

Executive Summary

Purpose:

The Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation (DEEOIC) Outreach and Customer Experience Unit (OXCUC) deployed a customer experience survey that we sent out in January 2024 to **2,000 stakeholders who served as Authorized Representatives (AR) for one claimant** between December 2021 and December 2023. For this feedback collection, OXCUC slightly revised a previous Authorized Representative survey that was originally sent in May 2022 to align with the new requirements in the 2023 version of the OMB Circular A-11 Section 280 (Managing Customer Service and Improving Service Delivery). The data request used to identify the sample relied on the same parameters as the May 2022 survey. These two surveys were limited to ARs with one claimant in an effort to better understand struggles that family member and non-professional ARs encounter throughout the claims process. Repeating a survey on the same population is essential for gaining insights into changes and trends over time. By conducting the survey again, we can observe shifts in attitudes, perceptions, and preferences within the population. This allows us to track the effectiveness of interventions or recommendations implemented since the previous survey and identify areas that may require further attention or improvement. Additionally, repeating the survey enables us to validate the reliability and consistency of the findings, ensuring the accuracy of our data and enhancing the credibility of our research. Overall, periodic repetition of surveys on the same population is crucial for maintaining relevance, understanding evolving dynamics, and making informed decisions based on up-to-date information. This report details the scores and analysis obtained from this survey and the associated recommendations from the Team's analysis of the results.

Results:

The Team received 531 responses (approximately 27% response rate) to this survey. The survey included eight questions that related to the Customer Experience Drivers identified in the OMB Circular A-11 Section 280. Seven of the driver related questions were scored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and one was multiple choice. The other six questions were questions designed to gather more specific information related to the experience of an Authorized Representative. The Customer Experience Driver-related question that received the **highest average score**, 4.46 out of 5, was related to **transparency** (Q: I understand my role and responsibilities as an Authorized Representative). The **lowest average customer experience driver score**, 3.66 out of 5, was received on the question related to **ease** (Q: It was easy to complete what I needed to do for the claimant to receive a final decision). Interestingly, results from the FY24 iteration of this survey are very similar to the results of the FY22 survey. In FY22, the highest average score by question, 4.42 out of 5, was also **transparency** (Q: I understand my roles and responsibilities as an Authorized Representative). The lowest average score by question on the FY22 version, a 3.74 out of 5, was also received on the question related to the perceived **ease** of the overall process (Q: It was easy to complete what I needed to do for the claimant to receive a final decision).

Open response comment analysis (How can the Energy Program help you better assist the claimant that you represent) aligned with the results from the customer experience driver questions. Of the 254 open response comments, 57 voiced concerns with communication with DEEOIC and 29 focused on the timeliness of the claims process.

Recommendations:

OXCUC developed four recommendations as a result of this survey and its analysis. These include enhancing communication efforts, developing a welcome packet for first time Authorized Representatives, improving the DEEOIC website through customer feedback, and targeted marketing to promote the value and benefit of in-person outreach events for Authorized Representatives.

Customer Feedback Analysis – Authorized Representative – Results and Recommendations

Purpose

To present the analysis of the January 2024 Customer Experience (CX) Survey, discuss results, and propose recommendations for programmatic improvement.

Background


In Fiscal Year 2019, the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) designated the Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation (DEEOIC) to report on OWCP's behalf as a High Impact Service Provider (HISP) due to the importance of the services that DEEOIC provides. HISPs are required to adhere to OMB Circular A-11 Section 280, "Managing Customer Experience and Service Delivery," incorporating the principles of customer experience into their organizations and ensuring that customer experience practices are integrated into program delivery.

To reinforce its commitment to its stakeholders, DEEOIC employs an Outreach and Customer Experience Unit (OCXU) within the Branch of Outreach and Technical Assistance (BOTA). This team has dedicated customer experience staff that work to solicit feedback from stakeholders, conduct analyses of data, and make data-driven recommendations for programmatic and procedural improvements. The CX staff regularly develop surveys and methodologies for collecting relevant customer feedback at different points in time ("touchpoints") throughout the customer's journey with DEEOIC. As part of its paper survey initiative, the current survey was developed to gather feedback on Authorized Representatives' experiences throughout the claims process.

Survey Instrument

U.S. Department of Labor

Office of Workers' Compensation Programs
Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation
200 Constitution Ave, NW, Room C-3321
Washington, D.C. 20210



DEEOIC AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE SURVEY

The OMB control number for this collection is 1225-0093 and expires on 02/29/2024. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no person is required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The obligation to respond to this collection is voluntary. We estimate it takes about 5 minutes to complete this collection of information, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing the collection of information. Please send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information to the U.S. Department of Labor, DEEOIC, 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Room C-3321, Washington, D.C. 20210 and reference OMB Control Number 1225-0093. **Note: Please do not return the completed form to this address.**

Please indicate your answers to the statements below by circling a response.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Based on my experience as an Authorized Representative, I trust DEEOIC to fulfill our country's commitment to nuclear workers and their families.	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
What factors contributed to your trust rating? (You may select more than one)						
<input type="checkbox"/> Helpfulness/commitment level of employees	<input type="checkbox"/> Ability to get my needs addressed		<input type="checkbox"/> Ease of process			
<input type="checkbox"/> Expectations/information provided throughout process	<input type="checkbox"/> Length of time of process		<input type="checkbox"/> Fairness during process			
I understand my role and responsibilities as an Authorized Representative.	5	4	3	2	1	N/A
It took a reasonable amount of time for the claimant to receive a final decision.	5	4	3	2	1	N/A
It was easy to complete what I needed to do for the claimant to receive a final decision.	5	4	3	2	1	N/A
I have been able to get my questions answered.	5	4	3	2	1	N/A
In my role as an Authorized Representative, I have been treated fairly.	5	4	3	2	1	N/A
The DEEOIC employees I have interacted with were helpful.	5	4	3	2	1	N/A

Over →

OMB Control Number: 1225-0093

Customer Feedback Analysis – Authorized Representative – Results and Recommendations

U.S. Department of Labor

Office of Workers' Compensation Programs
Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation
200 Constitution Ave. NW, Room C-3321
Washington, D.C. 20210



Please indicate your answers to the statements below by circling a response.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
I have been informed of or have access to resources that indicate the length of time each step in the claims process takes.	5	4	3	2	1	N/A
DEEOIC provides the appropriate information and tools necessary to do my job as an Authorized Representative.	5	4	3	2	1	N/A
Please rate your experience with DEEOIC as an Authorized Representative.	Outstanding	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor	N/A
What resources have you found most useful in helping understand the program and assisting your claimant?	DEEOIC website	Resource Center Employees	Claims Examiners	Outreach Events (Webinar and In-Person)	Other : _____	
How can the Energy Program help you better assist the claimant that you represent?						
Do you have additional feedback related to your experience as an Authorized Representative?						

Would you like to speak with our Customer Experience Team regarding your experience as an Authorized Representative?

Yes No

If yes, please provide your name and telephone number:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

OMB Control Number: 1225-0093

Survey Population

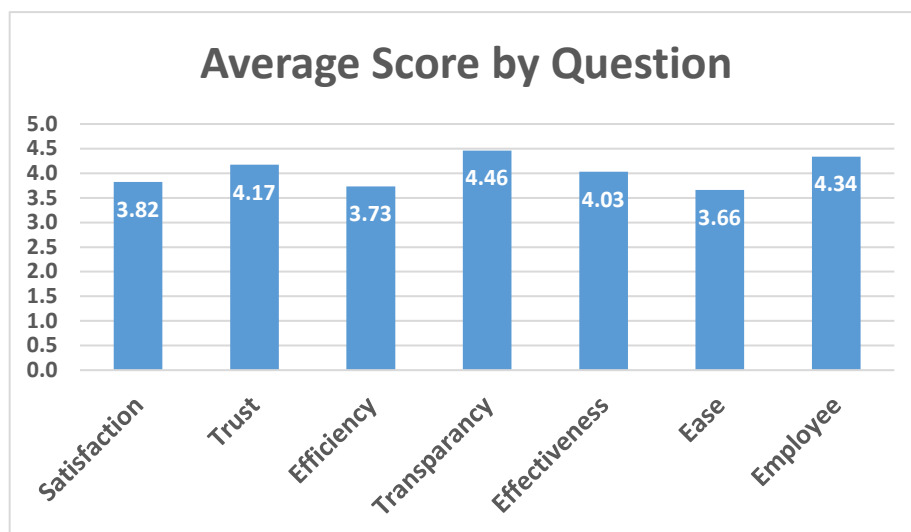
In January 2024, DEEOIC mailed the survey to 2,000 individuals who had been identified as an **Authorized Representative of one claimant** between December 2021 and December 2023.

Survey Results

2,000 surveys mailed
27% response rate
29 follow-up phone interviews

531 responses received
254 comments providing feedback

The survey included eight questions that related to the Customer Experience Drivers outlined in A-11 Section 280. The questions were scored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Scores were analyzed and averages are presented in the chart below.



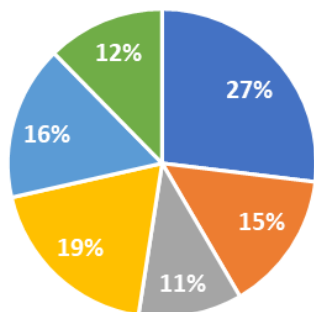
Customer Feedback Analysis – Authorized Representative – Results and Recommendations

The question that received the **highest average score**, 4.46 out of 5, was related to **transparency** (Q: I understand my role and responsibilities as an Authorized Representative). The question that received the second highest average score, 4.34 out of 5, was related to **employees** (Q: The DEEOIC employees I interacted with were helpful).

Three questions received an average score under 4. The **lowest average score** by question, 3.66 out of 5, was received on the question related to **ease** (Q: It was easy to complete what I needed to do for the claimant to receive a final decision). The second lowest average score, 3.73 out of 5, was received on the question related to **efficiency** (Q: It took a reasonable amount of time for the claimant to receive final decision).

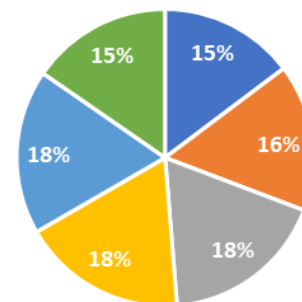
Additionally, a question was added to this survey that allows users to identify which factors contributed to their trust rating. This question, “what factors contributed to your trust rating,” is part of a new requirement from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) which is intended to gather additional feedback on why our customers trust us and/or what we could do better as far as earning their trust. For the purposes of scoring the trust question, DEEOIC considers 4’s and 5’s to be considered positive while 1’s or 2’s are considered negative. Overall, 80% of users selected a 4 or 5 while only 9% of users selected a 1 or 2 negative rating. For those who gave a positive rating, they found “Helpfulness/commitment level of employees” as the most common factor that contributed to their trust rating. Conversely, “Ease of process,” “Expectations/information provided throughout process,” and “Ability to get my needs addressed” were the most common factors identified by those who gave a negative rating. Interestingly, users who gave a positive rating were 57% more likely to select “Helpfulness/commitment level of employees” than those who gave a negative rating.

What factors contributed to your trust rating? (4's & 5's)



- Helpfulness/commitment level of employees
- Fairness during process
- Ease of process
- Expectations/information provided throughout process
- Ability to get my needs addressed
- Length of time of process

What factors contributed to your trust rating? (1's & 2's)

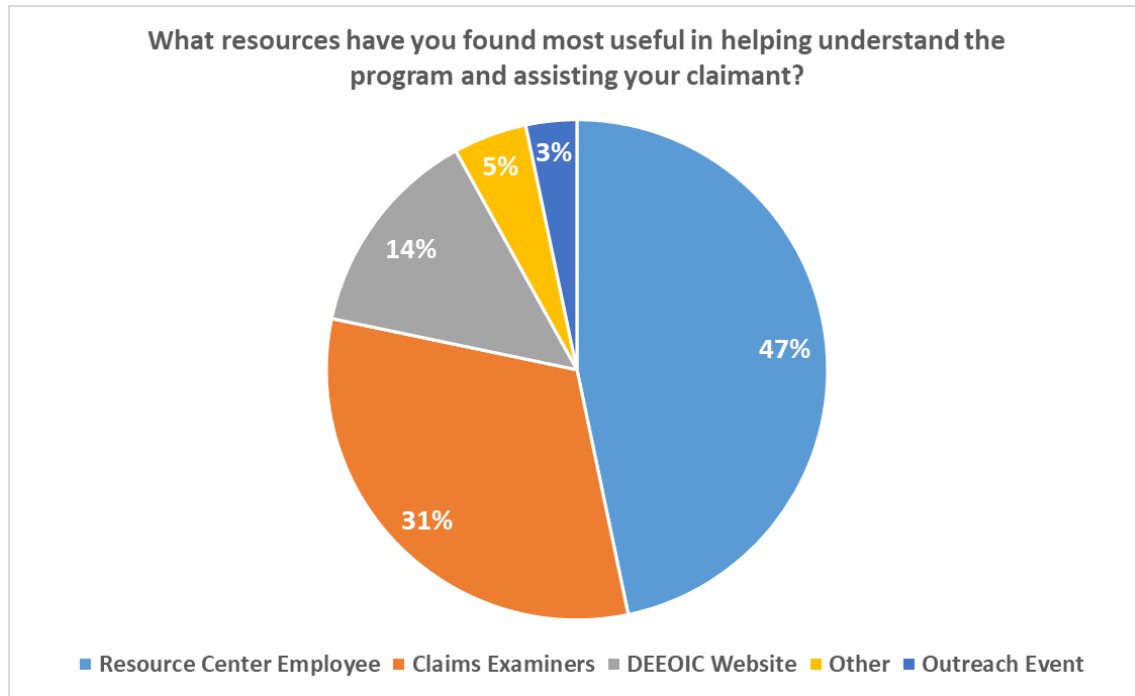


- Helpfulness/commitment level of employees
- Fairness during process
- Ease of process
- Expectations/information provided throughout process
- Ability to get my needs addressed
- Length of time of process

Following the questions related to Customer Experience Drivers, there were three additional questions on the survey designed to identify what types of resources Authorized Representatives found most useful and if they felt they had appropriate access to the necessary resources throughout the claims process. The results are shown in the table and chart below.

Customer Feedback Analysis – Authorized Representative – Results and Recommendations

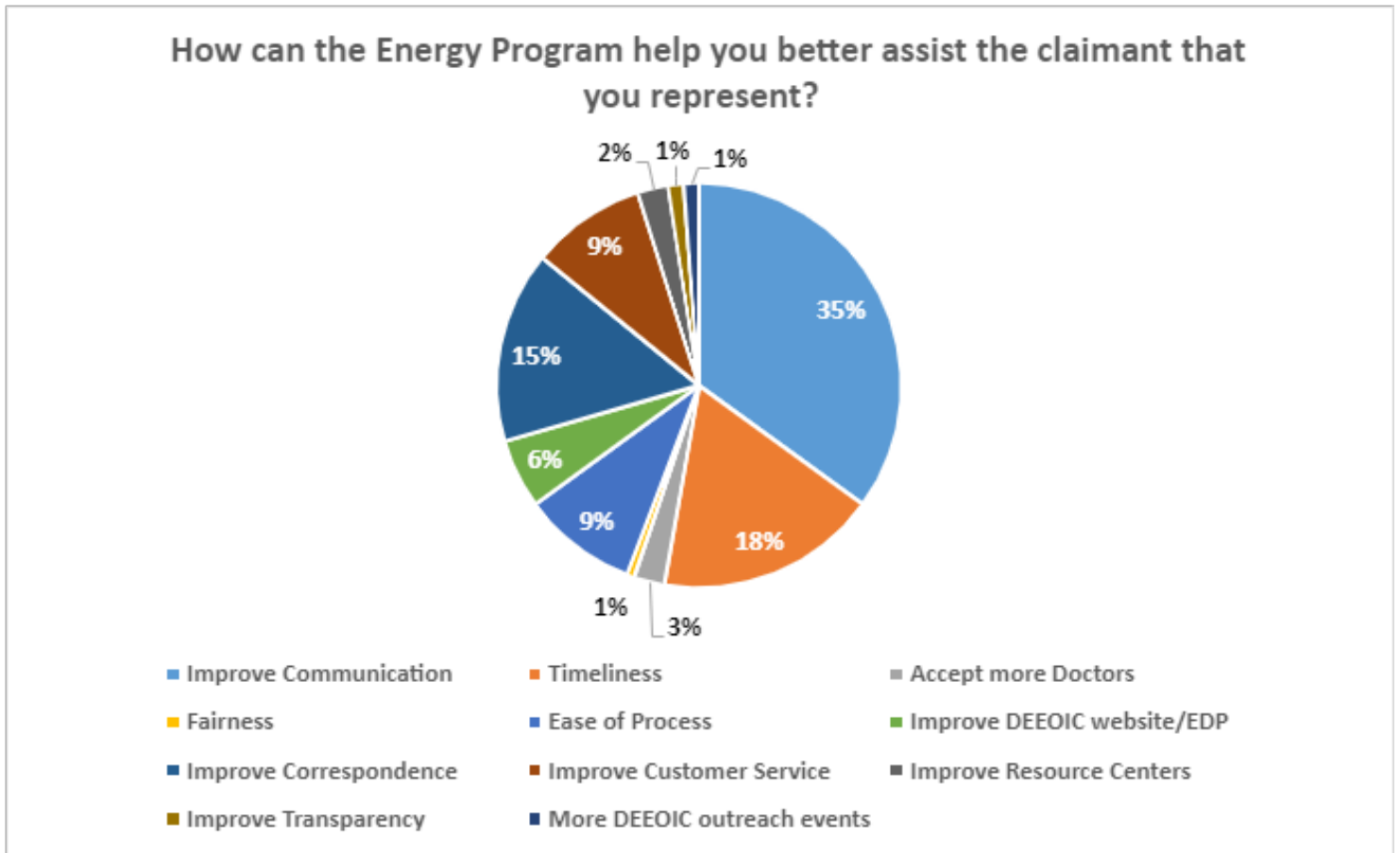
Question	Score
I have been informed of or have access to resources that indicate the length of time each step in the claims process takes.	3.76
DEEOIC provides the appropriate information and tools necessary to do my job as an Authorized Representative.	3.95



The responses indicate that 78% of Authorized Representatives found Resource Centers and Claims Examiners to be the most helpful in understanding the program. Additional feedback in the survey (i.e., Phone Interviews and Feedback Analysis) reinforce this analysis as many respondents shared how important working directly with another person was in understanding the program and process. One thing to note, only 3% of respondents indicated that Outreach Events were among the most helpful resource available to Authorized Representatives. This potentially indicates that the outreach events may not have been marketed widely enough to this population or that the topics were not of interest to the Authorized Representative population.

Feedback Analysis

The second page of the survey provided space for survey respondents to detail any feedback about their experience or suggestions on how the Energy Program could help them provide better assistance to their claimant. Overall, there were 254 comments on the question “How can the Energy Program better assist the claimant that you represent?” The CX Team read each comment and tagged and grouped all responses by theme. Some comments were categorized into more than one theme if the respondent mentioned several different topics.



The open response section of the survey provided additional context, further expanding on the numerical survey scores from the first page. An interesting point to note is that “Improve Communication” was by far and away the most common suggestion for improving the experience for Authorized Representatives. Improving communication was also identified as the biggest pain point when conducting the phone interviews. Other common suggestions related to Timeliness, Requests to Improve Correspondence, Ease of Process, and Improve customer service. All points indicate that the biggest issue facing Authorized Representatives is a process issue that is further compounded by communication, correspondence, and customer service concerns.

Phone Interview Analysis

As part of the survey, Authorized Representatives had the opportunity to provide their name if they wanted to share additional feedback with the CX staff. 68 survey respondents requested a call. The CX staff called all 68, connecting with 29 of those and leaving voicemails or callback information for the rest.

The conversations were primarily focused on the Authorized Representative identifying bright spots or pain points throughout the process of filing a claim. Comments were grouped together by category which is shown in the table below.

Customer Feedback Analysis – Authorized Representative – Results and Recommendations

Pain Points	Number	Percentage
Communication	7	33%
Difficult process	6	29%
Poor experience with DOL staff	4	19%
Poor experience with website	2	9%
Timeliness	1	5%
Correspondence	1	5%

Bright Spots	Number	Percentage
Collaborating with DOL staff	10	71%
Smooth process	3	21%
Good communication	1	8%

Pain Points:

- The most common pain point was communication with DOL during the claims process. During the interviews, 33% of the respondents who identified pain points stated that they felt like there was a lack of communication or situations resulting in miscommunication with DOL.
- In addition, respondents were frustrated by the DOL staff and the difficulty of the process. Six individuals noted that they had issues with the difficult claims process and had difficulty understanding next steps or how to resolve their matter.

Bright Spots:

- The most common bright spot that was identified was **collaborating with DOL**. While some Authorized Representatives expressed difficulty with DOL staff, it is interesting to see that ten respondents directly expressed gratitude for the DEEOIC staff members who helped them throughout the claims process.

It is important to call attention to the fact that the most common bright spot identified through the phone interviews was collaborating with DOL staff. 71% of respondents who provided bright spots were pleased with the DOL staff that they worked with in getting their claim submitted and processed. The most common pain point identified through the phone calls was the need for better communication. Authorized Representatives were dissatisfied with the long delays in communication between submitting the claim and receiving a response. A common complaint was also the unclear instructions provided by DOL staff and complicated correspondence which led to further delays and frustrations.

Recommendations

The responses from the survey did highlight a few key areas for improvement in the process for Authorized Representatives in filing a claim. The primary concern was with the ease and efficiency of the process, as indicated by being the two lowest scores of the CX driver questions (3.66 on the question related to ease and 3.73 on the question related to efficiency). Additionally, the phone interview and feedback analysis indicate that a majority of respondents were frustrated with the communication from DOL.

There are three Customer Experience Drivers outlined in OMB Circular A-11 Section 280, each of which have associated sub-drivers, shown below. As mentioned above, the sub-driver in which DEEOIC received the lowest average rating was “Ease.” The Team has developed recommendations based on these ratings as well as the results of the comment and phone interview analysis.

CX Driver Sub-drivers

Service Quality

Process

People

- Service Effectiveness/Perception of Value
- Ease/Simplicity • Efficiency/Speed • Equity/Transparency
- Employee Interaction/Warmth/Helpfulness/Competence

Process Driver, Ease/Simplicity

Lowest rating (3.66) on numerical score question.

1. Enhance Communication Efforts

We recommend enhancing our communication efforts by developing additional materials (infographics or brochures) about the expected timeline for each part of the process, including the approximate length of time for each step. The team will gather more information at the upcoming Authorized Representative workshop in order to develop a concept for these materials. Additionally, OCXU recommends creating more opportunities for Authorized Representatives and claimants to talk to claims examiners and ask questions about their claim. We recommend investigating alternative ways to help connect DOL staff and customers so that their concerns can be addressed in a timelier manner.

2. Develop Welcome Packet for First Time Authorized Representatives

In addition to Ease being the lowest scored driver on the numerical questions, a common theme throughout the phone interviews and feedback analysis was the difficulty with the claims process. To help resolve this, we recommend developing welcome packets designed specifically for first-time Authorized Representatives. These welcome packets would be designed to provide an overview of the program from the perspective of an AR to help explain the process, discuss AR roles and responsibilities, and help set expectations.

3. Improve DEEOIC Website through Customer Feedback

Based on the feedback provided, Authorized Representatives are having issues navigating and using the DEEOIC website. We plan to conduct a focus group with Authorized Representatives during the AR workshop event in Illinois to identify ways to make the website easier to navigate. We will also begin analyzing data from a recently deployed website survey to identify deficiencies in the website design and ways to improve. Additionally, we will make the materials from the Authorized Representative workshop available on the website and promote them to ensure easy access.

People Driver, Employee Interaction/Warmth/Helpfulness/Competence

3% of respondents identified outreach events as among the most helpful resource for understanding the program and helping the claimant.

4. Implement Targeted Marketing to Promote Benefit of In-Person Outreach Events to ARs

We recommend creating cover letters to be included with outreach mailers sent to Authorized Representatives. The survey demonstrates that Authorized Representatives perceive communication issues with DOL and may have been unaware that Outreach Events exist or unclear on how the event may benefit them. The proposed cover letter will provide additional information and discuss the benefits of the outreach event from the perspective of an Authorized Representative. Additionally, the cover letter can highlight other available resources for ARs that are available either on our website or through the Resource Center.

Random Sample of Comments:

- The mailing process is flawed there have been multiple letters that never reached myself or the claimant resulting in months of back up.
- I appreciate the help and support of the team who assisted me. They were very helpful, kind and understanding.
- As the wife of the claimant this is the first time that I've gone through this process so I wasn't familiar with all the steps that needed to be done. But all of the employees at the Resource Center in Las Vegas have been very helpful.
- The district office in Denver is usually very helpful to me.
- My clients and I have been treated poorly by claims examiners and resource center not able to get clear answers perhaps for representatives to attend.
- I have been very pleased with the whole experience employees have been very helpful; telling us the next step to do or what would happen next. They were always willing to fax forms and paperwork to where it needs to go. No problems with any help we received so thanks to everyone making this program to work for all the sick people.
- It took me many hours (days) of research and searching for letters from DEEOIC that I would think they would have instead of putting the responsibility on claimants (AR) to take time away from taking care of claimant. Very frustrating at times!
- I've been through the process before so it was fairly easy for me.
- The experience was seamless.