

## December 2011 STARS User Survey

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As part of the Wyoming Children's Action Alliance's (WCAA) contractual obligation to assure that the STARS system provides quality support and service to child care providers in Wyoming providers will be asked semi-annually about their experiences with STARS. In fiscal year 2012, the first survey was conducted in December 2011.

The following information is a report and analysis of the information generated by the survey with notes on the context of specific issues highlighted in the survey.

The opportunity to participate in the web-based survey was between December 6 and December 20. The total invitations sent seeking participation in the survey was 5444 of 6013 possible. Those excluded did not have an e-mail address recorded in the system on the day the invitations went out, or have specifically requested that STARS not send them email.

Of the 387 people who looked at the survey, 323 clicked the submit button at the end of the survey. Excluding the sessions that lasted over 2 hours, the average time to complete the survey was 4 minutes and 18 seconds, while the shortest time was a mere 37 seconds. In some questions, participants could choose multiple answers so total responses exceed 323.

Overall 90.5% of people who participate in STARS had the opportunity to share their experiences about using the system. Of the total users who received an invitation to take the survey, 7.1% opened the survey opportunity and 83% of those individuals completed the survey. Those who completed the survey represented 5.9% of those who received the invitation to complete the survey. The total number of completers was 323.

Both the multiple-choice questions about use and service and open comments indicate a high level of satisfaction with the system. Responders also expressed satisfaction with response from the system and periods for completing work. Those who answered the survey indicated a high level of website use. In those users, they indicated a higher use of the website than the phone. Some responses about phone and specific program questions commented on the supportive help provided by specific staff members.

Sixty-three people (19.5% of those responding) provided comments at the end of the survey. Many of the comments contained multiple topics. Seven comments dealt directly with problems controlled by the licensing agency. There were 17 comments dealing with the general issue of the provision of training. There were 41 specifically about work accomplished by STARS.

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Seven of the negative complaints reported in the open-ended portion were actually issues within the control of the licensing agency and not issues over which STARS has control. For example, problems with the DFS website and the required health and safety trainings provided were mentioned. Other complaints focused on the perceived need to reduce the number of required training hours or the percentage of training that could be gleaned from clearinghouse materials.

Issues raised in the comment section that are within the control of STARS include the outdated status of many Clearinghouse items and availability of materials. In fact, a thorough review of the material began in the summer of 2011 and is estimated for completion late in 2012. Outdated materials are being removed and when possible replaced by new versions or other offerings in the same topic area. This, however, also triggered complaints from some survey responders who no longer see familiar items that have been removed because they are old and cannot be replaced with updated versions.

Three comments noted poor customer service from STARS staff as an issue. This is an area of improvement, which will be addressed by WCAA with STARS staff.

Responders also voiced concerns about the class and instructor approval process. The primary concern was the requirement to submit training approvals 14 days in advance of the scheduled training date. Responders indicated that planning for this requirement is difficult.

These responses align with the general issue of lack of planning for training within the field across Wyoming. Providers frequently contract STARS with requests to find immediate training or for quick training hour input because their biennial licensing visit is upcoming with the next week. STARS staff in conversations with callers has also found that many providers are unaware of the training calendar on the website or of how to use. In the past year, efforts have been made to increase provider awareness of the training calendar and how to use it as well as the need to plan for training throughout the year. A set of simple tools for providers have been created and among those is a single page grid designed to help providers plan training over the course of a year. Complaints about the 14-day timeframe for advance approval also indicate a lack of understanding on how to announce upcoming training events and the need to provide time to plan to attend a training event. Additional education efforts with the field are indicated on this point.

It is also obvious from the comments that providers across Wyoming do not always understand that they are essentially responsible for the development of training to meet

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needs locally. Providers seem of the opinion that someone should be creating and distributing continuous training to the field when in fact no such training function exists. Comments point to a lack of understanding that providers need to work collaboratively to determine and schedule training sessions in their local areas. The developing Providers Empowering Providers (PEP) network has made some efforts in local training provisions in the past year but local home-based providers have not made full use of those opportunities. A fall evaluation of PEP efforts also highlighted this issue.

Additional education and awareness about training offered through PEP is needed and planned through 2012. The WY Quality Counts Program has created and scheduled training throughout the state on specific topics and provides funding for providers to attend training both community-based and academic. It remains the provider's responsibility to find and attend the required amount of training.

There were several insightful comments about training evaluation in the open comment section. One responder asked why STARS credits were provided even when a presenter did not meet the expectations of the training session. The dissonance between this question and the complaints about the perceived difficulty in instructor and class approval indicate a lack of knowledge and understanding in the field about the purpose of instructor and class approval and the relationship of those elements to the provision of quality training.

It appears that a significant program for educating providers on what constitutes a good training and the steps required to assure that training has a basic level of quality is needed in Wyoming. Comments display a belief that any video, webinar, or book will do for training purposes and the sole objective of training is to meet an hour total for licensing requirements. The concept that training might be directed at improving the level care provided to children is not displayed by these commenters. Others display a deeper understanding in their complaints about out-dated clearinghouse materials and poor presenters in live training sessions.

Below is a summary of the multiple choice questions posed in survey. The analysis above provides an overview of the open-end comment sections of the survey.

### Question and Answer Summary

1. **How often have you called or emailed STARS or used the website in the past year?**

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- Not at all 39
  - Less than once a month 188
  - Every month 66
  - Several times a month 51
  - No Answer: 1
2. **What method did you use *most* often to access STARS?**
- Phone 89
  - Website 208
  - E-mail 61
  - No Answer: 7
3. **Have you called STARS with questions?**
- Yes 240
  - No 87
  - No Answer: 3
4. **If yes, how would you rate your experience?**
- Excellent, I got what I needed right away 55% of those providing an answer
  - Good, I received the help I needed 38% of those providing an answer
  - Average, my experience was okay 7% of those providing an answer
  - Poor, I had to make several calls or didn't get what I needed 0%
  - No Answer: 68
5. **Do you participate in the Wyoming Career Development Program?**
- Yes 24%
  - No 75%
  - No Answer: 1%
6. **If you have a CDA, associates or bachelors degree have you shared that information with STARS?**
- Yes 63%
  - No 36%
  - No Answer: 1%
- Note: This would indicate that there are child care providers with higher qualifications than currently available data would indicate.*
7. **Have you applied to be a STARS approved instructor?**
- Yes 43%
  - No 56%
  - No Answer: 1%
8. **If yes, how would you rate your application experience?**
- Excellent, I got what I needed right away 41% of those providing an answer
  - Good, I received the help I needed 41% of those providing an answer
  - Average, my experience was okay 14% of those providing an answer
  - Poor, I had to make several calls or didn't get what I needed 4% of those providing an answer

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- No Answer: 176
9. **Have you applied to get a staff orientation, class or conference STARS approved?**
- Yes 52%
  - No 47%
  - No Answer: 1%
10. **If yes, how would you rate your application experience?**
- Excellent, I got what I needed right away 49% of those providing an answer
  - Good, I received the help I needed 33% of those providing an answer
  - Average, my experience was okay 14% of those providing an answer
  - Poor, I had to make several calls or didn't get what I needed 4% of those providing an answer
  - No Answer: 153
11. **Which of the following things on the website have you done? Check all that you have used.**
- None, I don't use the website 2%
  - Updated my personal information 12%
  - Checked my training record 19%
  - Looked at the training calendar 15%
  - Looked for Clearinghouse materials 13%
  - Complete a new provider registration 3%
  - Completed a Career Development application 3%
  - Completed or updated my instructor application 4.5%
  - Linked to the DFS Required Biennium Training sessions 13%
  - Read information on the core areas of knowledge, Stand & Celebrate, Pathways, STARS Board of Review, previous newsletters or other information 14%
  - No Answer: .3%