

DEEOIC CX Team

December 2021 CX Survey Results and Recommendations

Purpose

To discuss results of the December 2021 Customer Experience (CX) Survey, and to propose recommendations for changes and outline lessons learned.

Background

In Fiscal Year 2019, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) identified the Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation (DEEOIC) as a High Impact Service Provider (HISP) due to the importance of the services that DEEOIC provides. OMB issued guidance to HISPs ([OMB Circular A-11 Section 280](#) “Managing Customer Experience and Service Delivery”) to incorporate the principles of customer experience into their organizations and ensure that customer experience practices are integrated into program delivery.

To act upon their commitment to stakeholders, DEEOIC created a Customer Experience (CX) Team within the Branch of Outreach and Technical Assistance (BOTA) consisting of a Stakeholder Engagement Analyst and a Customer Experience Strategist. DEEOIC finalized their hiring for this team in mid-2021. The mission of this team includes soliciting feedback from stakeholders, conducting analyses of data, and making data-driven recommendations for programmatic and procedural improvements.

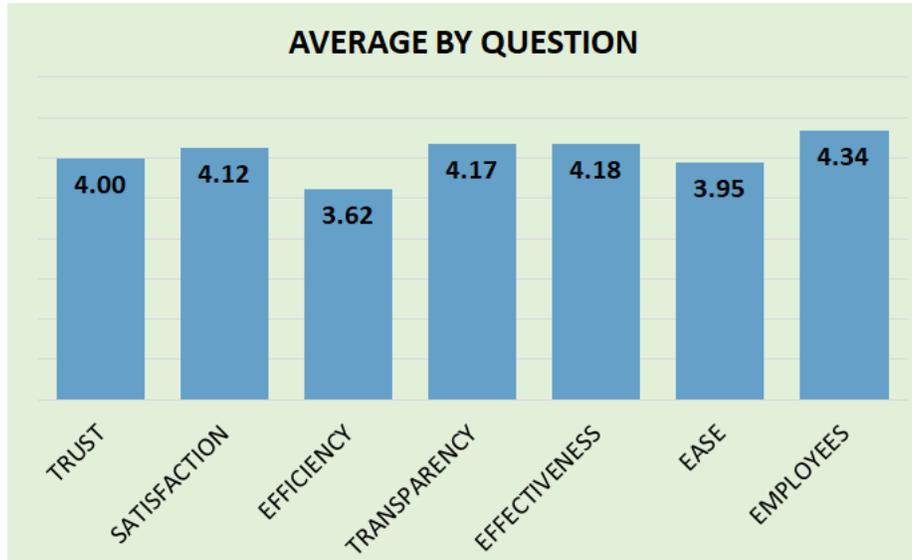
In Fiscal Year 2021, the CX Team developed a plan for increased customer feedback collection. Paper surveys were identified as an effective means of collecting feedback from the intended audience. The first paper survey was sent in July 2021 to stakeholders that had recently received a Final Decision from DEEOIC. The current survey is the second paper feedback solicitation and focuses on stakeholders that received a development letter (request for additional evidence) during the most recent 5 month period.

This collection included a new optional Equity Assessment. This assessment was conducted in response to the January 2021 Executive Order “Executive Order On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government” as a means of evaluating potential barriers that underserved communities and individuals may face to enrollment in and access to benefits and services. The data gathered from the Equity Assessment will help the CX Team to identify potential areas for improvement and allow the CX Team to understand the unique challenges that DEEOIC stakeholders may face. It is important to note that DEEOIC does not collect this type of demographic information on claimants, and the data collected from the Equity Assessment is strictly voluntary.

Survey Results

892 Total Surveys Sent	216 Survey Responses	173 Equity Assessment Responses
48 Written Comments	20 Phone Call Requests and Calls Made	11 Phone Conversations

Survey Results (cont'd)



The survey included 7 questions, each of which related to a Customer Experience Driver outlined in A-11 Section 280. Questions were scored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The CX Team analyzed individual question scores.

- **The question that received the highest score, 4.34 out of 5, was related to DEEOIC employees** (Q: the employees I interacted with were helpful). These results are consistent with the July 2021 survey.
- **Two questions received an overall score of under 4.** The lowest average score by question, 3.62 out of 5, was received on the question related to **timeliness/efficiency** (Q: The claims process is moving at a reasonable pace.) The second lowest score, 3.95 out of 5, was received on the question related to **ease/simplicity** (Q: I understood what was being asked of me throughout the process).

The survey included a space for written feedback. 48 respondents commented. Written comments were analyzed and grouped together by theme.

The most common positive theme was a positive experience with DEEOIC employees. These comments included both commendations for specific employees, and general employee appreciation. Other top positive categories included general program appreciation and gratitude.

The most common negative theme was difficulty with the process which relates to the two lowest rated questions, efficiency and ease. Of those who mentioned a difficult process, 67% were related specifically to the challenge of finding the required employment documentation and other records. Other top negative categories included timeliness and lack of communication.

The results of the comment analysis are consistent with the scores for the individual questions.

COMMENT THEMES

38% mentioned a positive experience with DEEOIC employees

19% expressed difficulty with the process

17% expressed gratitude

17% cited concerns with timeliness

13% indicated lack of communication

Telephone Follow-Up Results

As part of the survey, claimants could provide their name and phone number if they wanted to share additional information with the CX Team.

The CX Team called 20 survey respondents and connected with 11 of those, leaving voicemails with callback information for the rest.

The conversations focused on claimant experience and identifying pain points or bright spots during the process. The comments were grouped together by theme, shown on the table to the right.

PAIN POINTS AND BRIGHT SPOTS	
Pain Point	Frequency
Lack of communication	6
Difficult producing required evidence	4
Confusing process	2
ECOMP difficulties	2
Confusing/Government language	1
Errors in correspondence	1
Feels mistreated/lack of respect for service	1
Repeatedly asking for same documents	1
Unclear on timelines	1
Unhappy with CE	1
Bright Spots	Frequency
Professional employees	3
Grateful for program	2
Smooth process	1

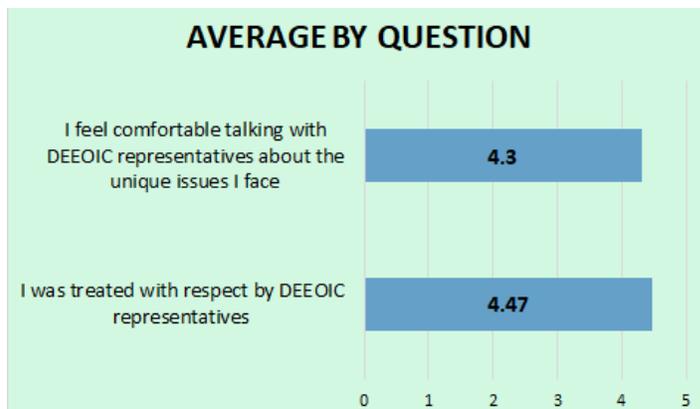
Equity Assessment Results

The Equity Assessment was comprised of three components. The **first component** asked the claimant to indicate whether they had experienced difficulties in their interactions with DEEOIC because of their:

Ability or disability status; Racial or ethnic identity; Age; Sex/Gender Identity; Sexual Orientation; Veteran Status; Religion; Social class; Geographic location (remote/rural); or other.

Of the 173 Equity Assessments received, only 16 people checked a box in this section. Results are shown below. The most commonly identified category was ability/disability status, followed by age.

EQUITY DIFFICULTIES	
Category	Frequency
Ability/disability status	9
Age	6
Geographic location (rural/remote)	2
Veteran status	1
Other (being a downwinder)	1



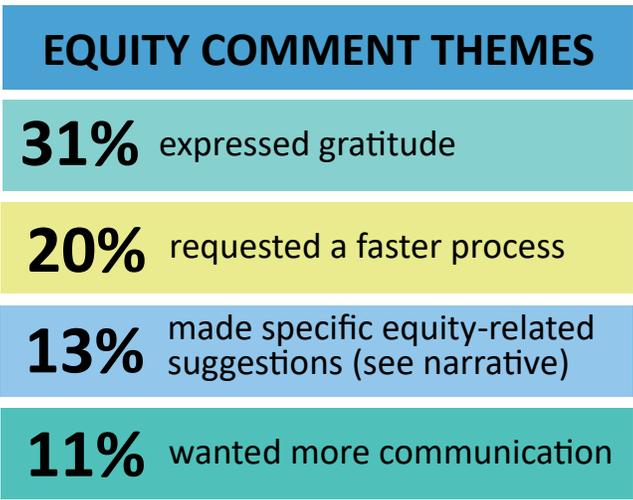
The **second component** included the two questions shown on the chart above, which shows the average score. The average scores for both of these questions was high.

Equity Assessment Results (cont'd)

The final component was a comment box soliciting feedback on what DEEOIC could do to deliver more equitable services. Of the 45 comments, the majority provided general program feedback and did not address equity issues.

The 13% who made specific equity-related suggestions were comprised of 6 comments. Suggestions included translation services (specifically Navajo), more time given to claimants to gather evidence, more in-person meetings, better accommodations for hard of hearing, an easier document submission process, and inadequate benefits provided for downwinders.

Due to the low response rate and low number of specific equity related suggestions, the results are not conclusive at this time. The CX team will continue to administer equity assessments until there is enough data to support conclusive results and recommendations.



Recommendations

There are three Customer Experience Drivers outlined in OMB Circular A11 Section 280, each of which have associated sub-drivers, shown below. The 2 areas in which DEEOIC received the lowest average ratings are sub-drivers of the “Process” driver.

CX Driver	Sub-drivers
Service Quality	• Service Effectiveness/Perception of Value
Process	• Ease/Simplicity • Efficiency/Speed • Equity/Transparency
People	• Employee Interaction/Warmth/Helpfulness/Competence

1. Timeliness/Efficiency

The question with the lowest average rating was related to timeliness/efficiency. 17% of written comments also mentioned issues with timeliness and 13% indicated a lack of communication between DEEOIC and the claimant. The claims process can be lengthy and that is often outside of the control of DEEOIC employees, driven by regulation and/or the amount of time it takes for claimants to gather documentation and evidence and move through each step of the process. Therefore we recommend increasing transparency and access to information about the process in order to mitigate complaints about timeliness.

1a. Update Claim Acknowledgement Letter/Welcome Packet

Currently new claimants receive a claim acknowledgement letter with several pieces of information/handouts. We recommend a revision of this packet by the Branch of Outreach and Technical Assistance to include more information about the forthcoming process and information about the claimant status portal (ECOMP) and its new functions. Additionally, in response to the previous survey, the CX Team developed an infographic outlining the general claims process and estimated timeframes for each step. We recommend including this document in the welcome packet and making it accessible on the website, especially in areas where first-time claimants might be seeking information.

Recommendations (cont'd)

2. Ease/Simplicity

The question with the second lowest average rating was related to ease/simplicity. 19% of written comments expressed difficulty with the process. 67% of those respondents specifically mentioned the difficulties they faced when procuring required employment documentation and medical documentation. DEEOIC is not able to change the documentation required by regulation, however we can provide additional resources and information to claimants in order to ease the process.

2a. Develop Resource on Procuring Required Employment Documentation

We recommend developing a tip sheet or other instructional document that provides claimants with information on exactly what types of documentation are required for proof of employment and the best ways to try to obtain that documentation.

2b. Market EDP/ECOMP and Provide Training Resources

In response to the previous survey, the CX team developed an infographic explaining the claimant portal, ECOMP. We recommend continuing to market EDP and ECOMP, including making the infographic and other informational and training materials readily available to claimants (both on-line and in person, at outreach events and Resource Centers) so they are aware of these services and how to use them to improve their claims process experience. A webinar to discuss available tools is planned for June 2022 and we recommend a focus on widely publicizing this webinar.

2c. Continue to Develop Infographics for Claimant How-to Guides Section

We recommend the continued development of informational materials that are simple, straightforward and easy to consume in order to further stakeholder understanding of the program and process. Future ideas include Home Health Care, How to File a Claim, and How to Submit Documents to DEEOIC.

Lessons Learned

Revisit Equity Assessment

The overall response to the equity assessment was lower than anticipated. It is unclear whether people were not aware of the assessment, since it was printed on the back of the CX survey, or whether stakeholders did not fill it out because they didn't understand what was being asked of them, or simply because they didn't identify any equity-related issues during their interactions with DEEOIC. Further analysis and attempts at Equity Assessments will be conducted.

More Thoughtful Touchpoints

Several respondents indicated that they didn't know what a development letter is or that they hadn't received one. In future feedback collections, we will intentionally define DEEOIC terms so that customers are better able to respond.

Larger Population Size

We sent the survey to 892 claimants and received 216 responses (24% response rate). The previous survey was sent to 2,000 claimants and 692 responses were received (35% response rate). The results from the previous collection were more robust and this appears to be in part due to the smaller sample size.

Appendix A—Random Sample of Written Comments

- The lady I spoke with during my telephone interview was very personable and professional.
- The letter had errors such as employment date and places of employment. I have no idea why the basics would be so hard to find in an occupational database. Then I had to prove where/how I got nodules in my lungs. Really?
- [Name Redacted] has been an absolute pleasure to deal with. She gets 5+ out of 5. Thank you!
- Some questions asked verbally did not match their written form on the printed version of the OHQ I reviewed. In some cases, the differences were significant. For example, verbal question: "What chemicals were in the facility?" Corresponding written version: "I was exposed to plutonium in facility B"
- Thank you. I would like a person to talk to me and I want examples in Navajo language.
- The process is too slow, cumbersome, and complicated. Takes forever to work thru the process. Ask the same information multiple times.
- The women at New Boston, OH were polite, answered my questions, and guided me through the process. I received a letter from Colorado asking me to send information from my employer from the 1950s. I had none of what he asked for from over 60 years ago. I called and talked to another agent and explained the situation and he said he would relay my phone call to the requesting agent and if he needed anything else he would notify me. I sent all the information I had in July 2021, until this letter I received nothing.
- The communications are difficult to decipher, seemingly asking for records that mostly don't exist, indicating that the DOE has almost no historical records of anybody or anything. Actually talking with a person to sort things out is almost impossible. The bureaucracy is impenetrable.
- Everyone whom I have spoken with were exceptional nice. The only problem or concern is the doctors. The doctors aren't radiation experts how can they say yes or no they don't look for the cause of your diagnosis the root of it. The individual explain what's wrong and they treat it. I have many sleepless nights with leg and foot pain/hair loss. They really don't know how much you have been exposed to. I have a lot of doctor bills even after insurance from going back and forth to the doctor. When you visit a physician they don't ask where you worked.
- I didn't receive any documents Development Letter from Division of Energy (DEEOIC). Asked to remember dates, jobs - I'm 78 years old it's been over 10 years of moving, losing my house, sent papers, spoke to you & addressed every question I could remember. Just reminds me of his death & illness. Sad.
- Everyone with whom I have spoken has been very professional and helpful.
- My communications from DEEOIC individuals have all been helpful and enlightening. All phone conversations with various individuals have also been pleasant and helpful. My confidence in the system has been greatly enhanced. Many thanks for your patience.
- My stepdad who was 93 died Nov. 18th. He was not able to provide his employment records because of time. Those he worked with are dead. Those he signed affidavits for are dead.
- Still waiting for compensation.
- I knew very well that a claim such as mine would entail much time and I feel you are doing just fine considering the amount of information you need to process the claim. Thank you for staying in touch and giving me updates.
- The whole process is a challenge and difficult especially with not good access to old records and age!
- I feel your representatives are very knowledgeable at what they are doing. Therefore, I have nothing to complain about. Keep up the good work.
- The main problem I have is proving employment. The government has all my records and could retrieve them easier than I could. After so much time has passed it is difficult for an individual. Some agencies are much better than others at this task. It is discouraging when fighting stage 4 cancer and trying to do the research.
- The interviewer was very professional and made clear and reasonable. Very positive exchanges.
- My only disappointment with your agency is that you obviously reached the wrong conclusion.



Appendix B—Survey

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE SURVEY

Please agree or disagree with the following statements by circling a numerical response:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
The process leading up to receiving my Development Letter increased my trust in the Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation (DEEOIC).	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
I am satisfied with the service I have received from DEEOIC thus far.	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
The claims process is moving at a reasonable pace.	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
I understood what was being asked of me throughout the process.	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
My questions have been answered throughout the process.	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
It was easy to complete what I needed to do to receive a Development Letter.	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
The employees I interacted with were helpful.	5	4	3	2	1	n/a

Additional Comments:

Would you like to speak with our Customer Experience team?

Yes No

If yes, please provide your name and telephone number:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Over



EQUITY ASSESSMENT

OWCP / DEEOIC is committed to finding ways to focus on equity for all, including people who have been historically marginalized or adversely affected by inequality. We strive for fair, just, and impartial treatment of all, including racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, the LGBTQ+ community, rural communities, and other underserved populations. We want to improve program accessibility and inclusion.

In your interactions with DEEOIC, have you experienced difficulties because of your:	
Ability or disability status	<input type="checkbox"/>
Racial or ethnic identity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex/Gender identity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Veteran status	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social class	<input type="checkbox"/>
Geographic location (rural/remote)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please agree or disagree with the following statements by circling a numerical response:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
I feel comfortable talking with DEEOIC representatives about the unique issues I face.	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
I was treated with respect by DEEOIC representatives.	5	4	3	2	1	n/a

What do you think DEEOIC could do better to deliver more equitable services?

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average **8 minutes** per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is **voluntary**. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, **DEEOIC, 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Room C-3321, Washington, D.C. 20210** and reference the OMB Control Number 1218-0276.