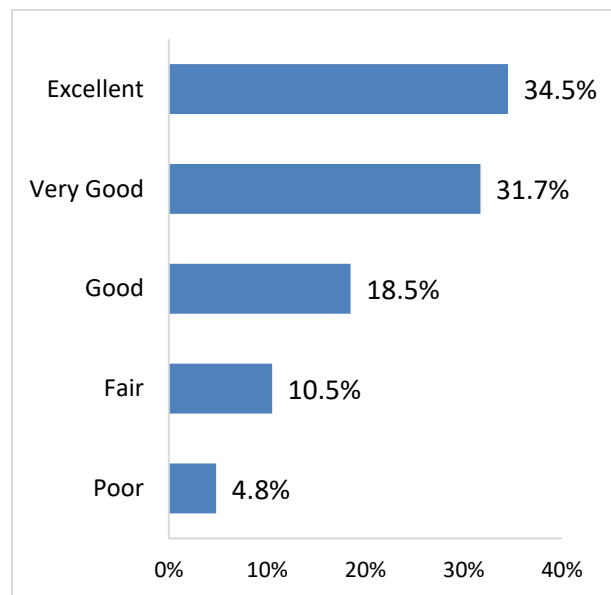
Analysis of the mean ratings and demographic variables indicates that race, length of residence, work status, and age play an important role in rating these goal category items.

## Explanations

Table A.3 in Appendix A displays the items for the goal category of staff explanations about DFS programs and services. The overall measure of this goal category asks respondents to rate the explanations given to clients by staff members.

Overall, 34.5 percent rate the explanations given to them by the staff as excellent, and another 31.7 percent rated them as very good. About one-fifth (18.5%) rate the overall explanations of DFS staff as good. About one in seven (15.3%) rate the explanations given to them as either fair or poor (see Figure III-3 below).

**Figure III-3: Overall Rating of Explanations Given to Clients by Staff Members, 2019**



## Performance Analysis

As in 2017, understandable explanations and descriptions about services and programs received the highest mean rating at 3.83 of all the items in this goal category. This item is followed by explanations of what you need to do with a mean rating of 3.78. As in 2017, explanations of a client’s legal rights (3.75) received the lowest mean rating.

On the same five-point scale, clients rate the overall explanations given to them at 3.80.

Excluding the explanation of legal rights, all items in this goal category received lower ratings in 2019, on average, than in 2017, but none of the differences were statistically significant.

## **Importance Analysis**

The regression results of the staff's explanations of programs and services are shown in Table C.3 of Appendix C. All items in this goal category are positively related to the overall ratings of explanations given to clients and are statistically significant. The results indicate a very good fit with a significant overall relationship.

Explanations of what staff will do to assist clients had the greatest impact on this goal category, followed by explanations of a client's legal rights, and explanations about what clients need to do to get help or services. Explanations and descriptions of services and programs have the least importance. Explanations of what clients need to do to access help or services had the greatest impact on this goal category in 2017.

## **Demographic Analysis**

In 2019, gender, race, and education were the only demographic characteristics that did not have a significant influence on the goal category of staff explanations about DFS programs and services. Clients that spoke a primary language other than English or Spanish had significantly higher satisfaction with descriptions of services and explanation of legal rights.

Residents that lived in the County two or fewer years had significantly higher satisfaction with the description of services than those having lived in the County 5 or more years. Those no longer residing in the County had higher satisfaction with explanations of what staff will do and the explanation of legal rights.

The only significant difference by age group was that clients age 24-44 had higher satisfaction with descriptions about services than respondents age 60 or older.

In terms of race, African American respondents had higher satisfaction than did White respondents for two components of the goal category of staff explanations about DFS programs and services.

They were explanations and descriptions about the services of DFS and the staff's explanation of legal rights.

As has been the case for other goal categories, respondents working full-time had significantly higher satisfaction with most types of staff's explanations compared with those who were working part-time or looking for work. The only exception was the explanation of legal rights.

## **Summary**

In general, staff members received moderately positive ratings for ability to explain DFS programs and services to clients. While the performance analysis indicates that the highest-rated item is understandable descriptions about services, the importance analysis highlights explanations of what staff will do to assist you as being the most important factor related to overall satisfaction with explanations by DFS staff.

This year, many demographic variables were important in rating the knowledge of the staff about DFS programs and services.

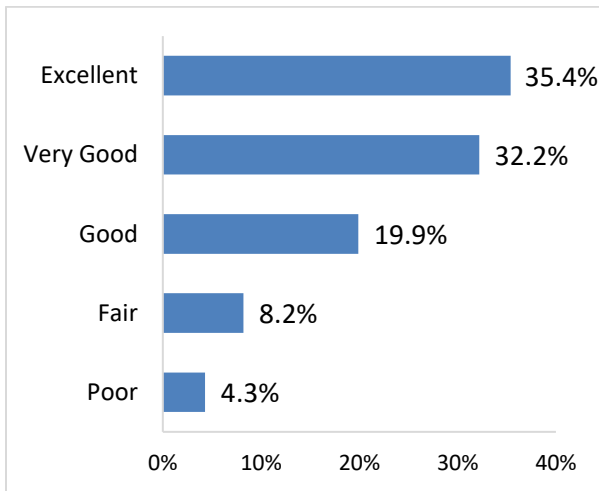
## **Knowledge**

Respondents were also asked two questions to evaluate how knowledgeable the staff is about programs and services. The overall measure in this goal category assesses the knowledge of DFS staff about programs and services.

Over one-third (35.4%) of respondents rate the overall job knowledge of DFS staff as excellent and 32.2 percent rate it as very good. This is the same combined proportion in these two categories as 2017. Nearly one-fifth (19.9%) rate the overall job knowledge of DFS staff as good, while 8.2 percent rate the overall job knowledge of DFS staff as fair and 4.3 percent rate it as poor (see Figure III-4).



**Figure III-4: Overall Job Knowledge of Staff Members, 2019**



### Performance Analysis

The items comprising “Knowledge” are listed in Table A.4 of Appendix A. These items assess the staff’s knowledge of important policies and procedures and whether the provided handouts help explain DFS programs and their requirements.

As in 2017, the staff’s knowledge of important policies and procedures tops the list with a mean rating of 3.85 on the five-point scale. The helpfulness of the handouts in explaining DFS programs and requirements received a mean rating of 3.82. The mean rating of the overall measure is 3.86 on the same five-point scale.

Analysis of the 2019 mean ratings indicates no significant differences from the 2017 results, though ratings for all three measures did show a decrease from 2017.

### Importance Analysis

Regression analysis of the items in this goal category reveals that both the staff’s knowledge of important policies and procedures as well as handouts explaining programs are significant predictors of the overall job knowledge of the staff. The results indicate a very good fit with a significant overall relationship.

The 2019 importance analysis results are like the 2017 results. In both cases, the staff’s knowledge of important policies and procedures has a greater impact on the overall job knowledge of the staff than do the provided handouts. Refer to Table C.4

in Appendix C for a listing of the regression analysis results.

### Demographic Analysis

Length of residence and work status are the most influential demographic variables. Respondents no longer residing in Fairfax County had significantly higher satisfaction with handouts explaining policies than did county residents.

Clients working full-time had higher satisfaction with staff knowledge across both goal measures compared with all other types of work status. The overall satisfaction with staff knowledge was significantly higher for full-time employed clients versus those working part-time or looking for employment.

### Summary

Overall, ratings for the “Knowledge” goal category are moderately favorable. Clients gave high mean ratings (3.85) to staff’s knowledge of policies and procedures.

Both the performance and importance analyses indicate that the staff’s knowledge of important policies and procedures has a great impact on the effective communication of DFS program requirements.

Analyses of the mean ratings by the demographic variables reveal that length of residence and work status have the most notable impact on the level of ratings.

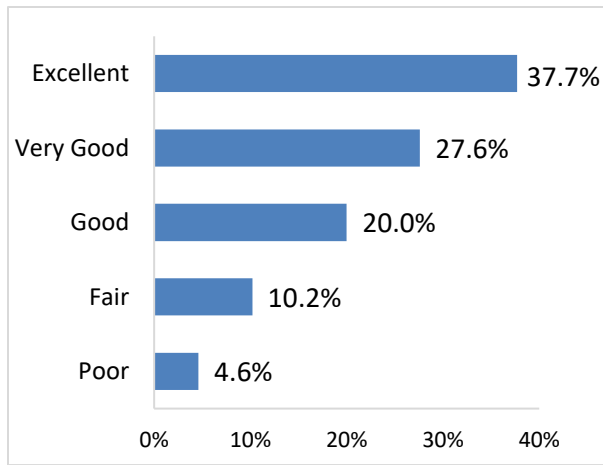
### Providing Services

Items regarding “Providing Services” are shown in Table A.5 of Appendix A. These items assess the extent to which staff members try to learn the details of requested services, understand a client’s personal needs, work well with co-workers to provide services, and handle client’s paperwork. Finally, the overall measure of this goal category evaluates the competence and completeness of the staff’s work.

Well over one third (37.7%) of respondents rate the overall competence and completeness of DFS staff’s work as excellent and 27.6 percent rate it as very good. About one fifth (20.0%) of the respondents rate the staff’s overall competence and completeness of their work as good, 10.2 percent rate it as fair, and 4.6 percent rate it as poor. These

ratings mirrored 2017 except at the bottom end where 2019 saw a slight increase in both fair and poor outcomes.

**Figure III-5: Overall Competence and Completeness of Staff's Work, 2019**



**Performance Analysis**

How well staff works with coworkers tops the list of this goal category with a mean rating of 3.81. This was followed by respondents’ rating of staff’s efforts to learn the details of clients’ needs (mean rating 3.78) and competency with paperwork (mean rating 3.76). The staff’s effort to understand a client’s personal needs received the lowest mean score of 3.73. The overall competence and completeness of the staff’s work received a mean rating of 3.84. There were no significant differences in the 2019 ratings compared to 2017. Each item in the goal category showed a modest decline in its 2019 rating compared to 2017.

**Importance Analysis**

Regression analysis reveals that three of the four components of this goal category are statistically significant and positively related to the overall ratings of competence and completeness of the staff’s work. The results indicate a very good fit with a significant overall relationship.

Efforts to understand client’s personal needs and handling of paperwork have the strongest effect on overall competence. This was followed by how well staff works with co-workers to provide services. The order of importance of all items is different than in 2017 when handling of paperwork had the strongest effect on overall competence.

Table C.5 in Appendix C lists the results of the regression analysis concerning ratings of overall competence and completeness of the staff’s work.

**Demographic Analysis**

Analyses of the mean ratings by the demographic variables indicate that language, length of residence, age, and work status have the strongest effects on the assessment of performance.

Spanish speaking clients have significantly higher satisfaction with staff’s efforts to understand personal needs than did English speaking respondents. This was also true for short-term residents relative to clients who have lived in the County 5 or more years. Those no longer residing in the County had significantly higher satisfaction for efforts to learn details of needs and how the staff works with coworkers than did long term County residents.

Respondents in the 25-44 age group had significantly higher satisfaction than did those 60 years or older for three components: efforts to understand personal needs, how the staff work with coworkers, and overall rating of competence of work.

Except for those unable to work, respondents working full-time gave significantly higher ratings in efforts to understand personal needs than other work status categories. Full-time employed clients also had higher satisfaction with efforts to learn details of needs than those who were working part-time or looking for work.

**Summary**

Overall ratings for the “Providing Services” goal category is moderately favorable. The performance analysis shows that how well staff works with coworkers is highest rated. The importance analyses reveal that efforts to understand client’s personal needs is the item in this goal category with the greatest impact on the overall rating for the goal area.

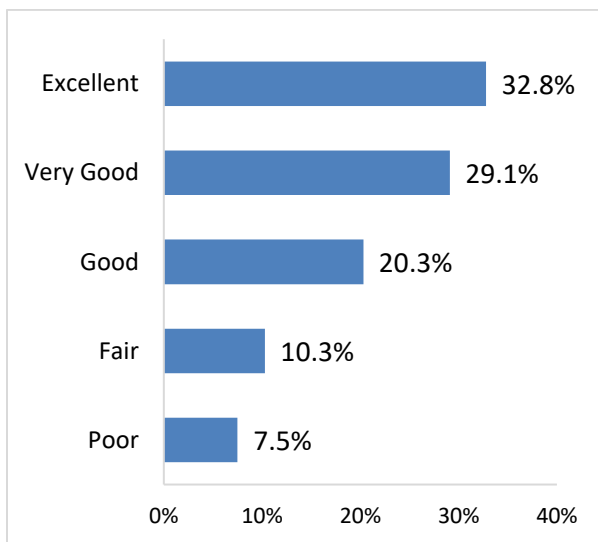
Analyses of the mean ratings by the demographic variables show that language, length of residence, age, and work status had significant effects in some cases.

## Providing Referrals

The questions comprising the issue of “Providing Referrals” by Fairfax DFS staff are in Table A.6 of Appendix A. These items ask respondents to rate the staff’s performance concerning referrals being provided knowledgeable and appropriately. Survey items include, “Are the people on the staff knowledgeable of other agencies that could help meet your needs?”, “Do they work well with outside agencies that need to help you?” and “When a referral is made, has the agency to which you were referred been appropriate for your needs?”

As seen in Figure III-6, slightly less than one third (32.8%) of the respondents rate the staff’s ability to provide referrals as excellent. More than one in four (29.1%) respondents rate it as very good, and one in five (20.3%) rate it as good. When combined, 17.8 percent of clients rate the overall ability of staff to make referrals as either fair or poor.

**Figure III-6: Overall Ability to Make Referrals, 2019**



## Performance Analysis

The highest mean rating is given for the staff’s ability to make appropriate referrals (3.76), followed by the staff’s knowledge of other agencies (3.69) and how well staff work with these outside agencies (3.64). This is the same rating of the components measuring competency in providing referrals as in 2017.

When asked to rate the overall ability of staff to make referrals, participants gave a moderately favorable mean score of 3.69. The 2019 mean ratings show no significant differences with the

2017 results, though all items show small increases in average ratings from 2017 to 2019.

## Importance Analysis

The regression analysis of the items in this goal category reveals all three items as having a statistically significant and positive impact on overall customer ratings of the staff’s ability to make referrals. The results indicate a very good fit with a significant overall relationship.

The analysis shows the appropriateness of the referral in meeting the clients’ needs as the strongest predictor of customer ratings of the overall ability of staff to make referrals. This is followed by how well the staff worked with outside agencies, with the item “Are the people on the staff knowledgeable of other agencies that could help meet your needs?” standing as the least important in the category. The most influential was the same as 2017, although the last two are reversed in order.

See Table C.6 in Appendix C for a complete listing of the regression analysis for the “Providing Referrals” goal category.

## Demographic Analysis

Concerning providing referrals, analysis of the mean ratings by the demographic variables reveals that length of residence and work status have the strongest effects on the ratings for this goal category. These same demographic variables have been influential in the proceeding analyses.

Clients living in the County for two or fewer years have significantly higher satisfaction with all facets of providing referrals, particularly in comparison with those who have lived here 5 or more years. This includes the overall ability of staff to make referrals. The same can be said of those who no longer reside in the County in comparison with residents in terms of being significantly more satisfied.

Clients that were full-time workers were significantly more satisfied with the appropriateness of referral agencies than those working part-time or looking for work.

## Summary

Generally, the ratings of items regarding the DFS staff’s ability to provide referrals are moderately favorable and increased since 2017.

The regression analysis shows that all three items have a significant impact on clients’ overall ratings of “Providing Referrals.” As in 2017, the issue having the greatest impact on a client’s overall satisfaction with this goal category is the appropriateness of the agency to which the referral was made.

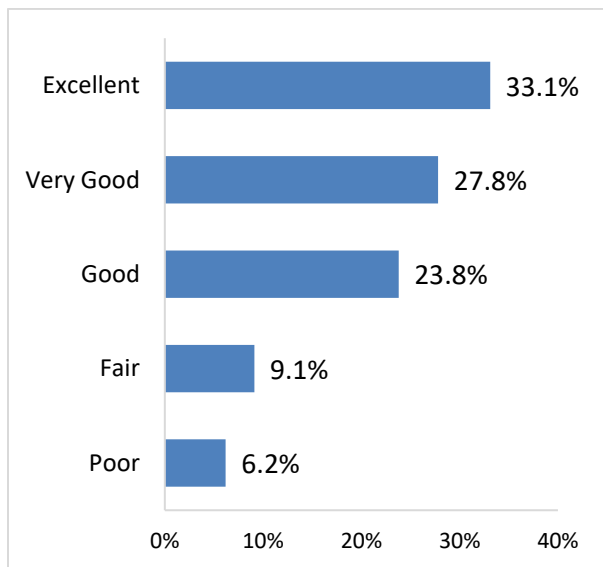
Analyses of the mean ratings by demographic variables show variation across ratings of the DFS staff’s ability to provide referrals for different work status groups and length of residence.

### Convenience

The questions regarding “Convenience” of the Fairfax DFS staff and office are shown in Table A.7 of Appendix A. These questions assess the degree of convenience for DFS clients to contact staff members and the time spent at the Fairfax office. Survey items include the convenience of office location, sufficient office hours, the ability of the staff to communicate in the client’s native language, convenience and availability of specific personnel, amount of office wait time, and amount of wait time before receiving services.

About one third (33.1%) of respondents said the overall convenience of the DFS staff is excellent, and 27.8 percent say it is very good. Additionally, 23.8 percent of DFS respondents rate the overall convenience of staff as good. 9.1 percent rate the overall convenience of the DFS staff as fair and 6.2 percent rate it as poor (see Figure III-7).

**Figure III-7: Overall Convenience of the Staff, 2019**



### Performance Analysis

As shown in Table A.7 the DFS staff receives moderately favorable mean ratings for each of these items. The highest average score on the scale is 4.03 for the ability of staff to communicate or arrange communication in the respondent’s native language. The convenience of office location followed with the second highest mean rating of 3.94. Sufficiency of office hours received an average rating of 3.92 followed by the availability of specific personnel with a rating of 3.73. The lowest mean scores are 3.49 for office wait time and 3.43 for wait time before receiving services. In all seven iterations of the survey since 2007, these two items have been the lowest rated in this goal category, however, they have also steadily increased over time. There were no statistically significant changes from the 2017 ratings.

When asked to rate the overall convenience of the staff to clients, respondents gave a moderately favorable mean score of 3.73, which is a slight decline from the same item rating in 2017, but not statistically significant.

### Importance Analysis

Regression analysis indicates a very good fit with a significant overall relationship. Further, analysis reveals that five of the six items have a significant impact on predicting ratings for the overall convenience of the staff. The one exception being that sufficiency of office hours is not a statistically significant predictor of overall assessment of convenience.

The amount of wait time before receiving services has the strongest effect on the overall assessment of convenience, followed by the availability of specific personnel, the convenience of office location, and the amount of office wait time. Communication in a client’s native language was the least influential component. The order of the items’ importance is the same as in 2017 except for the two highest items.

See Table C.7 in Appendix C for a complete listing of the regression analysis for the “Convenience” goal category.

### Demographic Analysis

Analyses of the mean ratings by the demographic variables reveal several differences among the “Convenience” survey items in the primary

language, length of residence, age, race, employment status, and education categories (see Appendix D).

Clients that spoke English or Spanish as their primary language gave significantly higher ratings for “ability to communicate in language” than did those that primarily spoke another language. Respondents that spoke a primary language other than English or Spanish gave a significantly higher rating for convenience of office location.

Residents of the County for two or fewer years gave significantly higher ratings than long-term residents for two components of convenience. These included sufficient office hours and ability to communicate in a language. They also gave a significantly higher overall rating for this goal area.

Clients age 25-44 years gave significantly higher ratings for four of the components of convenience when compared with those 60 years and older. These were convenience of office location, sufficient office hours, ability to communicate in a language, and convenience of specific personnel. This same age group also gave a significantly higher overall rating than the oldest age category.

African American clients and Arab clients both gave significantly higher ratings for convenience of office location than did White respondents. Both African American and White respondents gave a significantly higher rating for the ability to communicate in a client’s native language when compared with Asian clients.

Clients that were full-time employed gave significantly higher ratings for convenience of office location than all other work status categories. Full-time employed clients also gave a significantly higher rating for the ability of staff to communicate in a client’s native language than those unable to work. On the amount of time receiving services component, respondents working full time gave higher ratings than respondents who part-time or looking for work.

Respondents with a high school education or less gave a significantly higher rating for convenience of specific personnel than those with college or professional degrees.

## Summary

Ratings for “Convenience” items are generally positive, with two exceptions. Specifically, clients

give the highest mean ratings for convenience of office location, sufficient office hours, and DFS staff’s ability to communicate in their native language.

The amount of office wait time and the amount of wait time before receiving services continue to be the items receiving the lowest mean scores. However, this year’s rating for office wait time and the amount of wait time before receiving services both increased slightly from 2017, although not statistically significant.

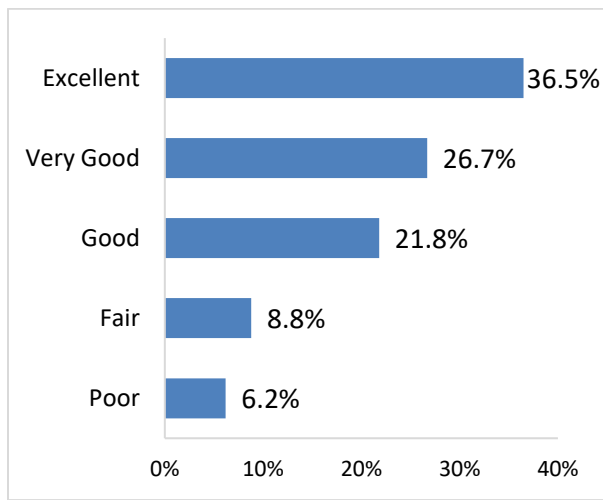
Regression analysis showed that the amount of wait time before receiving services is the most important predictor for the overall assessment of convenience.

## **Responsive to Needs**

Table A.8 in Appendix A displays the items for the goal category of “Responsive to Needs.” These items assess the extent to which customers of Fairfax DFS perceive staff to be flexible, understanding, and willing to provide customer service in general. Survey items include willingness to be flexible in meeting client needs, willingness to be open and understanding about the client’s situation, willingness to help clients understand their rights and benefits, response to a request for reasonable accommodation based on a disability.

As illustrated in Figure III-8, a majority of clients are pleased with the overall customer service they receive from DFS staff. Well over one third (36.5%) rate overall customer service as excellent, 26.7 percent rate it as very good, and 21.8 percent say the overall customer service they receive from DFS staff is good. When combined, fifteen percent rate the overall customer service as fair or poor.

**Figure III-8: Overall Customer Service Received, 2019**



**Performance Analysis**

The highest mean score for this goal category is 3.77, given to DFS’s willingness to be open and understanding about the client's situation. This is followed closely by a willingness to help clients understand their rights and benefits, which was rated 3.75, and by a willingness to be flexible (3.73). In contrast with 2017 when it was the highest-rated component, on average, response to a request for reasonable accommodation base on disability had the lowest mean rating at 3.69.

To assess whether Fairfax DFS staff are responsive to clients’ needs, respondents were asked, “How would you rate the customer service that you received overall?” On the same five-point scale, this item received a mean score of 3.78. Overall, the ratings for each item have not significantly changed since 2017.

**Importance Analysis**

Results from the importance regression are presented in Table C.8 of Appendix C. The results of the regression analysis indicate a very good fit with a significant overall relationship. All four independent items of the analysis are positively associated with clients’ overall ratings of customer service and are statistically significant in their impact.

The strongest predictor of client ratings of overall customer service received is the response to requests regarding disabilities. The second strongest predictor is staff’s willingness to be open and understanding, followed by a willingness to be

flexible. Willingness to help clients understand their rights had the least impact. This ordering of importance is identical to 2017.

**Demographic Analysis**

Length of residence, race, and work have the strongest demographic effects on assessments of customer service.

Clients that have lived in the county for two or fewer years had significantly higher ratings overall for needs responsiveness and for the component dealing with the response to requests dealing with disabilities than those who have resided in the County 5 or more years. Those who no longer reside in the County had a significantly higher rating for the response to requests dealing with disabilities than all other residency groups expect those here two or fewer years.

African American respondents gave a higher average rating for the response to requests dealing with disabilities than clients of Arab ethnicity.

Respondents with full-time employment gave significantly higher ratings across all components of customer service, including overall than those who worked part-time or were looking for work.

**Summary**

In general, Fairfax DFS staff receives moderately favorable ratings for being “Responsive to Needs” of clients. Relatively speaking, the DFS staff receives its highest marks for willingness to be open and understanding about the client's situation, though there is little variation across the ratings that the items in this goal category received.

As in 2017, issues having the strongest impacts on clients’ overall ratings of customer service are staff’s response to requests regarding disabilities and willingness to be open and understanding. Therefore, to continue improving upon overall client satisfaction with customer service, it would serve Fairfax DFS well to maintain its focus on these critical areas.

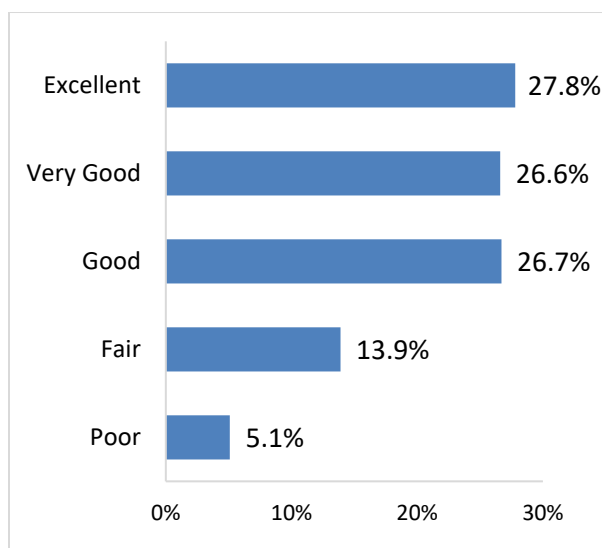
**Community Awareness**

The items comprising “Community Awareness” of Fairfax DFS staff and its services are listed in Table A.9 of Appendix A. These items assess the extent to which customers perceive the Fairfax Department of Family Services to be promoted and

easily located in the community. Survey items include promotion and publicity in the community, availability of information within the local community, how easy it is to find what you are looking for on the website, and how helpful the information is on the website.

As illustrated in Figure III-9, more than one quarter (27.8%) rate community awareness as excellent, and 26.6 percent rate it as very good. Nearly three out of ten respondents (26.7%) say the overall community awareness of Fairfax DFS is good. However, it should be noted that nearly one in five (19.0%) DFS clients rate the overall community awareness of the department as fair or poor.

**Figure III-9: Overall Awareness of the Department of Family Services, 2019**



## Performance Analysis

The highest mean ratings were given to how helpful the information on the website is (3.53) and promotion and publicity in the community (3.53). The availability of information about DFS programs had an average rating of 3.52, and direction for using the website had the lowest average rating for this goal area at 3.46.

When asked to rate overall community awareness of the Department of Family Services, participants gave a moderately favorable mean score of 3.58. None of the 2017 ratings in this goal category show statistically significant differences from 2017. Overall community awareness has significantly increased from 2005.

## Importance Analysis

Regression analysis (Table C.9 in Appendix C) of the items in this goal category reveals that all four independent items are statistically significant predictors of participants' ratings of overall community awareness. The results indicate a good quality fit with a significant overall relationship.

Community promotion and publicity has the strongest impact on assessments of overall community awareness, although there were small differences in the coefficient values. The second most important influence came from easiness to navigate the website followed by the helpfulness of information on the website. The fourth most important predictor is the availability of information about DFS programs within the local community. This represents a shift from 2017 when the availability of information in the community had the strongest impact.

## Demographic Analysis

Several demographic variables had significant demographic effects on respondents' assessments of community awareness, including primary language, length of residence, age, race, and education.

Clients that primarily spoke a language other than English or Spanish rated promotion and publicity higher than English speaking respondents. Respondents living in the County for two or fewer years rated this same component significantly higher than those residing in the County for five or more years. In general, those no longer living in the County rated all aspects of community awareness higher than did residents.

Respondents age 24-44 rated the availability of information in the community significantly higher than those in the 45-59 years, age group. The availability of information on the website was also rated higher for the 23-44 age group than for the oldest clients (age 60 years or more).

African American clients gave higher ratings for all components of community awareness and overall, when compared with White respondents.

Clients with job training or some college gave significantly higher ratings for promotion and publicity and availability of information in the community than for those with a college or

professional degree. The overall rating was significantly higher for this education category, as well. High school graduates or less had a higher overall rating for community awareness than clients with college or professional degrees.

### Summary

Overall, respondents gave somewhat favorable ratings to “Community Awareness” of Fairfax Department of Social Services, though this goal receives the lowest overall ratings in the 2019 survey. This year’s mean ratings of the items in this goal category show only negligible differences from 2017.

Regression analysis of the items in this goal category reveals that all four items are significant predictors of participants’ ratings of overall community awareness. The items having the strongest impact on overall ratings of “Community Awareness” are community promotion and publicity, followed by easiness to navigate the website. Therefore, to increase positive ratings of the “Community Awareness” goal category, it would serve Fairfax DFS well to devote resources towards community promotion and publicity efforts.

Several demographic variables show significant differences in ratings for the components of this category. Respondents in what might be considered target groups for DFS services – those with lower education levels, minority race or ethnicity, or languages other than English as their native languages – tend to give higher ratings for awareness and information in the community.

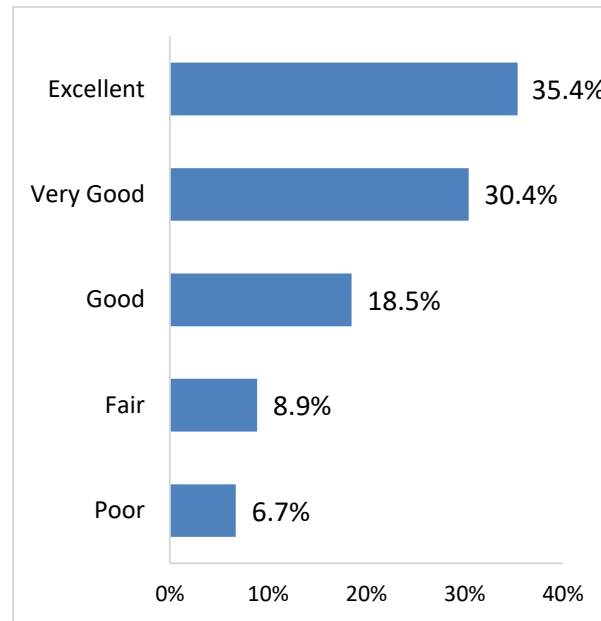
### Quality of Life

The items regarding the goal category of “Quality of Life” are shown in Table A.10 of Appendix A. These items assess the extent to which clients of Fairfax DFS perceive staff members to be working for their safety, security, success, and decision-making.

As observed in Figure III-10, a large percentage of clients favorably rate DFS staff’s effectiveness in helping them succeed overall, with over one third (35.4%) of respondents rating this item as excellent. Another three in ten (30.4%) say the DFS staff is very good and 18.5 percent say they are good when it comes to their effectiveness in helping clients succeed. When combined, 15.6 percent rate DFS

staff’s effectiveness in helping them succeed as fair or poor. This represents a three-point jump in the bottom two categories from 2017.

**Figure III-10: Overall Effectiveness of the Staff in Helping You Succeed, 2019**



### Performance Analysis

Of all the items in this goal category section, the helpfulness of the DFS services received the highest mean rating (3.92). The next highest mean rating in this goal category is for DFS efforts to help families be safe and secure in their everyday life (3.85). The items “how hard we try to help you succeed” was rated at 3.74, while “how we do in helping you make important decisions” got the lowest average rating at 3.71.

When asked to rate the “effectiveness of the staff in helping you succeed overall,” DFS clients gave a favorable mean score of 3.79, which is a lower item mean rating than was given in 2017. None of the 2019 mean ratings in this goal area show significant differences from the 2017 results. All ratings have markedly increased since 2005.

### Importance Analysis

Regression analysis reveals that all four items from this goal category have a significant impact in predicting ratings of overall effectiveness in helping clients succeed (see Table C.10 in Appendix C). The results indicate a good fit with a significant overall relationship.



The analysis shows that helpfulness in making important decisions ranks as the strongest predictor of satisfaction with the overall effectiveness of DFS staff members in helping clients' quality of life. This is followed by the helpfulness of services received, efforts to help clients' families be safe and secure, and how hard staff tries to help clients succeed. The ranking of the last two components was reversed from 2017 when efforts to help clients' families be safe and secure was the least influential item.

### **Demographic Analysis**

The client's age and work status demographic variables had significant effects on respondents' assessments of the quality of life.

Respondents age 25-44 years had significantly higher ratings for all aspects of quality of life services provided by DFS except "help you succeed," when compared with older clients. Nonetheless, there were no significant differences across age groups in terms of overall effectiveness in helping clients succeed.

Respondents with a full-time job had significantly higher ratings for all components of quality of life

services and overall than other work status categories except retired.

See Appendix D for the complete results of the "Quality of Life" mean analysis and demographic variables.

### **Summary**

In general, the DFS staff receives favorable ratings for the items comprising "Quality of Life." Clients gave good marks to the helpfulness of DFS services and DFS staff for their efforts to help families to be safe and secure.

The regression analysis reveals that all four items have a significant impact on predicting overall ratings of "Quality of Life." The staff's effort in helping clients make important decisions is the strongest predictor of satisfaction with the overall effectiveness of DFS staff in helping clients succeed, but this item is rated relatively low on performance (3.71) relative to other items in this goal category. This item is followed closely in the regression analysis by the helpfulness of services received. Therefore, to maintain and improve the "Quality of Life" goal category, it would serve Fairfax DFS well to focus resources upon these issues

## IV. Overall Analysis of Goal Categories

The purpose of this analysis is to use statistical techniques based on regression analysis to determine which goal categories contribute the most to clients’ overall satisfaction with DFS services. The techniques used here are sometimes referred to as “leverage analyses” or as measures of “derived importance.” They allow identification of items on the survey that are most strongly correlated with, or predictive of, a client’s overall satisfaction. Taken together with the performance scores (mean ratings) of the overall goal evaluations, the results may suggest areas that could be of higher priority for bringing about an increase in levels of “Overall Satisfaction.”

### Goal Category Derived Importance

The third column in Table IV-1 shows the *standardized beta coefficient*, which reveals a scaled overall association of each independent variable with the overall satisfaction score, taking the effects of all other goal areas into account simultaneously. Positive numbers indicate positive relationships (e.g. high ratings on overall satisfaction being associated with high goal ratings) and negative numbers indicate negative correlations (low ratings on overall satisfaction being associated with high goal ratings and *vice versa*). The strength of the relationship is given by the magnitude of the standardized beta coefficient. Note that all ten goal categories have positive zero-order correlation coefficients (these are one-on-one tests of association between the goal area and the overall satisfaction score) and are therefore individually positively associated with “Overall Satisfaction” of DFS services. However, four of the goal areas have negative standardized beta coefficients, meaning that they have negative relationships to overall satisfaction when the other goal areas are taken into account simultaneously. This is due to interrelationships among the goal areas. In this analysis, “Quality of Life” and “Explanations” have the strongest correlations.

The standardized beta coefficients in Table IV-1 show the relative importance of each independent variable in the regression analysis taking into account the impact of all other variables in the

analysis. In many cases, ranking by zero-order correlations will produce the same result as ranking by standardized beta coefficients. We have chosen to use the standardized beta coefficients to help rank the goal categories.

In Table IV-1, the categories are ranked in order of importance and divided into three levels (*High*, *Medium*, and *Low*) based on their significant impact and standardized beta coefficients with overall satisfaction with DFS services.

The group of goal categories under the first (*High*) level is composed of goal categories that have the greatest impact on overall satisfaction with DFS services based on their significant regression beta coefficients. Classification of the second (*Medium*) and third level (*Low*) goal categories, which have a decreasing impact, is based on the standardized beta coefficients and significance tests.

**Table IV-1: Overall Category Derived Importance, 2019 (Zero-order Correlation and Regression Analysis)**

Goal Categories	Zero-order Correlation	Standardized Coefficients	
		Beta	Sig.
<b>High</b>			
Quality of Life	.795	.557	.000
Explanations	.720	.140	.021
<b>Medium</b>			
Providing Referrals	.688	.096	.075
Politeness & Professionalism	.676	.057	.374
Providing Services	.705	.050	.441
Responsiveness to Needs	.684	-.032	.573
Respect	.685	.031	.635
<b>Low</b>			
Knowledge	.672	-.024	.700
Convenience	.692	-.010	.869
Community Awareness	.574	-.010	.816

Adjusted R-square =0.647

The significance column contains the p values which are used to evaluate whether or not the beta is statistically different from zero. The adjusted R-square is an overall measure of how much of the variation in “Overall Satisfaction” with DFS services is explained by the full regression model. The adjusted R-square value of .647 indicates that, taken together, the ten goal categories explain 64.7 percent of the variation in ratings for “Overall Satisfaction.”

The importance of the goal categories on overall client satisfaction with DFS services is determined by assessing their “predictive power” – that is, the ability of each category to account for differences among the respondents in their level of overall satisfaction. The predictive power of the ten goal categories is determined statistically using multiple regression analysis. Simply stated, the purpose of this analysis is to determine the predictors that have the greatest impact on clients’ overall satisfaction with DFS services. Of all the independent variables, “Quality of Life,” and “Explanations” are the most significant predictors of “Overall Satisfaction.” As in 2013, 2015, and 2017, with the other variables held constant, “Quality of Life” has the greatest impact on “Overall Satisfaction” (see also Appendix C, Table C.11).

### Performance Ratings for Goal Categories

Table IV-2 contains the performance measures for each of the goal categories. The measures are the mean ratings given by the respondents for the overall items of each goal category using a scale<sup>5</sup> from 1 to 5 where 1 equals “Poor” and 5 equals “Excellent.” As in the importance analysis, the performance ratings are also divided into three levels of *High*, *Medium*, and *Low*.

The performance analysis shows that DFS is performing quite well on “Respect” and “Politeness and Professionalism.” The goal categories of “Knowledge,” “Providing Services,” “Explanations,” “Quality of Life,” and “Responsive to Needs” also received relatively favorable mean ratings. As in previous years, DFS received the lowest performance ratings on “Convenience,” “Providing Referrals,” and “Community Awareness” goal categories.

**Table IV-2: Overall Mean Goal Category Ratings, 2019**

<i>Key-topic Areas</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
<b><i>High</i></b>			
Respect	762	4.01	1.099
Politeness and Professionalism	796	3.98	1.145
<b><i>Medium</i></b>			
Knowledge	743	3.86	1.117
Providing Services	769	3.84	1.171
Explanations	784	3.80	1.162
Quality of Life	732	3.79	1.208
Responsiveness to Needs	769	3.78	1.204
<b><i>Low</i></b>			
Convenience	738	3.73	1.189
Providing Referrals	649	3.69	1.236
Community Awareness	675	3.58	1.176

### Priority Analysis

The priority analysis combines the importance analysis and the measures of performance in order to examine where each goal category falls on these two dimensions using a single “Priority Matrix.”

Table IV-3 combines the high, medium, and low *importance levels* with the high, medium, and low *performance levels*. Information in the matrix can be suggestive of areas of strength—high performing areas that are also high in importance—for DFS. The matrix may also suggest areas of high priority for change—areas that are high in importance, but low in performance. Such areas represent goal categories that have relatively poor performances yet are important to clients’ ratings of “Overall Satisfaction.” The greatest gains in “Overall Satisfaction” with DFS services can be achieved if performance in these key areas can be improved.

<sup>5</sup> For purposes of analysis, the items were reverse-scored from those printed in the questionnaire so that high values represent desired outcomes.

**Table IV-3: Priority Matrix, 2019**

		<b>Derived Importance</b> <b>(Standardized betas from regression)</b>		
		<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>
<b>Performance</b> <b>(Mean Performance Scores)</b>	<i>High</i>		Respect Politeness & Professionalism	
	<i>Medium</i>	Quality of Life Explanations	Providing Services Responsiveness to Needs	Knowledge
	<i>Low</i>		Providing Referrals	Convenience Community Awareness

The priority matrix identifies “Respect” and “Politeness and Professionalism” of its staff as the greatest strengths for DFS. These are areas of high performance and medium importance.

This year, none of the goal categories are classified in the area of highest priority, which is the area of high importance and low performance in the lower left cell of the matrix. There were no goal categories in the area of highest priority in 2007, 2009, 2011, 2015 or 2017 either.

However, “Quality of Life” and “Explanations” fall into the area of second priority in the matrix. They are strong statistical drivers of overall satisfaction, but received only a moderate performance rating. “Providing Referrals” is classified in the area of third priority as it received a medium importance rating but a low performance rating.

## V. Summary

The 2019 Fairfax County Department of Family Services (DFS) Customer Satisfaction Survey was conducted from December 2019 through April 2020. Survey packets were mailed on December 11, 2019, to the home addresses of 5,400 DFS customers. Unlike prior years, the 2019 sample size was increased to achieve generalizable results both within subgroups (clients of self-sufficiency services and clients of non-self-sufficiency services) and for DFS clients overall. The sample was stratified across these two groups and then an equal number of cases were randomly drawn from stratum.

With a total of 918 completed surveys, the response rate for this survey is 18.9 percent. The margin of error for the survey is +/-4.25 percentage points.

Clients' overall satisfaction with DFS services received a mean rating of 5.90 on a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 means "Very Dissatisfied" and 7 means "Very Satisfied." A rule of thumb may be helpful to understand the meaning of a 5.90 rating. The mid-point of a seven-point scale is 4.0. Generally, a rating below the mid-point is thought to be unsatisfactory and signals the need for urgent review. Relative to this seven-point scale, the rating of 5.90 is a very favorable score, indicating that overall, clients are satisfied with DFS services. Further qualifying the 5.90 "Overall Satisfaction" rating, roughly 6 out of 7 (85.6%) respondents said they were very satisfied (43.1%), satisfied (34.2%), or somewhat satisfied (8.3%) with DFS services.

The 2019 rating is significantly lower than the mean of 6.14 reported in 2017, suggesting there is room for improvement. A beneficial goal would be to raise the overall rating significantly above the long-term average of 6.0 measured across all surveys since 2005.

### **Priority Matrix, 2019**

Ten goal categories are included in the survey for evaluation. This report evaluates each of them on two dimensions: *performance* and *importance*.

The *performance* ratings for the goal categories are measured on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 equals "Poor" and 5 equals "Excellent." The mid-point on a five-point scale is 3.0. Ratings below

3.0 tend to be less than satisfactory and areas receiving ratings below 3.0 should be critically reviewed. Ratings between 3.0 and 4.0 are generally satisfactory although they suggest existing room for improvement in the areas that receive those ratings. Generally, ratings between 4.0 and 4.5 are good, and ratings between 4.5 and 5.0 are thought to be excellent.

An overall performance question is included at the end of each goal category section. Each of the overall goal category ratings fell between 3.58 (community awareness of DFS services) and 4.01 (staff treats clients with respect). This suggests that DFS clients have a favorable view of the services provided by staff, but one that also provides an opportunity for improvement.

The *importance* ratings constitute the second dimension on which goal categories are evaluated. These ratings, which are measures derived through regression analysis, are conducted on two different levels. The first level is within the goal categories where overall goal performance measures are the dependent variables (predicted variables) and the individual goal performance ratings are the independent variables (predictor variables). The resulting standardized beta ( $\beta$ ) coefficients are measures of strength or importance in predicting the dependent variable while controlling for the other independent variables (refer to Appendix C).

In the second-level analysis, we used the "Overall Satisfaction" rating (Question L1 of the survey instrument) as the dependent variable and the overall goal category performance ratings as the independent variables. Again, regression analysis is used to determine the strength of each predictor variable while controlling for the remaining independent variables.

The performance analysis is combined with the second-level importance ratings, which are based on the standardized beta coefficients and regression results, to form a priority matrix shown in Table IV-3. The priority analysis identifies areas of strength and weakness in DFS staff and services.

The areas of greatest strength are "Respect" and "Politeness and Professionalism" of DFS staff for which clients gave a high performance and medium importance ratings. DFS should strive to maintain performance levels in these areas.

The areas of concern are “Quality of Life” and “Explanations”. These areas received high derived importance rating yet moderate performance ratings. Additionally, “Providing Referrals” received a relatively low performance rating yet moderate importance rating. This suggests that “Quality of Life” and “Explanations,” followed by “Providing Referrals” are priority areas that should receive more attention from DFS. The priority analysis suggests that improving these services will have a significant impact on clients’ “Overall Satisfaction” with DFS services.

In conclusion, the overall performance ratings for DFS services are most favorable with the goal categories of “Respect” and “Politeness & Professionalism.” As mentioned, the areas of greatest concern are “Quality of Life,” and “Explanations,” and “Providing Referrals.”

Fairfax County’s Department of Family Services should take pride in its favorable rating for overall satisfaction among clients and in the general stability of ratings over time. Raising performance ratings for important goal categories, as well as striving to maintain current strengths can further improve Fairfax County’s Department of Family Services.