[redacted]

Website Experience

User Research Report

Presented by [redacted]

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this user research report is to share research methods, results, conclusions, and recommendations of a study on [redacted] target end user community.

Answers to the following research questions are intended to inform the strategy for improving the information architecture, content strategy, and page layouts of [redacted] site.

Research Questions

- What is the demographic makeup of [redacted] end users?
- Why and how do [redacted] end users interact with existing websites?
- What content and functionality do [redacted] end users prioritize?
- What are some of the challenges that prevent [redacted] end users in accessing the content and functionality that they need?

Introduction

Research Methods

The user research team at [redacted] used the following research methods to gather insights about the demographics, habits, and needs of [redacted] websites audiences.

- An online survey was used to capture needs and beliefs of **end users**. This survey was accessible on existing [redacted] websites. We collected 138 responses over 11 days.
- **Providers, partners, and advisory groups** were sent a different online survey by email. The survey was open for 8 days and received 107 responses.
- Lastly, three 1.5 hour virtual focus group sessions were held via Microsoft Teams Video Conferencing with [redacted] **internal teams**.

[redacted]

End User Survey

Table of Contents

End User Survey: Results

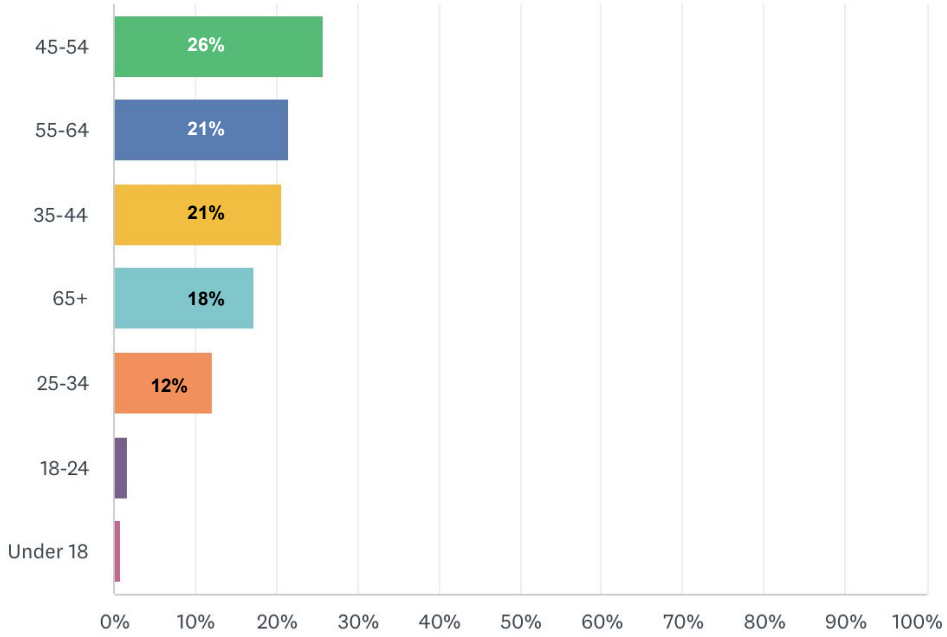
Age

Survey respondents represent a diverse range of age groups.

Respondents between 45 - 55 years old were the most represented age group, however 85% of responses were +/-5 percentage points away from an even distribution across the following age groups:

- 45 - 54 years old (26%)
- 55 - 64 years old (21%)
- 35 - 44 years old (20%)
- 65+ years old (18%)

About 2% of respondents reported falling within the age groups of 0-18 and 18-24 years old.



End User Survey: Results

Location

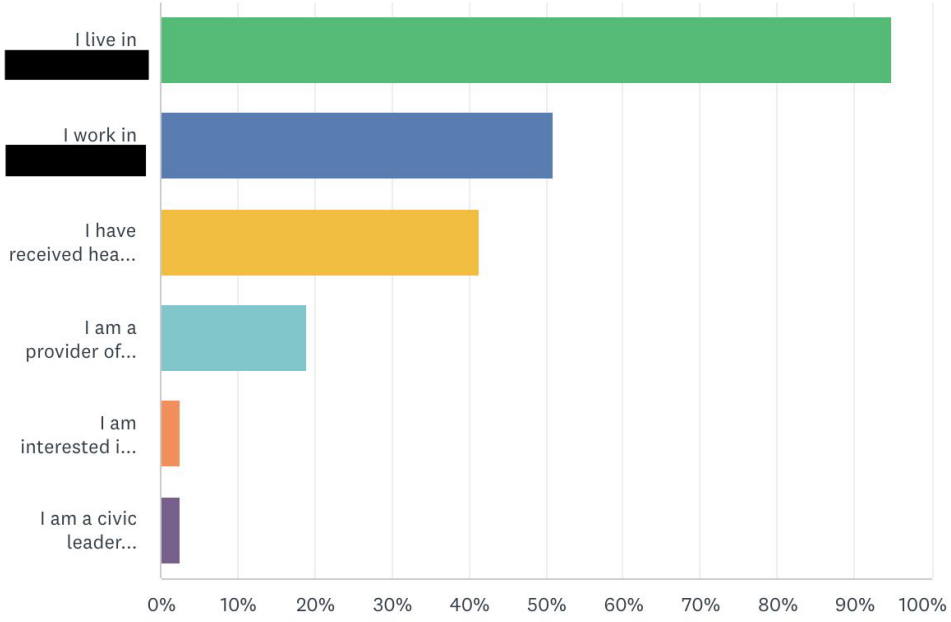
94% respondents live in [redacted], but only 51% work in [redacted]. There may be respondents who work out of state, who are unemployed or retired, or who work remotely for an organization headquartered elsewhere.

Roles

39% of survey respondents are **recipients** of services or care for someone who receives services.

21% of survey respondents are **providers** of services.

4% of respondents are **career seekers** or **civic leaders**.



End User Survey: Results

Beliefs and Mindsets

When respondents were asked to describe the mission or purpose of [redacted], 68% of answers included some or all of the following statements.

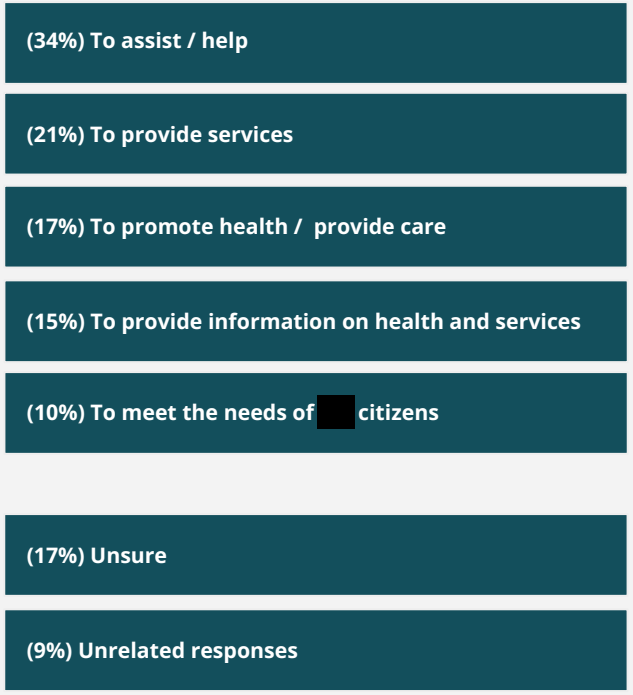
The purpose or mission of [redacted] is to:

- Help and assist [redacted] citizens in need
- Provide up-to-date information and education on health topics
- Help [redacted] citizens live healthy lives
- Connect and provide [redacted] citizens with services

One end user stated the mission of [redacted] was to...

"Support the health of [redacted] and assist them in finding the help they need"

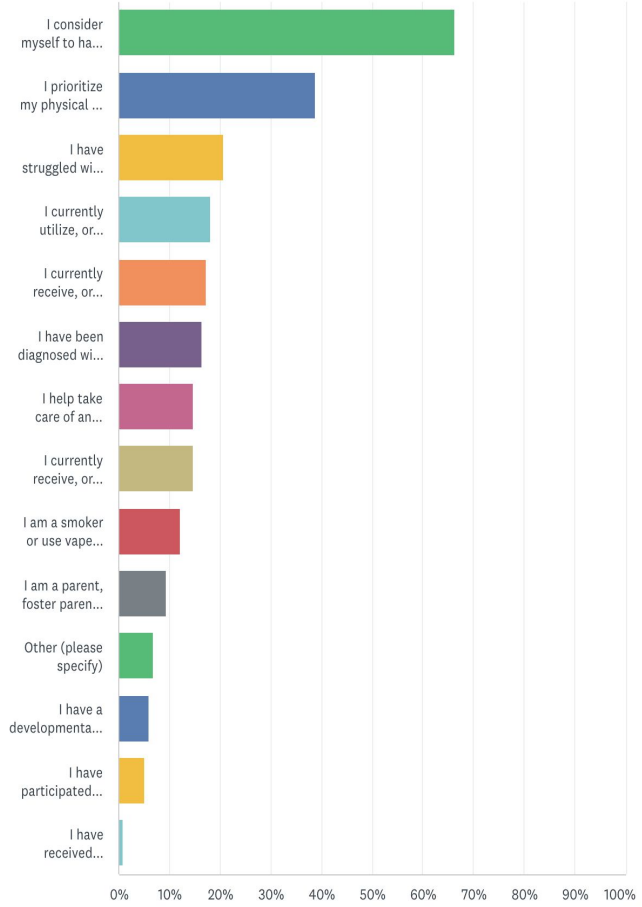
Top Beliefs about [redacted] Mission / Purpose



End User Survey: Results

Health Habits & Needs

- 66% of respondents reported having a healthy network of people in their lives (such as family, friends, and co-workers)
- 37% reported they prioritized their physical and mental health.
- 22% reported struggling with addiction or having friends or loved ones struggling with addiction
- 19% reported a diagnosis of a chronic illness or condition
- 13% take care of an elderly loved one
- 7% are individuals with or care for someone with a developmental disability

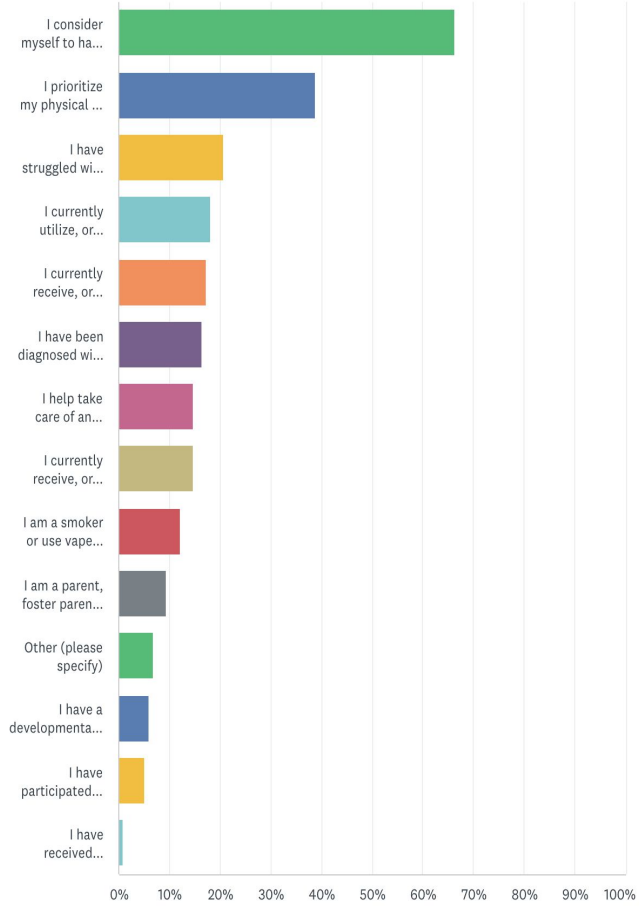


End User Survey: Results

Service / Program Representation

40% of respondents reported utilizing or caring for someone utilizing [redacted] services or programs.

- 19% of respondents reported using behavioral or mental health services of some kind
- 19% have received medicaid benefits
- 16% have received public assistance such as SNAP child care assistance, heating assistance or rent assistance
- 10% are parents, foster parents guardians or caregivers to someone who receives assistance
- 6% have participated in the child support program as a parent or caretaker
- 1% have received services through child welfare



End User Survey: Results

Obstacles and Barriers to Health

29% of respondents reported health conditions or habits as barriers to healthy living including:

- Drug abuse
- Not eating healthy or exercising
- Mental health challenges
- Intrinsic motivation / will power
- Aging
- Obesity
- Chronic diseases and conditions
- Developmental disabilities

28% of respondents reported financial obstacles and distribution / availability of services as barriers to healthy living, including:

- Healthcare costs
- Gyms
- Healthy food
- Medical insurance
- Dental insurance
- Eye exams
- Health Information
- Access to services due to location (rural)

Top 7 Responses

(24%) No barriers

(12%) Money

(10%) Chronic diseases and conditions

(9%) Access to health care and coverage

(9%) Intrinsic motivation / will power

(9%) Time

(6%) Access to healthy food

End User Survey: Results

Content & Functionality Needs

COVID-19 information and data was the most sought after piece of content, with 42% of respondents reporting looking for content on that topic.

General Public Content / Functionality (5%)

- Human service centers
- Employee contact information
- Research and data
- News

Services & Programs Content (22%)

- Rental assistance, guidelines, and laws
- SNAP
- Services for individuals with DD (independent living)
- Health coverage / Medicaid / Health tracks
- Child supervision guidelines
- Child protection services
- Vulnerable adult/child welfare reporting links
- Program data
- Program applications
- Program eligibility information
- Service providers

Behavioral Health Content (9%)

- Addiction treatment centers
- Addiction services for families and patiences
- *Confidential text support numbers*
- General mental health issues
- Children's mental health supports
- Smoking

Public Health Info (47%)

- Chronic diseases
- **COVID-19 data (# of positive cases, hospitalizations, vaccinated)**
- Dental health
- Medical Marijuana
- General health info

Provider Content (15%)

- Forms
- Grant Information
- Community Providers
- Training
- Resources
- Reimbursement policies
- Claims information
- Taxonomy affiliated with enrollment
- Medicaid enrollment 'how-to' resources
- Medicaid code books
- Medicaid provider information
- Updated codes
- Program regulations and updates
- General policies

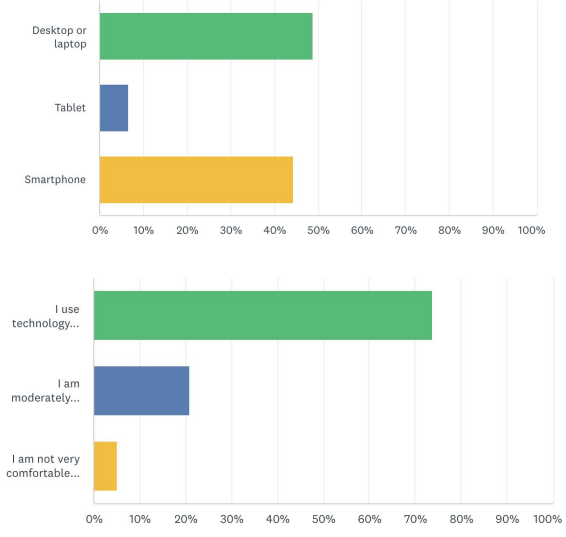
Records (2%)

- Birth certificates

End User Survey: Results

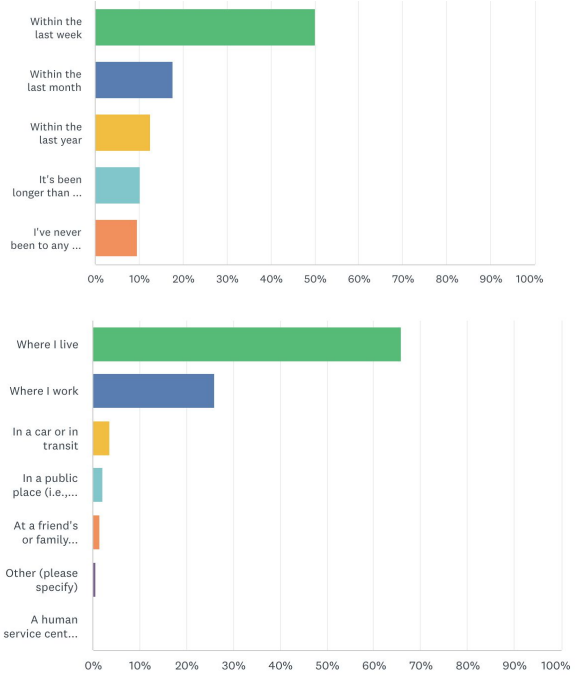
Device and Internet Use Habits

Respondents represent close to an even division of those who typically access the [redacted] website via mobile versus desktop or laptop devices. Most use technology and the internet for find information regularly.



Frequency and Location of Site Usage

Most respondents reported using the site at least one time in the past month, most frequently at their place of residence.



End User Survey: Results

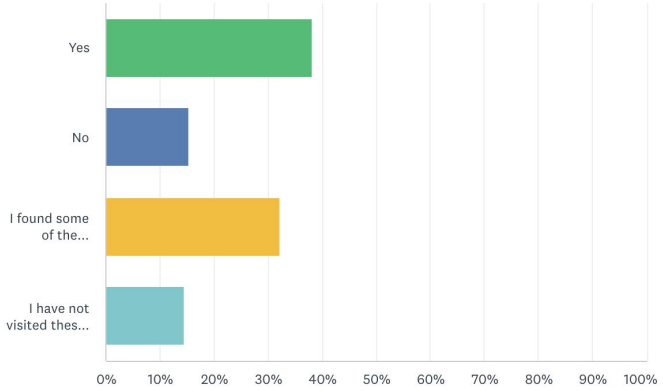
Findability of Content

59% of respondents reported finding some or all of the information for which they were looking

37% of respondents shared alternative methods for finding information when they were unable to find information on [redacted] sites.

Respondents reported the following methods used or general sentiments about the experience of being unable to find information they sought.

1. Contacted someone directly for help
2. Found it difficult to find information
3. Searched via Google or other search engines
4. Gave-up



Quote from a provider of health, human, or social services and a civic leader.

"Once I realized you could not submit a 960 online for children, it deterred me from following through with my reported concern."

End User Survey: Conclusion & Recommendations

Conclusions

[redacted] end users report feelings of belonging to communities that prioritize health and believe the mission of [redacted] is support them in achieving healthy living. Although end users largely described aspects of positive health, end users face barriers to living healthy lives, including but not limited to mental health issues, chronic diseases and conditions, unhealthy habits, and limited access to resources such as healthy food and health care coverage. [redacted] rural make-up was mentioned several times in reference to the lack of access or services.

Respondents expressed a need for content that supports them in overcoming the barriers to living healthy lives, including but not limited to addiction services and treatment centers, mental health information and resources, data and information on general health topics, and eligibility and application information for programs such as rental assistance, healthy food assistance (SNAP), health coverage, and more.

Respondents scored themselves high in technical skills and comfort, and half of users access content via mobile devices. While self-described to be largely technically savvy, it is more likely a higher rate of technical-savvy individuals would participate in an online survey. Mobile friendliness will be crucial to the successful use of [redacted] sites, especially considering that users seem to face challenges in finding content and tend to go elsewhere such as contacting state offices directly or giving up altogether.

End User Survey: Conclusion & Recommendations

Recommendations

- Prioritize an intuitive IA and the use of plain language as self-service and access to online materials is crucial to all citizens including those that are not technically-savvy.
- Emphasize priority topics on landing pages of parent pages. For example, COVID-19 data should be accessible from the homepage.
- Implement mobile-responsiveness pages, spacious layouts, large fonts (within reason) and obvious actions with ample space for clickability (for instance, emphasis on buttons and cards over inline text links).
- Incorporate access to actions related to content. For example, encourage users to apply for a program that support users in prevention or treatment of an illness described on a health topic informational page.
- Improve content quality or clarity to help address the personal habits, health conditions, and service access barriers end users describe.

Providers, Partners & Advisory Group Survey

Table of Contents

Providers, Partners, and Advisory Groups Survey: Results

Groups Represented

(23%) Local Public Health Units

[redacted]

(11%) Human Service Zones
(10%) Human Service Zone Supervisors and Eligibility Workers
(9%) Community Connect and Free Through Recovery Providers
(8%) Autism Task Force
(8%) Long Term Care Advisory Board
(8%) Medicaid Providers / Blue Cross Blue Shield
(7%) Medicaid Medical Advisory Committee
(6%) Youth Advisory Board
(4%) Be You Board
(4%) Behavioral Health Planning Council members
(4%) Legislators
(4%) LTC Association
(4%) Special Health Services Family Advisory Council
(4%) [redacted] public health partners
(3%) Economic Assistance Partners (i.e., Community Options)
(3%) Protection & Advocacy
(2%) Family Health Care
(2%) Family Voices of [redacted]
(2%) [redacted] Management Council
(2%) New American, Foreign Born and Immigrant Board
(2%) Physician Advisory Group
(2%) State Council on [redacted]
(2%) Tribal Consultation group
(2%) Tribal Liaisons
(2%) Youth leadership board
(1%) [redacted] Global Neighbors
(1%) Child Care Aware / ECE providers
(1%) DD Steering Committee
(1%) EMS Advisory Council
(1%) Family Voices
(1%) Foster parent coalition
(1%) Global Friends Coalition
(1%) New hires
(1%) Nexxus-Path
(1%) [redacted] Brain Injury Network
(1%) Other HR team members
(1%) University Partners

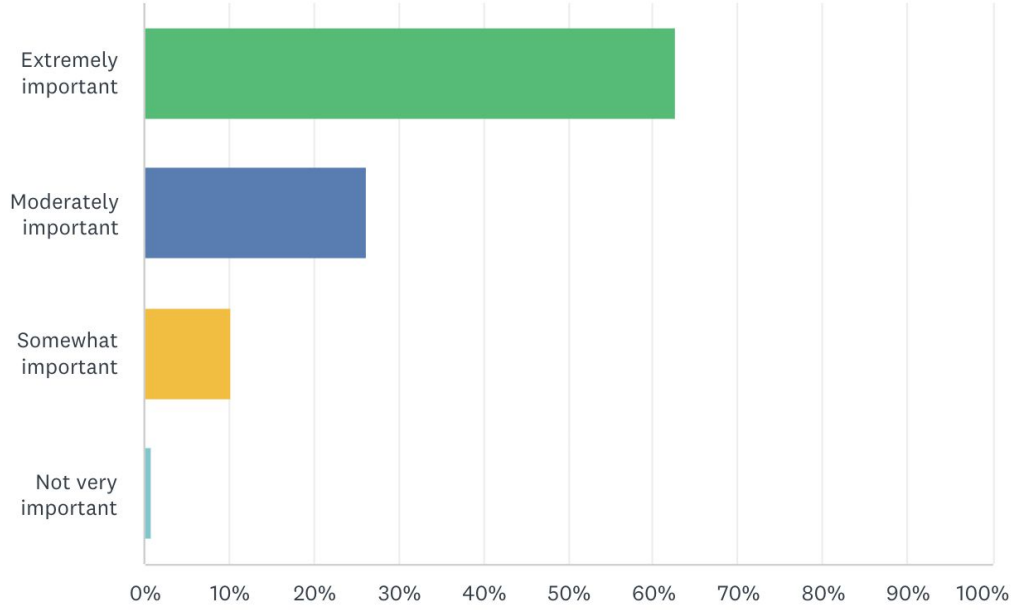
[redacted]

Providers, Partners, and Advisory Groups Survey: Results

Importance of Web-based Resources

89% of respondents reported web-based resources are extremely to moderately important to audiences served by providers, partners, and advisory groups.

10% reported web-based resources were somewhat important, while only 1% reported they were not very important.

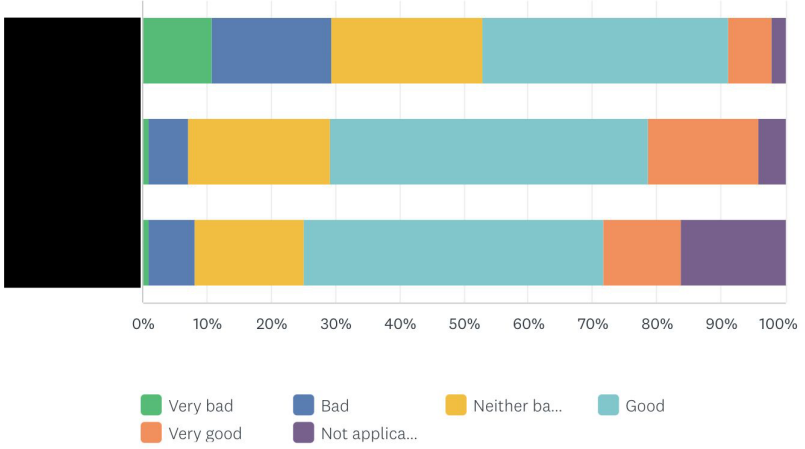


Existing Site Content Quality and Organization

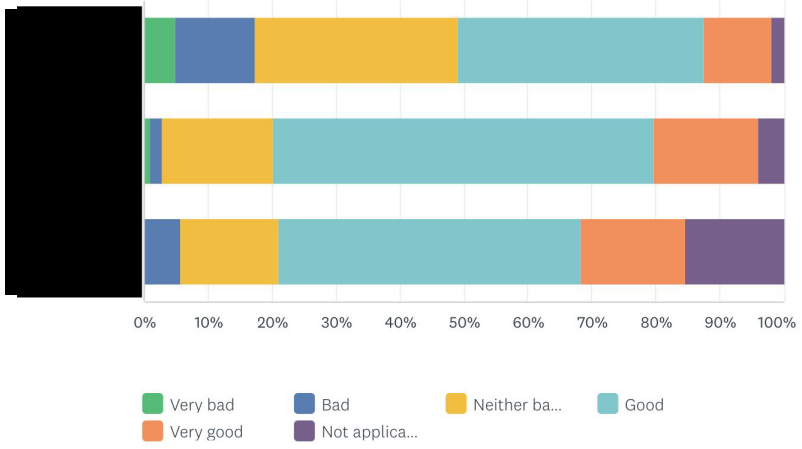
More than half of respondents report existing content is well organized, sufficient in scope, clear, detailed and useful on [redacted] (67%) and [redacted] Behavioral Health (59%) sites.

45% of respondents report lower ratings for the quality and organization of [redacted] site content in comparison to [redacted] and [redacted] Behavioral Health sites.

Content Organization



Content Quality



[redacted]

Providers, Partners, and Advisory Groups Survey: Results

Barriers / Obstacles to Content Access

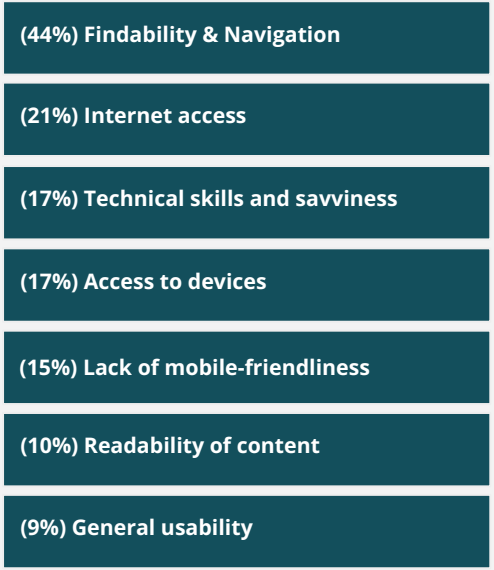
The top most common barriers experienced as reported by respondents was audience's ability to find information and navigate to content (44%)

Many references were made to audiences of older age groups needing support using technology.

Respondents reported the following factors impacted readability, making it challenging for audience to disseminate information across sites:

- Accessibility (text to speech, small copy, etc.)
- Categorization / Organization
- Content volume
- Language complexity / Use of technical terminologies
- Language translation

Top 7 Barriers to Content Access

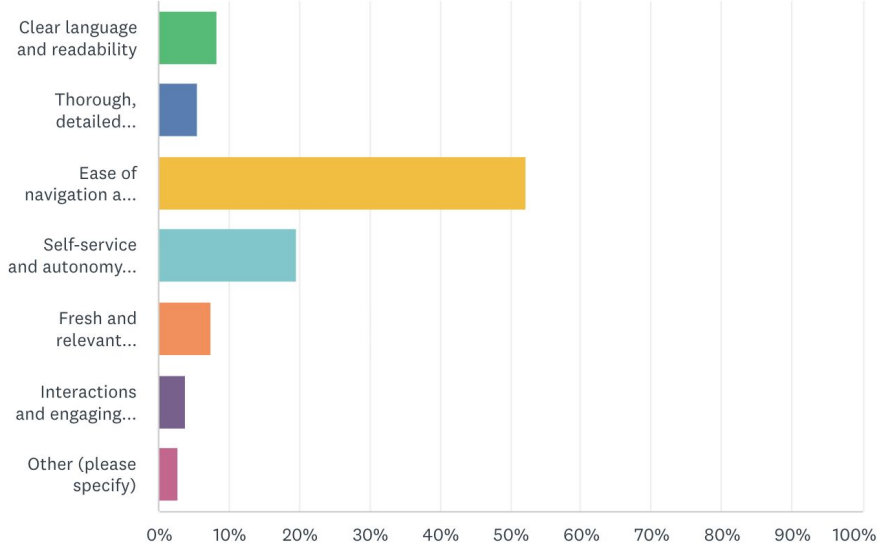


Providers, Partners, and Advisory Groups Survey: Results

Content Priorities

52% of respondents want the new [redacted] website to prioritize ease of navigation and find-ability of content and 20% want audiences to be able to find what they need and accomplish tasks without asking for help.

Least important to respondents are interactions, engaging presentations, and thorough, detailed content.



Providers, Partners, and Advisory Groups Survey: Results

Content Priorities

Respondents reported the topics below as priority content for their audiences. Programs and services information was reported by respondents as topics to prioritize.

Health Topics (17%)

- Senior Health
- Vaping
- Immunizations
- COVID-19 Info
- Vaccines
- Family Planning
- LGBTQIA+ Health
- Environmental health (water sampling request, septic code)
- Health nuisance and restaurant complaints
- Sexual transmitted diseases
- Sexually transmitted infections
- DEI & Historical Trauma
- Tribal representation

Behavioral Health Topics (9%)

- Mental health issues, signs and symptoms
- Stress, anxiety, and depression resources
- Available treatments and treatment centers
- DEI & Historical Trauma

Programs & Services (31%)

- Eligibility
- Applications and their requirements
- WIC
- SNAP
- Long term care program information (admissions, level of care, eligibility, rates, advocacy service, filing complaints
- Home and community based services (resources, providers, eligibility)
- Autism / Early Intervention resources, programs, private providers and public service sectors
- Related services
- Health tracks
- Records
- Online services
- Medicaid
- Help hotlines
- Aging services
- Child physical and sexual abuse resources

Contact Information (19%)

- Individuals handling program applications
- Individuals overseeing programs
- Zones
- Individuals who can assist with using online tools
- Offices and agencies
- Local health departments
- Help hotlines
- Service providers

For Providers, Partners, Advisory Groups (13%)

- Program policies and policy manuals
- Billing codes, guidelines
- Provider fee schedules
- Submit claims, payment
- Local public health unit staff resources
- State plans
- Meeting links
- Emergency preparedness
- Enrollments

Providers, Partners, and Advisory Groups Survey: Results

Content Priorities

52% of respondents prioritize ease of navigation and find-ability of content and 20% want audiences to be able to achieve necessary tasks without asking for help.

Very few respondents (9%) find interactions, engaging presentations, and through, detailed content to be priority for their audiences

Respondent Quotes

The more simplified the sites can be in regards to accessing it, navigating through it, and to the point information without having to go from link to another link to another link to find out the information you are looking for.

"Information needs to be more readily identifiable and accessible for average user"

"It needs to be written in generic terms and not the technical terms we use in our office. Policy manuals are available to the public online but if EWs have to ask for clarification from PASS and policy, our clients definitely will not understand it."

"I think the [redacted] are most aesthetically pleasing and engaging to consumers. Website should be designed with goal of consumers in mind-- don't necessarily need to break up based on "divisions" and "departments", but on what populations of focus would need most (new moms, youth, businesses, elderly, etc). I've learned consumers want to think as little as possible, so the more graphics, engaging fonts, and repetition is used--the better. I highly advocate for uniformity in organization-- make things that are the same, look the same and be organized the same. Comfortability and familiarity is key to making consumers feel self-sufficient rather than going to the "contact us" page to find a email or phone number for someone to do it for them."

Providers, Partners, and Advisory Groups Survey: Results

Conclusions

Respondent sentiments center on improving the findability of content. Audiences seem to know what they need, but are unfamiliar with the existing organization and categorization of content across [redacted] sites. Those who are unclear of the services available to them are experiencing difficulty in determining their eligibility for those programs. Program and service information seems to be top most content prioritized by audiences. Although respondents expressed concerns with audience technology skill level and technology and internet access, most respondents view web-based resources as essential means to [redacted] resources.

Recommendations

- Emphasize priority topics on landing pages of parent pages and first level navigation. Ensure content and category labels are easy to understand and read (3rd-8th grade reading level). Eliminate the use of internal labels and acronyms and expose layers of content within a user's first interaction with a menu link to provide audiences with the ability to uncover whether a category has the information they need prior to navigating to that space.
- Provide clear headings and utilize containers or dividers in sections of pages to help users visually distinguish between different ideas/topics conveyed within a category of content.
- Incorporate access to actions related to content. For example, encourage users to apply for a program that support users in prevention or treatment of an illness described on a health topic informational page.
- Consider providing separate spaces for provider information and recipient information as their needs are unique to their role. Providers expressed typically looking for resources pertaining to policies, billing, training, etc. Recipients seem to need information on available programs, eligibility, application, etc. The general public finds value in information on public health topics and data.
- Ensure content from all three sites are equally exposed to users in the new site as some respondents shared concerns with consolidation of sites and risk of missing information
- Implement mobile-responsiveness layouts and include quick tips on how to use mobile devices for scanning documents necessary for application completion.

Providers, Partners, and Advisory Groups Survey: Results

Recommendations

- Emphasize priority topics on landing pages of parent pages and first level navigation. Ensure content and category labels are easy to understand and read (3rd-8th grade reading level). Eliminate the use of internal labels and acronyms and expose layers of content within a user's first interaction with a menu link to provide audiences with the ability to uncover whether a category has the information they need prior to navigating to that space.
- Provide clear headings and utilize containers or dividers in sections of pages to help users visually distinguish between different ideas/topics conveyed within a category of content.
- Incorporate access to actions related to content. For example, encourage users to apply for a program that support users in prevention or treatment of an illness described on a health topic informational page.
- Consider providing separate spaces for provider information and recipient information as their needs are unique to their role. Providers expressed typically looking for resources pertaining to policies, billing, training, etc. Recipients seem to need information on available programs, eligibility, application, etc. The general public finds value in information on public health topics and data.
- Ensure content from all three sites are equally exposed to users in the new site as some respondents shared concerns with consolidation of sites and risk of missing information
- Implement mobile-responsiveness layouts and include quick tips on how to use mobile devices for scanning documents necessary for application completion.

Internal [redacted] Stakeholder Focus Groups

Table of Contents

Focus Groups: Results

Represented Internal [redacted] Divisions

Various [redacted] divisions and lines of business, listed below, were represented in internal stakeholder focus groups.

- Talent / HR / Career Services
- Health Promotion
- Early Childhood
- Refugee Services
- Child welfare
- Foster care
- Human Service Zone Operations
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Medical Services
- Economic Assistance
- Child Support
- Individuals with Developmental Disabilities
- Children and Family Services
- Licensing units
- [redacted]Hospital Administration
- Social Media / Graphic Design / Communications
- ADA Regulatory Oversight
- Civil Rights / Legal
- Health divisions
- Behavioral Health

Focus Groups: Results

Key Audiences

Internal [redacted] teams reported the following communities as key audiences of [redacted] sites

- Parents or guardians of children in need of parental support or care b/c of divorce, separation, death, or aged or disabled (TANF)
- Families in need assistance with buying nutritional food (SNAP)
- Families in need of assistance with the cost of child care (child care assistance)
- Families in need of assistance with home energy costs
- Individuals and children in need of healthcare coverage (CHIP & Medicaid)
- Teen parents up to age 21 who need help paying for child care and transportation so they can continue their education ([redacted])
- Parents participating in the child support program who need to log in and see balances, make payments or change methods of payment
- Individuals caring for children who are unable to remain in their home (kinship caregivers)
- Foster care parents and those interested in becoming foster care parents (high behavioral needs, high native american population)
- New americans in need of service eligibility information (refugees, especially secondary migrants who come to [redacted] for work) (large Ukrainian community)
- Seniors and adults with disabilities who need help with caring for themselves (preparing meals, laundry, etc.) (basic care assistance)
- Individuals who need vocational rehabilitation services
- Individuals with visual and hearing impairments, developmental and or intellectual disabilities and their families
- Individuals who need to file American with Disabilities Act, Office Civil Rights, and HIPAA / Protected Health Information complaints
- Individuals who need to report the suspicion of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation of an adult or child

[redacted]

Focus Groups: Results

Key Audiences (cont.)

- Individuals who need information on medical conditions and the programmatic work linked to addressing medical needs.
- Individuals who need information on behavioral health conditions and the programmatic work linked to addressing behavioral health needs
- Recipients of the state behavioral health system
- Early childhood educators
- Business and community leaders in need of information relating to connecting with refugee communities.
- Eligibility workers - frontline workers who work with people using programs and services
- Medicaid enrolled providers, medical service providers, medical advisory groups, and physicians
- Health professionals working with individuals with physical disabilities
- Providers of services for individuals with developmental disabilities
- Providers of vocational rehabilitation services
- Stakeholders and partners in the developmental disability industry
- Providers of care, treatment, and recovery that promote community integration
- Employers of individuals with disabilities
- Councils and centers for independent living
- Foster care agencies
- Individuals seeking licensing information and qualification
- Individuals interested in behavioral health work

Focus Groups: Results

Key Audiences (cont.)

- Policy makers interested in information on the refugee community, the ways in which they navigate resources and the ways they can become involved
- Policy makers who support the development of behavioral health policies
- Providers of behavioral health services:
- Prevention providers (community agencies, local public health depts., tribal entities, school districts)
- Early intervention providers
- Treatment providers
- Recovery providers (recovery organizations, community service organizations, and peer support specialists)
- Human service center clients, employees, and referral partners (clients might need assessment, crisis support, and or treatment)
- Reporters and media representatives
- Individuals interested in health and human service careers
- General public
- Advisory groups who need meeting times, agendas, links, minutes/notes, and presentations or documentation
- Lawyers, payroll companies, title companies and car dealerships, who need child support enforcement information

Focus Groups: Results

Existing Site Content Strengths

- Map of direct service locations
- Department of health imagery
- Direct links for self-directed services

Existing Site Content Pain Points

- [redacted] site is unfriendly (lacks warmth and welcome tone); difficult to navigate; lacking pictures; includes too many links
- Employment-related content is not solidified and option to apply for openings is not clear/prominent; need to share more information about rural areas to recruit more talent to those areas.
- Accessibility issues for those with disabilities and general public
- Audiences don't understand acronyms and program names
- Missing imagery that represents the diversity of ND citizens and their experiences
- Early childhood does not have it's own section
- Content overlaps and redundancies
- Refugee services content is limited and does not capture stories and voices of refugee communities
- Missing a child welfare dashboard to provide transparency of data and impact of services and programs
- Missing calls to action for foster recruitment and process to apply is not clear
- Information about services and locations of human service centers is not clear. Unsure of audiences understanding the meaning of "direct services"
- Individuals providing services or interested in providing services have trouble finding information about becoming a provider and available resources. The provider label might not be clear.
- Providers have difficulty finding billing information
- Process for applying for services needs to be streamlined; need a one stop shop
- Missing a space for policies and regulations regarding individuals with developmental disabilities and to educate businesses on how to request and receive accessibility for ADA compliance
- Medical service providers need a separate page from those looking for coverage
- Need to be able to update items in multiple areas quickly.
- Lacks ability for electronic referrals and mobile friendly forms
- Need a portal for foster parents to complete tasks online

[redacted]

Focus Groups: Results

Conclusion / Recommendations

Focus group participants emphasized the importance of ensuring site content/functionality meets the following criteria:

1. Meets accessibility requirements
2. Presents a warm and welcoming tone, incorporating imagery and storytelling representative of the diverse [redacted] population and their varied experiences.
3. Utilizes language reflective of common terminology used by the general public
4. Differentiates content by role (recipient, provider, businesses, employers, etc.)
5. Streamlines processes for applying and accessing resources and information about services and programs offered by each division.
6. Links informational content to related service or program information.